

1. STRATEGY FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES (A.1973 RC/JNT/CT)

Purpose of Report

1. This strategic framework is being proposed following the completion of some important work:
 - A cross-functional group of officers, the Promoting Understanding Group (Appendix 1, paragraphs 10 & 11) has successfully developed action plans to promote understanding and, together with Senior Management Team, has identified a need to simplify the delivery of this work and integrate it with other community engagement work
 - The Temporary Task Team for Communications, Consultation and Understanding has reached the end of its current work (Appendix 1, paragraph 12; Appendix 4)
 - The Community Engagement Best Value Review Team reached the end of its work in 2004 (Appendix 1, paragraphs 13 to 15; Appendix 3)
2. Reviews of the above three programmes identified successes and opportunities to further improve strategic effectiveness and also recognised areas of weakness that should be addressed.
3. This report, therefore, seeks member approval for a new, integrated, cross cutting approach to engagement, promoting understanding and communication. It seeks to further coordinate the Authority's work with people and communities, in line with:
 - National Park Authority purposes
 - Government expectations for engagement with people and communities
 - Resource constraints for the Authority and need to focus and prioritise
 - External funding and partnerships approaches.
4. This approach will pull together and take forward the existing promoting understanding, engagement and communications work, which includes:
 - Promoting Understanding strategy and cross cutting group work
 - Village planning
 - Environmental education visits, outreach and teacher support
 - Youth engagement
 - Ranger delivered education, engagement and outreach work

 - Hope Valley Area Forum and corporate public meetings, events and publications
 - Partnerships and Plans review engagement activity
 - Conservation engagement work
 - Communications, publications and events
 - Visitor information, centres and interpretation
 - Volunteering activity.
5. The report outlines the strategic approach, the mission, outcomes, key messages and themes, and a suggested steer on some key target audience groups. A steering group is proposed to coordinate the work. Detailed action plans and resourcing implications will be the subject of reports to the Services Committee.

6. **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **The Authority adopt an integrated, simplified and more focused approach to engaging with people and communities and and outside the National Park.**
2. **The establishment of an Executive Steering Group (paragraph 12) to coordinate the Authority's approach to Working with People and Communities.**
3. **That the mission, outcomes, target audiences, key messages and themes for a Strategy for Working with People and Communities to promote understanding and engagement of the National Park outlined in paragraphs 15 to 25 of this report be approved.**
4. **That action plans, and organisational restructuring and other resources issues arising from this strategy be reported to Services Committee.**

Legal & Policy Background to this Report

7. The background legislation and the Authority policy and approach – along with information on relevant reviews - are set out in Appendix 1 (paragraphs 1 to 9) of this report and Appendix 2).
 8. This strategic and coordinated approach will enable services to more effectively contribute towards key areas of the National Park Management Plan related to engagement and understanding, mainly focused on:
 - Objective 2 – Working Together for People
 - Objective 3 – Working Together to Generate an Economy
 - Objective 4 – Working Together to Create Understanding.
- These areas are detailed at Appendix 2 of this report.
9. Perhaps of particular significance to this proposed strategy is the feedback from the [National Park Authorities] Performance Assessment (NPAPA). During 2005 this Authority underwent its Performance Assessment and a report was published in October 2005 and a Performance Improvement Plan was presented to Audit and Performance Committee on 27 January 2006. The Assessors' report recommended that "*general clarity is needed about priorities, targets and outcome based objectives*". The report went on to say "*There are too many issues being addressed without clarity of prioritisation. This impacts on both stakeholders and staff and to the Authority's credit has already been recognised as an issue for improvement. The key now is to develop effective mechanisms for the establishment of a priority order for the work the Authority wishes to carry out; to ensure that it is deliverable within the resources allocated; and followed through into the newly developed service plans*".
 10. The Performance Assessment report also identified issues around communications, specifically a greater need for staff involvement and engagement and that internal communications needs further improvement

Proposals – ‘Working with People and Communities’ Executive Steering Group

11. A range of options for taking this work forward were identified during the Best Value Review of engagement. This approach would take on the work of the Temporary Task Team on Communications, Consultation and Engagement (a summary of the team’s progress is provided in Appendix 4 of this report). The Senior Management Team – with input from the Promoting Understanding Group - have identified the creation of a cross cutting Executive Steering Group following the project management approach (Appendix 5, option 4), as the best way forward.
12. The Executive Steering Group would provide a corporate, cross cutting approach for engagement and communications with the community and other stakeholder audiences outlined above. The Group would provide direction, co-ordination and a review process for audience-led action plans. It is proposed that the Steering Group be made up of Heads of Services or their deputies/nominees of the following services:
 - Communications
 - Policy, Strategy & Partnerships
 - Environmental Education
 - Access and Recreation
 - Conservation
 - Sustainable Tourism
 - Development Control
 - Senior Management Team champion
13. The Executive Steering Group would provide overall guidance for the development and review of Action Plans in context of the National Park Management Plan, the Authority’s developing performance management framework and other major policy areas (for example; equalities, recreation, conservation and links with the Strategic Investment Group). It is proposed that project managed sub-groups take responsibility for the development and implementation of specific, audience-led Action Plans (eg for landowners, for young people, for active elderly etc.) and that a project manager will have responsibility for this. A project champion will provide a strategic overview and support to the project manager.
14. Importantly, the Executive Steering Group would examine ways of working with external stakeholders to establish a shared Strategy for the National Park. For example, this work could link with the ‘Peak District Partnership’ of key stakeholders being established for the delivery of the National Park Management Plan Review.

Proposals - Key Messages and Audiences

15. This section of the report sets out proposals concerning the Key Messages for working with people to promote understanding for sustainable management of the Peak District National Park in pursuit of the **vision**:

Working together for the Peak District National Park

- a special environment
 - a welcoming place at the heart of the nation
 - vibrant communities and a thriving economy
16. Arising from the work of the Promoting Understanding Group the proposed **mission** (what we are trying to achieve in pursuit of the Vision) for Working with People is:

Working together to ensure opportunities for all to:

- appreciate, understand and enjoy the special qualities of the Peak District National Park
- contribute to sustainable management of the Peak District National Park and wider environment.

17. 'Working together' is intended to imply partnership working both internally and externally to the Authority with the former resulting in improved cross-functional working. The mission better reflects the developing and in future dominant role of the Authority as enabler and facilitator as well as, in some cases, direct service provider. Similarly, we had previously phrased our mission with 'access to information' but 'access to opportunities' would seem to be a better intention as 'information' could suggest a narrower range of access channels. Reference to 'the National Park and wider environment' recognises the importance of not viewing the National Park in isolation.

18. It is proposed that strategy **outcomes** should be that people:

- feel welcome in the National Park
- know they are in a National Park
- have the opportunity to influence decisions in the National Park
- understand that the Peak District is a special place
- enjoy their experience of the National Park
- that their lives are enriched or improved through visiting or living in a National Park
- respect those who live, work and visit the National Park
- value the Peak District as a National Park
- make a personal contribution to the sustainable management of the National Park

19. Corresponding with these Outcomes we should, through our own work and by influencing others:

20.

- ensure a welcoming manner and style
- inform people by defining the National Park, its purposes and our shared vision
- develop and promote key messages about the special qualities of the National Park
- are open, transparent and participative in how we make our decisions
- communicate using clear language, fun, engaging/interesting approaches to delivery
- highlight that people use, live and work in the National Park
- highlight 'codes of conduct' and possible actions
- employ Key Messages to influence our approach to delivering understanding
- ensure that the principles are deliverable by our partners
- plan over the long-term

21. The 'special qualities' of the National Park as a special place arise from its:

- Location
- Landscape
- Geology
- Wildlife
- Cultural Heritage
- People

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22. Officers have developed a set of **Key Messages** relating to the special qualities of the National Park. It is anticipated that whilst the key messages will remain constant for some time, specific messages relating to the themes may be relatively short-lived according to contemporary issue(s). The proposed Key Messages and underlying themes are summarised below.
23. Knowing that you are in the Peak District National Park
- Theme: National Parks
 - Theme: The Peak District
- Knowing that the Peak District National Park is a special place
- Theme: Landscape
 - Theme: Geology
 - Theme: Wildlife
 - Theme: Cultural Heritage
 - Theme: People
- Living in the National Park
- Having your say
 - Growing up in the National Park
 - Working in the National Park
 - Taking part in the National Park
- What we can do together
- Theme: Respect – Protect
 - Theme: Conserving the Peak District
 - Theme; Enjoying the Peak District
24. It is proposed that the Key Messages and associated themes be systematically used as a framework for communicating with groups of target audiences as identified below and that the messages form the drivers, alongside performance measures and targets for specific service delivery action plans.
25. It is also proposed that action plans be developed for specific target audiences (accepting that there may be some overlap between those audiences and that this would be reflected in the action plans). The proposed key target audience groups are:
- Young people (with a need to define more precisely whether these are residents, visitors or from surrounding areas, are in informal and formal education, in youth groups or defined as disadvantaged in some way)
 - Disadvantaged groups (including socially excluded because they have little access to information, finances, are in black and minority ethnic groups or who are disabled)
 - Residents (in the national park and neighbouring areas)
 - Recreational users/visitors (including interest groups, societies and individuals)
 - Businesses/land managers (includes quarries, land owners, tourism businesses)
 - Decision-makers (Local authorities/parish councils and meetings/the regions/Government)
26. Action Plans for the above target audience groups are being developed (and will be

reported to the appropriate Committee) that will include:

- A prioritisation mechanism applied to the individuals and groups within the above target audience headings in relation to the Authority's Corporate Priorities in relation to this report
- SMART objectives linked to the desired Outcomes
- A process of evaluation and review

Financial Considerations

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

Human Rights, Equalities and Health & Safety Issues

28. 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

29. 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)

30. Nil