

AGENDA ITEM No. 10

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY ANNUAL MEETING
25 JUNE 2010
OPERATIONS

PART A

1. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY REVISION (A.595/MF)

Purpose of the report

1. This report presents a revision of the Authority's Environmental Management Policy. This area of work has progressed within the Authority following the development of the original policy and we now have a greater understanding of our key areas of impact, our written policy should reflect this. While the format and wording of the policy has significantly changed, the revised policy maintains the same sentiment and standards but sets out our principles in a structure which runs through all environmental management within the Authority. The existing policy, approved in 2007, is now overdue for revision and required significant amendments to reflect progress within this area.

Recommendations

2. **1. That the Environmental Management Policy at Appendix 1 be adopted**

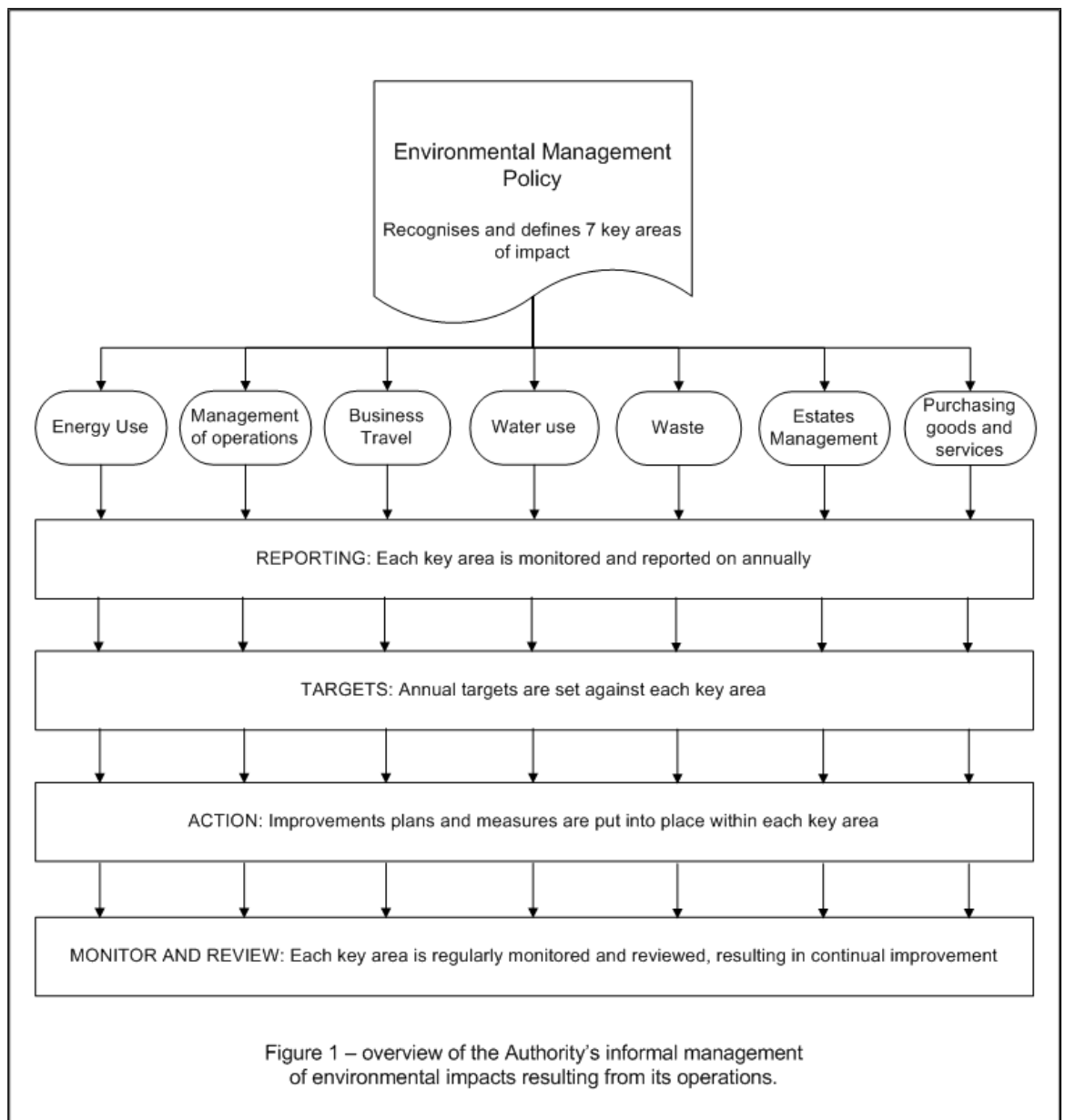
How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The Environmental Management Policy sits above all our work to achieve NPMP Outcome 4 / Corporate Objective 1. The policy provides the structure whereby we recognise our key areas of operational environmental impacts, set targets to reduce them and put actions into place to ensure that the targets are met. This also contributes towards the Authority's annual performance reporting, National Park Performance and Improvement Plan theme 4.6a, Family Indicator CP3 and National Indicator NI185.

Background

4. The Environmental Management Policy adopted by the Authority in December 2007 (minute ref: 111/07) is scheduled for review on a regular basis. While the focus to date has been on taking action to improve our environmental performance, it is recognised that the Authority's Environmental Management Policy is an important tool in driving improvements and a significant revision is now appropriate to ensure it reflects progress in this area.
5. The revised Environmental Management Policy also reflects improvements in our understanding of the key areas of operational impact resulting from the Authority's operations. It therefore also provides a framework to environmental management without the need for a formal, accredited system.

6. This approach reflects our progress in the area of environmental management and has resulted in significant amendments to our Policy document. However, it should also be recognised that the standards, principles and commitments made within the previous policy have not changed and have been transferred to the revised policy as appropriate.
7. Due to the significant amendments made to the policy as opposed to a simple revision, it is appropriate to bring the revision before committee. The policy has been developed with members of the Environmental Management Group, Management Team and subsequent informal consultations with those parties.
8. As indicated above, a key aim of revising the Policy is to bring the structure in line with a more strategic approach to environmental management within the Authority. The revised content and structure allows the policy to sit above all other activities within this area and ensure that the policy, monitoring and reporting, targets and actions are focused within our key areas of impact and therefore that the Authority approaches environmental management in a coherent and effective manner. An illustration of this approach is provided in Figure 1 below:



9. In addition to the changes to the structure of the policy, it was hoped to make the policy more concise and to ensure that it more effectively communicates our key aims and objectives in this area of work. The decision was also taken to remove the lengthy preamble concerning the Authority's purposes and the National Park Management Plan which, while putting the policy into context, are available in many other documents and therefore simply referred to in the amended policy.
10. To aid clarity and understanding of our principles in this important area of work, the policy clearly lists the key aims (bold, numbered text) within each of our key areas of impact and provides more specific examples of the procedures and/or actions we will put into place within each of these areas. Where possible, examples have been used to illustrate this work although the paragraphs have been kept as concise as possible so as to maintain the Policy at an appropriate length.
11. Any specific targets included within the previous version have been removed. This reflects the fact that the document is a policy and is therefore focussed on our aims and objectives. All targets will be set on an annual basis within the annual performance report to Audit and Performance Committee a hyperlink has been created within the policy document to the annual report to allow easy access to the report. This process has been described within the document.
12. In recognition of the fact that much of the work of the Authority could be interpreted as 'Environmental Management', the scope and breadth of the policy is briefly defined within the initial paragraph.
13. Although our role as a community leader and service provider is outside of the direct scope of this policy, which is primarily concerned with our operational environmental impacts, recognition of our influence within these areas is provided within the introductory section of the policy. A final section is also included where the National Park Management Plan and other policies and initiatives operational within the Authority are referred to.
14. The sentiment and standards established within the previous policy have been transferred to the revised version. As a result, the new document does not change our principles or values but merely presents them in a different way.
15. As a 'community leader' and leading exponent of good management of the environment in which we work, it is felt that any policy should reflect good practice while maintaining specific reference to issues that are important to the Authority (and its staff). To this end, the requirements of recognised environmental management standards such as ISO14001 and BS8555 have been considered when developing the Policy. A conscious effort was also made to avoid becoming a vague, corporate style document often promoted by larger organisations.

Proposals

16. To adopt the revised policy
This would benefit the Authority and allow progression of Environmental Management in the manner described above.
17. There are no budgetary or resource implications associated with the adoption of the revised policy. It would however, support the implementation of further improvement measures which will lead to efficiency savings over and above those already achieved.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

18. **Financial:**
No financial implications associated with the revised policy.
19. **Risk Management:**
There is some risk that a commitment made within the policy is not met. However, this would necessarily mean that the Authority had undertaken activities contrary to its principles and objectives. Whether those principles and objectives are written or not is largely irrelevant. A key purpose of the policy document is to help the organisation to minimise any risk that the high standards we set are not achieved.
20. **Sustainability:**
Sustainability is implicit within the policy document and does not need further elaboration.
21. **Background papers** (not previously published) –
None
- Appendices** –
Appendix 1 – Peak District National Park Authority Environmental Management Policy

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Matt Freestone, Environmental Management Officer, 17 June 2010