

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

26th SEPTEMBER 2006

'OUTDOORS FOR ALL?: DRAFT DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN'
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**Purpose of report**

To inform members about the YDNPA response to the defra consultation document, 'Outdoors for All?: Draft Diversity Action Plan'

Strategic Planning Framework

The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

- ***National Park Management Plan***

A&R Aim: Access and recreation in the National Park will be developed so that a wide range of people can enjoy the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales.
AR1 Support access by people with different abilities

U&E Aim: Everyone will be able to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the YDNP.
UE6 Make education and information more accessible to a wide range of people.

- ***Best Value Performance Plan***

Recreation Management, Aim: Develop access and recreation in the National Park so that a wide range of people can enjoy the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales.

Promoting Understanding, Objective 1: To provide accessible and high quality information and initiatives, and national curriculum related education activities and resources, that promote understanding and raise awareness of the opportunities the Yorkshire Dales National Park offers to target audiences (minority ethnic, urban, disabled and youth).

Background

Between 2002 and 2005 the Countryside Agency, carried out a Diversity Review on behalf of defra. The purpose of the review was to gather robust evidence about the needs of groups who are under-represented amongst visitors to the countryside, and the awareness of those needs by providers of recreational activities.

The main groups which are under-represented among national park visitors are: people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities, people from inner cities and young people.

As a result of this work, defra has drawn up a draft Action Plan, the objective of which is to increase the number of people from under-represented groups who take part in outdoor recreation, and increase their knowledge of where they can go and what they can do when they get there.

Given its position as a 'national resource' the NPA sees itself as particularly well placed to deliver the diversity agenda, along with the associated, emerging health and community cohesion initiatives. The NPA currently provides high quality recreational opportunities for target groups across the national park, through:

- a variety of activities which make direct contact with groups and communities;
- developments to the rights of way network and its associated infrastructure;
- work with partner organisations and local providers.

Current programmes involve working with a number of high profile national and local partners e.g. Beyond the Boundary (Countryside Agency, Diversity Review), Mosaic project (Council for National Parks), Dales Experience Programme (local partners), Learning in Limestone Country (English Nature, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Field Studies Council, Craven College).

Comments on the action plan have been received from NPA staff and members and collated in a formal YDNPA response to defra (attached). This document includes key points (highlighted), which have been supplied to the English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA), as a contribution to a collective response from English NPAs.

RECOMMENDATION

Members views are sought on the consultation response.

BILL WOOD
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION MANAGER

Background documents:

'Outdoors for All?: Draft Diversity Action Plan.' A Consultation Document. Defra May 2006.

Copies of the consultation document 'Outdoors for All?: Draft Diversity Action Plan' are available from:

- lesley.knevitt@yorkshiredales.org.uk tel. 01969 652326
- defra website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/outdoorsdiversity/draft-actionplan.pdf>

8th September 2006



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

**‘OUTDOORS FOR ALL?: DRAFT DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN.’
A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**RESPONSE OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY (YDNPA) FOR THE
AUTHORITY MEETING OF 26TH SEPTEMBER 2006**

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the ‘Outdoors for All?’ Draft Diversity Action Plan. The views offered here are those of NPA staff and members, based on substantial experience gained in delivering a wide range of high profile programmes and working across geographical and organisational boundaries.

Given its position as a ‘national resource’ the NPA sees itself as particularly well placed to deliver the diversity agenda, along with the associated, emerging health and community cohesion initiatives. The NPA provides high quality recreational opportunities for target groups across the national park, through: a variety of activities which make direct contact with groups and communities; developments to the rights of way network and its associated infrastructure; work with partner organisations and local providers. Current programmes involve working with a number of high profile national and local partners e.g. Beyond the Boundary (Countryside Agency), Mosaic project (Council for National Parks), Dales Experience Programme (local partners), Learning in Limestone Country (English Nature, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Field Studies Council, Craven College).

**Q1 Is this a vision that your organisation can subscribe to?
How can you help us to achieve it?**

The vision statement presented is one which the YDNPA wholeheartedly supports. The emphasis on making the ‘joys of the outdoors,’ in their very widest sense, accessible for ‘all groups in society’ and in particular to those from the under-represented groups identified in the review, is fundamental to the purposes for which national parks are established and is one which is embedded in YDNPA plans, strategies and programmes, for example.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan. ‘The Yorkshire Dales: Today and Tomorrow’ 2006 – 2011. (Consultation draft) Access and Recreation, aim:

‘Opportunities for access and recreation in the National Park will be developed so that as wide a social range of people as possible, with as wide a range of abilities as possible, can enjoy the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales and derive a sense of well being from their experiences.’

And principle:

- a) ‘People from every social group, and people of all abilities, should have opportunities to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.’

Best Value Performance Plan (2006 – 07), objective 1, section 4 states the overall objective of the NPA for promoting understanding activity in outreach (diversity) work:

'To provide accessible and high quality information and initiatives, and national curriculum related education activities and resources, that promote understanding and raise awareness of the opportunities the Yorkshire Dales National Park offers to target audiences (including minority ethnic, urban, disabled and youth).'

Q2 Are these outcomes realistic and are any missing?

The outcomes stated are highly desirable and while very challenging, they provide a useful framework for organisations to develop SMART targets.

The NPA particularly welcomes the emphasis on encouraging users from under-represented groups to 'confidently return for more' and especially, to support them to do so under their own direction.

It's worth noting specifically, that NPAs have only a limited role in the provision of "accessible affordable transport", ie no remit and no budget.

It's important to acknowledge 'the raising of awareness of opportunities among target groups' as an outcome is itself an important indicator of success. While increase in participation is likely to result from awareness raising, whether or not groups decide to make visits is in fact a much more complex issue. Awareness raising needs to be actively linked to work with groups and communities, in order to achieve desired increases in participation, while outcomes (and milestones) need to reflect this.

This raises the issue of the importance of a community development approach to much of the work. Experience is showing that awareness raising alone is increasingly seen as a simplistic approach, again activity needs to be linked with providing the means - cultural as well as practical - to make visits possible. Organisations must be alert to such emerging issues and able to respond constructively.

Perhaps the most important issue of all here is that experience is revealing that diversity work is still a learning experience for providers and in this sense, priorities are still emerging. We must be ready to accept that our existing views may not always match experience and be prepared and able to learn and adjust our activity accordingly.

It is important for NPAs to acknowledge that for many urban groups in particular, the best and most accessible countryside experiences may not involve national parks at all. This is an important consideration for NPAs when planning activity programmes and suggests that consideration be given to a 'hierarchy' of experiences for under-represented groups.

New audiences need to know how their behaviour as visitors impacts on the countryside. We wonder whether it's enough to leave this as implicit in, for example, the provision of appropriate information, and feel that there needs to be an explicit acknowledgement, appropriately framed, of the responsibility for care of the countryside, which accompanies access.

Q3 Are these objectives ones which your organisation can subscribe to and help deliver?

The YDNPA is very keen to subscribe to these objectives and to help deliver them.

Q4 Are these targets realistic and ones that your organisation is able to work towards, with others, to achieve?

We strongly support the intentions expressed in 1.3 and are currently investing significant resources in delivery and work with partners.

We have a limited role in the provision of "accessible affordable transport" No remit and no cash,

Q5 We do not think a quantified national target for the increase in under-represented groups is appropriate. Do you agree?

Should individual service providers set targets? If you are a service provider, what level of increase do you think it would be feasible to achieve?

Without targets - national, regional or local - service providers cannot gauge how much effort and resources are needed to address the issue sufficiently; they may spend too much or too little in relation to the issue.

It's critical for organisations to consider the diversity agenda in relation to the limited availability of resources and in relation to the priority an organisation places on diversity, as measured against its total responsibilities ('outreach' is currently rated priority B, on an A to E scale for the NPA).

We think that it is necessary to set local targets, in relation to regional and national expectations. We feel that a national target for increase is not appropriate in the case of national parks collectively, as the catchment area profiles are all very different.

Achieving the kind of 'sustained and measurable increase' referred to, requires a baseline to measure progress against, as well as an idea of what counts as a 'sustained and measurable increase', ie a target or several targets.

The idea of what counts as the outcome of 'sustained and measurable increase' is perhaps best indicated in the statement for organisations, on p30: 'We need to continue working so that the profile of management board members and staff of national, regional and local bodies across the sector reflects the diversity of the English population.' Perhaps we should be aiming for a similar position with regard to visitor profiles, while taking into account local and regional catchment population profiles.

Our experience is showing that there can be difficulties in monitoring progress towards targets set, for example, while a percentage increase year-on-year in levels of awareness among local populations, or in levels of participation might be reasonable, monitoring such small changes over short periods of time may be unrealistic, particularly given the resources available.

Q6 Do you think that the milestones are realistic and the timescales for change appropriate?

2, 5 and 10 year milestones are reasonable starting time scales and these can be modified in the light of experience if necessary.

While we welcome a national participation survey to provide data to underpin progress towards achieving action plan targets, there may be difficulties with the England Day Visits Survey (EDVS) in providing the data required for NPAs.

It is important to note that in terms of the proposed action plan even 10 years is not a particularly long time, given that the desired outcomes involve substantial cultural change in some cases, which is considerably more complicated to achieve than awareness raising or behaviour change.

A two year milestone that relates to increased visitor / awareness levels might prove unrealistic, early milestones would be better aimed towards training / service provision among providers.

Q7 What would be the best mechanism for keeping you up to date as the plan is implemented and reviewed?

We would welcome website based reporting, announced through email alerts as the most effective means of maintaining contact and consulting. Regional and national conferences need to be kept to a minimum.

Q8 Do you agree with these priorities for guidance and training?

It's important to include specific reference to 'boards and committees' (eg NPAs) among the key audiences (section 2.1.2) for training provision.

Attention must be given to providing different approaches for public, private and voluntary sector outdoor recreation service providers. The approach for the private sector is potentially considerably more challenging.

Regarding 'the provision of training and guidance are important tools', we feel the cascading of training will need very careful attention.

Ideas for provision to under-represented groups, require clear views on how they can become 'customers' and on what kind of service provision they will respond to, we feel that further research is needed in this area.

Regarding evidence gathering, a standard for evaluation is needed to give data which is comparable and useful nationwide and over time, ie set questions, common methodology, etc

We believe there is a need for the tourism industry as a whole to embrace the idea of seeing diversity target groups as potential new business, rather than as 'economically disadvantaged groups', this way tourism businesses are more likely to engage. There is a strong role to develop here with Area Tourism Partnerships, Regional Tourism Boards and Regional Development Agencies in particular.

Q9 Do you have a preference for how these are delivered?

'A major information campaign and programme of events,' would have greatest impact if coordinated at a national level, presumably by Natural England. This would require clear definition of the roles of major statutory agencies and of regional and local agencies in delivering initiatives. A nationally funded training programme would be a good incentive for involvement.

While we accept the need to review the format and distribution of existing materials and to avoid large, unwieldy documents and to distribute materials electronically, we feel there is a need to prepare and distribute national guidance quickly.

Q10 Can we link this work to existing training or guidance in this area?

It may be possible to provide diversity training as a module in business related training, by linking training for local landowners, land managers and local businesses, to business, customer or economic development training. We believe that this is more likely to increase the likelihood of uptake and to avoid a situation in which we only engage, with those who are most likely to engage.

Q11 Are there any further activities that would help embed diversity and equality principles?

The complexities of cultural change needed to deliver the diversity agenda, need to be strongly emphasised through the plans identified.

Q12 Is it practical for existing forums to assist and develop the diversity agenda? Which ones do you consider to be potentially the most effective?

With appropriate support and development there is considerable scope for building the diversity agenda into existing local forums and partnerships, as wide ranging as the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF), the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) in particular, the Rural Museums Network and Dales Heritage Forum for example. All of these can potentially contribute to delivering the action plan through involvement in training, facilities development, etc.

There is a key role here for Local Access Forums, drawing on 'an active pool of informed, engaged and able people from diverse backgrounds'. The Yorkshire Dales Access Forum is fully supportive of the diversity agenda and while it feels it lacks the time and experience to deliver, there are existing organisations with which to develop strong links, which have more relevant expertise to draw upon.

Some existing groups may need additional work to enable them to understand the value of embracing the diversity agenda. For example, the focus of the ATP on tourism business development, requires a shift to enable the partnership to view diversity target groups appropriately, as realistic business opportunities.

Q13 Are new types of forum needed, at what level should they be created and how would they work?

Ideally, it is better to encourage existing forums to include the diversity agenda, by making them more diverse if necessary and linking them with appropriate expertise.

Q14 What other types of information might target groups find helpful? Are there other formats in which it could be presented?

The NPA strongly agrees with the intentions expressed.

Baseline data, related to information available for targeting of specific groups is needed to facilitate informed decision making based on research findings rather than on subjective judgements about the needs of target groups.

Research suggests that 'face to face' and 'word of mouth' promotion are particularly effective, but unfortunately can be very costly.

The NPA has produced a DVD 'Yours to Explore', as part of the 'Beyond the Boundary' project which is producing encouraging results.

There is a need to mention web based information provision specifically.

The issue of cost makes much of this work prohibitively expensive for small organisations. In particular we would like to see activity aimed at creative and cheap solutions and producing information in many different formats to suit a variety of needs.

Q15 What assistance or guidance would your organisation need to develop or improve its own marketing information to under-represented groups?

Guidelines provided by representatives of key target groups, developed nationally, for application locally would prove invaluable. A good example of this approach might be that if reading and format of publications are issues, then own language providers could be used and a national telephone call centre approach could be considered.

Q16 Do you agree that there is a need to improve the baseline data on participation in outdoor recreation?

There is a need to improve baseline data on participation in outdoor recreation for all diversity target groups. It is strongly recommended that this is done as extensively as possible at a national level.

While we welcome the suggestion to '... make use of this information to publish an annual report of aggregated evidence gathered from effective project evaluations' we would hope this would be kept to a minimum, to enable available resources to be targeted at raising awareness, enabling providers to work more effectively at increasing participation.

**Q17 Does your organisation collect data on visitors and/or the awareness of provision by under-represented groups?
If so, in what form?**

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Awareness and Understanding in Keighley and Bradford Report. Dec. 2004.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Visitor Survey: Key Findings Report. June 2004.

North York Moors National Park Authority and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Awareness Research. May 2003.

Q18 Should the Action Plan be extended to cover carers for the elderly and children and young people in inner cities?

The elderly and their carers are the group with no explicit connection to existing target groups, even though they are represented among them. It's particularly important to ensure that awareness is raised amongst carers specifically, as they may often be the decision makers for the elderly for example.

Q19 What should the priorities for any further research be?

Identifying needs of target groups and gaps in provision for them. These needs must be researched and clearly identified, to provide a sound base for provision.

'To provide the initial support needed by under-represented groups to acquire a 'taste' for outdoor recreation' isn't necessarily the difficult bit: identifying ways of getting groups to engage and then supporting them to do it themselves may be where the real research and effort is needed.

Ascertaining which marketing activities work best, for which groups, in which locations, etc.

Defining and monitoring 'a sustainable and measurable increase' in awareness and participation.

Q20 Which existing funding programmes do you consider to be the most relevant for helping deliver the diversity agenda?

The principal existing programmes are the BIG Lottery Fund, 'Well-being' and 'Changing Spaces' in particular.

Actions would benefit from the existence of a simple, easily accessible funding stream, along the lines of the National Park Authorities 'Sustainable Development Fund', which is ring fenced for specific actions aimed at delivering the diversity agenda. Such a fund would benefit from being accessible to land owners and managers as well as statutory bodies. The Council for National Parks has recently bid to the Dept. for Transport to establish a Sustainable Travel Fund for just this type of provision within national parks. Such a fund would provide a major boost for our diversity work.

There is some potential for linking existing initiatives, for example, farm diversification grants with the diversity agenda.

Q21 What should the priorities be for spending in this area?

Facilitating initial contact with the natural environment - transport costs, leaders, entry costs, etc.

Sign-posting organisations / individuals to other information sources and publications.

Training for group leaders / visit organisers.

Identifying and providing support information for target groups.

Marketing / promotion materials and campaigns.

Infrastructure improvements to make routes / sites more accessible / appealing.

Features to support site based activities, eg. fishing platforms, specialist equipment hire facilities, etc.

Q22 Does your organisation have specific targets for diversity and do they cover access to outdoor recreation as a service?

YDNPA targets for outreach work are included in: Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan. 'The Yorkshire Dales: Today and Tomorrow' 2006 – 2011. (Consultation draft).

Access and Recreation.

AR6. Increase use of sustainable transport modes for leisure and everyday life within the Park by working through suitable partnerships to ensure that by 2020:

- a) the main visitor locations in the Dales are accessible from their main catchments between Easter and October on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays, and
- b) the key corridors in the Dales have access, all year, to key settlements providing essential services between Monday and Saturday;
- c) bus journeys are operated by low floor vehicles to and within the Dales;

AR7. Increase the accessibility of the Park to users of all abilities so that by 2010 at least 10 km (0.5%) of rights of way are fully accessible by wheelchair users and 105 km (5%) by those with limited mobility.

Understanding and Enjoyment.

UE1. Make education and information about the Yorkshire Dales National Park easily accessible and relevant to a diverse range of groups and individuals, focusing on the urban areas of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Teesside that surround it:

- a) increase visitor diversity from 1% of visitors being from black and ethnic minority communities in 2005 to 2% by 2011;
- b) increase the percentage of residents in Keighley and Bradford who are aware of the Park from 25% in 2005 to 30% by 2011;
- c) increase the percentage of residents in Teesside and the Vale of York who are aware of the Park from 34% in 2003 to 37% by 2009.

Q23 Where would the introduction of new diversity targets make most impact?

The identification of targets for awareness and participation for all diversity target groups, which are related to national, regional and local profiles would prove invaluable.

Targets for provision of facilities and infrastructure.

As far as possible, we would recommend that these be built into existing targets.

Q24 Are champions needed?

Champions are essential in organisations to action the commitment and mobilise the resources needed to transform good intentions into practical achievements. We are currently a partner in the national Mosaic Partnership which is using this approach to raise awareness and increase participation amongst BME communities. While it is still in the early stages, the approach does appear to be bringing tangible benefits and will be fully evaluated by the end of 2008.

The YDNPA has established a cross-organisation, Outreach Working Group, to identify cross-cutting themes, pool expertise and maximise benefit from resources. This group will be linked with the Equalities Working Group, working towards achieving the Equalities Standard.

Q25 Does your organisation have a diversity champion that we could keep in touch with during the delivery of this plan?

If not, are there any barriers to identifying such a person for us to work with?

The Outreach and Education Manager (Bill Wood) is the YDNPA staff outreach champion and Steve Macaré is the member champion for promoting understanding (including outreach).

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED PARTIAL REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (Annex 2)

Q1 Do you agree with the rationale for Government intervention (para 1.3.1)?

The YDNPA strongly agrees with the rationale for government intervention; countryside access belongs to everyone, as does the support to enable everyone to enjoy it.

Q2 Do you consider there are other options the Government should consider for implementing the Action Plan (para 1.5)?

Option 3 (para. 1.5) is strongly preferred.

Q3 Which of the options do you prefer, and why (para 1.5)?

Option 3 (para. 1.5) 'Develop the Action Plan for national application' is strongly preferred. There is a need to avoid the risk of losing the cohesion and inclusiveness which has been a strong feature of the diversity review, added to which, the review is already testing effectiveness of various interventions, lessons learned from these will feed the consultation process and the resulting amended action plan.

Q4 Are you aware of any existing research or other data that would help us to quantify the costs and benefits of the Action Plan (para 1.6)?

None identified.

Q5 Have we missed any qualitative benefits of the Plan (para 1.6.2)?

No omissions identified.

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