

AGENDA ITEM No. 7

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING

26 MARCH 2010

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART A

1. NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW (A.6121/RG)

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline an approach for reviewing the National Park Management Plan and to seek approval from members to undertake the review.

Recommendations

2. 1. **Agree to review the National Park Management Plan according to the approach, timescales and reporting mechanisms set out in the Proposals Section of this report, specifically:**
 - **Agreeing the outline project plan and key milestones (paragraph 9 and appendix 1)**
 - **Noting the project risks and opportunities (paragraphs 10 and 11)**
 - **Agreeing to the proposed project governance arrangements (paragraphs 12 and 15)**
 - **Endorsing the proposed stakeholder (including Member) engagement proposals (paragraphs 16-20).**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The National Park Management Plan (NPMP) is the most important document for each National Park. It is the overarching strategic document and central to the future of the Park. It co-ordinates and integrates other plans, sets the vision and objectives that will guide development for the next 20-30 years, and indicates how the National Park purposes and associated duties will be delivered through sustainable development. In so doing, it sets the overall framework for all policy and activity pursued by the National Park Authority. The Countryside Agency Guidance (published in 2005 but still the most recent guidance) sets out a number of principles for reviewing NPMPs but the main responsibility is that plans have to be reviewed every 5 years, to ensure that they remain current and valid.

Background

4. The current NPMP covers the period 2006-11 and we therefore need to establish a process to review the Plan. It does not need to be a fundamental review, indeed the Review could conclude that the content of the Plan is still largely valid and could just be updated.
5. We have been giving thought to how the Review could be managed and considerations for initiating and carrying out the Review have been tested and developed further with Management Team and the Strategic Advisory Group.

6. Although reviewing the NPMP is a significant piece of work for the Authority we are not starting from scratch, this Review builds on the current plan, and there is both considerable substance and learning upon which to base this Review. For example, a significant amount of data and evidence exists (including from the Local Development Framework Core Strategy work and recent NPMP strategies such as the Recreation Strategy). The Review will also be able to draw on existing public engagement material and what we know about what our residents have told us in the recent Residents Survey. Since the last Plan was produced we also have a number of roles and structures in place, which can help with the Review, including the Member Representatives for NPMP outcomes, Lead Officers for NPMP Strategies and the NPMP External Monitoring Group.

Proposals

7. Expectations for the Review

The vision and objectives of a NPMP are expected to have a life beyond the plan itself (i.e. 20-30 years). Since the last plan was a fairly fundamental review we are therefore embarking on this Review with the expectation that it will be about checking the basis for our current direction and adjusting if necessary. Our current assessment is that the framework for the Plan may broadly stay the same but the content could change, possibly significantly, if the evidence and analysis points to this need. Some of the key questions that we will be asking are as follows:

- What has changed/emerged since our last Plan was developed?
- What progress has been made towards delivering the current Plan (how can good progress be sustained and slower progress accelerated)?
- What are the key contextual indicators telling us about change for the Park?
- What are the issues that lie outside the Park that might have a bearing on the future of the Park e.g. regional policy?

8. These questions will both help with scoping the Review and contribute to possible content. A further key element of designing the Review relates to the requirements and expectations for engaging stakeholders, and this is heavily influenced by the expectations for the Review. Stakeholders, in their different forms, will need to be involved appropriately and proportionately throughout all stages of the Review (although they are not explicitly mentioned at each stage in the next section).

9. Project Plan

We are currently working on developing a detailed project plan. This covers five key stages. We estimate that stage five will take from June to late August 2011 allowing for the Plan to be launched during September 2011. Key stages of the Review are as follows:

- Initiate the project
- Stage 1 - Evidence and Gathering Analysis – to establish the State of the Park
- Stage 2 - Testing and Refining the Vision, Outcomes and Objectives
- Stage 3 - Determining Actions and Delivery
- Stage 4 - Drafting, designing and consulting on the draft Plan
- Stage 5 - Finalising and Launching the Plan
- Co-ordination and Monitoring the Plan

A slightly more detailed outline project plan is included at appendix 1. This shows the key dates, decision points and stakeholder involvement.

10. Risks and Opportunities

We have considered the risks and opportunities in carrying out the Review and putting together the outline project plan. Allowing for a timeframe that takes us into summer of 2011 enables us to control some risks that would have been greater with a much shorter review timetable. However, there are still some important risks that the Project Board will be managing. Some of the key risks include:

- insufficient capacity of senior managers and specialist officers, due to commitment to other major current projects – to be addressed through thorough programme management
- failure to get high quality engagement and commitment from partner organisations to the final plan – to be addressed through design of stakeholder engagement process
- differing and changing expectations for the review – to be addressed through scoping.

11. As we embark on reviewing the NPMP the opportunities that we can build upon include, a significant body of information, commitments in strategies and action plans and structures now in place (as set out in paragraph 6). However, the significant opportunity presenting us is to use the process of review to re-energise the level of discussion with our key stakeholders about the future of the Park; and how we can all collectively and variously contribute to realising National Park purposes. This should achieve greater alignment with the wider objectives and agendas of other partner and stakeholder organisations.

12. Project Organisation and Reporting Process

The Review will make use of existing roles, working groups, lines of communication, and forums wherever possible, to avoid having to create additional structures.

13. However a Project Board will be established to provide overall governance of the Review. It will escalate significant issues that it is not able to resolve to either Management Team and/or Members (including Strategic Advisory Group and/or Authority, if appropriate). The Project Board will comprise of the Chief Executive, Head of Policy, Head of Environment, Heritage and Recreation Strategy and Head of Communications, with policy, project management and support from the Policy Service. As a reflection of the significance of the NPMP as the most important strategic document for a National Park the Chief Executive will chair the Project Board and champion the NPMP Review process.

14. It is also proposed that three heads of service will be convened at key points during the process (for example at testing and drafting) to provide an internal quality assurance process.

15. The Project Board will provide a bi-monthly monitoring report (starting in May) to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, providing information on progress against the project plan, key tasks delivered and any risks and issues emerging.

16. Engagement Approach

Engagement with stakeholders will be important throughout all five stages of the project plan. Internal stakeholders comprise of both Authority members and staff, and external stakeholders cover a range of bodies including *formal* (e.g. local authorities), *communities* (e.g. place and interest), *statutory agencies* (e.g. the Environment Agency) and *representative/membership* (e.g. Peak Park Parishes Forum) etc. The

latter could help to represent a general public interest.

17. *Internal - Officers*

We will ensure that all staff have the opportunity to hear about the NPMP Review and contribute ideas through the employee engagement programme currently under development. However, the NPMP Strategy Lead Officers Group will be the key group in helping with the Review. This group meets periodically to progress the NPMP and during the next 18 months its programme of work will primarily consist of contributing to and shaping the Review. Making links with the individual strategies and action plans, reviewing evidence and providing analysis, and making connections with key external stakeholders.

18. *Internal - Members*

We will also provide information and opportunities for all members to engage in the Review at key stages. This is also likely to include key decision points for Authority (provisionally October 2010 and March 2011). However, there is an important role to play for the Member Representatives for NPMP Outcomes. An initial briefing with Member Representatives in April will set out the likely involvement in the key stages of the Review and the format that engagement might take. As the plan progresses, and especially as we get close to a wide public consultation on the plan, it will be important to provide support to parish and council members to enable them to play ambassadorial and facilitating roles with the communities and organisations with which they are associated.

19. *External*

We are currently undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify key stakeholder organisations and the role that they might play in the Review. We intend to make use of the NPMP External Monitoring Group as a key group for providing quality assurance of the process from an external perspective, as well as a sounding board to test ideas for external engagement and a source of ideas about the content of the Review.

20. It is likely that we will seek to convene stakeholders (external and internal - Representative Members and Strategy Lead Officers) in a workshop format at key points through the review to help develop and test content.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

21. **Financial:**

The financial costs associated with the Review will be met within existing resources.

22. **Risk Management:**

Risk management is covered in the body of this report in paragraph 10.

23. **Sustainability:**

The NPMP plays a central role in indicating how achieving National Park purposes and associated duties will be delivered through sustainable development and in doing so provides an overarching framework for all National Park Authority policy.

24. **Background papers**

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – outline Project Plan

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Rachel Gillis, Head of Policy, 18 March 2010