

## **12 STANAGE/NORTHLEES ESTATE – PROGRESS REPORT**

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

This report, in conjunction with the Part B report, updates Members on the leadership and management of Stanage/ North Lees Estate and reports on the progress of the business plan (Part B) to achieve full cost recovery position.

### **2. Key issues**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 Members considered a report of the management appraisal for Stanage/North Lees Estate and resolved that a business plan should be put in place to achieve full cost recovery by September 2014. Members also requested that officers develop a vision for the Estate in consultation with local organisations.

1. That Members note the current position with regard to improved asset management initiatives on the estate and the analysis of future management options in the context of full cost recovery.
2. Put the Business Plan in place to achieve a full cost recovery position by 30 September 2014.

### **3. Recommendations**

This report shows how this has been progressed this year, and how through an internal property review, the property will be led and managed going forward in liaison with the Stanage Forum and members of this committee.

The recommendations are as follows

**3.1 Members endorse the vision framework as the basis for developing the management plan for the estate. (Part A).**

**3.2 Members note the internal property review and timescales for the appointment of the new North Lees Property Manager. (Part A).**

**3.3 Members support the initiatives outlined in part B of the report on the progress towards achieving a Full Cost Recovery position. (Part B).**

**3.4 Officers will bring back a report on the “giving” opportunities on the North Lees Estate in March 2015.**

**3.5 Officers will bring back an annual report in September 2015 on the progress on North Lees vision, management plan and business plan.**

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

### **4. Corporate Policies.**

Stanage/North Lees contributes to our statutory purposes and duty. It is an asset for the National Park that brings pleasure and inspiration to millions.

Stanage/North Lees Estate contributes to the following corporate objectives:

**Corporate Objective 1:** Lead or enable landscape-scale environment and heritage conservation programmes through multi agency partnerships.

**Corporate Objective 2:** Be the main provider of integrated advice and support to farmers and land managers to enable farms and other land use businesses to achieve national park purposes.

**Corporate Objective 4:** Lead a programme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the National Park and adapt to climate change by inspiring and enabling others and through direct actions in our own operations.

**Corporate Objective 6:** Support a sustainable economy by working with businesses and other agencies, particularly focusing our efforts on environmental management.

**Corporate Objective 7:** Enable individuals, the community and voluntary sector to increase their contribution to the national park.

**Corporate Objective 8:** Provide and enable recreation services that promote health benefits, widen participation, reduce impact on the environment and manage conflicts between users.

**Corporate Objective 9:** Support the development of a coherent and successful Peak District tourism sector which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.

**Corporate Objective 10:** Inspire a wider range of people to access and better understand the national park, through some direct provision of services and enabling others to do so.

**Corporate Objective 11:** Be a well-run public body with proportionate and effective ways of working, delivering excellent customer service and living our values.

**Corporate Objective 12:** Develop an approach to income generation to harness a more entrepreneurial focus on service delivery that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Officers have instigated more efficient and successful management actions in key areas of the Estate as set out in this report. A key action was to ensure there was a new vision as the framework for the management and business plans going forward to achieve our statutory purposes and financial obligations in the medium to longer term.

## 5. Background

Stanage/North Lees is one of the Peak District National Park Authority's iconic estates. The estate totals 542 ha. and comprises moorland, woodland and farmland.

The scenic value is exceptional. The dramatic rock scenery of Stanage Edge is set in wild open moorland with views to the pleasant rural landscape surrounding North Lees Hall and the farm below. As well as being adored by local people of Outseats and Hathersage, Stanage is only 6 miles (9.5 km.) from Sheffield (the UK's fifth largest city) and is central to one of the busiest National Parks in the world. The estate receives over half a million visitors per year and people come to enjoy a whole range of activities including: climbing, walking, camping at the Authority's campsite, cycling, picnicking, horse riding, hang-gliding, para-gliding, model aeroplane flying, bird watching or simply enjoying the amazing wildlife and literary heritage. The estate affords opportunities for visitors to be actively engaged in energetic pursuits or, and as well as, quiet enjoyment, the main reason the estate was purchased in the first place. It is also a valued film venue. Details of the progress on access and rights of way, event and education and

interpretation can be found in Sections 9, 10 and 11 of this report. Numerous school and outdoor education groups visit the estate for education, outdoor sports, landscape and wildlife as well as the demonstration of good practice for managing the landscape. Key to the management of the landscape is the farm tenancy which has been renewed this year. The Estate is especially important for walking as an area of open access and for climbing for which it is regarded as the birthplace of the sport. Stanage Edge has over 1200 identified routes of all different grades and is internationally famous for bouldering.

It has internationally rare heather moorland and blanket bog, designated as a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation and sits in the recently designated Nature Improvement Area. It has a mixture of native broad leaved and coniferous woodlands and flower rich meadows. Details of the ecological significance of the estate can be found in Section 9 of this report. The whole landscape has been influenced by man and contains a wide range of interesting features, four of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These include the remains of a Catholic Chapel, a Romano-British settlement and Bronze Age sites. Interesting buildings include traditional farm buildings that predate the 16<sup>th</sup> century North Lees Hall (Grade 11\* Listed) which has literary associations with the novel “Jane Eyre” by Charlotte Bronte.

The existing vision was drafted and agreed with the Stanage Forum. “To care for and enjoy Stanage/ North Lees Estate in a way which respects and enhances wildlife, heritage and landscape.” The work with stake holders creating a new vision and framework for taking forward a management plan is detailed in Section 7 of this report.

Members have taken the decision to keep this iconic Peak District Estate in house which has given us an opportunity to create an outstanding example of working across services and with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to achieve great outcomes for our Authority purposes.

An internal Property Review has taken place this year through our Managing Change Process and from September 2014 Stanage/North Lees will move from Land Management into Enterprise and Field Services with a new North Lees Property Manager being recruited to a new position in the Authority as detailed in Section 6.

The Members resolved for the Stanage/North Lees Estate – Management Appraisal (PM6193/RHP/CBM) that officers develop a vision for the Estate in consultation with local organisations and :

1. That Members note the current position with regard to improved asset management initiatives on the estate and the analysis of future management options in the context of full cost recovery.
2. Put the Business Plan in place to achieve full cost recovery position by 30 September 2014.

## **6. North Lees Property Manager.**

It has been essential to review the staff arrangements and put in suitable leadership and management for the long-term needs of the estate as a result of the decision to retain the management of the estate for the long term within the Authority. Decisions relating to other estates and properties and the Authority’s Asset Management Plan Review required similar commitments and so a comprehensive review of property staff was undertaken in early 2014. A key conclusion was the need to have a North Lees Property Manager able to pursue with focus and appropriate professional skills the business planning for the estate. As part of the review North Lees Estate will move over

from the Land Management Service to Enterprise and Field Services from September 2014. The North Lees Property Manager post was advertised in the early September and the interviews for the post are scheduled for October 10<sup>th</sup>. The new North Lees Manager will be a key position for the Authority to take this estate forward, developing the business plan further, working with all stakeholders and developing an outstanding property for the Authority delivering our purposes and duty. The new manager will also be responsible for all the PDNPA minor properties in the northern part of the Peak District.

## **7. Progress on the Vision to August 2014**

To take the estate forward there is the need for an inspirational vision and management plan building on the previous plan. Links with the Stanage Forum Steering Group were refreshed early in 2014, with several meetings between the group, Authority officers and Members during January and February to discuss the need to refresh the vision for the estate and develop a new management plan. To ensure all stakeholders with an interest in the estate could be involved, a process of mutual co-operation and consultation was designed.

In March an open meeting in Hathersage was attended by approximately 50 members of the public, with an electronic survey targeting a wider audience during March and April resulting in an additional 60 responses.

Over a period of 8 weeks and 3 workshops with key stakeholders, (including members of the Stanage Forum Steering Group as well as organisations such as Natural England, Friends of the Peak District, Derbyshire County Council and English Heritage) a new draft vision framework was developed, aligned to the Peak District National Park Management Plan and Sheffield Moors Partnership Master plan as well as reflecting responses from consultation exercises earlier in the year.

The draft vision was produced as designed artwork in late July, using the new logo for the National Park, for wider circulation within stakeholders' networks and organisations, and for consultation by Authority members. Our new vision is "to care for, enjoy and promote understanding of the Stanage North Lees Estate in a sustainable way which respects and enhances wildlife, heritage and landscape for everyone, forever." The four segments of the vision that form the future management plan are Landscape, People, Connections and Resources. The artwork has been designed as an A3 poster, and presents the structure for the new management plan for the estate, the details of which can be seen in Appendix 1.

Members of the Authority have played an active role throughout the engagement process. The Chair of the Authority attended the public meeting, along with the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit Resource and Performance Committee (ARP), and subsequently the Chair and Vice of ARP were involved in stakeholder meetings. Members of the Authority had an opportunity to comment on the final draft through the Strategic Advisory Group in July. This version in Appendix 1 now reflects the views of a wide range of partners.

### **Next Steps.**

Working with the Stanage Forum Steering Group and stakeholders the development of a new management plan for Stanage North Lees Estate will commence once the new Property Manager is in post. The new management plan will address the detail of what needs to be done to deliver our vision. The final version of the vision framework will be agreed with the Stanage Forum as the management plan is progressed.

## **8. Progress on the Ecological significance of North Lees Estate.**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The North Lees Estate comprises a variety of habitats from flower rich hay meadows and pastures to National and European designated moorland, including extensive peat bog, dry heath habitats rough grazing and rock edges. Native broadleaved and coniferous woodlands are also present, with ancient woodland indicators recorded in some areas. Notable bird species which nest on the Estate include Golden Plover, curlew, snipe, ring ouzel, whinchat, long and short eared owls, pied flycatcher, reed bunting and linnet.

The Estate has been farmed in a traditional manner and is currently managed under a Higher Level Stewardship agreement which commenced in 2007.

### **8.2 Moorland habitats**

Two thirds of the Estate (359 hectares) falls within the Eastern Peak District Moors SSSI, which forms the eastern fringe of the Peak District National Park. This area also forms part of the Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (for birds), and the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (for habitats) at a European level.

The Eastern Peak District Moors are crossed by many minor roads that break the SSSI into a number of individually named and separately managed moors. These moors are of special interest for their breeding birds, upland vegetation, lower plants, invertebrates and geological features. Habitats present at North Lees include blanket bog, wet and dry heaths, bracken beds, acid grasslands and small flushes, together with gritstone edges, cliffs, boulder slopes, streams and fringing woodland, representing the full range of upland vegetation characteristic of the South Pennines and supporting several important species assemblages. The range of habitats makes the estate of very special significance.

The upland breeding bird assemblage is of great regional importance and contributes to national importance of the South Pennines. The site supports Merlin, Ring Ouzel, Curlew, lapwing and golden plover, along with whinchat, stone chat, reed bunting and grass hopper warbler. A bird survey of the Estate was last completed in 2001 and this has since been supplemented by records from the Estate Warden. The Sheffield Bird Study Group is to complete a survey for moorland birds on the Estate this year.

The watercourses and wetland habitats support good numbers of water vole and we have seen an increase in numbers on the Estate. Mountain hare are also present and are believed to be increasing in number.

Specific measures have also been put in place to protect breeding birds. For example, the Estate Warden diligently monitors the ring ouzel population once they have returned from migration and identifies potential nesting sites along the edge and bouldering areas. Once nesting sites are confirmed, 50 meter restriction zones are placed around the nests and climbers are encouraged to stay out of these areas until the young have fledged. Working closely with the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), these restrictions have been successful. As a result we still have a breeding population of ring ouzel at Stanage with the target of five successful nesting pairs being met this year; an iconic bird which has been lost from so many other upland areas in the Peak District. This is a brilliant success story and Natural England are considering including ring ouzel in the SSSI designation as a result of all the hard work to keep this species breeding here. The Chairman of the National Ring Ouzel Study Group wrote specifically during

the vision work to say “One of the few places where the Ring Ouzel numbers seem to be holding up and bucking the national trend is at Stanage. We think this continuing success is down to two factors. Firstly the excellent management of the area. The second factor is down to the North Lees Estate Warden. Bill Gordon has built up the trust of the visitors and recreational users of Stanage, in particular the rock climbing community. Bill then works with the rock climbers to negotiate temporary closures to enable the birds to nest without being disturbed. In many situations this would lead to conflict but Bill’s diplomacy has resulted in the climbers having a sense of pride and an “ownership” of the birds. Now the climbers are interested to know and enquire if the nests are successful, and are happy to cooperate. So the indicator of how people and wildlife can co-exist is certainly working at Stanage.” “This experience at Stanage is communicated widely so that the Stanage model can be copied elsewhere.”

Previous works to the herringbone ditches that drain the long causeway adjacent to the Jubilee plantations were designed to maximise habitat for water vole. The repair works that Derbyshire County Council has completed on Long Causeway have also included enhancements for water voles. Every opportunity is taken on the estate to enhance the landscape for visitors and wildlife.

### 8.3 SSSI Unit condition

The North Less Estate includes 4 SSSI units, numbers 56, 57, 58 and 59.

SSSI units on North Lees

SSSI Unit	Main habitat	Unit area (ha)	Condition status
56	Bogs - upland	171.95	Unfavourable recovering
57	Dwarf shrub heath - upland	60.22	Favourable
58	Acid grassland - upland	40.12	Favourable
59	Acid grassland - upland	86.41	Favourable

56. Unfavourable recovering. White Path Moss is a large unit stretching from Stanage Pole in the north-west to Burbage Rocks in the south-east. It mostly comprises bog vegetation on deep peat dominated in most parts by either heather or hare's-tail cotton-grass with smaller areas of soft-rush and purple-moor grass. While large areas are species-poor, much of the western part of the bog is fairly diverse, with scattered crowberry and occasional cross-leaved heath and cranberry, with frequent Sphagnum mosses. Current low intensity management of the bog (no burning and light grazing) and the blocked artificial drainage ditch is allowing the recovery of more diverse bog vegetation. Towards the end of summer, we are planning to ask volunteers to help collect and spread sphagnum moss in this area to speed up the recovery process. We hope to get this SSSI unit into favourable condition by 2020. Notable species includes bog rosemary and one area of bog bean has flowered well this year.

57. Favourable. This unit is dominated by dry heathland, with a few patches of dense bracken, a large stand of soft-rush flush, and small patches of acid grassland. Some bracken control has been completed in this area.

58. Favourable. The majority of this unit comprises bracken-dominated slopes below Stanage Edge. The bracken varies from dense stands to a more open cover with grasses. Dwarf shrub cover is generally low, but at the southern end of the unit there is a small area of dry heath dominated by heather and bilberry. Bracken control has targeted the areas of dry heath as described above. A series of small flushes occur on the lower slopes. Most of these are dominated by soft rush and sphagnum is becoming

more frequent.

59. Favourable. These slopes below Stanage Edge are dominated by bracken on the upper slopes with occasional patches of grassland, giving way to a mosaic of purple moor-grass, mat-grass and soft rush on the lower slopes. Numerous acid and base rich flushes run down the slope, mostly species-rich with abundant bog moss, common cotton-grass, small sedges, cross-leaved heath and cranberry. Notable and rare species in this area include common sundew, common butterwort and bog asphodel

#### **8.4 Hay meadows**

These are the conservation jewels of our in-bye land, as they are rich in wild flowers and those found at Ridgeway side are of SSSI quality. There are currently 9 hay meadows on the Estate that are managed in a traditional manner. The hay meadows are cut after the 15<sup>th</sup> July, with a later cutting date once every three years to allow later flowering plants to flower and seed.

A survey of the meadows in 2009 has shown that the number of wild flowers and grasses has increased as a result of the positive management.

Autumn gentian was recently found in one of the hay meadows when poor weather meant that it was cut late. The management of the field now takes into account this later flowering species.

#### **8.5 Pastures**

The farm has a range of pastures from semi-improved to unimproved of high conservation value.

As a result of careful management, the number of grasses and herbs has increased. Chapel field is of particular interest and is of SSSI quality. A survey in the 1980's recorded over 70 species here. This increased to over 80 in 2001 and a recent survey in 2009 recorded over 100 species in this one field. We have also seen a good increase in indicator species.

A fungi survey in 2012 found that some of the pastures are regionally important for their waxcap interest. We are making sure we take this interest is taken into account as part of their management.

#### **8.6 Woodlands and Plantations**

There are eight woods on the Estate which are managed by the Authority's Conservation Woodlands Officer.

Applications for Woodland Planning and Woodland Creation grants under the England Woodland Grant Scheme were successfully made on behalf of the Authority by a forestry consultant. An application for a Woodland Improvement Grant has also been made but has not yet been processed by the Forestry Commission. The Planning grant attracted a one off payment of £1,024 and the Creation grant a one off net payment of around £8,000 both in 13/14.

Although none of the broadleaved woodlands are found on the Woodland Inventory, there are a number that are ancient in character. Carpets of bluebells are present in some locations, along with dog's mercury, fly agaric and wood sorrel. The Estate Warden has recently found a large patch of wild daffodils within one of the woodlands. These may have been historically planted, but are still of significance. Veteran beech is

present in the woodlands along ridgeway side and the plantation. The cavities and cracks in these trees provide excellent features for nesting birds and roosting bats. The woodlands along the warren tend to be dominated by oak and are more characteristic of clough woodlands found in the uplands.

A nest box scheme has been set up in the Warren woodlands and these are monitored by Flo Gordon on an annual basis. There are now a total of approximately one hundred and fifty bird boxes. In 2014 we had occupancy of over 80%; in previous years it's has always been around 50%. The boxes support a regionally important population of pied flycatchers, with 72 successful fledglings recorded in 2012, 67 in 2013 and 123 in 2014 all of which have been ringed. We now have the largest pied flycatcher colony in Derbyshire. The Pied flycatcher under the Stanage Forum objectives is an indicator for how well the woodlands are managed.

Success this year with the great tit and blue tits has been the best ever with 80% of the boxes occupied and broods of 12 fledglings recorded. There is also known raptor interest within the woodlands with a successful buzzard nest this year.

The conifer plantations tend to fringe the moorland edge and are dominated by larch and scots pine. The Nature Improvement Area (NIA) funding has allowed us to thin these woodlands as well as create a number of glades and areas of standing deadwood. The works have been carefully designed to maximise benefits for the ecology, archaeology and landscape. These works were particularly aimed at benefiting woodland birds and this is already paying off, as breeding woodcock have been recorded in one of the plantations that were thinned in 2012. Enrichment planting of native species has also taken place in the plantations to benefit woodland birds, including planting rowan to provide a food source for the ring ouzel.

We have also been creating new woodlands on the Estate, with a small woodland being planted as part of the HLS agreement in 2008. A further area of woodland planting, seeding and encouragement of natural regeneration has taken place below sheepwash bank and is contributing to clough woodland creation targets in the NIA.

A woodland management plan is being produced for the Estate, funded through a grant from the NIA, and this will detail further works that will be carried out in the future, which will contribute to the North Lees management plan in consultation with the Stanage Forum.

## **8.7 Boundary features**

The walls and hedgerows on the farm are a feature of the in-bye and contribute to the character of the landscape. These features provide valuable shelter. The hedges provide food, shelter and breeding habitat for small birds, and support a range of woodland ground flora. The field boundaries generally have historical importance as they reveal the manner and sequence in which the land was divided over the centuries.

The fabric of the walled landscape is a feature of the in-bye, which we maintain. Unfortunately there has been some theft of coping stones this year which is being monitored and managed by the Estate Warden. Preventative measures include the regular patrolling and specific signs on site. Boundary features also include hedgerows which have been restored under the HLS agreement providing further habitat for a range of fauna.

## **8.8 Other interests**

Good numbers of bats are recorded on the Estate. A bat survey in 2005 recorded good numbers of pipstrelle and Myotid species foraging below the edge. There are a number



of roosts within trees in the woodlands. The campsite and cruck barn also support known roosts. A number of badger setts are also recorded on the estate.

Lower plants are found in good numbers on the Estate, some being rare and notable. A University project is currently looking at habitat parameters of the rare Reindeer lichen which is found on the Estate.

## **8.9 Current/Future Management Issues**

Over the last 10 years we have enhanced the ecological interests on the Estate, following the aims/objectives put forward in the previous management plan as well as completing additional tasks and we plan to do more over the next year. Much of this work would not have been achieved without the time and commitment of Bill and Flo Gordon. We need to ensure that the capacity to implement work on the ground is still available in the future. This includes unsociable hours (early morning and evening surveys and weekend work).

7.2.4 – Investigate planting fodder crop for birds was not implemented due to archaeological concerns. An alternative option was suggested, but this has not been implemented yet.

7.4.2 – Lichen survey. This has not been completed yet due to funding issues.

7.7.1 – Express concern about Blue Circle. No longer relevant as controls are in place under Environment Agency permit.

Bracken is an issue in specific areas where it is encroaching on existing ecological interest. This issue is partly being addressed through the NIA funding, where it is being controlled below the edge. Consideration needs to be given to funding this in the future once the NIA grant has been spent (by 2015).

Climate change – the habitats on the Estate need to be robust enough to face the issues that climate change may bring. The work that we have been doing has helped towards this, although more needs to be done. Monitoring of these habitats is also important so that any issues as a result of climate change can be highlighted and addressed.

## **Future Opportunities**

A lot of work has been carried out towards conserving and enhancing the wildlife on the Estate and achieved through external funding programmes, and we still plan to do more. Key will be the external funding opportunities and mechanisms of delivery. This will be taken forward with the Stanage Forum Steering Group and with greater public engagement to let people know that money is being spent in this way to maintain and enhance the wildlife, cultural heritage and landscape of the Estate.

## **9. Summary of Event and Education Work - North Lees Estate**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Field Services have been delivering events and educational visits at North Lees and Stanage in the form of guided walks and school visits for a considerable number of years. However these have always been part of the more general service offered across the national park. The new focus on North Lees as an estate with its own identity and vision has opened new opportunities to promote the site and increase the formal provision for visitors.

In early 2014 an assessment was made of the possibilities for the development of events and new educational programmes which have been further developed into a project plan with key targets and milestones. Many of these have been achieved with an event programme produced and currently being delivered, and publicity produced for all events so they can be marketed as a complete offer for the Estate (see Appendix 2).

The current school offer has been reviewed and the programme up-dated to fit the new school curriculum and work has started on developing new programmes. This has been delayed due to staffing issues in the Learning and Discovery (L&D) team but is now progressing well.

## **9.2 Events**

While there have been guided walks on the Estate we have not run events aimed at a wider market or on a different scale before, so this year has seen the L&D team working with the farm tenants and the Vivat trust to explore the possibilities on the site.

One of the key successes was 'Open Farm Sunday' in the spring. Open Farm Sunday is a project which has seen hundreds of farmers across the UK opening up their farm for one Sunday each year since 2006 and is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment and farming). The event at North Lees this year was jointly delivered by the Learning and Discovery team and the farm tenants. The BMC also held a celebration event for the first time this year which was a good success. The British Mountaineering Council Stanage Festival took place over the weekend of the 28-29 June 2014, and featured climbing master classes, guided walks, lectures, climbing challenges and social events. The Festival was intended to be both a celebration of the BMC's 70th anniversary and an opportunity to bring climbers and walkers together to enjoy Stanage Edge, one of Britain's most cherished crags. The BMC said they were grateful for the support of the PDNPA in making the event a success. PDNPA rangers led guided walks in conjunction with BMC volunteers, and staff provided hands-on support both in preparation for, and during, the weekend. The BMC gave a kind donation to the Authority for North Lees which will be spent on the estate.

The next big event will be the heritage days on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September. While the Vivat Trust will be opening the Hall to visitors the L&D team will be running activities for the public. We are very lucky to have Professor Steve Earnshaw delivering a talk on the Sunday titled, "'Truelove": The Importance of Names in Jane Eyre'. To help promote this event and the Estate we are also running a photography competition with a prize of £25 in vouchers being donated by Harrison Cameras.

Guided walks have continued to be delivered by the Ranger volunteers throughout the year.

## **9.3 Events - Next Steps**

- To co-ordinate further with North Lees Estate project team, especially ecology and cultural heritage team to develop a regular programme of guided walks – one a month
- To explore the possibilities of developing events, guided and self-guided walks round the Jane Eyre theme and using this as a USP for the site
- To work with North Lees team to develop a site web presence and social media marketing
- To plan a co-ordinated programme of events for 2015/16

#### 9.4 Current Education offer and programmes delivered in 2013/14 academic year

Programme	Key stage	Frequency of delivery	Numbers of pupils
Exploring my sense of place	KS2	2	103
Impacts of Tourism	KS3	6	126
Sustainable management	KS4 -GCSE	4	257
Sustainable management	KS5 – A level	2	23
	Tertiary	2	170
		<b>Total</b>	<b>679</b>
		<b>Income generated</b>	<b>£6,191.55</b>

#### 9.5 Educational Work – next steps

- To develop an education delivery plan including marketing for the site by December 2014 (delayed due to staffing problems).
- To continue to develop new literacy and habitat based programmes and trail these.
- To further develop promotional material showing the educational offer at North Lees as an individual site.

### 10. Interpretation

An audit of interpretation on the estate has been completed in readiness for developing the management plan. An interpretation plan for the site will be developed as part of the management plan with the Stanage Forum. Key to this work will be how we reach our different audiences, fulfil our secondary statutory purpose and ensure that the way it is done does not change the “wilderness” feel of the site. Several stakeholders have said that “accessible wilderness” is the unique selling point of Stanage/North Lees and a sensitive interpretation plan will be key to maintaining and enhancing these two key features. All options will be explored including new technologies.

### 11. Summary of Access & Rights of Way at North Lees/Stanage

#### 11.1 Introduction

In 2004 the moorland areas above and below the south eastern part of Stanage Edge and at Cattis-side/Carhead were designated as open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These areas coincide with the designations of SAC, SPA, SSSI and Natural Zone. Prior to this access to the open country had been established under the 1962 Stanage Edge access agreement and by way of the Authority’s acquisition of the Estate in 1971 but this had not included Cattishead Moor. In 2005, the Authority dedicated three of its woodlands to give an additional 23.8 hectares of open access land.

In addition to the open access areas, there are a number of public rights of way providing access on foot, by cycle and by horse and a byway (Long Causeway). The linear routes are complemented by permissive routes through the farmland and hay meadows. The Sheffield Country Walk runs along Stanage Edge.

#### 11.2 The NPA’s role

The NPA is the Relevant Authority and Access Authority for managing open access land within the National Park. In addition the NPA has certain other powers to help it

meet its statutory purposes although, with regard to public rights of way, it does not have the same duties and responsibilities as its 7 constituent Highway Authorities. The maintenance of the public rights of way on the Estate is therefore the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council whereas the maintenance of permissive paths and access to open country are the responsibility of ourselves both as the landowner and the Access Authority.

Work carried out by the NPA for access and rights of way improvements is undertaken by the Access and Rights of Way team working closely with the Estate Warden, Area Ranger, and Peak Park Conservation Volunteers (PPCV). Advice on access matters is provided by the Peak District Local Access Forum with detailed input from the Stanage Forum

### **11.3 Long Causeway**

Long Causeway is a Byway Open to All Traffic. This is a public right of way where there are rights of access for vehicles but where the main use is non-vehicular. It runs from Redmires Reservoir to Dennis Knoll car park a distance of approx. 3.5km and forms the northern boundary of the Estate. The route was identified by the NPA as a priority route requiring improved management in 2007 and prior to that, the Stanage Forum had sought to address matters relating to conflicts of use.

During 2012 a public consultation was undertaken on the Authority's proposal to make a traffic regulation order (TRO) on the grounds of safeguarding the natural beauty and amenity of the route and area. This consultation set out the conservation interests of the route, the factors which contribute to natural beauty and the opportunities for open-air recreation, and the effects of vehicle use on the special qualities of the area. The consultation generated 2500 responses illustrating the importance of the route and area for many people.

The Authority has now made its order prohibiting motorised vehicles which will further result in safeguarding the route and area.

The latest work by DCC were undertaken during July and August 2014 to repair the badly damaged sections of track immediately below and above Stanage Edge, and to have regard to the revetment wall. This is a very sensitive area in terms of ecology (SAC, SPA, SSSI, NIA), cultural heritage (historic trackway and revetment), landscape (Natural Zone, highly visible) and recreation (number and wide range of actual and potential users).

The Access and Rights of Way Team worked with DCC to ensure that all relevant interests and user groups were kept informed of actions at this site and that the repairs and maintenance were carried out in a way which recognises the sensitivities of the site and in accord with National Park purposes.

Throughout the process, advice and recommendations to DCC were provided by the Access and Rights of Way Team, the Estate Warden, the Authority's Ecologist and Archaeologist and Natural England. Supervision of the works was also undertaken in addition to formal progress meetings. The fact that there was often an onsite presence has helped with ensuring that any problems encountered have been dealt with expediently and appropriately. It has been recognised and acknowledged that a combination of the skills of those working on site, detailed management by DCC, expertise and knowledge of the Estate Warden, specialist input from Authority staff working in conjunction with Natural England has resulted in a good outcome.

The works were undertaken in a manner sympathetic to the surroundings and have not

disturbed the ecology and archaeology of the area. Wider ecological improvements have been gained including a small pond was created during the works which will improve the habitat diversity in that area. The revetment wall has been safeguarded and the causeway and the cobbled areas have been retained in the final surfacing. DCC also carried out landscaping improvements at Dennis Knoll car park which has resulted in the opportunity for better use to be made of the car parking space.

There will be many users who will now feel confident in accessing this route and the works have made a positive contribution to the amenity and natural beauty of the area. The Authority will proceed to make its TRO when it is in a position to be able to do so and which will further result in safeguarding the route and area. At the same time opportunities for accessibility by less-able users will be considered in conjunction with advice from groups representing accessibility matters. The Access and Rights of Way team will also be looking at improvements to the barriers to make them more in keeping with the area. It is also proposed that self-guided information be made available on the interest of this route and area.

#### **11.4 Access land**

In this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the introduction of open access, the Access and Rights of way team have been considering the potential to review and improve its open access areas. This will include the condition and accessibility of structures, the impediment of fencing or other barriers, repairs to paths and desire lines, creation of new access points, creation of routes to manage use away from sensitive areas and way marking and signposting.

Where there is permissive access then consideration will be given to formally dedicating the land to secure access and at the same time so as to reduce occupier's liability. Other opportunities for dedication will also be explored with relevant officers and will be subject to consultation via the Peak District Local Access Forum and as part of the management plan process.

Specific areas of work that the Access and Rights of way Team will be considering in consultation and partnership with others will include:

- Dedication of new areas of access land areas of moorland and woodland
- Link in fragmented areas of open access land with new access points, routes and areas of open access
- Localised improvements/repairs to path surfaces
- Upgrading of furniture including replacement of stiles with gates and steps and handrails from the campsite
- Improve signage and promotion of areas of access and rights of way including concessionary routes
- Removal of fencing where no longer necessary for the purpose for which installed

#### **12. The Buildings.**

The buildings of the Estate are described below with consideration of the current position and recent developments.

##### **12.1 North Lees Hall**

The Hall is a Grade 2\* Listed Building and is currently let to the Vivat Trust on a 50 year lease until 2038. The Trust restored the building in the late 1980's and early 1990's and it is used as three bedroomed holiday accommodation. The facilities, which are at the 'top end' of the market, have been 'refreshed' and the two separate "flats" combined so that the hall is let as one unit. Staff are working with the Trustees to ensure that all financial details of the lease and any other management issues are transparent for both parties so that a thorough assessment of the lease is completed.

## **12.2 East Wing**

The East Wing of the Hall has been unoccupied for many years pending decisions on its future use. The East Wing of the Hall is now occupied by the Farm Tenant. The cost of the refurbishment was approximately £70,500 and was financed from 'slippage' and from last years' estate budget and the carbon management plan budget. The East Wing has now been refurbished and the farm tenant and his partner have been in occupation since April 2014.

## **12.3 The Pig Sties**

At the rear of the Hall, there are a fine set of pig sties which would have serviced the Hall. These are also Grade II Listed Buildings and were restored by the Authority in the 1990's. These are now let with the farmhouse for general storage and use.

## **12.4 Traditional Farm Buildings**

This is a Grade 2 Listed building situated behind the Hall. This is a beautiful building with an ancient 'cruck beam' structure. It is currently used for agricultural storage by the farm tenant (on a licence basis) and also by the Estate Ranger for storing materials and equipment to undertake maintenance works on the estate.

Planning permission to convert it to a bunk house and teaching area for educational use was granted to the then farm tenant, Broomfield College of Agriculture, in 1996. The College used the farm as a teaching resource for hill farming and wanted to provide some basic overnight accommodation for students as travelling from the College and allowing enough teaching time in a day was not ideal. The class room and associated toilets was provided but the accommodation was never implemented prior to the College giving up the tenancy in 2006. The planning permission for the bunk house accommodation has now lapsed.

It is tempting to think that this building has significant development potential but it is considered that the following factors mitigate against the redevelopment of the barn at the present time;

- Its Grade 2 listed status and the very significant constraints imposed by the cruck beam structure, would limit the freedom that a developer might need to create a commercially viable space.
- There is already excellent provision of high class office and conference space at Hathersage Hall Business Centre with units currently to let and other good village facilities to service tenants.
- Vehicular access to the barn is 'tight' with a very limited parking area in front of the barns.
- The close proximity to the modern agricultural building behind which houses cattle in the winter and the sheep handling pens might not be conducive to

compatible uses in terms of smell, noise and farm vehicle movements.

- The farm only has the one modern storage building (above). The departing farm tenant had another set of farm buildings elsewhere but the present tenant has to be self-sufficient in this respect. Therefore these buildings will be of value to him. In particular, he is required to make small hay bales under the Higher Level Stewardship agreement and storage in the traditional lofts in the barn is essential.
- As mentioned above, part of the barn is also needed for secure storage of chemicals, fertilisers and machinery by the farm tenant and Estate Ranger.
- If the cruck barn were developed, another modern building would have to be provided for farm and estate use.
- If the buildings can still be used for their original function of agriculture / estate management, this would ideally take preference over a new use.

As proposed in the report to this committee in September 2013 the cruck barn has been let as part of the farm business tenancy on licence.

The existing classroom and toilets in the barn have been tidied up and painted so that, they can, once again, be used for educational purposes explaining the multi-dimensional role of land management and the Estate in the Dark Peak. The Authority and the new tenant have started to work in partnership for example on Open Farm Sunday. See section 9.2 above.

A small upstairs part of the eastern end of the barn (built at a later date to the cruck barn) could be used as a farm office. It could also be used as an occasional sleeping area in the event of forecast bad weather.

## **12.5 Cattiside Cottage**

This cottage is located near the campsite and approximately 1/3 mile from the farm buildings is the home of the Estate Warden. It is a basic two bedroomed house with a small garden and adjacent workshop. In the longer term, the cottage presents further options and this will be reviewed when the present Estate Warden retires. As one of only two possible residences on the estate, it is considered essential to retain it for the Estates use.

## **13. The Farm Business Tenancy.**

The new tenant at North Lees Farm took over the tenancy on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

The transitional year has involved providing support to the tenant, and working with them to achieve cooperation and collaboration for a successful partnership. The change of tenant initiated the re-use of North Lees farmhouse which, due to its Grade II\* status, was a significant project.

The farmhouse was mainly completed in April to coincide with lambing of the hefted flock of Swaledale ewes. Having a tenant living on the farm, and with his centre of operations there, the farm has changed from an ancillary block of grazing with a derelict house to a living working vibrant place and has attracted attention from Farmers Weekly, Farming Today, Upland Start, Princes Trust, and in addition provided the opportunity for the recent Open Farm Sunday event which included contributions from the Authority's Learning and Discovery Team, ex Newton Rigg students demonstrating sheep shearing and horse logging contractors demonstrating their work on the estate having worked for the Authority on the NIA project as noted in 10 above.

Teas were served and proved to be very popular with visitors. A planning application for diversification to serve refreshments to passing walkers was submitted but subsequently withdrawn by the Tenant due to a mapping anomaly. A revised application is imminent.

#### **14. The Campsite**

The basic 60 pitch facility and very reasonable camping charges has provided ideal accommodation for visitors to the Estate (particularly rock climbers) and has discouraged 'rough camping' elsewhere. It was also seen as an opportunity for staff to talk to visitors regarding the purposes of the Estate and National Park objectives.

The Estate Warden records overnight use on the estate and there are approximately 650 vehicles in a year staying for one night on the property, this would roughly equate to about £9000 worth of income lost to the estate. This has declined from approximately 1000 vehicles per year with the policy to speak to everyone and remind them of the campsite.

Over 90% of this use at the campsite is by climbers and a strong partnership with the British Mountaineering Council and monitoring and engagement by the Estate Warden are key to the prevention of "wild camping" on the estate.

However, as previously noted by Members, the campsite has usually been run at a trading loss. Recognising that in the current financial climate, that there needs to be a better balance between the above aspirations and the trading loss, new managers introduced a business plan in 2011. This increased pitch fees and adjusted opening hours which has reduced the staff costs. The site also required some capital investment to bring facilities up to date and these have been implemented. Despite bringing the campsite into profit in 2011/12, 2012/13 was a particularly bad weather year for all the Authority's trading operations and the campsite was not an exception. The 2013/14 did produce better results with more normal weather conditions prevalent. A challenging profit target for 2014/15 has been set. The details of the campsite income can be seen in Part B. The campsite is in the process of being tendered to see if there is interest in running the site from people outside the Authority.

#### **15. Car Parks**

There are 4 main car parking areas on or near the Estate. From West to East, these are Dennis Knoll (14 spaces), Hollin Bank (150 spaces), Hooks Car (58 spaces) and Burbage Bridge (38 spaces). There is a pay and display machine at Hollin Bank and an 'Honesty Box' at Hooks Car. As can be seen above the DDC work on Longcauseway has resulted in an improvement to Denis Knoll car park. One of the central policies of the North Lees /Stanage Estate Management Plan (2000-2013) is to manage the car parking charges preferably through voluntary rather than obligatory means. Working with the Stanage Forum as part of the management plan going forward we have started to look at how we can work together to help everyone use the car parks and contribute to the estate.

In 12/13, the machine at Hollin Bank yielded around £12,000. With increased charges to be introduced in early 2014, it was predicted that this machine could yield a further £2,000 per annum. Unfortunately, by the end of 13/14 the total yield was only £9,323.

Currently, the machine has yielded £3,550 to date which is £695 more than the equivalent period last year. The honesty box yielded £180 in 13/14.



It is very difficult to estimate the year end figure but the projected annual income is revised downwards to £12,500 at Appendix 1.

One of the central policies of the North Lees /Stanage Estate Management Plan (2000-2013) is to manage the car parking charges preferably through voluntary rather than obligatory means. This followed a campaign against parking charges mounted by the British Mountaineering Council and others in the late 1990's. This indirectly led to the formation of the Stanage Forum and the production of the Management Plan.

Work with the stakeholders as part of the vision and management plan moving forward is to ensure visitors to the estate wish to contribute to the estate park their car in the car parks and pay the required fee. Initiatives for 2014/15 include providing a car sticker saying "I'm supporting Stanage" with an annual fee that goes directly into the Estate budget and better signage to promote a deeper understanding of the costs of running the Estate and specific projects.

#### **16. Refreshment Concessions**

There are mobile refreshment concessions on Upper Burbage Bridge Car Parks. No one was interested in providing a concession at Hollin bank this year. There might be some scope for further concessions on the Estate but these would need to be very sensitively handled to avoid undue commercialisation and distraction from the open and "wilderness" landscape. The new farm tenant is providing some catering at the farmhouse gardens but this is unlikely to yield significant extra income for the estate.

#### **17. Toilets and Ranger Briefing Centre.**

The public toilets are located about 100 metres from Hollin Bank Car Park and are well used at all times of the year. The ranger briefing centre at Hollin Bank is a small functional area next to the public toilets. The building has no electric provision and therefore options for reuse are limited for the existing provision. Clarification of the planning position will continue with an options appraisal to be developed when the new North Lees Manager is in place.

The overall review of the Authority's toilets has not commenced and therefore no decision has been made on the future of Hollin Bank toilets. The new Property Manager – Trails will be responsible for the overall toilets review and liaise with the new Property Manager – North Lees when both are appointed. Preliminary discussions with the Director of Planning have taken place looking at future opportunities for this building

#### **18. Visitor Giving.**

There are opportunities for developing giving opportunities beyond the donation box in Hooks car park for volunteering, donations and sponsorship. Last year we had a donate from the BMC for the help we gave for their Stanage Event. Ranger walks have also collected donations and there have been initial discussions on vehicles for giving (both giving of money and time). The aim is to come back to the March ARP with a strategy for giving for the estate based on the work with the Stanage Forum and stakeholders. See section 7 above and Appendix 1.

#### **19. Renewable Energy Initiatives**

Carbon Management at North Lees

North Lees Estate encompasses many of the challenges faced when implementing carbon reduction measures in the National Park. The Authority has a unique opportunity

to demonstrate how energy efficiency and renewable technologies can best be implemented while conserving the unique characteristics of the Park.

In North Lees Hall Farmhouse, we have an opportunity to demonstrate how an important listed building can be treated so that the thermal performance is improved and alternative, more sustainable sources of heat and power can be used.

The refurbishment of the farmhouse allowed us to create a building that is well insulated and heated using a renewable biomass energy source. The heating system not only offers a lower cost heating system for the tenant but also allows the Authority to benefit from Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) tariff payments for the next 7 years. The tariff will allow the capital investment in the system to be repaid and a contribution towards the estate running costs to be made.

North Lees Campsite also presents an excellent opportunity to achieve a high level of performance and develop a demonstration project that will show leadership to others with the recreation and tourism industry within the Park.

Work is planned to install a ground source heat pump to provide hot water and heating to the site before the 2015 season. This will demonstrate how renewable heating can be incorporated with minimal impact on the landscape and provide a more sustainable facility from both environmental and financial perspectives. The Authority will benefit from tariff payments as owners of the site and will benefit directly from energy savings if it continues to run the facility or indirectly if it leases the site.

#### **Financial aspects:**

North Lees farmhouse:

Amount invested in complete heating system: £15,000 (including new radiators etc)

Annual income from RHI: £2,466 for 7 years

Benefit to Authority efficiency savings: £1,600 for 7 years

Benefit to estate budget: £800 for 7 years

North Lees Campsite:

The business case is still to be approved before the project is committed to but the tender process is complete and a planning application is being considered in September 2014 planning committee. However, the headline figures for the project are:  
Total costs of project: £33,000

Annual income from RHI: £2220 p.a. for 20 years

Annual savings due to decreased energy use: £1,800 p.a. (this will continue for the lifetime for the installation – expected to be 25 years minimum)

This will make a contribution of approximately £2,400 p.a. towards efficiency savings for 20 years and approximately £1,600 towards the estate budget for the lifetime of the installation.

## **20. Filming**

The Estate and, in particular, Stanage Edge has been used for many TV programmes films and still photography, on both a documentary and commercial basis. The Authority charges a commercial rate where appropriate. The Authority is mainly reactive to requests although suitable filming locations on Authority properties are published on the website. Although, the Authority already has a longstanding contact with Creative England (Central) who promote filming opportunities in the Midlands, a more pro-active marketing stance through other regional brokering agencies could be further developed. However, there must be realism in terms of income generation opportunities for filming as it is a very competitive market and filming budgets are often limited. It is likely that it

will remain a fairly static source of income for the estate but an increased target has been included in the budget. Unfortunately this hasn't been realised this year and the marketing and branding of opportunities on the estate will be assessed in the Management Plan.

A target of around £3,500 pa was included in the Business Case. In 13/14 income was around £2,000. In 14/15, the current income is £200 to date and there are further enquires.

**21. Bottled water**

Under the 'Dragons Den' initiative, the Authority investigated the commercial possibility of bottling water from a spring source in an Authority owned woodland. Unfortunately this was found to not be a viable business opportunity on the estate. No financial input was included in the budget.

**22. Grants and external funding**

Working with the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area (NIA) has attracted grant aid of £34,000 over 3 years for woodland and land management work on the Estate. External funding will be sought for all projects on the estate. Year 3 of the work is currently underway and will be self-financing.

**23. Financial targets.**

The financial targets set by Members in September 2013 to achieve full cost recovery position by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 have not been fully met this year. Detailed progress on this can be seen in Part B of this report. We are on a journey and progress has been made with additional opportunities beyond the original September 2013 business plan.

**24. Risk Management:**

Addressed in the Part B report

**25. Sustainability:**

Addressed in the Part B report

**26. Consultations:**

The Stanage Forum and wider stakeholders have been consulted about the refreshed vision as described in Section 7.

Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources, Assistant Director of Land Management, Assistant Director of Policy and Partnerships, Head of Legal, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources, Property Managers, Ecologists, Access and Rights of Way Staff, Learning and Discovery Team, Ranger Service Staff and site staff.

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

None

**28. Appendices**

Appendix 1- Draft Vision  
Appendix 2- North Lees Events

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

Mary Bagley, Assistant Director of Enterprise and Field Services. September 12th 2014.