

North York Moors National Park Authority

15 December 2015

Developing a New Volunteering Strategy – Framework and Timetable

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline to Members the framework and timetable for development of a new Volunteering Strategy

2. Background

- 2.1 Volunteers have contributed to the Authority's work from its very early years. A Voluntary Ranger Service was formed shortly after designation and was the core of the Authority's volunteer support up until the beginning of the 21st Century by which time it was contributing around 2000 days work per year.
- 2.2 In 2001, following a Best Value fundamental service review the Authority set out an aspiration to develop a new Volunteer Service alongside the Voluntary Ranger Service and to provide opportunities for people of all abilities and from all walks of life to contribute to all aspects of our work.
- 2.3 Over the following 12 years, this ambition has been largely realised and this Authority now has the greatest contribution by Volunteers of all UK National Parks with active involvement of people from a wide range of backgrounds, and of different ages and abilities making a contribution to many areas of our work. Since 2001 the proportion of the total days worked for the Authority which is performed by volunteers has grown from 4% to 30% and volunteers now outnumber staff by about 7 to 1, working around 12,000 days per year, equivalent in time to around 45 full time staff.
- 2.4 This is a wonderful achievement contributed to by many staff, members and volunteers. It means the National Park Authority is better able to deliver more, is better connected with a wider "constituency" and is providing many people with an opportunity to enjoy the place whilst helping care for it. This said, officers do not feel that it is a "job done" and in 2015 a new strategy is to be developed to set the course for new ways of working and a continuing growth in opportunities for people to work with us in caring for the area and helping people enjoy it. Set out below is the proposed framework and timetable for this process.

3. Framework for the New Strategy

- 3.1 It is proposed that the strategy covers the following topics
- Developing a "one team approach" that fully integrates paid staff and unpaid volunteers
 - Enabling volunteers to contribute to every area of our work
 - Making it easier and more attractive for people to volunteer
 - Finding new ways to organise and support volunteers
 - Corporate volunteering
 - Working safely and developing a "code of conduct" to be clear about expected behaviour

3.2 The strategy will also include a costed action plan, timetable for delivery and targets for the coming five years.

4. **Timetable for Developing the Strategy**

4.1 It is proposed that the following timetable be followed

Activity	Date
Research best practice – both in UK and further afield and from both inside and outside the National Park family	Ongoing. Complete by mid-January 2015
Analysis of areas of weaknesses in current volunteering operation.	Ongoing. Complete by mid-January 2015
Agree timetable and scope with members	December 2014
Consultation with volunteers focus group and contact with all volunteers and voluntary rangers	January
Consultation with staff focus group	January
Consultation with local communities from in and around the National Park via Parish Forums and community champions	February
Discussion at Directors meeting	February
Draft strategy considered by National Park Authority	March

5. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising immediately from this report. The strategy and action plan will set out in full the financial and staffing implications of delivery.

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

6.1 An effective, active volunteer service has the potential to contribute directly to delivery of all aspects of the National Park Management Plan

7. **Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

8. **Recommendation**

8.1 Members comments regarding the process outlined in the report would be welcomed

8.2 That the framework and timetable be approved

Contact Officer
Richard Gunton
Director of Park Services
Tel No 01439 772700

Background papers to this Report

File ref

None