

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING - 28 MARCH 2007

SECOND CORPORATE PLAN: DRAFT PERFORMANCE SECTION

Report by: Lindsay Cornish, Chief Executive

Summary:

This paper presents the first draft of the performance section of the Second Corporate Plan; it:

- updates members on the changing Government requirements for Best Value Performance Plans (BVPPs);
- seeks members' comments on the draft performance section; and
- describes the further work needed to complete this year's Corporate Plan.

The draft performance section was discussed at the Resources and Performance Committee on 16 March, where the Committee agreed that subject to the reservations set out in paragraph 3.3 of this report, the Authority should be asked to consider the draft.

Recommendations

- 1 That the Authority agrees, subject to points raised in discussion, that the draft of the performance section of the Corporate Plan in Annex 1 should be finalised for inclusion in the full draft Corporate Plan for approval on 24 April.**
- 2 That the Authority notes the further work needed and the timetable for the completion of the Corporate Plan**

Resources: Continuing staff and consultant involvement until May 2007.

Papers:

NFNPA 169/07: Cover paper
NFNPA 169/07: Annex 1: Performance Section of the Corporate Plan
NFNPA 150/07: Corporate Plan Review

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Report by: Lindsay Cornish, Chief Executive

1 Introduction

This paper presents the first draft performance section of the Corporate Plan for 2007/08 - 2008/09 (**Annex 1**). Specifically, the paper:

- updates members on the changing Government requirements for Best Value Performance Plans;
- seeks members' comments on the draft performance section; and
- describes the further work needed to complete this year's Corporate Plan.

2 Background

2.1 At present each national park authority is statutorily required to draw up a Best Value Performance Plan each year that is intended to set out its vision and objectives for its work. Guidance on the plans is given in the ODPM Grant Memorandum 2000 and the Defra/ODPM Circular 10/2003, "Guidance On Best Value and Performance Improvement for National Parks and the Broads Authority".

2.2 In its 2006 Local Government White Paper, "Strong and Prosperous Communities", the Government indicated its intention to apply a "lighter touch" in the way it imposes requirements on local authorities. In particular, the White Paper says that:

"Since 2000 local authorities and other best value authorities have been under a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in exercising their functions. The duty of best value and its underlying principles will remain at the heart of the performance framework. But, drawing on the experiences of best value authorities, we will reform elements of best value. We will relax those more prescriptive process requirements, whilst sharpening the focus on two key areas where best value has not had the impact envisaged – citizen engagement and competition. Accordingly, **we will remove the requirements for best value authorities to prepare Annual Best Value Performance Plans and conduct best value reviews.** Planning and reviewing services is a critical part of local performance management but research has shown that prescriptive statutory requirements are unnecessary."

- 2.3 *The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* has now completed Committee stage in the House of Commons but, until it becomes law, the requirement on national park authorities to produce Best Value Performance Plans remains.

3 The second Corporate Plan

- 3.1 The Authority's first Corporate Plan, which provided the context for its forward work proposals for the period 2006/07 - 2007/08, fulfilled the requirements for Best Value. It also gave the Authority its first opportunity to "set out its stall" and explain to all those who were interested in its work (including its members and staff, the Government and the Authority's auditors and partner organisations) how it planned to fulfil its mission.

- 3.2 Following Authority approval at its meeting on 18 January, this year's Corporate Plan will be essentially a rollover of the first Plan. It reviews the Authority's performance and achievements in 2006/07 and rolls forward its policy agenda for the next two years and beyond. The meat of the Plan is in the tables in the performance section (in **Annex 1**), which explain, for each of the priority objectives the Authority chose last year:

- **action in 2006-2007:** setting out what the Authority achieved in its first full year;
- **action for 2007-2008 and beyond:** the activities planned for the Authority's second year, with quarterly milestones for completing them, and, where appropriate, how these activities will be taken forward in later years.

- 3.3 The actions for 2007-2008 cannot be finalised until the budget allocations have been agreed, and commitments for later years will be conditional on the resources made available to the Authority in those years. Action planned for 2007/08 comprises three elements:

- action delayed in 2006/07 due to late recruitment of staff, or started in 2006/07 but with an end date of 2007/08 or beyond;
- action already planned to start in 2007/08, sometimes containing more detail;
- new actions for 2007/08 not envisaged when the first plan was written.

Recommendation 1

That the Authority agrees, subject to points raised in discussion, that the draft of the performance section of the Corporate Plan in Annex 1 should be finalised for inclusion in the full draft Corporate Plan for approval on 24 April.

4 Local Performance Indicators

4.1 Following the member workshop on 4 January staff have continued to develop a relatively narrow suite of Local Performance Indicators taking into account, particularly, that where plans and strategies are still in development true outcome-related indicators cannot yet be drawn up but will be a product of those strategies.

4.2 Further work is still needed to complete the suite of indicators. They will be considered at the next Resources and Performance Committee Meeting, for approval, on 3 April.

5 The overall structure of the Plan

5.1 Like last year's Plan, this one will also include:

- an initial section '**Setting the Scene**'; and
- four **Appendices** containing: the Park profile; the organisational structure; the financial statement table; and the performance indicators.

6 Further work

6.1 More work will be needed on all sections of the draft. The key milestones in the timetable for completing the Plan are, as follows:

- **28 March:** the Authority considers the draft Performance section of this year's Corporate Plan;
- **3 April:** the Resources and Performance Committee considers the draft Local Performance Indicators and other sections of the Corporate Plan taking account of the Authority's approval of the 2007/08 Budget;
- **24 April:** the Corporate Plan is approved by the Authority, submitted to the Audit Commission for review, and published and submitted to Defra before the end of June.

Recommendation 2

That the Authority notes the further work needed and the timetable for the completion of the Corporate Plan.