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Towards a new model for managing a National Park

We have concluded that the best way to achieve National Park purposes is by putting the economy and community at the heart of our work. Working with the community and partners we aim both to achieve National Park purposes and build a more sustainable economy, one grounded in the special qualities of this National Park, notably the unspoilt natural beauty, tranquillity and cultural inheritance.

We think this is a practical way to give effect to the intention of the Environment Act (1995), which gave National Park Authorities revised purposes and a new duty towards the local economy and community. Our views echo the ‘Review of English National Park Authorities’ which was published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in July 2002. The Review creates a new and clearer framework for National Parks. It sees us working in an integrated way with local and central government and public agencies.

We will face three tests in implementing our Vision:

- To convince others that we are a natural partner in rural development;
- To agree with our partners how to regenerate the economy using the special qualities to the benefit of the widest community. We will seek consensus on resisting those developments which undermine the special qualities and distinctiveness;
- To work in a practical way towards sustainable development in Northumberland National Park. We have begun to alter the way we work, putting more resources into rural development, setting up special funds for Action Areas, and creating schemes to help our communities and businesses to benefit from information technology. We invite others to explore this new approach with us.

John Riddle
Chairman
JANUARY 2003
A very special place with very special qualities

“In Northumberland alone, both heaven and earth are seen, we walk all day on long ridges, high enough to give far views of moor and valley, and the sense of solitude below. It is the land of far horizons . . .”

From G.M. Trevelyan’s ‘The Middle Marches’ 1926

“Tides of History, the hopes and dreams of empires and kings, have ebbed and flowed across the Borderlands. So have the lives of shepherds and labourers.

What is now defined as Northumberland National Park is the gathering of elements, ribbons of moorland, cascades of water and the bleached quilt of the border hills. It is landscape on a grand scale, something unusual in our crowded island; it fills the senses and feeds the imagination.”

Tony Hopkins in ‘Land of the Far Horizon’ 1997

This landscape we now know as a National Park inspires us and fires our emotions. It is a living landscape with a community still rooted deep in its soil. The inheritance of ancient landscapes from the Stone Age, 7,000 years ago, through to the remains of Roman and mediaeval buildings speak of a border history, of continuity and a cultural inheritance, which lives on in the people. This legacy is the result of previous economic conditions and systems. The local speech, traditions, folklore, knowledge and skills also help make up the warp and weft of this place.

It is a living landscape too in the assemblages of plants and animals, some rare even on a world scale and our visitors come to be inspired and to seek spiritual refreshment.

In our consultation brochure we asked ‘what makes this place special?’.
Whether young or old, resident or visitor the response is the same. Pupils of Rothbury Middle School said:

Others added: Openness Peace and Quiet Natural/Traditional/Unspoilt Wild/Wilderness Remote Silence/Solitude Diversity
Our Vision: a living landscape

Our Vision is that:

‘Northumberland National Park Authority will be proactive, innovative and forward-looking, working towards a National Park with thriving communities and a sustainable local economy grounded in its special qualities, including a richness of cultural heritage and biodiversity, a true sense of tranquillity and a distinct character associated with a living, working landscape, in which everyone has an opportunity to understand, enjoy and contribute to those special qualities.’

We have put the economy at the heart of our Vision, because we believe that the best way to achieve the purposes of a National Park is through working with the local community and other partners in a new form of sustainable rural development. We are encouraged in this analysis by the conclusions of the ‘Review of English National Park Authorities’, carried out by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which reported in July 2002. It puts sustainable rural development at the core of our mission.

A living landscape needs a vibrant community and the countryside is undergoing profound social and economic change. The view is widespread that conventional solutions to rural development are no longer enough and need to be replaced by a new approach. In our view, the special qualities of this National Park can be a source of new wealth and security for the local community because of the tremendous appeal of the landscape to the wider community.

In this new thinking, the landscape of the National Park - the scenery, vegetation and wildlife and the cultural heritage - is an economic asset to the local and wider community. The National Park is also a regional asset, aiding the renaissance of the North East through the promotion of regional distinctiveness and a high quality of life.

... and we want a wide range of people to enjoy those qualities.
Northumberland National Park is unique in its sense of space and the breadth of its historical legacy. Hadrian's Wall, internationally famous and a World Heritage Site, spans the southern boundary. The Wall, for much of its central section in the National Park built on the crest of a great ridge of rock - the Great Whin Sill - looks
out to its North on a largely forgotten landscape of repeated ridges, each with a steeper northern slope, like waves breaking on the landscape, often with glacial lakes at their foot and bogs and mires of international importance, rich in wildlife.

The middle section of the National Park comprises the broad valleys of the North Tyne and Rede, the high moorland bordering them, and the Simonside Ridge overlooking the River Coquet. Now clothed in part by the Forests of Kielder and Wark. This is border country, for centuries turbulent and lawless, caught between the warring Scots and English and plundered by Reivers and moss-troopers.

The Cheviots in the North, great rounded and whale-backed hills, volcanic in origin, provide exhilarating hill walking, some of the best in Britain. Big skies, distant views to Scotland and the North Pennines, a sense of emptiness and a glimpse of wilderness rare in a small crowded island: the very essence of why National Parks were created and why they remain so important to people.

This is stock rearing country, famous for producing breeding stock of the characteristic sheep breeds - Black Faced, Hexham or Blue-faced Leicester. Traditional breeds of cattle have given way to continental breeds. There is little arable land.
At 1,049 sq km the National Park covers about a fifth of the County of Northumberland but settlements are few and the population only around 2,000 people. It does not include the key settlements of Bellingham, Otterburn, Rothbury or Wooler; nor does it include most of Kielder Water or Kielder Forest or any of the Northumberland Coast or the Kyloe Hills.

Over half the land in the National Park is privately owned and used mainly for agriculture. The Government owns about 42% of the land with about 23% being used for military training and 19% for commercial forestry. In total four-fifths of the National Park is farmed, of which nearly 90% is grass and heather moorland. The National Park Authority owns very little land.

Military training (especially live firing) in National Parks has been contentious from their inception. Much of the early controversy related to Dartmoor and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks. Debate has become more heated in Northumberland in recent years. While views are strongly held on both sides, it is worth remembering that the issue is complex and subject to rapid change as military tactics and equipment evolve and the distribution and composition of forces adjusts to match the changing political context. Otterburn Training Area (OTA) is used mainly for infantry and artillery training, but low-flying aircraft practicing ground attack techniques also use the area.

### Land ownership in Northumberland National Park

- **Private**: 57% Landowners
- **Public**: 23% Army
  - 19% Forestry
  - 1% National Trust
  - 0.2% National Park
Military training and forested areas in and around the National Park

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About this plan

Parliament requires us to prepare a management plan for the National Park and to update it every 5 years. In early 2001 we consulted widely on what people think is special about the National Park; what they think our goals should be; and how we should go about achieving them. We sent out close to 3,000 copies of a consultation brochure, mostly to local people, but also to a wide range of stakeholders. The response rate, at 17%, was excellent for this type of consultation.

After taking stock, we sought the views of key stakeholders on a draft of this document. There was substantial agreement with the general thrust of the approach, although it was clear that a radical shift of approach requires us to be quite plain speaking in explaining what we intend. We have redrafted the text, taking people’s comments into account.

This plan is our framework for working with others to achieve the purposes of designation. It is also a framework for discharging the duties placed on all public bodies (government departments and agencies and private sector utility companies) by Parliament to take account of National Park purposes in their work.

Purposes

Section 61 of The Environment Act (1995) updated the purposes of designation:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National park;
- Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of (the) areas by the public.

Duties

Section 62 of The Environment Act (1995) relates to the application of National Park purposes.

It places a duty on all public bodies and public utilities to have regard to the purposes of designation in carrying out their work. Circular 12/96 which implemented the Act explains that this ‘ensures that they take account of Park purposes when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities relating to or affecting land within the Parks. Relevant authorities will be expected to be able to demonstrate that they fulfilled this duty. They will wish to consider whether they could usefully make reference to it in their annual reports.
It may sometimes be the case that the activities of certain authorities outside a National Park may have an impact within the Park. In such cases it will be important to ensure mutual co-operation across Park boundaries, particularly in planning and highway matters.’

Section 62 also places a duty on the National Park Authority to ‘seek to foster the social and economic well-being of the local communities’. Circular 12/96 also explains that this is not a purpose and we must do so only in pursuit of the twin purposes; in co-operation with those who themselves have a rural development purpose and without significant expenditure. Later we explain how we plan to satisfy all those requirements.

The National Park Management Plan will be made up of three components. This, the Framework Document, sets out the direction of travel. It will set out high-level targets. We also want to provide more opportunities for people to contribute to the achievement of the plan and to be more specific about the targets we will achieve in the shorter term. So, we will follow up the Framework Document with Topic Papers. Through them we will capture agreed policies and set out programmes of work as the basis of partnerships with stakeholders. Finally, and following consultation with local communities and stakeholders, we will prepare Action Area programmes. We will use them to promote practical collaboration in an integrated fashion, to address the priorities of each area.

Topic papers are planned covering:

- Natural environment;
- Archaeology and the historic environment;
- Land use and land management;
- Tourism (including visitor services and transport);
- Wider access and recreation;
- Promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment;
- Thriving communities, including culture, traditions and local enterprise.

We expect to produce Action Area programmes for:

- The Cheviots;
- Upper Coquetdale;
- North Tyne and Redesdale;
- Hadrian’s Wall.

We will also work with the Ministry of Defence on the Integrated Land Management Plan for the Otterburn Training Area.
Taken together, this Framework Document, the Topic Papers and the Action Area programmes will comprise the National Park Management Plan required by legislation.

Our aim is to keep the plan alive and evolving. We can expect the Framework to remain a valid document for some years, but we will respond to changing circumstances and new opportunities through updating the Topic Papers and the Action Area programmes.

Putting the plan in context

What is driving change in the countryside?

The rural economy and society are changing and so are public opinion and behaviour. The rural economy was in the throes of structural change and farming had been in deep recession before the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001. The factors for us to take account of are:

- Government policy as set out in the Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: Our Future, November 2000) which gives a vision for ‘a living countryside, a working countryside, a protected countryside and a vibrant countryside’;
- The fundamental changes that are taking place in the rural economy and society with:
  - Agriculture, forestry and other primary industries making a declining contribution to the rural economy;
  - Migration and diversification of the economy providing opportunities and threats; and
  - The growth of the economic importance of tourism.
The weakness of the rural economy and the lack of integration and joined up delivery in countryside policy revealed by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease;

The legislation to provide for access to open country;

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and strengthening of rural development in its wider sense;

The aim of ONE North East and Government Agencies to bring about a Rural Renaissance through a Rural Action Plan;

The adoption by government of the principles of sustainable development;

Modernisation of local government and the principles of best value;

A breakdown of traditional links between town and country.

All of these influences are reflected in the ‘Review of National Park Authorities in England’ by DEFRA, which can be found on its website at www.defra.gov.uk

Our work in a wider context

Wider family and national relationships

Parliament established National Parks as national designations under local stewardship. They enjoy the highest level of landscape protection. Established in 1956, we are one of 11 National Parks in England and Wales. Already there is a new National Park in Scotland, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, soon expected to be joined by the Cairngorms, and in England by the New Forest and then the South Downs. New designations and the very positive ‘Review of English National Park Authorities’ indicates a great vote of confidence in the environmental, social and economic value of the designation.

We will play our part in the wider family of protected areas through the Association of National Park Authorities. We will support and collaborate with local arrangements for staff development and the sharing of resources and best practice in protected area management.

Our relationship direct to government has been steadily developed and we greatly value the links to DEFRA and the Countryside Agency. We will operate as partners with them to deliver aspects of the broader countryside agenda, including acting as agents for the delivery of government programmes such as Countryside Stewardship.
Regional and local relationships

Similarly, we offer the expertise and skills of the Authority in regional and sub regional partnerships. We offer ourselves as key partners in taking forward the relevant components of the Regional Economic Strategy, the Rural Action Plan for the Region and initiatives such as the Regional Cultural Strategy and the bid for the European Capital of Culture 2008.

We need to explore with public bodies how they will exercise their duties towards National Park purposes under Section 62 of the Environment Act (1995). (The formal wording of the purposes and duties is on pages 11 and 12). One means to achieve this is with local interests, through active involvement in the Community Partnerships and the plans they prepare.

Already we have appointed a new manager for rural development and, working in local partnership, we are using grants from a range of sources such as ‘Implementing Electronic Government’, Europe, Heritage Lottery and the Regional Development Agency to benefit our communities and visitors.

Border and boundary issues

The National Park is not a social, economic or environmental island. We need to reach across the boundary to establish effective partnerships with communities and agencies, especially in the fields of tourism and economic development.

We also recognise that our role is complementary to that of other bodies, such as the Community Council of Northumberland. We recognise that we have a number of very valuable strategic partnerships as well as local partnerships.

We have recently gained valuable experience in sustainable tourism and community-led approaches to development through the ‘People and Place’ project. This project helped some of the National Park communities achieve improvements in their environment, access and recreation provision. We also helped tourism businesses invest in infrastructure to improve their product for walkers and cyclists. We need to build on that experience.
The new Sustainable Development Fund and the work of the Northumberland National Park Environment Association enable us to work with communities in and around the National Park to explore ways of sustainable development.

The character and quality of the landscape in neighbouring Scotland, especially in the Cheviots, is comparable. We will work with our Scottish neighbours to provide the public with the same quality of access and experience, and to achieve similar levels of management and quality of information each side of the border.

The Authority: Modernising the way we work

Some facts

The Northumberland National Park Authority is a special purpose local authority. Our structure and purposes and duties are set out by legislation (see pages 11 - 12) and there are limits on what we can and cannot do, although the ‘Review of English National Park Authorities’ commits Government to review some of those constraints on action for rural development.

We are subject to similar legal and administrative requirements as other local authorities. The National Park covers parts of the areas of Tynedale, Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed District Councils and is wholly in the County of Northumberland.

The Authority comprises 22 members: six County Councillors, six District Councillors, four Parish Councillors and six Members appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Anyone can apply for appointment by the Secretary of State.

We are legally required to produce:

(i) An annual Best Value Performance Plan setting out our past performance, future targets, the detailed work programme for the coming year and our bid to government for the following two years;

(ii) An Annual Report showing what progress we have made and accounting for the public money we have spent; and

(iii) A Structure Plan, which we do jointly with the County Council, and a Local Development Plan.

In future we will use the Vision Statement to help us organise implementation and assess progress in our work.
Northumberland National Park in relation to District boundaries
What sort of National Park; What sort of National Park Authority?

The review of the National Park Management Plan is the time to review our long-term vision for the National Park and to reconsider the way we carry out our work. As well as the responses to the consultation document, the review has benefited from the Authority’s Management Development Initiative.

In 1999 we asked ourselves:

- What sort of National Park we wanted it to be in, say, the year 2020, and drafted a provisional Vision Statement;
- What sort of National Park Authority we needed to be to achieve the Vision.

We have reviewed the way we make decisions in the Authority. Members wanted to take a more strategic role. We streamlined the decision making so that there was more time to debate policy and created a small Management Group of members to oversee the day-to-day decisions and to raise the profile of the National Park.

We saw the necessity for us to be more of an enabling Authority, with less emphasis on our regulatory role, more outward looking and proactive. We see partnership with others as the principal style of delivery in future. That is reflected through this document but we now need to demonstrate what that means in practice.

A local partnership approach to sustainable rural development

We see it as critically important to improve awareness of the National Park and increase the number of visitors. We must improve the quality of the welcome they receive and so improve their enjoyment. These are essential, not only to secure the future of local businesses, local services and the long-term future of the communities, but also to spread the benefits of better public access and enjoyment of the National Park.

Our communities retain a distinctive culture, are part of the social capital upon which the future vitality depends, and local pride is important to the regeneration we foresee.
We have experimented with community-led work in environmental improvement through the Hareshaw Linn project in Bellingham, where a project identified in the village appraisal snowballed and led to improvements to woodland and paths, provided new seats and an artist-designed bridge, a leaflet and a play written especially for the local drama group. We have learned about sustainable tourism through our ‘People and Place’ project. In the consultation for this plan and through recent independent evaluation of both projects consultees have enthusiastically endorsed that approach.

Towards a new sustainable ‘Environmental and Cultural Economy’

Inherent in our new approach are the principles of sustainable development because it is in the best long-term interests of everyone. Our new approach is a way to fulfil the duty to ‘seek to foster the social and economic well being of the local communities’ in a way that better integrates that duty with the National Park purposes.

Economists have coined the phrases ‘environmental’ and ‘cultural economies’ for this new type of economic activity in which the appeal of the natural and cultural assets, rather than the production of goods, forms the principal basis of the economy.
Most successful approaches to sustainable development come when the local community feels it has a stake in the plans. So, in addition to consulting widely on the Development Plans, we will undertake ‘Planning for Real’ training to help communities participate in planning the future of their areas. In those areas where the community agrees, we will work with them on a new type of parish or community plan or development statement comprising:

(i) An agreed statement of what the community and the National Park Authority consider to be the principles to be adopted in relation to built development. It will identify constraints; indicate the desired nature, pace and scale of development, looking ahead 10 years; and set down design and other criteria to be adopted;

(ii) An agreed statement of priorities for the maintenance and enhancement of the special qualities and attitudes to land uses, land management, tourism and other related businesses, and to local services. An action plan will form a part of the statement. It may contain action that lies with public bodies other than the National Park Authority.

To help identify constraints we will undertake surveys of both the archaeological and natural inheritance in the area of the settlements. This will assist the National Park Authority and the community to agree what is special to preserve and celebrate.

We conclude that integration is best achieved at the level of four distinct areas within the National Park: Hadrian’s Wall and West Tynedale, North Tynedale & Redesdale, Upper Coquetdale and the Cheviots. These will provide the basis for our Action Area programmes mentioned earlier.

We will base our approach to rural development on these four propositions:

- The appeal of the countryside is a very valuable economic asset, creating jobs in tourism and supporting local services of all sorts;
- Caring for that asset is itself an economic opportunity, potentially creating jobs and attracting income to farm businesses;
- A high quality environment is an attraction for footloose businesses to relocate to the National Park and its neighbouring towns and villages;
- A thriving local community, with its own distinctive culture, is part of the appeal of this National Park and is probably essential to providing a welcome to visitors and new businesses.
The four Action Areas for the National Park

- Northumberland National Park
- Hadrian’s Wall
- North Tyne and Redesdale
- The Cheviots
- Upper Coquetdale

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Here we set out some principles for a sustainable development approach:

- Integrating social, economic and environmental goals means working in partnership. One way is through the new Community Partnerships and Plans;
- We will protect the special qualities of the National Park from unsuitable development because it is a vital economic asset as well as valuable in itself;
- Development is essential if communities are to remain viable. Sustainable development is in the long term interests of the greatest number of people;
- We need to share resources and expertise with other public and voluntary bodies and the communities of the National Park;
- We need to reach out across the boundary of the National Park for effective working on social and economic opportunities and to protect the setting of the National Park;
- Sustainable tourism, based upon the special qualities and in tune with the interests of the local communities, yields the best long term benefits;
- Managing the National Park has substantial economic potential. We will explore ways to create local jobs in environmental management;
- We favour the implementation of the Vision through area plans and practical projects integrating social, economic and environmental goals;
- In our role as a planning authority we will prepare development statements with our communities;
- We will encourage development that is neutral to the special qualities or will lead to environmental gain.

**Changing the way we work**

The Authority has a direct influence on the local economy as a local employer and purchaser of goods and services. To maximise the benefit of the organisation for the local community and to ensure that rural development is recognised as a core activity, we will:

- Carry out a sustainability audit on our policies and internal practices;
- Optimise the use of our facilities, financial and staff resources for rural development;
- Give access to our data and information systems to a wider community;
- Ask an internal working group to undertake reviews and report.
A living landscape: Sustainable land use in the National Park

Background

As our Vision Statement emphasises, we believe that the future of the National Park lies in maintaining and enhancing its special qualities. That includes keeping it as a living, working landscape.

The open landscapes and horizons free from significant human intrusions, would be familiar to past generations. Some 70% of the National Park is moorland maintained by grouse moor management and low intensity grazing.

Consultation told us that people wanted to retain the tranquillity, the openness and the moorland character, the unspoilt nature of the area and to conserve wildlife habitats and species.

In a small, crowded island, tranquillity is a rare commodity. Its appeal to a largely urban society also represents a substantial economic asset for this National Park and its economy. For that reason, resisting undesirable developments, especially intrusive development in open country, remains one of the key jobs of the town and country planning system.

The relationship between the environment and economic activity is constantly changing. In Northumberland National Park this fragile relationship is affected by significant changes in farming, forestry and military training. Farming is the dominant land use at some 80% of the land cover. The enclosed farmland provides a contrast and a complement to the moorland. These two components of the upland farmed landscape appear as a harmonious interaction between people and the environment, the very essence of the character of our National Park.
At present, the aftermath of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease is producing an economic threat. This is in addition to falling farm incomes. As well as providing employment, farming is a significant influence on the landscape. In 1999/2000 we undertook a survey of some 164 farms covering 85% of the farmed area. We have seen substantial changes in farm practices in order that the businesses remain viable:

- Farms carry a higher density of sheep and cattle than a generation or two ago, often through land improvement;
- Some farm businesses have been lost and others are run part-time;
- There has been a 30% decline in the number of people directly employed in agriculture over the last 30 years; and
- Two-thirds of farm businesses have at least one source of non-agricultural income.

Despite high levels of business support through the European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the results indicate major reductions in farm incomes in recent years and a lack of confidence in the future for many. The question for us is what might be the impact of a major restructuring of farming with farm amalgamations and disposals being predicted? Foot and Mouth Disease has probably accelerated the trends which might have taken longer.

At the same time, the stated direction of the reform of the CAP is towards the achievement of both production and environmental objectives. The environmental objectives of the CAP will be strengthened and greater sums of money are being devoted to agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship. This potentially presents an attractive opportunity to secure some farm businesses through supplementary income for environmental management and to create or enhance the landscape and biodiversity.

Forestry covers about 20% of the National Park. There has been little additional planting of commercial forestry since taxation and grant incentives were removed in 1988. In recent years we have set out with the Forestry Commission to improve the amount of native woodland. In five years the area has more than doubled to over 10 sq km, but there is clearly great scope to continue this approach.
We have also worked closely with Forest Enterprise and private sector operators to encourage forest restructuring in order to increase the recreation and conservation value of existing plantations and to reduce their landscape impacts. There remains great scope to continue this approach.

In order to maintain the essential landscape character we currently:

- Work with farm businesses to enable them to benefit economically from environmental management, for example by introducing Countryside Stewardship payments on as many farm holdings as possible;

- Run a Land Management Initiative to explore the opportunities for new forms of land management, as well as farming;

- Take a sympathetic approach to farm diversification, providing advice on the Rural Enterprise Scheme;

- Resist intrusive developments which might erode the sense of openness and tranquillity.

Authority staff have helped to conclude Countryside Stewardship Agreements on about 40% of holdings covering 60% of the land area of the National Park. Payments worth well over £10m have been secured since 1996.
Countryside Stewardship Agreements in Northumberland National Park

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Consultation

Respondents were asked to define the National Park’s special qualities and the most popular words used were tranquillity, openness, peace and quiet, natural, traditional, wild/wilderness, remote and so on. 90% agreed that we should continue to assist farmers in obtaining agri-environment and diversification funds.

85% of people thought we should help influence the future shape of farming by research, advocacy and grant aid.

There is an intimate connection between landscape and vegetation cover and some of the consultation questions regarding wildlife and biodiversity have direct relevance to the consideration of landscape and vice versa.

There was support for the removal and restructuring of intrusive conifer blocks (76% of respondents) but we feel we need to do more to interpret the apparent support for the potentially controversial idea of ‘rewilding’ (85%).

There was a high level of support for the Authority’s work to support farming. The emphasis in the responses appeared to be on maintenance of traditional farming - 75% thought it critical.

Focus group work, conducted under the Land Management Initiative, has revealed that farmers, local people and visitors all wish to see a living, working landscape although they are also open to change. They do not necessarily mean that they view the maintenance of the current pattern of traditional hill farming as essential in all areas of the National Park.

Policy response

Given the generally high level of support for our current work from residents and stakeholders it is not surprising that these policies are largely unchanged. However the long-term decline in hill farming, and the impact of the Foot and Mouth crisis mean that we have to be alive to the process of change in the landscape and aim to intervene in a proactive way.

Implementation

We will seek to research and promote those land-uses and management practices that serve to produce positive landscape change. Hence we will continue to assist farmers to adopt more sustainable methods principally by improving uptake of relevant agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship. Our target is that by 2012 we will have all significant farm holdings in some form of agri-environment.
The resources devoted to the CAP within the National Park area are an order of magnitude greater than the Authority’s entire budget and they are due for fundamental reform. Our aim is to influence the CAP reforms to ensure they benefit the National Park environment and rural economy.

We will continue to resist infrastructure developments, or land-uses, which have a significant detrimental effect on the special qualities of the National Park while recognising that some landscape change is inevitable.

Targets for woodland management and planting are covered in the Biodiversity section (page 34).

**Monitoring**

In order to respond to change we need information on the state of both the landscape and the industries which manage it. In terms of the characteristics, plans and prospects of the principal land occupiers, we have benefited greatly from the resurvey of farm businesses in 1999-2000. We aim to do repeat surveys of farm businesses and use the information to review policy.

Monitoring landscape change and landscape condition has been a problem for ourselves and other National Park Authorities. In the past we have largely been reliant on outside agencies to provide us with the trend information on changes in landscape and vegetation cover. This data has often been of poor resolution and well out of date before we received any analysis. The advent of cheap, high-resolution satellite data and powerful image processing software and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has revolutionised our capability to monitor the state of the National Park.
Remote sensing data is becoming both cheaper and of greater resolution. We have good links with remote sensing units in local universities. A number of our partners are interested in utilising the technology so there is potential for sharing costs.

We will appoint a new member of staff to undertake State of the Park monitoring and co-ordinate our activities with the statutory agencies and other designated areas to ensure the greatest possible levels of co-operation and resource sharing.

**A living landscape:**
**Sustainable land use in the National Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of large area integrated sustainable land management initiatives delivered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of farm holdings in some form of agri-environmental scheme</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses successful in gaining farm diversification grants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background

Biodiversity - the richness of habitats and species, both commonplace and rare, which we see around us is important and their loss reflects upon our stewardship of the land, water and air. The National Park Authority produced its Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2000, which identified key wildlife habitats (see the table below). In the National Park we can see this diversity in nationally and internationally important habitats; for example mires (bogs), heather moorland, hay meadows, ancient woodlands, rivers and burns and lakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International importance</th>
<th>National importance</th>
<th>Regional importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blanket bog and raised bog</td>
<td>Rivers and burns</td>
<td>Heath and grass mosaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Heath</td>
<td>Ancient semi-natural woodlands</td>
<td>Rock exposures and scree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species-rich hay meadows</td>
<td>Mesotrophic lakes</td>
<td>coverage c.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coverage c. 12%</td>
<td>coverage c. 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The BAP also lists 161 rare and significant species, some of which will be priorities for specific action such as Red Squirrel, Black Grouse and Juniper.
We currently:

- Carry out surveys to find out the location and state of the most valuable habitats and species;
- Work with landowners and farmers to restore mires by blocking drains to make them wet again and fencing to eliminate grazing;
- Target schemes such as Countryside Stewardship at priority elements of the farmed landscape, increasing heather cover and protecting mires by reducing grazing, protecting the remaining hay meadows and encouraging restoration of others;
- Encourage, through grants and advice, the expansion of native woodland and the management of existing native woods;
- Bring important habitats into formal management agreements whereby landowners agree to the long-term management of these sites;
- Work with Forest Enterprise, English Nature and others to secure the enhancement of both the landscape and biodiversity through forest restructuring, new native woodland and individual species action plans.

On the Otterburn Training Area, military training has, to some extent, helped sustain National Park purposes because it has effectively preserved the landscape, and vegetation, which existed at the time of designation (1956) by largely preventing afforestation or agricultural improvement. We have worked with the MoD, as with any other landowner and landlord. We have facilitated grant schemes, worked together on habitat and woodland creation plans and, helped to get farms into Countryside Stewardship. The Integrated Land Management Plan for the Training Area will enable the natural and cultural resources to be protected and enhanced.

**Consultation**

Respondents to our consultation brochure give the highest possible levels of approval for our work in promoting biodiversity. 96% agreed that we should continue to protect and enhance rare habitats and species and promote biodiversity projects. There is also a good level of support for being sensitive to opportunities, when they arise, to add to the wildness and biodiversity of areas. Our partners and stakeholders are in agreement.
As an example of that opportunistic approach, the suggested removal, or restructuring, of intrusive conifer plantations had high level of support amongst consultation brochure respondents. Some local residents and Parish Councils pointed to the economic importance of commercial forestry in the region. Consultees called for the Authority to take action to encourage industry and craft activity that would add value to woodland products within the region. These are all points we can accept as being within the spirit of the rural development model we favour.

Policy response

Much of our policy direction is set by the national agencies, such as English Nature and the Forestry Commission, but the Authority has the direct responsibility to maintain and enhance the nationally and internationally important habitats and species that occur in the area. As with other components of work the two aspects that have, perhaps, been underplayed in the past are community involvement and integration with economic activity such as tourism.

In co-operation with the relevant agencies, and in line with national policy, we will continue to develop, review, update and implement the Biodiversity Action Plan.

We will, as a matter of principle, now put community partnerships at the heart of the implementation of the BAP and to this end we are preparing proposals to celebrate the biodiversity in the National Park in a proactive way. Together with the ‘Historic Village Atlas’ (see page 38) we will have two documents to enable us to work with landowners and local communities to preserve what is important. This is the sort of work that can help to increase the vitality of local communities and make our settlements more attractive to live in. The action to implement our work with communities can be found in the ‘Thriving Communities’ section starting at page 52.

We will also be sensitive to opinion and work closely with local interests, in particular when opportunities arise to return some land to a more natural state and re-create wild areas.

We will seek significantly to extend the coverage of native woodland within the National Park, from 1% to 4%. To do that we will need to work especially closely with the Forestry Commission.

We will also explore how we can improve the contribution of forestry and woodlands to the local economy. Part of that may be to assist the viability of woodland management through assistance with grants, promotion and marketing of woodland products and the encouragement of businesses and processes that add value locally.
Implementation

The BAP approach has solid support from all concerned. Species and Habitat Action Plans will be developed, promoted and implemented. We will continue our current approach to engage the communities in and around the National Park in this work and look for linkages to tourism.

Our target is that all internationally important habitats and semi-natural woodland will be under good management by 2012.

Any possibilities for wilderness re-creation are likely to be opportunistic and dependent on large-scale changes in land-use or land ownership. It is inherently difficult to plan for such eventualities. Communities or landowners may bring forward such proposals themselves. Our target is to have set up an experiment before 2012.

Extension of native woodland cover is primarily dependent on our partnership with the Forestry Commission and the large landed estates, the MoD and Forest Enterprise. Much of the work involves focusing national grant schemes and external funding, but there is also a need to explore new approaches. Our target is that by 2012, native woodland will cover 2,500 ha of the National Park.

To do this we aim to attract the additional resources to establish an initial, 3-year project by April 2004.

Some conifer blocks planted in the 1960s and 1970s detract from the high quality landscape of the National Park. Our target is that 500 ha of these plantations have been felled and removed by 2012, and action taken to re-establish the habitats which characterised those sites before plantation.

Action to improve the viability of woodland products and industries is likely to require an externally funded project that draws in a wide range of partners.
Monitoring

There are existing mechanisms for monitoring and managing designated sites. Many of the arguments deployed in favour of remote sensing and GIS in the landscape section above also apply to biodiversity. A combination of accurate, timely data and a capability to analyse and present them allows us the opportunity to create genuine feedback. The impact on biodiversity of changes in land-use, climate or agricultural grant regimes become apparent in a few years.

Developing this capability, whether in-house or with partners or other agencies, must be a priority for the Authority.

A landscape rich in biodiversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of upland heath in good management (ha)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td></td>
<td>20000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of blanket bog and raised bog in good management (ha)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of upland hay meadows in good management</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of ancient semi-natural woodland in good management</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of new native woodland created from 1995 (ha)</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% area of SSSIs and NNRs in favourable or unfavourable improving condition</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of working experiments for wilderness re-creation on a large area (i.e. a hillside or valley)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New areas of conifer plantation removed to allow restoration of semi-natural habitats (ha)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Baseline data to be established in 2003-04.

SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest; NNR: National Nature Reserve.
A rich cultural heritage

Background

One of the Northumberland National Park’s special qualities is without doubt its historical legacy. Recent investigations have pushed back the limits of our knowledge of the early history of this land. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this legacy to us or to diminish the excitement and pleasure our new knowledge is beginning to give to resident and visitor alike. Let no one be under any illusions, this is one of the most important historic landscapes in Britain and we have only just begun to explore it.

By cultural heritage we include both the physical remains, left to us by past societies, and the living inheritance of the local people - their language, traditions, folklore, skills and knowledge. There is great local pride in this inheritance, and we have benefited from the co-operation, energy and knowledge of local communities in developing projects around the cultural heritage - the ‘Hidden Histories’ project in the Coquet Valley, the ‘Discovering our Hillfort Heritage’ project in the Cheviots, ‘Thirlwall Castle Conservation Project’ on Hadrian’s Wall, and so on. It is now a principle to engage the local community closely in the planning of such projects. The cultural heritage of the National Park can also benefit its economy. We deal with this issue under ‘Thriving Community and Economy’.

Hadrian’s Wall is one of the best known archaeological features in Northern Britain.

The Haystack Hill Romano-British village, Ingram. The National Park Authority does much to record, research, conserve and interpret sites such as this.
Our most visited area is Hadrian’s Wall, a World Heritage Site and as such an international icon and a major asset to the region. We are in productive partnership with the major players - ONE North East, the Countryside Agency, English Heritage and the National Trust over action within the National Park. Through the World Heritage Site Management Plan Committee and the Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership this contribution has extended beyond the National Park section of the Wall.

The aims of our partnerships are comprehensive - researching, protecting and enhancing archaeological sites, restoring historic buildings, improving access, interpretation and education. They are models for cross boundary working. They have attracted substantially greater resources than we alone could have devoted to our work. Such partnerships, of which our cross border partnership with the Tweed Forum in the Scottish Borders is another exemplar, must be developed throughout the National Park.

The basic explanation for the remarkable preservation of our historic landscapes lies in the lack of recent intensive agricultural development in the uplands, enabling the survival of extensive remains of past societies. These ancient societies can now be revealed by ‘peeling back’ the successive layers, one by one. The area’s remoteness and lack of attention from archaeologists, compared to the more populous south of England, means that its significance and richness have gone largely unrecognised amongst both professional archaeologists and the general public.

Recent work in partnership with the amateur Northumberland Archaeological Group, the Universities of Durham and Newcastle, and various other archaeological contractors, has added much to our knowledge of pre-Roman and Romano-British societies in the National Park. In particular, our Breamish Valley Archaeology project, while enthusing locals and visitors with regard to the magic of archaeology, has produced results that will in due course rewrite the text books about prehistoric societies in central Britain. Our ‘Discovering our Hillfort Heritage’ project will continue to add to our knowledge, and will disseminate this knowledge to the public using effective and innovative interpretive techniques. Such projects all add to the reasons for visitors to come to North Northumberland and help revive the tourist industry. Access to open country will also help to improve access to these landscapes.

Over the past decade we have also researched, recorded and conserved a substantial number of the most important and most threatened buildings from the mediaeval period, notably those defensible structures associated with the period of the Anglo-Scottish wars and the Border Reivers. We have made several bastles, castles and towers accessible to the public, enabling us to
create heritage trails to intrigue and delight the visitor: a further reason to come
to the Northumberland National Park and experience its distinctive culture.

But there is also a living culture. In the past we have assisted with traditional
music and speech festivals. Now we see it as important to celebrate and
encourage an appreciation of the whole of the cultural inheritance - speech,
traditions, music, folklore, knowledge and skills. We will consult with local
communities to identify the most effective and sensitive ways to do this.

Consultation

In our consultation process, we did not ask questions specifically about the
cultural heritage. A number of respondents considered that this was a significant
omission and we agree.

Policy response

In our work on archaeology, the historic environment and cultural heritage
we will:

- Continue to implement policies on conservation and development control
to ensure that the best of our ancient sites and landscapes are preserved;
- Continue to develop programmes of investigation, research and protection
for archaeological remains and historic structures. We will take a broad view
of these within their landscape setting;
- Seek to develop new initiatives in partnership with government, the local
community, academia and others
to present the National Park’s
archaeological heritage to the
wider public within the context of
our strategies for understanding
and enjoyment;
- Investigate with local people
how we can best contribute to
keeping alive and enhancing the
distinctive cultural inheritance of
local communities, and prepare a
policy document on culture and
traditions in the National Park.
Implementation

We will continue to add to our understanding of the National Park through research and survey. In particular we will undertake a ‘Historic Village Atlas’ project, in which local residents will be encouraged to participate, to provide inventories of archaeological and historic features in and around the National Park’s historic settlements. We will also complete a second phase of the very successful ‘Discovering our Hillfort Heritage’ project, and seek to develop a 5 year ‘Farming through the Ages’ project to follow on from this. All such projects have the potential to attract substantial amounts of external grant aid.

Our targets are to begin the ‘Historic Village Atlas’ project in 2003 and complete the coverage by April 2005; to launch the practical implementation of the ‘Farming through the Ages’ project in April 2005 with completion in 2010.

The information generated by such projects will be used proactively as an aid to future planning, conservation and development control work. It will provide a better understanding of local history and enhance the sense of place and ‘visitor experience’ and provide opportunities for local tourist businesses to consolidate and expand.

The cultural richness of the National Park is potentially a major component of its attractiveness to visitors and tourists and is an economic asset in itself. We will adapt our ‘Great Days Out’ programme to enable tourist businesses in an area to offer archaeological and cultural events as part of their visitor package. Targets for this area of work can be found under ‘A thriving community and economy’.

A consortium, Culture North East, has produced a Regional Cultural Strategy and the local authorities in Northumberland, led by the County Council, have produced a cultural strategy within the framework of the regional strategy. Northumberland National Park Authority is contributing to their implementation through the development of projects which focus on the living culture and traditions of the National Park.

Traditional music is an integral part of life in Northumberland.
Monitoring

We lack detail on the full extent and nature of our historic landscapes, on the condition of the resource and the priorities for management. Our target is to agree a research and management strategy with English Heritage by April 2005 and deliver the objectives by March 2008.

A condition survey of all the bastles and pele towers in the National Park was done in the late 1980s from which we derived a programme of action for their consolidation and interpretation. That programme of work is now at an end. Our target is to begin a wider review in April 2004 of buildings at risk and opportunities to implement an action plan to conserve and interpret such structures.

Work in connection with the World Heritage Site Management Plan, the Sites and Monuments Record, the ‘Historic Village Atlas’ and our research projects will provide us with substantially more information. We will use all this proactively in formulating our future plans for the National Park’s historic environment.

A rich cultural heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of the National Park covered by archaeological air photographic survey</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of significant new research initiatives to inform better understanding and management of cultural heritage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of heritage sites under archaeological management agreement (ha)</td>
<td>6600</td>
<td>6960</td>
<td>7320</td>
<td>7680</td>
<td>8220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of heritage sites/trails outside the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site promoted to the public</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of communities which have produced a detailed historic record of their local area</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new initiatives based on local culture and traditions supported by the National Park Authority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A true sense of tranquillity

Background

‘Tranquillity’, ‘peace and quiet’, ‘wildness’, ‘solitude’, ‘remoteness’, ‘openness’, ‘lack of people’, ‘naturalness’. These are some of the expressions which Rothbury Middle School students used to describe the spirit and tranquillity of the place (see page 4). Whatever the terms used, this quality of tranquillity tops virtually everyone’s list of the special qualities of the National Park.

For that reason we have singled it out as a key component of the National Park experience and the landscape, separate from the land uses and the conservation of the wildlife and cultural heritage.

It is an emotional, spiritual quality, difficult to assess and monitor by standard methods. Nevertheless it is, overwhelmingly, what people have said they value in this National Park whether as a reason to visit or as an asset they value as a resident. It is not in itself, however, an area of activity or a topic, like nature conservation or visitor services. So this is a cross cutting issue, to be reflected in other policies.

If tranquillity is the special quality above all others, which defines the character of this place, then threats to it have to be vigorously resisted. Let us speak plainly: some developments are unacceptable in this National Park, regardless of any narrow economic benefit, if they would erode that sense of tranquillity.

Current threats to the openness are the drive to increase renewable energy, resulting in pressure for the development of large scale wind power stations in the hills, and the pervasive development of telecommunications masts.

Older threats to the tranquillity of the open landscape include commercial afforestation, which has largely been replaced by opportunities for broadleaved woodland creation, and military training.
While military training has helped to preserve the low intensity farmed landscape there is, however, a down side for National Park purposes - noise, disturbance, unsightly structures, vehicle movements and the exclusion of the public for extensive periods. We have agreed with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) a five-year development plan for routine developments and we plan to use the partnership which has created the Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP) for the Otterburn Training Area (OTA) to minimise the impact and maximise the opportunities to benefit National Park purposes, arising from military training activity. This is a welcome development.

Consultation

In the open question about people’s views on what are the special qualities of this National Park, the quality we are summarising as tranquillity was, almost unanimously, the characteristic recognised and valued above all others. In addition, we asked whether we should resist threats to the beauty and tranquillity of open moorland. 92% agreed that we should.

We asked about support for the removal and restructuring of obtrusive conifer plantations. The proposition that in the past we made errors in the siting and design of conifer plantations is an issue which today enjoys a wide measure of consensus among foresters as well as amenity interests. Not surprisingly then, this was supported by 76% of respondents.

Consultation responses showed a broad level of support for the Authority’s established policy on military training. However the strongly held minority view, expressed both through the questionnaires and through letters from individuals, was that the needs of the military should be given precedence at all times. A roughly similar sized minority advocated tighter controls on military training or the removal of the training area. The majority of respondents advocated a more pragmatic approach.

Policy response

Our approach to tranquillity will be fourfold. Firstly, to ensure that in drafting our own policies for development or operations, and in considering and regulating the activities of others, tranquillity is protected or enhanced.

Secondly, we will resist proposed developments that have a significant impact on tranquillity. We must give it full weight in the drafting and implementation of our development control policies. Threats we have recognised include the building of wind power stations, telecommunications masts and the intrusion of roads, for whatever purpose, into a moorland landscape.
Thirdly, we will establish with partners ways to reduce the impact of traffic and other intrusive activities, for example by implementing traffic calming and cycle usage.

Finally, in the case of military training, the Authority accepts the presence of the Army as a fact of life for the foreseeable future and seeks a constructive partnership with the MoD in the management of the training area to ensure that the character of the landscape is not irreversibly damaged and opportunities for public access are maximised.

We will work constructively with the MoD which is implementing the ILMP for Otterburn Training Area. The National Park Authority is a key partner in this process, providing much of the technical expertise. The ILMP process has provided an unprecedented opportunity to examine and reduce or eliminate (at a detailed level), sources of conflict between military training, conservation and recreation and to maximise the many benefits of the military presence. We will continue to examine development proposals, and changes to training practices, including the introduction of new (to Otterburn) weapons systems or training types, with a view to avoiding any intensification which is likely significantly to erode the special qualities of the National Park. We will do so through the five-year development plan. Any proposals for alterations to the boundary of the training area, or for an extension of training over private land, will be considered on the basis of the net effect on the National Park’s special qualities and accessibility.

We will consider the impact on tranquillity of our own land use policies and those of others including those for farming, forestry, game management, nature conservation and access.

However, it is not solely a protectionist issue: we have the ability to enhance and develop tranquil areas. In advocating the selective and timely removal and restructuring of unsightly conifer plantations we know we have the support of the Forestry Commission and many others.

But there will be other cases where we will need to resist intrusive development. Hence we will work with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and other partners to develop a method for the assessment of tranquillity (or adopt a national standard if one is developed) and promote wider understanding and appreciation of this special quality.
Implementation

The principal action here is to consider the issue of protecting and enhancing tranquillity as a cross cutting theme to be addressed through our mainstream policies. We will make it a consideration in our development plans and our land use, conservation, tourism and access topic papers.

Much of our landscape work is statutory in nature and is heavily influenced by planning guidance. We will seek to take a lead on the issue of tranquillity since we believe that this has not received the attention it deserves. This will be reflected in our revised Local Plan.

Action Areas will provide the focus for groups of communities to appraise their own surroundings and to decide what they value and how it should be protected.

The statutory agencies and the landowners themselves will continue to be our key partners. We will work with them to ensure that the importance of tranquillity is recognised in their plans and programmes and that opportunities are taken either to enhance tranquillity or to ameliorate or compensate for any loss of tranquillity. Our target is to develop a method to assess tranquillity and any changes to it by 2005.

Our target will be to work with the MoD to complete delivery of the ILMP by August 2008.

Monitoring

While we have improving knowledge of some of the physical resources - biodiversity and cultural heritage, for example - tranquillity has been a weak area and in particular, mapping has not been well researched. We will examine in more detail the value to us of the work carried out by CPRE and Forest Enterprise, but there remains a lack of attention to and agreement on this subject. There is no doubt that the outcome of the planning inquiry into the changes at the OTA will be a serious erosion of the quality of tranquillity of a major part of the National Park. Limiting and mitigating that loss represents a serious challenge, both to the MoD and to the Authority, since legislation charges both of us with duties towards the National Park purposes.
Background

A key driver for the establishment of National Parks was the demand for access to our finest landscapes for spiritual refreshment and recreation. Tourism and recreation are now very important to the rural economy and significant to the regional economy.

Northumberland National Park has one of the best-preserved records of human presence in the UK and a wealth of historic buildings. The culture and traditions of the people of upland Northumberland are also distinctive. These are important in their own right, as part of our shared inheritance, but also act as a focus for tourism, recreation and education.

Successive visitor surveys have shown that the most visited area of the National Park is the Hadrian’s Wall corridor and that the majority of visitors are holidaymakers. The centre and north of the National Park receive far fewer visitors and most use is by day visitors from urban Northumberland and Tyneside. The most popular activities remain sightseeing, walking and visiting specific attractions. Most of our holidaymakers originate from elsewhere in England, especially Yorkshire, the East Midlands, East Anglia and the South East.

The North East is the least visited region of England. Northumbria Tourist Board statistics show that while, in the region as a whole, tourism is growing this is not true of Northumberland. The number of visits to key attractions in the National Park has declined in the last ten years. The indications are that overall visitor numbers have declined in recent years too.

The National Park Authority has a clear mandate to be involved in the management of tourism in that:

- People will only support and protect that which they understand, hence public support is vital to the conservation of the National Park in the long term;
- Visitors have the potential to impact (positively and negatively) on the biodiversity, cultural heritage and residents of the National Park;
- Tourism is a vital component of a diverse rural economy.
The 1956 National Park boundary operates as a constraint on our involvement in that much of the tourism infrastructure is concentrated in the ‘gateway towns’ (among them Wooler, Rothbury, Bellingham, Haltwhistle and Hexham) that lie beyond the National Park boundary.

Our priorities to date have been to:

- Increase opportunities to enjoy public access to open land;
- Improve the rights of way network;
- Develop car parks and toilet blocks where appropriate;
- Provide visitor centres;
- Develop a programme of events and activities for visitors;
- Provide an education service for schools and community groups;
- Form closer working relationships with other recreation/tourism providers;
- Work closely with landowners and farmers in managing recreational use;
- Monitor trends in recreational use of the National Park.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), with its provision for access to open country, is set to increase the upland areas available to walkers. This was not seen as a major issue in Northumberland, with its relatively low density of users and an historical tolerance of widespread access to upland areas, but it will require active management and a significant commitment of resources in the early stages.

The presence of the military training area and military personnel and equipment is double edged. It acts as a deterrent to visitors and tourism to parts of the National Park, but there is also the potential for partnership to enhance recreational opportunity, including organised events.
The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control measures in 2001 had a major impact on the already pressured tourism sector. This has affected business profitability and confidence. However, it has led to a wider recognition of the importance of tourism to the rural economy and the viability of local services. It has also made the connection between the landscape and the economy far more obvious to residents and visitors alike.

**Consultation**

There are few effective measures of understanding and enjoyment, although we do measure visitor satisfaction and the effectiveness of visitor services. We know from national surveys that awareness of National Parks is low, especially for Northumberland. Members of the National Park Authority and stakeholders have emphasised the importance of Information Technology (especially the World Wide Web) in providing information to, and communicating with, visitors, potential visitors and educational groups.

Access is fundamental to the purposes of National Parks. However we have been guilty of focusing on access rather than accessibility. Overall numbers of day visitors have fallen despite improvements in access.

Many respondents to the consultation highlighted the value they placed on our educational work, especially in relation to young people. Stakeholders have commented that traditional links with urban Northumberland and Tyneside are breaking down and that we should seek to reach out to these communities. It is apparent that there is a general perception of a widening gulf between ‘town’ and ‘country’. 92% supported our work in increasing mutual understanding. However this was tempered by some concerns regarding positive action to encourage participation by disadvantaged groups.

Many consultees view tourism as an economic lifeline for National Park communities. Stakeholders also commented that Northumberland National Park Authority should provide a model for sustainable development. Consultation brochure responses, and community meetings, showed that there is a very high level of support for community-led, sustainable tourism initiatives such as our ‘People and Place’ project. 86% supported sustainable tourism.

A study of the role of Northumberland National Park Authority in rural development (‘Sustaining Living Uplands’, page 54) challenged the Authority to make its position on tourism clear and, in particular, to modify its visitor provision (such as visitor centres) to better meet the needs of local communities and businesses.
Policy response

We will develop a coherent, co-ordinated approach to promoting understanding of National Park purposes and the special qualities. We will do this across the continuum of public relations, information, interpretation and education, and include measures of effectiveness and links to the work of partners. We will investigate how we can widen the appeal of the National Park and the scope for enhancing its enjoyment.

We will give added emphasis to accessibility (the ability to take-up access opportunities). This will still require us to maintain the infrastructure and facilities for access, but also to develop a proactive approach to social inclusion.

We have concluded that to achieve our purpose, we need to increase the number of visitors to the National Park. We will pursue that sensitively in conjunction with the local communities, but rural tourism is barely holding its own at present and tourism based on the special qualities of the area can be accommodated. The District Councils, Northumberland County Council, ONE North East and the Northumbria Tourist Board also have their own roles to play and we will work with these organisations so that visitors receive a consistent message. Through the development of sustainable tourism we aim to ensure that local communities and the local environment, receive the maximum benefit from the 'short term letting' of their locality. In this way tourism will be seen as a positive contribution to the future development of the National Park.

Our aims are that:

- Tourism development integrates social, environmental and economic factors;
- Tourism activity provides the maximum possible benefits for the local community and environment as a whole, and imposes the minimum possible damage and inconvenience;
- People who live or work in the National Park have an input into the development of tourism from the outset. It should be realised that some communities will be more willing, and/or able, to accept visitors than others - tourism should not be forced on anyone;
- Visitors are made more aware of their social, economic and environmental impacts and have the opportunity to contribute positively to the development of the National Park and to relate their improved understanding to their own communities and workplaces.
In line with the recommendations of the ‘Sustaining Living Uplands’ study we are committed to reviewing the provision of visitor infrastructure with a view to prioritising those facilities which link to public transport provision, community services and hospitality businesses and which complement the activities of partners.

We have begun to experiment with a limited walk card hire scheme through our ‘People and Place’ project and this has been well received by businesses and Parish Councils. Voluntary contributions for the use of interpreted routes around villages are ploughed back into environmental improvements for that village. We aim to build on this experience to provide a direct economic link between visitors, the environment and local communities through the introduction of visitor payback schemes and other such mechanisms.

As well as making financial connections we are keen to allow people (local residents and visitors) to devote some of their time and energy to improving the National Park’s environment for all. We already have a successful Voluntary Ranger Service and this is currently being developed to expand its role, give it more autonomy and widen participation.

We have also developed a Volunteer Accord with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the National Trust, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Newcastle City Council to provide a co-ordinated approach to environmental volunteering in Northumberland.
Implementation

Implementation will aim at enhanced accessibility, understanding and sustainable tourism. We already do a great deal for those who now come to the National Park, and that will continue, but we will look again at the way we use resources and facilities to establish relationships with new users.

Action must be integrated with local area plans. We will be open about our plans, focus on measurable outcomes, which are agreed with those affected, and with sufficient monitoring to assess their effectiveness.

Our target is to increase awareness of the National Park by 2007 to 85% locally, 30% regionally and 5% nationally through public relations, information, interpretation and education.

We will work closely with the Countryside Agency, Forest Enterprise, National Park communities, landowners and users to manage the introduction under new legislation of access to open country. We will seek to maximise accessibility to the military training area through information provision and integrated management and aim to complete, by the end of 2003, agreements and action plans with the MoD and Forest Enterprise to foster joint working on recreation management.

We will seek strategic partners such as the Youth Hostels Association and urban community groups in the creation of ‘bridges’ or ‘stepping stones’ to the countryside. We will identify and engage with excluded groups in rural and urban areas in the region. Our target is to establish, by 2007, a total of five urban/rural partnerships and to have completed 60 activities.

We will:

- Further develop the Voluntary Ranger Service as an opportunity for anyone from the region who wishes to make a long-term commitment to improving Northumberland National Park and its environs;
- Co-operate with partners to promote volunteering and training opportunities for young people;
- Facilitate suitable opportunities for short term volunteer activities for day visitors and holidaymakers;
- Use our work to improve understanding between town and country.
Transport provision underlies our approach to both sustainable tourism and community development. While we register its importance we also acknowledge that our own direct influence is limited. Cycling has great potential and we are proud of our pioneering work on the Hadrian’s Wall Bus - an award-winning scheme but one which is aimed largely at the visitor and which only serves a small area of the National Park for a part of the year. We have actively supported the County Council’s Rural Transport Partnerships. We will support the development of sustainable transport options for tourists, day visitors, staff and local people. Where we identify an approach or technique that is not being exploited, we will seek external funding to carry it forward.

We will work towards becoming a signatory to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, to sign up 60 local businesses to the principles of sustainable tourism by 2005.

**Monitoring**

Past visitor surveys have been widely spaced and have only surveyed existing participants using a limited range of techniques. In co-operation with other National Parks and Protected Landscapes we will develop a 5-yearly survey which will employ modern technological aids (such as automatic people counters and web-based survey forms) and which will include non-participants. This will provide essential management information for ourselves, our funders, our communities and our partners.

This information will be supported by the annual collation, analysis and distribution of existing tourism and visitor statistics and will include much internal data that is already collected to meet the requirements of Best Value.

Measuring the effectiveness of communication techniques is a notoriously difficult task. Communication is essentially an open-ended process. However, given our investment in very expensive interpretative and educational resources it behoves us to explore the use of currently available techniques. Again this is probably best accomplished in co-operation with other designated areas to share scarce resources and experience, and to provide direct comparisons. The tourism business sector would be best surveyed in cooperation with other key players such as Northumbria Tourist Board, the County and District Councils.
### Opportunities for all to understand, enjoy and contribute to the special qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of the local population aware of the National Park</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the national population aware of the National Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of active urban/rural exchange programmes established by the Authority and its partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of opportunities created or developed for currently un-engaged audiences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of days per year the public can and are aware of access to the MoD live firing area</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Rights of Way in the National Park that are easy to use by members of the public</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Rights of Way that are easy to use by members of the public on MoD land</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of promoted cycle routes in/through the National Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of passengers using the Hadrian’s Wall Bus Summer Service</td>
<td>16695</td>
<td>22220</td>
<td>24442</td>
<td>24442</td>
<td>24442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of visitors to the National Park</td>
<td>1.4m (1994)</td>
<td>1.4m</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8m (2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses within or neighbouring the National Park developing new sustainable tourism initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses signed up to the principles of sustainable tourism</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background

There is no doubt that local people take enormous pride in their history, culture and environment. We recognise that it is a critical part of the identity of our communities and demands respect. But it is also of tremendous value in terms of National Park purposes and a basis for us to work with the communities.

The National Park boundary was drawn on the basis of landscape, rather than social or economic factors. Communities adjoining the National Park provide critical functions such as employment, health care, education and housing. The National Park Authority has a limited remit in social and economic policy. We cannot legally spend significant amounts of our own budget on rural development as such, but we can tune our activities so that we contribute to the well-being of the communities at the same time as achieving National Park purposes.

We have been successful in attracting external funding for such work by using our own, limited, budgets to support bids for EU funding and other funds. Thus we have been able to provide support for rural transport, new tourist attractions, training for tourism businesses and contributions for the re-development of village halls and community-led projects.

The project with the people of Bellingham, which grew out of our plan to improve the local beauty spot of Hareshaw Linn, developed into a major project involving all generations and including community arts and a memorable play. Together these activities involved many hundreds of local people. It was a very moving experience to be involved in. It has changed this Authority.

Also critically influential has been the ‘People and Place’ project. It has allowed us to implement integrated village enhancement schemes and to gain experience in working with local communities.
Through ‘People and Place’ we have provided limited support to local bus services, installed secure cycle parking in a few locations, and enabled capital investment into cycle tourism facilities in local businesses.

The presence of the Otterburn Training Area is important to many local people. They see it as both a part of the rural economy and as a means to secure the future of their communities.

Our view is that the challenge facing rural areas is to allow a substantial change in the rural economy while retaining what makes each place distinctive and special. In our case, we need to be alive to conservation and even enhancement of the special qualities - the tranquillity and openness, the natural and cultural inheritance, the distinctive communities and their traditions - while encouraging the development of a more diverse economic base. Only if we are open to change does a secure future seem achievable. The special qualities of the National Park are, we contend, as much a local asset as a national one. The key is the economic value of the appeal of the countryside to visitors and potential residents and footloose businesses.

Consultation

The consultation process for this review of the National Park Management Plan marks the first occasion on which we have actively sought the views of every household and business within the National Park. A consultation brochure and questionnaire was posted to every address. The response rate of 17% was good for this technique.

The brochure responses, meetings with Parish Council groups and written representations from individual Parish Councils, revealed almost unanimous support for continued consultation of, and engagement with, the local community (95%). Hopefully the tone and content of this plan meets that aspiration.

Respondents told us that they wanted the National Park to remain a living countryside; that farming was important to the area; and that sustainable tourism should be the goal. There was also considerable support for Northumberland National Park Authority continuing to seek external funding for community projects (91%) and for it developing an advocacy role for rural Northumberland (83%).

Communities made it plain that they wanted to be closely involved with plans for their areas and that we should approach development in a way that integrates social, economic and environmental objectives. 96% of respondents agreed that we should pursue integrated solutions to the future development in the National Park. This resulted in the National Park Authority commissioning an external study of its role within rural development.
The University of Newcastle’s Centre for Rural Economy was engaged to ‘explore new approaches for supporting rural jobs and communities, based on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of the special environmental qualities and cultural distinctiveness of the Northumberland National Park and its surrounding area’. The overall aim of the study was to reflect on the role of the National Park in rural development based on a discussion of its remit, current initiatives and external relations. The resulting report ‘Sustaining Living Uplands’ has proved pivotal in the evolution of the Authority’s approach.

The broad conclusions of the study were that:

- There is now a complex, not to say bewildering, array of community and economic development initiatives that operate within the National Park area;
- Northumberland National Park Authority has a direct impact on the rural economy because it employs a significant number of staff and has a reasonably substantial, largely externally financed budget to spend on goods and services;
- Northumberland National Park Authority can have a highly influential impact on rural development through the exercise of its statutory planning powers;
- There has been a lack of clarity concerning responsibility for rural development and limited success at integration, reinforced by funding structures that generate a series of stand-alone grant schemes. The result is no coherent strategy for rural development, only a collection of projects.

**Policy response**

**Young people**

The consultation brochure highlighted the importance of involving and retaining young people in our communities. This obviously struck a chord with respondents and generated a deal of comment and suggestions. The strongest support was for Northumberland National Park Authority’s involvement in education. Jobs, a strong local economy and affordable housing were also popular themes. Other suggestions included the provision of volunteering opportunities, improving IT links, a young people’s forum and support for outdoor activity centres.
We will work through formal education, but we also need to work outside the formal structures. Research shows that many young people in Northumberland are isolated and disengaged from their environment. They do not think that Northumberland has much to offer them. We will explore new ways in which young people can be engaged in the future of their communities. The Tweed ‘Bridging the Borders’ Education Project provides one model for future work in this area.

Community liaison

We have not always been very effective at explaining our role or at listening to the needs and concerns of residents. We have begun to change our way of working. We will continue to improve liaison arrangements with the National Park communities to ensure the highest possible level of engagement and feedback. The consultation on the Action Areas will be very important. We will make use of the interpretive planning process, widely welcomed in Bellingham as part of the Hareshaw project - to provide a focus for community liaison. We will investigate our potential to encourage young people to get involved with their communities.

Not everything can be resolved at the local level

We need a note of realism here. Not all developments are locally generated, nor can all development be accommodated. We anticipate that major developments will occasionally arise and even on local matters Government policy on developments in the countryside are very strict. Those developments which are contrary to Development Plan policies will have to be determined against national policy.

We found general support for our pragmatic approach to military training, as highlighted in the section on tranquillity on page 40. We therefore acknowledge here the benefits (for the environment and the economy) of military training and will reflect that policy stance in the review of the Development Plan.

Implementation

Implementation will depend on the establishment of effective partnerships with existing and developing community partnerships. Community partnerships and relationships with the individual District Councils, Parish Council groupings and the Community Council for Northumberland are critical.
Government has, in June 2002, committed finance to the National Park Authority to support a Sustainable Development Fund. Only communities in and around the National Park can access this fund, which may be continued for at least two years. It is intended to fund local initiatives that connect the community and their economy with their environment. The Northumberland National Park Authority is also a full partner in the two LEADER+ programmes that cover the National Park. Together, these initiatives will become an important focus for innovative action, which grows out of the local community. Our target is to support 30 community groups with their initiatives by 2005.

The Authority must be seen to put its own house in order regarding rural development. Implementation will require a re-distribution of core resources as well as continuing to attract external resources.

The Government policy on planning is encouraging new models for bottom up or community based planning and we aim to use Parish Plans, or a local adaptation under the Countryside Agency’s Vital Villages Initiative, to inform our statutory planning function. Community planning, through Objective 2 appraisals, the Market Towns Initiative and other mechanisms will also feed into our four Action Areas. Our target is to ensure that the majority of consultees feel that they are actively engaged with the development of our statutory Local Plan.

The ‘People and Place’ project supported a ‘Millennium’ church window at Holystone.
Monitoring

Existing statistics to measure the health of our communities and their economic activity are plentiful. Demographic data and Index of Multiple Deprivation data are available from national Government on a ward basis. The County Council produces an excellent annual review of the economy of Northumberland. The LEADER networks, Rural Development Programme and others have commissioned sectoral reviews.

We will also benefit from greater engagement with local communities, to produce more qualitative feedback regarding developing issues and our performance. The role of the four Members appointed as Parish Council representatives can assist if strengthened.

A thriving community and economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community groups actively assisted in sustainable development initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of sustainable development initiatives actively assisted by the National Park with partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of local consultees who felt actively engaged in the production of the Local Plan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses running events in conjunction with the Authority linked to National Park special qualities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The nature of key partnerships

We shall take forward the action outlined in this framework document mainly in partnership and we will do so in three ways:

- First we will work closely with our key partners to draft topic papers. These will identify the issues, priorities, action required and the opportunities for implementation;

- Secondly we will work with key partners to see how their own work might contribute to National Park purposes. Public authorities and utilities have a particular duty under Section 62 of the Environment Act (1995);

- Thirdly we will promote local area initiatives identifying, through Objective 2 appraisals, Health Checks under the Market Towns Initiative (MTI), Parish Plans and other locally based appraisals, the action required. We will then seek to play our part through partnerships to deliver that action through integrated programmes of work, often seeking external funding and contributions of expertise and staff time from others as well as the Northumberland National Park Authority.

Our Strategic Partners at present (list may be revised in future):

- The District Councils;
- The Parish Councils;
- The Community Council of Northumberland;
- Local Strategic Partnerships;
- DEFRA;
- Northumberland County Council;
- The MoD;
- Forestry Commission;
- The Countryside Agency;
- One North East;
- Northumbria Tourist Board;
- English Nature;
- English Heritage;
- The Youth Hostels Association;
- The National Trust;
- The tourism and business associations;
- The National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association and their members;
- Northumberland Wildlife Trust.
This is a plan for the National Park not for the Authority. We are not resourced to achieve, on our own, all the activity identified in this plan. Some is beyond our core activities and is a shared responsibility with our partners. Legislation currently means that we are strictly limited in the extent to which we can use National Park Grant to pursue economic and social development for its own sake. We therefore seek partnerships which will bring additional economic development resources to the National Park and in so doing release the rural development potential of our own resources.

Looking outward

We also need to work to the relative strengths of our partners and ourselves. We will therefore seek to create arrangements which resource the necessary action through:

- Allocating responsibility for projects or activity to the most appropriate body;
- Pooling expertise, staff resources and money to achieve efficient joined up delivery;
- Attracting new resources when the action proposed is in line with the objectives of EU, Government or Agency priorities; and
- Pursuing a pilot project in Upper Coquetdale, with the Community Council of Northumberland and Alnwick District Council as co-sponsors, to facilitate the local communities to bring forward action to achieve integrated, sustainable rural development.

The Upper Coquetdale Project has been approved for funding by ONE North East and will start in April 2003. We will promote the lessons learned in other areas of the National Park and beyond.

Looking inward

In 2002/3 we received a good budget settlement from Government that has enabled the Authority to acquire, for the first time, core expertise in all existing areas of work rather than as project staff. We still require additional capabilities to fulfil the Government’s new legislation for open access. If open access is successfully implemented it will produce some 250 square miles of new public access in Northumberland - an area greater than the whole of the Isle of Man.
Having gained expert capabilities in all areas except open access, we still seek fair funding from Government to allow us to operate to a standard of service similar to other English National Parks. We also lack the capacity to respond flexibly to new Government priorities and so enable full and effective use to be made of our areas of expertise and our proven ability to lever-in external funds.

Areas where our capacity to respond is currently limited include:

- Developing the sporting and recreational potential of the National Park, such as packages for walking and cycling;
- Enabling all sections of the community to understand, use and enjoy the National Park through special programmes;
- Supporting sustainable land management by farmers, landowners, foresters and public bodies;
- Developing sustainable tourism and promoting integrated transport;
- A dedicated manager to assist in attracting external funding;
- State of the Park monitoring as a means to focus action by ourselves and other bodies;
- Sharing best practice with other protected areas.

**Looking to the long term**

National Park Authorities were created to make a lasting impact on the quality and experience of the most precious landscapes in Britain. We find it therefore anomalous that Government has not provided the Authorities with borrowing
powers to enable them to invest in long-term projects for the lasting benefit of the Nation. We note the commitment in the ‘Review of National Park Authorities in England’ to explore the scope to borrow or to access capital funds for planned developments.

Northumberland National Park is the only one that has neither a EU nor a UK-funded scheme designated to protect and enhance the agricultural environment such as Environmentally Sensitive Area funding. The Review commits the Government to achieve comparable opportunities for National Parks to make use of agri-environment funds.

Looking to the National Park Review

The recently published ‘Review of English National Park Authorities’ by DEFRA sets out the Government’s agenda and expectations. It also makes reassuring recommendations that will, if implemented in full, resolve our long-term resource constraints and address the shortfall in resources for work in the National Park.

We identify the following areas of unfinished business and the relevant recommendations in the Review that may tackle them:

- Rural development: a clear recognised role and support for the National Park Authority to play its proper part in sustainable development (recommendations 4 and 5 of the Review will address this issue);
- Acting for the area of National Parks as a first stop shop for other funding bodies, especially in brokering agri-environment schemes (recommendation 6);
- Giving Northumberland National Park a comparable agri-environment scheme to those operating in other National Parks (recommendation 7);
- Introducing funding arrangements which reflect the similarity of recurring baseline needs in all National Parks as well as the performance related element (recommendation 42);
- Giving the National Park Authorities longer term security of funding (recommendation 45);
- Ability to borrow capital funds for major projects of lasting value (recommendation 49);
- Clarifying the ability of National Park Authorities to work and commit resources across National Park boundaries (recommendation 50).

The report of the Review and the recommendations can be found on the DEFRA website at www.defra.gov.uk.
The Authority has agreed a new approach to performance management, which brings together the processes involved in preparing this plan, complying with Best Value legislation and the requirement to prepare an annual report to Government.

This document refers to the targets that we have set ourselves, under the different parts of the Vision for Northumberland National Park. The complete list of those targets is as follows:

### A living landscape: Sustainable land use in the National Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Section 62 (^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of large area integrated sustainable land management initiatives delivered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>MoD, EH, FE, EA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of farm holdings in some form of agri-environmental scheme</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>DEFRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses successful in gaining farm diversification grants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>DEFRA, RLA, LSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)See page 66
## A landscape rich in biodiversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Section 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of upland heath in good management (ha)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>EN, DEFRA, MoD, FE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of blanket bog and raised bog in good management (ha)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>EN, DEFRA, MoD, FE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of upland hay meadows in good management</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>EN, DEFRA, MoD, FE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of ancient semi-natural woodland in good management</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>EN, DEFRA, MoD, FE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of new native woodland created from 1995 (ha)</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>FC, FE, MoD, DEFRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% area of SSSIs and NNRs in favourable or unfavourable improving condition</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of working experiments for wilderness re-creation on a large area (i.e. a hillside or valley)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mod, FE, EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New areas of conifer plantation removed to allow restoration of semi-natural habitats (ha)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>PBL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Baseline data to be established in 2003-04.*

*See page 66*
A rich cultural heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Section 62 ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of the National Park covered by archaeological air photographic survey</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>EH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of significant new research initiatives to inform better understanding and management of cultural heritage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>EH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of heritage sites under archaeological management agreement (ha)</td>
<td>6600</td>
<td>6960</td>
<td>7320</td>
<td>7680</td>
<td>8220</td>
<td>EH,DEFRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of heritage sites/trails outside the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site promoted to the public</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>EH,MoD,PBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of communities which have produced a detailed historic record of their local area</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new initiatives based on local culture and traditions supported by the National Park Authority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NSP,ONE,NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹See page 66
Oppunities for all to understand, enjoy and contribute to the special qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Section 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of the local population aware of the National Park</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RLA, NTB, BTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the national population aware of the National Park</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RLA, NTB, BTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of active urban/rural exchange programmes established by the NNPA and its partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>HWTP, TWF, CCN, NSP, RLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of opportunities created or developed for currently un-engaged audiences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>NW, FE, MoD, RLA, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of days per year the public can and are aware of access to the MoD live firing area</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>MoD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Rights of Way in the National Park that are easy to use by members of the public</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>MoD, FE, NCC(HA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Rights of Way that are easy to use by members of the public on MoD land</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>MoD, NCC(HA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of promoted cycle routes in/through the National Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>FE, NCC(HA), CA, MoD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of passengers using the Hadrian’s Wall Bus Summer Service</td>
<td>16695</td>
<td>22220</td>
<td>24442</td>
<td>24442</td>
<td>24442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of visitors to the National Park</td>
<td>1.4m (1994)</td>
<td>1.4m</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8m (2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td>NTB, NSP, ETC, BTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses within or neighbouring the National Park developing new sustainable tourism initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>RLA, NBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses signed up to the principles of sustainable tourism</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>RLA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1See page 66*
A thriving community and economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Section 62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community groups actively assisted in sustainable development initiatives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>RLA, CCN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of sustainable development initiatives actively assisted by the National Park with partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>RLA, CCN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of local consultees who felt actively engaged in the production of the Local Plan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of businesses running events in conjunction with the Authority linked to National Park special qualities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Acronyms mean the following:
- BTA: British Tourism Authority
- CA: Countryside Agency
- CCN: Community Council of Northumberland
- DEFRA: Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- EA: Environment Agency
- EH: English Heritage
- EN: English Nature
- ETC: English Tourism Council
- FC: Forestry Commission
- FE: Forest Enterprise
- HWTP: Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership
- LSC: Learning and Skills Council
- MoD: Ministry of Defence
- NA: Northern Arts
- NBL: Business Link for Northumberland
- NSP: Northumberland Strategic Partnership
- NTB: Northumbria Tourist Board
- NCC (HA): Northumberland County Council (Highway Authority)
- NW: Northumbrian Water
- ONE: One North East
- PBL: Public Bodies as Landowners
- RLA: Regional Local Authorities
- TWF: Tweed Forum
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A secure future for the land of the far horizons