

Peak District National Park Authority Performance and Business Plan 2010/11

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**Member of The UK Association of National Park Authorities (UK ANPA) and the English
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Holder of the Council of Europe Diploma**

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Foreword by the Chair of the Authority

I am delighted that once again this Business Plan records outstanding achievements and sets out a great ambition for the future. The Peak District National Park is important to the nation and to the many people who live and work in it. People expect this Authority to work as hard and effectively as it can. In the future, no doubt, both the Authority and its key partners and communities will have to work more closely to achieve even more for less money. This is a challenge that we are ready for.

In 2009 we added further high quality strategies to guide the most important work that we do, especially on Landscape and Recreation. For all our core areas of work, from cultural heritage to people and communities, we have a strong, up-to-date- and evidence-based approach to our work. In preparing our new strategies we have worked with partners and sought to follow and lead national best-practice. These important documents set the foundations for our very practical work for the future. In the coming year, we will submit for inspection the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework and also begin the 5yearly review of the National Park Management Plan.

I am delighted that almost all of the important wildlife sites are in good condition, a huge improvement achieved in just 6 years. However, with the challenges of climate change and uncertainty for farming, now is the time to take stock on these targets. We must also achieve more for some of our threatened species such as curlew, snipe, lapwing and crayfish.

I was delighted to see the close working by our officers on the exceptional quality restoration of Chatsworth House at first hand recently and, with the Duke of Devonshire, to have launched the important archaeological survey of the Chatsworth parklands. Across the rest of the National Park, I am pleased we are working to restore farm buildings and have helped many businesses reduce their own impact on the environment. And, it has been an uplifting experience to watch the practical work to restore Calver Weir, a fantastic community achievement.

Under the Authority's leadership, *Moors for Future* continues to engage an effective and enduring partnership of all who cherish our moorlands. We embark this year on the next round of ambitious projects. These achievements are testament to great leadership, strong partnership and a dedicated group of staff.

After much uncertainty and a difficult time, I am heartened that we now have a more sympathetic legal judgement on the permission at Longstone Edge. Over the next few years, I am confident this will allow us to achieve a permanent solution that can restore and remove unequivocally the threat from this landscape.

We continue to provide exceptional standards to our visitors across a wide range of services. This year we are also investing £2.25m to improve the quality of cycling, especially by introducing a wider audience to cycling through Pedal Peak District and also in opening what will be an iconic and sustainable new cycleway between Buxton station and the heart of the National Park at Bakewell.

Introduction

We continue to listen to the local communities and I have learned much from our visits, meeting people on their own terms. And our Residents Survey and Action Plan puts this work on a firm footing. Central to our relationship with the community is the provision of affordable housing. I was delighted to join with the Leaders of Derbyshire Dales District and High Peak Borough Councils in agreeing one of the first Rural Housing Investment Plans. I hope that this will provide the basis for further delivery of affordable housing in many of our villages and towns.

In everything that we do it is the commitment of staff, volunteers, members, communities and partners that makes the difference. I am delighted that the Authority has achieved the *Investors in People* award and that we have been able to demonstrate a further 3.5% efficiency savings on top of similar levels in previous year. We are on track with our demanding CO₂ reduction target of 26% by the end of this year.

We are planning carefully for the future. Whilst I expect the new Government to recognize how popular and effective national parks are, we will need to plan for a leaner period in public spending. In doing so, we will work hard to keep our staff focused and motivated and ensure that the work that really matters continues. In 2011 we will both celebrate the 60th anniversary of this National Park but also do so by setting out the future with our new Management Plan. The Peak District matters to many millions of people. I know that the members and officers of the Authority will continue to work unstintingly for that future.

Narendra Bajaria
Chair of the Authority

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Background

The Peak District National Park was the first national park to be designated in Britain and is a very special place for the people who visit and those who live and work here. 38,000 people live in the Park, many working locally. Every year millions of people visit to take part in a very wide range of activities. The Peak District Moorlands and Dales are of international significance for wildlife while the quality of the landscape and environment is outstanding. See Annex 1 for further information about the National Park.

The Peak District National Park Authority is the guardian of the National Park with clearly defined purposes to:

- Conserve and enhance the Peak District National Park's special qualities
- Provide opportunities for their enjoyment and understanding

In doing this we are also required to seek to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities within the National Park. We take this duty as seriously as we do our purposes.

The Peak District National Park Authority is the statutory Local Planning Authority for the Park and took decisions on 1,056 planning applications last year, including on mineral working sites, and we also have responsibility for setting the policy framework for these. The Authority is an 'Access Authority' for the purposes of managing public access to 37% of the National Park which is open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The work of the Authority is guided by 30 members, (their photographs are shown inside the back cover) with a committee structure shown in Annex 2 and the supporting organisational structure shown in Annex 3. 458 staff (261 full time equivalents), comprising full time, job share, part time, seasonal, temporary and casual posts are employed (Annex 4).

The National Park Management Plan – a plan for everyone

Our approach to fulfilling our purposes and duty, in partnership with others, is through the National Park Management Plan. This sets out the vision and desired outcomes for the Park and guides the activities of everyone who has influence over, or an interest in, the National Park. On 18 March 2010, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published a circular¹ which is the official guide on the role of national parks. The National Park Management Plan will be reviewed over the course of 2010/11 to incorporate the requirements of this circular. The current version can be viewed at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp.htm

¹ English National Parks and the Broads – UK Government Vision and Circular 2010
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/national-parks/index.htm>

A Shared Vision for the National Park²

The Peak District National Park is a special place whose future depends on all of us working together for its environment, people and economy. Our vision is for:

- A conserved and enhanced Peak District where the natural beauty and quality of the landscape, its biodiversity, tranquillity, cultural heritage and the settlements within it continue to be valued for their diversity and richness
- A welcoming Peak District where people from all parts of our diverse society have the opportunity to visit, appreciate, understand and enjoy the National Park's special qualities
- A living, modern, innovative Peak District that contributes positively to vibrant communities for both residents and people in neighbouring urban areas, and demonstrates a high quality of life whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park
- A viable and thriving Peak District economy that capitalises on its special qualities and promotes a strong sense of identity

Partnership working is vital to achieving the outcomes of the National Park Management Plan through the wide range of administrative bodies (the National Park incorporates 4 Regions, 11 Metropolitan, District and County Councils, 125 Parishes, 7 Highway Authorities) and thousands of community groups.

The Authority's contribution to the National Park Management Plan is through our Corporate Objectives, each of which is considered in detail in subsequent sections and illustrates the focus on developing and sustaining partnerships to achieve the desired outcomes for the National Park.

Our 5 key areas of focus for 2010/11 are:

Biodiversity: *Achieve the priority species and habitat targets in the Biodiversity Action Plan on our own land and by influencing landowners and managers in the wider National Park.*

Climate Change: *Deliver the priority actions of the Climate Change Action Plan³*

Recreation and Tourism: *Increase opportunities for recreational activities, especially for our target priority audiences*

Economy: *Contribute to the environmentally sustainable economic development*

The way we do business: *Use planning powers to achieve our outcomes*

² Taken from the National Park Management Plan 2006-11 www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/npmp.htm

³ Climate Change Action Plan can be viewed at <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/peakdistrict-climate-change-action-plan.pdf>