

Corporate Outcome 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 by ...

1. Providing learning opportunities to key rural and urban audiences, particularly residents, young people and under-represented groups from surrounding urban areas (Priority level 1)

2: Working with and influencing stakeholders to enhance learning opportunities about the National Park (Priority level 3)

3: Encouraging and developing volunteering opportunities that allow people to make a personal contribution to the sustainable management of the National Park (Priority level 3)

We delivered learning opportunities to approximately 480,000 customers, of which 23,000 were through active engagement in learning and the remainder through contacts in our Visitor Centres. We achieved our targets for active engagement despite a lack of funding for the Youth Ranger programme (although now resolved) and we are reaching our target audiences. We delivered over 10,000 volunteer days in 2008/09.

Key contributors have been the ongoing success of the John Muir Trust Award (1,319 individuals), ongoing environmental learning activities at Longdendale (in partnership with United Utilities) and at the Moorland Discovery Centre (in partnership with National Trust) and through professional courses and learning activities at our Losehill Hall Study Centre. Although we did not meet our overall target for increasing understanding of the National Park among service users, on analysis, this was specific to visitor centres and we will monitor this more closely.

As part of our Local Residents Action Plan we have now identified a structure for delivering community planning. This has largely been achieved through the Live & Work Rural programme. We have started to review our approach to area forums and will complete this work during 2009, and have attended 3 local shows. We have been unable to develop a specific White Peak Project but have started to look at potential project areas in relation to our own strategic asset management plan, community planning and other strategies.

We have developed action plans within our Working with People and Communities Strategy for: young people, visitors, local residents and under-represented groups. We do not propose to develop a specific action plan for businesses as this area of work is absorbed in our other programmes and initiatives.

We have developed new strategic partnerships in the south west of the National Park area (with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust as the lead body), Kirklees Council, Oldham MBC and a trust working with disaffected young people. We have also started discussing partnership working with Barnsley MBC.

Looking ahead to 2009/10

We will have been successful in 2009/10 if we deliver learning opportunities to a similar number of customers, of which a majority are from our target audiences and we improve our average increase in understanding of why the National Park is special to 5 out of 6.

Key actions for 2009/10 include:

- *Develop policies and plans with partners for their contribution to delivering the working with people and communities strategy (L1)*
- *Increase the number of participants receiving learning opportunities, particularly from target audiences (L1)*
- *Deliver interpretation projects with partners (L2)*
- *Implement the priority actions from the working with people and communities strategy (L2) Develop 4 strategic partnerships to deliver learning opportunities to a wider audience (L1)*
- *Provide conservation projects, with a focus on target groups, totalling 6,000 volunteer days (L1)*
- *Support key partners to promote and extend volunteering opportunities (L1)*
- *Undertake consultation on developing a volunteering strategy (L2) PIP 3.7a/1*

National Parks for all

For many people the Peak District National Park is on their doorstep. But despite being so near to big cities and towns, some communities remain unaware of what the National Park has to offer. They may feel excluded or simply do not know what to do when they get here.

Working with the Campaign for National Parks, who have successfully bid to the Big Lottery Fund, the Peak District National Park Authority is recruiting and working with volunteer Community Champions who live in many of the neighbouring towns and cities.

There are over 50 community champions already. They come from Sheffield, Tameside, Derby and Birmingham. They are all black and ethnic minority community representatives who want to share their enthusiasm for the Peak District National Park with others. Through their local networks, the Champions act as ambassadors, promoting the opportunities available in the National Park and helping others to experience what it has to offer.

For 2009/10, working with the champions, we aim to:

- Provide the Community Champions with more training and support so that they can better promote the opportunities the National Park offers
- Develop a group of Champions based in the area around the north of the Park
- Widen the Champions involved to include other community representatives
- Deliver a range of projects including producing community posters and information, promoting the National Park at local shows and cultural events, and helping young people to visit the National Park.