

North York Moors National Park Authority

25 June 2012

Tourism Task and Finish Group Update

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the main outcomes of the Members' Tourism Task and Finish Group discussion held 16 April 2012.

2. Background

- 2.1 The North York Moors National Park Authority Management Plan, to be adopted in June 2012, takes an innovative approach by focusing on the benefits that the Park provides for people such as food production, storing carbon and holding rainwater, and on the industries that sustain the economy and landscape of the area, particularly farming and tourism.
- 2.2 The Management Plan also aligns with England - A Strategic Framework for Tourism, which proposes the principles of 'wise growth' and adopts a 3% real growth target in the economic value of tourism.
- 2.3 As a result, the Authority is keen to take a positive approach to tourism and to be more proactive in raising the profile of the North York Moors and the surrounding area.
- 2.3 This new emphasis on tourism has resulted in the Authority recently creating and appointing a Head of Tourism & Promotion.
- 2.4 At the Access and Information Committee 23 January 2012, a number of Members indicated their interest in attending a Tourism focus group with Officers to guide the initial direction for the Authority's work on tourism.
- 2.5 This Members' Tourism Task and Finish Group, comprising Malcolm Bowes, Richard Thompson, Val Arnold and Jim Bailey, subsequently met 16 April 2012 in what was a very useful discussion.

3. Summary of Main Outcomes

- 3.1 After a scene setting presentation on visitor trends, challenges and opportunities, a subsequent discussion facilitated by Malcolm Bowes generated a number of ideas that were grouped and prioritised into five areas of activity.
- 3.1.1 **Partnerships** - Members emphasised the benefits of pooling resources and working in partnership to promote the North York Moors Brand, the place and associated business, with key organisations, including, but not limited to: Welcome to Yorkshire, District and Borough Councils and tourism businesses.
- 3.1.2 **Increase visitor numbers** (including return visits) - The Management Plan sets out an intention to support an increase in the number of visitors. There is not enough activity at a local level to entice people here, linking in with the work of Welcome to Yorkshire. More could be done to promote the family friendly facilities in the area.

- 3.1.3 **Increase visitor spend** that benefits the local economy - Member suggestions included raising the profile of local food and drink, the quality shops that do exist and to take advantage of the growing trend by visitors for authentic experiences, by raising the profile of existing ones, as well as encourage new product development.
- 3.1.4 **Awareness** - Increasing the awareness of the North York Moors brand, the National Park and wider area is a priority and we need a much clearer identity. Members were in agreement that a Local Distinctiveness LEADER bid should be submitted. This would help local businesses and communities to promote consistent messages to residents and visitors about what makes the North York Moors special. This would engender a strong identity and 'sense of place' for visitors, making it easier for them to recommend the North York Moors to others. Such a bid should encompass local produce/products, cultural and heritage assets.
- 3.1.5 The project would also seek to create greater awareness of the existence and value of local suppliers and activities, creating stronger local supply chains and a more self-sustaining local economic base. It would encourage businesses to develop specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area. In turn this should help to provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit, and enhance the tourism economy of the area.
- 3.1.6 The possibility of seeking Geopark status was discussed. The group recommended that the potential pros and cons of this should be investigated to enable an informed decision to be made.
- 3.1.7 It was also agreed that the Authority should develop and implement a "Promoting the Park Plan" – including proposals for large scale events, signposting from major roads, use of social media, local distinctiveness etc.
- 3.1.8 **Managed Tourism** - Members were in agreement that all activity be done sustainably so that it does not harm the special qualities and communities in the area.

4. **Next steps**

- 4.1 The conclusions from this Tourism Task & Finish Group will be built into the new business plan, which sets the Authority's programme of work for the next three years.

5. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 This is an update report for information only.

6. **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 6.1 A Sustainability Assessment is not required because this is an information report.

7. **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

<h4>8. Recommendation</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 That the report be noted.

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Background papers to this Report

File ref

None.