

## 2. STRATEGY FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES (A.1973 RC/JNT/CT)

### Purpose of Report

1. This report follows the previous item on the agenda of this meeting and seeks approval for a strategic approach to consultation and focusing the Authority's resources to engage with young people and disadvantaged communities.

### RECOMMENDATION:

2.
  1. The Authority adopts the proposals for priority areas outlined in paragraphs 9 to 12 as the basis for consultation with relevant authorities and community representatives to identify further priority groups.
  2. Action plans relating to this outline strategic approach be reported to Services Committee.

### Background

3. The preceding report (Strategy for Working with People and Communities) outlined the policy and guidance affecting the ways in which Authority services are delivered. Overall, there is a great expectation on the Authority to provide services for a potentially very large number and wide range of people as part of the broader national community of this National Park. The Authority has responded to this perpetual challenge through; (a) the development of its Corporate Objectives to reach specified target audiences and, (b) through its Performance Improvement Plan to enhance its capability and efficiency. This report proposes a way of prioritising how the Authority deploys its own limited resources towards working with young people and disadvantaged groups. The information and proposals should be read in context of other strategic approaches, for example, Sustainable Tourism where other audiences are targeted.
4. The Strategy for Working with People and Communities refers to recommendations arising from the Authority's Performance Assessment. In view of the apparent enormity of the challenge of promoting understanding of the National Park with urban communities around the Peak District National Park, this report summarises a mechanism for establishing priorities to ensure that action plans are deliverable within resources.
5. A further specific issue that highlights the need for the Authority to pursue the Performance Assessment recommendations is the Defra announcement of a zero growth budget for the period 2006-08, which places particular pressure on prioritisation and focus.
6. In considering how to work with and respond to the needs of communities in and around the National Park it is perhaps worth identifying those communities and one way of doing so is to consider how many people this organisation is potentially 'working together with ....'
  - The total population 'in and around' the National Park (with an outer 'boundary' of; South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, West Midlands, Staffordshire, Cheshire, eastern parts of Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire) is around 10,031,718 people (2001 census)
  - Almost 3 million of those are under the age of 24

7. The Promoting Understanding Group has identified target audiences of 'young people' and 'disadvantaged groups' (referred to specifically in the Authority's Corporate Objectives 2004-09) and the Group sought a means of better defining and reaching members of those target audiences with a view to developing action plans.
8. In seeking guidance from other professional sources the Promoting Understanding Group examined details and maps of Multiple Deprivation Indices for England (ODPM, 2004). The Indices include the following weighted domains; Income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education, training and skills deprivation; barriers to housing and services; living environment deprivation; crime. The details of these indices will not be discussed in this report and it is intended that members should focus on the overall index for each district within the relevant Government Regions as illustrated in the map in Appendix 1 of this report.
9. In September 2005, members were invited to a workshop on Promoting Understanding that was focused mainly on the target audience of young people. A detailed Action Plan for this target audience will be presented to Service Committee in March 2006. During the workshop members were asked to contribute to a prioritisation process. Officers identified the following principle arising from the workshop:
  - Services should be focused on (young) people living in the National Park and the neighbouring authorities, especially disadvantaged (young) people in urban areas
10. From the map in Appendix 1 it can be seen that those districts 'in and around' the National Park with the highest indicator of multiple deprivation include:
11.
  - Manchester
  - Rochdale
  - Stockport
  - Oldham
  - Tameside
  - Barnsley
  - Kirklees
  - Sheffield
  - Doncaster
  - Chesterfield
  - Bolsover
  - Rotherham
  - Ashfield
  - Mansfield
  - Nottingham
  - Derby
  - Stoke on Trent
12. It is proposed that the Authority should focus its resources on the above areas and the disadvantaged communities within them together with local residents of the National Park in the High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Staffordshire Moorlands. The combined total population of these areas is around 4,429,974 (and includes, for example, over 1,700 state schools) and so a much higher degree of focus will be required. It is proposed that this higher degree of focus will be achieved largely through consultation with authorities and community representatives in these areas. For example, c 500 Looked After Children (in care homes and fostering) are a priority of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum covering all of Derby and Derbyshire and Staffordshire has a similar priority. It is important that our priorities reflect the expressed priorities of other authorities and groups in society. Such a strategic focus would, by definition, mean that other areas would not be priority for action planning. Exceptions to this policy might include instances where the Authority is charging for services as part of a trading operation.
13. These proposals must be viewed in the context of important national initiatives such as the Mosaic partnership (working with the Council for National Parks, three other National Park Authorities and the Youth Hostels Association) and possibly external funding opportunities.

14. As part of its service planning process and focusing on the above key strategic priority areas the Authority would develop action plans to achieve understanding of the National Park through:
- Proactively engaging with communities and key partner organisations in the respective areas and identifying to a much higher degree, specific needs, priorities and roles
  - Seeking opportunities to work with partners to attract funding for Promoting Understanding programmes and initiatives
  - Developing the Authority's own role as enabler and facilitator
  - Direct service delivery where the Authority is the only, or main, provider of such services
15. Strategic and service planning as part of a developing performance management culture would enable the Authority to allocate resources in a prioritised and focused way in pursuit of its Corporate Priorities. Reports with action plans and monitoring mechanisms will be made to Service Committee, together with any implications for staffing and resource allocation.
16. With respect to non-priority areas it is proposed that an action plans be developed that include for 'sign-posting' people as appropriate to other agencies and organisations who may be able to provide services.

#### **Financial Considerations**

17. There are no immediate financial considerations at this stage.

#### **Human Rights, Equalities and Health & Safety Issues**

18. There are no specific issues apparent. An Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment (in relation to achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government) will be carried out in relation to this strategy.

#### **Consultation**

19. The following Authority officers have been consulted: the Strategic Management Team, Heads of Service and staff involved in the Communications Task Team and Promoting Understanding Group. The following members have been consulted: Barbara Wilson (representative on the Best Value Review of engagement), Mike Crompton, Chris Furness and John Herbert (members of the Communications Task Team at a meeting on 16 January 2006) and Andrew Marchington (member Youth Champion). Views have been taken into account in finalising this report.

#### **List of background papers** (not previously published)

- 20 Nil

### **APPENDIX 1 – Attached Map**

#### **Map of the Government Regions covering the wider Peak District and showing Index of Multiple Deprivation**

Note: Darker blue represents areas of higher multiple deprivation and paler green represents areas of lower multiple deprivation.