



# Corporate Plan

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**2012 - 2013**

The Corporate Plan identifies the performance of the Authority in the previous years and identifies priorities for the current year 2012/13.

These key actions are matched against our ability to deliver and are cascaded into team and individual staff programmes of work.

June 2012

## Our Values

**In Northumberland National Park Authority our corporate values are:**

- Respect for each other
- Equality
- Collaborative and supportive working
- Trust and empowerment
- Communicating and Acting
- Strong, clear and inspiring leadership

## Our Culture

**In order to address these values and to achieve its aims the Authority will adopt a culture which:**

- Is open to and embraces change
- Actively supports personal and organisational learning and development
- Values innovation and achievement over systems
- Recognises and celebrates individual and team achievements
- Learns from what we do within a “no blame” culture, with performance management and review contributing positively to our learning
- Has open and honest communications where information is freely shared, feedback given and actions explained
- Where non-adherence to our Culture and Values is challenged and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated

## Statutory Purposes and Duty

**The role of the National Park Authority is clearly defined in our two statutory purposes which are to:**

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

**In pursuing these purposes, we are also required to:**

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

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## Section 1. Executive Summary

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### Organisational Change

In December 2010 Northumberland National Park Authority was informed by Defra (the Authority's sponsoring government department) that its budget would be cut by 33% in real terms over the next four financial years. As the Authority has limited opportunities or capital assets on which to develop dependable income generation from year to year, the Authority committed itself to a wholesale reassessment of the organisation with most of the necessary staffing changes and budget cuts to be implemented in the first financial year 2011/12.

The Organisational Change programme required dramatic changes including:

- Reduction in senior managers from 8 to 4;
- 50% cut in corporate administration staff, and;
- 30% cut to most front-line services such as rangers and farm advisers.

In 2011/12 the number of staff employed by the National Park Authority fell 25% from 81.5 full-time equivalent posts to 60.8, the lowest staff level for over ten years. Going forward expectations built-up over the last 15 years of what the Authority can deliver need to be managed to lower levels. Thus the Authority will use this Corporate Plan to carefully prioritise as we are no longer able to maintain previous performance in all areas.

### Budget Cuts and Savings

Organisation change has reduced the cost of staff as a proportion of the core Defra funding from 89% to 66% over the last 12 months. Other budget and ongoing efficiency savings were made in 2011/12, over and above the budget targets set, most notably:

- £10,000 from improved treasury management;
- £35,000 from adopting pool cars and other initiatives (e.g. video conference meetings) as part of the Green Travel Policy and more energy efficient buildings;
- £15,000 in revised telecoms and photocopying contracts;
- £4,000 on external audit fees;
- £3,000 on cost of operating the Joint Local Access Forum; and
- £2,000 by sharing premises with the National Trust.

The following significant budget cuts were embedded in 2011/12:

- £25,000 in community grants via the Action Area approach;
- £50,000 in the Sustainable Development Fund for businesses and communities; and
- £11,000 in rights of way materials.

A market testing exercise for all bought-in professional services was undertaken in the final quarter of the year, in addition the Chief Financial Officer role was fully internalised, generating ongoing budget savings of £28,000 per annum from 2012/13 onwards.

In 2011/12 the National Park Authority struggled to make progress with generation of additional income as visitor numbers and visitor spend fell at the visitor centres; car park income dropped; and there was a lack of interest in renting office space at the Authority's head office. Whilst in light of this, income targets have been reduced going forward the Authority still requires a step change improvement in income generation in order to create a balanced budget by 2014.

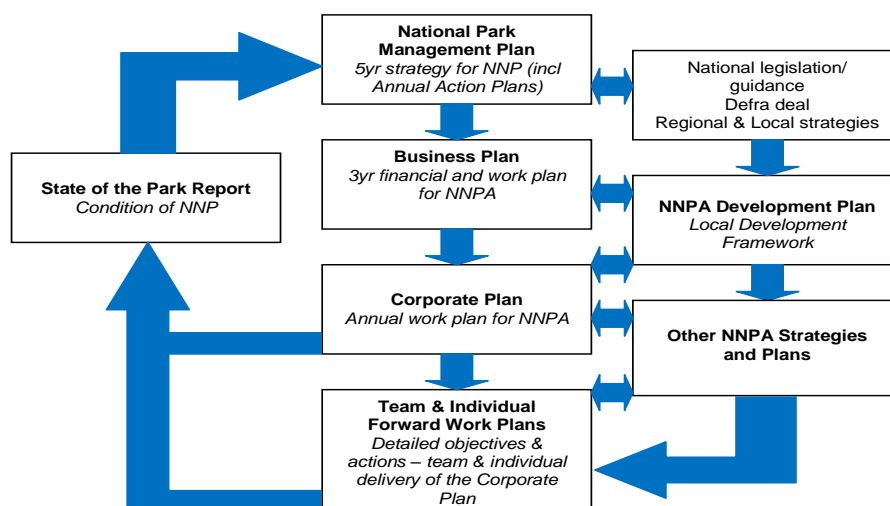
As a result of front-loading budget cuts and receiving funds from the Treasury to part finance the costs of redundancy, the budget plan is balanced over the next three years. However, the ongoing planned expenditure in 2014/15 remains greater than estimated levels of income.

## Governance

In 2010 Defra initiated a review of governance arrangements for English national parks. This exercise was originally intended to conclude in April 2011. In 2011/12 the Authority undertook a review and redesign of its own governance arrangements. From April 2012 the Authority is now operating more cost effective and streamlined governance arrangements. The Authority awaits the conclusion of a further Defra consultation which may introduce further change to the governance arrangements in 2013.

## Medium Term Business Plan

In October 2012, the Authority will hold a Policy Conference to determine its priorities and investment strategy for the next Business Plan covering the period 2013 to 2016. The diagram below explains how the three-year Business Plan and the annual Corporate Plan form core elements of the Authority's planning and performance management framework and help guide the day to day work of the Authority.



## Risk Management

The identified primary risks to the effective delivery of this 2012/13 Corporate Plan are:

- The Sill Landscape Centre: loss of opportunity to invest £10m in new visitor facilities;
- The Authority becomes financial unstable as it fails to meet income generation targets and/or further budget cuts are required by Defra;
- The Authority's reputation is damaged by failure to adhere to good governance practice; and
- Ineffective partnership working resulting in poor delivery of the National Park Management Plan.

The Authority will receive quarterly reports on the active management of these risks.

## Our Performance – Delivery Against Plan

As a result of the significant reductions in staffing during the year we were only able to complete two-thirds of the planned actions in the 2011/12 Corporate Plan. As a result we have set a more realistic future work programme with more focussed attention to the prioritised actions.

	Status of 2011/12 actions			
	Substantially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	
Aim 1	13	3	2	
Aim 2	10	3	3	
Aim 3	10	3	2	
Aim 4	6	2	3	
Aim 5	5	2	0	
Aim 6	8	3	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Total as a %</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### We performed strongly in:

- Successful submission of a funding bid for 'The Sill' Wild Landscape Centre;
- 26% reduction in our carbon footprint in the year and a 39% reduction since the baseline year of 2008/09;
- High overall visitor satisfaction with Northumberland National Park's services;
- Steady progress in improving the rights of way network by targeting preventative maintenance resulting in usability increasing to 74% from 53% in 2008;
- Volunteering rose 31% driven by successful initiatives with young people and black and minority ethnic communities;
- 72% of farmed land is covered by some form of environmental agreement;
- Assisted by extra volunteer activity, 22 monuments have been removed from 'at risk' reducing the percentage 'at risk' in the National Park from 56% to 50%; and
- Good levels of performance were maintained with the development management service.

### We performed weakly in:

- A 26% drop in National Park Centres visitor numbers compared to the 5 year average;
- Improvements to the visitor offer at key villages were not progressed as planned;
- Electronic communication targets were not met in areas including rural broadband, the website and our Facebook site;
- Corporate communication was weak with far fewer e-zines, position statements and high profile case studies of good practice being produced than planned; and £45,000 of the Sustainable Development Fund could not be committed or spent and 51 grants were offered to communities down from 93 the previous year.

### We made progress of the following unforeseen work:

- Leading a partnership to develop and submit a bid to government for a Nature Improvement Area (NIA), and;
- Working with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Nidderdale AONB, and North Pennines AONB to scope options for a new Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

## Our Performance – Key Indicators and Trends

Our performance in 2011/12 for our 44 headline indicators showed that against the previous year's performance 14 are improving, 9 are static, and 18 are declining. (There was no trend information available for 3).

2011/12 Performance Indicators – movement from previous year		
Improving	↑	14
Static	=	9
Declining	↓	18
Trend not available	n/a	3
		44

Measuring performance against the previous year does not tell the whole story as static or even declining performance may still represent good performance relative to longer term trends and external benchmarks. Therefore an assessment of performance has been made using trend and benchmark information where it is available. This shows that 'good' performance outweighs 'poor' performance by a ratio of over 4:1. However it should be noted that there was a shift from both 'good' and 'poor' performance in 2010/11 to 'acceptable' performance in 2011/12.

Performance Indicators - Assessment		
Good Performance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>18</b>
Acceptable Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>21</b>
Poor Performance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>4</b>
	n/a	<b>1</b>
		<b>44</b>

## Our Forward Work Programme – 2012/13 Priority Actions

This Corporate Plan aims to set more realistic targets. This will involve addressing important areas where performance is below realistic expectation and in some areas setting targets which better reflect the much reduced level of resources. It remains an area of concern that whilst the Authority is able to amend its delivery expectations based on much reduced resources, both national and community needs and expectations remain high.

**The Authority has defined its four key priorities as:**

- Land Management;
- Rural development;
- The Sill Landscape Centre; and
- Engagement with young people through pathways to work and education.

Northumberland National Park Authority is committed to focussing on those areas where it can best deliver its priority areas of work. Our expectations are narrower but in key priority areas we remain committed to delivering excellent services and achieving significant improvements in outcomes.

**In 2012/13 we aim to:**

- Implement a monitoring framework for Defra's Higher Level Stewardship farm conservation grant scheme;
- Train volunteers and improve the monitoring of the health of the natural environment with targeted surveys on key species and habitats including waxcaps, hay meadows, curlew and ring ouzel and native woodland sites;
- Undertake practical maintenance on 5 scheduled monuments and use volunteers to survey the condition of 50 scheduled monuments to have 220 scheduled monuments classified as being at just low risk by March 2013;
- Secure International Dark Sky Reserve accreditation for the National Park;
- Protect the pristine water quality of the rivers in the National Park by preventing sediment pollution associated with erosions from tracks and paths by undertaking research, completing pilot mitigation projects, and sharing the learning lessons;
- Play a leading role in the establishment of a new destination management organisation for Northumberland to ensure that the county continues to be effectively marketed and continues to realise the potential of tourism to support the environment, cultural heritage and rural communities;
- Support 45 businesses who deliver National Park purposes including advice to new business start-ups, access to grant aid and support to enable businesses to deliver nature based tourism products and services;
- Enable the communities and businesses in the National Park to receive reliable and superfast broadband by supporting bids of £1m for investment in the Coquetdale, Redesdale and North Tyne areas of the National Park and assist the Northumberland Uplands Local action Group to address the so-called not-spots;
- Work with regional partners on the Rural Growth Networks initiative to ensure the successful development of the North Tyne cluster of 10 new businesses as live: work units in the National Park;
- Take forward proposals for 'The Sill' Landscape Centre;
- Create a framework for the Authority to deliver career pathways for young people (16-25 year olds) from within our existing capacity. That is, embed volunteering and create 10 placements within the Authority's work and support training programmes delivered by partners;
- Review our corporate communications and set an improvement plan to enable the work of the Authority to be better understood and appreciated;
- Take action to expand income generation as far as practical; and
- Respond to Defra on the plans to change the governance of the English National Park authorities and prepare the Authority for a high level of board member change in 2013 when, rather unusually, all members' appointment either end or require renewal.

Tony Gates - Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

June 2012



## Section 2. Delivering the Vision – Our Previous Year's Performance (2011/12)

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### Aim 1. A Welcoming Park

In contributing to an exceptional National Park experience we have:

**Submitted a funding bid for 'The Sill' Landscape Centre** – The Authority and the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) worked in partnership to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which would see the development of a £10m investment in a multipurpose landscape centre to showcase the National Park, attract 60,000 additional annual visitors and boost the local economy. Early in the current year we heard that our round 1 bid has been successful releasing a £399k development grant to allow us to progress plans to a stage where we can apply for funding of £6.3m in 2014.

**Continued to operate our award winning National Park Centres** – We maintained visitor satisfaction levels across our three centres at 90% or above for a sixth consecutive year. However, visitor numbers were down 17% to 91,225 from 109,716 the previous year and down 26% on the previous 5 year average of 122,608. The picture of reduced visitor numbers is mirrored in our car parks, the results from our visitor survey, and from tourism providers in the region and is attributed to the poor weather in summer 2011 and the economic downturn.

Significant efforts were made in the year to secure agreements to transfer our National Park Centres at Rothbury and Ingram to private sector providers. Unfortunately, initial bids for each site have come to nothing and it is now likely that both centres will close at the end of the 2012/13 visitor season.

**Made further improvements to access** – The Authority's approach to access is to target its limited resources on the most heavily used routes and to upgrade routes to make them 'accessible to all'. We maintained sections of flagged path and boardwalk along the border ridge on the Pennine Way National Trail. We have installed an 'access for all' path at Steel Rigg enabling access for the less able to one of the best sections of Hadrian's Wall. We have also replaced 8 stiles with gates on our most heavily used rights of way to improve their accessibility.

Whilst our focus is on the most heavily used routes, the percentage of rights of way that were 'easy to use' has seen steady year on year improvements since 2008 to 74% in 2012.

**Worked to improve the visitor welcome** – We developed an action plan to improve the visitor welcome to the National Park including new welcome and boundary signage and interpretation and web based information for the key villages of Elsdon, Falstone, Alwinton, and Ingram. However, the first improvements were not implemented as had been planned.

The 2011 Visitor Survey identified 'quality of footpaths' followed by 'welcome and friendliness', 'toilets', and 'car parking' as the most important aspects to for visitors. Visitors experience fell short of expectations for toilet provision and only narrowly exceeded expectation for footpaths and car parking within the National Park demonstrating the importance of delivery in this work area.

## To help achieve a wider and more diverse audience we have:

**Delivered the final year of the black and minority ethnic 'Mosaic' project** – We undertook the third and final year of the 'Mosaic' project to encourage black and minority ethnic communities to visit the National Park. We hosted a group leader visit to the National Park and embedded Community Champions within the National Park Volunteer Service ensuring they receive information and training opportunities to provide a legacy to the project. We also promoted the National Park by supporting events at the Great North Museum, County Show, and Hexhams picnic in the park family day. However, we did not support the Newcastle Mela as originally planned.

**Hosted events for the Disabled** – We worked with the Disabled Ramblers Association and landowners to develop 2 routes to provide 2 challenging events in summer 2011. The events were very successful, providing the Authority with useful feedback on the defining of disabled routes. Building on this success the Authority will work with the Disabled Rambler Association in 2012 to develop further events for summer 2013.

**Worked on our website and social media presence to engage new audiences** – We worked to enhance the Authority's presence on Facebook and Twitter in the year. We now have 600 'Likes' on Facebook and 1,000 followers on Twitter. However, we did not deliver planned work to develop new web and social media content specifically targeted at under-represented groups. The number of unique users of our website dropped by 16% from 232,000 last year to 194,000 this year. The drop in users coincides with work to migrate our website onto a new platform in the second half of the year. Technical difficulties have prolonged the migration and resulted in a lack of new content on the website. Further, several work areas encountered delays or have been unable to deliver their web based targets due to the protracted website migration.

**Completed a visitor survey** – We completed a major visitor survey in 2011 to update the information from the previous survey in 2007. The percentage of people from under-represented groups surveyed fell between 2007 and 2011 suggesting declining performance. However the context of the 2011 survey with particularly poor summer weather and the wider economic downturn could explain the reduction in new audiences and the high relative level of traditional and repeat visitors.

## We have contributed to a more diverse range of learning opportunities by:

**Working with local schools** – We delivered a programme of 'Learning Outside the Classroom' activities and 9 new National Park schools attended training on 'becoming an eco-school'. However, we didn't deliver 2 educational packs based on sites in the National Park and our overall level of engagement fell short of plan.

Performance information shows that 88% of users were satisfied with the services provided but that only 69% felt they had learnt something about the National Park from using our services. Our education service returned a low score relative to our services (National Park Centres, events, website) with only 63% of users saying they had learnt something about the National Park compared to the 82% of users of our events service that learnt something.

**Increasing and embedding volunteering into the work of the Authority** – With fewer resources to deliver bespoke skills and training programmes the Authority is prioritising volunteering, placements, and bursaries to increase learning opportunities and develop career pathways with a focus on young people. Volunteering increased by 31% from 1,129 days to 1,480 days last year, with the number of days from under-represented groups rising

by 251% from 45 days to 158 days. Under-represented groups accounted for 11% of all volunteering last year, up from 4% in the previous year. The increase is driven by the focus on the Youth Volunteer Initiative, university placements, and embedding the Mosaic project. The Authority supported the youth 'Changemaker' to deliver an event and 7 youth volunteers were engaged in the year.

**Supporting a bid for a new training programme** – We reviewed our past training programmes (Traditional Boundaries, Traditional Skills and the Upland Farming Traineeship) and shared the learning to support a bid by Rural Development Initiatives to the Regional Growth Fund for a training scheme for new entrants to the forestry and farming industries. Unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful.

## A Welcoming Park – Performance Summary

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm't
Visitor satisfaction with the tourism services and facilities in the National Park	78%	78%	78%	72%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
% of users satisfied with 'promoting understanding' services	-	92%	92%	88%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
% of users whose learning increased about Northumberland National Park as a result of using 'promoting understanding' services	-	76%	84%	69%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
% of users of 'promoting understanding' services from under-represented groups	-	9%	41%	28%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
National Park Centre satisfaction-effectiveness survey score	90.12%	90.35%	89.96%	90.58%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
Website usage - unique users and user satisfaction					
a) Unique users (,000)	178	217	232	194	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) % rating the website as 'very good' or 'excellent'		82.9%	72.8%	79.3%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Volunteer Days					
a) Number of volunteer days led by Northumberland National Park Authority	1,252	1,124	1,129	1,480	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Number of those days attended by 'under represented' groups	-	-	45	158	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Percentage of footpaths and other rights of way easy to use by the public					
a) % easy to use even though they may not follow the exact definitive line	-	68.30	71.20	73.90	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % easy to use that follow the exact definitive line	66.80	68.30	71.20	73.90	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
c) % signposted where they leave the road	91.90	93.30	100.00	90.00	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓

Good Performance

Acceptable Performance

Poor Performance

↑ Improving Trend

= Static Trend

↓ Declining Trend

## Aim 2. A Distinctive Place

### To help maintain the sense of inspiration and tranquillity we have:

**Developed Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)** – We have reviewed and updated the Building Design Guide SPD and developed a new Landscape SPD to guide planning decisions to ensure developments compliment the National Park special qualities. For the first time since monitoring started in 2008, the Building Design Guide was cited in 100% of all relevant planning decisions.

**Monitored tranquillity levels** – We have reassessed tranquillity and mapped the National Park to demonstrate tranquillity levels in different areas. However, the final report and communication of the results was not completed. Northumberland National Park is still the most tranquil area in England and the tranquillity map helps to guide development and land use decisions.

In an unprompted question in our 2011 Visitor Survey, 'landscape/scenery' followed by 'peace and tranquillity', 'open spaces', and 'wilderness/remoteness' were identified as the most important special qualities of the National Park.

**Been developing a Landscape Strategy** – Early engagement and a draft strategy were developed back in 2010/11. However as a result of staff changes no further work was undertaken in 2011/12. The formal consultation and adoption of the final strategy was not undertaken.

### To safeguard and enhance the natural qualities and diverse habitats we have:

**Added value to agri-environment schemes** – We used our 'Action Area' approach to understand how individual agri-environment agreements could fit together on a landscape scale and then worked with farmers and Natural England to design the most appropriate agreements. In the last year we helped to develop 14 new and added value to 13 existing Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements. There are now 235 Environmental Stewardship agreements covering the National Park, 128 at Entry Level covering 14,000ha, and 107 at Higher Level covering 60,831ha<sup>1</sup>. The area of land covered by agreements that include HLS options increased by over 6,500ha in the last year representing 72% of the farmed area of the Park (up from 64% the previous year). We also worked with Natural England to develop an HLS monitoring framework in the year to allow us to measure the impact of land management under HLS on environmental outcomes.

**Completed Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) actions** – We completed 17 actions to improve the condition of our BAP habitats and species in the year. Examples of our biodiversity work include: Monitoring upland heath at Dargues Hope and Low Bleakhope and surveying 20 hay meadows to assess the impact of management under HLS and to help develop management practices; Improving mires at Pundershaw, Chartners and Low Bleakhope by blocking grips and removing conifers; Reseeding heather at Linhope and Simonside; Working with volunteers to complete bird surveys, and; completing a population viability study for Black Grouse which reported that habitat restoration and population supplementation could help restore Black Grouse numbers in the National Park.

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<sup>1</sup> The figure for HLS includes all land within the Park boundary for farms with HLS agreements, but includes land on those farms which is managed under entry level options as it is not possible to split the data from Natural England.

100% of the 12,453ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest were retained in 'favourable' (29%) or 'recovering' (71%) condition for a third year. Condition was static with no progress against our target to move land from 'recovering' to the top category of 'favourable'. Of the 17 habitats or species covered by Biodiversity Action Plans 9 are considered to be improving, 4 stable, and 4 declining. The lack of any new planting and the threat of disease have seen the status of Juniper reduced from improving to stable.

**Submitted a bid for a Nature Improvement Area (NIA)** – We led a bid for the 'Border Uplands' area to become recognised and funded as one of 12 NIA's. We worked with a wide range of partners to develop the bid that covered a 275,000ha area of Northumberland and linked outcomes with Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. Our bid was one of 76 and unfortunately the bid was ultimately unsuccessful, however much of the work will be put to good use in taking forward the initiative by other means.

### **We have assisted with the understanding, value and care of the historic environment and archaeological heritage by:**

**Delivering year 1 of the Heritage At Risk (HAR) project** – The project has had a very successful first year exceeding its targets and achieving its principle objective of engaging volunteers and communities to lead on the protection of the historic environment. 7 community events were held and 27 volunteers were recruited and trained in monument surveying techniques. Volunteers contributed 121 days and surveyed 92 of the National Parks 424 monuments. The surveying was targeted at sites with out of date information to help us understand the true picture of monument condition and to allow us to focus resources and inform management prescriptions for sites in genuine need of conservation. The result is that improvements in condition have been recorded for 38 monuments with 23 of these removed from the 'at risk' register. A decline in condition was recorded for 4 monuments with 1 added to the 'at risk' register. The Nett position is that 22 monuments have been removed from 'at risk' reducing the percentage 'at risk' in the National Park from 56% to 50%<sup>2</sup>.

There has been no movement in the Listed Building indicator with 23 (10%) of the Parks 229<sup>3</sup> Listed Buildings remaining 'at risk'. However, behind this headline the Authority, Natural England and English Heritage have reduced the number of 'vulnerable' buildings from 44 to 39 preventing them from becoming 'at risk'.

**Supporting historic environment engagement and learning** – 6 walks and talks were provided and a number of community projects supported, but the volunteer led day school was not delivered. 3 research bursaries were provided to university students and a placement student was hosted and helped to develop the draft Kirknewton conservation area character appraisal. However, the character appraisal and the wider historic environment action plan were not consulted and adopted in the year as planned.

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<sup>2</sup> The number of scheduled monuments in the National Park reduced from 430 to 424 with the amalgamation of 7 designations to 1 at Ingram Farm.

<sup>3</sup> The number of Listed Buildings in the National Park increased by 1 to 229 in the year as building had been incorrectly categorised as outside the National Park boundary.

## A Distinctive Place – Performance Summary

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm't
% SSSI and NNR in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition in:					
a) NPA Management	-	100%	100%	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) the National Park as a whole	92%	100%	100%	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance (LBAP condition)					
a) Improving	9	9	10	9	
b) Stable	4	4	3	4	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
c) Declining	4	4	4	4	
Number of Listed Buildings 'at risk' in the National Park	25	25	23	23	
a) Number of Listed Buildings 'at risk' rescued during the year	1	0	2	0	<input type="checkbox"/> =
b) % of Listed Buildings 'at risk' rescued during the year	3.8%	0.0%	8.0%	0.0%	
Changes in Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) risk status					
a) Number in High risk category	67	65	64	49	
b) Number in Medium risk category	172	173	176	163	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
c) Number in Low risk category	191	192	190	212	
a) Number of scheduled monuments 'at high or medium risk' conserved during the year (through NNPA actions)	-	12	0	38	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % of scheduled monuments 'at high or medium risk' conserved during the year (through NNPA actions)	-	5.0%	0.0%	15.8%	
a) Number of Conservation Areas	1	1	1	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) % of Conservation Areas with up-to-date character appraisals	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Use of the Building Design Guide in relevant planning decisions					
a) Number of relevant applications	33	40	26	36	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Percentage of relevant application where Building Design Guide used	75.76%	37.50%	80.77%	100.00%	
Positive planning actions for protected species in relevant planning applications					
a) Number of relevant applications	12	17	9	15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
b) Percentage of relevant applications with actions for protected species	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Good Performance

Acceptable Performance

Poor Performance

↑ Improving Trend

= Static Trend

↓ Declining Trend

### **Aim 3. A Living Working Landscape for Now and The Future**

**We have contributed to new and better approaches to sustainable land and water management by:**

**Working with the Environment Agency to improve water quality** – Over the last 3 years we have worked with the Environment Agency and farmers to identify sheep dipping facilities that presented a high risk of pollution to water courses in the Till, Tweed, Coquet and Aln catchments. Last year we completed the ‘sheep dip project’ which over the duration of project risk assessed 53 facilities and made improvements to the highest risk facilities.

**We have contributed to increasing understanding about, and demonstrating the practice of, sustainable development and responses to climate change by:**

**Continuing to deliver climate mitigation work** – We have helped to establish the network of electric vehicle charging infrastructure having installed 12 charging posts at 8 sites around the National Park. The Authority concluded its trial of an electric vehicle and will now add an electric vehicle to its pool car fleet in 2012/13.

Research on the potential of hydro and solar micro-renewable energy and the study of 21 off-grid properties was also completed but the results have not yet been shared on the website. The results of our resident survey and the study of off-grid properties demonstrate that many properties within the National Park are energy inefficient. We have continued to work with Northumberland Warmzones to offer free home energy assessments and free home insulation to all National Park residents. 121 properties have been improved since 2001 of which 27 properties were improved in 2011/12. Whilst the uptake of the scheme has not been as high as we hoped, there has been a significant step change improvement in uptake with the Authority’s involvement in recent years. We also worked on a micro-hydro project with 5 farms in the Cheviots helping one of the farms to submit a planning application. Direct delivery by the Authority was limited in the year and will be in future as staff resource was removed from this work area.

**Submitting a climate adaption report to Defra** – We finalised and submitted a climate adaptation plan to Defra which was well received as a thorough and integrated plan for adapting to the affects of climate change. Many actions from the plan were undertaken in the year such as implementing preventative and collaborative heather burning regimes and flood alleviation measures.

**Delivering the Cheviot Futures project** – We worked in partnership to deliver the cross-border Cheviot Futures climate adaptation project. Within the Action Areas, 5 farms developed climate resilience plans identifying natural hazards and the necessary mitigation with 6 practical mitigation/resilience measures implemented. A new lake at Linhope has been completed for use in fighting wildfires and natural flood alleviation measures such as tree planting on river banks and in-river protection have been delivered. A new weather station has been installed at the head of the Breamish Valley.

**To assist business growth in sectors which sensitively make use of the natural, historical and cultural qualities of the National Park we have:**

**Administered the Action Area funds, Sustainable Development Fund and Leader funds** – With little activity at the start of the year, Authority staff proactively engaged with businesses to generate initiatives, providing advice and support to 34 businesses throughout

the year. This generation of initiatives enabled large sums to be allocated to projects. However, translating these allocated sums into firm commitments and spend in the year proved difficult with the economic downturn, the difficulty in securing matched funding, and general confidence cited as the main reasons. Overall 18 businesses were supported with grants totalling £110k and leveraging in £260k of matched funding. The grant to match fund ratio is slightly improved on the previous year but both 2010 and 2011 figures demonstrate a decline compared to previous years.

**Supported nature-based tourism initiatives** – We have worked with the Outdoor Northumberland Network to promote outdoor activities and events and worked with providers on Hadrian’s Wall to promote nature-based tourism, including promoting a star gazing event at Cawfields to promote the National Park as an ‘astro-tourism’ destination. We also continued our support of the ‘Coast and Country’ programme of events to help businesses to utilise the special qualities of protected areas to enhance their product and marketing. 7 events were held with 127 participants, with 80% saying they would recommend the programme. 17 businesses in the National Park are accredited under the Green Tourism Business Scheme with 6 gold, 6 silver, and 5 bronze awards. However accreditation to the scheme is declining over time and the Authority has removed its staff resource in this area as a result of budget cuts.

### A Living Working Landscape – Performance Summary

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm't
Adapting to climate change	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
Business grant awards in line with National Park Authority purposes					
a) Number of grants awarded	37	28	21	18	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) Value of grants awarded	£208,602	£142,918	£195,294	£110,342	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
c) Value of levered/matched funding	£951,049	£556,274	£248,534	£260,263	<input type="checkbox"/> ↑
Businesses and groups using the Green Tourism Business Scheme	20	19	18	17	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Importance of the visitor economy (value & volume of tourism)					
a) Value of tourism (£ million) - Northumberland National Park	£59.1	£61.4	£62.3	PI reports previous years data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Number of tourists (million) - Northumberland National Park	1.45	1.51	1.36		
a) Value of tourism (£ million) - Action Areas (inc. NNP)	£139.5	£140.0	£143.4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Number of tourists (million) - Action Areas (inc. NNP)	1.73	1.79	1.65		

Good Performance       Acceptable Performance       Poor Performance  
 ↑ Improving Trend      = Static Trend      ↓ Declining Trend



## Aim 4. Thriving Communities

**We supported communities' connections to, and appreciation of, the National Park and engaged them in shaping its future by:**

**Continuing to operate our 'Action Area' approach** – 'Action Area' working continued during the year but we did not deliver a review of the approach as intended in the year.

**Helping three communities develop a Neighbourhood Plan** – We have worked with 3 communities under the Front Runners scheme in the new Localism Act to support them in their development of a Neighbourhood Plan. We have met with 15 Parish Councils to discuss the possibilities for producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

**Holding a National Park Forum** – We held the third annual National Park Forum in October 2011 to hear feedback from residents and stakeholders on the work of the Authority and the issues affecting the National Park. The National Park Awards were presented at the Forum providing recognition to individuals and organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to protecting and enhancing the National Park.

**We have striven to ensure effective infrastructure (services and facilities) are available to support communities in and around the National Park by:**

**Undertaking our annual facilities survey for the National Park** – The survey showed that communities in the National Park continue to have access to essential services such as shops and schools, it also shows that the availability and/or quality of broadband connections is still a major issue.

**Working to improve rural broadband** – Having worked hard in previous years to lobby on the issue of poor rural broadband services and having had some success in securing funding to progress initiatives, we had a disappointing 2011/12. A £250k project to be delivered via the Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group had been held up on state aid rules and has not progressed as planned.

**Supporting sustainable transport options** – We continued to support the Hadrian's Wall Country Bus Service (AD122). Performance for the service was mixed with passenger numbers down by 12% but revenue up by 10%. It is understood that the increase in revenue is driven by the purchase of the more expensive 'Rover' ticket but that the full value of the ticket was not fully realised by passengers. It is believed that the decline in passenger numbers represents the decline in the number of visitors that other services and attractions also experienced.

**We have helped to ensure people have opportunities to work in, live in and contribute to resilient communities in and around the National Park by:**

**Continuing to support local communities** – We have used our 'Action Area' approach to provide advice, support and funding to many community groups. In total the Action Area funds, Sustainable Development Fund, and Leader have provided 51 grants totalling £393k and leveraging in £453k of matched funding. As with business based projects, a large amount of work has been undertaken to allocate funds but the external economic climate has made it difficult to realise projects, especially the larger scale projects applications to the Sustainable Development Fund. The Action Area funds are predominantly used to support small scale community led initiatives and we have continued to support and fund projects

such as the Bellingham All Acoustic Festival, Bellingham Blast, and Otterburn Village Festival. Encouragingly, this year a number of biodiversity projects have also been supported such as assisting with hay meadow restoration and working with schools to release brown trout into water courses in Coquetdale.

**Providing career pathways for young people** – The Authority has previously successfully delivered major rural skills training programmes, but budget reductions mean that we are no longer in a position to support such initiatives. Therefore we have changed our approach to focus on integrating volunteering, placement students, and bursaries training opportunities into the routine work of the Authority. The emphasis is to offer career pathways for young people by providing work experience that will help them into employment in land based industries. We provided 8 work experience placements and engaged with 7 youth volunteers in the year.

### Thriving Communities – Performance Summary

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm't
Community grant awards in line with National Park Authority purposes					
a) Number of grants awarded	92	69	93	51	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
b) Value of grants awarded	£454,494	£365,840	£551,926	£393,014	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
c) Value of levered/matched funding	£2,418,859	£719,319	£1,014,686	£453,146	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓

Good Performance       Acceptable Performance       Poor Performance  
 Improving Trend      = Static Trend      ↓ Declining Trend

## Aim 5. A Valued Asset

### We have promoted the social and economic contribution of the National Park to the North East of England by:

**Contributing to key regional groups and strategies** – We have ensured the value of the National Park is recognised within the Northumberland Economic Strategy, influencing themes such as: low carbon economy; (rural) broadband, and; the value of the historic environment. Our input has resulted in good representation in the final strategy document.

We have helped to establish the new Northumberland Visitor Economy Partnership. The Authority is a key partner and our Chief Executive sits on the board of the partnership. The body retains the name ‘Northumberland Tourism’. We have also promoted the eco-system service benefits and the heritage and tourism benefits that the National Park contributes to the region through the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and have contributed to the development of the North East Farming and Rural Advisory Network.

### The National Park has contributed to a broader network of protected areas by:

**Working in Partnership with other protected area** – We worked with partners such as the Tyne Rivers Trust, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Defence Estates, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission to develop a bid for a Nature Improvement Area (NIA) for the ‘Border Uplands’ in Northumberland. The bid covered the National Park and the adjoining designated areas of Kielderhead and Emblehope SAC/SSSI to the Scottish border and the Border Mires SAC into Cumbria and the edge of Geltsdale RSPB reserve. Unfortunately the bid to improve ecosystems and connectivity was unsuccessful. However, if the government extends the scheme in future as is planned we are well placed to re-submit an application.

We also started preliminary work with the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and The North Pennines AONB to scope options for a Local Nature Partnership covering the ‘Northern Uplands’. The intention is to join-up thinking and action on upland policy, landscape scale species and habitat conservation, and landscape scale delivery of eco-systems services.

### We have helped ensure the value of the National Park is clearly demonstrated in the policies and actions of those who have influence on the National Park by:

**Coordinating the National Park Management Plan Partnership** – We have continued to work with partners to ensure positive actions for the National Park are embedded within partners’ policies and plans.

**Inputting into key policies** – Our input into critical documents such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Northumberland Economic Strategy has also ensured the National Parks interests are appropriately represented.

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm’t
National awareness of Northumberland National Park	3%	3%	3%	3%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Partner survey score - NNPA as an effective partner	TBC	TBC	75.0%	75.0%	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a

Good Performance

Acceptable Performance

Poor Performance

↑ Improving Trend

= Static Trend

↓ Declining Trend

## Aim 6. An Excellent Organisation

### We have continued to deliver value for money through:

**Embedding budget reductions and income generation** – We embedded the new reduced staffing structure and revenue budgets. However, work to generate additional income has been more difficult to achieve. Our budget plan includes generating income from the leasing of our National Park Centres and office space in our headquarters, however market conditions and the economic downturn has limited our ability to realise these ambitions. The decline in visitor numbers has also seen an 8% reduction in our trading revenue from the previous year with reduced spend in our National Park Centres and reduced car parking income.

As can be seen in this Corporate Plan, there has been a level of under-delivery against our work programme for the last year. This has been driven by a combination of the wider economic climate making it difficult to deliver with communities, businesses and partners, and the new staffing structure ‘finding its level’ for achievable delivery. Overall this has resulted in a relatively high underspend against budget with an unforecast underspend of 4.5%. There have also been many examples of very strong delivery in the year.

**Improving performance management and communication** – We have improved our project initiation and monitoring processes to ensure the outcomes from new projects are optimised and we achieve better management of projects. We have also successfully delivered over half of our performance improvement plan from our 2010 National Park Authority Performance Assessment. The remainder of the improvement plan is scheduled for delivery in 2012/13.

Performance on communications has been mixed. A prolonged migration of our website has impacted on our ability to update content and share information. We only developed 1 of a planned 20 position statements to communicate key work areas and have made limited progress on developing our Facebook presence.

**Providing effective Development Management services** – In addition to dealing with planning applications, over recent years we have increased the level of pre-application advice and, monitoring and enforcement activity that we undertake. This last year was the busiest since planning was internalised in 2006 with 123 pre-application enquiries and 52 planning applications, whilst resources to deliver the service were reduced. Despite this 100% of ‘major’, 80% of ‘minor’, and 93% of ‘other’ applications were dealt with within statutory deadlines meeting or exceeding government targets. Customer satisfaction remained high with 94% of people satisfied with the pre-application advice service and 82% satisfaction for full planning applications. A new Development Management IT system was developed in the year to improve the efficiency of dealing with applications and to allow greater public access to information. The system will be launched in 2012.

### We have developed our staff, volunteers and board members through:

**Staff development** – The last year was difficult for staff as many acclimatised to new or changed job roles and we saw colleagues leave the Authority. Transitional support was provided to staff losing their jobs and handovers completed for staff changing job roles. Now that the new structure has had time to bed in, the focus for the year ahead is to ensure the training and development needs of staff in new roles are met. Staff sickness levels rose to an average of 8.68 days per person, however this is not considered to be an indication of

low morale as the average was driven by a small number of staff with long term illnesses and the short term sickness figure was very low at 1.77 days per person.

**Volunteer development** – Following a review of volunteering the previous year, we provided increased training and development to a reduced core of voluntary rangers. We also increased opportunities for more *ad hoc* volunteering such as through Action Area projects. We have successfully begun to change the emphasis of the volunteer service to include opportunities to deliver career pathways for young people by embedding young volunteers and placement students into the ongoing work of the Authority.

**Member development** – We concluded a governance review in the year which will see a new set of structures and arrangements to direct and scrutinise our work for 2012/13. The new arrangements will move away from sub committees and enhance the role of the full Authority in overseeing our work. Member participation at all main meetings and committees (e.g. including Strategic Leadership Panel and Review Panel, etc) was 78%, slightly down on the previous year. However attendance at the core meetings of the Full Authority and Development Management Committee was 84%, an improvement on the previous year.

### **We have worked through partnerships by:**

**Co-coordinating the Management Plan Partnership** – We have continued to meet with our key partners to monitor progress in delivering the National Park Management Plan and to integrate our work programmes to ensure coordinated and efficient delivery. We have worked in a number of partnerships in the year to submit funding bids for projects and programmes of work such as on 'The Sill' and the 'Border Uplands' NIA bids.

However, we did not complete one of our performance improvement actions to review our Strategic Partnership Plan.

### **We have ensured our services are available to all in our diverse society by:**

**Operating an Equality Forum and undertaking outreach activities** – We continued to operate our Equality Forum to help inform our policies and service delivery. We had previously self assessed at level 3 of the Equality Standard and this has been transferred to 'Achieving' status under the Equality Framework.

We completed the final year of the Mosaic project to improve engagement with black and minority ethnic audiences and have embedded the Mosaic community champions within our volunteer service. We continued our programme to improve 'access for all' and hosted events for disabled ramblers. We supported our youth 'Changemaker' to deliver an event and increased engagement with youth volunteers.

### **We have 'walked the talk' on climate change by:**

**Implementing a Green Travel Plan** – We have reduced our carbon emissions by a significant 39% over three years from our baseline in 2008/09. Our performance in the last year saw a 26% reduction in emissions from the previous year. In previous years the reductions were driven by improvements to our estate such as improving insulation, installing renewable energy generation, and reducing energy consumption from IT systems. This year we have made further improvements to our estate by installing solar photovoltaic

panels on the roof of the Coquetdale Centre and we have realised the full year affect of previous investments.

In the past we have made little impact on our transport emissions so efforts have been made to rectify this by implementing a Green Travel Plan. We have introduced a fuel efficient pool car and trialled an electric vehicle. We will add an electric vehicle and further fuel efficient vehicles to our pool car and ranger fleet in 2012 whilst removing the 'essential car user' allowance to reduce transport emissions. We also began streamlining member meetings in 2011 by holding a number of meetings on the same day. The impact of this work and too an extent, the reduction in staffing numbers has resulted in a significant reduction transport emissions for the first time.

### An Excellent Organisation – Performance Summary

Indicator Title	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Assm't
Inclusive Authority - level of the Equality Standard attained	Level 1	Level 3	Level 3	Achieving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE	3.99	4.62	5.36	8.68	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Member participation in attending committees	-	86%	79%	78%	<input type="checkbox"/> =
Income generation - trading accounts profit performance (£'000)	103.6	136.4	129.6	118.7	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
Financial outturn (variance to forecast reserves position as a % of total expenditure)	2.3%	3.5%	2.8%	4.5%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
IT critical system available in core working hours	98.98%	93.25%	97.76%	n/a	n/a
Processing of planning applications (major, minor, other)					
a) % of major applications determined within 13 weeks	100%	100%	75%	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) % of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	68%	95%	88%	80%	<input type="checkbox"/> ↓
c) % of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks	71%	96%	94%	93%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =
% of planning applicants satisfied with the service received	78%	72%	88%	82%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓
Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) reduction from National Park Authority operations					
a) Percentage reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	n/a	9.6%	9.0%	26.4%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↑
b) Total CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from Authority operations (Kg)	308,919	279,252	253,403	187,240	
Level of air quality - reduction in NOx and PM10 emissions through Authority operations					
a) NOx - oxides of nitrogen emissions (Kg)	368	380	235		tbc
b) PM10 - particulate matter emissions (Kg)	16	16	10		tbc

Good Performance

Acceptable Performance

Poor Performance

↑ Improving Trend

= Static Trend

↓ Declining Trend

## Section 3. Delivering the Vision – Forward Work Programme (2012/13)

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### Aim 1. A Welcoming Park

*Our aim is to put people and their connections with the landscape at the heart of the National Park.*

#### 1.1 In contributing to an exceptional National Park experience we will:

a) Deliver the development phase of 'The Sill': Landscape Centre.

**Targets:**

- Raise awareness of the bid regionally and identify 12 advocates from the local community and partner organisations by September 2012 to help secure support and match funding for the project;
- Eliminate the funding gap by securing in-principle match funding commitments of £2.5m by April 2014;
- Complete procurement of professional project team by December 2012
- Complete public consultation by June 2013 to gain input into the design and development of the centre;
- Complete archaeological and environmental assessments for the site by June 2013;
- Develop detailed design, specification, and costings by November 2013;
- Gain planning consent by November 2013;
- Develop the educational and delivery programme for the centre by April 2014.

b) Implement actions to enhance the visitor welcome in Elsdon and Falstone by March 2013.

**Targets:**

- None

c) Provide access to information to enhance visitor enjoyment of the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Deliver information services from 3 National Park Centres for the visitor season exceeding 90% visitor satisfaction levels;
- Manage the transition to alternative suppliers or closure of the Rothbury and Ingram National Park Centres by March 2013;
- Review the provision of information services once the future of National Park Centres is known to identify future requirements;
- Develop the National Park Visitor Guide with the online version on prominent websites and 40,000 copies printed and distributed regionally to key attractions such as the Great North Museum, Alnwick Garden and Bamburgh Castle;
- Deliver 2 visitor access improvements at sites along Hadrian's Wall as pilot and part of a wider broadband initiative;
- Develop existing interactive web-pages for the historic landscape of the National Park and aim to involve local colleges / schools in delivering this step change initiative; and
- Review the effectiveness of the web cams and weather stations by September 2012.

d) Improve access to the National Park by contributing into the review of National Trails and surveying the condition of 15% of the Public Rights of Way network to inform the annual maintenance/improvement programme.

**Targets:**

- Actively contribute to the consultation on the future of National Trail management by July 2012;
- Engage 10 volunteers in surveying 10% of the Public Rights of Way network by the end of March 2013;
- Complete national benchmarking surveys on 5% of the Public Rights of Way network for May 2012 and November 2012;

**1.2 To help achieve a wider and more diverse audience we will:**

- a) Raise awareness with urban and regional audiences by attending events and developing new links with urban and urban fringe communities.

**Targets:**

- Contribute to 2 Great North Museum events, County Show, Hexham Children Centre Picnic in Sele Park, the Glendale Children's Show, and the Newcastle Mela;
- Develop a minimum of 4 projects through Action Area working with partners such as North East Scouts and Fairbridge Drake;
- Deliver a 4 day event for National Parks week in August 2012 to engage a wide audience.

- b) Increase diversity within the volunteer service by encouraging volunteering by Mosaic Champions.

**Targets:**

- Mosaic Champions to support at 1 outreach event at the Newcastle Mela, 1 article in the Curlew volunteer magazine, and 3 group visits by March 2013.

- c) Work with the Campaign for National Parks to develop a Mosaic Youth Project which aims to build links between National Parks and young people in urban areas.

**Targets:**

- If successful in acquiring funding develop National Park outcomes by May 2012, and;
- Deliver first phase of the project by March 2013.

- d) Enhance the digital media presence (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) of the Authority and the National Park to improve communication and engagement, particularly with young people.

**Targets:**

- Develop a Social Media Plan to ensure Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are used where they are most effective;
- Create a Youth Engagement project to improve the web with interactive mapping and streamed content via the public;
- By March 2103 aim to recover the lost web usage caused by the national change over to new web software in 2011/12 whilst maintaining satisfaction levels with a minimum 80% of users rating the site as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

- e) Provide targeted opportunities for less experienced and disabled walkers to enjoy the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Work with existing walk schemes to deliver 15 walk events within the National Park;



- Work in partnership with the Disabled Ramblers Association to identify and plan potential accessible routes and support delivery of an event for summer 2013.
- f) Complete a management plan for the Walltown recreation site and deliver schedules of work to improve accessibility on the most heavily used rights of way.

**Targets:**

- Complete a management plan for Walltown to include how the site will be developed to improve recreation, conservation, and accessibility by July 2012;
- Develop a bid and seek match funding for an integrated project at Walltown by December 2012 to improve visitor facilities (car park and building) and create a fully accessible route. Practical works to be completed prior to the 2013/14 visitor season;
- Deliver improvements on 10 well used routes by the end of March 2013 exchanging 10 stiles with gates to improve accessibility;
- Upgrade the riverside route at Falstone and in Elsdon the route between the car park and the village green by March 2013.

### 1.3 We will contribute to a more diverse range of learning opportunities by:

- a) Using the resource of the National Park to provide relevant and increased access to learning and educational opportunities.

**Targets:**

- Develop 2 packs of educational material based on sites in the National Park (Walltown and Breamish Valley) in partnership with 2 private or community enterprises (YHA and Bellingham Heritage Centre);
- Deliver 20 Learning Outside the Classroom activities prioritising National Park Schools Programme primary and middle schools engaging 400 children;
- Rangers to deliver 5 Inside the Classroom environmental activities to engage 100 primary school children with the natural environment;
- Continue development and delivery of National Park Schools Programme working closely with the 26 schools in and around the National Park and the high schools they feed into. Support 6 schools engaging 120 children to achieve eco-school status;
- Coordinate the Authority's engagement work to ensure it effectively contributes to the National Park Schools Programme by February 2012 (e.g. inside the classroom, heritage at risk, and neighbourhood planning work);
- Review the Audience Engagement programme and plan for future delivery by December 2012 to ensure coordinated delivery focusing on priority audiences (5-25 year olds) after the Audience Engagement project is complete.

- b) Providing relevant and increased opportunities for adults and young people to become involved in participatory learning activities and volunteering.

**Targets:**

- Establish a framework for the Authority to deliver career pathways for young people (16-25 year olds) from within our existing capacity (i.e. embedding volunteering and placements within the Authority's work and supporting training programmes delivered by partners);
- Develop conservation skills career pathways with local high schools linked to the John Muir Award and deliver a programme of vocational field skills training for 8 students leading to the Discovery and Explorer award;

- Engage young people with the work in protected landscapes by providing a minimum of 10 School and University work placements and student bursaries across the Authority's four departments;
  - In partnership with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, explore options with Kirkley Hall Agricultural College to provide opportunities to use Carlcroft on the Otterburn Training Area as an upland farming educational resource by December 2012;
  - Build upon the existing Young Volunteer initiative to enable 10 young people to be regularly participating as Youth Volunteers in the NNPA volunteer service;
  - Work with 10 volunteers to increase outreach engagement and activity;
  - Support the delivery of 40 volunteer led events attracting 200 participants;
  - Deliver 5 community volunteer projects, including a volunteer-led Archaeology and Historic Environment Festival centred on Kirknewton;
- c) Improving interpretation resources to help people better understand the natural and historic environments.

**Targets:**

- Link people with bio-diversity through development of 3 new interpretation projects with new and existing partners, to include development of a self guided trail to give people the opportunity to see wild goats in the Cheviots;
- Develop on and off-site interpretation for the Yeavinger landscape to be installed in the newly conserved Old Palace building, and update online information.

### Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **75% of visitors to Northumberland National Park visitor services feel they have had an exceptional experience by 2013**
- **5% increase in visitors from the underrepresented groups of young people, disabled, and black and ethnic minorities by 2013 from the 2007 baseline and 90% of our promoted routes classified as 'easy to use' by 2013**
- **300 school children engaged annually in educational activities by 2013 and 90% of adults and young adults are in employment or education following completion of Northumberland National Park Authority apprenticeships by 2013**

### Resources to deliver the priorities

	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
Budget:	£950,000	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011): £891,800
Outturn:	£943,700	Current Budget: £855,400

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## **Aim 2. A Distinctive Place**

*Our aim is to manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.*

### **2.1 To help maintain the sense of inspiration and tranquillity we will:**

- a) Build on early engagement work to develop a Landscape Strategy in consultation with local communities, partners and other key stakeholders.

**Targets:**

- Draft strategy by July 2012;
- Further engagement and consultation completed by end September 2012;
- Strategy adopted by the Authority in January 2013.

- b) Secure International Dark Sky Reserve accreditation for the National Park in partnership with the bid to secure Dark Sky Park status for Kielder Water and Forest Park.

**Targets:**

- Consult with local communities on the proposal to secure International Dark Sky Reserve status by July 2012;
- Submit an application for Reserve status to the International Dark Sky Association by August 2012;
- Secure a second 'Dark Sky Discover Site' by gaining status for the Breamish Valley site (adding to Cawfields) by March 2013;
- Undertake a lighting audit for the proposed 'core zone' and prepare a National Park Lighting Management Plan to minimise light pollution by August 2012.

- c) Work with Northern Power Grid to identify opportunities to underground power lines within priority landscape character areas across the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Conclude a mapping exercise identifying all low voltage overhead electricity lines in the National Park and prioritise them for undergrounding by June 2012;
- Seek to underground 1,000 meters of existing overhead electricity cable within Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and key settlements such as Elsdon, Falstone and Greehaugh by March 2013.

- d) Work with user groups, large event organisers, partners and local land managers to implement effective recreation plans for the areas of the National Park suffering from inappropriate use particularly in the Cheviots and Hadrian's Wall area.

**Targets:**

- Continue to monitor the rights of way network for illegal motorised vehicle use;
- Develop management techniques through the NNPA and Northumbria Police Land Managers Liaison Group to minimise damage on sensitive routes;
- Expand the scope of the group to include other issues (e.g. damage to historic sites) and replicate the groups activities in the South of the park
- Revise the protocols for large scale events by March 2013.

## 2.2 To safeguard and enhance the natural qualities and diverse habitats we will:

- a) Revise and simplify the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) for priority habitat and species by March 2013, creating a vision and map for future work to influence the long term vision for sustainable land management in the National Park.

### Targets:

- Map and agree priority areas for new native woodland planting, heather moorland restoration and hay meadow improvement/creation;
- Undertake a mapping exercise to identify opportunities for linking habitats within the National Park with areas beyond the National Park boundary through habitat restoration and creation;
- Undertake habitat suitability mapping for black grouse within the National Park and adjacent areas. Use this to help prioritise areas for habitat enhancement for this species. Evaluate whether black grouse population supplementation is feasible in the National Park;
- Review and consolidate datasets for woodland and forestry in the National Park and identify opportunities for removing and restructuring conifer plantations that are detrimental to the landscape and biodiversity of the National Park.

- b) Undertake practical work to deliver at least 5 actions from the revised BAPs including:

### Targets:

- Improving bogs and mires by blocking ditches and removing conifers on 4 sites using volunteers and contractors;
- Surveying for waxcaps on Hadrian's Wall targeting old Whin Sill grasslands;
- Surveying at least 20 hay meadows and adding seed/plants to at least 5 fields;
- Investigating the use of hay meadows by invertebrates;
- Working with volunteers to assess Curlew and Ring Ouzel numbers and identify wader hotspots – survey at least 15 Ring Ouzel sites and undertake Curlew surveys every 10km<sup>2</sup>;
- Engaging 10 volunteers to survey 20 (Section 39 agreement) native woodland sites;

- c) Develop the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership and the Border Uplands Partnership.

### Targets:

- Work with the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Nidderdale AONB and North Pennines AONB to submit a bid to Defra for LNP status by June 2012;
- If successful establish the NUCLNP Board by September 2012 and;
- Hold the first annual meeting of the Partnership by April 2013;
- If successful with bid to Natural England (on behalf of the Border Uplands Partnership) for funding to take forward actions from the original Nature Improvement Area submission; host a project coordinator on behalf of the Partnership.

- d) Work with estates in the National Park including Linhope, Lilburn, Northumberland Estates, College Valley Estate, The National Trust, High Green and Hesleyside to ensure land management and HLS schemes take a landscape scale approach and maximise opportunities to link habitats and species across the Park'.

### Targets:

- Prioritise areas and facilitate bracken control on 250ha of ground;

- Engage a bursary student to complete management statements for 5 (Section 39 agreement) native woodland sites, and undertake maintenance work on 5 sites.
- e) Increase delivery of biodiversity outcomes using the Action Area approach.

**Targets:**

- Use Action Area funds to deliver 8 biodiversity and habitat creation projects working in partnership with landowners, farmers and local communities;
- Link delivery with engaging young people through the Young Volunteers Initiative, John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh awards;
- Projects to include creation of a network of bumblebee willow habitat around Simonside in Harwood forest and other suitable locations, development of grass verge habitats, scrub creation including juniper and willow and pond and wetland creation.

**2.3 We will assist in the understanding, value and care of the historic environment and archaeological heritage by:**

- a) Working with the local community and Northumberland County Council to complete the character appraisal and management plan for the Kirknewton Conservation Area.

**Targets:**

- Produce a draft Conservation Area Appraisal by September 2012, tying in with the Kirknewton Festival;
- Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan adopted by March 2013.

- b) Work with Natural England to complete consolidation works on important vernacular buildings already prioritised for funding through HLS.

**Targets:**

- Complete building conservation works on Yeavinger Palace and the Shieling at Ewarty Shank, and complete a Management Plan for the Lime Kiln at Low Town by December 2013.

- c) Deliver year 2 of the Heritage at Risk project.

**Targets:**

- Work with English Heritage to target priority sites for conservation based upon the information from year one of the Project. Conservation work to improve the condition of 5 scheduled monuments by March 2013;
- Continue to co-ordinate the work of the project with the work of community Archaeology groups. Sustain and develop the existing 16 community group members by offering opportunities for involvement in all aspects of the project; consider expanding the numbers involved if sustainable and manageable;
- Deliver 3 additional volunteer training events;
- Increase the diversity of the volunteer base by seeking to engage 10 young people in the work of the project by delivering specific events/education days targeted at young people;
- Deliver education/engagement work with 5 schools;
- Volunteers to survey the condition of 50 Scheduled Monuments by March 2013, and;
- Aim to have 220 scheduled monuments at low risk by March 2013.

- d) Carry out a Quinquennial Review to understand the condition of Listed Buildings within the National Park by March 2013.

**Targets:**

- Update the Buildings at Risk register for the National Park;
- Integrate the results for Grade I and II\* into the English Heritage at Risk Register;
- Seek resources to develop and deliver conservation plans for 10 Grade II Buildings at Risk.

- e) Work with community archaeology groups and volunteers to promote opportunities for community led cultural heritage research, conservation and interpretation.

**Targets:**

- If the funding bid is successful, deliver year 1 of the *Altogether Archaeology* community archaeology project with the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Engage with at least 2 key National Park communities in Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle;
- Continue to provide advice and support to community archaeology groups including the Coquetdale Community Archaeology Barrowburn Mill project;
- Help to retain living traditions by supporting 20 park-wide local events and shows through attendance and/or funding to include local agricultural shows, community events, cultural festivals/shows and activity events delivered by our partners and Action Area communities;
- Host one university placement student to support delivery of the Heritage at Risk projects.

### Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- **The National Park will continue to be the most tranquil part of England**
- **Increase the area of SSSIs (and NNRs) in favourable condition whilst maintaining 100% area in favourable or recovering condition**
- **60% of scheduled monuments and 95% Listed Buildings at low risk by 2013**

### Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/12</u>
Budget: £763,700	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011): £683,300
Outturn: £652,500	Current Budget: £564,800

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### **Aim 3. A Living Working Landscape for Now and The Future**

*We will help the Park adapt to change by applying new approaches, together with traditional techniques*

#### **3.1 We will contribute to new and better approaches to sustainable land and water management by:**

- a) Formulating a long term vision for sustainable land management and the natural environment in the National Park through consultation with external partners, farmers and land managers.

**Targets:**

- Authority policy conference on the future of land management and the natural environment by April 2012;
- External consultation completed by January 2013;
- A robust vision for sustainable land management and the natural environment in the National Park agreed by March 2013.

- b) Working with Natural England to ensure the appropriate targeting of Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) schemes to maximise environmental benefits.

**Targets:**

- Deliver 10 new HLS agreements that maximise the opportunities to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of the National Park;
- Implement a monitoring framework for HLS to assess the success of positive management on 10 sites and negotiate and agree any amendments required.

- c) Working with the Environment Agency's Catchment Sensitive Farming Project Officers to develop a new project to protect the pristine water quality of the rivers in the National Park by preventing sediment pollution associated with erosions from tracks and paths.

**Targets:**

- Initial proposal for Water Framework Directive funding for research work to quantify erosion within the National Park by April 2012. If funding is successful:
- Undertake research to identify appropriate techniques for preventing peat and soil erosion and movement of sediment into watercourses from tracks associated with farming, forestry and recreation by September 2012;
- Trial techniques identified in the research on 3 different sites within the National Park to assist land managers to find solutions for sustainable track management. Capital works to be completed by March 2013;
- Monitor the results of the trials and share information to inform best practice by March 2014.

- d) Identifying priority stretches of watercourses within the National Park that require action to improve their ecological and chemical condition and draw up a joint action plan by March 2013.

**Targets:**

- Work with the Tyne Rivers Trust to develop a project to improve water quality in the Haltwhistle Burn catchment including Greenlee Lough;
- Identify improvements on the Coquet with the newly formed Northumberland Rivers Trust;
- Identify improvements in the Till catchment with the Tweed Forum.

- e) In partnership with Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), begin to develop the remit of the Otterburn Training Area (OTA) Environmental Steering Group to look forward and demonstrate effective partnership working.

**Targets:**

- Review and agree membership and terms of reference for the OTA Environmental Steering Group and agree an action plan by end of March 2013;
- Develop a revised timescale with DIO for completion of the Otterburn Integrated Rural Management Plan;
- Work with Defence Estates to complete a byelaw review by March 2013;
- Brief ENPAA Military Liaison Group to embed learning lessons by March 2013.

**3.2 We will contribute to increasing understanding about, and demonstrating the practice of, sustainable development and responses to climate change by:**

- a) Encouraging the production of renewable energy from sources compatible with the National Parks distinctive qualities.

**Targets:**

- Enable delivery of phase 3 of the on-farm micro-hydro project on 5 farms in the Cheviots by April 2013, including:
- Monitoring energy usage on 3 sites to assess the micro-hydro potential;
- Directing the land owner(s) to the most appropriate sources of funding and providers for any specialist survey advice required;

- b) Embed actions from the climate change adaptation plan into the policies and plans of the Authority and its partners to ensure adaptation to the opportunities and threats presented by climate change.

**Targets:**

- Deliver the Cheviot Futures climate adaptation initiative;
- Ensure the innovation and lessons learnt from the Cheviot Futures initiative are shared and influence partner/national policy (e.g. farm resilience plans become a standard part of HLS applications);
- Support the Northumberland Community Flood Partnership through positive actions delivered by Cheviot Futures e.g. natural flood management works completed at Netherton and Kirknewton by March 2013
- Support the Northumberland Fire Group by assisting to deliver collaborative burning on two farms and by testing innovative fire suppression techniques on at least one site in the park;
- Supporting the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service to develop Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler retained fire stations as wildfire operational centres;

- c) Continue to implement the Cheviot Futures climate change adaptation initiative.

**Targets:**

- Develop a further 10 farm resilience plans across the Cheviot Futures area, including at least 5 holdings within the National Park and Action Areas;
- Install a webcam to monitor the innovative riverbank erosion protection works at Ingram via webcam installation;



- Hold at least 3 Cheviot Futures demonstration days (or promotional events), within the National Park or the Action Areas;
  - Continue to work in partnership with Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) on projects such as trialling of ground reinforcement products to reduce livestock poaching around feeders within the National Park area, and development of innovative run-off management solutions on a farm within the Cheviot Action Area;
  - Provide input to securing additional funds for projects within the National Park and Action Areas – such as additional HLS funds, CSF Capital Grants and other appropriate sources to lever funds to deliver practical climate change adaption measures.
- d) Deliver the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to enable businesses and communities to deliver sustainable living initiatives.

**Targets:**

- Work with businesses and communities that have already been allocated funding to ensure their projects are delivered, and their grant funding is claimed by March 2013 (translating £200k of allocated grants into spend by March 2013);
- Develop new project initiatives for delivery in 2013-2014, allocating 'in principle' funds up to a total value of £125k by March 2013;
- Review the lessons learned from previous SDF projects (including the Tasset 2050 project) to inform future delivery by December 2012;
- Identify targets to guide the specific allocation of future SDF funding alongside other funds by March 2013;
- Complete a 3 year review of the SDF and communicate the results.

**3.3 To assist business growth in sectors which sensitively make use of the natural, historical and cultural qualities of the National Park, we will:**

- a) Enable local businesses to sensitively and sustainably utilise the qualities of the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Support and advise 20 new and existing businesses by March 2013;
- Provide 15 business grants through Action Area, SDF and LEADER schemes by March 2013.

- b) Support the development and marketing of tourism based on the special qualities of the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Contribute to the development of the Northumberland Visitor Economy Partnership (NVEP) and establish the new partnership by July 2012;
- Support and market appropriate partner events (e.g. Bellingham Blast, Northern Rock Cyclone). Support delivery with private and community partners by March 2013;
- Encourage 10 new and existing businesses to develop/promote nature based tourism events/activities (including dark sky events) by March 2013;
- Support Outdoors Northumberland (commercial outdoor experience providers) and encourage members to initiate 10 activities in the National Park by March 2013;
- Explore the 'Our Land' initiative as a means of linking the North East's designated areas for tourism;

- Pilot the 'Good Nature Fund' visitor payback scheme and explore options for a county-wide visitor gifting model.

### Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like

- All water bodies classified as within good ecological condition by 2013 and 75% of the farmed land in Higher Level Stewardship. 75% of HLS sites monitored achieving their indicators of success (monitoring framework to be developed by March 2012)
- Carbon capture/sequestration within the National Park improved by 500 tonnes per year (equivalent to 500 trees per year) from the 2009 baseline
- 5% increase in farming, tourism, food, crafts and retail micro enterprises within the National Park and Action Areas making use of the natural and cultural qualities from 2008 baseline

### Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
Budget: £775,000	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011): £592,200
Outturn: £508,900	Current Budget: £579,600

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## **Aim 4. Thriving Communities**

*We will contribute to the thriving and vibrant communities which have a strong sense of place and an economy grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park*

### **4.1 We will support communities' connections to, and appreciation of, the National Park and engage them in shaping its future by:**

- a) Continuing to develop community engagement in the work of the Authority to inform future policy:

**Targets:**

- Develop a statement of engagement which sets out how the National Park Authority engages, and will continue to engage with local communities by September 2012;
- Hold the third annual National Park Forum in November 2012 to communicate with and hear feedback from residents and stakeholders;
- Develop and agree the governance arrangements for new Local Area Forums within the National Park by November 2012, with inaugural meetings to be held by February 2013;
- Appoint 3 representatives from local businesses and/or residents to participate in scrutiny and advisory groups reviewing the Authority's work on an ongoing basis by June 2012.

- b) Continuing to work with Northumberland County Council to support Parish Councils within the National Park that want to develop Neighbourhood Plans

**Targets:**

- Provide technical support to the Parish Councils in the North Tyne to develop a Neighbourhood Plan with wide community and other stakeholder engagement by 2014;
- Develop a procedure for determining applications for designation of Neighbourhood Planning Forums and Areas by July 2012;
- Continue to raise awareness of the opportunities for Neighbourhood Planning with Parish Councils across the National Park, and produce guidance building on the experience of the 'Front Runners' by March 2013.

- c) Finalising the review of the impact of 'Action Area' working on the National Park and its residents by October 2012.

**Targets:**

- Develop methods for gaining information on the benefits and impact of past community and business projects on residents by June 2012;
- Report on the benefits and impacts of past projects by October 2012;
- Implement necessary changes to the Authority's 'Action Area' way of working by March 2013.

- d) Building community connections with and appreciation of the National Parks special qualities.

**Targets:**

- Support a volunteer-led historic environment 'day school' at the Kirknewton festival as part of the festival of British archaeology in September 2012;

- Develop and publish information about distinctive and visible species and where to see them to help people engage with biodiversity and recognise the importance of the Northumberland National Park.

#### **4.2 We will strive to ensure effective infrastructure (services and facilities) are available to support communities in and around the National Park by:**

- a) Continuing to undertake an annual local facilities survey to inform decisions on planning applications.

**Targets:**

- Survey completed by end April 2012;
- Results published in the State of the Park report by the end of June 2012 and shared with communities and partners.

- b) Increasing the sustainability of homes and businesses by improving the energy efficiency of domestic and commercial infrastructure by March 2013.

**Targets:**

- Working with Northumberland Warm Zone to analyse National Park specific datasets to get a better understanding of fuel poverty and where to promote opportunities to mitigate against the causes of fuel poverty;
- Facilitate the installation of loft insulation on an additional 10 farms that have not yet taken advantage of the NNPA Warm Zone insulation offer;

- c) Continuing to support the roll-out of broadband to areas of the National Park.

**Targets:**

- Work as an effective partner to help delivery the coordinated Northumberland Broadband Plan whilst ensuring the interests of residents and visitors to the National Park are adequately addressed;
- Work with Newcastle University to complete a pilot visitor information wifi broadband pilot by September 2012;
- Support the Northumberland Uplands Leader Local Action Group to invest £230,000 EU funds;
- Work with partners to secure over £1m in funding from Defra's Rural Community Broadband funds to deliver superfast broadband to the Coquetdale, Redesdale and North Tyne areas by December 2015 by securing funding from Defra by September 2012.

#### **4.3 We will help to ensure people have opportunities to work in, live in and contribute to resilient communities in and around the National Park by:**

- a) Continuing to provide and collect information on housing needs within the National Park to seek to ensure that new housing development meets identified needs.

**Targets:**

- Work with the Housing Authority and Parish Councils to update housing needs information as appropriate by March 2012.

- b) Enabling local communities to become sustainable by providing advice and support through 'Action Area' working.

**Targets:**

- Provide 40 community grants, and 5 other grants by March 2013;
  - Direct community groups to potential funding sources, sharing best practice and providing advice and guidance on writing funding applications throughout the year.
- c) Enabling sustainable rural development by consulting with policy makers on the future of rural development policy and funding, and continuing to host the Northumberland Uplands Leader.

**Targets:**

- Respond to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the future of rural development funding in England by the end of April 2012;
- Following the success in the Rural Growth Networks bid, work with public sector partners and private sector partners to ensure the successful development of the North Tyne cluster of 10 new businesses as live: work units in the National Park by December 2015. Work with partners to encourage Defra to approve the programme to have an effective start date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012;
- Host the Northumberland Uplands Leader and help the Local Action Group to bridge outcome gaps (e.g. youth engagement projects and trans-national projects with Leader Linne in Sweden) by hosting two new part time Youth Engagement officers from April 2012;
- Support NULAG in developing ideas for England's first Rural Parliament with partners across the UK and in Sweden by September 2012, aiming to deliver the first event by April 2013;
- Meet Defra's new quarterly financial performance targets;
- Assist NULAG with its work to bridge the gap between funding rounds and to influence future delivery of Leader funds;
- Support the development of Rural North to become an effective social enterprise company which will assist in the regeneration of the rural economy in and around the National Park;
- By March 2013 aim to create system to enable the SDF Grants Panel to work more closely with the Northumberland Uplands Leader Local Action Group;
- Contribute to the work of the North East Farming and Rural Advisory Network, leading on environmental matters for the network.

**Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like**

- **Level of influence of National Park residents on Northumberland National Park Authority services in the top 20% nationally by 2013**
- **95% of businesses and households within the National Park are able to access affordable broadband and speeds of at least 2Mb by 2012**
- **The age profile of the National Park indicates a decrease in outward migration of young people and adults of working age**

**Resources to deliver the priorities**

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
Budget: £206,800	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011): £167,700
Outturn: £122,300	Current Budget: £201,800

## **Aim 5. A Valued Asset**

*We will help ensure the National Park is valued as a local, regional and national asset, with influence beyond its boundaries that is worth looking after now and for generations to come*

### **5.1 We will promote social and economic contribution of the National Park, particularly to North East England by:**

- a) Undertaking research on wider environmental benefits to society provided by the National Park.

#### **Targets:**

- Work with ENPAA to complete research on the national data for valuing eco-system services to derive a value for each of England's National Parks;
- Work with Natural England to complete a further study into the value of the eco-system services of Northumberland National Park by March 2013;
- Share the results of the eco-systems services studies with key policy makers including the North East LEP. Create dedicated web pages and a high quality report for key partners;
- Ensure the lessons learnt from the Linhope landscape scale approach are communicated and integrated into the future vision for sustainable land management in the National Park. Create dedicated web pages, run a site visit for key partners and design and print a high quality report for key partners.

### **5.2 The National Park will make contribution to a broader network of protected areas by:**

- a) Finalising a habitats and species (and HLS) monitoring programme to report and share information on the extent and condition of priority habitats and species.

#### **Targets:**

- Habitat and species monitoring programme agreed by September 2012;
- Build on successful partnership working between the Authority and Natural England in delivering HLS by undertaking monitoring of HLS outcomes and using this to inform amendments to management prescriptions.

- b) Submitting a bid to Defra for Local Nature Partnership status for the Northern Upland Chain LNP.

#### **Targets:**

- Work in partnership with the North Pennines AONB, Nidderdale AONB and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to submit a bid by June 2013.

### **5.3 We will help ensure the value of the National Park is clearly demonstrated in the policies and actions of those who have influence on the National Park by:**

- a) Actively contributing to the North East Farming and Rural Advisory Network (NEFRAN) to influence policy development and the development and delivery of programmes by Defra and the North East LEP.

#### **Targets:**

- To contribute to relevant national policy consultation exercises to ensure National Park interests are appropriately represented;
  - To contribute to national and local studies and research related to the delivery of the National Park purposes and duty, and host study visits to the National Park in order to help inform such studies.
- b) Review the Authority's Partnership Engagement Plan to ensure strategically important messages are shared with key partners.

**Targets:**

- Review of the Partnership Engagement Plan completed by September 2012.

**Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like**

- **Enhanced awareness of the value of the National Park to the region**
- **Northumberland National Park is recognised as a regional / national exemplar for low carbon living**
- **The Integrated Regional Strategy, Northumberland Community Strategy and neighbouring Local Development Frameworks have policies which are demonstrating that they protect the heritage assets and support the delivery of the key elements of the National Park Management Plan**

**Resources to deliver the priorities**

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
Budget: £145,700	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011): £184,600
Outturn: £126,600	Current Budget: £268,000

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## **Aim 6. An Excellent Organisation**

*We will be an efficient, effective and inclusive organisation, achieving though partnerships and will strive for excellence*

### **6.1 We will continue to deliver value for money by:**

- a) Developing the next Business Plan for the period 2013-2016 to identify the Authority's medium term priorities and budget.

**Targets:**

- Review delivery against the current Business Plan by September 2012;
- Undertake a priority setting exercise at the policy conference in October 2012;
- Adopt and publish in print and on the website a new three-year Business Plan by the end of March 2013; and
- Maintain a high level of reassurance from the Assurance Framework including external and internal audits

- b) Completing the outstanding actions from the National Park Authorities Performance Assessment (NPAPA) improvement plan.

**Targets:**

- Complete the review of the Partnership Engagement Plan by September 2012 (see 5.3.b.);
- Report on the benefits and impact of Action Area working on the National Park and its residents (see 4.1.c.);
- Finalise and implement a habitat and species (& HLS) monitoring system to allow targeting of resources (see 5.2.a.);
- Better understanding regionally and nationally of the value of the National Park - achievement of the 'Valued Asset' aim (see 5);
- Complete a skills audit of staff, members, and volunteers to improve the effective allocation of skills and expertise (see 6.2.a);
- Improve income generation from the Authority's estate (see 6.1.c.).

- c) Completing actions to reduce costs and generate income to deliver the 33% reduced budget by 2014.

**Targets:**

- Set an Income Generation Strategy to reduce the Authority's reliance on the decreasing value and short-term nature of government spending plans, and widen the sources of income to support priority activities;
- Establish lease agreements to realise rental income from part of Eastburn, the ground floor of the Coquetdale Centre, and all of the Ingram Visitor Centre by March 2013. Conclude an alternative course of action by March 2013 if leasing is unsuccessful;
- If economically viable and following archaeological investigation and planning approval, create 40 new spaces at Housesteads car park by March 2013 to generate £10,000 additional annual income from 2013/14 onwards;
- Implement a new pricing policy across all the car parks by December 2012 for full-year implementation in 2013-2014 to generate £30,000 additional annual income;
- Review the financial effectiveness of current car park enforcement activity by December 2012;
- Develop a new 3-5 year Treasury Management Strategy by September 2012 to generate maximum income from the use of reserves, earmarked funds and working balances;



- Revalue the Authority's fixed assets with the new property advisor;
  - Manage the annual budget to embed cuts, and develop a new format to present budget information to the Authority to aid sound financial management.
- d) Delivering the new ICT Strategy to ensure cost effective, fit for purpose and sustainable (less resource intensive) solutions, maximising the advantages of open-source software and partnership working;

#### **Targets**

- Complete the migration of the website to the new platform and train 20 staff to be able to update web content by July 2012;
  - Upgrade and rationalise the virtual private network system to allow improved remote working for staff by June 2012;
  - Replace the staff intranet and shared workspace software (Sharepoint) with a less resource intensive electronic file storage and sharing system by March 2013;
  - Change from the MapInfo Geographic Information System (GIS) to the open source system to achieve annual savings of £3,000. Migration and training complete by December 2012;
  - Move corporate GIS datasets into a new spatial database by March 2013 to improve access to the data and improve integration with other applications. Test the 'all Parks portal' web mapping application to resolve issues by March 2013 with a view to migrating in 2013/14 allowing live updates of GIS datasets on the website;
  - Market test the Authority's telecommunication services by March 2013;
  - Optimise superfast broadband for the internal interests of the Authority;
  - Maintain the current customer relationship management software and assess the options to transfer to another system by February 2013.
- e) Improving Corporate Communications to increase the volume and quality of corporate messages.

#### **Targets**

- As part of the agreed Change Management Programme, complete a review of the communications function by December 2012 to ensure cost effective delivery of corporate messages and better use of scarce design resources with the aim of delivering £10,000 p.a. savings from April 2013;
- Produce 20 position statements – the first 10 by October 2012 to enable the Authority to better explain its achievements in key areas of work;
- Produce, print and circulate to all residents four newsletters each year to include promoting the Annual National Park Awards and the subsequent results;
- Finalise a Social Media Plan by June 2012 and extend the active use of social media (web, Facebook, Twitter, and mobile applications) to operations and policy staff, and senior managers by September 2012;
- Improve and refresh the content of the website. Following training, staff to regularly update the website.
- Use Google analytics to identify trends in customer usage to inform our investment in e-communications and to stay in touch with technological moves like the growth of smart-phones and tablets.
- Update the 10 year old stock of photographic images of the National Park. Focus on People in the Park – living working and enjoying the National Park. Ensure historic landscape photographic images are undertaken in spring 2013. Create a series of new summer and autumn images. Provide the volunteers with easy to use and high quality mobile technology to capture ongoing images.

- f) Manage 12 key recreational sites to a high standard of recreational, amenity and environmental services. Seek to maximise opportunities for income generation from recreational sites (in addition to car parking).

**Targets:**

- Visitor Survey ratings of 5 for visitor satisfaction for car park and toilet facilities.
- Generate £3,000 from recreational sites In addition to existing car park income.

- g) Ensuring a focus is maintained in providing a high quality and efficient Development Management Service

**Targets:**

- Ensure 80% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks and 80% of pre application enquiries are responded to within 28 working days in 2012/13;
- 75% of customers are satisfied with the development management service by March 2013;
- Consistently and clearly communicate relevant Development Management decisions and reasons for the decisions to the community within 48 hours;
- Develop a local fee charging scheme following further guidance from Government and alongside a review of the charging scheme for pre application advice;
- Review Development Management procedural documents including – Monitoring and Compliance Policy, site visit procedure, public speaking on Development Management matters and validation checklists;
- Finalise the implementation of the new Development Management IT system by end of May 2012;
- Deliver 'Planning on Tour' trial in three parishes in the National Park to improve access to Development Management Service for local communities.

## 6.2 We will continually develop our staff, volunteers and board members by:

- a) Completing the change management process to restructure the Authority's staff team and ensure the skills and expertise of staff, members and volunteers are effectively utilised.

**Targets:**

- Manage the staffing implications of leasing or closing the Rothbury and Ingram National Park Centre's ensuring full support is provided to staff transferring or ending employment;
- Complete a full skills audit of staff by October 2012 to ensure individual's skills are valued and utilised. Examples of wider skill use by March 2013;
- Ensure the Human Resources strategy focuses on providing training to staff, especially those in new job roles to ensure they have the skills and confidence to deliver;
- Introduce 360<sup>o</sup> appraisals for all managers;
- Implement the new Human Resources software system to ensure all important data is securely and efficiently captured by October 2012;
- Due to the limited staffing capacity, develop succession and contingency plans to cover job roles if members of staff are unavailable to work;
- Set a new three year Human Resources Strategy by December 2012;
- Maintain the Investors in People Award; and
- Update the suite of Human Resource policies to ensure they are consistent with the new organisational structure and provide clarity to staff.

- b) Implement and embed the Authority's revised governance arrangements to improve consultation, scrutiny, and decision making.

**Targets:**

- New Authority meeting structure and calendar implemented throughout 2012/13;
- Local residents and/or businesses represented on Review at least twice in 2012/13;
- Maintain Member attendance rates at above 75%;
- Due to legislative change revise the Member Code of Conduct and establish a new and local standards regime by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012;
- We will respond to the Defra consultation on direct elections to National Park Authorities and to further changes in Northumberland National Park Authority membership;
- As a result of Council and Parish elections we will ensure plans are in place for effective induction and training of members early in the new financial year;
- Develop a Member / Officer Working Protocol by January 2013;
- Reduce the carbon footprint of member travelling activity by 20%;
- Establish local area forums by February 2013.

- c) Ensuring the Authority Members and volunteers comply with Health and Safety legislation and all staff, Members and volunteers have effective training opportunities.

**Targets:**

- Review relevant health and safety documentation and systems during May and identifying changes to ensure systems are user friendly. Complete actions by July;
- Identify key health & safety training through the appraisal process and prioritise within the training plan to complete programmes by October;
- Number of relevant work related incidents to be less than 10 per year;
- Number of days lost due to work related incidents fewer than 50 days per year.

### **6.3 We will work with partners by:**

- a) Continuing to support and develop the National Park Management Plan Partnership.

**Targets:**

- Monitor delivery of the Management Plan Action Plan in October 2012 and communicate key messages by December 2012;
- Prepare the next Management Plan Annual Action Plan through the Management Plan Partnership by January 2013.

- b) Implement the changes to the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) following the review.

### **6.4 We will ensure our services are available to all people in our diverse society by:**

- a) Continuing to embed equality of opportunity in delivery of all our services, particularly in relation to the Equality Act.

**Targets:**

- Review Equality Objectives as part of the review of the Business Plan by January 2013;
- Continue to support the Equality Forum and seek to establish an independent chairman by March 2013;

- Review 8 Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they meet the requirements of the new Equality Act and undertake 6 Equality Analysis on new areas of work;
- Continue to publish information 6 monthly on our website which demonstrates compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and delivery of the organisations equality objectives.

### 6.5 We will ‘Walk the Talk’ on climate change by:

- a) Continuing to reduce energy consumption and green house gas emissions from our estate and operations.

**Targets:**

- Reconfiguring the ranger fleet to include lower CO<sub>2</sub> emitting vehicles and ensuring the fleet also provides pool vehicles for staff working from the working bases at Hadrian’s Wall and Rothbury;
- Continuing the Green Travel policy for all staff and increasing the pool car fleet to meet staff demand by purchasing lower CO<sub>2</sub> emitting cars at Head Office at Hexham.

### Meeting Our Business Plan Targets - What success will look like:

- **Maintain leverage levels of 150% on our National Park Grant and the National Park Authority judged as a highly effective authority through the national performance assessment in November 2011**
- **Maintenance of our Investors in People award throughout 2010 to 2013**
- **Assessed as an ‘Excellent Partner’ through our Partner surveys in 2010 and 2011**
- **Migrate from Level 3 of the Equality Standard to the equivalent level, ‘achieving authority’, of the Equality Framework by October 2011 and greater representation from underrepresented groups in NPA workforce, governance and forums by 2013 from 2010 baseline**
- **10% reduction in the carbon footprint of the NNPA estate and activities by 2013 from the 2009 baseline**

### Resources to deliver the priorities

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
Budget: £456,000	3 Year Plan (revised Dec. 2011):£368,000
Outturn: £349,000	Current Budget: £330,300

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