

ANNEX 1

Annex 1: “The Deal” for the National Park and Broads Authorities, incorporating the financial grant memorandum and the spending expectations for the CSR07 years.

Introduction

The National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority (“the NPAs”) are well established and well-respected bodies, delivering statutory purposes whose basic concept has stood the test of time since they were first formulated in 1949.

The NPAs have a unique constitution, reflecting their distinctive mix of national, regional, and local responsibilities.

The Government recognises the particular role which NPAs play, and that their mix of skills and knowledge makes them especially well-fitted to discharging that mix of responsibilities. Government ‘sponsorship’ of the NPAs is therefore aimed at enhancing their capacity to fulfil their role and does not seek to intrude on their areas of expertise nor to second-guess decisions which are best taken by the NPAs themselves.

Nevertheless the Government does have a significant interest in what the NPAs do as it provides the bulk of NPA funding, appoints some members, and cannot fully achieve its own objectives without the contribution which NPAs make.

This document sets out the roles which both the Government and the NPAs need to play if they are, together, to maximise the benefit of the National Parks and ensure that the taxpayers get maximum value for their investment.

The Government’s Strategic Priorities

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (“CSR07”) was the occasion for the Government to review its priorities for the coming period, in particular through a streamlined set of Public Service Agreements. Defra leads on two PSAs :

- to lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change, and
- to secure a healthy natural environment for today and for the future

The NPAs will contribute to both of these (and indeed to other PSAs led by other departments) but the natural environment PSA is particularly relevant and they have been written into the action plans for delivering that PSA.

Beneath the PSA are two further tiers of objectives - the Departmental Strategic Objectives and the supporting Intermediate Outcomes, of which the following are especially relevant to the NPAs :

Departmental Strategic Objective	Related Intermediate Outcome(s)
Climate change tackled internationally; and through domestic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Reduced UK energy consumption...
A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment	Biodiversity valued, safeguarded and enhanced Land and soils managed sustainably People enjoy, understand and care for the natural environment Sustainable living landscapes with best features conserved
Sustainable development championed across government, across the UK, and internationally	
Strong rural communities	Economic growth is supported in rural areas with the lowest levels of performance The evidenced needs of rural people and communities are addressed through mainstream public policy and delivery

Shared Aims

There is a close correlation between what the Government is seeking to achieve and the statutory purposes of National Parks which (with amendments) go back to 1949 and have always set the National Parks the twin role of conserving or enhancing their areas and facilitating the enjoyment and understanding of those areas' special qualities by the public.

A landscape designation is, by definition, long term. The core duty of the NPAs is therefore to ensure that their areas are conserved (or enhanced where possible) for future generations. But alongside that the Government also expects them to answer the (sometimes transient) needs of the current generation and also to remain live-able areas for the people whose homes or jobs lie within their boundaries. This was made explicit by the insertion of the socio-economic duty into the legislation.

A fuller description of the Government's aims for the National Parks is set out in DoE Circular number 12 of 1996.

Shared principles

This Deal is based around a shared set of principles that each organisation will apply in operating this relationship. Each party will:

- focus on outcomes and delivery to customers against public service standards that set out the quality of service that customers should expect;
- in particular, work together to implement a further round of NPAPA (National Park Authority Performance Assessments);
- share data, information and analyses across the network;
- involve each other early on in the development of policy and delivery options;
- respect partners' differing roles and responsibilities;
- ensure that there are no surprises, especially on matters that may interest the media;
- invest in building good working relationships – being open and honest with views and information; investing senior time in developing relationships; take responsibility for promoting good relations at all times; take action where there are problems;
- if a dispute arises it will be referred initially to the relevant NPO (or the ENPOG Chair if it is a general point) and the Senior Responsible Officer for the Defra 'People and Landscapes' Programme – if necessary it will then go to Ministers and NPA Chairs;
- encourage better understanding (eg secondments where appropriate, seminars, site visits. In particular the sponsorship team will meet and/or visit each NPA each year and the NP Minister will maintain a cycle of meetings/visits with individual NPAs
- share successes and problems;
- support periodic independent review of how the Deal is working;

Defra's role

Defra will :

1. Set an appropriate legislative and policy framework for the NPAs to operate within. This covers both legislation (for example open access) and also policy development outside of legislation (for example the diversity review and its subsequent action plan). Where these policies are being developed by Defra the NPAs will be directly involved whenever appropriate. Where the lead lies with another Government department Defra will where necessary either facilitate direct contact with that Department or else ensure that it is aware of NPA views before making its own contribution to the inter-departmental discussion.

Defra will follow the same principles on matters affecting the governance of the NPAs themselves, where the lead will most often lie with DCLG (for example on member and officer codes of conduct or on audit arrangements or on requirements for disclosure etc). Where the special circumstances of the NPAs require some adaptation of the general approach (as happened, for example, on CPA) Defra will pursue this with DCLG and the NPAs.

When appropriate Defra will also liaise with the Welsh Assembly Government (whose National Parks share the same primary legislation) or with the Scottish Executive or the Northern Ireland Executive

2. Provide adequate funding. Overall funding will be decided in each spending review and the NPAs will be given a full opportunity to set out their case. The level of funding for local government will be one factor but there will be no automatic link to the local government settlement given the different and narrower range of functions which the NPAs have

3. Appoint 'national' members who will add a national perspective whilst still working in the interest of the National Park and its Authority

4. Provide a degree of challenge as a "critical friend" of the NPAs

The NPAs' role

The NPAs will:

1. Ensure that they derive maximum benefit from funding, including by efficiency savings and shared services. They will also seek to maximise other sources of income – though Defra recognises that it will continue to be the primary funder

2. Make the contribution to Defra's natural environment PSA target which is described in the action plans and contribute as fully as they can to the delivery of other PSAs. To that end ENPAA will write to Defra at the end of each financial year, setting out the collective contribution which the NPAs have made to the PSA targets

3. Look to cooperate with other public and voluntary bodies, such as NE, LAs, RDAs, so as to maximise their impact

4. Apply the principle of sustainable development to their work so that environmental, social, and economic needs are all met

Both Defra and the NPAs will agree a set of priorities for delivery in each funding period. For the CSR07 period (2008-11) these are set out in the Annex attached (Annex 1).

Review

This Deal will be reviewed as necessary at the request of any of the signatories or their successors.

Signed:

Senior Responsible Officer, People & Places Programme, Defra

Date:

Signed:

Chairman English National Park Officers' Group

Date: