

**6. VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND RECREATION HUBS PROGRAMME
(DEC 20 / AKB)**

Purpose of the report

To appraise members of the latest thinking in developing the visitor management and recreation hub approach and to shape and confirm the strategic direction (vision and programme brief), so officers can develop a detailed delivery plan with confidence.

Key issues

- **Definitions and language - What do we mean by a recreation hub? Where are they, where could they be?**
- **What is the National Park Authority's policy for visitors? Is it managing better existing numbers or attracting more visitors (diverse audience plan; income generation)?**
- **The role of the National Park Authority and partners in moving forward this significant issue not least learning from past experiences and Covid-19 in the 2020 season.**
- **Should the sustainable transport plan be merged with the visitor management plan to form one overarching delivery plan?**

1.

Recommendations

2.

1. **Members confirm the programme brief, vision and definitions**
2. **Members confirm the sustainable transport plan is part of the visitor management and recreation hub delivery plan**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3.

- The programme contributes directly to three PDNPA outcome themes:
- a. A sustainable landscape that is conserved and enhanced
 - b. A national park loved and supported by diverse audiences
 - c. Thriving and sustainable communities that are part of this special place.

These three outcomes reflect our two purposes. Visitors and how they arrive, experience and leave the Peak District National Park in a sustainable way so they protect, respect and enjoy the national park is at the heart of PDNPA policy and legal obligations.

Background

4.

The Peak District National Park has always attracted visitors since its inception in 1951. The Authority has responded by providing visitor information; messaging; products & services along with infrastructure to manage visitors.

More recently, the National Park Authority and our partners have recognised the increasing popularity of a number of hotspots and have adopted an area management approach, sharing skills, expertise and resources delivering a wide range of outcomes (e.g. conservation improvements; protection and education). In addition, adopted planning policies have recognised differing capacity of some parts of the National Park to accommodate visitors without harming the special qualities of the area. Our current planning policies are set out in the Core Strategy (2011) and the Development

Management DPD (2019) and the Planning Policy team are currently working on the Recreation Hub supplementary planning document (SPD).

This programme now provides the opportunity to bring together at policy and operational levels visitor management; appropriate planning policy and guidance and sustainable transport plans.

An overview of existing projects was presented to the Programmes and Resources Committee on 6 December 2019. The feedback was to develop a vision and a programme brief for this strategic area of work.

Covid-19 and the subsequent explosion of visitors during 2020 has reinforced the need for a programme approach with partners to attract and manage visitors in a more welcoming and less harmful way. At the present time PDNPA does not have a visitor management policy. The trend in visitors (STEAM) has been steadily upward over the past 5 years with c12m visits per annum. Indicators from business (Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire and other NP forecasting) show a continued rise in visitor numbers especially next year with the likely preference for staycations by UK holidaymakers.

A number of visitor and resident surveys and feedback during 2020 (rangers; Cambridge university; parishes forum), highlights a wide range of views reflecting the importance of visitors to the local economy, attracting more diverse audiences, increasing spend per person, and the impact on local communities and wildlife especially in honeypot sites. Nevertheless, the overriding observation is to 'do something better'. The experiences from 2020 are not sustainable. The question is what?

5.

The vision and programme brief set out a framework for taking strategic action in partnership over the next 10 years. No one organisation can solve the issues – it has to be a collective responsibility which if agreed with partners and the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group could perhaps be an action in the National Park Management Plan in the future.

Proposals

6. Consider and comment on the scope of the programme brief, vision and definitions to steer priorities and a longer term detailed delivery plan.
7. Consider the benefits of merging the sustainable transport plan into a wider visitor management & recreation hub delivery plan
8. Consider discussing this with the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group and prospective partners to see if this delivery programme could be an action in the National Park Management Plan.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

9. **Financial:** Full delivery costs will be identified as part of developing the programme delivery plan and projects. A number of projects are in progress with funding secured.

10. **Risk Management:**
- Capacity and prioritisation during the ongoing management restructure and other functional savings
 - Managing and messaging external expectations, especially with local communities which are currently experiencing visitor pressures
 - Commitment of partners both time and money to deliver the outcomes
 - Planning and investment. Some of the aspirations e.g. Langsett are subject to securing investment via partners.
11. **Sustainability:** A key outcome of the programme is to deliver a better and more sustainable management approach towards visitors.
12. **Other relevant implication – None**
13. **Background papers - None**

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Programme brief & vision
Appendix 1a – October Vision Workshop
Appendix 2 – Definitions and map of existing and proposed hubs

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