

4. NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2010 (A.61834/WA)

Purpose of the report

1. To seek approval for the participation of staff and members in National Park Authority Performance Assessment 2010.

Recommendations

2.
 1. **Welcome the participation of Peak District National Park Authority in National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA) during 2010.**
 2. **Approve the involvement of staff and members as outlined in this report.**
 3. **Approve future reports, including the Authority's self-assessment, peer review and other matters relating to NPAPA be brought to the Audit and Performance Committee in line with the timetable outlined below.**
 4. **Approve the nomination of the Chair or their nominee to be involved in a National Park Authority Performance Assessment review of another Authority at a time yet to be determined.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. National Park Authorities are subject in broad terms to the same requirements to achieve best value through structured approaches to improve their effectiveness, efficiency and economy as other local authorities under the Local Government Act 1999. As the authorities are generally smaller than local authorities and also because they have specific purposes which make them different from other local authorities there is a specially tailored approach to assessing the performance of the authorities. It contributes to our corporate objective 11.1 of ensuring continuous improvement, value for money, sustainability and high standards of corporate governance.

Background

4. Each authority is subject to periodic review through the National Park Authority Performance Assessment. This approach was developed and first applied for all English national park authorities (NPAs) in 2005 (other than the newly created New Forest NPA). It is based on best practice assessment for public bodies and uses techniques similar to the former Comprehensive Performance Assessment and also it is complementary to Comprehensive Area Assessment. NPAPA has been agreed by Defra, Communities and Local Government, the Audit Commission and the English National Park Authorities Association as the appropriate approach for NPAs. At its heart the assessment is based on a standardised approach comprising the following:
 - There is an agreed list of Key Lines of Enquiry (summarised at appendix 1)
 - The authorities agree with English National Park Authorities Association and Defra an appropriate time for their authority to be assessed and this is at least once in every 5 years
 - The authority prepares a self assessment prior to a peer review
 - A peer review team comprising senior officers and members from other national park authorities, a local authority chief executive and a facilitator undertakes a review based in the authority lasting about 4-5 days
 - The peer review team report their findings, initially verbally and then in a written report to the authority and also to Communities and Local Government, Defra and the Audit Commission.

- Recommendations are expected to be integrated into the authority's work plans and/or own performance improvement plans
 - Where significant issues arise Communities and Local Government, Defra and the Audit Commission will agree appropriate follow-up action with the authority
 - Reports and follow up actions are generally made available publicly by the authority
5. The Authority was last assessed in September 2005 with the final report approved at Audit and Performance Committee, January 2006 (minute 5/06).
 6. Recommendations from the report were used to inform the revised Performance Improvement Plan during 2006 and approved by Audit and Performance Committee January 2006 (minute 5/06).

Proposals

7. The Peak District National Park Authority propose requesting assessment to be undertaken during the week of 11 October 2010 (with alternative weeks of 18 October and 4 October, if the assessment team are unavailable).
8. An outline of the actions to be undertaken to support the assessment, together with timelines and those involved are proposed in Appendix 2.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

9. **Financial:** The Authority is required to make a contribution to the cost of the assessment team of £10,000 plus approximately £2,000 accommodation costs which has been approved in principle by Resource Management Team as a call against the 2009/10 out turn which will be reported to Services Committee in June. A budget of £10,000 already in the Human Resources and Performance service budget and £5,000 from the corporate overhead budget will be carried forward into 2010/11 to provide staff support to the project and support other costs associated with the assessment, including the events listed in appendix 2. Defra also contributes to the overall costs of this work which is equivalent to about £4,500 per authority.
10. **Risk Management:** The risks associated with this project have been assessed by the project team and mitigating action is being undertaken, including providing extra staff support and working with the Head of Communications to appropriately involve and communicate with key stakeholders.
11. **Sustainability:** none identified
12. **Background papers** (not previously published) –None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Lines of Enquiry

Appendix 2: Proposed activities to support the National Park Authority Performance Assessment

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Wendy Amis, Senior Performance Officer, 18 March 2010