

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING – 20 OCTOBER 2005**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Report by: Lindsay Cornish, Chief Executive/National Park Officer

Summary:

Another month of steady progress.

Recommendation:

To **note** the report.

Resources:

Availability of staff is now proving a real constraint on progress, with primary effort focussed on recruitment, accommodation and developing the planning functions.

Other major considerations:

None.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Report by: Lindsay Cornish, Chief Executive/National Park Officer

1. This report describes progress since the last Authority meeting on 20 September 2005. Another month of steady progress on building the Authority, with effort focussing on recruitment, accommodation and corporate functions, developing outline planning functions, corporate planning and developing policy priorities.

Members

2. A relatively quiet month apart from a second meeting of the Transfer of Planning Functions Project Steering Group and six members attending an ANPA Induction Course in the Peak District on 5-7 October.

Next steps

3. Interviews for the two independent Members of the Standards Committee will take place in late October with recommendations for appointment to be made to the November Authority meeting.
4. The fourth member workshop, on corporate planning and the underpinning policy and performance priorities will be held on 24 October.
5. A training session on the role and work of English Heritage and the organisations of the confederation of Natural England is being organised for November.
6. A workshop on dealing with issues arising from multiple representation, drawing on experience from other national parks, is also being arranged for November.

Delivery of National Park purposes and functions

7. The policy team has taken forward work on a number of fronts including:

Working with other statutory bodies: the first of, what we hope will become regular, meetings with senior officials from all the key statutory bodies provided a useful forum for identifying how those bodies can contribute to national park purposes and their expectations of the National Park Authority.

Transfer of planning functions: the Steering Group held its second meeting on 27 September to consider progress with and risks to the project, and a revised paper on the principles underpinning, and indicative structure of, the Authority's planning service (to be taken as a separate item on the agenda). Additional consultants have been recruited to assist with the work on this project.

Influencing regional policy: National Park Authority input was provided at the South East protected Landscapes Officers meeting and the English Heritage Review workshop.

Work has continued on the **State of the Park Report** and on the **review of the Management Plan**, including integration with the Local Development Framework core strategy and community strategy.

Development of the **Sustainable Development Fund** is proceeding on schedule on the basis agreed at the previous Authority meeting.

Next steps

8. Main focus will be on development of the Authority's planning functions, developing proposals for the preparation of the National Park Management Plan, preparation of the Local Development Scheme, developing the Sustainable Development Fund, contributing to the Corporate Planning Workshop.

Stakeholders and Communications

9. A full update to be provided for the November meeting. Interviews with the Chief Executive published in Leisure Manager Magazine and Community Magazine. Work on a residents' newsletter is at final draft stage.

Next steps

10. Issue Residents' Newsletter and revitalise plans for a stakeholder event later in the year.

Corporate Services

Staffing/Recruitment

11. Appointments have now been made to the following posts:

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|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Director, Understanding and Enjoyment | Jeff Haynes (Dartmoor National Park Authority) | Formally taking up appointment in new year but working one day per week for the Authority in the interim. |
| Head of ICT | Colin Banfield (East Hampshire DC) | Taking up post on 17 October. |
| Planning Adviser | David Ilesley (Eastleigh BC) | Taking up post on 7 November. |
| Policy Adviser – Recreation (Access) | Sarah Manchester (Warwickshire County Council) | Taking up post on 7 November. |

12. Interviews for the Head of Communications, Head of Member Services and Director of Corporate Services take place on 12, 17 and 19 October respectively and second-stage interviews for the Director of Conservation and Enhancement take place on 14 October.
13. The Director, Strategy and Planning post is being re-advertised around 20 October.
14. The first meeting with the planning staff identified to transfer from New Forest District Council took place on 29 September and a number of issues on terms of transfer, location of the work and nature of the planning service have been raised. All those affected have been offered individual one to one meetings with senior managers in the Authority. The second meeting takes place on 20 October.

ICT

15. The draft ICT Strategy will be presented to Authority members separately at the meeting.

Accommodation

16. Progress on medium term accommodation is being reported separately at the meeting.

Corporate Planning

17. Staff from Corporate Services, together with the Policy Team and a consultant have begun work on the development of the Authority's Best Value Performance Plan and budget and the associated links with the Authority's strategic priorities and the National Park Management Plan. Outline proposals will be discussed with members at a workshop on 24 October and a paper will be brought to the November Authority meeting.

Next steps

18. Recruitment will continue with emphasis on recruiting to the Planning Posts. The ICT strategy will be finalised and implementation will begin, with priority given to the systems required to support Planning services. Terms for the Efford site will be agreed, and plans for moving in are nearing completion.