

## **8. UPDATE ON WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS THE UK NATIONAL PARKS (SF)**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To up-date members on working together across the National Park network in the UK and on some of the future plans.

#### **Key Issues**

- The National Park network within the UK has worked well together over many years and this continues to offer a strength to how we operate within the Peak District National Park.
- At the English level we collaborate with the 9 other English National Parks through National Parks England (NPE) to: enhance NPAs profile for inspiring work and delivery across Government and key partners; to proactively influence policy and legislation; and, to be a catalyst to support smarter use of resources amongst the National Park family in England. We have achieved much by operating this way and seek to continue this approach.
- At the UK level we collaborate on opportunities to communicate the national parks story and connect with wider and more diverse audiences, to seek efficiencies in support functions, develop income generating opportunities, support joint member training and strategic debates about the future opportunities for national parks across the UK. We seek to improve the way we collaborate, especially in opportunities to communicate with the public.
- This paper up-dates members on progress over the past year and some of the future plans

### **2. Recommendations(s)**

- 1. To note this report on progress over the past year in working collectively together across the network of UK national parks is noted and the future plans.**

**How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. This is considered in the sections below.

#### **Background Information**

- 3.1 There are 15 national parks across the UK, 10 of which are in England that cover approximately 10% of the country and hold one third of internationally important UK wildlife sites. The 15 UK national parks have approximately 104 million visitors annually, bringing £6.9bn value.
- 3.2 In England and Wales National Park purposes are: to “conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage” and to “promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public”. In carrying out these purposes they also have the duty to: “seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks”. The Broads Authority has an additional purpose of “protecting the interests of navigation” Scottish National Parks have additional aim: “to promote sustainable use of

the natural resources of the area”

3.3 As a collective network we work together at the English level, through National Parks England and at the UK level across the 15 national parks, as National Parks UK. When we come together we start with the unifying purposes of national parks and a collective ambition and approach to work well collaboratively. We use our contrasts and diversity as distinctive and unique landscapes as a strength in how we work together. So while individual NPAs will have individual priorities and needs, there is value in bringing this, often pioneering work, together to establish a coherent national picture. And drawing on that experience and by coming together we can be more effective in seeking to influence debates, public and policy that have a bearing on the National Parks and support for the future health and wealth of the nation.

#### **4. Up-date on progress and next steps**

4.1 Significant amongst what has been achieved working collectively at the England level in the past year has been the prominence given to enhancing landscape, beauty and continued support for the 8 Point Plan within the Government’s flagship 25 Year Environment Plan; ensuring continued protection for National Parks in the revised National Planning Policy Framework; establishing NPAs as key players in the development of the Environmental Land Management scheme; securing £1m for the English National Park Experience Collection for 9 NPAs/BA; agreeing and launching Accords with Forestry Commission and Mobile UK with Ministerial endorsements; as well as developing a collective response and continued input into the Review of Protected Landscapes.

4.2 At the UK level through our collective support of National Parks Partnerships we have secured significant value for UK National Parks, of note has been the support from Columbia Sportswear to provide outdoor kit for staff in all 15 National Parks and the promotion support of the National Parks brand. The UK collaboration also continues to support member induction, sharing of good practice across parks officer working groups, identifying opportunities for efficiencies through shared working together and the biennial UK National Parks conference. The Chairs Forum met for the first time in November 2018, hosted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, with the theme of ‘Rural Areas in a post Brexit World - Challenges for National Parks’

4.3 Looking ahead, future proposals for working collectively together include:

- continuing engagement with the Review of Protected Landscapes and to seek to deliver the big opportunities identified in National Parks England collective response to the call for evidence
- continuing to seek opportunities for National Parks to help deliver the Government’s 25 year plan for the Environment
- providing opportunities for National Parks to be at the forefront of delivering a future environment land management scheme in national parks that supports the payment of public goods to help meet national park purposes.
- supporting better public engagement with our collective aspirations as 15 National Parks in the UK and in communicating the unique story of our National Parks and enhancing our collective brand of the 15 national parks in the UK

- continuing support for National Parks Partnership Ltd and the setting up of a UK National Parks Charity Foundation to support our aim to grow and diversify our income, building on the valued government grant.

**Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

**5. Financial:**

All action is taken within the requirements of Standing Orders and as set out in the budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20

**6. Risk Management:**

The performance of our working together at the England level is measured against the delivery of the National Parks England Business Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21 and is overseen by the National Parks England Board of which the Chair of Peak District National Park Authority is a chair. National Parks Partnerships assess their performance annually through their Annual General Meeting and a similar approach will be undertaken for the future UK National Parks Charity Foundation.

**7. Sustainability:**

Our approach to collaboratively working together is intended to help us achieve greater sustainability for national park purposes and our duty to communities who live and work in the national parks.

**8. Equality:**

Our approach to collaboratively working together is intended to help us meet our equality obligations

**9. Background papers (not previously published)**

None

**10. Appendices**

None

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

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