

Date: 29 September 2009

Report: POSITION STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To seek Members' approval of a position statement on climate change for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

### **Strategic Planning Framework**

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

- ***Corporate Plan objectives***

Plan and manage all aspects of the Authority's business so as to make the most effective use of our resources and consistently reduce the environmental impact of the Authority's own projects and operations:

- work towards the Authority becoming 'Carbon Neutral' by 2012, including reducing CO2 emissions by 15% by 2009 (compared to 2005/6 levels);
- by 2009, assess the most likely impacts of climate change on the National Park over the next 40 years, and use this to produce an adaptation plan for managing those impacts.

### **Background**

3. In May 2009, the Authority's internal Climate Change Working Group considered a paper that identified the Authority's key messages on climate change and how we should communicate them.
4. As well as explaining what the Authority was doing to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change in the National Park, the group also felt that we should:
  - explain the important role national parks can play as 'caretakers for the nation' (with particular regard to woodland and peatland as carbon stores);
  - illustrate how the Authority can act as a conduit for advice and information from expert sources;
  - do more to showcase good practice - case studies of what others are doing locally as well as the Authority itself becoming an exemplar.

5. The following 'headlines' were identified to guide these messages:
  - Climate change is everyone's problem
  - Treasure your national parks – they are yours and they are fragile
  - Caretakers for the nation – if we look after national parks, they will look after us
  - Little things can have a big impact
  - We all have a part to play.
6. As part of the discussion, the group felt that there was a need to formally state the Authority's position on climate change as this had not been done to date. Such a document would not conflict with ENPAA's position statement as this identifies what national park authorities are doing practically, whereas our proposed position statement attempts to set out this Authority's philosophy and beliefs in relation to climate change.
7. The position statement, shown on the attached **ANNEX**, was recently discussed along with our key messages at SMT. Members' approval of the document is now sought.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

8. That a position statement on climate change be formally ratified by Members.

**Sarah Nicholson**  
**Communications Officer**

10 September 2009

## THE AUTHORITY'S POSITION STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today. Rising global temperatures will bring changes in weather patterns, higher sea levels, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather. For the UK it will mean hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters.

The Authority believes that climate change, however it is caused, will have the biggest single impact on the state of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in coming years.

The special qualities of the National Park makes it a national treasure in its own right, but it can also be of significant benefit to the nation in tackling the effects of climate change as an absorber of carbon through its trees, soils and peatland.

We need to adapt and be adaptable as science develops concerning the best way to tackle climate change and manage our resources.

We have a long way to go in both adapting to the impact of climate change and changing our own behaviour to help reduce the impact on the environment.

We can all learn from others and use our influence and resources to spread the word about what works and what doesn't.