

Date: 29 September 2009

Report: THE PRIORITISATION OF NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY WORK PROGRAMMES 2010/11

Purpose of the report

1. To inform members of the work carried out as part of the fundamental review of the prioritisation of the Authority's work programmes; and to seek approval for the revised prioritised list of programmes for 2010/11.

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**
Objective 21 Ensure a robust and accountable Performance Management Framework is in place and is driving improvement.
 - **Corporate Plan Targets**
Action 171 Carry out a fundamental review of the Authority's priorities.

Background

3. Establishing a robust system of prioritising the Authority's work programmes has become an integral and important part of our business planning. It is important that we identify those areas of work that are most important to us to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and that staff, partners and stakeholders are clear about where we will be directing our efforts. The impending and expected public finances spending squeeze will make this work all the more relevant in the near future.
4. The Authority first set out its 'priorities' in September 2003. This followed a detailed evaluation of all the main areas of the Authority's work (the 'programmes') using a model developed by a Member/officer working group. The model assessed each programme against a range of criteria including not only the two national park purposes but also wider factors such as socio-economic benefits, stakeholder support and the contribution to the work of other bodies. The results of this evaluation were then taken into account by Members in setting the Authority's priorities.

5. As part of this work the following basic principles were agreed:
- 'Budget programmes' form the basic means of identifying programmes of work
 - The evaluation system is robust
 - Core services (e.g. IT, personnel, finance) lie outside the prioritisation process
 - The number of programmes is about right (40)
 - If we change programmes we change the budget heads to match
 - The programmes encompass everything we do that isn't covered by core services
 - We include statutory functions (e.g. development control) and areas of work that are externally funded.
 - When moving programmes within the priority list the rule is 'one up – one down' so that the numbers in each category remain the same. This brings a necessary discipline to the process.
6. In 2006 a fundamental review of how we prioritise our work programmes took place. Some minor changes to the evaluation system were introduced (e.g. increasing the percentage of the overall 'score' attributable to National Park purposes), and the presentation of the list of priorities was amended from a straightforward A, B, C, D, E list into three categories:
- 1. priority programmes (the A's)**
 - 2. programmes where we will maintain a good level of service and/or make steady improvements (the B's and C's)**
 - 3. programmes where progress will be limited and/or dependant on external funding (the D's and E's).**
7. The Authority also agreed that 'light touch' reviews should be carried out each year and a more fundamental review every third year. Light touch reviews were subsequently carried out for 2008/09 and 2009/10 work programmes and this fundamental review was scheduled for 2009 in order to prioritise the work programmes for 2010/11 onwards. The current prioritised list of work programmes is at **Annex A**.

The evaluation process

8. The Authority's approach to setting and reviewing its priorities is now well established and has become embedded within the culture of the organisation with members and staff. It is also widely understood by external bodies. The Authority was rated as being 'strong' on setting priorities as part of the National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA) assessment in 2005.
9. As a starting point for this review, the Senior Management Team (SMT) considered and adopted some minor amendments to the evaluation sheet and proposed the deletion of some programmes and the addition of new ones. These changes were initially discussed at a meeting attended by the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

Determining the Authority's priorities

10. The evaluation process is intended to give an indication of the relative contribution made by different types of Authority activity. As such, the results produced are neither wholly scientific nor infallible. While it takes account of a range of factors, it does not attempt to factor in the 'political' dimension that Members could, and rightly should, bring to any consideration of priorities. Rather, Members should use the results to inform their consideration of whether the Authority should change its current priorities.
11. The results of the evaluation process were considered by Members at the Policy Development Forum (PDF) meeting on 9 July. Members debated the additions and deletions of the programmes and proposed some additional changes to the list. The programmes proposed for deletion and addition is at **Annex B**.
12. Members then split into three groups to consider the programmes in detail. There was a wide-ranging debate as to what the priorities for the National Park Authority should be. There were many programmes on which there was general consensus amongst Members as to their relative priority, as well as some on which Members had widely diverging views. However, Members were able to reach a consensus, and the outcome of the debate resulted in there being 36 programmes, 5 in the Priority category, 16 in the second 'good progress' category and 15 in the third 'limited progress' category. In doing this members identified programmes within the lower categories that it might be sensible to 'move up' to better balance the priority list and asked officers to consider this after the meeting. **Annex C** shows the draft list following the Policy Development Forum, the shaded programmes being those that members considered could be 'moved up'.
13. Following the Policy Development Forum, SMT considered the list further and agreed that, in order to provide better balance between the different categories, and comply with a current principle, it would be beneficial to adjust the numbers in the categories. The results of this adjustment and the list of priorities for 2010/2011 are at **Annex D**, whilst **Annex E** provides members with a description of each programme.

Conclusion

14. The Authority's approach to prioritising its work programmes has made a tangible difference to the way in which we deliver our services. Setting new priorities — taking account of the fundamental re-evaluation of all the Authority's programmes — will build on the progress made and provide a clear direction for the future work of the Authority and assist in the allocation of resources.

RECOMMENDATION

15. It is recommended that Members:

Approve the prioritisation of the Authority's work programmes for 2010/11, as the basis for preparing the Authority's 2010/11 budget and Corporate Plan;

Jon Avison
Deputy Chief Executive

6 August 2009

Background documents: None

CURRENT YDNPA PRIORITIES (2009/10)**Priority Programmes**

Biodiversity	Farm Conservation	Sustainable Development Fund
Climate Change	Green Lanes	Web-based Services
Development Control	Rights of Way	

Programmes where we will maintain a good level of service and/or make steady improvements

Archaeology	Building Conservation
Enforcement	Communications
Outreach	Countryside Skills and Training
Recreational Activities	Definitive Map
Sustainable Tourism	Education
Trees and Woodlands	Planning Policy
Volunteers	State of the Park
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust	Toilets

Programmes where progress will be limited and/or dependent on external funding

Access for all'	Branding
Cultural Heritage	Car Parks
Geodiversity	Events
Historic Environment Record	National Park Management Plan
Landscape Policy and Advice	Pennine Bridleway
National Park Centres	Public Transport
Open Access	Retail
Park Information Points	Traffic Management

PROGRAMME CHANGES PROPOSED AT PDF FOR 2010/11

Deletions

1. Historic Environment Record

This is now established and can be accommodated within Archaeology.

2. Landscape Policy and Advice

Landscape Conservation Officer now in post and providing in house landscape advice.

Additions

1. Climate Change

A new programme of incorporating the Peatland Project, Trees and Woodland and Renewable Energy.

2. Environmental Footprint

The actions the Authority is taking to reduce its own carbon footprint, e.g. Wood fuel boiler at Colvend.

Changes

1. Cultural Heritage changed to **DCM**

To highlight current activity and proposals for DCM as the current plans for the development of DCM merit it being the focus of the programme and DCM encompasses the Authority's cultural heritage activity anyway.

2. Development Control and **Enforcement** be combined following the restructuring of the Planning Department.

3. Access For All to be incorporated into **Rights of Way**

YDNPA PRIORITY LIST AFTER PDF ON 9TH JULY 09**Priority Programmes**

Biodiversity

Farm Conservation

Rights of Way (Incorporating Access for All)

Building Conservation

Climate Change (incorporating Renewable Energy / Trees & Woodlands / Yorkshire Peat Partnership)

Programmes where we will maintain a good level of service and / or make steady improvements**Sustainable Tourism****Recreational Activities**

DCM

Development Control / Enforcement

Green Lanes

Planning Policy

Volunteers

YDMT

Sustainable Development Fund

Archaeology

Communications

Countryside Skills & Training

National Park Centres

Outreach

Toilets

Web-based Services

Programmes where progress will be limited and / or dependant on external funding**Definitive Map**

Branding

Car Parks

Education

Geodiversity

National Park Management Plan

Open Access

Retail

Public Transport

Events

Pennine Bridleway

Environmental Footprint

Park Information Points

State of the Park

Traffic Management

PROPOSED YDNPA PRIORITIES FOR 2010/11

Priority Programmes

Biodiversity

Farm Conservation

Rights of Way (Incorporating Access for All)

Building Conservation

Climate Change (incorporating Renewable Energy / Trees & Woodlands / Yorkshire Peat Partnership)

Sustainable Tourism

Recreational Activities

Programmes where we will maintain a good level of service and / or make steady improvements

DCM

Development Control / Enforcement

Green Lanes

Planning Policy

Volunteers

YDMT

Sustainable Development Fund

Archaeology

Communication

Countryside Skills & Training

National Park Centres

Outreach

Toilets

Web-based Services

Programmes where progress will be limited and / or dependant on external funding

Definitive Map

Branding

Car Parks

Education

Geodiversity

National Park Management Plan

Open Access

Retail

Public Transport

Events

Pennine Bridleway

Environmental Footprint

Park Information Points

State of the Park

Traffic Management

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTIONS

ARCHAEOLOGY

- Action to preserve historic buildings and structures that are neglected because they are of no economic value or have uncertain ownership;
- Research to improve knowledge of the historic environment, and help local people and visitors to realise and appreciate its value and interest (e.g. archaeology day school);
- Monitor the condition of the NP's most important historic sites and features;
- Respond to wide range of statutory and non-statutory consultations.
- Maintenance and enhancement of the publicly-accessible Historic Environment Record.

BIODIVERSITY

- Produce, co-ordinate and monitor the Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Implement Habitat and Species Action Plans;
- Rolling programme of habitat surveys across the Park;
- Species monitoring and research projects;
- Support for 'Hay Time' project to restore degraded hay meadows;
- Develop community/volunteer involvement in Local Nature Reserves.

'BRANDING'

- Develop a strong and consistent 'brand' for the National Park to support Park purposes, including integration of 'Britain's Breathing Spaces' and YTB brand research;
- Promotional activity to showcase different facets of the Park so as to change perceptions about the National Park amongst target audiences;
- Develop opportunities to support local products (e.g. 'Limestone Country' beef) that make a strong contribution to national park purposes.

BUILDING CONSERVATION

- Advise on significant applications for Listed Building consent;
- Action to conserve Listed Buildings that are 'at risk';
- Raise awareness of built heritage, and help people to realise and appreciate its value;
- Monitor the condition of the NP's listed buildings and other important built features;
- Appraise, designate and produce management plans for Conservation Areas;
- Provide detailed advice and assistance to Natural England to help deliver funding for works to restore traditional field barns through agri-environment schemes.

CAR PARKS

- Ticket machine provision, management and cash collection;
- Rates;
- Repair and maintenance works.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Develop, facilitate and fund new native woodland planting and management schemes (working with Forestry Commission, YDMT and others);
- Support woodland management, training and product initiatives through Yorwoods;
- Protect important amenity trees and hedgerows, and manage the Authority's own trees and woodlands;
- Provide advice and funding to support the development of appropriate renewable energy schemes within the National Park.
- Work with partners across the region through the Yorkshire Peat Partnership to deliver a programme of capital works to restore around 15,000 ha of degraded peat within the Park.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Provide interpretative materials at important sites in the National Park and in National Park Centres;
- Facilitate and support production of high quality interpretation by other organisations and individuals;
- Produce a range of publications that inform people and promote understanding of the National Park;
- Attend a range of shows and exhibitions in and beyond the National Park.

COUNTRYSIDE SKILLS AND TRAINING

- Support for initiatives that develop traditional rural skills;
- Provide practical apprenticeship placements within the Authority's Ranger Service.

DCM

- Run the Dales Countryside Museum and manage the collection of cultural heritage artefacts;
- Develop and enhance the cultural heritage and traditions within the National Park;
- Enhance the opportunities for both visitors and local communities to understand and enjoy the arts, folklore, music and traditions of the National Park.
- Provide relevant outreach and education activities at DCM and use the collection as a basis for further learning work at venues across the region.

DEFINITIVE MAP

- Make Modification Orders to change the Definitive Map;
- Divert footpaths or bridleways, and enter into creation agreement and orders where appropriate;
- Temporary closures of rights of way (e.g. for health and safety reasons);
- Keep a public register of RoW modification and path order applications;
- Digitise the current 3 Definitive Maps to create a single digital Definitive Map for the Park.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL / ENFORCEMENT

- Provide pre-application advice and assistance to the public;
- Deal with all planning applications and appeals;
- Carry out Land Charge Searches;
- Advise, guide and monitor the development of mineral working and quarries;
- Comment on major applications for development close to the Park.
- Monitor development and investigate complaints to ensure compliance with planning control.

EDUCATION

- Provide a range of education programmes and resources;
- Contribute to the sustainable development education agenda regionally and nationally.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

- Manage the Authority's own operations to minimise the environmental impact and the potential damage that they may cause, by developing and investing in projects that will achieve this aim.
- Comply with the Authority's obligations under National Performance Indicator 185 to monitor and set targets for the reduction of CO2 emissions from these operations.

EVENTS

- Organise an annual programme of events (e.g. guided walks) for the public.

FARM CONSERVATION

- Prepare Farm Environment Plans for farmers wishing to enter Environmental Stewardship Scheme;
- Provide a range of environmental advice/assistance to farm businesses;
- Advise and support DEFRA in dealing with grant applications under the national agri-environment schemes
- Deliver a programme of advice and grants to farmers in targeted areas as part of the 'Catchment Sensitive Farming' initiative;

GEODIVERSITY

- Raise awareness of the geodiversity of the Park;
- Develop a local geodiversity action plan.
- Carry out works to protect and enhance regionally important sites.

GREEN LANES

- Gather evidence and make Traffic Regulation Orders;
- Carry out works to specific routes, as part of the management of those routes;
- Liaise through the Yorkshire Dales green lane advisory group;
- Provide information and advice to clarify users' responsibilities (e.g. signing and NERC Act).

NATIONAL PARK CENTRES

- Provide tourist information, retail services, advice and information on the National Park;
- Promote local services;
- Contribute to the running costs of 'partnership centres';
- Rates, maintenance etc for buildings.

NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Develop, monitor and review progress in implementing the National Park Management Plan;
- Production of National Park Management Plan.

OPEN ACCESS

- Determine applications for restrictions and exclusions to 'open access' areas;
- Positive visitor management in relation to nature conservation, land management and wardening;
- Physical works to enhance access to, and within, 'open access' areas.

OUTREACH

- Engage with new audiences, notably minority ethnic communities (e.g. 'Mosaic partnership')
- Programme of outreach activities targeted on specific groups;
- Raise awareness of the Park amongst residents of surrounding urban areas.

PARK INFORMATION POINTS

- Maintain a network of Information Points inside and beyond the National Park boundary.

PENNINE BRIDLEWAY

- Carry out a programme of works to implement the new national trail through the Park.

PLANNING POLICY

- Prepare and review the Local Development Framework;
- Represent the Authority's interests in shaping Regional planning policy;
- Facilitate the delivery of affordable housing.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Assist the provision of innovative public transport services;
- Liaise with providers and users through the Sustainable Travel partnership;
- Provide public transport information for users.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Promote responsible use through specific information 'campaigns' for different activities, and liaison with local communities, clubs, and user groups;
- Monitor and audit activities: to manage their impact and safeguard the National Park;
- Encourage visitors and residents to get more 'active' while enjoying the National Park (e.g. cycling);
- Increase opportunities for any activities based on the special qualities of the Park and where there is a recognised need (e.g. canoeing);
- Large scale events (e.g. 'Three Peaks', cyclo-cross, fell races and sponsored walks).
- Provide the secretariat for the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

RETAIL

- Market, sell and wholesale to local retail outlets a range of products, including appropriate local products, which promote the National Park and local skills.

RIGHTS OF WAY

- Carry out works to maintain and enhance rights of way;
- Bridges; construction, maintenance and structural surveys;
- Liaise with landowners, parish councils, and users groups on rights of way matters;
- Remove physical obstructions.
- Works to the surfaces of rights of way and the provision of more accessible stiles and gates etc;
- Improve other recreation opportunities for disabled people;
- Information about accessibility in the National Park.

STATE OF THE PARK

- Monitor progress on the objectives set out in the National Park Management Plan;
- Co-ordinate and produce the 'State of the Park Report';
- Analyse and distribute data from other bodies (e.g. 2001 Census).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

- Support projects that contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the Dales.
- Support the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme to assist community regeneration projects.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- Work through the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership to promote appropriate tourism and tourism services;
- Assist in the implementation of the Tourism Partnership's Action plan and the development of tourist markets for local products;
- Encourage public support for local businesses, products and services that contribute to sustainable development.

TOILETS

- Maintain and clean public conveniences.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- Contribute to Local Transport Plan development and implementation;
- Influence the design and signage of traffic management schemes and traffic flow through and within the Park by responding to consultations and traffic management strategies.

VOLUNTEERS

- Promote and manage volunteering opportunities with the Authority;
- Training, conferences, travel expenses, and clothing for core 'Dales Volunteers';
- Provide work placements.

WEB-BASED SERVICES

- Maintain and develop the range of information provided through the Authority's website;
- Develop the range of Authority services to the public that can be provided electronically through the website, including through Geographical Information Services.

YORKSHIRE DALES MILLENNIUM TRUST

- Support the running costs of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust;
- Identify and develop funding opportunities and projects.