

Peak District National Park Authority Performance and Business Plan 2008/09

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**Member of The Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) and the English National
Park Authorities Association (ENPAA)
Holder of the Council of Europe Diploma**

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Foreword by the Chair of the Authority

I am very pleased to present our new business plan that shows people what we achieved in the last year and what we will focus on in the coming year. In my first few months as Chair, I have been keen to establish a real focus on tangible progress on key projects. At the same time I want to build on our reputation for being committed to continuous improvement and to achieving a higher standard of excellent performance.

After launching our National Park Management Plan in 2007, I am delighted that we are making good progress with partners towards delivering it and we will report mid 2008 on the first year's achievements. We are also making good progress on our Local Development Framework, with a clear plan in place to complete the work in 2010. The Landscape Character Assessment has now been completed for the National Park, so that we can produce a landscape Strategy in the coming year, and we have made excellent progress towards the targets for getting wildlife sites into better condition, much outpacing the national trend. I was pleased that we launched our Design Guide to great acclaim and ran a successful design award to go with the guide. Our performance in planning is improving and we have approved an action plan for further improvements. We have not yet convinced the Government that the fine detail of major planning applications is worth spending time on to get the right decision in a National Park. This costs us dearly in grant, but I remain convinced it is in the best interests of the National Park for us to consider the needs of the local community in important local planning decisions, as this far outweighs speed in making such decisions. We continue to make good progress enabling local needs affordable housing, with over 260 new families moving in to such homes since 2002. Major casework remains very demanding for this Authority, with a difficult year for progress on Longstone Edge, but a resolution, after 9 years, of the threat to Lees Cross and Endcliffe quarries at Stanton Moor. Progress on the A628 public inquiry remains frustratingly slow, although a thorough examination is the right solution to the Highways Agency's unacceptable plans.

Our performance in reaching out to young people remains good and is increasingly focused on key target audiences. I was very pleased to launch a new teaching pack for schools in Sheffield and, in March, we agreed a challenging but refocused business plan for Losehill Hall that will deliver an increase from 12,800 target users in 2007/8 to 22,900 in 2012/13 and achieve a total turnover of £7.3 million over 5 years. Visitor centres, cycle hire and ranger services have continued to give excellent service to the public and all of our field services are working much more closely together as part of the new Area Teams.

Looking to 2008/9, I am particularly keen that we use the extra resources directed at us by Secretary of State Hilary Benn to help meet his challenging Public Service Agreement targets for the natural environment and climate change. I am confident that with our core conservation work, especially influencing communities, land managers and local authorities, we will continue to make a contribution to achieving low carbon rural and visitor economies. We have made clear our own contribution with specific targets for reducing the Authority's carbon footprint. In particular, we will continue to support the excellent *Moors for the Future* partnership which is delivering large scale habitat restoration and keeping vital carbon locked up in the peat moors of the Park District.

In 2008 we completed a successful performance improvement plan, including delivering nearly all of the commitments made following the first performance assessment in 2005. In 2008 we also put in place the main parts of a new organisational structure, strengthening our strategic work on the one hand and our focus on delivery on the other. Shortly, we will complete a new plan that will help us achieve more, especially capitalising on the very welcome 3 year horizon for budget planning. Funding remains tight, however, given the enormous challenges we face in the National Park. We will need to focus our improvement efforts very carefully such that we achieve greater levels of excellence for the future.

Narendra Bajaria
Chair of the Authority

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The Peak District National Park

Setting the Scene

The Peak District National Park is a very special place for the people who visit and those who live and work here. The Peak District Moorlands and Dales are of international significance for wildlife and the quality of the landscape and environment is outstanding. Millions of people visit to take part in a very wide range of activities and 38,000 people live in the Peak District National Park, many of whom work locally. It was the first national park to be designated in Britain, in recognition of its uniqueness. Annex 1 provides further information about the National Park.

The National Park Management Plan

This plan sets out the desired outcomes for the Park over the next 5 or more years. It guides the activities within the Park of everyone who has influence over or an interest in the National Park. The Plan is available on the Authority's website at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp.htm

A Shared Vision for the National Park

The Peak District National Park is a special place whose future depends on all of us working together for its environment, people and economy. Our vision is for:

- A conserved and enhanced Peak District where the natural beauty and quality of the landscape, its biodiversity, tranquillity, cultural heritage and the settlements within it continue to be valued for their diversity and richness
- A welcoming Peak District where people from all parts of our diverse society have the opportunity to visit, appreciate, understand and enjoy the National Park's special qualities
- A living, modern, innovative Peak District that contributes positively to vibrant communities for both residents and people in neighbouring urban areas, and demonstrates a high quality of life whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park
- A viable and thriving Peak District economy that capitalises on its special qualities and promotes a strong sense of identity

Partnership working is vital to achieving the outcomes and vision for the Peak District National Park through the wide range of administrative bodies (the National Park incorporates 4 Regions, 12* Metropolitan, District and County Councils, 125 Parishes, 7 Highway Authorities) and thousands of community groups (see Annex 2). The Authority relies increasingly on effective partnerships to help deliver its defined outcomes and this is the central basis of the National Park Management Plan.

Introduction

The Peak District National Park Authority

Purposes and Duty

The Authority is the guardian of the National Park with clearly defined purposes to:

- Conserve and enhance the Peak District National Park's special qualities
- Provide opportunities for their enjoyment and understanding

In doing this we are also required to seek to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities within the National Park. We take this duty as seriously as we do our purposes.

As the statutory Local Planning Authority we took decisions on 1,112 planning applications last year, including on mineral working sites, and we also set the policy framework for these.

The Authority is an 'Access Authority' for the purposes of managing public access to 37% of the National Park which is open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Values

The Peak District National Park Authority is a sustainable organisation that achieves National Park purposes by valuing....

The Place: Where we operate to serve the National Park and its communities, valuing

- Needs and contributions of visitors, residents, customers and the environment
- Involvement and participation
- Special qualities of the Peak District
- Working in empowered partnerships

The Way We Work: Operating within our capacity & resources, and valuing

- Minimal bureaucracy
- Flexibility
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Learning
- The professionalism, knowledge, passion and contribution of staff
- Innovation
- Initiative and a pro-active approach

The People: Where we value and treat each other with

- Openness
- Integrity
- Consistency
- Trust
- Fairness and mutual respect
- A positive outlook

and have a passion for the Peak District

A sustainable organisation that values the diversity of people, nature and opportunity

...in its Leadership of the National Park.

Organisation and Membership

30 members guide the Peak District National Park Authority, (their photos are shown inside the back cover) with a committee structure shown in Annex 3 and the supporting organisational structure shown in Annex 4.

447 staff (242.6 full time equivalents) are employed comprising full time, job share, part time, seasonal, temporary and casual posts (Annex 5). During the past year, a new organisational structure has been implemented which reinforces the Authority's ability to achieve its ambitions both by doing and influencing others. Work will continue during 2008 on implementing a new structure of the administrative and support functions.

Performance Management

Our performance management framework (Annex 6) illustrates that the activity of the Authority flows from the National Park Management Plan.

The Authority's corporate plan for medium term planning (3-5 years) was developed to show what the Authority will do to help achieve the outcomes of the National Park Management Plan. The corporate plan consists of 11 corporate outcomes, closely linked to the National Park Management Plan outcomes, and Key Corporate Actions for each outcome. See Annex 7 for details.

All actions have partnership working and sustainable development as underpinning principles and contribute to the Authority's response both to addressing the effects of climate change and to reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. Through planning policy and decisions, grants and advice and working with communities we will continue to support action to reduce energy demands. In a national park environment we must also ensure that we understand the probable impacts of climate change scenarios on the special qualities. We will publish our own Action Plan for Climate Change at the end of 2008.

Corporate Planning and Prioritisation

Within the corporate plan, all Key Corporate Actions are prioritised. Prioritisation is used to identify where the Authority considers that extra effort needs to be applied to achieve the specified action, taking account of past performance and external factors in making a judgement. Prioritisation at level 3 does not mean an action is less valued in its contribution to achieving our corporate outcomes. However, by prioritising, the Authority can reallocate its resources to enable greater effort to be made on level 1 and 2 priorities.

The priority given to each Key Corporate Action is reviewed by members and officers annually as part of the annual corporate planning cycle and is then used to inform decisions relating to allocations of budget to services and actions. Prioritisation is informed by:

- Progress towards achieving each of the Key Corporate Actions (using corporate indicators and targets)
- The Authority's Performance Improvement Plan (which will be reviewed by December 2008)
- The National Park Management Plan and related strategies
- Natural England's strategic priorities and how we can work together to implement those where we have a shared interest
- Our contribution to Defra's Public Service Agreement targets and also to those of the departments as prescribed by Government's expectations of National Park Authorities (see Annex 8)
- Audit reports (see Annex 9),
- Our financial settlement

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The three year financial settlement from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has enabled the introduction of a 3 year corporate planning cycle, starting in 2008/09. This informs the annual corporate planning cycle. The strategic direction given through the corporate plan will be considered alongside progress to date and the financial settlement to give a medium term view on the actions we can undertake to achieve our outcomes. This longer term focus helps our ability to allocate (or reallocate) resources to projects and actions that may take longer than a year to achieve their outcomes and give continuity to some work streams.

Annual Service Planning

Annual service plans are developed from the strategic direction given by corporate planning. Heads of Service are responsible for developing actions to achieve the corporate plan and for identifying appropriate measures and targets to monitor their activity and contribution. Individual work programmes are developed from these service actions so that each member of staff can see how their work contributes to achieving the work of the Authority.

Performance Monitoring

Performance in achieving our Key Corporate Actions and on selected underperforming indicators is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported on an exception basis: to management team quarterly and to Audit and Performance Committee six monthly. During 2007/08 the following indicators were selected for quarterly monitoring:

- Major applications determined within 13 weeks
- Planning appeal decisions allowed against the Authority's decision to refuse planning permission
- Performance in answering letters within 15 working days

For 2008/09 the following indicators will be monitored quarterly:

- Major applications determined within 13 weeks
- Performance for answering letters within 15 working days
- The Authority's overall carbon footprint

During 2007/08 87% of our stated service actions were achieved by the end of the year and a further 9% were achieved based on the revised targets imposed during the course of the year. Outstanding issues have been considered by the Authority's Audit and Performance Committee and the recommended remedial action approved (25th April 2008, minute ...).

We also benchmark our performance against our constituent authorities (Annex 10) and other National Park Authorities, shown in the indicators tables in the subsequent sections. The English National Park Authorities are continuing to review the cross-Park indicators.

Risk Management

Heads of Service are also responsible for identifying key risks in their service which are then considered for inclusion in the corporate risk register. Management Team review the risks on the corporate register annually and it is approved by the Authority's Audit and Performance Committee (25th April 2008, minute ...). A copy of our corporate risk register is shown in Annex 11.

Both service level and corporate risks will be monitored on a quarterly basis by management team and 6 monthly by Audit and Performance Committee.

Performance Improvement

Our partners and funding bodies, as well as the Authority, need to know we are using all our resources – people, funds and properties – to the maximum benefit of the National Park. In 2004 we produced our first Performance Improvement Plan (2004-08) and updated it in 2005 to incorporate recommendations from the first National Park Authority Performance Assessment. A report on the projects delivered through the plan was received by Members in January 2008 (Audit and Performance Committee January 2008, minute 5/08). The Performance Improvement Plan gives a clear focus to our improvement efforts, highlights cross-functional improvement efforts and gives an external perspective on our approach.

A new Performance Improvement Plan will be developed by December 2008 with the added opportunity afforded by the 3 year budget settlement in terms of funding our forward planning.

Financial overview

Each year, we support our expenditure with four main sources of funds:

- National Park Grant from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Other Local Authority special grants from the Department for Communities and Local Government
- Income generation from sales and charges for our services
- Additional funds from grant bodies and partnerships

During the financial year we allocate expenditure to 8 functional headings as requested by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (Full details are shown in the overall financial statement in Annex 12 of this plan, and in the relevant subsequent sections of this document).

The financial information covers four years:

- Resources used in 2006/07 and 2007/08
- Our budgeted expenditure and income for 2008/09
- Our planned requirements for 2009/10 based on estimates of funding available

Following the announcement of National Park Grant in December 2007 we were able to draw up the 2008/09 budget based on an increase in National Park Grant of 4.3%, together with planning figures for further inflationary increases of 2.75% in 2009/10 and 2010/11. In a difficult public expenditure climate these increases were justified by the Minister because of the huge value and impact National Parks were having across a whole range of important issues and, for the first time since the Comprehensive Spending Review of 1998, National Parks now have the welcome ability to plan their resource allocations over the medium term, based on firm funding intentions from Defra.

- We are pleased to be able to supplement this expenditure by the continuation of Defra's ring-fenced Sustainable Development Fund of £200,000 for the next three years.

We also work with partners to secure extra funds for new initiatives to meet our National Park purposes. These are outlined more fully in the following sections. The most significant are:

- Commitment from current Moors for the Future partners towards continuation of the work started under the Heritage Lottery Funded project. A bid to the European Life + programme is currently underway with moorland partners to extend further the restoration work carried out in the first five year programme

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- Extension of some of our European funded projects coming to an end (New Environmental Economy, Interpretation, Community Planning) using new sources of European, Regional development, and partner funding where applicable

The matched funding is provided either in cash or through in-kind contributions from our baseline resources, and our partnership and external funding work attracts nearly £5 in outside funds for every £1 of our own resource used.

We continue to be prudent in our approach to financing capital expenditure from our borrowing powers, setting an overall borrowing limit of £1.7m rising to £2.6m over the 3 year Spending Review period, (between 2.7% and 4.5% of overall net income). These limits will be revised when work on the capital strategy is progressed, assessing our need for capital expenditure on assets over a 10-20 year period, informed by our work on the Asset Management Plan and our need to ensure that the Authority's asset base is financially sustainable. The availability of borrowing enables us to manage our long term assets more cost effectively, based on the principles of sound investment, rather than the in-year constraints caused by financing capital wholly from the revenue budget.

Contract statement

There has been one contract awarded this year which involved a transfer of 2 members of staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 which complies with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.


Format of following sections


The following sections of this document show, within Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs functional headings:


- The related National Park Management Plan Outcome (s)
- The Authority's related corporate outcome (s) and Key Corporate Actions
- Under each Key Corporate Action: i) how we are monitoring our achievement of the Key Corporate Action, ii) our performance, iii) activities the Authority undertook last year to achieve that action and iv) actions planned for the year ahead

Key to Performance Indicators

Our performance in comparison with All National Park Authorities:
--

 We are in top 25%

 We are in bottom 25%
--

 Our performance is average compared with other Authorities
--

Our performance in comparison with the target we set ourselves:
--

✓ We met or exceeded our target

✗ We did not meet our target
