

North York Moors National Park Authority

19 March 2018

Communications Strategy

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline to Members progress on development of the Communications Strategy.
- 1.2 To invite comments regarding the outline brief for the Strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Authority's Business Plan sets out a proposal to develop a Communications Strategy, for both the North York Moors and the National Park Authority.
- 2.2 The Strategy will identify key audiences and encompass profile, promotion, communications and interpretation. It will replace and build upon the existing Communications Strategy, Promoting the Park Plan and Interpretation Plan, setting out priorities for delivery of National Park Management Plan policies and Business Plan targets relating to communications and marketing.
- 2.3 The original intention was that the plan should be developed during the 2017/18 financial year. It was subsequently agreed that this should be postponed for 1 year to 2018/19. Officers are now keen to progress this and a first draft of the outline brief has been prepared and is attached at **Appendix 1**. Members comments are sought regarding the scope and content as set out in the brief.
- 2.4 As set out in the outline brief, members, staff and volunteers will have clear opportunities to contribute to the development of the strategy. It is proposed that Members will be involved via this paper and discussion and a facilitated discussion with the consultants as the main item for the 4 July evening seminar, before receiving a final version for approval.

3. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 Funding to commission the strategy is allocated in the 2018/19 financial year.
- 3.2 The Strategy is to be developed by external consultancy. The process will be overseen by Director of Park Services, working with Communications Officer, Head of Promotion and Tourism and Assistant Director of Park Services. All key staff have this task identified in their personal delivery plans for the coming year.

4. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

- 4.1 This Strategy will help focus and guide our work to deliver many Management Plan aims and policies, particularly the aims:
 - A wide audience will be aware of and associate positive images with the North York Moors National Park (policies U10, U11, U12)
 - There will be an increased level of understanding of the special qualities of the National Park (policies U14, U15, U16)

4.2 It will also guide our communications with all stakeholders including local communities, central and local government and partner agencies. The strategy will complement rather than replace our existing statutory Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out how we communicate with people specifically as part of our planning role

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **Recommendation**

6.1 Members' comments regarding the draft brief and timeline for development of a Communications Strategy are invited.

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Background papers to this Report

File ref

1. National Park Authority Business Plan 2017 - 21

North York Moors National Park Communications Strategy

Brief

Aim: To provide a framework that will assist staff, Members, volunteers and partner organisations to deliver more professional and consistent communications about the North York Moors National Park and the Authority.

The plan will:

- Align with the Authority's Core Values, particularly points one and two as follows:
 - Champion the qualities that make the North York Moors a unique and special place.
 - Promote opportunities for everyone to get involved.
- Help the Authority articulate its vision across all audiences.
- Assess our 'niche offering' as a National Park.
- Capture this existing sense of 'who we are' and 'what we do' and distil it down into a narrative (our 'story') that will subtly run through all external communications issued by, or on behalf of the Authority.
- Not involve re-naming the Authority or redesigning the logo, but rather focus on building our brand by capturing and succinctly expressing our 'essence'.
- Discuss the difference between the Authority and the National Park and where necessary, be clear about which of these we are talking about in each aspect of the Plan.
- Review all current guidance relating to Communications (Clear Communications Guide, Social Media Guidance, video and YouTube policy, writing for the website, logo guidelines etc.) and assess how these will fit with the new documentation.
- Be drafted and agreed between those directly involved in Communications and Marketing at the Authority, with input from Members, volunteers and staff as a whole.
- Be signed-off by Senior Management and then Members.

The deliverables will be:

- The Communications Strategy itself. This document will include:
 - An assessment of our current and target audiences and how they are most effectively reached
 - Information for everyone to use on how we communicate and the key messages about the National Park we want to convey.
 - Clear communications and marketing goal(s) with a description of how 'success' will be measured (i.e. *To use professional marketing and strategic communications to establish The North York Moors National Park (Authority) as...*)
 - A list of 'communication priorities': which areas of the National Park Authority's work do we wish to dedicate the most time to, in order to help us reach our goal.
- A 'brand-pack'. This will be a separate document containing all the brand/visual identity guidelines, with sections on:
 - Strap-line(s)
 - Personality and story
 - Tone of voice
 - Logo, typeface and colour palette
 - Imagery and photography style

- Use of video

The 'pack'* would provide specific guidelines to help staff, Members, volunteers and partner organisations (especially tourism businesses and agencies) use the Authority's brand and assets. It will therefore be designed so that it is easy to understand and share both digitally and physically.

** At this stage we remain open-minded whether a single brand-pack can meet both our internal and external needs (i.e. an external organisation involved in destination marketing and a member of staff producing an event poster), or whether we require two variations.*

Timeline:

- **March/April 2018:** Share brief with Members at March Authority meeting (19 March 2018). Undertake a quotation exercise with potential consultants.
- **April 2018:** Appoint external consultant to help develop brief into project deliverables in consultation with key staff and with wider staff/member/volunteer engagement as recommended by the consultants
- **June 2018:** First draft(s) from consultant.
- **June /July 2018:** Facilitated discussion of draft strategy with members at evening seminar (4 July 2018) and staff at full staff meeting (27 June 2018) to which volunteers will be invited.
- **August/September:** Receive final draft. Seek approval by Authority (24 September 2018).

Nina Beadle
Communications Officer
February 2018