

North York Moors National Park Authority

18 December 2017

Proposed Performance and Learning Reviews for 2018

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider and determine what should be the focus of two performance reviews to present to Members at the July scrutiny committee.
- 1.2 To inform Members about the topic for discussion at their April 2018 evening seminar.

2. Background

- 2.1 Each year, in line with the Authority's performance framework, (see Appendix 1 for a reminder) officers have committed to completing 'Performance and Learning reviews' as part of the review of progress on the Authority's Business Plan. The annual Scrutiny meeting in July is the obvious opportunity to look at specific areas of work in depth and discuss the key findings of these reviews.
- 2.2 Performance and Learning Reviews will focus on effectiveness and value for money. As well as making an assessment of whether an area of work is achieving its objectives set by the Authority, reviews will also make comparisons with similar services in other Authorities, look at the value for money that they provide and consider key lessons for improvement in the future. In the interests of managing resources, it is proposed that no more than two reviews are completed each year.
- 2.3 Alongside Performance Reviews, the Authority provides an opportunity for Members to look at issues which have the ability to impact on the special qualities of the National Park through its regular Member evening seminars. A proposal for the April seminar is also set out here.

3. Consideration

- 3.1 For 2018 officers have put forward three suggestions for areas of work that it would be useful to look at through Performance and Learning reviews. These are Development Management benchmarking, Rights of Way maintenance, and progress on establishing effective Wildlife Corridors. Members should not be limited by these and additional topics of interest are welcome to be put forward in the meeting before a decision is made on which to pursue.

Development Management Benchmarking

- 3.2 The Authority's Business Plan makes a commitment to carrying out a bench marking exercise for the Development Management service as one of its financial principles for this Business Plan period "*Undertake a benchmarking exercise to ensure that planning applications are delivered in the most cost effective way*" (page 4). Scoping for this exercise has been carried out by an independent consultant and an initial review of the service completed. The next step is to complete a more detailed benchmarking exercise, which will compare the North York Moors service to other Local Authorities including National Parks. The results of this exercise would provide Members with a good opportunity to discuss the Performance of the Authority's development Management function and pick up on any lessons for the future.

Rights of Way Programme Review

- 3.3 The Authority's Rights of Way work is its single biggest area of investment in direct delivery 'on the ground.' The programme covers more than 2,000km of public rights of way and in surveys features as the top priority of both residents and visitors to the National Park. In the 2016 Visitors Survey 86% of visitors stated that they were visiting the National Park to go for a walk. In 2014 the programme underwent a major review with a significant reduction in staff working on delivery and a conscious decision to transfer delivery to landowners and managers to fulfil their responsibilities for maintaining rights of way. There was also been an increased focus on working with volunteers on Rights of Way. Between 2001 and 2014 there was a steady increase in the quality of rights of way in the National Park and, now would be a good time to take a more in depth look at the impact that programme changes are having as well as picking up any learning for future delivery.

Progress on Wildlife Corridor Establishment

- 3.4 The Authority's Business Plan has identified work on Wildlife Corridors as a strategic priority in this Business Plan period stating, *"Our flagship work on wildlife corridors will help to link the places where animals and plants live so that species can better move around the landscape, allowing them to adapt to changing conditions and to find the things they need to survive. This should make the North York Moors a place where more nature flourishes, where people can experience and enjoy the sight and sound of rare wildlife, and where local people are custodians of this abundance of nature and are proud of what they have helped secure."* This priority was 'carried over' from the previous Business Plan period with a recognition that initial progress on achieving the targets set out was, for a number of reasons, slower than anticipated. The pace of progress on this area of work is now picking up and a review would provide members with an opportunity to look in more detail at how this is performing.

April Evening Seminar – Farming and Stewardship in the National Park

- 3.5 The EU has been the major shaper of farm support in the UK since accession in 1973. It is some years now since the Authority stopped running its own farm scheme and almost all support now comes from central government under EU programmes. The English National Parks have collaborated to produce (under the leadership of our own Chair Jim Bailey) a report 'Farming in the English National Parks'. This sets out how a new system of support might operate in the National Parks post Brexit. It expects the detailed operation to be agreed at a local level and there is much to discuss about how such a system could work in the North York Moors. This is especially topical because, as Members may recall from recent meetings, (November FRASC, September NPA) there is a decline in the proportion of land in the National Park being managed 'in line with conservation objectives'. A number of reasons are believed to be contributing to this decline, largely the amount of land that is being entered into the 'new' Countryside Stewardship schemes. The Authority is currently working with other National Parks, farmers and land managers to get a better understanding of the issues involved and look for opportunities to tackle them in the months and years ahead. This evening seminar will provide Members with an opportunity to learn more about the issues and discuss the Authority's response to them.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Performance reviews are a fundamental part of the framework by which Members are able to engage in scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Authority's work. Three suggestions for the focus of performance reviews in 2018 are set out here. Members are also encouraged to put forward any alternative topics of interest that they would like to see reviewed in 2018.

4.2 The Members evening seminar in April will focus on the future of Farming and Stewardship in the National Park.

5. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

5.1 None.

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

6.1 Performance reporting sets out what the Authority is achieving to contribute towards the ambitions in the National Park Management Plan.

7. **Legal Implications**

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1 That Members agree on the areas of work to be scrutinised through two performance reviews in 2018.

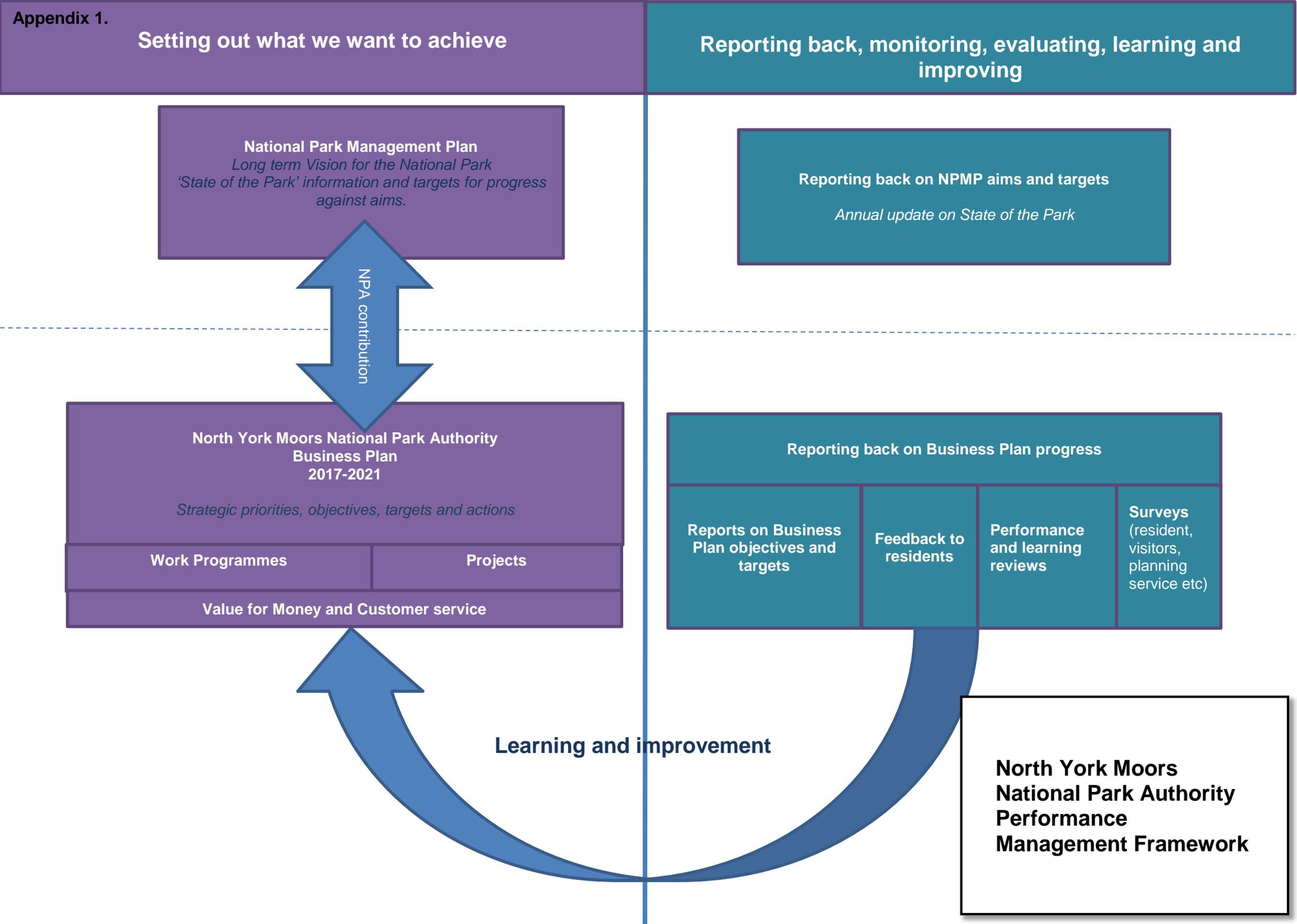
8.2 That Members note the topic for their April evening seminar

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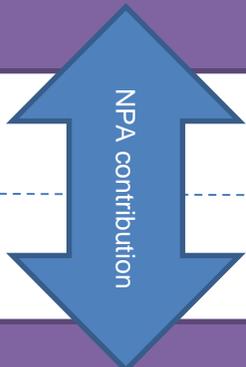
Appendix 1.

Setting out what we want to achieve

Reporting back, monitoring, evaluating, learning and improving

National Park Management Plan
Long term Vision for the National Park
'State of the Park' information and targets for progress against aims.

Reporting back on NPMP aims and targets
Annual update on State of the Park



North York Moors National Park Authority Business Plan 2017-2021
Strategic priorities, objectives, targets and actions

Work Programmes	Projects
Value for Money and Customer service	

Reporting back on Business Plan progress

Reports on Business Plan objectives and targets	Feedback to residents	Performance and learning reviews	Surveys (resident, visitors, planning service etc)
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North York Moors National Park Authority Performance Management Framework