

## **Annex 2**

### **Visitor Action Plan**

#### **Summary**

Visitors are one of the Working with People & Communities Strategy target audiences. This plan co-ordinates activity to communicate with visitors to the National Park and contributes to the National Park Management Plan Outcome 8 'Understanding of the National Park':

#### **Why Visitors?**

This Action Plan focuses on the visitor and their experience of the National Park. It aims to identify a set of actions that will most improve this experience and visitors' understanding of the National Park. The actions are a plan for the National Park and not just for the Authority and are an extension of the NPMP Outcome 8 actions to be taken forward by both the Authority and partners.

Visitors to the National Park includes everyone who makes a leisure trip to the area including staying visitors and day visitors for all purposes – outstanding scenery, sightseeing, attractions, events, walking, specific recreation pursuits, etc.

It is important not to assume visitors means tourists since the National Park is the local countryside and green space for millions of residents in surrounding cities and towns so most visits to the National Park are from what is effectively an extended local community.

Separate to this Visitor Action Plan, under the National Park Management Plan Recreation & Tourism Outcome 7, is the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Peak District which the Authority signed up to in 2000. It focuses on the following:

- tourism businesses support e.g. sustainable tourism schemes
- policies for tourism development e.g. through the Local Development Framework
- visitor economy issues e.g. low value jobs/skills, low visitor spending, lagging investment, etc.
- relations with key tourism bodies e.g. Destination Management Partnerships.

#### **Outcomes**

This action plan will contribute to the following National Park management plan outcome for Understanding the NP:

By 2011, increased understanding of the special qualities of the Peak District National Park amongst residents and target groups, so that they:

- Feel welcome & know that they are in the Peak District National Park
- Understand why the Peak District National Park is a special place
- Have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them and respect each others needs
- Have the opportunity to make a personal contribution to sustainable management of the National Park.

And support the following outcome:

By 2011, the number of people staying overnight in the Peak District, and the sustainability of tourism experiences, is increased especially resulting from:

- Increased quality of tourism services
- A wide range of tourism products based on, and compatible with the special qualities of the National Park

The indicators that will measure progress towards the National Park Management Plan outcome are:

		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>UC1:</b> Proportion of population in surrounding deprived areas who have heard of the PDNP	T		Arrange data collection	To be set	To be set	To be set
	A	Not available				
<b>UC2:</b> Percentage of people that know they are in the PDNP: - All visitors - Children & young people - Minority ethnic groups - People with a limiting long-term illness/disability - From a deprived area	T		98%*			
	A					
<b>UC3:</b> Average score (1-6) of how much people felt their understanding about what is special about the PDNP increased: - All visitors - Children & young people - Minority ethnic groups - People with a limiting long-term illness/disability - From a deprived area	T		5.0*			
	A					

\* current data is only available for our own service users. Targets will be set once partners' data has also been collated.

The Authority's own contribution will be through the following corporate outcomes:

G Understanding of the National Park and its special place has increased so that people recognize its value, and have the opportunity to make a personal contribution to its sustainable management.

D. Feel welcome in the National Park and have the opportunity to participate in recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives.

## Key Drivers Summary

- Sustainable tourism, as defined by The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, is: 'any form of development, management or tourist activity which ensures the long-term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas.'
- DEFRA's Expectations of National Parks 2008-2011 makes reference to contributing to other Government policies as well as delivering the statutory duties. Specifically relevant to this action plan the document refers to the Natural Environment Public Service agreement as follows: 'England's nine NPAs will continue to develop policies and programme aimed at retaining the local character, landscape features and tranquillity, and promote landscape restoration and encourage sustainable tourism initiatives.'
- ENPAA position Draft Statement on Sustainable tourism states that:

Sustainable tourism is important to National Park Authorities. It contributes to delivery of our statutory purposes, particularly that of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public. Properly managed tourism can bring a range of benefits and help sustain our communities, environment and way of life. Inappropriate tourism development or poorly managed visitor pressure, however, can be damaging. In order to achieve the aims above National Park Authorities will, for example, :

  - Work in partnership with Destination Management Organisations/Area Tourism Partnerships to develop sustainable tourism strategies and action plans and put these into practice.
  - Promote the principles of sustainable tourism.
  - Will continue promoting National Parks, through UK-ANPA and the *Britain's Breathing Spaces Brand*, as places for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.
  - Promote sustainable tourism by working with all interests to improve the environmental performance of all sectors of the tourism and visitor industry through the adoption of agreed standards and methods, such as green accreditation schemes.
  - Work with other organisations and communities to promote (and occasionally provide) sustainable transport options...
  - Recognise the importance of working with partner organisations, businesses and communities in areas around the boundaries since visitors may be staying in accommodation outside the National Park and making one or more day trips into it. They may not necessarily notice the boundary of the National Park but we need to work together to maximise the benefits to and from these visitors.
  - Work with others and directly to provide public realm services and improvements that enhance the visitor experience.
  - Work to reduce barriers to accessing the National Parks and to provide opportunities for all.
  - Develop, promote and put into practice policies that facilitate diversification of businesses and allow them to adjust to changes in market conditions or tourist preferences.
  - Monitor visitor numbers and activities using NPA surveys and data from other organisations (destination management partnerships, Natural England, VisitBritain).

- *Principles for sustainable tourism in National Parks and AONBs* (Countryside Agency, 2004) and put an emphasis on opportunities for visitors to both understand and contribute to sustainable development whilst enjoying National Parks. These include:
- Sharing responsibility (through joint working and the establishment of permanent forums to involve all relevant stakeholders);
  - Agreeing a tourism strategy (related to the National Park Management Plan and providing the basis for joint working);
  - Basing tourism on the area's special qualities (ensuring that the level and type of activity take account of National Park qualities, including tranquillity);
  - Providing a quality experience for all visitors (with an emphasis on access for all and quality of experience rather than quantity of visitors);
  - Reducing the environmental impact of tourism (by assessing the impact of developments, and encouraging enterprises to reduce energy and water consumption, pollution and waste);
  - Raising awareness and supporting conservation (through accurate information, creative interpretation, and tourism-sector support for practical conservation initiatives);
  - Bringing more benefit to the local economy (by making use of local skills, resources, products and services); and
  - Engaging with the local community (by involving local communities in tourism development and management).

## Peak District National Park Situational Analysis Summary

- In 2004, the Peak District Interpretation Partnership commissioned 'Celebrating the Peak District Landscapes'. This document proposed Landscape Interpretation Plans for 4 main character areas of the Peak District and recommendations included:
  - Supporting initiatives that allow local people to communicate directly with visitors about where they live
  - Work with small scale businesses e.g. accommodation providers, to explore how the landscape contributes to their businesses and how they communicate messages to their customers, whether this can be developed & supported
  - Create interpretive gateways to the Peak District for both public and private transport users
  - Develop interpretive and information hubs that direct people to sites of related interest in the area
- The Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2000 was developed in response to the downturn in the Peak District economy at that time. It was developed and supported by a wide range of partners, including High Peak Borough Council, Staffordshire county Council, PDNPA, Derbyshire County Council. The aims of the strategy are:
  - To increase visitor spend and maximise the local benefits of spend
  - To encourage visitors to stay longer
  - To encourage visits throughout the year
  - To attract new visitors (with potential spending power) where appropriate
  - To reduce dependency upon the car when visiting
  - To deliver for local people and not just for visitors
  - To conserve the landscape, including the towns and villages, and their special qualities
- Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP) commissioned visitor research in 2008 to inform their marketing strategy. Respondents from a national panel and from a panel of respondents to previous DMP marketing campaigns provided the following information:
  - The national panel listed the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Devon above the Peak District as a rural area they had visited.
  - Day and staying visitors origin was almost equally spread across the East Midlands, West Midlands, Yorkshire and North West. Staying visitors also came from the South East
  - Strong associations with the Peak District were identified by national panellists as: attractive countryside (92%), attractive villages (86%), leisurely walking routes (85%) and a National Park (81%)
- The Peak District National Park Authority Visitor Survey 2005 was undertaken across 24 Peak District locations and highlights, for example, that:
  - Respondents mainly visited as families or groups of friends (75%)
  - Most popular visitor accommodation was caravan & tent (22%), hotel (19%) and friend or relative (18%)
  - The main reasons the respondents visited included, in order: scenery, tranquillity and peace & quiet
  - Planning aides for their visits were, in order: been before/know the area, maps, guide books/leaflets, internet/website, Tourist Information Centres
  - Main activities were, in order: walking 2-10 miles, sightseeing and visiting an attraction /place of interest

## **The Visitor Journey**

One of the main ways to understand a visitor's experience of the National Park is to consider all the possible stages of a visit to the area - from when they first start planning a trip, to making the journey, arriving and getting around, staying in the area or visiting sites, through to their experience of specific products, events and services and after their trip how they may keep in touch with the area through their general knowledge or interests (e.g. leisure interests/clubs, heritage body memberships).

Some of the key messages that this Action Plan has taken from work done on visitor journeys\* to the Peak District are as follows:

- That the National Park is one part of a mix of messages and products that make up the wider Peak District and what it has to offer visitors. On the one hand the distinction between the Peak District, Districts/Counties, the National Park, Market Towns etc. are often unclear to the average visitor and not always that important to them. On the other hand visitors like to feel as part of the distinctive nature of their visit that they have had some recognisable experience of the National Park either through the place, through the quality of visitor services or through specific local products and events etc.
- That an experience involves not just the obvious tourism attractions, events or accommodation, but what a place has to offer more generally, e.g. its outstanding landscape and natural beauty, its public realm, its shopping and food outlets, its local products, its friendliness and welcome.
- That the quality of all parts of this experience is important to the visitor and any poor quality elements wipe out good quality elements very easily.
- That many visitors want easy ways of finding out about and accessing products in the National Park. Whilst some visitors know what they want from a visit and will do their own thing, many others who are not traditional or confident users of the countryside need a range of help such as easier transport, 'day out' itineraries, more packaged and laid on arrangements, or more accessible recreation opportunities to experience what the National Park has on offer (also refer to Under-represented Groups Action plan).


\* Work has been done by the DMP on the quality of the Peak District visitor journey and as part of a specific community forum event in the Hope Valley in 2007.

The SWOT analysis below gives an overview of some of the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the visitor journey and their experience of the wider Peak District and National Park.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attractive countryside, attractive villages , walking routes, National Park</li> <li>▪ Well known heritage attractions e.g. Chatsworth</li> <li>▪ Good Public Visitor services including National Park Visitor Centres</li> <li>▪ Range of specific National Park Services:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Losehill Hall</li> <li>○ Rangers Walks</li> <li>○ Cycle Hire</li> <li>○ Camp Sites</li> <li>○ MFF</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ High number of Sustainable Tourism Schemes and participating businesses (EQM, BESST, PD Foods, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Range of national, regional and local recreational opportunities</li> <li>▪ Peak District brand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gaps in some sectors of accommodation (e.g. higher quality serviced)</li> <li>▪ Lack of higher value/package products generally</li> <li>▪ Less family appeal and products</li> <li>▪ Recreation more informal and less geared to new users/visitors</li> <li>▪ Quality of some amenity/public realm sites is weak</li> <li>▪ Heavy reliance of external funds for 'environmentally sustainable' product development schemes and promotions e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Peak Experience</li> <li>○ Peak Connections</li> <li>○ Peak Foods</li> <li>○ Interpretation</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Need to keep websites, signage, interpretation, up to date and high quality, including PDNP boundary signs</li> <li>▪ Non-accredited but requested accommodation e.g. camping are not promoted through the DMP.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attracting new tourism investment in products, accommodations etc.</li> <li>▪ LDF support for appropriate tourism development</li> <li>▪ Growth in local products</li> <li>▪ Recreation opportunities (linked to 2012)</li> <li>▪ Key product priorities from DMP:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ spa/water</li> <li>○ outdoor adventure</li> <li>○ family fun</li> <li>○ eco-tourism</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Visitor transport opportunities</li> <li>▪ Local FE/HE courses supporting tourism related skills/qualifications</li> <li>▪ New media technology for interpretation</li> <li>▪ Recession leading to a focus on more domestic holiday destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fragmentation of Peak District into separate DMP/County and support to businesses.</li> <li>▪ Missed investment from private and public sector</li> <li>▪ Low visitor spending</li> <li>▪ Micro-businesses with low margins</li> <li>▪ Quality of tourism jobs</li> <li>▪ Public costs under pressure (e.g. running Tourist Information Centres, finding match funding for projects)</li> <li>▪ Recession more generally</li> </ul>

## Proposed Framework and Initial Action Plan

The framework below aims to capture the range of current activities that help provide a National Park experience to visitors.

	<b>Action Headings</b>	<b>Current activities</b>	<b>Key needs</b>
<b>Increasing levels of direct visitor engagement</b> 	General visitor information/booking services	NPA/Partner literature/website DMPs literature/website Commercial websites	- Influence most outreaching information  - Use new media more
	NP specific product/services promotion to priority groups	Tourism providers Cultural initiatives User groups (sports, NT, YHA, etc.)	- Influence key groups more e.g. through Recreation Strategy
	Developing public realm and transportation related to NP sites	Public transport services NP gateway/arrival site – infrastructure	- Target most important NP signage/gateways/ arrival sites/amenities/ transport routes
	Developing visitor products related to NP qualities	Local products (foods, crafts, etc.) Local events New investment	- Support most important NP related product developments
	NP specific visitor services	Visitor Centres Interpretation/displays New Media (Peak Exp.)	- Ensure NP services are high quality and maintain investment
	NP specific visitor experience sites	Nature/heritage/ recreation sites most in need of quality improvement.	- Agree priorities for quality improvement & investment  - Look for more partnership investment options







<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support initiatives to assist businesses to invest in product development that are based on the qualities of the NP (e.g. continuation of EQM and taking forward 'Peak Product' masterplan)</li> </ul>	
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<b>National Park specific visitor services</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<p>Visitor Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve strength of NP messages and learning resources through Visitor Centres (NPA and partners) and monitor impact</li> </ul> <p>Interpretation/displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- improve strength of NP messages and learning resources through interpretation/displays at visitor service sites (NPA and partners)</li> <li>- develop new media opportunities at key sites and gateway locations, including NP messages</li> <li>- monitor impact</li> </ul>	<p>NPA/Partner Centres</p> <p>NPA/Partners PD Interpretation Partners</p>

<b>National Park specific visitor experience sites</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<p>Strategically important NP experience sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and improve specific NP visitor experience sites (e.g. strategically important nature/heritage/recreation sites)</li> </ul> <p>New forms of Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore where new forms of partnership and investment would assist site development and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p>NPA/Partners</p> <p>NPA/Partners</p>