

Date: 27 March 2007

Report: MONITORING OF THE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Purpose of the report

1. To propose arrangements for monitoring progress against the objectives of the updated National Park Management Plan.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

- ***Best Value Performance Plan objectives***

Review and update the National Park Management Plan (NPMP):

- put in place appropriate arrangements to monitor, record and publicise progress on the NPMP objectives, including through future 'State of the Park' reports.

Background

2. At its meeting on 28 November 2006 the National Park Authority resolved that: "the revised draft of the National Park Management Plan be adopted as the basis for publication and for further work with partner organisations to identify how the Plan objectives will be delivered and monitored."
3. The updated National Park Management Plan is now 'published' and will be sent to all of the 277 authorities and organisations that were consulted on the draft document. Copies will be available for Members at the meeting. The Plan will also have been placed on, and can be downloaded from, the Authority's website.
4. The published Plan is the product of more than eighteen months work that involved partners directly in its drafting. Members also agreed that a 'Steering Group' of key partners should oversee the process. The Group, which was established in July 2005, was made up of representatives of (what is now) Natural England, English Heritage, Yorkshire and Humber Government Office, and the Chairs of the three Local Strategic Partnerships, as well as the Authority (see **Annex**).

Proposed Monitoring Arrangements

5. A key element in updating the Plan was to provide clear and measurable objectives. The result is that 60 of the Plan's 70 objectives are now 'SMART'. For each of these, specific indicators can be identified which will allow progress to be measured. These indicators fall into two categories:
 - a. those that measure what the Authority and others are doing (e.g. area of new broadleaf woodland planted, length of rights of way made 'easy to use'). These are called 'output' indicators. They are relatively easy to collect and so can be updated each year.
 - b. those that measure whether the work of the Authority and others is making an overall difference to the state of the Park (e.g. the total area of broadleaved woodland; the percentage of rights of way that are 'easy to use'). These are called 'outcome' indicators. They are usually more difficult (time-consuming and/or expensive) to collect, and so are collected less frequently.
6. Identifying appropriate 'output' and/or 'outcome' indicators for each objective will enable monitoring to be kept simple – rather than trying to collate detailed action plans and progress reports each year from a host of different bodies.
7. In most cases, the indicator(s) will flow naturally from the wording of the objective. However, for some – notably the 10 objectives that are not 'SMART' — further work will need to be done with partners to try to identify appropriate measures.
8. In the meantime, the Authority is developing a 'National Park Management Plan/State of the Park' site within its website. This will eventually host the latest information on each indicator, allowing anyone to see what progress has been made on any of the objectives.
9. Data on indicators will be sourced both from within the Authority and from other organisations. Most of the information is already being collected. Officers will be using their existing contacts to make appropriate arrangements for the provision of any additional data.

Next steps

10. As with the drafting of the Plan, the monitoring of it will only be effective if it is shared by those bodies who have the main responsibility for implementing it. It is, therefore, proposed that the 'Steering Group' be re-convened and asked to oversee the monitoring arrangements. The Group would make a report back to the Authority on progress each year.
11. When the Steering Group was originally established, Members were keen that it should be kept to a manageable size and be made up only of organisations with a broad interest in the Authority's statutory purposes.

12. The rationale for a small Steering Group still stands. The establishment of Natural England – bringing together three organisations (English Nature, the Rural Development Service, and the Countryside Agency) that were all originally represented on the Steering Group — has reduced the group from ten to eight. As we move into the monitoring phase, it would make sense to bring in other bodies that will have a broad and significant role in delivering the NPMP objectives over the next five years. It is, therefore, proposed that the Group be expanded to include representatives of Cumbria and North Yorkshire County Councils, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

Conclusion

13. The success of the Plan depends on the work and co-operation of many agencies and organisations. As we shall be relying on some partners to supply updated information, there is a good case for involving those with a significant contribution to make to the Plan's implementation. As the Steering Group worked so well during preparation of the Plan, it is recommended that this body be given a continuing role. It would oversee the monitoring of the Plan, ensuring data is being supplied and assessing achievements against the objectives so that periodic reports can be made to the Authority and other agencies. Continuing to involve partners after the Plan's publication will strengthen the sense of joint ownership and the shared responsibility for delivering its objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

14. That the National Park Authority:

- i) notes the proposals for providing access to the National Park Management Plan and information on progress against the Plan's objectives on the Authority's website;
- ii) asks the National Park Management Plan Steering Group to reconvene to finalise and then oversee the development of an appropriate monitoring framework; and,
- iii) approves the list of bodies with a major role in delivering and monitoring the Management Plan who should be invited to sit on the Steering Group.

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5 March 2007

Background documents:

None

Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Steering Group

Current membership

English Heritage	Maddy Jago, Regional Director
Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber	Tim Godson, ESD Team Leader
Natural England	David Shaw, Area Manager (NY)
Craven Local Strategic Partnership	Carl Lis, Chairman
Richmondshire Local Strategic Partnership	Judith Bromfield, Chair
South Lakeland Local Strategic Partnership	Robert Straughton, Chairman
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	Jerry Pearlman, Vice Chairman David Butterworth, Chief Executive

Proposed Additional Organisations

Cumbria County Council

Environment Agency

Forestry Commission

North Yorkshire County Council