

DECC Statistics User Survey

A response by the English National Park Authorities Association

July 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) exists to provide a collective voice for the ten English National Park Authorities. It is governed by the Chairs of the ten Authorities. Our response represents the collective view of officers who are working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities (NPAs). Individual National Park Authorities may submit separate comments, which will draw on the specific issues for their particular area. We are happy for our response to be made publicly available and to discuss its contents with officials if that would be helpful.
- 1.2 We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Department of Energy and Climate Change's statistical user survey. Before responding to the specific questions from the survey, we wish to make the general point that National Park Authorities use a great deal of geographic data from a number of government sources. Much data is geo-coded using postcode, ward and parish boundaries, some of which straddles National Park boundaries. This makes analysis on a National Park basis particularly difficult. NPAs are keen to further evidence-based decision-making, but struggle to do so in the absence of data that is cut to National Park boundaries. The UK Government Vision and Circular for the English National Parks and the Broads¹, recently published by Defra, recognises this point and specifically urges those with responsibility for preparing data sets to where possible provide data that is cut to National Park boundaries (see Paragraph 118).

Specific questions raised in the survey

2. **Why are our statistics of interest to you or your organisation? Which statistics do you use, how do you use them or how you would like to be able to use them.**
- 2.1 National Park Authorities are a type of local authority, funded through Defra with statutory purposes including that of Local Planning Authority, as set out in the *Environment Act* 1995. They are charged with helping to look after England's National Parks, which are largely rural areas of the country that make up 9.3% of England's land area. An important aspect of NPA work is climate change mitigation and adaptation. The role of NPAs in climate change work is set out in the ENPAA publication *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in National Parks*², which identifies four key roles. These are sustainable land management, low carbon rural communities, landscape-scale adaptation and communicating climate change.
- 2.2 The climate change mitigation work of NPAs includes influencing land management to reduce emissions from agriculture and land use, land use change and forestry

¹ Presently available from the Defra website via <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/national-parks/vision-circular2010.pdf>

² Available from <http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/enpaa-publications.htm>

(LULUCF); helping increase the uptake of appropriate renewable energy and energy efficiency measures to reduce domestic and commercial emissions; and promoting sustainable transport to reduce road transport emissions.

2.3 In all cases, evidence of the scale of greenhouse gas emissions and trends over time on a National Park basis is important to guide work, assist in prioritisation and monitor success. Until recently, no such data was available cut to National Park boundaries. In late 2009 following discussion between ENPAA and Defra³, Defra commissioned AEAT to undertake work to produce CO₂ emission estimates for the then nine National Parks. The work by AEAT used the same methodology as the larger Local Authority CO₂ Emissions Project that is owned by DECC and produced results in the same format. This was a one-off commission that covered emission estimates for the year 2006. The results have been extremely useful to NPAs in understanding the scale of CO₂ emissions from different sectors in National Parks.

3. How well do the statistics meet your needs, and how could they be improved? Please consider their comprehensiveness, the level of detail available, how accessible and timely they are, the commentary and presentation, and any explanations of methodology or other available metadata.

3.1 We would like to see National Park administrative boundaries included in the Local Authority CO₂ Emissions Project that is owned by DECC, so that annual CO₂ emissions at a National Park level are produced in line with those provided to all other local authorities. The LA CO₂ project already includes more than 430 local authority boundaries, so the addition of a further 10 National Park boundaries should not be onerous. If provided with this data, NPAs would be able to track emission trends within the National Parks that they are responsible for.

4. How would you like to see DECC develop, now and in the future, its range of statistical outputs?

4.1 The provision of CO₂ emission estimates cut to National Park boundaries, as described above, is the highest priority in the development of DECC's statistical outputs from ENPAA's point of view.

4.2 Additionally, it would be very useful to be able to track the development of renewable energy in National Parks. At present, although National Core Output Indicator E3⁴ requires the collection of this information (but not that arising from permitted development), we are not aware that this is being undertaken nationwide to provide a resource of accurate and comparable information. A statistical resource that provided figures for installed renewable energy capacity on a spatial basis, which could be cut to a variety of boundaries (including National Parks), would be very beneficial to understand the uptake of domestic and community-scale renewable energy measures. It would also be helpful if such data was split to show installed capacity by type of renewable energy measure (solar PV, solar thermal, wind, biogas, ground and air heat-source pump, etc). An example of good practice is the *Annual survey of renewable electricity and heat projects in south west*

³ DECC were also consulted on the proposed work. John Mackintosh (DECC - CESA) confirmed that the department was happy for the work to be carried out.

⁴ NCOI E3: To show the amount of renewable energy generation installed by capacity & type, Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators, July 2008, DCLG.

England undertaken by Regen SW. Again data sets cut to National Park boundaries would further enhance its functionality for NPAs.⁵

- 4.3 A further significant development would be improving the accuracy of the LULUCF CO₂ emission estimates. Natural England recently published *England's peatlands – carbon storage and greenhouse gases*. This work examines peat stores and fluxes and demonstrates that these soils can be significant emitters of CO₂ when in poor condition and, equally, can sequester carbon when in good condition. The Natural England peat flux methodology should be incorporated into the calculations for the National Inventory and would then cascade to the spatial LULUCF emission estimates for National Park and other local authorities. The increased accuracy of the LULUCF figures would be of particular interest to NPAs because of their influence over land management activities within National Parks.
- 4.4 We would also welcome more spatial statistical outputs for other greenhouse gases. With land management a key activity in National Parks, nitrous oxide and methane emissions in particular (mainly from fertilizer and livestock respectively) are also important sources of emissions. These two greenhouse gases may account for around 50% of overall emissions in some Parks. In order to have a complete picture of GHG emissions within National Parks, NPAs would find it extremely helpful if DECC produced a full GHG emissions estimate cut spatially to National Park boundaries, as an extension to the local authority CO₂ emissions work. GHG emissions estimates cut to local authority boundaries may also be helpful to other local authorities and other organisations in fully understanding emissions in their local area. We note that the data is available at a 1km square resolution in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, which should assist in aggregating the data to administrative boundaries.
5. **How satisfied are you with the way that DECC engages and consults with you as a user?**
 - 5.1 ENPAA received notice of this statistical survey through our climate change member of staff having signed up to all DECC information releases. It would be useful for DECC to include ENPAA and the ten individual National Park Authorities in any information that is sent by the Department to other Local Authorities (District, County or Unitary Authorities) or to the Local Government Association. ENPAA would be happy to provide contact details upon request.
6. **Would you be interested in becoming a member of a user panel so that DECC can discuss developments and use of our statistics with a range of key users?**
 - 6.1 We fully support DECC's ambition to engage more closely with their stakeholders and as such would support the development of a statistics user panel. National Park Authorities and ENPAA itself, however, are small organisations so we would be unlikely to have the resources to become actively involved in the user panel. We would be interested in receiving updates from any such panel and will respond where appropriate.

⁵ 2010 annual survey: *Renewable electricity and heat projects in south west England*, ReGen SW, see http://regensw.s3.amazonaws.com/1277806837_656.pdf.