
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The aim of Personal Development Planning

Personal development planning provides you with the opportunity to discuss your individual development needs and how they can best be met. This is done within the context of the Authority's vision and outcomes and roles held as a member at Peak District National Park Authority. Your Personal Development Plan (PDP) is a written plan of your commitment to your personal development in your member role(s) over the coming year.

Why Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) wants Members to have a Personal Development Plan

In October 2007, members approved a set of proposals to improve the way member training and development is provided – a key activity of which is an annual review of member needs through personal development plans using an agreed skills and knowledge matrix. In March 2008, the authority agreed to sign up to the East Midlands Member Development Charter and appointed a Member representative for member learning and development. Since then although Members agreed to continue to work towards the EM Member Development Charter the Member representative for Learning and Development was discontinued for a while until being re-appointed in 2014.

Member Development is a strategic issue and should be seen in the context of the vision for the National Park, the achievement of National Park Management Plan outcomes and the delivery of the Authority's own corporate strategy.

Personal Development Planning is a key tool to help us identify and prioritise the needs of individuals aligned with the role of the member and priorities of the authority, which will provide a focused training and development programme.

Although a generic job description is provided for all members, there are members with special responsibilities and a wider range of other responsibilities and roles – eg as decision-makers on outside bodies, in scrutiny, as external advocates for NPMP outcomes, as community leaders and working in partnership with a wide range of other organisations. There are other members who also have special needs eg as new members or as a result of their previous experience. Personal Development Planning helps us to tailor the process to individuals.

The Personal Development Planning (PDP) Process

The Personal Development Planning (PDP) process requires you to do four things:

- Look back at your experiences as a member and reflect on how you have contributed to the NPA outcomes and
- reflect on your skills, knowledge and experience developed over the past year (whether by PDNPA or elsewhere that is relevant to your role(s)).

- Look forward at what you hope to achieve over the next 12-18 months in the role(s) you hold, being mindful of the authority's outcomes, and how your skills and knowledge as a member can be developed.
- Reflect on the way you like to learn by completing a learning styles questionnaire that can then be used to tailor your individual plan.

If you are a newly appointed member this is an opportunity to focus on developing your existing skills and updating your knowledge and learn new skills in the context of your role(s).

There are four stages to the PDP process:

1. Your Preparation – including the completion of a learning styles questionnaire
2. One to One scheduled discussion with Lisa Butterfill (EMC)
3. Agreement and signing of completed Personal Development Plan
4. Submission of the signed Plan to the Democratic and Legal Support Team

Preparing for Personal Development Planning

You may find it helpful to use the blank Personal Development Plan attached as Appendix A to prepare for the one to one discussion.

Taking account of your various roles, your future plans and the authority's priorities and outcomes consider what training and development activities will help you to carry out your member role(s). You might find it useful to ask a more experienced peer, or someone you trust, what they think.

Development needs are usually identified at three levels, although these often overlap:

- Individual (what you personally need to carry out the role, for example chairing, time management, computer skills, etc.)
- Function (needs for specific committee or roles, for example regulatory/planning knowledge, performance and scrutiny skills, etc.)
- Authority (what the authority recommends, in terms of development for all members, for example ethics and standards, equality and diversity, performance management etc)

Broad areas to consider are:

- Specific committee work/roles
- Changes that will affect you
- Specific policies
- Information technology
- General topics / skills and knowledge
- Aspirations and Personal development

In thinking about *how to meet specific development needs*, remember there is a wide variety of ways to learn. You could have a one-to-one with an appropriate officer, or an observation visit, (for example if you wanted to learn more about protected landscape matters). It could be discussing the matter with a more experienced member, doing some personal research, or depending on your role, attending an external or internal organised event.

You will be sent a Learning styles Questionnaire which will ideally need to be completed prior to your Personal Development discussion. It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

The Interview

At the meeting we will discuss each section of the Personal Development Plan (see Appendix A), giving guidance as appropriate and helping to make sure that you find personal development planning worthwhile. The meeting is usually fairly informal and will last approximately one hour.

We will lead a guided discussion on:

- what you feel pleased at achieving (or have played a part in achieving) within your various roles as a member at PDNPA
- general review of your current skills, knowledge and experience you bring
- what you hope to achieve over the next year
- your self-assessment against the Skills and Knowledge framework for members
- training and development activities that will help you in your various roles as a member
- How you like to learn - your learning style.
- Your learning and development action plan

The Personal Development Plan (PDP)

The PDP is divided into four sections:

1. Context information – positions held, length of service, personal achievements, skills, knowledge and experience as well as personal ambitions.
2. The Skills and Knowledge Matrix – assessment of development needs against the job role and PDNPA outcomes
3. Learning styles – analysing your learning styles questionnaire
4. Your learning and development action plan

The Skills and Knowledge Framework

This framework has been developed in conjunction with the PDNPA member job role, PDNPA vision and priorities and I&DeA political skills framework. This identifies the different skills and knowledge required as an appointed member to undertake your various roles including; strategic and external leadership, governance and scrutiny, contribution and development and communication. Using this framework as part of your Personal Development Planning process we can work with you to identify any areas where you would like further training or development.

Confidentiality

Actual discussions about your self-assessment of skills and what you perceive are your development needs are totally confidential. The completed Personal Development Plan is seen on a 'needs to know' basis. Officers responsible for organising and monitoring development activities will have sight of the plan as will the Chair of the Authority. Any concerns by individual members about confidentiality will be dealt with sensitively.

Monitoring

The information that is contained in your completed paperwork will only be used to generate an overall training needs analysis for the authority to ensure a focused learning and development programme is provided.

Normally a review of your Personal Development Plan will take place after eight to twelve months. Unless otherwise requested, these will be part of the annual Members' self-assessment questionnaire. These reviews are to ensure that you are receiving the training and development that was planned and to identify any new needs. They are also used to help the Authority evaluate its investment in training.