

Corporate Objectives: We provide quality, customer focused, sustainable services and ensure continuous improvements in the way that these are delivered:

- 1. Ensure continuous improvement, value for money, sustainability and high standards of corporate governance (Priority level 2)*
- 2. Provide a framework of plans and policies to achieve our outcomes and govern our work (Priority level 2)*
- 3. Use planning powers to achieve our outcomes (Priority level 1)*
- 4. Continue to provide quality, customer focused services (Priority level 3)*
- 5. Communicate effectively with residents, visitors and other stakeholders (Priority level 3)*
- 6. Continue to value and develop staff and members (Priority level 2)*

The public expect us to run the Authority as efficiently and effectively as possible. This year key successes have been achieving the Investors in People Award and receiving unqualified reports from our auditors. We have also made improvements in performance in areas highlighted as causing concern last year. In particular: ensuring all milestones are met for the production and submission by September 2010 of the core strategy of the Local Development Framework; meeting targets for answering letters in planning; participation by members in formal committees and on development events; and staff sickness absence.

We continue to deploy resources effectively and have reviewed and refocused the Authority's resource and contribution to National Park Management Plan outcomes as expressed in our new corporate objectives, which have been prioritised to guide our allocation of resources for the next three years. We have completed, and started to action, almost all the planned strategies and action plans, designed to support delivery of the National Park Management Plan. The remaining action plan, for sustainable transport, will be produced during 2010.

We received positive feedback about our magazine for residents, Parklife, and have agreed a communications strategy with a focus for improvement on communication about planning and climate change issues and increasing the use of new and social media. A new Authority website has been created improving access to on-line services such as Planning and the Pedal Peak District project. We have continued our customer service improvements in the Planning Service. In a recent survey, 70% of planning applicants were satisfied with the service received, a significant improvement on the results from the last study conducted 3 years ago.

Efficiency savings have been delivered in a number of areas including travel, payroll, energy contracts, vehicles and recruitment advertising. A major project to upgrade the Authority's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, providing improved resilience and a better platform to deliver customer service improvements, started during the year. We continued to deliver actions in our Asset Management Plan alongside a review of the Plan and the Authority's capital strategy.

We continue to engage and enthuse staff in delivering our work together as reported by the Investors in People assessors and have taken action in response to the last staff survey including: developing and re-launching the 'Think BIG' staff suggestion scheme; improving the visibility and contact with managers; and increasing the number of staff with learning and development plans (to 89%).

The Authority agreed a Code of Corporate Governance which sets out our 'fit for purpose' governance framework, in accordance with external standards, including our member development work. We have also highlighted the need to review and streamline where possible governance and decision making structures in 2010/11.

Looking ahead to 2010/11, key actions include:

- *Implementation of building block one of the Information Management Strategy*
- *Review and implementation of the asset management plan*
- *Securing the longer term sustainability of the Authority's financial position*
- *Responding to the external scrutiny of the National Park Authorities Performance Assessment*
- *Streamlining use of member and staff resources in achieving effective governance*
- *Submitting the core strategy of the Local Development Framework to the Secretary of State*
- *Ensuring higher level of commitment by partners and communities through review and promotion of the National Park Management Plan*
- *Further develop interpersonal skills in Planning Service in order to continue to improve the service to customers*
- *Increasing the number of enquiries dealt with at first point of contact and through other channels*
- *Achieving Authority-wide standards for customer service*
- *Supporting the delivery of our new strategies through communication and working with partners and communities*
- *Implementing actions across the Authority in response to the staff survey results*
- *Analysing reasons for indicator performance on voluntary leavers, training days per full time equivalent and % of employees from minority ethnic communities and take any specific action as a result*
- *Supporting members to be advocates for the National Park through personal development planning and special responsibility roles*

Achieving Investors in People

This year we chose to benchmark our performance management framework and people management policies against the Investors in People standard and were delighted to gain the Investors in People Award. Investors in People state that the assessment is "intended as an organisational improvement tool .. with the emphasis on feedback.. to challenge the organisation to make further improvements". Assessment is made across 10 indicators including having:

- A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation that is clearly defined and understood
- Learning and development which is planned to achieve organisational objectives and
- Staff Contribution to the organisation that is recognised and valued

The assessment in February involved interviews with 47 staff, which the assessor chose completely at random. The Authority Chair, the Chief Executive, a Director and selected managers met individually with the assessor. Staff (including the UNISON representative and Staff Committee Chair) met the assessor in groups.

The report records some direct comments from staff including

- A very positive organisation, approachable, supportive, open door, a lot of that comes from the top
- They are open to listening to people's thoughts and ideas
- We get constructive feedback, it's a learning environment
- New to this role, my manager has developed me, explains things in a nutshell
- I try to lead by example, reflect the culture of the authority, be helpful and set clear guidelines
- Coaching is the preferred style of management around here
- As a manager, I have a very supportive manager
- My role is to guide people in the right direction, give them information and support

The Investors In People panel's overall view of the Peak District National Park Authority is that we have: "a culture which all public sector organisations aspire to achieve".