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# Corporate Plan

2009 - 2010

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## FOREWORD

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This Corporate Plan sets out Northumberland National Park Authority's achievements in delivering its strategic objectives from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. It also identifies key aims for the year 2009/10. 2008/09 was another year of sound delivery and continued improvement for Northumberland National Park Authority:

- virtually all of the keys targets were hit
- good progress made on every strategic objective; and
- budget outturn was on target

In terms of the seven strategic objectives we set ourselves for the year, we achieved much progress including:

### Safeguarding the Natural and Cultural Qualities

The Local Development Framework which provides a sound basis for the future protection and development of the National Park was produced with significant partner and community support, and ahead of schedule.

### Thriving Communities

Our approach to delivery within four 'Action Areas' and the Sustainable Development Fund have produced exceptionally strong performance, with well over 100 individual projects and initiatives supported across a range of businesses and community projects. This activity resulted in over £3million of spend in the National Park which demonstrates that the Authority is now working very effectively with local businesses and communities.

### A Welcoming Park

Progress was made in working with local tourism businesses throughout the year and regionally. During the year the Authority completed an audit of all tourism infrastructure within the Park and will now take forward a programme to identify gaps in visitor provision.

### The Park as a Valued Asset

The National Park has been identified as one of the three key tourism destinations for the (North East) region. The Authority is also playing an active role in the development of regional planning within the North East region.

The 'Cheviot Futures' programme, developed with a number of partners, is demonstrating the value of the National Park in leading action to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

### Achieving through Partnerships

During the year the Authority reviewed its ways of working with key strategic partners. Very effective arrangements are now in place with a wide variety of partners, for example our work with Natural England on the Environmental Stewardship Schemes in the National Park is viewed as an example of best practice.

The Authority (as Lead Partner) is pleased that the New Northumberland Uplands LEADER Partnership was the first in mainland England to be in operation and providing grants to local businesses in 2008.

### An Efficient and Inclusive Authority

In 2008/09 the Authority made good progress in making an assessment of its services to ensure that they are available to all people on an equal basis. Equality is a high priority for the Authority and by the end of 2010 we aim to achieve Equality Standard Level 3.

Increasing Understanding About and Demonstrating Responses to Climate Change

The Authority developed a Climate Change Action Plan during the year. The Authority has now assessed its carbon emissions as 308,000Kgs of CO<sub>2</sub> (2008/09). In 2009/10 the Authority is aiming to reduce its carbon emissions by 5% or approximately 15,000Kgs of CO<sub>2</sub>. We have already made some important progress through the introduction of energy efficiency measures.

All of this progress was, of course, only made possible by the dedicated work by members, partners, volunteers and staff, and by the ongoing commitment of our partners and the communities within, and around, the National Park.

The National Park Management Plan was revised in June 2009, and has given us a clear agenda for action for the next five years. I trust we can now work equally successfully to take this forward

This Corporate Plan was approved by the Northumberland National Park Authority on 24 June 2009.

**Tony Gates**  
**Chief Executive (National Park Officer)**  
**June 2009**

# 1. Introduction

## Portrait of the National Park

1.1 Spread over the hills and valleys at the very top of England, but right in the centre of Britain, the landscape of Northumberland National Park has distinct characteristics. To the north there are the breathtaking rolling moors and grasslands of the Cheviot Hills, with their ancient hillforts and clean rivers. To the east is the Upper Coquet Valley with the landmark Simonside Hills and attractive villages. To the west are the valleys of the North Tyne and Redesdale, wild, inspiring, and once home of the Border Reivers. To the south is the iconic ridge of the Whin Sill with Hadrian's Wall striding along its crest. The landscape of the National Park also supports habitats suitable for rare species such as red squirrel and black grouse.

1.2 As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 Northumberland's six District/Borough Councils and the County Council will merge into a single Unitary Authority for Northumberland. The National Park lies wholly within the new Unitary Authority area and the North East region of England, but borders Scotland and the North West region. The Unitary Authority will deliver various local services in and around the National Park.

1.3 Covering over 400 square miles, the tranquillity and spectacular scenery of the National Park are attracting an increasing number of visitors all year round. More people also want to live in the National Park and there is now an increased demand both for holiday homes and affordable housing.



1.4 Historically, the level of development in the National Park has been low. The National Park boundary excludes the larger settlements in the area, and settlements within the boundary comprise small villages, hamlets, and isolated farm dwellings. Significant land use change has resulted from the development of military training facilities and forestry plantations. Around 75% of the area is designated as Open Access land, which makes Northumberland one of the most accessible National Parks in England.

## Northumberland National Park Authority

### Statutory Purposes and Duty

1.5 Northumberland National Park was designated in 1956 and the Northumberland National Park Authority was established in 1997<sup>1</sup>. The National Park Authority is a special purpose local authority, with two statutory purposes<sup>2</sup>:

- ***Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and***
- ***Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of (the) areas by the public.***

1.6 In pursuing the purposes, the National Park Authority also has a duty to: ***“seek to foster the social and economic well-being of the local communities”***.

### Authority Members

1.7 The creation of a single Unitary Authority amalgamating the County Council and the six District Councils has significant impacts on the membership of the Authority. To maintain a balanced membership representing local, regional and national interests the membership will change from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 as summarised below:

|                                      |    |    |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Local Authority                      | 12 | to | 6  |
| Secretary of State – Parish Councils | 4  | to | 6  |
| Secretary of State – wider interests | 6  | to | 10 |

There will be six members appointed from the Unitary Authority and six Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs appointees from Parish Councils. The remaining Secretary of State appointees will consist of: two members that live or work in the National Park; one member from the Newcastle/Gateshead area; one member with specialist knowledge of regional issues, and; six representing the national interest, often with specialist knowledge or a particular interest in the National Park.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously the functions were undertaken by Northumberland County Council

<sup>2</sup> Section 61 of The Environment Act (1995) updated the purposes of designation of National Parks

## 2. Management Context – Strategy, Implementation and Review

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### The National Park Management Plan and the Authority's Corporate Plan

2.1 The National Park Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park, setting out the guiding principles, vision, objectives and actions for managing the Park, based on the National Park's special qualities. In 2008/09 the National Park Authority coordinated the 4<sup>th</sup> review of the plan with a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders.

2.2 The Management Plan review has refined the Vision for the National Park to 2029 and developed a set of aims and outcomes to guide management decisions for the National Park Authority AND our key partners and stakeholders.

2.3 The Authority's own medium term (3 year) priorities and objectives are due for review in 2009 following the publication of the revised Management Plan. The development of this Corporate Plan falls towards the end of the Authority's existing medium term priorities and objectives, and with refined aims emerging from the Management Plan. As a result this Corporate Plan uses a set of 'interim' strategic objectives balancing the existing and emerging approaches.

### Our Vision

2.4 The refined Vision for the National Park to 2029 is that:

*"Northumberland National Park will be a truly welcoming and distinctive place, easily accessible to all.*

*Its inspiring and changing landscapes, characterised by open spaces, tranquillity, diverse habitats and rich cultural heritage, will be widely recognised and valued.*

*The living, working landscape will contribute positively to the wellbeing of the thriving and vibrant communities in and around the Park."*

2.5 The statement emphasises the Authority's belief that the future of the National Park lies in maintaining, enhancing and promoting its special qualities and that this will be achieved by keeping it as a living, working landscape. Realising the Vision means that the Authority will work towards:

- Sustainable land use – encouraging the people that live and work in the National Park to make a good living from the land, while leaving it in good condition for future generations;
- A landscape rich in biodiversity and geodiversity – protecting and enhancing the whole range of distinctive habitats, and species across the National Park and conserving the geological heritage of the area;
- A rich cultural heritage<sup>3</sup> – conserving, enhancing, and celebrating the historical legacy of the National Park, and developing it as a part of contemporary culture;
- A true sense of tranquillity – the peace and quiet which are increasingly rare and precious in the rest of the country;
- Opportunities for all to understand, enjoy and contribute to the special qualities – for the benefit of visitors and residents, and because well informed passionate people will help to support all our other aims;
- A thriving community and economy grounded in the special qualities – for the benefit of residents and visitors, and to underpin all our other aims.

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<sup>3</sup> The cultural heritage includes both the physical remains and the living inheritance of the National Park

## How We Translate the Vision into Action

2.6 Our approach to delivering the Vision recognises the critical interaction between people and the landscape. We work with and through local communities using the 'Action Area' approach. Our 'Action Area' approach reflects both the central role of thriving communities in securing a sustainable future for the National Park and the fact that the special qualities express themselves differently from one part of the Park to another, creating areas of locally distinctive character. It recognises that broad and generalised prescriptions are unlikely to be the most effective way to maintain the rich variety of landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage and that action tailored to the local context will frequently be more appropriate.

2.7 'Action Area' working seeks to use this local distinctiveness as a framework for engaging communities and other partners in the planning, care and management of local landscapes. It harnesses the knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of local people and supports them with expert technical advice, help and funding to nurture and strengthen local connections between people and place. The Authority sees this approach as a corner stone of its activity and will seek to pursue this further, locally and regionally, throughout its partnership working.

2.8 The National Park is divided into four 'Action Areas' based on a mix of geographical and social factors. 'Action Areas' extend beyond the National Park boundary, recognising that the 'gateway settlements' outside the Park are essential to maintaining strong and sustainable communities.

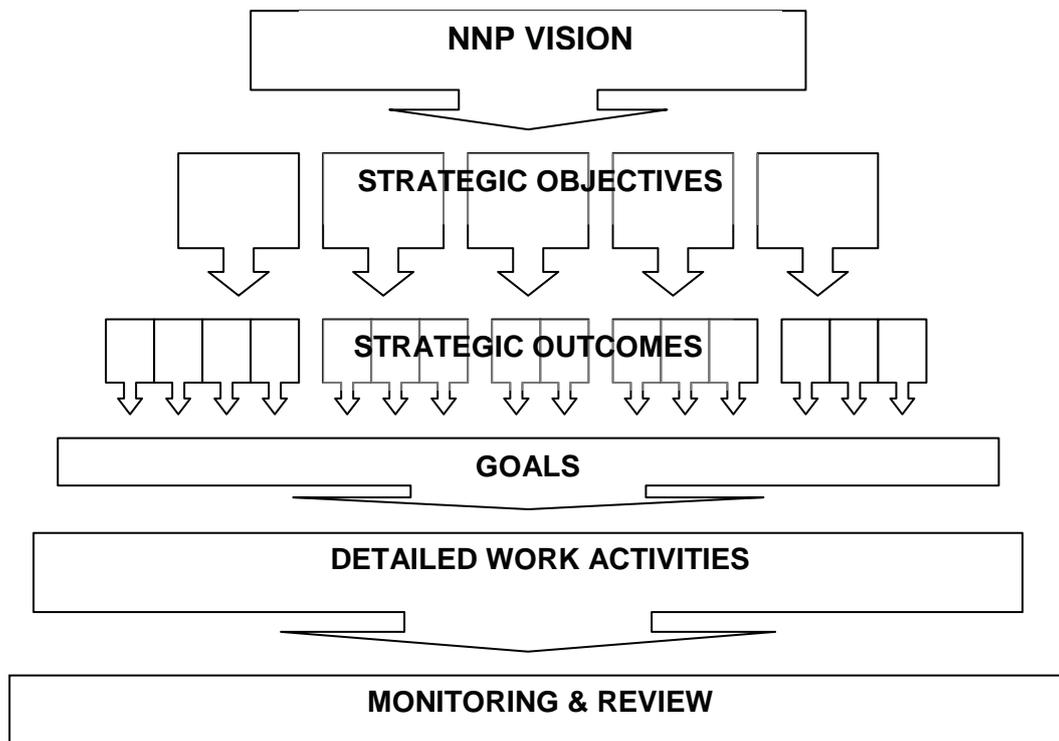
The four 'Action Areas' are:

- Cheviot and Glendale
- Upper Coquetdale
- North Tyne and Redesdale
- Hadrian's Wall and South Tyne



2.9 The Authority translates its contribution towards the Vision for the National Park and guides its Action Area delivery by means of setting a medium term set of strategic objectives (see 2.12 below) and detailed annual goals, activities and measures which are outlined in section 5 of this document and detailed within Team Work Plans. Figure 1 demonstrates how the Authority translates the Vision in to actions for delivery via the Action Areas.

**Figure 1: Translating the Vision into Action**



## Government Priorities

2.10 Defra is the Government department responsible for English National Park Authorities. It has set challenging objectives for the Authorities, which can be summarised as:

- Promote the principles of sustainable development;
- Implement the Countryside and Rights of Way Act;
- Promote understanding and greater use by all sections of society;
- Promote wildlife conservation and cultural heritage; and
- Improve performance through regional and national working.

2.11 Defra has prepared a 'deal' setting out priorities and working practices to 2011<sup>4</sup>. One key priority is climate change as Defra is the Government department co-ordinating action on climate change. Defra are looking to National Parks to make a contribution towards this national priority and as such Northumberland National Parks Authority has adopted climate change as a strategic objective.

<sup>4</sup> Further information is set out in appendix 3

## **'Interim' Strategic Objectives**

2.12 The Government's priorities and the emerging aims from the Management Plan have been incorporated into an 'interim' set of strategic objectives building on the Authority's existing medium term objectives that were set in the Strategic Priority Setting Process<sup>5</sup> of 2006 (see Table 1). The Authority's medium term priorities and objectives will be reviewed in 2009 following publication of the Management Plan.

**Table 1: NNPA 'Interim' Strategic Objectives**

| <b>Interim Strategic Objectives</b>   |
|---|
| 1. To safeguard and enhance the distinctive sense of place, characterised by a sense of inspiration and tranquillity, diverse habitats, and a rich historic environment   |
| 2. To ensure a thriving, vibrant community and economy is grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park and embeds the principles of sustainable development  |
| 3. To ensure a welcoming and accessible National Park, available to a wider and more diverse audience, offering exceptional experiences and a more diverse range of learning opportunities  |
| 4. To ensure Northumberland National Park is demonstrating its value to sub-regional, regional and national agendas and is valued as an asset for the region and the nation. The Northumberland National Park Authority is recognised an effective and reliable partner |
| 5. Northumberland National Park Authority is proactive, innovative & forward looking, achieving through partnerships  |
| 6. Northumberland National Park Authority is efficient, effective and inclusive   |
| 7. The National Park Authority is increasing understanding about and demonstrating responses to climate change  |

## **Corporate Planning Process**

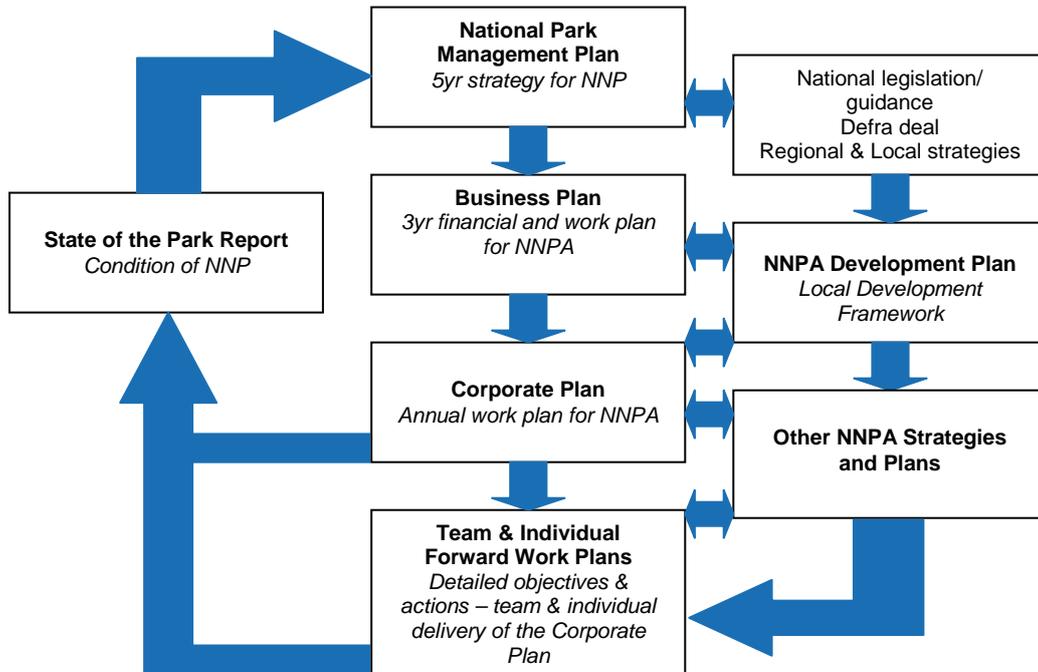
2.13 The process for preparing this Corporate Plan commenced in December 2008 with the identification of challenges and goals for the year ahead and continued through January and February with work, budget and resource planning. The Corporate Plan provides the strategic targets for the Authority for the coming year and provides the basis for: Team Work Plans, which explain in more detail what will be done to deliver these priorities; and individual Forward Work Plans which illustrate what every member of staff will do to work towards achieving the Vision.

2.14 The Corporate Plan and the budget plan for the coming financial year are taken to the meeting of the full Authority in March for sign-off. The Corporate Plan is published by 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.

<sup>5</sup> See section 3.9 for further information

2.15 The corporate planning process ensures a clear link between each member of staff's work and the objectives of the Authority. Figure 2 illustrates how the Corporate Plan, Team and Individual Forward Work Plans fit within the hierarchy of strategies and plans prepared by the Authority.

**Figure 2: Hierarchy of Plans**



### **3. Continuous Improvement and Efficient and Effective use of Resources**

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#### **Background**

3.1 In July 2005 the Authority was one of the first to be inspected as part of the newly agreed National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA). This Assessment was deliberately designed to be a supportive process to enable each National Park Authority to identify its strengths and weaknesses. In overall terms the review gave the Authority a favourable outcome similar to that of a "good" council and the Authority subsequently set a target to become "excellent". The Authority aims to achieve this by a process of ongoing organisational development including work to improve; working practices to support the Authority's culture and values; human resource policies; information provision and communication; equality, and; performance management practices.

3.2 The Authority therefore agreed an improvement plan in September 2005 which focussed attention on a number of key drivers for improvement:

- The development of a Strategic Priority Setting Process to enable resources to be focussed on the most effective means of delivering the Authority's Strategic Objectives;
- Staff restructuring, to align resources and work programmes to the Strategic Priorities, (effective from 1 August 2006);
- Corporate Governance Review, to allow the Authority to operate more effectively in delivering the Vision, complementing the review of staff structures. The new governance structure was approved by the Authority in March 2007 and went live in July 2007;
- Human Resource Strategy starting with an evidence based approach to human resource management with the aim to create personnel policies, practices and work plans aligned to the strategic objectives and the organisation's culture and values;
- Commitment to progress through the Equality Standard to ensure equality is mainstreamed into the Authority's service delivery and employment practices.
- Corporate Communications Strategy aims to ensure key messages are delivered in a timely and consistent manner to key audiences to enable internal and external audiences to be better able to understand the prioritised aims and objectives of the Authority;
- Strategic Partnership Review is being implemented to ensure that the Authority is better able to respond to and work with key national, regional, and sub-regional partners whose role is critical to the enhancement of Northumberland National Park.

#### **Resources**

##### Staff

3.3 The Authority employs 99 staff<sup>6</sup> and has 123 active voluntary rangers. The staff and volunteers are the Authority's greatest resource and they account for 62.6% of the annual income.

3.4 The Authority's staff structure has a Strategic Management Team consisting of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) and Directors and a series of functional staff teams, each headed by a Business Manager. The Strategic Management Team provides direction and ensures integrated delivery between the Authority's staff teams. The structure also enhances capacity and decision making at Business

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<sup>6</sup> 82.1 full time equivalent

Manager level to support local area delivery. The specialist skills of our functional teams are incorporated into delivery via our Action Area working approach.

3.5 Each of our staff teams contains specialist skills and knowledge and between them they undertake the following roles:

- Interpretation of the policy environment within which the Authority works; influencing national and regional policy in order to benefit the National Park and its communities.
- Our area teams are the main implementation arm of the Authority; therefore, for many local communities and visitors, they are the visible part of the Authority, playing a key role in integrating at a local level all the operations of the National Park Authority. There are two area teams covering the northern and southern parts of the National Park.
- Our corporate teams provide the supporting services and systems for the Authority, and regulate the work of the Authority within the context of financial and legal undertakings. The corporate teams ensure that the Authority has the resources (sites, finance, staff, and information) and business systems appropriate to the style of operation and works to enable the Authority to achieve its wider strategic objectives.

### Financial Planning

|                     | 2008/09 Budget and Actual |             |             |             |              |              | 2009/10 Budget |             |              |          |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
|                     | Sal & Rel                 |             | Expenditure |             | Income       |              | Sal & Rel      | Expend      | Income       | FTE      |
|                     | Budget                    | Actual      | Budget      | Actual      | Budget       | Actual       |                |             |              |          |
|                     | £000s                     | £000s       | £000s       | £000s       | £000s        | £000s        | £000s          | £000s       | £000s        | Staff no |
| Finance and HR      | 223                       | 259         | 78          | 81          | -75          | -63          | 207            | 115         | -25          | 7        |
| ICT                 | 188                       | 188         | 184         | 172         | 0            | 0            | 215            | 168         | 0            | 6        |
| Office Services     | 285                       | 300         | 358         | 342         | -7           | -7           | 296            | 383         | -9           | 11       |
| Development Control | 89                        | 86          | 20          | 20          | -12          | -10          | 93             | 19          | -9           | 2.5      |
| Forward Planning    | 96                        | 87          | 61          | 59          | -19          | -125         | 104            | 54          | -19          | 2.5      |
| Landscape & Rec     | 158                       | 158         | 35          | 36          | -5           | -5           | 163            | 47          | -23          | 4        |
| Visitor Development | 180                       | 164         | 65          | 63          | 0            | 0            | 160            | 50          | 0            | 4        |
| Operations North    | 345                       | 346         | 111         | 32          | -83          | -68          | 373            | 73          | -4           | 10       |
| Visitor Centres     | 116                       | 115         | 46          | 44          | -83          | -71          | 120            | 47          | -79          | 6        |
| Operations South    | 378                       | 378         | 91          | 87          | 0            | -7           | 392            | 73          | 0            | 11       |
| Car Parks           | 0                         |             | 17          | 18          | -95          | -94          | 0              | 18          | -100         |          |
| SMT                 | 292                       | 251         |             |             |              |              | 300            |             |              | 4        |
| Other related       | 84                        | 60          |             |             |              |              | 79             |             |              |          |
| National Park Grant |                           |             |             |             | -3092        | -3117        |                |             | -3181        |          |
| Efficiency Savings  |                           |             |             |             |              |              | -90            | -10         | -20          |          |
| <b>Non-project</b>  | <b>2434</b>               | <b>2392</b> | <b>1066</b> | <b>954</b>  | <b>-3471</b> | <b>-3567</b> | <b>2412</b>    | <b>1037</b> | <b>-3469</b> |          |
| <b>Projects</b>     | <b>355</b>                | <b>340</b>  | <b>756</b>  | <b>748</b>  | <b>-692</b>  | <b>-743</b>  | <b>341</b>     | <b>401</b>  | <b>-668</b>  | 15       |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>2789</b>               | <b>2732</b> | <b>1822</b> | <b>1702</b> | <b>-4163</b> | <b>-4310</b> | <b>2753</b>    | <b>1438</b> | <b>-4137</b> | 83       |
|                     |                           |             |             |             | Deficit      | Deficit      |                |             | Deficit      |          |
|                     |                           |             |             |             | <b>448</b>   | <b>124</b>   |                |             | <b>54</b>    |          |

\*Note: Expenditure includes approx. 60% inflexible costs such as property costs and service level agreements. The remaining "flexible" costs include £200,000 for Sustainable Development Fund and £100,000 for Action Areas.

### Partnership Working

3.8 The Northumberland National Park Authority is committed to achieving the management of the National Park through partnerships, as working together with partners is the only way to tackle many of the complex problems facing the National Park. The Authority will continue to work closely with its key partners to maximise the value from working with and through others to enhance delivery of our Vision.

## **Focusing Our Resources**

### Priority Work Areas

3.9 In 2006 the Authority established a Strategic Priority Setting Process to help prioritise its discretionary work areas (areas of work which the Authority undertakes in pursuance of its statutory purposes and duty, where the Authority has discretion on the way in which it delivers). With limited resources, it is important for the Authority to have a clear view on where it needs to focus most.

3.10 In parallel the Authority's "Core and Statutory Services" (those other areas of work which are required to allow the organisation to function effectively, such as: Development Control; Forward Planning; Open Access; operating the Sustainable Development Fund; Strategic Management and Corporate support) were subject to review assessing improvements in efficiency, economy, and effectiveness.

3.11 The Authority's discretionary areas of work were prioritised as follows:

| <b>Priority 1 Work Areas</b>   | <b>Priority 2 Work Areas</b>  | <b>Priority 3 Work Areas</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rural Diversification</li><li>• Skills and Training</li><li>• Farming and Land Management</li><li>• Website and e-communications</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Natural Environment Conservation</li><li>• Sustainable Tourism</li><li>• Cultural Heritage</li><li>• Rights of Way and Access</li><li>• Marketing</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and Interpretation</li><li>• Sustainable Transport</li><li>• Archaeology and the Historic Environment</li><li>• Visitor Centres</li><li>• Recreational Sites and Facilities</li><li>• Events</li></ul> |

3.12 The medium term priorities and objectives set in the Strategic Priority Setting Process are due for review in 2009. This will take place after publication of the National Park Management Plan to ensure the Authority's own resources and objectives are fully aligned to the priorities and aims agreed with partners and stakeholders for the National Park. The 2009 review will guide the corporate planning process through to 2012.

## 4. Review of Performance 2008/2009

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### Priority Activities - 2008/09 Performance

4.1 The following section provides a summary of performance against the priority work activities for the last year.

#### **Strategic Objective 1:**

To safeguard and enhance the distinctive sense of place, characterised by inspirational and tranquil natural qualities, diverse habitats, and a rich historic environment

**Strategic Planning:** The Authority successfully adopted its Core Strategy in March 2009 three months ahead of target. The Core Strategy is a critical statutory document that will shape the future development of Northumberland National Park. The Authority also undertook a very successful and inclusive consultation process on the 4<sup>th</sup> review of the National Park Management Plan. The draft Management Plan has been developed by working closely with partners, communities and other stakeholders and is scheduled for publication in June 2009.

**Landscape Strategy – to guide delivery for a landscape designation:** The Authority made a decision not to progress a Landscape Strategy as originally planned until the review of the Management Plan has been completed. Valuable background information for the strategy was gained via the Management Plan consultation process. This work will be carried forward into the coming year after publication of the Management Plan.

**Development Control improvements:** Timeliness of dealing with planning applications fell in the year and customer service improvements have not been implemented as planned. This is partially explained by a lack of continuity in the Development Control team due to maternity leave cover. Enhanced performance and customer service are expected in the coming year.

**Land Management – securing environmental and economic benefits:** The Authority's Farming and Rural Enterprise team have worked closely with Natural England and farmers to develop Farm Environment Plans to enhance the special qualities of the Park and secure income for land managers. The 'farmed' area of the Park (farms excluding forestry) in Higher Level Stewardship, the most environmentally and economically beneficial scheme has increased from 12% to 22% in the year. In total 83% of the farmed area of the Park is in an agri-environment scheme with 59% of the area in a form of 'higher targeted' scheme.

**Seeding Change – hay meadow restoration:** The Seeding Change project successfully completed in December 2008 contributing to the Upland Hay Meadow Habitat Action Plan by restoring 60 hectares of hay meadow and planting 9,000 wildflowers in school grounds, verges and other wild spaces. The project was very successful in engaging communities and businesses with 35 schools involved, 60 volunteer projects undertaken, 46 community walks and talks, and 22 business and tourism walks and talks completed.

**Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills:** This Authority run project trains ten people from differing backgrounds each year in countryside management and micro-business start up skills. The third intake of trainees graduated in the last year. In the three years of the project, over 6 Kilometres of dry stone wall and 3 Kilometres of hedgerows and footpaths have been restored. 28 of a possible 30 trainees have graduated from the course with 26 achieving the intermediate dry stone walling qualification and 25 moving into employment.

### **Strategic Objective 2:**

To ensure a thriving, vibrant community and economy in the Park grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the Park and based on the principles of sustainable development

**Action Area Delivery – attracting funding into the National Park:** The Authority's Action Area funds have successfully facilitated local community and business projects in and around the National Park. 87 projects were grant funded by the Authority in the year to a value of £82,000 and attracted £444,500 of matched funding. Other aspects of our Action Area work are outlined later in this section.

**Sustainable Development Fund:** The Authority has had a very successful year in administering the Sustainable Development Fund. 40 projects claimed grants in the year totalling £491,000 and attracting £2.6 million of matched funding. All the projects meet sustainable development criteria and stimulate the economy in and around the Park.

**Cheviot Hills Heritage Project:** This cross-border heritage and access project has successfully engaged communities in the foothills of the Cheviot Hills. On completion of the project communities will have been connected with the landscape and a legacy of interpretative materials to support tourism in the local area will remain.

### **Strategic Objective 3:**

To ensure a welcoming and accessible National Park, available to a wider and more diverse audience, offering a more diverse range of learning opportunities and exceptional experiences

**Sustainable Tourism initiatives:** 20 businesses are now accredited to the Green Tourism Business Scheme. All three National Park Centres have now undergone assessment under the scheme with the Once Brewed centre achieving a Gold Award in the year and the Ingram centre pending its award. The Authority undertook a mapping exercise of the tourism infrastructure in and around the Park allowing for future gap analysis and targeting of resources. The Authority also registered as a candidate Park for the 'European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas' a tool that aims to improve sustainable development and management of tourism within protected landscapes.

**Coast and Country – enabling local businesses to promote and gain value from protected landscapes:** This initiative delivered in partnership with the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) helps local businesses and organisations to understand the special qualities of the National Park and AONB protected landscapes. 54 separate businesses and organisations attended events in the year equipping them with the knowledge to promote and gain value from the protected landscapes through their own operations and marketing.

**Access – improvements to infrastructure and promotion:** The condition of public rights of way within the Park has deteriorated over several years since the Authority moved resources away from this area in the Strategic Priority Setting Process of 2006. In response the Authority allocated resources to complete an audit of the network in the northern area of the Park and produced a costed three year maintenance programme in the year. The Authority completed works on the National Trail routes through the Park and helped to promote the Rothbury Walking Festival. The Authority trialled a 'meet the Voluntary Ranger' programme where volunteers were trained to share their enthusiasm and local knowledge with visitors to enhance the visitor experience. This and a programme aimed at the less active called 'Walks to Wellbeing' will be fully implemented in the year ahead.

**The Sill Protected Landscape Centre:** A significant amount of work was completed in the year to finish the 'Project Planning Phase' with the result that a One North East Economic Impact Assessment demonstrated that the project could return a healthy 8% on investment if pursued. However, progressing in to the 'Development Phase' is proving difficult due to a current reduction in regional funding.

**Strategic Objective 4:**

To ensure the National Park is demonstrating its value to sub-regional, regional and national agendas and is valued as an asset for the region and nation. The National Park Authority is recognised an effective and reliable partner

**Northumberland Uplands LEADER:** The Authority has been instrumental as lead partner in initiating and administering the new Northumberland Uplands LEADER approach. The approach provides access to £350,000 of Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) funding each year until 2013 and helps to facilitate community led action in the uplands within and beyond the Park for sustainable rural development projects. In the last year 5 projects and £205,000 funds were awarded of which 2 and £90,000 directly impacted the National Park.

**Local Government Review – aligning with the new Unitary Northumberland County Council:** The Authority has worked to establish a strong working relationship with the new Northumberland County Council with a number of important service level agreements being successfully transferred. The Authority is working closely with the new Northern and Western Area Partnerships and with the newly constituted Northumberland Strategic Partnership. Discussions on alignment of the Action Area approach with emerging council structures have taken place as has an assessment of how the Authority is contributing to the Local Area Agreement and the Northumberland Strategic Community Strategy.

**Water Framework Directive:** The Authority has actively input into the Area Advisory Groups for the 'Solway Tweed' and 'Northumbria' river basin districts helping to produce a draft plan for consultation. The plans aim to improve the chemical and biological condition of water bodies in the region.

**Strategic Objective 5:**

The National Park Authority is proactive, innovative, and forward looking, achieving through partnerships

**Partnerships with Natural England and English Heritage:** The Authority developed joint action plans with Natural England and English Heritage to agree priorities and ensure alignment of resources to maximise effectiveness. The partnership between the Authority and Natural England in delivering the Environmental Stewardship agri-environment scheme is held as a national exemplar of partner working in this area.

**Action Area Working – the benefits of the integrated approach:** The Action Area approach provides access to the specialist expertise and knowledge of the Authority and its partners through our area teams. The network of contacts built through Action Area working resulted in successful engagement of communities in the National Park Management Plan review process. Informal focus groups were held throughout the Park, involving communities, businesses, farmers and young people both at an early stage to help frame the policy issues and at draft plan stage to check that their input had been accurately captured. The benefits of the approach were demonstrated in the wake of severe flooding in September when the Authority acted

as a hub and catalyst to communication between local communities and the various organisations and services responding to the event. A key objective for the coming year is to achieve visibility of this work and ensure that the work of the Authority is fully recognised.

**Strategic Objective 6:**

The National Park Authority is efficient, effective, and inclusive

**Equality – ensuring the Authority lead on the equality agenda:** The Authority's commitment to equality was demonstrated with significant progress being made in the year. Staff and members undertook training, equality impact assessments were completed and equality targets have been built into team work plans. The Authority narrowly missed achieving Level 2 of the Standard within the target date but considers that all elements are now in place and that achievement will be confirmed soon. The Authority aims to be ready for external assessment for Level 3 by March 2010.

**Infrastructure to support delivery:** Particular emphasis was placed on developing the Authority's information technology and support systems at the Once Brewed and Rothbury sites to support the area based teams and reduce exposure of core systems at the Eastburn site. The Authority also implemented an enhanced risk management framework to aid the management team in risk identification and mitigation and continued to embed performance management with the role out of a set of enhanced performance indicators and improved information collection to aid decision making.

**Communication:** The Authority has recognised that it does not always succeed in communicating the good work and positive outcomes that it delivers. In response a communications strategy identifying the Authority's main audiences, key audience specific messages and principle media was produced in the year. The Communications Officer has produced a communications timetable identifying the main activities and milestones from the work plan for the year ahead to ensure accurate and timely communications.

**Strategic Objective 7:**

Contribute to increasing understanding about and demonstrating responses to climate change

**Climate Change Action Plan:** The Authority produced a climate change action plan identifying the potential implications of climate change on the National Park and actions to aid mitigation and adaption. The plan identifies actions to progress within the Park and actions to directly reduce the impact of the Authority's operations. The Authority allocated a proportion of its Action Area funds to climate change projects helping to fund development of an educational film and an educational school garden. The Cheviot Futures project, a project to develop exemplar climate change mitigation and adaption measures was also initiated in the year.

**Reducing the Authority's carbon footprint:** The Authority undertook extensive work to determine a carbon emissions baseline for its operations and commissioned an audit of its sites to identify areas for improvement. This work identified the Authority's carbon dioxide emissions to be 308 tonnes last year with the estate accounting for 54% and transportation accounting for 46% of emissions. This work also identified areas where significant improvements can be made. Some actions have already been progressed such as new loft insulation, introducing low energy options when replacing computers and information technology equipment, and solar powered, motion sensitive security lighting and low energy LED lighting options.

## Summary

4.2 The Authority concludes that it largely achieved the work programme that it set itself for the last year. There were two important areas of work where the Authority fell short of its plan, namely implementing improvements to the Development Control service and development of a Landscape Strategy. This is partially explained by staff continuity issues within the Development Control team and the focus on reviewing the Management Plan. The Authority achieved and often exceeded its expected outcomes in other priority work areas with good progress made on the climate change and equality agendas. Excellent progress was made in delivering the land management agenda in partnership with Natural England and the Authority's Action Area approach is successfully delivering advice, support, and funding for sustainable development initiatives into local communities and businesses. The Authority will continue to learn from and embed this approach and expand its implementation with partner organisations.

### **Performance Indicators**

4.3 Since April 2000 all local authorities in England and Wales have had a duty to plan the provision of their public services to clear standards of cost and quality, and by the most economic, efficient and effective ways available. The aim is to deliver continuous improvement of services to the public. The 2006 Local Government White Paper '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*', promised a new era of freedom for local Government to offer greater flexibility to set priorities and greater discretion how to meet them. At the national level the number of indicators for assessing performance would be reduced from 1,200 to 197.

4.4 In order to reflect these national changes, fully reflect the strategic priorities, new organisational structure, and to link clearly with the State of the National Park Report, during 2008 the Authority developed a new suite of indicators and targets<sup>7</sup>. This will enable us to effectively measure progress towards achieving our priorities.

### **Performance Indicators 2008/09**

4.5 The Authority's new suite of performance indicators comprises of 27 top level indicators that directly align to the Strategic Objectives. Some of the indicators incorporate contextual or sub-indicators bringing the total number to 43. Where indicators have been retained from the previous suite or where historic data is available for new indicators, trend information has been calculated to determine the direction of travel. Two indicators will not be reported this year because the information is not yet available for calculation (partner survey score and CO<sub>2</sub> reductions) and another sub-indicator is not yet available following issues with the reliability of the collection methodology (local/regional awareness of the National Park), all three are intended to be reported next year.

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<sup>7</sup> All performance Indicators and targets are set out in appendix 1

4.6 Performance against the previous year is available for 24 of the 43 indicators, with information against the three year average available for 15 indicators. There is benchmark information to the other eight English National Park Authorities available for 8 of the indicators. Where previous year information is available 10 (42%) indicators improved, 8 (33%) recorded no change, and 6 (25%) recorded a decline. 3 of the indicators that recorded no change and 2 that recorded a decline still reported above the three year average figure so these are not considered to reflect a poor result.

| <b>Performance Indicator Trends</b> |                       |                      |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                     | against previous year | against 3 yr average | against NPA family upper quartile |
| Better                              | 10                    | 10                   | 3                                 |
| No Change                           | 8                     | 1                    | 0                                 |
| Decline                             | 6                     | 4                    | 5                                 |
| <b>Total (where relevant)</b>       | <b>24</b>             | <b>15</b>            | <b>8</b>                          |

4.7 Overall 19 indicators are considered to be positive, either because they show improvement on the previous year or three year average performance, clearly demonstrate the work of the Authority, or are providing information that was simply not previously available to the Authority to influence decision making. 17 indicators are considered to be neutral because there has been no change or because no trend information is yet available, four indicators are considered to represent poor performance and three are not yet available to report.

#### Indicators showing positive performance

**Percentage area of SSSI's and NNR's in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition** – The 2008/09 status is 92%, up from 87% the previous year and a previous three year average of 78%. The National Park is now just 3% short of the Government target of 95% by 2010.

**Listed Buildings removed from the 'at risk' register** – 1 building was removed from the at risk register in the year, an improvement on the previous three years where no buildings were saved. 25 listed buildings remain at risk within the Park.

**Changes to Scheduled Ancient Monument risk status** – The number of monuments considered to be in the high and medium risk categories was reduced in the year from 60% to 56% of all monuments. This change is primarily considered to be the result of a recategorisation of out of date records rather than genuine improvements in condition. However the availability of more accurate base information to target the Authority's work is a major step forward.

**Grant awards in line with National Park purposes** – This new indicator demonstrated that the Authority awarded 129 grants totalling £663,100 and leveraging in £3.37m in matched funding through Action Area funds, the Sustainable Development Fund, and the LEADER approach last year. This confirms the Authority's pivotal role in providing advice and support to local communities and businesses in supporting sustainable development initiatives and in effectively leveraging income in to the rural area at a ratio of 5:1.

**Website usage – unique users and page impressions** – The number of individuals visiting the Authority’s website has increased by 30,000 in the last year to a total of 269,000. The number of web pages visited reached nearly 2 million, up on the three year average of 1.3 million.

**Percentage of footpaths and other rights of way easy to use by the public** – Following three years of year on year decline the ease of use indicator recovered from a low of 53% the previous year to 67% last year. The Authority is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of the 9 English National Parks for this indicator but the resources allocated to undertake a condition audit and prepare a maintenance programme appear to be having a positive impact on the indicator. The signage indicator dropped slightly but is hovering around the three year average and is deemed to be stable.

**Staff participation: average number of days lost per employee due to sickness** – Average sickness dropped to 3.99 days per employee last year, well below the previous three year average of 5.91 days and ranking the Authority in 1<sup>st</sup> place against the other English National Parks.

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) reduction from National Park Authority operations** – The Authority has calculated its carbon footprint for the first time with this new indicator showing a baseline of 307,834 Kgs (308 tonnes) of carbon dioxide emitted through our estate and operation last year. The Authority aims to reduce its emissions by 5% in the year ahead. This does not currently include figures for carbon capture in land owned and managed by the Authority.

**Adapting to Climate Change** – This new indicator demonstrates that the Authority has swiftly moved from level 0 to level 1 with the adoption of its climate change action plan. Many elements of level 2 can be seen in the Authority’s work but a prudent approach is being taken to self assessment.

#### Indicators showing neutral performance

**Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance** – This new indicator monitors the 17 habitats/species biodiversity action plans and shows no change to the previous baseline year. This is not surprising as biodiversity improvements can take many years to become evident. The main information to draw from the indicator is that in the professional judgement of the Authority’s ecologist, 9 habitats/species are improving, 4 are stable, and 4 are declining.

**Percentage area of the National Park managed in line with Authority purposes** – The indicator is broadly stable at 59% moving down from 60% the year before. However behind the headline figure there has been movement from land managed within Countryside Stewardship to land managed under Higher Level Stewardship. It may be that in future years we see a decline in this indicator if not all land from the old scheme transfers into the new scheme.

**Average percentage score: National Park Centre satisfaction / effectiveness survey** – Satisfaction with the National Park Centres is 90%, a slight decline on the previous year’s performance but stable against the previous three year average figure. The Authority’s National Park Centres have been ranked in first place against other English National Parks in previous years and this maintains our existing very high standards.

### Indicators showing decline in performance

**Processing of planning applications** – The indicators demonstrating the percentage of ‘minor’ and ‘other’ applications processed within 8 weeks have both declined significantly on the previous year’s performance reducing from 83% to 68%, and 84% to 71% respectively. The figures rank the Authority poorly against the other English National Parks and are now below the Government target of 80%. It should be noted that due to the low number of applications a small number missing the deadlines will impact on the indicator result, but the Authority is aware of this fact so must focus on processing applications in a timely manner. The result can be partially explained by staff continuity issues in covering maternity leave.

**Number of volunteer days led by Northumberland National Park Authority** – The indicator includes all Authority led volunteering including the Voluntary Ranger service, corporate groups, and placements. The Authority led 1,252 volunteer days last year but this is a decline on the previous year’s 1,512 days and the three year average of 1,561 days. There are two main causes: a drop in the number of corporate groups volunteering last year, and; a small reduction in the total number of Voluntary Rangers with some of our most active Rangers leaving the service. The Authority plans to address this by recruiting new Voluntary Rangers with a focus on increasing diversity by targeting currently non-represented groups. The Authority also hopes to increase volunteering in other areas of its operation outside of the Voluntary Ranger service.

### Summary

4.8 On balance the performance indicators do reflect the wider performance of the Authority in the year with a broadly positive performance indicated. The planning indicators are a concern and the Authority will focus on this area in the coming year to return the indicators to their previous positive performance levels.

## **5. Delivering the Vision – The Year Ahead 2009/10**

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### **Background – The Key Strategic Challenges**

5.1 Although the Authority prepared Strategic Objectives and identified priority work areas to deliver the Vision in 2006 there continue to be a number of changes proposed at both the national and regional level which the Authority must react to. Such changes will have an impact on the way we work with partners and local communities. The following have been identified as the key strategic challenges for the Authority in 2009/10:

#### Sub National Review

5.2 Governments 'Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration' will result in the abolition of the North East Regional Assembly and the combining of the roles of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy into a Single Integrated Regional Strategy, prepared by the Regional Development Agency. The focus of the new strategy will be to deliver economic and housing growth and to engage the private sector. It is important that the National Park Authority is appropriately engaged within the new regional structures and that the assets and opportunities of the Park's Special Qualities are fully reflected in the proposed Single Integrated Regional Strategy.

#### Local Government Review

5.3 As a result of local Government review in Northumberland, the six District Councils in the county and Northumberland County Council will be replaced by a new single Unitary Authority from April 2009. The formation of the new Unitary Authority poses both opportunities and risks for the National Park. As such the National Park Authority will continue to build appropriate links to take advantage of opportunities for collaborative working between the two Authorities. The National Park Authority will also have to manage and embed changes to its own membership structure brought about by the formation of the Unitary Authority.

#### Climate Change

5.4 The effects of climate change on our environment are now universally accepted. Climate change represents a threat to Northumberland National Park's special qualities and yet the National Park offers significant opportunities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The National Park Authority has signed the Nottingham Declaration<sup>8</sup> and developed a Climate Change Action Plan in 2008 as part of the review of the National Park Management Plan. This Corporate Plan, together with the three year budget plan has identified additional resource to focus on this new national and corporate priority.

5.5 The Government recognises that National Park Authorities have a significant role to play in addressing climate change, for example working with farmers and land owners to maintain healthy peat landscapes and soils as peat locks up huge reserves of carbon. Preventing their degradation avoids this carbon being released to the atmosphere and adding to climate change. The Authority has already developed a number of initiatives and projects to tackle climate change and will continue to integrate its policies and operations to achieve key climate change objectives linked to regional and sub regional actions. This approach is in line with the English National Park Authorities Association 'Position Statement on Climate Change' which makes it clear that the National Park Authorities in England are committed to addressing the issue and becoming carbon neutral (in keeping with the rest of the Government estate) by 2012.

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<sup>8</sup> When Local Authorities sign the Nottingham Declaration on climate change they pledge to actively tackle climate change in their area and work with others to reduce emissions country-wide.

### Equality

5.6 As a public body the Authority is fully committed to achieving a fair and just society. Equality of access, opportunity, and participation are key targets for the Authority. To achieve these targets the Authority has established an equality framework to drive a fully integrated approach across all aspects of our work. The Authority is committed to achieving a high standard of equality meaning we will not just be conforming to the letter of the law but we will make a real positive impact on peoples' experience of the National Park. The Authority narrowly missed achievement of Level 2 of the Equality standard for Local Government in the last year but still aims to be ready for external assessment for Level 3 by March 2010.

### Strategic Planning

5.7 The Authority has a statutory responsibility to produce the two main strategic documents covering the National Park area, namely the National Park Management Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a portfolio of documents which form the Development Plan for Northumberland National Park. These strategic planning tools guide and shape the way in which the National Park will be managed and developed over the years to come. The Core Strategy (main LDF document) was adopted in March 2009 and the Management Plan is scheduled to be adopted in June 2009. Both documents will be published in 2009 with 2009/10 being the critical year to effectively launch and entrench them within the Authority's and its partners work.

### Ongoing Organisational Development

5.8 Since the National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA) peer review of 2005 the Authority has been working through an improvement plan to enhance organisational effectiveness (see section 3.2). The plan has been wide ranging from developing a shared culture and set of values through to specific initiatives to develop individual and corporate competencies. This year the Authority need to review its progress against this agenda prior to the next NPAPA review scheduled for 2010.

### Information and Communication

5.9 This area of work would normally be considered a sub-section of the previous organisational development heading. However the large amount of change this year warrants special attention. The changes at sub-national and local Government level combined with significant changes to the Authority's membership and the publication of the two most important strategic documents covering the National Park means that effective communications and partner engagement are more important than ever this year. The Authority will use the communications strategy and strategic partnership framework developed in 2008 to achieve this.

## **Goals and Priority Activities 2009/10**

5.10 The following section sets out the Authority's goals and priority activities for the year ahead incorporating the 'interim' strategic objectives and the key strategic challenges identified previously. The Authority's work plan demonstrates clear delivery of the strategic objectives through partnerships with external organisations on behalf of, and through local communities. For example our natural and cultural heritage work and access work has been planned to integrate with the climate change and equality agendas.

## **Goal 1: Develop and Refine the Strategic Direction for both the National Park and the National Park Authority:**

5.11 In the coming year the Authority will publish the National Park Management Plan and the Core Strategy (part of the Local Development Framework) and work on promoting and communicating them internally to staff and externally with partners and stakeholders. We will integrate these strategic documents in to our own delivery mechanisms and will coordinate a key partners group to develop an annual action plan to ensure the Vision and objectives of the Management Plan are realised.

5.12 Last year the Authority produced the first State of the National Park Report which proved invaluable in providing an objective information base for the review of the Management Plan. We will produce this report again this year and in subsequent years to ensure that a reliable and up to date information base is maintained to support monitoring and decision making.

5.13 Following adoption of the Management Plan work will start on the development of a Landscape Strategy for the National Park. Since the National Park is a landscape designation this strategy will be vital in providing a clear context for our operations teams when undertaking local action on the ground.

## **Goal 2: Develop Policies to Guide Delivery**

5.14 The Authority adopted its Climate Change Action Plan in September 2008 and will now take forward key actions. Some of the initiatives and projects the Authority will be undertaking are identified later within this section. This year we will need to develop methodologies to establish baseline values, monitoring, and report against the action plan.

5.15 The Authority will be researching and testing activities designed to engage with new and developing audiences, which will inform a new Audience Development Plan for 2010/11. This year we will focus on three work areas which link closely to the Authority's equality and partnership working aims:

- MOSAIC, which aims to improve awareness and understanding of the National Park amongst local Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in the region.
- 'Walks to Wellbeing' - a new programme of tailored health walks, will be delivered in partnership with the Tynedale Sport and Physical Activity Alliance.
- A second year of 'Coast & Country – Your Passport to Northumberland', a programme of awareness and familiarisation seminars for tourism businesses about the protected landscapes, will be delivered in partnership with Northumberland Coast AONB.

This work will be backed up by market research into non-audiences and strategic cooperation at national and regional level. The Authority will commence an 'Access for All' project starting with an access audit this year. The project will work with partners and user groups such as the Disabled Ramblers Association to identify and promote suitable routes for the less-able and to identify further routes for upgrading.

5.16 Last year the Authority successfully completed the 'project planning phase' for The Sill Protected Landscape Centre and aims to secure funding for the 'project development phase' this year. If funding can be secured, work on the design and development of the site will commence this year to progress the project towards the 'construction phase'. If funding is not forthcoming then this project will have to be re-visited.

5.17 This year the focus of our marketing will be to promote the National Park with regional audiences and to develop the concept of a National Park destination brand

with local businesses and communities for them to then use in their own marketing activities. We will also work with tourism partners to ensure the National Park is promoted in their respective out-of-region marketing campaigns. The Authority will publish the 2010 Visitor Guide and a new Marketing Plan.

### **Goal 3: Influence National and Regional Agenda**

5.18 Changes to the regional agenda, the creation of the new Unitary Authorities and the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration will impact on the work of the Authority. To ensure the National Park is recognised and has an effective position within regional planning we will secure a place and play an active role on the Leaders Board which will have responsibility for inputting and signing off the Integrated Regional Strategy. The Authority will work closely with the new Northern and Western Area Partnerships and with the newly constituted Northumberland Strategic Partnership.

### **Goal 4: Provide Specialist Advice to Authority, Partners and Communities**

5.19 One of the Authority's key advisory roles is the provision of the Development Control Service, which advises the Development Control Committee on planning applications. The emphasis during this year will be on improving the service to customers and addressing issues relating to the monitoring and enforcement of previous planning decisions. The Planning Team will also forge closer integration with our integrated area teams.

5.20 The Authority believes that the best way to safeguard and enhance the natural and historic environments of the National Park is by working with partners and communities. The Authority's specialists provide advice and input into many areas of the Authority's work such as planning applications and environmental stewardship scheme designs to achieve this aim. This year we will work with both Natural England and English Heritage to deliver Joint Action Plans.

5.21 Biodiversity work to implement the 5 habitat and 12 species action plans will continue contributing to the UK and regional Biodiversity Action Plans. The survey of peat and heather moorland condition will be completed this year to identify the location of future habitat improvement opportunities through agri-environment and other projects including Cheviot Futures. Improving these habitats, together with native woodlands and river corridors are important aspects of the Authority's climate change mitigating work. Historic environment work will focus on enhancing opportunities for volunteer involvement in research, conservation and interpretation.

### **Goal 5: Integrate Policy into Action Area Delivery**

5.22 The Authority will continue to work with Natural England in leading on and coordinating the local delivery of the land management agenda. Our Farming and Rural Enterprise Officers will work with landowners and farmers to deliver new Higher Level Stewardship agreements on key sites across the Park. The agreements will be targeted at priority sites; specifically the "Cheviot Massif" to help meet the Government's target to improve the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest by 2010. In order to deliver these important schemes the Authority will prepare landscape scale, estate wide agreements for land owned by Northumberland Estates and Lilburn Estates in the Cheviot Hills. All of the new agreements will help to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of the Park by addressing species and habitat management, archaeological sites and historic landscapes, access and recreational interests, and soil and water resource management.

5.23 Work on Climate Change will be guided by the Authority's agreed Action Plan and will include both actions to reduce the carbon footprint of the Authority and work in the Park to test adaptation to the impact of Climate Change. We will look to reduce our carbon footprint through a revised approach to the use of fleet vehicles and improvements to the day to day management of our buildings and wider estate,

including having all of our National Park Centres graded under the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Climate Change adaptation work will be delivered through Cheviot Futures; a multi-agency and land manager led programme which will investigate and pilot solutions to the effects of a changed climate on land management. The Authority will act as the lead for this work in the Cheviot Hills, initially focusing on the management of blanket bog for carbon sequestration, upland water storage and the management of potential wildfires. Public awareness will be raised through interpretation at the Ingram National Park Centre.

#### **Goal 6: Action Area - Community and Business Engagement and Partnership Delivery**

5.24 The Authority's Community Enterprise Officers will work with community groups, businesses and individuals to advise and build confidence and capacity within Action Area communities to deliver projects and initiatives which reflect, enhance and link people to the special qualities of the National Park. Priority will be given to reaching communities and individuals not previously engaged with the Authority and to promoting and helping communities to investigate the viability of community renewables including micro wind, hydro and biomass projects. This work and that of the Operations teams collectively will form the basis of work with partners that will help deliver high level objectives, contributing to the targets for the Northumberland Local Area Agreements and the developing relationships with the new Unitary Council and North and West Area Partnerships.

5.25 The Authority will continue to work with key Partners including the Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence, Natural England and Large Estates; specifically, Lilburn, Northumberland, College Valley and National Trust and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd. The Operations teams will work with all of these partners on detailed land management and other initiatives in 2009/10. For example the Authority will work with Natural England on an enhanced delivery process for Higher Level Stewardship as a national pilot for Defra on the delivery of Environmental Stewardship by National Park Authorities here and in other English Parks. The Operations teams will also engage with the new Unitary Council and particularly with the new North and West Area Partnerships.

#### **Goal 7: Action Area - Sharing the Authority's Skills and Knowledge**

5.26 The Operations teams will deliver targeted schemes of work to manage and maintain the natural, historic and access resources of the National Park. Following survey work of Public Rights of Way in the National Park during 2008 the Authority's Ranger Service will work with local contractors, rural skills trainees and volunteers to deliver schedules of maintenance work on access routes. Surveys will continue and criteria for improving access for all will be incorporated into information gathering to help determine priority 'Access for All' routes. This year the Authority will also complete the Cheviot Hills Heritage Project; a cross-border community based heritage and access project based in the English and Scottish Cheviots.

5.27 The Voluntary Ranger Service will help to undertake routine surveys and schedules of maintenance work in woodland sites managed by the Authority under agreement through Section 39 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Positive management work to further enhance the woodlands will be managed by the Farming teams and delivered with the assistance of funding from the Forestry Commissions new Woodland Improvement Grants for Ancient Semi-natural woodlands in the Park.

5.28 The Authority will deliver the fourth year of the Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills project. This year trainees will undertake rural skills training in dry stone walling, hedging, fencing and footpath construction. Business support training will also be provided to compliment practical skills and provide knowledge and expertise to enable trainees to set up contractor micro businesses. The project aims

to secure the final phase of funding to allow the project to progress with the fifth and final year of training. This year work will begin on the legacy of the project by investigating the feasibility of forming a virtual college training hub providing upland agricultural practices and traditional building technique training and work placements.

### **Goal 8: Efficient and Effective - Becoming an Excellent Authority**

5.29 We aim to move swiftly from Level 2 to Level 3 of the Equality Standard. To achieve this the Authority will continue to impact assess its services and develop and implement realistic delivery plans to ensure the Park is more accessible to all people in our society. The Authority aims to maintain the Investors in People award and focus training on managerial skills following a downsizing of the management teams. We aim to provide a working environment to support a healthy workforce – with sickness levels half the national average and deliver equality across staff recruitment, remuneration and development.

5.30 We have been told by partners and local communities that we do a great job but often fail to communicate this effectively. We will improve our communication activities internally and externally with key strategic partners and local communities. With a dramatic turnover of appointed members to the Authority following local government reorganisation we will implement a comprehensive member induction, training and development programme. This will ensure all mandatory training is completed in good time and mentors will be offered to accelerate this learning process.

### **Goal 9: Enable the Authority Frontline Staff to Deliver the Strategic Objectives**

5.31 Virtually all our delivery staff are based in the Park's communities at local bases deep in the rural area. Therefore effective information and communication technology support needs to be innovative to overcome market failures in these rural areas. We will work to provide cost-effective solutions to ensure all staff computer systems are operational 95% of the core working day. We will ensure the Authority is protected from serious interruption to its business critical areas of working by implementing live back-up systems based away from the head office.

5.32 The Authority will make best use of partnership working with regional universities to provide cutting edge solutions. The website is our principal means of communication externally and it now needs greater input from staff to ensure it makes virtually all our information accessible to the wider public.

5.33 The Authority remains underfunded and faces an unsettling macro-economic climate for the next few years. Therefore we will develop a financial plan to achieve £120,000 of cash savings plus use value for money studies to create greater flexibility of resources (human and financial).

### **Goal 10: Enable Delivery through Partnership**

5.34 Last year the Authority as lead partner was instrumental in setting up the Northumberland Uplands Leader Action Group. Northumberland Uplands is very successful and became the first Local Action Group in mainland England to disperse Rural Development Programme funding to local communities and businesses. We aim to build on this success and encourage the Local Action Group to fully spend all its allocation of resources and seek additional funds to drive forward rural regeneration in this England's most remote rural area. We will actively support the Local Action Group to be more than just a grant giving group and to become a trusted partner for community and economic regeneration bodies.

5.35 The Authority will aim to become much more effective in its promotion and brokerage for the wider Rural Development Programme for England (of which Leader funds represent just 5%). This will require both a good evidence basis of need and

opportunity plus excellent on-the-ground delivery personnel with great links to local rural business.

5.36 The Sustainable Development Fund of £200,000 p.a. has proved immensely successful in enabling local communities and businesses to create new business models which complement the purposes of national parks. This year we aim to encourage other funders and partners to match fund the sustainable development themed priority of addressing climate change and thereby gain greater future impact.

5.37 The development of the new National Park Management Plan will be used to change the Authority's priorities over the next three years. We will focus more on the high priority objectives in this new Plan. In addition, many of these new high priority objectives will require substantial input from our partners, therefore we will aim to establish an effective buy-in from key partners to the Plan and transparently monitor the effectiveness of their and our activities.

### **Goal 11: Become an Exemplar in Measures to Address Climate Change**

5.38 Carbon dioxide produced from the Authority's own estate and operations contribute to climate change. Whilst the Authority owns less than 1% of the 400 square miles of the National Park, the Authority's estates (sites and land holdings) are very much in the public eye. We are committed to a 5% decrease in our carbon emissions from our activities this year against our baseline set in 2008/09. This will require our buildings to become more energy efficient and our sites more carbon neutral. Making a lasting impact on the carbon footprint of the Authority's operations will require a review of human resource policies to encourage less impact on the environment from travelling. We will need to change how we work. For example improvements will require new working patterns with and from partners such as encouraging tele-conferencing to replace long-distance travel.

5.39 The moves to making a demonstrable change in the Authority's carbon footprint require a trust-worthy, responsive and accurate means of recording the amount of carbon dioxide created by our activities. The Authority will complete the development of a measurement tool and ensure its compatibility with the existing but less effective national method of measurement designed for use by large organisations.

### Summary

5.40 The Goals and priority work activities outlined in this section demonstrate a clear link to delivering the Vision and Strategic Objectives and in addressing the key challenges identified for the Authority in 2009/10. The priority work for the year ahead highlighted in this summary is managed via Team Work Plans which identify detailed work activities and measures of success.

## Appendix 1 – Performance Indicators

| Strategic Obj.                    | PI number | Business Manager lead   | Indicator Title   | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| 1                                 | 001       | ER  | % SSSI and NNR in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition                       | -       | -       | 68%     | 81%     | 87%     | 92%        |
|                                   | 002       | ER  | Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance (LBAP condition)            | -       | -       | -       | -       | 9       | 9          |
|                                   |           |   | a) Improving  | -       | -       | -       | -       | 4       | 4          |
|                                   |           |   | b) Stable   | -       | -       | -       | -       | 4       | 4          |
|                                   | 003       | ER  | Percentage of Local Biodiversity Action Plan actions completed or underway against plan | -       | -       | -       | 68%     | 72%     | 72%        |
|                                   | 004       | ER  | Listed Buildings removed from the 'at risk' register                                    | -       | -       | 0.00    | 0.00    | 0.00    | 1.00       |
|                                   | 005       | ER  | Changes in Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) risk status                               | -       | -       | -       | -       | 77      | 67         |
| a) Number in High risk category   |           |   | -   | -       | -       | -       | 183     | 172     |            |
| b) Number in Medium risk category |           |   | -   | -       | -       | -       | 170     | 191     |            |
| 006                               | LB        | Use of the Building Design Guide in relevant planning decisions                   | -   | -       | -       | -       | -       | 33      |            |
|                                   |           | a) Number of relevant applications  | -   | -       | -       | -       | -       | 75.76%  |            |
| 007                               | LB        | Positive planning actions for protected species in relevant planning applications | -   | -       | -       | -       | -       | 12      |            |
|                                   |           | a) Number of relevant applications  | -   | -       | -       | -       | -       | 100%    |            |
| 2                                 | 008       | DW  | Importance of the visitor economy (value & volume of tourism)                           | £87.00  | £91.70  | £94.60  | £98.82  | £103.90 | £103.90    |
|                                   |           |   | a) Value of tourism (£ million)   | 1.82    | 1.76    | 1.68    | 1.60    | 1.65    | 1.65       |
|                                   | 009       | SG/DP/AM  | Grant awards inline with National Park Authority purposes                               | -       | -       | -       | -       | -       | 129        |
|                                   |           |   | a) Number of grants awarded   | -       | -       | -       | -       | -       | £663,095   |
|                                   |           |   | b) Value of grants awarded  | -       | -       | -       | -       | -       | £3,369,908 |
| 010                               | DW        | Businesses and groups using the Green Tourism Business Scheme                     | -   | -       | -       | 12      | 18      | 20      |            |

## Appendix 1 (continued) – Performance Indicators

| Strategic Obj.   | PI number | Business Manager lead   | Indicator Title  | 2003/04   | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08    | 2008/09       |
|--|-----------|---|--|---|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------------|
| 3  | 011       | DW  | <b>Awareness of Northumberland National Park (local, regional &amp; national)</b>        | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | not available |
|  |           |   | <b>a) Local and regional (not yet available)</b>   | -   | 2%      | 2%      | 2%      | 3%         | 3%            |
|  |           |   |  | <b>b) National</b>  | -       |         |         |            |               |
|  | 012       | DW  | Visitor satisfaction with the tourism services and facilities in the National Park       | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | 78%           |
|  | 013       | DP / AB   | Average percentage score – National Park Centre satisfaction-effectiveness survey        | -   | -       | 86.00%  | 89.65%  | 92.63%     | 90.12%        |
|  | 014       | TF  | Website usage - unique users and page impressions  | -   | 75      | 100     | 230     | 239        | 269           |
|  |           |   | a) Uniques users (,000)<br>b) Page impressions (,000)                                    | -   | 375     | 760     | 1,248   | data error | 1,950         |
| 015  | DP        | Number of volunteer days led by Northumberland National Park Authority  | -  | 1,763   | 2,142   | 1,028   | 1,512   | 1,252      |               |
| 016  | ER        | Percentage of footpaths and other rights of way easy to use by the public   | -  | 67.00   | 79.00   | 64.10   | 52.90   | 66.80      |               |
|  |           | a) Percentage easy to use<br>b) Percentage signposted where they leave the road                                   | -  | 92.00   | 100.00  | 84.20   | 94.40   | 91.90      |               |
| 4  | 017       | ER  | <b>Percentage area of the National Park managed inline with Authority purposes</b>       | -   | -       | -       | -       | 60.00      | 59.38         |
| 5  | 018       | RM  | <b>Partner survey score - awareness and effectiveness</b>                                | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | TBC           |
| 6  | 019       | SG  | <b>Inclusive Authority - level of the Equality Standard attained</b>                     | -   | Level 0 | Level 0 | Level 0 | Level 1    | Level 1       |
|  | 020       | SG  | Staff participation - average number of days lost per employee due to sickness absence   | -   | 8.85    | 4.42    | 6.48    | 6.83       | 3.99          |
|  | 021       | SG  | Income generation - trading accounts profit performance (£'000)                          | -   | -       | -       | 0.0     | 0.0        | 103.6         |
|  | 022       | SG  | Financial outturn (variance to forecast reserves position as a % of total expenditure)   | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | 7.0%          |
|  | 023       | TF  | IT critical system available in core working hours                                       | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | 98.98%        |
|  | 024       | LB  | Processing of planning applications (major, minor, other)                                | -   | 100.00  | 0.00    | no apps | no apps    | 100.00        |
|  |           |   | a) % of major applications determined within 13 weeks                                    | -   | 83.00   | 43.00   | 80.00   | 83.33      | 68.42         |
| b) % of minor applications determined within 8 weeks<br>c) % of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks |           |   | -  | 89.00   | 68.00   | 90.91   | 84.38   | 70.59      |               |
| 7  | 025       | RM  | <b>Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) reduction from National Park Authority operations</b> | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | 307,834       |
|  |           |   | <b>a) Total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Authority operations (Kg)</b>                  | -   | -       | -       | -       | -          | n/a           |
|  |           |   |  | <b>b) Percentage reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Kg)</b> | -       | -       | -       | -          | -             |
| 026  | ER        | Adapting to climate change  | -  | -   | -       | -       | -       | Level 1    |               |
| 027  | RM        | Level of air quality - reduction in NO <sub>x</sub> and PM <sub>10</sub> emissions through Authority operations   | -  | -   | -       | -       | -       | 488        |               |
|  |           | a) NO <sub>x</sub> - oxides of nitrogen emissions (Kg)<br>b) PM <sub>10</sub> - particulate matter emissions (Kg) | -  | -   | -       | -       | -       | 148        |               |

## Appendix 2 – Risk Management Plan 2009/10

This appendix outlines the revised Risk Management Plan for 2009/2010. The risk matrix below shows the inherent (in black) and residual (in blue) risk associated with the 11 goals and priority work areas for 2009/10.

| <b>Inherent and <i>Residual</i> Risk to the Authority's 2009/10 Goals</b> |                        |  |             |                            |  |                   |
|---|------------------------|--|-------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| <b>I<br/>m<br/>p<br/>a<br/>c<br/>t</b>                                    | <b>5. Catastrophic</b> |  |             |                            |  |                   |
|   | <b>4. Major</b>        | 2  | 1, 4, 10    | 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10<br>8, 11 | 1, 4, 8, 11  |                   |
|   | <b>3. Moderate</b>     | 3  | 5, 7, 9     | 6                          | 6  |                   |
|   | <b>2. Minor</b>        |  |             |                            |  |                   |
|   | <b>1. Slight</b>       |  |             |                            |  |                   |
|   |                        | 1. Rare  | 2. Unlikely | 3. Possible                | 4. Likely  | 5. Almost Certain |
|   |                        | Likelihood   |             |                            |  |                   |
|   |                        | Contingency  |             |                            | Primary  |                   |
|   |                        | <b>Contingency Group</b><br><i>(issues for strategic management team)</i><br>Where risk management will ensure that contingency plans are in place |             |                            | <b>Primary Group (issues for members)</b><br>Where risk management should focus most of its time   |                   |
|   |                        | Low  |             |                            | House Keeping  |                   |
|   |                        | <b>Low Group</b><br>Where risk is so minimal it does not demand specific attention   |             |                            | <b>House Keeping Group</b><br><i>(issues for business managers)</i><br>Basic mechanisms should be in place<br>- Risk Management will confirm |                   |

None of the inherent risks is considered to carry a potentially catastrophic impact to the Authority, but a large number are deemed to carry major potential impacts against one or more of the criteria outlined in the tables on the following page. The controls and actions identified in the plan reduce the potential impact in some (but not most) cases with the overriding result of the controls being to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring.

| Ref. Number | Goal for 2009/10  |
|-------------|---|
| 1           | Develop and Refine the Strategic Direction for both the National Park and the National Park Authority |
| 2           | Develop Policies to Guide Delivery  |
| 3           | Influence National and Regional Agenda  |
| 4           | Provide Specialist Advice to Authority, Partners and Communities                                      |
| 5           | Integrate Policy into Action Area Delivery  |
| 6           | Action Area - Community and Business Engagement and Partnership Delivery                              |
| 7           | Action Area - Sharing the Authority's Skills and Knowledge  |
| 8           | Efficient and Effective - Becoming an Excellent Authority   |
| 9           | Enable the Authority Frontline Staff to Deliver the Strategic Objectives                              |
| 10          | Enable Delivery through Partnership   |
| 11          | Become an Exemplar in Measures to Address Climate Change  |

### Impact Matrix (I score)

| Impact           | Finance        | Service Quality/Objective   | Legal/regulatory   | Reputation   | Health & Safety  |
|------------------|----------------|---|--|--|--|
| (5) Catastrophic | £500k plus     | Complete failure of services.<br><br>Unable to meet business objectives in many areas.          | Termination of the funding or criminal / civil prosecution   | Reputational Damage is irrecoverable i.e. Government intervention<br>National media coverage | Fatality (Staff, members and visitors etc...)  |
| (4) Major        | £100k to £500k | Significant reduction in service quality expected.<br>Re- prioritisation of business objectives | Defra step in or legal case leading to major investigation or overhaul of procedures.                | Reputation damage occurs with the Key Strategic<br>Regional media coverage                   | Serious injury occurring - many months off work / reportable to Health and Safety Exec |
| (3) Moderate     | £30k to £100k  | Service quality impaired<br>Achievement of business objectives delayed by over 1                | Legal action or regulatory penalty including Ombudsman   | Localised reputational damage with local partners and local press                            | Minor injury - up to a week off work   |
| (2) Minor        | £10k to £30k   | Service marginally impaired<br>Some impact on business objectives but recoverable               | Minor breach with no penalty but key learning lessons which can be implemented virtually immediately | Temporary reputational damage .<br>Partner expectations are not met.                         | Very minor injury  |
| (1) Almost None  | £0 - £10k      | Negligible Effects on service quality or business objectives                                    | Negligible   | No Effects on reputation   | No injury  |

### Likelihood Matrix (L score)

| Likelihood         |  |           |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| (5) Almost Certain | Very likely to happen within the current year, or could occur within the next 3 months   | 90 – 100% |
| (4) Likely         | Likely to happen within the current year, or could occur within the next 6 months        | 65 – 90%  |
| (3) Possible       | Might happen within the current year, or could occur within the next 6 -12 months        | 40 – 65%  |
| (2) Unlikely       | Unlikely to happen within the current year, but could occur within the next 1 to 5 years | 10- 40%   |
| (1) Rare           | Unlikely to occur within the next five years   | 0 – 10%   |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect  | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations  | Residual Risk Rating | Actions   |
|-----|--|---|----------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| 1   | <b>Failure to refine the strategic direction for the National Park and the National Park Authority</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>NNPA fails to deliver key strategic policies/documents in timely manner for example; Local Development Framework, Management Plan, State of the Park Report and Landscape Strategy. This could occur if there is a lack of staff/member availability or if inadequate resources are allocated. External controls such as independent examination could cause delays if policies/documents are not of sufficient quality. Poor communication with staff and members.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Lack of strategic direction leading to inappropriate allocation of resources negative impacts on the Park and loss of credibility with partners and Defra. Poor performance on LDF documents could have a negative impact on the award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Lack of 'buy in' from staff and members. Lack of progress on the annual action plan for the Management Plan could lead to lack of implementation and loss of credibility with community and other partners.</p> | I:4 L:4              | Ensure appropriate staffing and member resources are available and included in the Corporate Plan. Ensure staff are fully trained and knowledgeable with the relevant expertise and professional knowledge. Effective communication with staff and members. Management Plan key partners group agree an early programme and timetable for development of year 1 action plan. | I:4 L:2              | Identify resources needed. Identify training required. Effect a communications strategy for each area of work. Maintain Key Partners group. |
|     |  |   | Primary              |  | Contingency          |   |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations  | Residual Risk Rating | Actions  |
|-----|--|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 2   | <b>The Authority fails to develop and effectively implement policies to guide delivery</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>LDF policies not effectively implemented leading to poor Development Control decisions. Key policy areas contained in the Management Plan (e.g. Landscape Strategy) not taken forward. NNPA fails to progress effective delivery policies and plans in the year including: annual climate change action plan; audience development plan (MOSAIC/Walks to Wellbeing); tourism and marketing plan, and; the development phase of 'The Sill'. This could occur if there is a lack of staff and member availability or commitment, or if appropriate resources are not made available.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Loss of momentum in taking policies and plans forward reducing the potential benefits from their implementation. Also leads to loss of credibility with partners, businesses and communities if the NPA is unable to progress in important policy areas.</p> | I:4 L:3              | Work scope, priority and resource requirements were discussed and agreed as part of the corporate work planning process for 2009/10. Large multi-faceted areas such as the 'climate change action plan' and 'The Sill' will be managed and monitored via the NPA's project management process to ensure progress. Establish clear managerial and communication responsibilities with partners for audience development work. Ensure objectives are set for key staff as part of the appraisal/forward work planning process. | I:4 L:1              | Manage climate change action plan and The Sill via the project management process. Establish NPA responsibilities for audience development projects. Ensure work is set as an objective in staff forward work plans. Deliver staff/member training on new LDF policies |
|     |  |  | Contingency          |  | Contingency          |  |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating  | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating   | Actions  |
|-----|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| 3   | <b>Strategic positioning and policy fail to influence the national and regional agenda leaving the National Park exposed to inappropriate policy instruments</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Failure to secure an influential position on the Leaders Board and therefore have an effective input into the Integrated Regional Strategy. Failure to reply to or lack of influence on regional and national consultations.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Loss of credibility with partners. Failure to influence regional and national polices to align with National Park purposes resulting in potentially detrimental impacts on the Park.</p> | <p>I:4 L:3</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Contingency</p> | Ensure Authority is represented on Leaders Board and inform partners of our position. Ensure prompt replies to consultations with Authority support where necessary. Ensure this area of work is appropriately prioritised and resourced. | <p>I:3 L:1</p> <p style="background-color: #90EE90;">Low</p> | Allocate time in forward work plans to respond to consultations. Provide support to other staff/members playing a role on the leaders board. Identify any up coming consultation that may require an Authority response. |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect  | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating | Actions  |
|-----|--|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 4   | <b>Failure to provide specialist advice to partners and communities (including provision of Development Control service)</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/> <b>Development Control</b> - Planning Officers unable to provide appropriate levels of pre-application, application, or enforcement advice. Poor or late planning decisions made. Officers do not provide input in to external consultations impacting the National Park (e.g. Windfarm consultations)<br/> <b>Other</b> - Input and advice on the natural and historic environment not provided into planning applications, agri-environment schemes, or community and partner projects.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/> <b>Development Control</b> - Miss statutory targets for planning decisions. Poor appeals record (with financial impact on planning delivery grant). NPA becomes a standards Authority with loss of reputation within communities and with partners due to poor service or decisions.<br/> <b>Other</b> - Benefits to the natural and historic environments not fully realised in planning applications, agri-environment schemes, and projects (or even damage sustained).</p> | I:4 L:4              | <p><b>Development Control</b> - Processes in place to cover staff absence (inc. consultant cover if necessary). Provision made for insurance and legal advice where necessary. Planned development of an enforcement policy and training for members on planning policies.</p> <p><b>Other</b> - The NPA employs specialists in the natural and historic environment with provision of advice part of the role. Specialists are consultees for planning applications. Joint action plans with both Natural England and English Heritage to ensure appropriate input and advice into agr-environment schemes and projects.</p> | I:4 L:2              | <p><b>Development Control</b> - Secure call on arrangements with planning consultants to support DC service and assist with particular apps (e.g. windfarms). Provide appropriate training to new DC Committee members post 1 April 2009. Maintain current arrangements for call on legal advice from Ward Hadaway. Check adequate insurance in place.<br/> <b>Other</b> - Agree joint action plans with Natural England and English Heritage.</p> |
|     |  |   | Primary              |   | Contingency          |  |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations  | Residual Risk Rating | Actions   |
|-----|--|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| 5   | <b>Inability to integrate policy into Action Area delivery</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Failure to lead on the land management agenda and effectively work with Natural England to target agri-environment schemes within the Park. Inability to get large estates and areas of particular interest (e.g. SSSI's) into appropriate stewardship schemes. Failure to roll out climate change actions within Action Areas such as: visitor centres not achieving Green Tourism Business Scheme accreditation and the Authority under-delivering on climate change actions in the Park.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Resources for agri-environment schemes are not targeted in the Park so that the potential positive impacts on the: natural environment; historic environment; accessibility to the Park, and; the positive economic benefits to the farming community are not realised. The Authority loses reputation within Action Areas as it is unable to demonstrate leadership and positive action on climate change.</p> | I:4 L:3              | Agree a joint accord with Natural England and continue regular liaison. Lobby Natural England at a national level to remove bottlenecks and further develop the working relationships between the Authority and farmers/landowners. Allocate resources to the 'Cheviot Futures' project and other climate change activities. | I:3 L:2              | Hold quarterly meetings with National England regionally and an annual national meeting. Increase/target capacity in Farming team to undertake brokering role. Focus attention on large estates (i.e. MOD, Lilburn, and Northumberland estates) in 2009 |
|     |  |  | Contingency          |  | Low                  |   |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title  | Cause & Effect  | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating | Actions   |
|-----|---|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 6   | <b>The Action Area approach to community and business engagement fails to deliver effectively</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Awareness of support and resources from National Park doesn't reach unengaged communities, businesses or individuals. The economic climate reduces opportunities for businesses to secure match funding and credit terms. The Authority misjudges the level of community interest in engaging with community renewables and staff lack sufficient awareness of renewable technology/networks to be effective. The National Park is not represented on new County/Area partnerships and activity is not aligned to Local Area Agreement priorities.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>The NPA supports fewer community and business projects, specifically in the target areas of unengaged audiences and renewable technologies. Project opportunities based on the special qualities of the National Park are not developed and the reputation of the NPA as a driver for community renewables is not established. National Park activity does not contribute to Local Area Agreement priorities.</p> | I:3 L:4              | Area teams communicate and raise awareness of available support to communities and businesses. Regular liaison and information sharing through renewables network. NPA active engagement in shaping the new Unitary Authority arrangements and gains representation on the emerging structures. | I:3 L:3              | Develop and implement an action plan to increase awareness of the support resources available from area teams. Ensure staff knowledge and contacts in community renewables are up to date. Staff team to meet monthly to review and update action plan. Active participation in developing LSP and Area Partnerships. |
|     |   |   | House Keeping        |   | Low                  |   |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title  | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations  | Residual Risk Rating | Actions  |
|-----|---|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 7   | The Action Area approach fails to share the Authority's skills and knowledge when we are undertaking our work | <b>Cause</b>   | I:4 L:3              | ROW/Woodland activity prioritised in Corporate Plan and cascaded/reviewed through individuals work plans; Secure year 4 + 5 funding for <b>Traditional Skills</b> ; virtual training plan in place | I:3 L:2              | Develop, implement; review action plans to deliver 2009 improvement plan for ROW/woodlands; Target external funding sources and review progress. Complete feasibility study for virtual training hub. Staff team meet monthly to review impact, progress and update action plan; develop and implement training plans; |
|     |   | The Authority fails to share skills and knowledge with communities, volunteers, and trainees through its operations and projects in Action Areas: <b>Rights of Way (ROW)</b> surveys fail to capture information required to improve 'access for all'; insufficient skills transfer by ranger teams to enable local contractors, trainees and volunteers to undertake path improvements; <b>Woodland surveys</b> not completed involving volunteers and implementation delayed by not securing Forestry Commission Woodland Improvement Grants; <b>2009 Traditional Skills</b> trainees fail to complete training programmes due to key management/supervisory staff turnover in project current final year; Skills/knowledge transfer and potential reach of Traditional Skills constrained by lack of funding for years 4 and 5. |                      |  |                      |  |
|     |   | <b>Effect</b>  |                      |  |                      |  |
|     |   | Delivery not maximised and <b>ROW performance indicator continues to decline</b> due to insufficient improvement works completed. Backlog of section 39 <b>woodland management maintenance not completed</b> /reputational risk - landowners/managers; Year 4(2009) <b>Traditional skills</b> project fail to meet training targets - Heritage Lottery Fund withhold grant; full potential of project reach/impact not achieved in year 5 + 6; Potential to assess feasibility of virtual training hub not achieved.   |                      |  |                      |  |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title   | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating   | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating  | Actions  |
|-----|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| 8   | <b>Failing to make good progress from good performing Authority to excellent</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Failure to reach Level 3 of the Equality Standard and loss of Investors in People award. Combined with poor staff sickness records, weak improvement in internal and external communication, ineffective training for new members, and failure to comply with the Data Protection Act.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Public degradation by the Human Rights Commission. Reduced staff moral. Loss of support and direction from external partners and internal staff, members and volunteers. Weakened and less robust decision making. Legal implications of data protection breaches.</p> | <p>I:4 L:4</p> <p style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center;">Primary</p> | <p>Establish an effective in-house team to lead on Equality, Communication, and data protection with member, senior officer and additional support.</p> <p>Implement actions from the previous Investor in People assessment and set and deliver an annual training plan.</p> <p>Manage sickness and address root causes.</p> | <p>I:4 L:3</p> <p style="background-color: yellow;">Contingency</p> | <p>Allocate time and resources to the Equality Team, Communication leads, and data protection group. Implement Equality and Communication training for staff, members and volunteers.</p> <p>Implement and performance manage internal and external communication plans. Monitor sickness at team level on a monthly basis and report upwards any issues / trends.</p> |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title  | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating              | Controls/ Mitigations  | Residual Risk Rating      | Actions   |
|-----|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| 9   | <b>Failure to implement solutions that drive service delivery improvements and allow frontline staff to deliver</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Innovative ICT solutions fail. Universities do not produce timely or applicable solutions. Key staff make very small / negligible content contributions to the web. Cash savings do not materialise or are temporary and value for money studies result in little improvement.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Cost overruns on ICT initiatives and loss of service due to technical failures. University solutions can not be used. The key national park messages are ineffective via the web and more costly / less sustainable media (paper) are used instead. Web visits fall. Resources (human and financial) are not applied to new and high priorities.</p> | <p>I:4 L:3</p> <p>Contingency</p> | <p>Ensure that innovative solutions are phased in to contain any negative impacts. Invest in training and development of ICT staff. Actively manage staff input to the web as it is already a high priority objective. Communicate our needs to the universities. Ensure all business managers have time to undertake value for money studies and are led by a strategic manager with regular reporting to the Authority. Freeze any additional financial commitments until savings are achieved and budgets balance on an annual basis.</p> | <p>I:3 L:2</p> <p>Low</p> | <p>Complete and use the Geographical Information Systems strategy and ICT infrastructure plan. Regularly meet the universities to discuss need and opportunities. Use the Communication Strategy to set targets and action plans for each business area for updating the website and ensure leadership from the top. Set a realistic savings action plan and undertake a supported value for money programme with high support and high challenge in prioritised areas of work.</p> |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title                                      | Cause & Effect  | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating | Actions   |
|-----|---|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 10  | <b>Inability to widen delivery partnerships</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Regional and sub-regional processes are too intensive and risk minimising practices limit the ambition of the Leader Local Action Group. The Local Action Group loses its most adventurous / ambitious advocates. In-house, staff who produce joined-up business / community / environmental solutions do not receive the specialist and policy support to develop and progress at a good pace. Matched funding partners find it difficult to place Sustainable Development Fund aims within their priorities. The National Park Management Plan fails to hold the attention of our partners who in turn fail to change their delivery plans.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Leader and Sustainable Development Funds remain financially constrained and fail to engage with the wider regional and national agendas. The priorities in the new National Park Management Plan are not delivered and without early wins the momentum is lost for the remainder of the Plan's 5 year existence.</p> | I:4 L:3              | Connect the Local Action Groups ambition with sub-regional and regional partners. Maintain ambitious plans for Leader and Sustainable Development programme . Raise the profile of all three initiatives (Leader, sustainable development and new Plan) with strategic partners. Ensure the Authority's resources are targeted at the new high priorities in the new Management Plan. | I:4 L:2              | Provide top level leadership to connect the Local Action Groups. Provide resources and supporting staff to deliver ambitious plans . Utilise the partner engagement plan to place all three initiatives (Leader, sustainable development and new Plan) as key outcomes for all high and medium priority strategic partners. Provide good communications and transparent progress reports on all three initiatives. Deliver a new priority setting process which engages members and managers to reflect the changing priorities from the new Management Plan. |
|     |   |   | Contingency          |   | Low                  |   |

## Strategic Risk Register

| Ref | Risk Title                                    | Cause & Effect   | Inherent Risk Rating | Controls/ Mitigations   | Residual Risk Rating | Actions  |
|-----|---|--|----------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 11  | <b>Not walking the talk on climate change</b> | <p><b>Cause</b><br/>Resources (human and financial) are not applied in a timely a manner to achieve the 5% annual cut in CO<sub>2</sub>. Staff hostility and lack of union support for changes which affect reimbursement schemes. Old 20th Century paper-based working practices are not changed and weak leadership from senior staff and members. Meaningful measurement systems are costly to deploy in face of antipathy.</p> <p><b>Effect</b><br/>Loss of reputation and creditability with the Authority (staff and members) as we ask others to change their practices but we are unable to achieve a similar improvement ourselves.</p> | I:4 L:4              | Prioritise the reduction in carbon footprint activities to the beginning of the financial year. Use expert advice to reduce footprint on buildings and use save to invest model to accelerate this expenditure. Communicate the need to 'walk the talk' with unions and staff . Ensure policy changes are not all negative impacts on staff conditions at work. Develop the thinking of senior staff and members to change paper intensive working practices. Celebrate successes and communicate widely and often. | I:4 L:3              | Budget and corporate plans prioritise carbon reduction as a Quarter 1 activity. Set a capital / revenue plan with save to invest options of for CO <sub>2</sub> reductions. Apply recommendations of lower / sustainable energy audit. Early engagement with staff and unions to explain the need to reduce our carbon footprint. Communicate importance at staff meetings, team meetings, e-zines and other communications. Develop a balanced approach to changes in Human Resources policies to reduce the carbon footprint. Familiarise senior managers and members with best practice models in reducing paper based working systems. |
|     |   |  | Primary              |   | Contingency          |  |

## **Appendix 3 – Defra Expectations – the ‘Defra Deal’**

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In December 2007, Defra announced an above-inflation grant settlement for the next three years for the National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority.

This provides the context for Defra, Natural England, and National Park Authorities to now agree “a Deal”, setting out some agreed priorities and working practices for the financial years 2008/09 – 2010/11. The following text sets out the current draft of the ‘deal’, which is an elaboration of the approach adopted in previous years.

### **“The Draft Deal” for the National Park and Broads Authorities, incorporating the financial grant memorandum and the spending expectations for the CSR07 years.**

#### **Introduction**

The National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority (“the NPAs”) are well established and well-respected bodies, delivering statutory purposes whose basic concept has stood the test of time since they were first formulated in 1949.

The NPAs have a unique constitution, reflecting their distinctive mix of national, regional, and local responsibilities.

The Government recognises the particular role which NPAs play, and that their mix of skills and knowledge makes them especially well-fitted to discharging that mix of responsibilities. Government ‘sponsorship’ of the NPAs is therefore aimed at enhancing their capacity to fulfil their role and does not seek to intrude on their areas of expertise nor to second-guess decisions which are best taken by the NPAs themselves.

Nevertheless the Government does have a significant interest in what the NPAs do as it provides the bulk of NPA funding, appoints some members, and cannot fully achieve its own objectives without the contribution which NPAs make.

This document sets out the roles which both the Government and the NPAs need to play if they are, together, to maximise the benefit of the National Parks and ensure that the taxpayers get maximum value for their investment.

#### **The Government’s Strategic Priorities**

The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (“CSR07”) was the occasion for the Government to review its priorities for the coming period, in particular through a streamlined set of Public Service Agreements. Defra leads on two PSAs:

- to lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change, and
- to secure a healthy natural environment for today and for the future

The NPAs will contribute to both of these (and indeed to other PSAs led by other departments) but the natural environment PSA is particularly relevant and they have been written into the action plans for delivering that PSA.

Beneath the PSA are two further tiers of objectives - the Departmental Strategic Objectives and the supporting Intermediate Outcomes, of which the following are especially relevant to the NPAs :

| Departmental Strategic Objective   | Related Intermediate Outcome(s)  |
|--|--|
| Climate change tackled internationally; and through domestic action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions | Reduced UK energy consumption.   |
| A healthy, resilient, productive and diverse natural environment                                       | Biodiversity valued, safeguarded and enhanced<br><br>Land and soils managed sustainably<br><br>People enjoy, understand and care for the natural environment<br><br>Sustainable living landscapes with best features conserved |
| Sustainable development championed across government, across the UK, and internationally               |  |
| Strong rural communities   | Economic growth is supported in rural areas with the lowest levels of performance<br><br>The evidenced needs of rural people and communities are addressed through mainstream public policy and delivery                       |

### Shared Aims

There is a close correlation between what the Government is seeking to achieve and the statutory purposes of National Parks which (with amendments) go back to 1949 and have always set the National Parks the twin role of conserving or enhancing their areas and facilitating the enjoyment and understanding of those areas' special qualities by the public.

A landscape designation is, by definition, long term. The core duty of the NPAs is therefore to ensure that their areas are conserved (or enhanced where possible) for future generations. But alongside that the Government also expects them to answer the (sometimes transient) needs of the current generation and also to remain live-able areas for the people whose homes or jobs lie within their boundaries. This was made explicit by the insertion of the socio-economic duty into the legislation.

A fuller description of the Government's aims for the National Parks is set out in DoE Circular number 12 of 1996.

### Shared principles

This Deal is based around a shared set of principles that each organisation will apply in operating this relationship. Each party will:

- focus on outcomes and delivery to customers against public service standards that set out the quality of service that customers should expect;
- in particular, work together to implement a further round of NPAPA (National Park Authority Performance Assessments);
- share data, information and analyses across the network;
- involve each other early on in the development of policy and delivery options;
- respect partners' differing roles and responsibilities;
- ensure that there are no surprises, especially on matters that may interest the media;

- invest in building good working relationships – being open and honest with views and information; investing senior time in developing relationships; take responsibility for promoting good relations at all times; take action where there are problems;
- if a dispute arises it will be referred initially to the relevant NPO (or the ENPOG Chair if it is a general point) and the Senior Responsible Officer for the Defra ‘People and Landscapes’ Programme – if necessary it will then go to Ministers and NPA Chairs;
- Encourage better understanding (e.g. secondments where appropriate, seminars, site visits. In particular the sponsorship team will meet and/or visit each NPA each year and the NP Minister will maintain a cycle of meetings/visits with individual NPAs
- share successes and problems;
- Support periodic independent review of how the Deal is working.

### **Defra’s role**

Defra will:

1. Set an appropriate legislative and policy framework for the NPAs to operate within. This covers both legislation (for example open access) and also policy development outside of legislation (for example the diversity review and its subsequent action plan). Where these policies are being developed by Defra the NPAs will be directly involved whenever appropriate. Where the lead lies with another Government department Defra will where necessary either facilitate direct contact with that Department or else ensure that it is aware of NPA views before making its own contribution to the inter-departmental discussion.

Defra will follow the same principles on matters affecting the governance of the NPAs themselves, where the lead will most often lie with DCLG (for example on member and officer codes of conduct or on audit arrangements or on requirements for disclosure etc). Where the special circumstances of the NPAs require some adaptation of the general approach (as happened, for example, on CPA) Defra will pursue this with DCLG and the NPAs.

When appropriate Defra will also liaise with the Welsh Assembly Government (whose National Parks share the same primary legislation) or with the Scottish Executive or the Northern Ireland Executive

2. Provide adequate funding. Overall funding will be decided in each spending review and the NPAs will be given a full opportunity to set out their case. The level of funding for local government will be one factor but there will be no automatic link to the local government settlement given the different and narrower range of functions which the NPAs have.

3. Appoint ‘national’ members who will add a national perspective whilst still working in the interest of the National Park and its Authority

4. Provide a degree of challenge as a “critical friend” of the NPAs

### **The NPAs’ role**

The NPAs will:

1. Ensure that they derive maximum benefit from funding, including by efficiency savings and shared services. They will also seek to maximise other sources of income – though Defra recognises that it will continue to be the primary funder

2. Make the contribution to Defra’s natural environment PSA target which is described in the action plans and contribute as fully as they can to the delivery of other PSAs. To that end ENPAA will write to Defra at the end of each financial year, setting out the

collective contribution which the NPAs have made to the PSA targets

3. Look to cooperate with other public and voluntary bodies, such as NE, LAs, RDAs, so as to maximise their impact

4. Apply the principle of sustainable development to their work so that environmental, social, and economic needs are all met

Both Defra and the NPAs will agree a set of priorities for delivery in each funding period. For the CSR07 period (2008-11) these are documented separately.

**Review**

This Deal will be reviewed as necessary at the request of any of the signatories or their successors.