

REVIEW OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN - REPORT FOR INFORMATION

1 Purpose of the report

This report outlines the proposed approach to the review and creation of a new National Park Management Plan (NPMP) covering 2017 - 2022, as discussed at Strategic Advisory Group in August 2015, and reminds members of the approach taken to create and monitor the current plan.

2 Key issues

- The review of the NPMP, which we are obliged to complete by 2017, will take place in 2016, with preparatory work beginning in September 2015.
- The current NPMP provides us with a good basis in terms of long term vision, and a working process led by an active group of stakeholders. Our intention is to continue with the overarching vision framework and way of working with stakeholders into the next plan.
- The review will focus on the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, and our ambitions to protect them and maximise their enjoyment.
- The review will be championed by the Chief Executive, with full engagement from a range of stakeholders.
- It will be a proportionate review, and emphasis will be on pragmatic action planning, with real partner commitment to delivery, including clear links to the Corporate Strategy where National Park Authority is required.

3 Background

Members are requested to note the approach, process and timelines for the review of the NPMP, which will include member involvement at key stages.

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

Section 66 of 1995 Environment Act requires National Park Authorities to produce a National Park Management Plan which 'formulates policy for the management of the relevant Park and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to that Park' and should reflect national park purposes.

Our current plan complies with all requirements so we have a good basis on which to carry out a review, but it must be complete by 2017 to meet the legal expectations.

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The current NPMP covers the period 2012-17 and was developed in partnership with stakeholders through thorough engagement. It has been refreshed and kept up to date through an annual process of ongoing monitoring, information gathering and information sharing.

During the last review process, effort was concentrated on nurturing a cohesive partnership, and on getting the right structure for the NPMP. A 20 year Vision Framework was established around 4 inter-related themes, which address the challenges identified by stakeholders.

When the NPMP was launched in 2012, for the first time we also published an annual delivery plan of activities and projects which stakeholders had committed to deliver. Each year since 2012, the delivery plan has been updated and reported to Advisory Group, to stakeholders and to Authority via 5 shorter term signature programmes of work, referred to as 'Signatures'.

The independently chaired Advisory Group was created from the previous External Monitoring Group at the start of the current plan period, to provide expert guidance and direction, as well as to monitor ongoing progress of the NPMP. The group meets 3 times each year and will provide a key role in shaping the approach to the review.

National Park Authorities are also required to compile a report about the current state of the National Park, issues which have direct implication affecting the special qualities, and how the special qualities are enjoyed and by whom. An on-line State of the Park was created at the end of the last review, as a sister to the on-line NPMP, and is updated as new data sets become available. It provides our data repository and is the basis for producing a 'point-in-time' State of the Park Report.

5 Proposals

5.1 The forthcoming review will involve the relevant local authorities, partners and other stakeholders through an early engagement process. It is proposed that the next Peak District National Park residents survey, due later this financial year, is used as a vehicle for wider public consultation in the early stages of the review. By the end of 2015, we will also have updated data on visitor perceptions of the national park via 3 character area based visitor surveys. Additional contact with key stakeholders through telephone interviews and one-to-one meetings will also form part of the engagement and intelligence gathering phase. All this information will contribute to an updated State of the Park.

5.2 The existing network of stakeholders and partners will be updated to meet ongoing partnership management within the national park, as well as the ongoing delivery of the NPMP. There may be synergies with other large projects - for example it could be possible to use the same stakeholder mechanism for destination management work developing a recreational hubs policy and for the new Warslow estate management plan vision work.

5.3 National park authorities are expected to clearly express the special qualities of the national park and their status and condition, who they are enjoyed by and how they are enjoyed. Initial work identified the need to review the definitions of the existing special qualities. Draft statements for the special qualities will be available for input to the NPMP review. Condition monitoring of the special qualities will be developed in parallel to the next NPMP.

5.4 The last NPMP review in 2010/11 concentrated on establishing a structure for the plan, based around 4 key themes. Partnership consultation and detailed drafting sessions took place over 12 months to produce a robust 'vision framework', with an outlook of up to 20 years. We anticipate that this vision still reflects the Peak District ambition, and so we intend to use the same structure for the new plan. It would be desirable to make the minimal changes required to the structure of the plan, rather than create a new structure, and focus effort on delivery planning.

5.5 We would like to focus effort on reviewing, and rationalising the detailed aims and delivery plan which continues to embed key stakeholder activity within the Peak District National Park, including our own commitments. The review presents a good opportunity to ensure that our NPMP includes actions from the climate change adaptation report, as well as the opportunity to re-absorb some earlier strategic plans, such as recreation, biodiversity and cultural heritage. Delivery planning also provides the important stage where partner buy-ins are secured. This may need to be done both through a combination of joint stakeholder meetings and one-to-one CEO level meetings. This will be an important feature of the review as the Authority is not able to deliver the NPMP alone.

5.6 The NPMP should continue to provide explicit links to Peak District area based management plans. Links between the Sheffield Moors Master Plan, and the emerging Stange and North Lees management plan are already developed. It is hoped that a similar 'golden thread' will be established for the next Warslow management plan.

5.7 The project sponsor is the CEO, with a standing item on Senior Management Team agenda, allowing them to act as a project board. Advisory Group will provide quality assurance as critical friend at each project stage. Other senior managers and functional experts will be required at different stages of the project.

5.8 It is essential to involve members at key points in the process, including decision stages, in ways which are proportionate to the scale of the review. It is suggested that Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) is used to report progress at key stages and secure a member input. SAG may wish to advise when there is a need to engage more widely.

5.9 The new NPMP will cascade into the Authority's Corporate Strategy, linking the concept of the 'golden thread' beyond our own objectives and to a vision for the wider national park stakeholder community. It will continue to link to the Local Development Framework and be underpinned by the Landscape Strategy. The corporate strategy 2016-19 will be agreed in December 2015, and this will be our NPA position as we go into the review year. If as a result of the updated NPMP we need to amend the corporate plan this can be done at the end of 2016, as there is a circular relationship between the two plans.

6 **Outline Project Schedule**

Agree project approach and project structure – Milestone SAG 28 August 2015

Stage 1

Early engagement and intelligence gathering work (survey design, interviews, process design) September 2015 to December 2015

Special Qualities definition – August 2015 to November 2015

Residents Survey January 2016 to February 2016

Mapping and updating of key aims and ambitions for former strategies (e.g cultural heritage, biodiversity, recreation, climate change adaptation) December 2015 – April 2016

State of the Park Report point in time – Milestone end March 2016

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment initial planning for a proportionate approach– December 2015 to February 2016

Analysis of information – March 2016 to April 2016

Minor changes to Vision Framework - decision point through partnership event - Milestone May 2016

Stage 2

Delivery plan developed including bringing together key action plans via partner conversation and one-to-ones – June to November 2016

Commitment to delivery via a partnership event – Milestone October 2015

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment further analysis reflecting a proportionate approach –March 2016 to December 2016

Stage 3

Consultation on draft NPMP – January to February 2017

Partner Sign-up – February – March 2017

Stage 4

Authority approval of NPMP – March 2017

Launch new NPMP April 2017