

Peak District Local Access Forum - 8th December, 2016

Report from John Thompson with Edwina Edwards

Item 5

Peak District NPA - Structure Review and Funding Issues

Introduction

1. At the last meeting of the Forum which I chaired on 22nd September in Edwina's absence, a number of issues were raised about the Structure Review, Funding Issues and Authority Properties that I undertook to raise with Edwina and Sarah Fowler as Chief Executive of the National Park Authority.
2. This resulted in a letter to Sarah Fowler on 25th September, her email response of 30th September (both circulated by Mike Rhodes to LAF Members), a very helpful meeting with Sarah on 17th November and my summary note of key points on that date. All are included in this report and I am delighted that both Sarah and Simon Malcolm (Director) will be attending our meeting when this information is presented to give a short presentation to share the context of the work share some of the key positive decisions they have taken over the past few months about the direction of the Authority and how they are resourcing and supporting this direction, including sharing the confirmed management structure. They will happily answer questions from LAF members.

Letter to Sarah Fowler on 25th September, 2016

Dear Sarah

John Thompson chaired the Local Access Forum meeting on Thursday 22 September in the Board Room and, thanks to Jason Spencer, our first broadcast meeting was held to broaden coverage and ensure openness as for Authority and Committee meeting. I am told it went well and it was good to have Cllr John Walton along as the Authority's member representative. He said he found the meeting very interesting.

I am writing to raise points and questions about the Structure Review and Funding issues some of which were mentioned in the meeting and others have been aired with us as Chair and Vice Chair. I am raising them now as we gather the structure review is well advanced and due to be reported to the Authority on 7th October for approval.

As a statutory adviser to the Authority, we hope you may be able to respond ahead of 7th October on a few issues please:

We trust Access and Recreation will remain as an integrated service and retain the link to our Forum given our key role through knowledgeable, experienced and enthusiastic volunteers giving advice on a range of issues from the National Park Management Plan to sustainable management of Green Lanes. Can we be

assured that key service being kept as one within the structure and the proposed management arrangements and links to the LAF please?

Where will Rangers and Recreation Properties be in the new structure as we have enjoyed close links in the past and wish to sustain that in future please? Close links and advice have included the Trails and Cycling with support for funding bids and input to the Trails Management Plan through a Steering Group The other Forum and Property we have had input to is Stanage Forum and North Lees Management Plan, and we therefore ask about future management arrangement planned for both areas.

On funding we have been actively involved in the establishment of the Access Fund and encouraging contributions to that from User Groups and individuals involved in the Forum and currently welcoming the investment in access improvements related to the "Wish List" and Map related to that. One of our members asked how secure that was as he felt it was vital to encouraging ongoing development of the fund which has been "ring fenced" as have the Trails Fund and Stanage ticketing. Can you please give us assurances on those funds?

I hope this is helpful as we can only keep colleagues in the picture if we know current thinking and facts please.

Yours sincerely

Edwina and John

Edwina Edwards and John Thompson
Chair and Vice Chair
Peak District Local Access Forum

Copies to: Simon Malcolm, Mike Rhodes, Andrew McCloy and John Walton and all PDLAF members

Emailed Response from Sarah Fowler on 30th September

Cc: Malcolm Simon; Rhodes Mike; McCloy Andrew; Walton John; Roberts Lesley, subsequently circulated by Mike Rhodes at Edwina's request to all LAF members for information

Edwina

Thank you for your letter dated 25 September 2016, which I received on 27 September 2016. I am glad to hear that officers continue to positively support the Local Access Forum in its work and in your aspirations to open up access to your discussions to a wider group of people. The LAF is, and will continue to be, an important partnership group for us. We value its input and support in us working together to care for the Peak District National Park and to open up access for all to enjoy.

The changes you refer to are about moving to a clearer and simpler way of operating for us as an Authority to help us deliver the Corporate Strategy. The Corporate Strategy 2016-19 sets out what we will do and why - this is our focus. In this we have given support for work to look after the whole Park as a public asset in a way that encourages access and responsible behaviour. I hope you have already seen evidence of our support in this area with our investment of £26k into our baseline work on the green lanes action plan (which was approved at the Authority meeting on 27 May 2016). None of 'what' we want to achieve will change in our deliberations of 'how' we might organise ourselves for the future to deliver it.

The changes proposed are about 'how' we organise ourselves as a business - investing in staff and the organisation so we have a sustainable and thriving future to carry on caring for the National Park and promoting its enjoyment. To answer your particular questions about resources for our access and rights of way work, rangers and the trails. This work and focus remains unchanged in the proposed new organisation design. We have already done work to ensure all of the work you mention in your letter - access, property and fund-raising activity - lies within one Directorate. We are proposing to bring our work within the brief of new Heads of Service roles with a brief to develop our visitor experience, engagement and support. In terms of fundraising the proposal is to bring all our efforts into one team to boost the scale of our activity, diversify our channels and increase the value of donations.

The overall impact of the proposed changes are, therefore, for more investment and better connections across these areas of work. We will be happy to meet with you and John to share with you how we will organise ourselves for the future.

I am sure you will appreciate that we are not immune to external changes. If we are to navigate a confident future *together* we need to be open to change, be better connected internally and better supported externally. The change is about keeping our pioneering outlook as the original National Park alive for the times we are in today and I look forward to a continuing strong partnership with the Local Access Forum.

Regards
Sarah

Sarah Fowler
Chief Executive

Meeting with Sarah Fowler on 17th November - Summary

by John Thompson shared by email with Sarah, Edwina and Mike

Thank you very much for your time with Edwina , Mike and I this morning and the copy of the “Leading in the 21st Century” presentation you kindly went through with us and gave me a copy of which I will share with Edwina.(Also attaching the Structure Updates we were passed, and noting the report about the Corporate Strategy to the Authority on 27th May,2016).

I am dropping you a note as Edwina will be with you and many others this afternoon at the Medway Centre for Penny Anderson’s presentation of the “State of Nature Report.” I look forward to reading about that.

We greatly valued your interest in, and support for, the work of the Local Access Forum where Mike’s role and advice as Secretary is invaluable and greatly appreciated by all our enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers.

Your reassurances on the future of the Access Fund linked to the Wish List (being reported re Annual Accounts by Sue along with myself on 8th December), Sue Smith’s post re Green Lanes being approved as permanent, and the continuing work with corporate support re the Trails, Stanage and Warslow Moors were most welcome and we value the approach and involvement in the National Park Management Plan Review where Joe Glentworth has been most helpful. I will be at the NPMP meeting on 5th December on behalf of the LAF.

The ongoing collaboration and partnership work planned is good to hear and really well illustrated by the approach recognised and applauded by the Ramblers Survey Findings about the condition of rights of way in the Peak. The Authority with its work through Mike and team with Rangers, Highway Authorities and landowners, is crucial to that and commendable in helping people enjoy the special qualities and experiences of the Peak District.

We made a few suggestions about sharing information with LAF and communication on a number of topics (e.g. Trails Management Plan), with the benefit of feedback from members of the LAF, which you kindly agreed to pursue with colleagues.

With thanks again for the your time in a very helpful meeting when you have such a lot on, and I hope the State of Nature Report launch goes well later today.

Kind regards
John

Heads of Service Updates - Note from Sarah to Staff on 15th November

I am delighted to announce the following appointments to the Heads of Service roles across the Authority:

Conservation and Planning Directorate (Director – John Scott)

Head of Policy and Communities:	Brian Taylor
Head of Landscape and Conservation:	Suzanne Fletcher
Head of Programme Delivery (MFTF):	Chris Dean
Head of Development Management:	To be appointed

Commercial Development and Outreach Directorate (Director – Simon Martin)

Head of Visitor Experience Development:	Emma Stone
Head of Outreach Development:	Sarah Wilks
Head of Marketing & Fundraising Development:	To be appointed

Corporate Strategy and Development Directorate (Director – Ruth Marchington)

Head of Law:	Andrea McCaskie
Head of Finance:	Philip Naylor
Head of Human Resources:	Theresa Reid
Head of Information Management:	Darren Butler
Head of Strategy and Performance:	Emily Fox

Two appointments are still to be made and I will let you know the outcome when I know.

It is great to welcome these staff to the new Leadership Group they now join. The Leadership Team, comprising myself and the 3 Directors, wish them well in their role and look forward to working with them so we are an organisation that is better connected internally and better supported externally.

My thanks to you all for your continued focus on delivery in caring for the National Park and promoting its enjoyment for all during this period of change over the past months.