

Date: 24 November 2009

Report: NPA CONTRIBUTION TO THE YORKSHIRE DALES AND HARROGATE TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Purpose of the report

1. To agree the National Park Authority's contribution to the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership for 2010-11.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

- ***National Park Management Plan objectives***

UE4. Through the Tourism Partnership, strengthen and develop the image of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to incorporate sustainability, inclusion and conservation values, alongside outdoor recreation, excitement and enjoyment.

UE9. As part of the Tourism Partnership's programme, develop an annual programme of events, walks and activities that use the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to deliver wider benefits, such as health, leadership skills and spiritual well-being.

UE10. Promote environmental awareness amongst tourism businesses and visitors within the Yorkshire Dales National Park, so as to increase the number of businesses offering 'sustainable tourism products' from 25% in 2006 to 50% by 2010.

EE3. By 2011 develop, through the Tourism Partnership, a range of high quality, innovative heritage, cultural and sustainable tourism initiatives that make imaginative use of the area's image and assets.

EE9 Use publications, events and other opportunities to encourage businesses, residents and visitors to buy and source local food and products that support national park purposes.

- **Corporate Plan objectives**

UE4. Through the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership, strengthen and develop the image of the National Park to incorporate sustainability, inclusion and conservation values, alongside outdoor recreation, excitement and enjoyment.

UE10. Increase the number of businesses that are accredited through a green tourism scheme from 0% to 25% by 2011.

EE9. Use publications, events and other opportunities to encourage businesses, residents and visitors to buy and source local food and products that support national park purposes.

EE3. By 2011 develop, through the Tourism Partnership, a range of high quality, innovative heritage, cultural and sustainable tourism initiatives that make imaginative use of the area's image and assets.

Sustainable Tourism is one of the Authority's programme priorities.

Background

2. In 2003 the Government devolved strategic responsibility for tourism in England to the Regional Development Agencies. In 2006, the Yorkshire Dales and Harrogate Tourism Partnership (YDHTP) was established. It was to be responsible for visitor management, 'product' development, and promotion in the local authorities of Craven, Richmondshire, Harrogate, parts of Eden, parts of South Lakeland and the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
3. The YDHTP is one of three Tourism Partnerships (TPs) across the North Yorkshire sub-region: the other two are Yorkshire Moors and Coast (YMCTP), and York.
4. During 2008, a review was carried out into how tourism should be delivered in Yorkshire and the Humber region. This culminated in Yorkshire Forward setting up a new Yorkshire Tourism Network spearheaded by Welcome to Yorkshire (WtY) - previously the Yorkshire Tourist Board. Yorkshire Forward will inject £30 million over three years to support a visitor economy which currently brings £6 billion per annum to the region.
5. A joint Business Plan has been negotiated with WtY and the six Tourism Partnerships in the Yorkshire region and it is via this mechanism that the £30 million will be distributed from Yorkshire Forward to WtY and then out to the TPs. WtY currently provides £275k per annum to the YDHTP for operational expenditure, with additional income being generated mainly by advertising revenue.
6. To date, the commitment to the YDHTP by the Yorkshire Dales NPA has been both financial and in-kind, although in recent years our in-kind (staff) contribution has been so great that we have not provided any additional financial contribution other than that which we spent to deliver TP related activities e.g. coordinating the National Park events programme on behalf of the TP.

7. During 2008/09 our staff contribution to the TP was made up broadly of 1.5fte within the External Affairs team. In addition, we spent 0.5fte delivering the Europarc accreditation scheme on behalf of the TP.

Changes to the North Yorkshire Tourism Partnership Structure

8. Until recently, neither the YDHTP nor the YMCTP had a full time CEO in post unlike some of the other more successful TPs such as York and South Yorkshire. The YDHTP Board has subsequently recognised this as a weakness in the development of the TP, and appointed a CEO utilising funds available from the new WtY contract.
9. During the development of the TP Business Plan, it became evident that WtY would only provide funding for a CEO if it was a shared position for the two North Yorkshire Partnerships. In April, WtY appointed Aviva Pearson to this shared role.
10. The new shared CEO is currently involved in discussions with all Local Authorities and the two National Park Authorities on the future role and relationship of the two Partnerships. Part of these discussions relate to contributions – financial and otherwise.
11. During these discussions the Yorkshire Dales NPA set out our requirements from the new arrangements. These include:
 - To improve the TPs understanding of the NPAs conservation/sustainability remit and reflect this in promotional material.
 - To promote the special qualities of the National Park
 - To support the DCM project in any discussion with relevant agencies
 - To promote the NPCs in the Park and to recognize their role is wider than TICs
 - To assist the NPA in the delivery of 75 new 'green' accredited businesses over 3 years (50 during 2010/11)
 - To include the NPA in discussions in the 'Sense of Place' project.
12. Staff for both Partnerships will now be based in new offices in Thirsk and they are to work across both TP areas. Although the administrative centre for the YDHTP has relocated to Thirsk from Settle, the TP itself still covers the same area within the Yorkshire Dales National Park as it did previously.
13. A proposed strategy for the YDHTP was presented to the last YDHTP board meeting. (Mr Fenten is the Authority representative). The proposed strategy does link in well with our Statutory Purposes and Europarc agendas. Specifically it focuses on culture, heritage and food as key areas, acknowledging that this must be done sustainably.

Proposed Revised Contributions to the YDHTP

14. It is important to have a strong working relationship with the YDHTP in order to achieve our second purpose and specifically to achieve objectives relating to sustainable tourism and the Europarc accreditation in the corporate plan. (It is worth Members

noting, on page 1 of this paper, how many of the Objectives in the Management Plan and the targets in the corporate Plan, are delivered through this partnership). This work will also help to support local tourism providers and other bodies/agencies to deliver sustainable tourism activity. In addition the Local Authorities working together through the two Partnerships and with WtY will enable a stronger, more co-ordinated tourism activity to take place.

15. Discussions regarding contributions to the TP have been held with Local Authorities and the North York Moors NPA and it is our understanding that all the current contributions to the TP have now been increased in order to better support and finance this work.
16. With officers for the new TP based in Thirsk, there is less need for Authority staff to become as involved in operational TP work. We will, however, still need (and want) to continue to deliver Europarc activities on behalf of the TP. This will be effectively an in-kind contribution although will not be a quantified time commitment to the TP. In addition we will support the work of the TP by allocating space in some of the Authority's publications e.g. Visitor newspaper and by allocating Website space to the work of the TP.
17. In addition Officers need to continue to work with the Partnership at a strategic level and support the Authority Member on the YDHTP Board.
18. It is proposed that our cash contribution currently £0 is increased to £10k for 2010/11. This additional money has been allocated in the proposed budget under the Sustainable Tourism programme. Any financial contribution the NPA makes in future years would be based on evidence of successful delivery of sustainable tourism and NPA objectives and targets.

Legal implications

19. The TP are currently working on a legal partnership agreement for each partner to sign up to. This is currently with NYCC legal services for checking (as the accountable body) before being circulated to other partners, including the NPA.

Conclusion

20. It is important that the NPA are active members of the TP for several reasons
 - The TP is now gearing up to deliver on a new strategy which clearly links to the Statutory Purposes of the NP
 - Being 'at the table' allows us to influence strategy.
 - Yorkshire Forward is allocating tourism funding via the TP.

RECOMMENDATION

21. That

- a) the Authority's financial contribution is set at £10k for 2010/11
- b) we allocate some editorial in key publications to the work of the TP
- c) we continue to deliver Europarc on behalf of the TP.
- d) we work together with the TP wherever possible to achieve our objectives and targets and review progress against these in 12 months time.

Annie Galloway
Head of External Affairs
3 November 2009

Background documents:
none