



## **ENPAA response to An invitation to shape the Nature of England Defra Discussion Document - July 2010**

### **Introduction**

The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) exists to support the policy making process by coordinating the views of the ten National Park Authorities across England. It is governed by the Chairs of the Authorities. Our submission 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.

National Park Authorities exist to help the National Parks deliver two statutory purposes:

- to protect 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 these areas.

In achieving these purposes, National Park Authorities also have a duty 'to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.'

National Park Authorities are small rural place based organisations that are helping the thriving distinctive rural communities within some of the most beautiful environments to be found in England to achieve their aspirations for sustainable development, a healthy natural environment and a rich quality of life. As such ENPAA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the Natural Environment White Paper. There is much in *An Invitation to Shape the Nature of England* that ENPAA supports, not least the link it makes between economic prosperity and maintaining a high quality environment. We look forward to contributing further to the development of the White Paper.

Below, our response sets out some overall points and responds to the questions set out in the discussion document. NPAs through their work with local communities combine both policy and practice. Our response includes a number of case studies that have been selected to illustrate wider points. We believe in many instances this work can act as exemplars of sustainable development and be extended to other areas and communities. We are happy to provide further detail about any of the points raised or any of the case studies. These are in no way an exhaustive list.

## **Key themes**

In our response to the discussion document some common themes emerge:

- an ecosystems services approach to decision making and planning needs to be adopted across the board
- a landscape scale approach is key to the ecosystems services approach
- spatial planning that works across administrative boundaries and is supported by a clear National Planning Framework is key to facilitating successful local projects
- National Parks and National Park Authorities are frequently exemplars of sustainable development, application of the ecosystems services approach and much good practice
- To aid successful delivery of the ecosystem services approach in National Parks, the statutory duty to have regard to National Park purposes should be strengthened
- The need to increase society's understanding and appreciation of the value of the natural environment and the ecosystems services it provides
- The important role played by access to nature in helping to achieve this.

Essential delivery mechanisms are:

- partnership working
- joint working across administrative boundaries
- spatial planning
- well targeted agri-environment schemes
- flexible local delivery
- communication

## **General comments**

We welcome the link made in the discussion paper between economic prosperity and maintaining a high quality environment. Communities and businesses in National Parks understand this linkage well. The key challenge for the White Paper process will be the extent to which this message is embraced by other government departments, local authorities, business and wider society. We hope that the process of developing the White Paper will also provide the opportunity for cross-departmental adoption of the ecosystems services approach and embedding the value of the natural environment in decision making across Government, and at all levels. The Government has said it wants to be the 'greenest Government ever'. We warmly welcome this but note that if it is to be achieved it will require concerted effort across Whitehall and society.

Throughout the document reference is made to ecosystem services. This is welcome. There is, however, quite a heavy focus on biodiversity while other services (cultural services, for example) are given less emphasis. The focus on biodiversity is understandable given the urgency of the problem of halting biodiversity loss. Nevertheless, we would like to see a more balanced document. Landscape, communities and the historic environment are given less attention in the document yet all provide important services to the nation and are an integral part of the natural environment, inextricably linked with biodiversity. Geodiversity, which also influences biodiversity and ecosystems, is not mentioned in the discussion paper but should be included in the White Paper.

It is also important that the White Paper recognises that what is often considered ‘natural environment’ is in fact countryside that has been hugely influenced by humans over many centuries and that without continuing careful management by farmers, land owners, managers and others cannot provide the ecosystems services we so value.

National Parks and National Park Authorities are exemplars in many aspects of what the Government is seeking to achieve (for example, working with local communities, working across administrative boundaries, working in partnership, linking the environment with economic prosperity, integrated spatial planning). The National Parks and NPAs aim to be exemplars of sustainable development. Much of the good practice and innovation in our National Parks can be applied elsewhere. National Parks and NPAs should be supported to continue their role as exemplars.

A landscape scale approach is the key to managing the natural environment effectively. National Park Authorities, in fulfilling National Park purposes and by taking a landscape scale approach, are already helping link biodiversity and climate change rather than seeing them in silos (see case studies 1, 2, 15 and 17). NPAs are ready and keen to do more on this, resources permitting.

We welcome the recognition in the recent *Making Space for Nature* report that National Parks and AONBs offer some of the best opportunities for improving the functioning and resilience of England’s ecological networks, especially through securing better management of big sites and improving semi natural habitat outside the SSSIs. Delivery of the Lawton recommendations relating to National Parks will also need improvements in the way the settings of protected landscapes are managed (for example, through planning policy and targeting of agri-environment schemes). The impact of development proposals close to National Park boundaries is an important consideration as some forms of development can be harmful to National Park purposes even though they are located outside of the designated area. We hope this will be addressed in the White Paper, in the proposed National Planning Policy Framework, and the future targeting of agri-environment schemes.

To help deliver some of the aspirations expressed in the discussion document, and to increase the positive effects of current work, we would like to see a bigger role for National Park Authorities in the roll out of Axis 3 of the RDPE and the LEADER approach. NPAs are well placed to support rural communities and businesses to deliver sustainable rural development providing a one-stop-shop for advice and a light touch administrative system.

The Vision for the English National Parks and the Broads set out in the *English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010*<sup>1</sup> illustrates what success might look like in the medium term if our natural systems are properly managed and their true value considered in all decision making in and around National Parks.

To help NPAs and our partners achieve the vision for National Parks, we would like to see Section 11A (section 17A for the Broads) of the 1949 Act – the duty to have regard to National Park purposes – strengthened to require all government departments, statutory bodies and other relevant organisations to take action to benefit the natural environment through the delivery of National Park purposes and show how they do this.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/national-parks/vision-circular2010.pdf>

This might include, for example, providing greater local discretion in planning or transport policies to uphold local distinctiveness, or support for particular policies/ funds to support National Park communities.

### **Question 1 – What do we need to do to embed the true value of our natural resources in decision making at all levels?**

The Government has said it wants to be the ‘greenest Government ever’. We warmly welcome this. If it is to be achieved it will **require a clear commitment and concerted effort across Whitehall**. The last White Paper in 1990 marked changes in the machinery of Government (for example, Green Ministers, *Policy Appraisal and the Environment*). While these initiatives had a mixed impact they were innovative at the time. There is a clear opportunity through the White Paper to initiate similarly innovative processes for cross-departmental adoption of the ecosystems services approach and embedding of value of the natural environment in decision making across Government and at all levels.

We would support the recommendation of the Sustainable Development Commission report *Becoming the “Greenest Government Ever”* that **sustainability be put at the heart of civil service appraisal and the staff development process**. This would help achieve the cross-departmental understanding and actions that would reflect the true value of our natural resources. However, amending the appraisal systems, while important and welcome, is unlikely to be sufficient on its own.

We need to find ways to **protect and enhance our landscape, wildlife and communities through development** rather than see a constant gradual erosion. As part of this we need to establish the economic value of our environment but there also needs to be recognition of intangible values that cannot easily be given a price. Work by Natural England on [Experiencing Landscapes](#) demonstrates the considerable value placed on landscapes by people, the benefits that can accrue, that these are variable between individuals, and that they cannot be given a monetary value.

We need to **assess the environmental consequences of any proposal**. This needs expert assessment and involvement of affected communities. Individual items can appear insignificant but collectively contribute to wider damage, for example nutrient loads on freshwaters from domestic or agricultural sources. Strategic approaches are required such as the use of spatial planning, partnership working across boundaries and consistent use of environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment.

For National Park Authorities, **a strengthening of the statutory duty on all relevant authorities to ‘have regard to’ the purposes of National Parks set out in Section 11A** of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act and Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. Rather than having to ‘have regard to,’ all relevant authorities should be required to actively show how they contribute towards the delivery of National Park purposes. Community Strategies could be a helpful mechanism.

**Spatial planning is crucial to the effective management of our natural resources.** Embedding the true value of the natural environment through reform of the planning system could be achieved by the use of spatial planning based on eco-systems across

the country. The Government is undertaking a major review of spatial planning and we see the development of neighbourhood plans, and the national planning policy framework as real opportunities to embed this approach. Communities will need significant help, however, to be able to do this at the local level and in a way that reflects the wide range of services that exist (eg. beyond biodiversity). It emphasises the big picture, understanding the relationships and connections between drivers such as climate change, biodiversity, economic development, housing need and social cohesion within a network of plans and policies in which community involvement and transparency represent crucial components.

Spatial planning is already used to good effect in National Parks and AONBs. For example, National Park Management Plans cover the whole National Park area, crossing local authority administrative boundaries. National Park Management Plans provide an overarching strategy and shared vision for the area, and this is then supported by spatially specific plans, such as whole catchment management plans or biodiversity action plans for specific habitat areas. NPAs are using this approach to lead the way on work linking biodiversity enhancement with climate change adaptation and mitigation – see case studies 1, 2, 15 and 17.

#### **Case Study 1 - Exmoor Mire Restoration Project**

The Exmoor Mire Restoration Project is working to restore dry and damaged peatlands in the uplands of Exmoor. This work is required as climate change is likely to increase the drying out of peatlands in the South West region resulting in:

- loss of Sites of Special Scientific Interest wetland habitat and associated Biodiversity Action Plan species
- degradation of the peat and loss of carbon into the atmosphere
- drying out and loss of archaeology and palaeo-ecology on the moors
- damage to moorland river flows leading to floods and erosion after high rainfall; drying out in droughts, and loss of key species and diversity

To date the project has re-wetted 17 drying peatland sites within 1,100ha of the Exmoor moorland Site of Special Scientific Interest. 50km of ditches have been blocked with 4,300 dams and 326ha of mire re-wetted.

**Appreciation and understanding of the value of the natural environment and ecosystems services** across society is needed. National Park Authorities have a key role to play in helping people to understand and then value the environment. This is required by the second purpose of National Parks. We would like to work with BIS and Defra to achieve the Vision for English National Parks and the Broads<sup>2</sup>, part of which is gaining widespread recognition of National Parks as fundamental to our prosperity and wellbeing. NPAs can contribute to the embedding of the true value of natural resources in decision making at both local and national level.

#### **Question 2 – Have we identified the right overarching challenges for the White Paper to consider?**

We agree with the challenges set out in the discussion document, especially in terms of interconnectedness leading to a highly complex system. However, the Natural

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<sup>2</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/national-parks/vision-circular2010.pdf>

Environment White Paper should also include recognition of the significant development pressures that exist and the need to ensure adequate monitoring of success or failure to inform future decisions. While delivery and decision making can be devolved to the local level, Government should provide a framework and take action to support many community ambitions and ensure they contribute to the wider goals. Within National Parks, the unique statutory remit of National Park Authorities can ensure that requirements that contribute to national objectives (such as reducing climate changing emissions or protecting biodiversity) are understood and implemented effectively at a local level alongside local communities, land managers and the voluntary sector.

**a. If not, what should we focus on?**

We would suggest a fourth challenge on communicating the value of the natural environment to the society as a whole. *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*<sup>3</sup> (TEEB) estimates that, without action, biodiversity loss will cost 7% of global GDP per year by 2050. Although awareness of environmental issues has grown in recent years, there is still a lack of knowledge of the fundamental dependence of humans on the natural environment and a lack of willingness to change behaviours. Without improved understanding, decisions will continue to be made at the organisational and personal levels which go against the grain of nature, and Government decisions or activities may be misunderstood.

**Case Study 2 - Bassenthwaite Lake catchment management**

The Bassenthwaite Lake catchment management programme was an early pilot for the national Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative. [The Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration Programme](#) (BLRP) and associated [Bassenthwaite Reflections](#) have demonstrated how to develop ownership and actions by the local tourism industry and communities in addressing water quality issues.

BLRP is a highly effective partnership project which has focussed on catchment management since its initiation in 2002. The Environment Agency funds a Lakes Manager for the project. Other partners fund a range of projects and initiatives that contribute to meeting BLRP's objectives. The Heritage Lottery funds the community engagement and education arm, Bassenthwaite Reflections. Building on the success of the existing work at Bassenthwaite, in 2009 the [Bassenthwaite Vital Uplands Project](#) was launched. It is one of 3 ecosystems services pilot projects funded by Natural England. This new project will focus on the future for livestock production and how this can continue to deliver other environmental services.

The uplands project will bring organisations together to look at how local upland management can deliver a range of public benefits. The Bassenthwaite area is already important for farming, tourism and water supplies. Future land management could ensure the future of existing benefits and also provide communities with other benefits such as carbon storage and flood alleviation. Bassenthwaite Vital Uplands will work with partners to reach a consensus on how this broad scope of goals could be realised.

Environmental management by farmers in the catchment is currently supported through either the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme or the new Higher Level Scheme (HLS) of Environmental Stewardship. The majority of ESA agreements within

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.teebweb.org/>

the Bassenthwaite catchment are due to expire in 2013/14. It is intended that a high percentage of these agreements, particularly on those farms that demonstrate the delivery of multiple objectives, will be replaced by Natural England's HLS.

**b. How should we approach these challenges?**

In terms of adaptation to climate change in rural areas we need to enrich the environment at a landscape scale to provide resilience. This does not mean taking large areas out of agricultural production but using sustainable agricultural management as standard while creating connections between patches of semi natural habitat. National Park Authorities are already working in some of the ways recommended by *Making Space for Nature*<sup>4</sup> so National Parks are ideal places to increase our efforts, using existing sites as 'reservoirs' and linking to surrounding areas as suggested in recommendation 14 of *Making Space for Nature*.

Adopting an ecosystem services approach to land management offers opportunities for protecting and enhancing resources, creating a robust natural environment with space for people and wildlife. This will mean taking a broad landscape/catchment approach to land use planning, making information accessible, creating cross boundary partnerships and involving key stakeholders in genuine dialogue. It is vital to engage with landowners in facing the challenges ahead. They should be rewarded for taking the right approach to farming sustainably and for protecting, enhancing and restoring ecosystems. Many of the mechanisms to do this are already in place in National Parks.

**Question 3 – What are the existing policies and practices aimed at protecting England's natural assets (including but not limited to those set out above on our biodiversity, seas, water bodies, air and soil) that currently work most effectively?**

There are a wide range of locally-tailored policies and practices across the English National Parks that are relevant to addressing this question. These have been effective in protecting and enhancing some but not all of our natural assets. However, it should be noted that National Park Authorities have no greater powers or statutory mechanisms than in the rest of the country. What they do well is utilise existing mechanisms and demonstrate how they can be applied. Individual responses from the National Park Authorities will give local examples of practices that could be applied elsewhere. We fully recognise that good practice exists across the country, including in local communities or in other protected landscapes like AONBs. Here we concentrate on those policies and practices that are common across the National Parks which we believe are helpful to addressing common challenges:

- Landscape scale approach to management
- Spatial planning
- Locally responsive planning
- Delivery of agri-environment schemes
- Partnership working
- The Sustainable Development Fund
- Biodiversity Action Plans and partnerships

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<sup>4</sup> Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network - Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, September 2010

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

- Sustainable transport initiatives
- Supporting volunteer opportunities

#### *Landscape scale approach to management*

The approach of NPAs to the management of the National Parks is based on a landscape scale approach. This may be through the National Park Management Plan (for the whole National Park area), a whole river catchment management scheme (covering a part of the National Park or incorporating areas outside the boundary) or a habitat restoration plan (for a small area of the park or particular type of habitat in several locations). One measure of the success of this approach is that of the nine submissions that were made to the UK Landscape Awards 2010 for National Park landscape projects, 5 were commended and one was a regional winner.

The case study below, and those found elsewhere in this document, give examples of how the landscape scale approach can be successfully applied in a variety of ways.

#### **Case Study 3 – Trinity Broads Restoration Project**

The Trinity Broads is a wild wetland of interconnected shallow lakes, dykes, open fen, reedbeds and wet woodland near Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. The Trinity Broads Partnership – whose members are the Broads Authority, Essex and Suffolk Water, Natural England and the Environment Agency - have pooled their expertise, resources and commitment since 1995 to tackle pollution sources, restore neglected fens, mud-pump and manage non-native species such as mink. The Trinity Broads Restoration project has recently won both a Waterways Renaissance Award and the East of England UK Landscape Award.

The project has demonstrated the real benefits that can be achieved using a landscape-scale approach, in this case tackling catchment management issues to bring about a significant change in water quality. Deepening local people's involvement in management, practical conservation and events was a key part of the project. An extensive programme of public events has helped to communicate the importance of both place and the project - many more people now know the area and share their enthusiasm with others. The partners are engaged with landowners to establish common aims, and the Trinity Broads experience has been used as a model at regional catchment sensitive farming meetings. The now clear waters of Ormesby Broad attract such biodiversity priority species as water voles, otters and bitterns; and the project has worked hard to provide good facilities and better access for quiet recreation including fishing, bird-watching, canoeing, and sailing.

<http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/projects/trinity-broad.html>

#### *Spatial planning*

Spatial planning is crucial to the effective management of our natural resources and is used to good effect in National Parks (see above Question 1 for details) for the development of National Park Management Plans and other plans and policies.

#### *Locally responsive planning*

The role of spatial planning in reconciling multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities for a limited resources (land) is difficult and can be controversial in any part of the country.

National Park Authorities are the sole planning authority, meaning that they are responsible for developing the strategic planning documents that guide development in the area, as well as making decisions on planning applications. This is an absolutely critical way of ensuring National Park purposes are delivered across the National Park in a consistent manner.

The efforts of National Park Authorities demonstrate that it is possible to combine a focus for achieving national environmental outcomes alongside locally distinctive policies. The planning departments of NPAs are small. The total complement of planners within England's National Parks – which cover over 9% of England is just over 100. And rather than saying 'no' to developments, NPAs like working with local communities and developers in order to be able to say 'yes' to high quality and appropriate developments. There is a focus on providing pre-application advice (very often at no charge) in order to help applicants develop proposals that meet National Park purposes and to try and minimise the number of controversial cases. In 2008/09 (latest figures available) NPAs gave the green light to 83% of planning applications. That is exactly the same as the average for England as a whole, and is despite their very sensitive environments. We believe that other planning authorities could use some of the methods NPAs use to integrate natural environment considerations into planning decisions to good effect. Across the National Park family, 75% of planning applicants say they are satisfied with the service – with some reaching as high as 89%.

#### **Case Study 4 - Peak District Landscape Strategy and Action Plan**

The Peak District National Park Management Plan (2006-2011) identified the need for a landscape strategy and action plan for the park, including a landscape characterisation. The strategy, which was completed in July 2009, makes explicit reference to the overall aims, intent, and language of the ELC throughout. A Landscape Character Assessment was completed in 2008 to establish a baseline of current landscape character, with a commitment to undertake a review by 2018.

The Action Plan uses and endorses the ELC definition of landscape, and an explanatory introduction moves the reader on from "landscape as just the view... to it is about the relationship between people, place and nature". It addresses varying scales of landscape, and points to landscape encompassing the urban as well as the rural. The LCA includes a forward looking vision, whilst the Strategy and Action Plan establish a landscape perspective for integrated land use planning and land, water and resource management. It explains how landscape can act as an integrating medium for local planning and policy. The involvement of local people and visitors was central to the production of the Action Plan, which contains a dedicated section on stakeholder consultation in decisions about landscape changes.

<http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/index/looking-after/landscape.htm>

#### *Agri-environment schemes*

Current agri-environment schemes are effective but need to be less complex administratively. Agri-environment schemes have developed over time to achieve greater biodiversity benefits (see case study 5 below and case studies 2, 7 and 14). Schemes need to evolve to consider future payment for public goods to ensure that there is a return to land managers. They are also particularly important as a mechanism to achieve similar gains in the wider countryside outside designated wildlife sites. In future, funding should be concentrated on the Higher Level Schemes to get most benefit

from money spent. We welcome the decision in the Spending Review to seek to increase spending on HLS and hope the work that Defra will be undertaking with Natural England on increasing the environmental outcomes of Environmental Stewardship will also be reflected in the forthcoming statement on hill farming.

NPAs have worked with partners to develop more effective and efficient mechanisms for delivery of agri-environment schemes – acting as one-stop shops to simplify the administration of the scheme for farmers and land managers.

**Case Study 5 - North York Moors NPA and Natural England joint HLS delivery**

The North York Moors NPA works closely with the local Natural England team to prioritise HLS agreements. Combining local background knowledge helps ensure that agreements are targeted where they have the greatest conservation benefit. Communication between staff members is very good and progress meetings are held every month. The NPA carry out most of the FEPs and HLS Applications within the Park. In 2010 the NPA produced 33 FEP and HLS applications with some of this work being done by a local contractor.

Since 2002 the NPA has had a joint funded Moorland Project post with Natural England. This post has created an invaluable link between the two organisations and has helped negotiate Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and Environmental Stewardship agreements on the moor. Moorland HLS agreements are notoriously difficult to negotiate as most involve shared grazing, often commons, as well as grouse shooting interests. The NPA's role as a third party is very useful in helping move negotiations forward. 67% of the moorland SSSI is now covered by signed HLS agreements. Once agreements are signed National Park staff help deliver some of the special projects, such as peat restoration and archaeological monument repairs.

*Partnership working*

All NPAs are involved in numerous partnerships that pool resources, avoid duplication, enhance service delivery to individual users, and mean that everyone is working towards a common goal. NPAs often take a leading role in establishing and maintaining partnerships. For example, the Lake District NPA was instrumental in establishing the Lake District Partnership which is taking key decisions that influence the priorities of the NPA and others who manage the Lake District National Park.

Partnerships may also be issue or area specific such as the Mires on the Moors partnership in Exmoor and Dartmoor (see case study 15) or the Lake District National Park/University of Cumbria Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

**Case Study 6 - Lake District National Park Partnership**

The National Park Authority facilitates [The Lake District National Park Partnership](#). This is a Partnership of 22 organisations which have a key role in the National Park. They come from all sectors – business, tourism, conservation, voluntary and locally elected. It meets quarterly and has an independent Chair (Lord Clark of Windermere). One of the terms of reference of the Partnership is to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the NPA in the creation, monitoring and review of policies for developing and managing the National Park and, in particular, the National Park Management Plan.

There is a subgroup of the Partnership called the Business Task Force which allows different sectors of local business in the National Park opportunity to meet with the NPA and discuss their issues. This helps to inform the NPA's decision making and that of the Partnership. The NPA facilitates the Business Task Force. This form of engagement has been recently recognised through Customer Service Excellence and given a 'Compliance Plus' rating for exceeding the standard set. On the back of the successful Business Task Force, the Lake District NPA is liaising with the Partnership to establish a Farming Task Force which will increase accountability to this key group of people.

The preparation of the Partnership Plan for the Lake District National Park by the Lake District National Park Partnership is an innovative way to involve and gain the support of a wide range of organisations in the management of the National Park. This allows for better coordination and helps to address the number and complexity of individual initiatives. The joint Partnership Plan for the National Park includes measures of success and a shared implementation plan.

[http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/lake\\_district\\_docs95/the\\_partnership\\_s\\_plan\\_-\\_a\\_management\\_plan\\_for\\_the\\_national\\_park.pdf](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/lake_district_docs95/the_partnership_s_plan_-_a_management_plan_for_the_national_park.pdf)

#### *Sustainable Development Fund*

Each National Park Authority in England and Wales administers a Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) worth £200,000. The Fund was established eight years ago and aims to support new ways of living and working within National Parks in a sustainable manner. It provides a flexible and non-bureaucratic means of funding projects to aid the achievement of National Park purposes by encouraging individuals, community groups and businesses to develop practical sustainable solutions to the management of their activities. The SDF is also run in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Between 2002-2009, the SDF in National Parks has supported 1,235 separate projects. The NPAs have been keen to support local projects and have successfully levered in additional funding for them. So while the NPAs received £9.9m for the SDF, they were able to find match funding of an additional £42.5m. An independent evaluation<sup>5</sup> of the use of the Fund found that 64% of the projects supported by SDF helped bring different organisations together to tackle rural problems in the spirit of partnership. Applicants are free to identify the needs and objectives they wish to address. SDF Panels have shown themselves amenable to taking risks on projects with no proven track record, supporting initiatives that would otherwise fall between the gaps of other funds. The SDF is a bottom-up approach to funding and so is responsive to the sorts of projects that come forward from communities.

Other conclusions from the review, conducted by Land Use Consultants in 2009 were that the SDF:

- Creates jobs. Over 16% of the projects that were funded created jobs, and over half of those projects received less than £1,000 per job created
- Reaches where other schemes do not. The SDF gives priority to innovative ideas, supporting initiatives that would otherwise fall between the gaps of other funding schemes.

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<sup>5</sup> Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Fund in English National Parks, 2002-2009. Land Use Consultants. February 2010. [http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/whatsnew/s\\_d\\_f\\_evaluation\\_report.htm](http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/whatsnew/s_d_f_evaluation_report.htm)

- Meets needs identified by communities and businesses.
- Provides practical examples of sustainable development in action.

#### *Biodiversity Action Plans and Partnerships*

In most cases, National Park Authorities provide a lead role in coordinating and implementing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan in their area. Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) have fostered a partnership approach to prioritising resources, as demonstrated by the Yorkshire Dales case study below. National Park Authorities also establish a focal point for wildlife conservation through National Park Management Plans, and associated strategies and business plans. Despite the overall gloomy picture in biodiversity, the work in National Parks and by National Park Authorities has had some success in halting or reversing biodiversity loss. Although these are small gains, the approach applied could be replicated elsewhere to good effect, or used as a starting point for implementation of the *Making Space for Nature* recommendations.

National Park Authorities play a key role in bringing partners together to deliver biodiversity conservation and provide strong local leadership. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity on a large scale requires partnership working that engages national, regional and local organisations and communities working closely with land managers and owners. Increasingly such partnerships in the National Parks are achieving landscape scale changes, and considerable value is often added to such projects by drawing on a wide range of funding sources. Partnerships have reached beyond National Park boundaries and beyond 'traditional' conservation partners, for example the Crayfish Arks project in the Peak District and Derbyshire. This has involved providing biodiversity advice to aggregates companies, and assessing aggregates sites for potential as 'ark' sites into which threatened populations of native white-clawed crayfish could be translocated.

#### **Case Study 7 - 10 years of work in the Yorkshire Dales shows results**

During the last 10 years, many organisations, local groups and individuals have worked hard to look after the unique natural environment of the Yorkshire Dales and to conserve, enhance and protect key habitats and species. Set out in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) '[Nature in the Dales](#)', much of this work has taken place through collaborative projects, from regional partnerships to local community-led schemes. Throughout the ten years, the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum has been instrumental in keeping the action plan on track and is a good example of wildlife conservation organisations and other experts working well together for the common good.

As a result of this work, there are positive, measurable improvements including, but not limited to:

- 97% of SSSIs now in 'favourable or recovering condition'
- Increases in population of red squirrel; black grouse; and yellow wagtail (at a time of national decline in all 3)
- Many other species now 'stable' following previous decline in the Dales (and continuing national decline)
- Hugely successful re-introduction of dormice
- Over 150ha of hay meadow restored through the 'Hay Time' project
- Over 600 ha of new native woodland planted through the 'Dales Woodland Restoration' programme

- Almost 2,000 ha of limestone grassland enhanced through the 'Limestone Country' project
- The most comprehensive information on the condition of habitats and species of any landscape in the country

The Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum members include national bodies such as Natural England and the National Trust and local organisations such as the Craven Conservation Group and Upper Wharfedale Field Society. The work of these partners has been co-ordinated through the LBAP, with the National Park Authority working as the 'glue' holding the different partnerships/projects together.

#### *Apprenticeships and traditional skills programmes*

National Park Authorities are helping people to retain traditional skills. Traditional skills like hedge-laying, drystone walling, reed and sedge cutting are essential to the management of semi-natural habitats and the National Parks' landscapes. Many people are interested in learning such skills and the National Park Authorities help them to do this through bursaries and apprenticeship schemes. These schemes are successful in both providing training and helping create employment while benefitting National Park management. For example, in Northumberland National Park, the *Traditional Boundaries Project* has led to local people setting up businesses as drystone wallers following their apprenticeship and providing a valuable service to local farmers. 80% of trainees from this scheme are using the skills they developed with the project to earn a living.

#### **Case Study 8 – Sustaining traditional skills and supporting business opportunity**

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded £714,000 for the Broads Authority and a range of partners to run the Reed, Sedge, Fens and Mills Bursary Scheme to train ten reed and sedge cutters and five millwrights over a four year period to reverse the decline in these trades, which were traditionally passed down from father to son.

These industries are essential to preserving the historic character of the area. There are 74 drainage mills in the Broads but at the start of the scheme only one local millwright. Many of the mills are in a derelict state yet millwrighting skills, to carry out repairs and maintenance, are in danger of extinction. The bursaries included an opportunity to learn about the historic and cultural background of the Broads, as well as the traditional skills. The aim is to help the reed and sedge cutters, and millwrights to prepare and run projects of their own. The millwrights' flagship task was to restore the 200 year old Grade II listed Stubb Mill on Hickling National Nature Reserve which is owned by Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

#### **Case Study 9 - North York Moors Apprenticeships**

In the North York Moors there was decline in some traditional skills necessary for future management of the landscape. There was also a lack of opportunity for young people to train and work locally. In response to these issues, the National Park Authority created its apprenticeship scheme.

North York Moors National Park Authority now has 15 apprentices (12 in countryside management apprentices and 3 in business administration) who represent more than 10% of the full time NPA workforce. The scheme has been hugely successful over the last 6 years with high demand for places and all apprentices passing qualifications and moving into employment. It has provided a pool of skilled local young people to care for

the environment in the future and improved opportunities for young people to train and work locally. This success has been recognised by regional and national awards including “Best Training Provider” in the UK National Training Awards 2009. The scheme is delivered in partnership with two local higher education colleges, the Forestry Commission and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

In addition to the employed apprentices, the Authority has coordinated and supported the development of a Hill Farming Apprenticeship where local farms work co-operatively to provide training to young people in the skills needed to manage the hill farm landscape. The scheme is currently providing training to seven local young people.

#### *Sustainable transport initiatives*

NPAs welcome visitors to the National Parks, but need to manage the effects of significant volumes of traffic as the majority of the 75 million visitors who come to National Parks each year arrive by car. National Parks are also home to over 310,000 people, in market towns and rural communities, all of whom have transport and access needs. The NPA’s goal is to see a significant shift where a higher proportion of visitors and residents use alternatives to the car to travel to and around the National Parks. We also aspire to see National Parks as exemplars in sustainable travel.

National Parks are therefore at the coalface of some significant transport challenges including from the increase in car borne leisure traffic; in meeting the accessibility needs of rural communities; and in managing traffic in ways that are sympathetic to the environment. NPAs are not transport authorities themselves so have limited powers and resources in this area and therefore rely heavily on the goodwill of others. NPAs work very closely with local authorities and other partners on practical cost effective solutions to transport issues. We hope the newly announced Sustainable Transport Fund will be able to support transport initiatives within National Parks (even though NPAs are not the transport authorities) in order to support local communities.

Despite their limited remit and resources, NPAs are behind a lot of successful initiatives to promote the use of sustainable transport and provide solutions to the problems created by high traffic volumes. NPAs focus on working with local authorities and others to ensure they integrate the needs of the National Park communities and visitors into their plans. NPAs have also been behind some innovative schemes to ensure sustainable transport options are available including providing walking and cycling routes and facilities, supporting rural car share schemes, providing or supporting bus services, testing and investing in new technology (such as electric car charging points) and a host of other initiatives. NPAs have also worked on innovative safety projects, with some National Parks implementing voluntary speed restrictions which have improved safety for road users and livestock.

#### **Case Study 10 - Pedal Peak District**

Pedal Peak District is a £2.25 million project set up to:

- encourage more people to cycle, particularly those who don’t at the moment or do so only occasionally.
- promote regular cycling for fun, health, fitness and transport.
- create a new cycle route from Bakewell to Buxton which includes re-opening former railway tunnels that have been closed off to the public since the 1960s.

- promote better public transport links to cycling routes to help reduce car use and carbon emissions.

The project is managed by the Peak District National Park Authority and is part of a pilot project being run by Cycling England, a former independent body funded by the Department for Transport.

The Peak District National Park was chosen for its extensive network of trails, cycle hire centres and attractive scenery within easy reach of big towns and cities. As well as providing a sustainable transport infrastructure, it helps increase access to the natural environment.

Innovation in reducing carbon emissions is also a key consideration for NPA's work on sustainable transport. Case study 11 shows how Northumberland NPA are looking to the future of vehicle technology.

#### **Case Study 11 - First electric car charge points at Hadrian's Wall**

England's first electric vehicle charge points based in a protected area were unveiled on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Northumberland National Park.

While the roll-out of the charge points is well underway in some urban areas, the four charge points along the iconic Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site represent the first attempt to take this new infrastructure to an upland rural setting. The aim is to demonstrate that with appropriate infrastructure even the North East's most remote and tranquil rural areas can be accessed by electric cars for leisure and business use and that they should not just be regarded as 'run-arounds'. Installing these charging points now means that the growing number of electric vehicle users over the next decade will not be excluded from one of the country's most important monuments and beauty spots. Plans are already underway to install a network of additional charging points around Northumberland National Park.

It is not just electric cars that can benefit from these new electric charge points. All-terrain off-road electric buggies can enable those with a physical disability to go off-road and feel more independent and adventurous.

The project has been made possible by Northumberland National Park Authority working with the Northumberland Uplands New LEADER Approach and the regional ONE NorthEast-led Plugged in Places initiative, which aims to install up to 1,300 charge points across the North East by 2011.

NPAs also work with transport operators on joint ticketing arrangements; and on providing buses which link deprived urban communities with the stunning countryside found in National Parks. Good quality public and demand responsive transport services can help local communities in, and visitors to, National Parks – and provide real benefits to the rural economies. Some NPAs (like New Forest, North York Moors, Northumberland, and Exmoor) provide public transport services themselves while others support community transport initiatives or work in partnership with local transport operators.

#### **Case Study 12 - New Forest Tour [www.thenewforesttour.info](http://www.thenewforesttour.info)**

The New Forest Tour is an open top bus experience which operates during the summer months in the New Forest National Park. The aim of the service is to provide a memorable and unique experience, whilst reducing the number of private car journeys on roads in the New Forest.

The Tour operates a circular route, taking in villages, the coast, key attractions, and the best of the National Park landscape. Once onboard, customers receive a copy of the New Forest Tour Official Guide, packed full of things to do at each of the stops, including walks and cycle rides, discounts at places to eat, and fun and games for children. Customers also benefit from a professionally recorded commentary, which details the history and cultural heritage of the New Forest.

2010 represented the most successful season yet, with the Tour carrying over 17500 passenger journeys over its 86 day operating period, a 16% rise on the equivalent figures for 2009. In addition, it is estimated that Tour passengers contribute some £267k per annum towards the local economy through associated spend and that over 81k private car miles are taken off New Forest roads, saving nearly 23 tonnes of carbon emissions.

The Tour is marketed, managed and operated through a partnership which includes the New Forest Tourism Association, Bluestar bus, and the New Forest National Park Authority.

#### *Supporting volunteering opportunities*

Volunteers contribute extensively to the work of National Park Authorities and to the achievement of National Park purposes. National Park Authorities rely on a huge level of voluntary commitment and support. In 2009/10 for all ten National Parks this amounted to 44,856 volunteer days. Were you to apply the average UK hourly rate and assume a 7 hour day) this equates to over £3,463,000. See question 7 for case studies and details.

#### **Case Study 13 - Working together to preserve Dartmoor's prehistoric cairns**

This is a five year partnership project to survey and repair Dartmoor's predominantly Bronze Age summit cairns, beneath which there may be fragile archaeology at risk from modern disturbance. The partnership is between Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) the charity Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA) and English Heritage (EH).

The Project started in 2005 and over five 'seasons' of work the project has surveyed 49 cairns to a very high standard. By undertaking such detailed survey work, previously unknown features within and around the cairns have been identified. The repair works have taken place at a total of 31 cairns and because of this they have been removed from the English Heritage 'at risk' register - a fantastic outcome.

Although the project was initiated by Dartmoor National Park Authority and English Heritage, the work has entirely depended on the dedicated local volunteers of the DPA. It has been a tremendous project in which there have been very positive outcomes both practical and academic. Not only is the project helping protect threatened archaeological sites on the moor, it has created a pool of highly skilled surveyors drawn from the local community who through their work are helping to increase our understanding of the past.

The project relied on help and co-operation of land owners and commoners who have enthusiastically given permission for the works to take place. Due to the success of this venture, similar projects are being considered in other National Parks.

**a. What works less well – what could we stop doing or do differently?**

Continued silo working by local authorities, government departments, NGOs and others will hamper an ecosystems approach and cross-boundary working. New approaches to working within and between organisations will need to be found and applied across the board. This represents a considerable challenge to how Government is organised. It means looking at the impact of changes to existing structures, or the creation of new institutions to consider the extent to which they further sustainable development. A more localised approach will also mean differences will occur across the country. The creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships is a good example, where some areas will have a LEP whilst others will not. How will the implications of these differences be considered for the achievement of cross boundary work and the pursuit of sustainable development? There may, therefore, be a role for the White Paper to consider what capacity building is required in this area.

National Parks provide some good practice. The fact that their designation covers large areas of Britain; and that they have been established on the basis of environmental rather than administrative criteria means that they have considerable experience of working in partnerships across boundaries.

Previous Government targets have focused on SSSIs. They only represent a small part of the landscape. We need mechanisms that work for the wider countryside, hence the importance of maintaining the local sites network, bringing all semi-natural habitats in National Parks into good management through agri-environment schemes, and implementing the recommendations of the *Making Space for Nature*<sup>6</sup> report. National Parks contain significant areas that are important for biodiversity but have no legal protection – 28% of nationally important semi natural habitats in National Parks have no designation.

Current agri-environment schemes are prescriptive in that they dictate management rather than focussing on outcomes and allowing local bodies to work with farmers and land owners to deliver them in the most effective way. This means that environmental objectives are not 'owned', and are sometimes impractical to deliver. A more collaborative approach is needed and one based on delivery of ecosystems services, such as in case study 14 below.

**Case Study 14 - Dartmoor Farming Futures**

Dartmoor Farming Futures is an initiative which seeks to involve farmers fully in designing and monitoring a new agri-environment scheme on two commons and a sample of home farms. This will be underpinned by a review of the public benefits of their work which includes looking after Dartmoor's extraordinary riches of nature and archaeology, protecting water supplies and storing carbon (ecosystem services).

<sup>6</sup> Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network - Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, September 2010

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

The initiative has its origins in a proposal by the Dartmoor Commoners' Council and the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) to Defra in 2009. It is now a stand alone strand within Natural England's eco-system pilot in the South West of England and has been developed in a partnership between the original proposers and Natural England.

The Dartmoor Vision is a collective statement of what upland Dartmoor will look like in 2030 and brings together all of the people - organisations, farmers, commoners and other interest groups - who can influence the management of Dartmoor's moorland. The Vision recognises that collective working is the best way to manage the moor and also ensures that resources are used effectively. The Dartmoor Vision will be developed to see if the same process is suitable for access, stored carbon and water. This will help those farmers participating in the initiative by ensuring that they are fully aware of the public goods found on their common. Both strands of the work will be independent but complementary, facilitated by one project manager. The project is initially for six months but may be continued if it is successful.

The DNPA is hosting this initiative on behalf of the partners. It is supported by a wider range of bodies including Defence Estates, South West Water, RSPB and the Duchy of Cornwall and is currently funded by the Dartmoor National Park Authority, Natural England and Defence Estates. The support of the farming community is essential to the project's success and the initiative has started by engaging with commoners and others farming the moorland.

If genuine change in any area of work is required then measures should be targeted and properly resourced.

#### **Question 4 – What mechanisms should we focus on to ensure we manage our natural systems more effectively in future?**

Mechanisms are required that enable a holistic approach to ecosystems and are not hidebound by administrative boundaries, such as the examples given below.

An approach is needed that not only includes consideration of every aspect of the environment (including societal and cultural aspects), but also in most cases the benefits to all aspects of society including the economy. For example, peatland restoration projects have multiple benefits which, as well as carbon sequestration, include provision of cleaner drinking water and flood alleviation, habitat provision for birds and insects, job training and job creation, a tourist attraction and an educational opportunity.

We need to develop a culture of husbandry and nurture of natural resources rather than exploitation. There also needs to be better general awareness of subtle issues such as diffuse pollution and the long-term, widespread and costly effects these can have.

Specific mechanisms that are employed to good effect in National Parks are:

- Agri-environment funding to support **less intensive management** of semi-natural habitats and to allow movement of species in response to climate change.
- **Partnership working** (see Question 3 above for details)
- **Whole catchment management, landscape partnerships** and other ecosystem based mechanisms that cross existing administrative boundaries (see Question 3 for details and case study 2).

- **Utility company levies for ecosystems services protection or enhancement** such as the precept agreed in South West Water's 2009 Periodic Review. See Mires on the Moors case study 15 below.

**Case Study 15 - Mires on the Moors**

From 1998 to 2010 the Exmoor Mire Restoration Project worked on re-wetting and restoring these interesting and valuable wildlife areas with ditch blocking and water management techniques (see case study 1 for details). The Exmoor project funding ended in June 2010 but the Restoration Partnership continues its good work with funding from a new source. A successful South West moorlands partnership funding bid was made by South West Water to the Water Regulator (OFWAT) under their Periodic Review 2009 Programme. Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks will now share around £4m of mire restoration funding over 5 years starting from 2010.

The new "Mires-on-the-Moors" project partnership will be led by South West Water, with contributions in staff, time and resources from the other partners. The project will be run by dedicated staff based in Exmoor and Dartmoor. Partners for the project include: Dartmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor National Park Authority, Natural England, South West Water, the Environment Agency, the Duchy of Cornwall, the Ministry of Defence, and the RSPB.

The funding will be used for restoration of some of Dartmoor's and Exmoor's blanket bog, in order to conserve and enhance this important habitat for upland wildlife, to improve water quality and increase the potential of south west England's blanket bog to store carbon and hence mitigate the impacts of climate change.

On Dartmoor, the work will be carried out in close partnership with Dartmoor commoners, recognising their unique skills and knowledge of the blanket bog, as well as the Ministry of Defence and other organisations.

- **Quantifying the economic value of the natural environment and ecosystem services** will help demonstrate the economic value of this approach and better inform planning and other decision making processes. There will need to be an incentive in terms of economic returns for land managers to change practices. Identifying economic gains from conservation projects such as peat restoration work, for example, help to offset the initial costs of such projects. However, in making such valuations, it is important not to lose sight of the valuable but unquantifiable benefits we get from the natural environment such as a sense of wellbeing, tranquillity or closeness to nature.
- **Visitor payback schemes.** Entry to UK National Parks is free to all, unlike most other countries. If each visitor to the English National Parks gave just £1 per visit, we would have around £75 million to spend on managing the natural environment (more than the total of the current National Park Authorities grant from Defra). Visitor payback schemes encourage people to donate money to local projects through the businesses they use while visiting a National Park. This forms a direct link between the visitor and the natural environment and between businesses and the environment on which their business often depends. Use of visitor payback schemes varies across the National Parks but they have great scope for encouraging understanding and engagement while also raising funds for managing the natural environment in protected landscapes and elsewhere.

### **Case Study 16- [Nurture Lakeland](#)**

Nurture Lakeland was originally created in 1993 as a scheme to demonstrate that the tourism industry and conservation organisations can be mutually supportive. Initial funding was provided by the Cumbria Tourist Board, Cumbria Training and Enterprise Council, the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust and the Rural Development Commission.

Starting out with just one project officer, Nuture Lakeland has now evolved into a charity with 7 staff members, a membership of over 220 businesses and conservation organisations. All are working together to ensure a sustainable future for the beautiful landscapes of Cumbria and the Lake District.

In 2009 Nuture Lakeland became a registered charity and over the years has raised over £1.5 million for conservation in the Lake District and Cumbria.

Many fundraising appeals relate in some way to climate change - either repairing damage made by changing weather patterns, or preparing and adapting for future change. Some projects, such as Fix the Fells, focus on repairing and maintaining footpaths in the high fells, whilst others are working to improve 'access for all' by removing barriers and making small but important improvements.

Conserving threatened species such as red squirrels and the Osprey continue to be important, but Nuture Lakeland also provides financial support for the ongoing care of small local nature reserves and community projects and in helping to preserve traditional skills such as dry stone walling.

#### **a. How should we define success?**

The Vision for the English National Parks and the Broads set out in the *English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010*<sup>7</sup> illustrates what success might look like in the medium term if our natural systems are properly managed and their true value considered in all decision making. While the Vision was developed by ENPAA and Defra with input from our partners in National Parks, the Vision is widely applicable. We hope that the White Paper will endorse this Vision for National Parks and consider a similarly ambitious vision for the whole natural environment.

#### **Vision for the English National Parks and the Broads**

##### **By 2030 English National Parks and the Broads will be places where:**

- There are thriving, living, working landscapes notable for their natural beauty and cultural heritage. They inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide-range of services they provide (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society.
- Sustainable development can be seen in action. The communities of the Parks take an active part in decisions about their future. They are known for having been pivotal in the transformation to a low carbon society and sustainable living.

<sup>7</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/national-parks/vision-circular2010.pdf>

- Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel and healthy, prosperous communities have long been the norm.
- Wildlife flourishes and habitats are maintained, restored and expanded and linked effectively to other ecological networks. Woodland cover has increased and all woodlands are sustainably managed, with the right trees in the right places. Landscapes and habitats are managed to create resilience and enable adaptation.
  - Everyone can discover the rich variety of England's natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value them as places for escape, adventure, enjoyment, inspiration and reflection, and a source of national pride and identity. They will be recognised as fundamental to our prosperity and well-being.

In the shorter term, indicators are needed to assess the health of ecosystems and the delivery of ecosystems services. We also need indicators or measure of the direct benefits to people experiencing the natural environment, though health and wellbeing, as well as the benefits listed above. We recognise this represents a challenge for some services but would be happy to work with the Government, Natural England and others on this. Indicators must be clear so that direction of travel can be assessed easily and measures to prevent negative effects and boost positive outcomes taken quickly.

#### **b. How can we agree on common goals and assess our progress towards them?**

One of the main challenges for the White Paper will be getting other government departments and some of the public and private sector on board with its goals especially in a difficult economic climate. Strong leadership will be needed from Defra if the White Paper is to have real effect on the ground.

We need to take an inclusive approach to identifying a common vision at all levels, work out together how we are going to get there, agree targets and milestones, assess progress jointly (with simple transparent monitoring systems) and adjust management as necessary. This is easier said than done, but the experience of National Park Management Plans is likely to be useful here.

The process of developing National Park Management Plans is a strong example of the way in which common goals can be agreed and then monitored. As well as using extensive consultation with the public, National Park Authorities have engaged partner organisations directly in drawing up a common vision and a broad set of goals, as well as agreeing the means to achieve them. In this way, local and national objectives are fused and translated into a Vision for the area. Progress towards these goals is monitored jointly and the results shared widely. A framework for the process for National Park Management Plans is given in the National Park Circular 2010<sup>8</sup>. Each National Park Authority has tailored the process to suit local circumstances. A key technique in developing National Park Management Plans is partnership working (see Question 3 and case study 6 above).

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<sup>8</sup> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/national-parks/vision-circular2010.pdf>

Partnership working to achieve sustainable land management and effective use of resources is well established in National Parks. Partnerships that bring public and private sector together are likely to be increasingly important in the future. For example, the PR09 decision to allow South West Water to spend money on peat restoration off its own land is beneficial to company and wider society (see case study 1). Also, partnerships between the public and voluntary sector can be used, such as the arrangement under which RSPB and the National Trust managed the Eastern Moors area in the Peak District National Park – see case study 17.

Assessment via ecosystem valuation and measurement and use of existing measures which give trend information will be vital.

#### **Case Study 17 - Working together - a new era for the Eastern Moors**

[The Eastern Moors](#) is a vast landscape between Curbar and Sheffield where buzzards soar, deer roam and views take your breath away. In a new project, the 25 sq km Eastern Moors estate will become a model for the future management of the uplands.

Unusually, the National Park Authority owns a large area of the moors. The Authority has asked the National Trust and RSPB to manage the Eastern Moors for the next 15 years. Their expertise will bring unprecedented benefits for biodiversity, access, landscape and carbon stewardship. Developing this vision will depend on greater public involvement than ever before. The aim is to make the Eastern Moors a benchmark for how uplands should be managed in the future, to help people to explore its rich heritage, and to encourage people from all backgrounds to learn about this magnificent landscape.

The Eastern Moors Partnership will act as a catalyst to create a vision for the future land and recreational management of the wider moorland area along the eastern edges of the National Park. A full range of local interest groups such as Friends of the Peak District, conservationists, the British Mountaineering Council and Ramblers will be closely involved alongside local communities.

<http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/index/looking-after/npa/cprop/cp-easternmoors.htm>

#### **Question 5 – How best can we reduce our footprint on the natural environment abroad, through the goods, services and products we use?**

Procurement policies at all levels and in all sectors should support wider social, economic and environmental objectives in ways that offer real long term benefits. Procurement decisions should consider whole lifetime costs of the product or service being purchased.

Measures should be found to highlight the importance of UK-produced timber and food, to reduce imports and work to create a low-carbon, low-input agricultural system that does not rely on foreign feedstocks in the case of livestock farming. Give consumers holistic information about products and viable alternatives.

**Case study 18 – The New Forest - making a Marque to support local businesses**

The New Forest NPA has, with help from the Sustainable Development Fund, been supporting the establishment and use of the New Forest Marque®. The logo is used to identify goods and products which have been produced within the New Forest. By encouraging people to purchase goods with this label, the NPA is seeking to support the local economy and New Forest producers, and also reducing the impact that food production has on the environment.

<http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/new-forest-produce/about-the-marque.htm>

**Question 6 – What best practice and innovative approaches to protecting and enhancing our natural environment do you think should be considered as we develop the White Paper?**

There is a wide range of best practice and innovation across the English, Welsh and Scottish National Parks which could usefully be drawn on to inform and inspire action elsewhere. Below we highlight those approaches that are most successful and used across the National Park (or protected landscapes) family. There will be many local examples that would also merit consideration for wider application.

**Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)** – in National Parks in England and Wales and AONBs. An independent review of seven years of operation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) in England's National Parks<sup>9</sup> has shown just how successful it has been. The SDF is a grant scheme which encourages individuals and communities to find sustainable ways of living and working, whilst enhancing and conserving the local culture, wildlife and landscape. It provides a test bed for new ideas, enables communities to get ideas off the ground, encourages volunteering and creates and supports jobs in rural areas amongst other benefits. Further details of the benefits of SDF are given above under Question 3.

The SDF as operated by the NPAs and AONBs provides a model that could be applied more widely to great effect in both rural and urban communities across the country.

**Locally responsive planning** including greater use of community planning, pre-application planning advice, community forums, etc – see Question 3 for details.

**Visitor payback schemes** – see Question 4 above for details.

**Biodiversity Action Plans** – see question 3 above for details.

**Partnership working** – Partnership working is a key mechanism used by NPAs to deliver National Park purposes and has potential for supporting ecosystem services more widely. See Question 3 above, the examples throughout this document, and the case study on Cheviot Futures below for details.

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<sup>9</sup> Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Fund in English National Parks, 2002-2009. Land Use Consultants. February 2010. [http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/whatsnew/s\\_d\\_f\\_evaluation\\_report.htm](http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/whatsnew/s_d_f_evaluation_report.htm)

### **Case Study 19 - Cheviot Futures – collaborative working**

Cheviot Futures is an initiative committed to providing practical real-world solutions to the challenges rural communities face due to the effects of climate change.

The project is a co-operative formed from representatives of agencies and organisations involved in working with the rural communities of north Northumberland. It is a simple, practical approach that focuses on taking action to adapt to the changing climate, working with farmers and land managers to advise them on funding opportunities, look at new farming techniques and share best practice. The aim is to support local business in rural Northumberland, helping them become more resilient to predicted changes and move forward, stabilising the local economy.

Cheviot Futures has two delivery strands; lowland and upland. The lowland work is led by Tweed Forum and the upland work delivered by the Northumberland National Park Authority. The organisations are specialists in this area and are already involved in many aspects of the Till catchment. The current work in progress includes:

- Tree planting to reduce riverbank erosion and reduce flows during flood events
- Wind breaks at the Fenton Centre
- Wetland creation
- Production of 60 farm flood plans
- Improvements to interpretative displays at the Fenton Centre and Ingram

Visitor Centre to promote climate change adaptation measures to local businesses and communities

Partners in Cheviot Futures are: English Heritage; Environment Agency; Forestry Commission; Ministry of Defence; Natural England; North East Assembly; Northumberland National Park Authority; RSPB; The Fenton Centre; The Wildlife Trusts; and Tweed Forum.

### **Question 7 – How best can we harness and build on public enthusiasm for the natural environment so people can help improve it through local action, as informed consumers or by shaping policy?**

The public have great enthusiasm for the environment and landscape and wildlife in particular. The recent report [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\)](#) showed that 95% of respondents agreed with the statement 'There are many natural places that I may never visit but I am glad that they exist'. About a third of those responding in this way did not visit the natural environment regularly and some never visited. An IPSOS Mori in 2009 found that 82% of people think National Parks are important to them 'personally'. The fact that people still feel that the natural environment and protected areas are important to them personally indicates the level of importance people attach to the natural environment generally and a sense of connection even in those who don't regularly visit the natural environment.

MENE also found that 81% of visits to natural environment are less than 5 miles from home. People are visiting their local area so there is a need to capture their enthusiasm and the value they place on local green spaces and countryside in better ways. If they were to feel greater ownership and responsibility for local open spaces and countryside more people may take up volunteering and there would be less irresponsible and anti-social behaviour in the countryside and urban green spaces.

Although individual responsibility and action is important, the burden should not be solely on individual action. The length of time that change can take and incremental nature of change can be demotivating for individuals. Also, they cannot always see or experience the effects of their action directly (e.g. using less water at home). So, we need individual and collective action, but also action by Government at national and local level to lead by example and demonstrate the benefits of action. We also need action by the private and third sectors and more cross-sector working in recognition of the fact that change takes time and concerted action. For example, the idea of Fairtrade goods began in the late 70s/early 80s as a third sector initiative encouraging individual action but also campaigning for cross-sectoral change. With the involvement of the private and public sector and mass public support, Fairtrade goods are now mainstream with major companies taking up the production and provision of Fairtrade coffee, tea, chocolate, bananas, clothes, etc. For a similar effect in other areas, the benefits to the individual and to society need to be demonstrated.

National Parks are places where people come into contact with the natural environment, and as such provide significant opportunities for conveying messages to the public about the value of their environment and how they can contribute to its conservation. This can also strengthen links between urban and rural communities. The integrated statutory purposes of the National Parks mean that they are able to provide a strong focus for wildlife conservation and climate change, while encouraging people to access, enjoy and benefit from a high quality environment. Projects such as the Malham Peregrine Watch in the Yorkshire Dales National Park provide visitors with a stunning wildlife experience, which provides an ideal opportunity to talk about wider nature conservation issues. The high numbers of visitors to National Parks mean that significant numbers of people can be enthused in this way – in May 2009 the Malham Peregrine watch welcomed its 100,000<sup>th</sup> visitor to the site. Literally millions of other interactions with nature take place as people use Public Right of Way and benefit from other access arrangements. Such interactions are informal and not recorded, but provide significant health and well being benefits to the population, as well as interaction with nature.

Below are some of the techniques used by NPAs to harness public enthusiasm which could be used more widely.

Most NPAs have established **Community Forums** that provide an opportunity for local people to come together and exchange their ideas with senior NPA members and staff. Some have independent Chairs, others are Chaired by the National Park Authority Chair. While some Forums exist with a broad remit allowing people to delve into any of the operations of the NPA, others are more focused. Dartmoor NPA, for example, has established a Farmers' Forum and a Moorland Management Forum amongst others.

#### **Case study 20 - Northumberland National Park Forum**

Northumberland NPA's first open annual Forum which sought independent feedback from local people, stakeholders and interested communities to help the Authority shape its work, was held in October 2009. It was attended by around 80 people. With an independent chair/facilitator, the Forum provides an opportunity for the Authority to report publicly on progress, achievements and challenges in the year against key performance targets, and offers an opportunity for the public to discuss key aspects of the future of the National Park with the Authority. This helps inform the Authority's selection of priorities for its 3 year Business Plan and 1 year Corporate Plan. Following the success of the inaugural Forum last year, it is now seen as a key annual corporate

event for the Authority, and will rotate around venues within or close to the National Park.

The most recent Forum, in October 2010, called for the Authority to prioritise tourism promotion and business support, as well as infrastructure such as rights of way.  
<http://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/news-article.htm?newsid=15913>

**Engaging beyond meetings.** In addition to creating opportunities for people to interact with NPA members and staff at meetings, the NPAs make sure they are visible to local communities. Their relatively small size and the nature of the work means NPAs stand apart from most other public authorities in the number of outward facing frontline staff that they employ and the impact this has on their accessibility and accountability. NPAs employ Rangers, Volunteer Officers, Field staff, Education Officers, Information Centre Staff. A significant element of their role is to interact, both formally and informally with the people who live in the National Park and the public. This provides an enormously valuable and very accessible conduit for exchange of information, opinion, local feeling, etc and enables the Authority to gauge local feeling and local needs and to respond directly.

**Case Study 21 - Peak District – ‘Your issues on your turf’**

Meetings between the Peak District NPA Chair and Chief Executive and the Parish Council have long been established. More recently, they developed the Community Visits Scheme. The project was established to tackle an incorrect perception that the authority was less interested in the needs of residents than national purposes. It looked beyond formal consultation arrangements and wanted to encourage dialogue with the wider community without resorting to traditional public meetings. The NPA came up with a different approach - informally meeting people ‘on their terms and on their turf’. Meetings have taken place at village pubs, community centres, churches, schools, village shops, and even private houses. Each involves parish councils, teachers and governors local schools; business leaders; other community leaders.

At all events the Chair, CEO or another director, the head of communications and either a ranger or village officer attend. The emphasis is to listen to communities about the issues that matter to them. The benefits of the scheme have been:

- to hear first hand concerns of individual communities and to feed this information into the NPA’s decision making processes;
- communities have welcomed the opportunity to meet senior people from the authority. Their very presence has shown that the authority is serious about community engagement;
- better quality two-way communication has been possible than would be achieved through a normal public meeting;
- providing leads for on-the-ground staff to build on; and
- sharing good practice between communities (eg on setting up community websites)

**Providing better opportunities for more volunteers, including better recognition of the full value of their work.** Volunteers already contribute extensively to the work of National Park Authorities and to the achievement of National Park purposes. Volunteers might work directly with the NPA (see below) or in the National Park with other

organisations such as Friends groups, RSPB, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, local charities, community groups, schools, churches, etc. Volunteering occurs in similar ways throughout the UK but some best practice in making best use and reaching out to new communities of interest could be shared by the NPAs.

#### **Case study 22 - Volunteering in the North York Moors**

In the North York Moors National Park volunteers now work over 11,000 days per year, this equates to around 25% of all the days worked by the Authority.

The volunteer service harnesses a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm and enables people to get directly involved in managing their own environment. It also greatly increases the Authority's capacity to deliver a cost effective range of services. 9 years ago the Authority set out to give people from all walks of life the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of its work and volunteers are now involved in habitat management, improving village environments and facilities, care of archaeological sites, access improvement, administration, scientific survey, education, and visitor management. The range of people involved is also enormous with ages from 4 – 75, an active special needs volunteer service and partnerships with local communities, social services, prison services, mental health charities and conservation charities.

The value of work carried out by volunteers is impossible to fully quantify but if a monetary value was placed on the volunteer effort using the current HLF value of an unskilled volunteer day (75%) and semi skilled (25%), it would be £825,000. In addition to any economic value, there are also health, well being, training and community benefits which arise from involvement and volunteering.

#### **Question 8 – What should be our vision for the role of Civil Society in managing and enhancing the natural environment and for engaging individuals, businesses and communities in setting the agenda for that work?**

We believe the Vision for English National Parks (see page 21) is instructive here. It explains that we aim to:

- ...inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide-range of services the natural environment provides (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society.
- ...communities... take an active part in decisions about their future.
- Everyone can discover the rich variety of England's natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value them as places for escape, adventure, enjoyment, inspiration and reflection, and a source of national pride and identity. They will be recognised as fundamental to our prosperity and well-being.

Civil society should contribute to managing and enhancing the natural environment but a framework is needed to ensure their actions help achieve national and international goals (for example on biodiversity, water quality, climate changing gas emissions, etc) as well as obvious local benefits.

The vision for the role of Civil Society should involve partnership working between communities and land managers and the public, private and third sectors as given in the examples throughout this document.

**Question 9 – How best can Government incentivise innovative and effective action on the natural environment, across England, at the local level?**

A key to incentivising effective local action on the natural environment will be for the White Paper, alongside the National Policy Framework for planning, to set **a clear national set of expectations and to support local organisations and communities to deliver locally appropriate activities that meet national and local needs and aspirations in tandem**. The framework would, for example, set out targets to be met (such as biodiversity targets, water directive framework targets, carbon budgets) and legal duties (such as requirements for environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment or reporting requirements).

The beneficiaries of assets are not necessarily limited to those in its local area, and this should be taken into account.

**Local government and communities need to be encouraged and supported in taking ecosystems services based approaches to action on the natural environment.** Cross-boundary working will enable them to take advantage of economies of scale as well as helping overcome the potential problems of increased parochialism under a more localised decision making system.

**Funding mechanisms for developing innovative test-beds for delivery on the ground using landscape scale principles are needed.** No one approach will suit all circumstances. New funding mechanisms need to add value to the current agri-environment schemes so that groups of land managers can be encouraged to work together at appropriate scales. In order to incentivise innovative local action on the natural environment, the model of the Sustainable Development Fund in National Parks and AONBs could be used as a template (see Question 4 above). It is currently a ring fenced fund and this is unlikely to be appropriate in future, but the model underpinning the SDF remains sound. While working within a clear framework, set by Defra in 2002, the SDF has supported innovative projects have benefitted communities, the natural environment and rural economies. The recent RSPB report *Financing Nature in an Age of Austerity*<sup>10</sup> suggests some other funding mechanisms.

**Establishing the economic value of the natural environment and habitats and communicating this widely**, while not losing sight of the intrinsic and unquantifiable value of the natural environment in all its forms (landscape, history, geology and biodiversity). The findings of existing studies such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) work are not widely known but contain information that could usefully be communicated to the general public.

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<sup>10</sup> Financing Nature in an age of Austerity, RSPB, October 2010  
[http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Financingnature\\_tcm9-262166.pdf](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Financingnature_tcm9-262166.pdf)

**Establishing the value placed on the natural environment by the local communities and visitors (see response to Question 7) and engaging them in activities to help preserve or increase this value.** This links to visitor payback schemes (details under Question 4) and payments for ecosystems services. Current payments for ecosystems services are low compared to the value derived from them. For example, the cost of the National Park grant to the taxpayer is less than £1 per person per year and emerging work from Defra shows that this investment is multiplied many times over in terms of other funds levered in, outcomes achieved and value for money.

**a. How best can local Government and other local partners work together to improve local outcomes on the natural environment, and pursue a more integrated approach linking a healthy natural environment to economic prosperity, sustainable development and a better quality of life, health and wellbeing?**

By adopting ways of working which aim to deliver positive outcomes for the natural environment and embedding the goal of maintaining healthy ecosystems at the heart of decision making and in planning will be key to success in this respect.

In rural areas effective action on the natural environment has to be via engaging with land managers as well as local communities where landscape scale change is needed. For example, to conserve pollinator species or improve water quality. This does not necessarily mean large scale change in land use but the introduction of small scale intervention across large areas which will have a significant cumulative effect.

We have an extensive network of public rights of way in this country that (providing they are maintained to a high standard) present excellent opportunities for members of the public to engage with nature, to be inspired by it and to improve their own well being. Extensive information on these benefits is available through the Outdoor Health Forum. As the Government increasingly focuses on public health and preventing disease, rather than solely on addressing the symptoms of ill-health, we see a real opportunity for the White Paper to acknowledge the importance of access and to enhance its provision where possible.

**b. What are the most effective mechanisms for managing the natural environment where cross-boundary issues are involved, and making the link to other mechanisms for economic growth, transport and planning?**

National Park Authorities, and the local authorities whose areas include National Parks, have experience of effective cross-boundary working. National Park Authorities themselves are an example of a cross-boundary body working to manage the natural environment. Within each National Park unitary, or county and district, local authorities come together with parish councils and other interests to work to deliver National Park purposes. Their common interest is in the National Park whose boundaries will usually only be partly within the local authority area. Some of the mechanisms used in National Parks could be extended to other protected areas and would be useful as good practice in examples in cross-boundary working throughout the country.

As discussed above (Question 3) National Park Management Plans and the associated Local Development Frameworks provide an example of effective cross-boundary working on strategic spatial planning. NPAs are also involved in a wide range of local

partnerships including those aimed at delivering economic growth, transport and planning. Following the announcement on abolition of the Regional Development Agencies, local groups of council leaders and business leaders were invited to come together to consider the formation of local enterprise partnerships. There is a potential for more localised partnerships based around, for example the Peak District NPA are leading on a proposal for a focused partnership based on the wider Peak District. Alternatively existing partnerships should look at supporting SMEs in rural economies. Whatever the institutional framework to deliver their economic goals effectively, LEPs should be encouraged to take an ecosystem services approach. We hope that the Natural Environment White Paper development process will enable Defra to work with colleagues in other Government departments to ensure this is the case.

National Character Area and other landscape based approaches are a good mechanism for dealing with cross-boundary issues as landscape character assessment goes beyond administrative boundaries and provides the basis for protecting the wider setting of the National Park. They are also useful in promoting awareness of the value of the natural environment with local communities or communities of interest and overcoming parochialism.

### **c. How best can the value of the natural environment be considered within local planning?**

Maintaining healthy ecosystems should be a guiding principle of the National Policy Framework and therefore of local planning. Awareness of the value of ecosystem services provided both locally, nationally and internationally will be required of local authority staff and members, and communities. Landscape scale approaches to planning (such as whole catchment management) can assist with this as they are intuitively understandable by the majority of people if explained correctly.

### **Question 10 – How best could the economy reflect the true value of nature’s services in the way business is done, to drive smarter, greener growth?**

As the discussion document recognises, our economy relies on the ecosystem services provided by the natural environment. Maintaining healthy ecosystems should be the primary aim in a system delivering ‘smarter, greener growth’.

Future agri-environment funding schemes might include models where downstream beneficiaries pay land managers upstream for ecosystem services. For example, for their work in flood prevention and alleviation.

NPAs and others have produced evidence of the value of the natural environment to local economies. For example, the Natural Economy North West Project<sup>11</sup> and *Contribution of the Peak District National Park to the Economy of the East Midlands*<sup>12</sup> Such evidence is useful in persuading others of the value of the natural environment and the services it provides. Such considerations need to become mainstream for the economy to fully reflect the value of nature’s services.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> The Contribution of the Peak District National Park to the Economy of the East Midlands, SQW Consulting, 2008 <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/contributiontotheeconomy.pdf>

**Question 11 – Responsible businesses are already looking for ways to reduce their impact on the environment. How can we encourage more action like this?**

A few examples include:

- Lead by example through sustainable procurement policy and practice at all levels of Government. Even in a slimmed down state, Government and local authorities will still be significant customers and can insist on improvements in environmental practice throughout the supply chain.
- Encourage and reward employee volunteering schemes and links between business and community groups or projects.
- Continue to develop schemes where businesses can pay into funds for UK projects that reduce carbon emissions, so that companies get a specific return (in terms of net carbon emissions) on their cash. The Forestry Commission is currently developing the Woodland Carbon Code and carrying out pilot schemes, but this could be expanded to peatland restoration and other initiatives.
- Through the planning process by providing good pre-application advice and clear guidance.
- Through more partnership working and engagement from businesses of all sizes in initiatives such as those mentioned elsewhere in this document, in the text and as case studies 2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 21. Partnership working and engagement with business in National Parks ranges from the SDF supporting individual small business start ups as in case study 23 below to joint projects with utility companies (case study 15) and transport companies (case study 12) or engagement with particular sectors such as farming or tourism business (see case studies 14 and 16).

**Case study 23 - The Pantry@Overacres**

The Pantry @ Overacres is an example of how the Sustainable Development Fund can help a young person to start-up a new business. The SDF provided 50% of the start up funding. The Pantry provides a high quality catering service, using the finest fresh ingredients from leading local suppliers. The business targets customers that require catering for a range of events, from dinner parties, home cooking, shooting lunches, weddings, christenings, family occasions, and corporate events. The Pantry provides a quality service to remote rural communities.

[www.thepantryatoveracres.co.uk](http://www.thepantryatoveracres.co.uk)

**Question 12 – What are the barriers to joining up and seeking multiple benefits from our natural assets?**

**Question 13 – What are the barriers to thinking big and taking a landscape scale approach to managing our natural assets?**

To address both the questions above, it is vital that ‘joined up thinking’ and environmental awareness are promoted across sectors and across boundaries. **The absence of strategic spatial planning** in areas outside National Parks and AONBs is a potential barrier. The larger designated areas such as National Parks (and AONBs),

which have a coherent management plan that is endorsed by a wide range of stakeholders, do offer the opportunity for a coherent approach to landscape-scale conservation. The absence of spatial planning in other rural areas may detract from the effective management of the natural environment unless a national framework is in place that clearly sets out some goals and encourages cross-boundary cooperation and the consideration of non-local environmental impacts.

**Scarce resources in terms of public sector funding – could lead to exacerbation of parochialism in local government and communities** which are a barrier in themselves. There need to be clear benefits for all sectors in order for them to take part in cross-sectoral and cross-boundary working. This is challenging but key, especially at a time of scarce resources. The balance between decisions made for immediate, direct self-interest might outweigh decisions that would have wider benefits and would require a holistic view to be taken. We are concerned that communities may not have the resources to perform environmental assessments of projects or policies adequately. Capacity building for local communities on ecosystem services is likely to represent a huge challenge. We believe communicating this approach needs to avoid theory and instead be based around the services provided and tangible examples that people can relate to.

**Multiple land ownership.** National Parks are characterised by a large number of land owners. This is one of the things that sets National Parks in the UK apart from others internationally. NPAs embrace this enthusiastically and are proud of the partnership working that has led to positive environmental outcomes that are supported (and indeed frequently delivered) by local communities themselves. Yet it is important to recognise that different land owners and managers have different objectives, resources, outlooks and do not often act in unity. A major challenge is to bring together groups of landowners to work together for their own and the natural environment's benefit. NPAs have had much success with this through their support on delivery of agri-environment schemes and other initiatives (see Questions 3 and 4 above for details and the majority of case studies).

The Water Framework Directive provides a good example of legislation that has enabled work across administrative boundaries, as it recognises the importance of natural units for decision making (i.e. basins and catchments). But other models that exist, covering landscape for example, do not have similar delivery mechanisms.

#### **Question 14 – what should be the priorities for the UK's role in EU and international action, to protect and enhance the natural environment at home and abroad?**

We would identify the priorities as:

- Carbon reduction - reducing emissions to mitigate climate change and long-term planning to adapt to that change which is inevitable. The UK network of protected areas (including National Parks and AONBs) is increasingly important in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- CAP reform – Maintaining European resources for managing the natural environment by rewarding land managers for the delivery of ecosystems services.

- Protection of ecosystem services. Maintenance of the Nature 2000 network (within the context of climate change as the biodiversity in some of these sites is likely to change).
- Implementing the Water Framework Directive
- Biodiversity – The UK must ensure that ambitious targets at an EU and international level are set and achieved to halt biodiversity loss and where possible restore biodiversity. The UK and its overseas territories should be exemplars in demonstrating the economic and social value of diverse and intact biodiversity.

**Question 15 – If you could chose just one priority action for the Natural Environment White Paper to drive forward locally, nationally or internationally – what would it be?**

Adopt a nationwide approach to land management based on the delivery of ecosystems services. A central plank of this approach would be implementation of recommendation 14 of The Lawton Review report, *Making Space for Nature*<sup>13</sup>, which relates to National Parks and AONBs.

*Recommendation 14. In view of the opportunity presented by their existing statutory remits, in National Parks and AONBs:*

- (a) favourable condition of SSSIs should be achieved as quickly as possible;*
- (b) non-SSSI semi-natural habitat should be brought under management equivalent to SSSI standards; and*
- (c) other land should be managed so as to enhance connectivity.*

ENPAA October 2010

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<sup>13</sup> Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network - Report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, September 2010  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>