



CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CIRCULAR 'PROTECTION OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES'

A response by the English National Park Authorities Association August 2008

Summary

1. The English National Parks Authorities Association (ENPAA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. ENPAA exists to provide a collective voice for the nine English National Park Authorities (NPAs). It is governed by the Chairs of the nine Authorities. This submission has been prepared by officers of the National Park's Heads of Planning Group, working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities (NPAs). Individual NPAs may wish to submit separate comments, which will draw on the specific issues for their particular area.

2. English National Parks are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) in recognition of their natural beauty and opportunities for open-air recreation. The two statutory purposes of the National Parks' designation are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas; and
- to promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

3. In carrying out these two main responsibilities, the NPA has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. The Broads Authority was established by the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and has an additional purpose to those above, namely to protect the interests of navigation.

4. Where World Heritage Sites (WHSs) are inscribed within or partly within National Parks there is therefore likely to be a large degree of correspondence between the identified features that form the focus of the WHS inscription and the special qualities of the National Park. Objectives for protection and management are also likely to be very similar or identical together with a concern to secure sustainable economic development for the local community.

5. At present the only WHS inscribed within an English National Park is the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall)*, which lies partly within the Northumberland and Lake District National Parks. In addition, the Lake District and the New Forest are on the UK Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. The

Lake District is actively developing its bid for inscription by 2012 and the proposed boundary of the WHS is likely to be coincident with the National Park boundary.

6. ENPAA strongly supports the Government's stated intention in the White Paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* (DCMS, 2007) to 'further recognise in national policy the need to protect World Heritage Sites as sites of outstanding universal value, and...make more prominent the need to create a management plan for each WHS...'. This is entirely appropriate in the context of wider heritage protection reform.

Specific comments to the Draft Circular - Protection of World Heritage Sites

CLG and DCMS Draft Circular on World Heritage Sites (Annex A)

Paragraph 3 The *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* were most recently revised in January 2008.

Paragraph 7 ENPAA strongly supports the statement that WHSs can "contribute to a national and local sense of community and to sustainable economic development". Where WHSs are inscribed within or partly within National Parks this will assist with achieving the National Park duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

Paragraph 12 The three principles included within paragraph 12 reflect very closely those underlying the protection and management of National Parks. We therefore offer strong support and in particular welcome the recognition that a balance needs to be struck "*between the needs of conservation, access, the interests of the local community and the achievement of sustainable economic growth*".

Paragraph 13 National Parks have a statutory duty to produce management plans under Section 66 of the Environment Act (1995). It would be helpful if the circular clarified the relationship between National Park Management Plans and WHS Management Plans where both are required. We suggest that in general, where WHSs lie partly or wholly within National Parks, separate Management Plans should be developed for each.

Paragraph 14 We welcome the proposed link between policies in WHS Management Plans and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). The proposal, however, that WHS Management Plan policies on development control could be adopted within a Local Development Document (LDD) appears to contradict the required staged development of LDDs starting with "issues and options". This would preclude the adoption of fully formed policies from other documents as the LDD may undergo further revision following public examination.

We therefore suggest that the development control sections of WHS Management Plans should identify the principles upon which development control policies should be developed to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of WHSs. These could then guide the process of developing local development documents in relation to WHSs.

Paragraphs 20 to 21 ENPAA notes the proposed inclusion of WHSs in Article 1(5) land in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 in order to restrict incremental change. National Parks are already included in Article 1(5) land and this measure will therefore not introduce any further protection or control on development in WHSs which are inscribed in or partly within National Parks. As a result the proposal will not increase the number of developments requiring planning consent in such areas.

Paragraph 23 We note the requirement for EIA to be carried out for development proposals in WHSs, and the requirement for Design and Access Statements. These measures will have little additional effect in WHSs in or partly within National Parks.

English Heritage Guidance Note on the Protection and Management of WHSs in England (Annex B)

ENPAA welcomes English Heritage's Guidance Note on WHSs in England as clarification of issues included in the draft circular and on wider matters.

Paragraph 1.3 We strongly support the statement that WHSs "*can be important for social cohesion and can help to foster a sense of pride. They can also act as the focus for tourism and economic regeneration...*". Where WHSs are inscribed in or partly within National Parks this is likely to assist with the National Park's duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

Paragraph 7.1 We would draw your attention to the fact that National Park Authorities are also local planning authorities in addition to regional, unitary, county and district LPAs. We would therefore welcome inclusion of National Park Authorities in this paragraph.

Paragraph 8.4 It is helpful that the benefits of a link between Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs) and WHS Management Plans are clearly stated. SCSs form part of the basis for Local Development Frameworks and a link between SCSs and WHS Management Plans will strengthen the golden thread of WHS protection in all relevant strategic documents.

Paragraphs 9.1 to 9.15 - World Heritage Site Management Plans. As noted above, National Parks have a statutory duty to produce management plans under Section 66 of the Environment Act (1995). For cases where WHSs are inscribed in or partly within National Parks it would be helpful if the Guidance clarified the relationship between National Park Management Plans and WHS Management Plans. In addition, in cases where WHSs are entirely within National Parks, it would be helpful if guidance were provided on the necessity for having two separate Management Plans.

ENPAA

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