

AGENDA ITEM No. 4

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING

31 JULY 2009

STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT

1. PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (A.5912/JC)

Purpose of the report

1. This report seeks Authority approval for the attached Peak District National Park Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, which provides a key framework for delivery of National Park and Corporate outcomes for Natural Beauty:

By 2011 the natural beauty of landscapes means:

- *They are still attractive places to live in and visit and are assets to communities and the economy*
- *There is a clear characterisation of the whole of the landscape and it is conserved and enhanced in accordance with that characterisation*

The Strategy builds on the previously approved Landscape Character Assessment and provides guidelines for the management of different landscapes within the 8 Landscape Character Areas which have been identified and mapped across the National Park. The accompanying Action Plan sets out how those guidelines will be used to deliver the National Park outcomes above, and will form a basis for future resource planning and partnership work.

The report seeks the views of Members in particular on the Landscape Guidelines for each of the 8 Landscape Character Areas, and on the proposed actions set out in the overall Action Plan. Members are invited to contact Garrie Tiedeman by email (garrie.tiedeman@peakdistrict.gov.uk) in the Natural Environment Team, either before or after the Authority meeting, if they have any queries on the detail of the document.

Recommendations

2. **1. The attached Landscape Strategy and Action Plan be approved as a framework for action to deliver National Park outcomes for natural beauty with partners.**
- 2. Authority to make any changes arising from Members' comments is delegated to the Director for Strategy & Development in consultation with the Member Representative for Natural Beauty.**
- 3. The Authority, through the lead officer and Member Representative, works with lead partners to ensure their contributions to this Action Plan.**

4. **The Strategy and Action Plan informs the Authority's Corporate Priorities, with the level of contribution by the Authority to the Action Plan being annually determined through the Annual Performance and Business Planning Process.**
5. **The Authority notes that the process for monitoring the Action Plan will be through the National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Reporting to Audit and Performance.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The current National Park Management Plan 2006-11 sets out an Outcome (3) for Natural Beauty which recognises the need for clear characterisation of the landscape and for conservation and enhancement in accordance with that character. The Strategy and Action Plan sets out how this will be achieved with an indication of timescales and lead partners.

Background

4. In March 2008 the Authority approved a Landscape Character Assessment for the Peak District (Minute 20/08), which identified 8 different Landscape Character Areas and described a range of Landscape Character Types within each. The Landscape Strategy and Action Plan builds on this previous work by identifying the following for each of the 8 Landscape Character Areas:

- Issues of Change, i.e. pressures influencing the landscape
- An overall landscape strategy for the area and each of its constituent Landscape Character Types
- A table of landscape management guidelines, with accompanying explanation

The Action Plan, covering all 8 Character Areas and therefore an area slightly greater than the National Park, then sets out how those guidelines will be implemented, identifying timescales and lead partners.

5. In addition to providing a framework for the National Park outcomes for Natural Beauty, the Action Plan is also an important part of the Authority's contribution to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). This came into force in the United Kingdom in March 2007, and recognises the need to address landscape protection, management and planning measures across Europe. Natural England has been charged with leading its implementation in England, and has strongly welcomed the fact that the structure of the Peak District Landscape Action Plan, which will be one of the first in the country, is based on the ELC.
6. Production of the Strategy and Action Plan has been guided by a steering group of Authority officers and key external stakeholders, and written by landscape consultants in close partnership with Authority officers, particularly landscape architect Garrie Tiedeman. An internal workshop was held seeking staff views, and several public workshops have also been held, some of which have been jointly with Local Development Framework workshops attended by some Authority Members. The Member Representative for Natural Beauty, Christopher Pennell, has been involved since his appointment. Topics from the draft Strategy were also presented at the Authority Members' workshop on Corporate Outcomes in May, and feedback from Members has been taken into account in producing the final draft. The document then went through a 5 week public consultation process, which resulted in 25 responses. Significant issues raised in consultation included the balance between preserving existing landscapes and allowing landscape evolution, and potential conflicts between renewable energy developments and landscape conservation. The Strategy has sought to take a balanced approach to

these issues.

Proposals

7. Any amendments arising from the Authority meeting will be agreed with the Director for Strategy & Development in consultation with the Member Representative for Natural Beauty. The final document will be integrated with the existing Landscape Character Assessment document so that the description, analysis and guidelines for each of the 8 Landscape Character Areas is brought together.
8. The Strategy will provide a clear vision of how landscape protection, management and planning in the National Park should be developed over the next ten years to deliver National Park outcomes for Natural Beauty, providing guidance on priorities for resources for the Authority and its partners. It will facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to landscape work, and help embed a landscape character based approach across the work of the Authority and its partners. It will also build on and help inform future revision of the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Cultural Heritage Strategy, and will be embedded in Local Development Framework policies to help inform planning decisions.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

9. **Financial:** The actions would be implemented by a combination of focusing existing work, new work carried out by existing staff and project work which would require specific financial resource allocation. We will seek to harness the efforts and resources of partners to work with us on projects and actions and, where appropriate, external funding would be sought for project work. Any additional Authority commitment to further actions within the Strategy and Action Plan will be considered through the annual budgetary cycle. The Action Plan makes it clear that delivery of all actions will depend on availability of resources and partnerships.
10. **Risk Management:** Risks will be applied to the finally agreed actions in the Action Plan as part of the NPMP Annual Monitoring Report. There is a potential risk of lack of outcome delivery through lack of partner engagement or inadequate resources.
11. **Sustainability:**
The Strategy and Action Plan help to achieve:
 - the aims of the Climate Change Action Plan, by identifying how key issues such as renewable energy proposals and flood risk management can be integrated into the landscape
 - the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Cultural Heritage Strategy, by identifying priority areas for conservation and enhancement at a landscape scale.
12. **Relationship to planning policy:**
The Authority's Planning Policy and Natural Environment Teams have worked closely together to ensure that the Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy is embedded within the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, thus negating the need for a separate Supplementary Planning Document for Landscape. However review of any existing Supplementary Planning Guidance will incorporate consideration of the Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy.

13. The preferred option for natural beauty within the LDF Core Strategy is to base landscape conservation and enhancement policies on the key landscape features identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and the landscape guidelines identified in the Landscape Strategy, so that development would only be acceptable where it is in keeping with the landscape character and guidelines. Within this overarching framework areas of particular importance for their qualities of wildness, naturalness, tranquillity and remoteness, which are especially sensitive to development, will continue to be identified as the Natural Zone. Within this, most forms of development are likely to be out of keeping with the character, so development would only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

14. **Background papers** (not previously published)
None

Appendices -

Appendix 1: Draft Landscape Strategy and Action Plan for the Peak District National Park (for approval)

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Rhodri Thomas, Natural Environment Team Manager, Thursday 23 July, 2009.