

North York Moors National Park Authority

23 March 2020

Preparing a New National Park Management Plan – Beyond 2022

Feedback from the Members' Evening Seminar on the 30 January and Next Steps

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide initial feedback to Members on views expressed as part of the 'Future of the North York Moors' Members' seminar held on 30 January 2020, and to suggest next steps towards preparing for a new National Park Management Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Authority has committed itself to preparing a new Management Plan for the National Park. The preparation or review of a Management Plan every five years is a statutory requirement for National Park Authorities. As the current Management Plan was last reviewed and adopted in December 2017, this means that completion of a review is necessary by the end of 2022 at the latest.
- 2.2 In any event, there is a need for a significant review or new plan since the last review was very light touch. There are, moreover, significantly changed public expectations as well as pressing issues which demand answers in the relatively short term. The country faces fundamental changes brought about by Brexit/ELMS, climate change, nature recovery and how these impact on land management systems and priorities. Members should also note that one of the Glover Review recommendations (Proposal 3) was *"Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law."*
- 2.3 The next version of the Management Plan is likely therefore to form the Authority's (and others') approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the creation of 'nature recovery networks', as envisaged by the current Environment Bill.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that the Management Plan is the overarching strategic plan setting the vision and objectives to guide the future management of the Park over a long term period. It is a plan for the place (not the Authority), setting out how National Park purposes and associated duties will be achieved by the NPA and others with an interest or stake in the National Park. It therefore sets the context for all other policy and Authority activity – the Local Plan, Business Plan, Departmental Plans as well as influencing the programmes and activities of others. It should also reflect the Government's vision and priorities for National Parks and how they can be delivered in the North York Moors.
- 2.5 To start the review process Members took part in a 'Future of the North York Moors' evening seminar on 30 January 2020. This sought to gain Members' initial views on how work on a new Management Plan may happen, the potential issues the Plan will need to tackle and as there is no set format prescribed, the scope and format of the Plan itself. This report sets out these initial thoughts. A summary of round table discussions is attached at **Appendix 1** which has been sent to Members in advance of this report.

3. **Scope of the Seminar**

- 3.1 The event was intended as a 'first step' to help inform the Plan review by asking all Members for initial views. It was not intended as a forum for any decisions to be made on the scope and content of the Plan and the initial thoughts gathered and set out in this report should not therefore be taken as a definite indicator of how the review will take place or what the new Plan may cover. Members have yet to decide these. Nevertheless, the event raised some principles about the form and scope of the Plan, which although not for final agreement now, are helpful as a basis to start the process off.
- 3.2 Following introductory presentations by officers, the seminar was split into two parts. The first covered the 'approach' to the review (the scale of the review, the format of the document and working arrangements with outside bodies etc.) and the second the potential key priority issues it would seek to address.

4. **Initial Views Expressed**

4.1 In summary, on the *approach* officers noted the following feedback:

- There was strong support for a longer term vision – for example up to 2030;
- There was strong support for a shorter, more flexible Plan – for example a higher level priorities document backed up by Appendices with more detail and thematic action plans;
- There was strong support for the Authority producing the Plan 'in house'; however with the involvement and agreement of others via topic working groups was seen as vital;
- There should be an internal steering group of Members and Officers with responsibility for producing the Plan, supported by other working groups;
- It should be a thematic plan with a spatial expression for some elements (setting out specific locational actions).

4.2 On the *priority issues* officers tabled an initial set for consideration:

- Climate change
- Wildlife and Nature Recovery
- Agriculture and Future of Farming
- Health and Wellbeing
- Marine and Coast

4.3 Members generally agreed with these (and seemed to see climate change as a driving issue); however several Members felt (and officers very much agree) that there needed to be recognition of the 'people' element i.e. around communities, education, economic development and digital connectivity.

5. **Next Steps**

5.1 Officers will develop a work programme in the coming months. In the meantime Members should note that at the National Park Authority Annual General Meeting on 22 June the annual nomination of Members to committees and outside bodies will take place. The current Management Plan Working Group comprises seven Members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair and with at least one Secretary of State and one Local Authority Member. This group was however formed to assist in monitoring and implementing the existing Management Plan and the focus going forward will be on preparing a new plan.

At this early stage Members may feel that the full Authority needs to remain actively involved in setting the scope and format of a new plan with the involvement of a new Steering Group following these initial formative stages, later in the year.

- 5.2 Officers suggest that the second evening seminar covers an outline timetable for production of the Plan, the communications that will be needed and the main gaps in research/knowledge/information. The quadrennial survey of residents of the National Park is scheduled for this summer and this is an obvious way of obtaining local input to the Plan.

6. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 Work on the Management Plan is now the chief focus for the Forward Planning Team and will require input from all parts of the organisation. The Conservation Department has allocated part of its 20/21 budget to cover gaps in critical data sets. Although most of the resources for the review of the Management Plan will be met within existing staff resources, an expanded budget is likely to be needed in 21/22.

7. **Contribution to National Park Management Plan**

- 7.1 As described in this paper.

8. **Legal Implications**

- 8.1 None at present. Production or review of a Management Plan is a statutory requirement.

<h2>9. Recommendation</h2>

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| <p>9.1 That: Members comment on the contents of this report, agree a further Members' Seminar in April and to establish a Steering Group at the AGM .</p> |
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Contact Officer
Paul Fellows
Head of Strategic Policy
Tel No 01439 772700

Appendices

File ref

1. Members' Evening Seminar held on 30 January - Summary of Round Table Discussions.

Notes of the Members' Evening Seminar, 20 January 2020

A Seminar 'The Future of the North York Moors National Park?' was held on 30 January 2020 to explore Member's initial views on the scope and means of producing the next North York Moors National Park Management Plan. It also included early discussion of some of the key issues it may need to address.

Summary of the Round Table Discussions

The seminar was divided into two main discussion sessions, with four tables of Members invited to discuss and feedback views.

Part 1

The first part of the session invited Members to offer views around competing statements or propositions around the format, scope and production arrangements for the next Plan. Members were asked to discuss the Plan using question prompts placed on pieces of paper. Members were also asked to identify particular statements they agreed with by placing stickers next to that statement.

A summary of these statements of propositions were:

1. Scope of the Plan – a focussed Plan or a Plan that covers a broad range of issues?

Views expressed:

- *The Plan should not get into too much detail and should focus on key issues – it should not be 'spread too thin' and should focus on the achievable (*Strong support (using stickers) for this);*
- *It should be short enough not to have a need for a summary;*
- *It should be a high level plan in the first instance with supporting action plans;*
- *The Plan should be short (a top 'level' document) but then include thematic 'sub plans';*
- *The Plan should be pragmatic, flexible and achievable – it should focus on what can be done rather than be a high level aspirational plan. (*Strong support (using stickers) for this);*
- *Should it be a 'two step' process? i.e. agree key issues with stakeholders and then produce sub plans for each?*
- *Infographics are a useful form of communication;*
- *There was support for "evidence of people talking" rather than just reading a document with a top down strategy;*
- *A social media strategy is important;*
- *The Plan should be 'dynamic' – not just sit on a shelf, i.e. measurable, flexible, adaptable;*
- *Printed documents become out of date – it should be a living, online strategy.*

2. Should the Plan look beyond the National Park Boundary or should it be a Plan that focusses on change within?

Views expressed:

- *The Plan should focus on the National Park and its influence area;*
- *It should be a Plan for the National Park, not just the Authority;*
- *The Plan should recognise relationships with other areas but should focus actions on where it can influence;*

- *The relationship with the neighbouring Howardian Hills AONB needs to be recognised (and potentially the Yorkshire Dales).*

3. The timescale for the Plan – should it focus on short term goals or long terms aims?

Views expressed:

- *The Plan should look to the longer term e.g. 2030 with shorter term actions *Strong support (using stickers) for a longer term plan/vision when Members were asked to identify priorities;*
- *Support for a longer timescale;*
- *The Plan should focus on what can be done in five years but have a longer term vision.*

4. How should the Plan be produced? - Ranging from entirely ‘in house’ with consultation with others, through a steering group with topic working groups through to a full partnership plan with the Authority providing a secretariat.

Views expressed:

- *Support of a key or ‘core’ group which oversees production – including Members; *Strong support (using stickers) for drafting in house but with involvement of partners;*
- *Some support for a core group including 2-5 key partners;*
- *Support for sub-groups focused on topic areas reporting to the core group;*
- *A steering group of 12-15 NYMNP Members/Officers should produce the Plan in house, however with a brief to consult widely;*
- *The Plan does ultimately need to identify priorities for the National Park Authority;*
- *The word ‘partnership’ can mean many things – the issue is the degree to which the extent of working partnerships is formalised. Everyone won’t agree on everything;*
- *There are 2-5 key partners that need to be involved including farmers and landowners.*
- *There was support for it to stay as a “Management Plan” rather than a “Partnership Plan”.*

5. Should the plan be theme based or have a spatial dimension (or a mix of both?)

- *Some support for a spatial element but this will not cover all areas;*
- *It should be a thematic plan with a spatial expression for some elements (‘horses for courses’);*
- *Spatial elements will need exploring with /require the involvement of key partners.*

Part 2

The second round table discussion focussed on key issues for the next Plan. An initial set of issues was provided by officers:

- Climate change
- Wildlife and Nature Recovery
- Agriculture and Future of Farming
- Health and Wellbeing
- Marine and Coast

Views expressed:

There was agreement around all these themes – which will need to be addressed, however;

- *A 'people element' is missing – i.e. living/declining communities/young people*
- *Population diversity is an issue. Does there need to be 'support for 'community life'?*
- *Tourism needs to be included;*
- *There was strong support for climate change – this should be the prime objective with others secondary;*
- *Building conservation needs to be recognised;*
- *Economy needs to be in there;*
- *How are special qualities factored in?*
- *Wildlife – would this include bringing back species that have left?*
- *All these are just one issue – it's around changing land use pressures;*
- *Working with young people is a priority and need to hear the voices of the less engaged;*
- *Needs to cover services in the Park e.g. work, transport, digital connectivity;*
- *Education needs to be recognised;*
- *We should discuss key themes with partners before final identification;*
- *Why is Marine and Coast singled out? Is it because it's under-recognised?'*
- *The point was made that external 'expert' advice on technical issues; especially climate change would be useful.*