Appendix 1
Q3 Operational Plan Update

2018-2019

The Operational Plan sets the Authority’s work programme for the coming year. The actions contained within the Plan have been identified taking into account our available resources and the ability to deliver within the 12-month period. All actions are cascaded into team and individual staff programmes of work for 2018-19.

Three key priorities for the National Park have been established to guide our activities. These are:

Natural Environment:
- To support sustainable land management in the National Park, whilst leading the way in developing ideas and practical solutions to restore nature.

The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre:
- To establish The Sill as a national centre for landscape discovery and the means through which we deliver across all of the National Park.

A Park Authority for the Future:
- To continue to evolve an organisation and model of operation fit for the future.

This Q3 Performance Summary Report provides an update on progress against the Plan during the months of October, November and December of 2018-19. Prior information is available in the Q1 and Q2 reports respectively.

Q3 2018-19 Performance Highlights

A Welcoming Park / The Sill
- Improvements to a 2.5km section of the Pennine Way were completed during Q3 with funding provided from the Trail Partnership and Revitalising Redesdale.
- The Phase 1 bid for Walltown improvements was submitted during Q3, a decision is anticipated during Q4.
- The Digital Landscapes exhibition has been followed in Q3 by ‘Inspired by our Lands’, a partnership between the Sill and local artists. Sales of artwork from the temporary exhibition are supporting both regional talent and the diversification of Authority income streams.
- The National Park Visitor Survey 2018 was completed and feedback is helping to frame the Tourism Strategy heading into 2019/20. An infographic is being created to highlight the key messages from this research.
• Visitors to the Sill numbered 124,445 to the end of December 2018 and spend per head in The Sill retail space increased over £1.20 year to date for the first time during Q3.

A Park fit for the Future
• The Leadership Team is now back up to full strength following the appointment of the Director of Park Management, Head of Business Development and Head of Activities and Exhibitions.
• The Head of Business Development is driving the development of Northumberland National Park Foundation and has begun supporting staff with access to funding streams.
• The Authority's Digital Strategy has been developed during Q3 and is currently undergoing cost / benefit analysis. The strategy focusses on improvements to our software, productivity and visualisation tools.
• The Gamma web booking system went live in November. Refinements to the system are still needed but bookings are taking place. The software provider is developing the required updates on an ongoing basis.

A Distinctive Place (The Natural Environment)
• The Review of Designated Landscapes and Post-Brexit agri-environmental reform consultations continue to be Important work areas. The Review Panel visited the National Park in early Q3 for a fact finding visit, following this, National Parks England and Northumberland National Park submitted responses to an open consultation and call for evidence during December.
• The Peatland Project developed during the start of the year has now been refined and is working to a revised timetable. An indemnity agreement has been signed by NNPA and CVE during Q3. Reprofiling and Sphagnum works are to begin in summer 2019.
• Electronic data capture systems were trialled for the first time for meadow surveys. Currently data capture is ongoing for waxcaps, bees, lichens and reptiles. Butterfly data collection is being trialled. The success of this system means we now have a shortage of the tablets required for data capture.
• Revitalising Redesdale continues to contribute to a number of National Park objectives with dedicated staff compliment of 4 all in position. The projects continue to operate predominantly self-sufficiently and are performing well. The Authority-administered Pennine Way improvements have now been completed.
• 25 National Traditional Farm Building applications were submitted by the 29th of June deadline. The deadline for this has now been extended until the end of August 2019.

A Working Landscape (The Natural Environment)
• The natural conclusion of BUDIS during 2018-19 prompted the submission of a bid to Defra to trial whole farm approaches to ELMS. In Q3 it was announced that this bid has been successful and work with Defra and Natural England is ongoing to establish the details.
• The target to get 12 holdings to enter the new Countryside Stewardship Schemes this year has been surpassed; Farming Officers have facilitated 14 Higher-Tier schemes and 3 Mid-Tier schemes.
• Ongoing pipeline management of Environmental Stewardship applications is ongoing. Natural England has offered several farms the option of rolling their existing agreement for one year.
• The land management plan for Greenlee has been written, there are currently ES rollover implications for the site which need to be addressed by Natural England.
• Of the 5 moorland management plans to be drawn up this year, one has been signed off, three are near sign off and another is being incorporated into these agreements. A further two are under draft, including Grasslees with the MoD and Hepple Whitefield which has removed sporting tenants from the land resulting in significant management changes.

• Following the fires on the OTA in June, fire management has been incorporated into the moorland management plans. National guidance is expected early next year. The Conservation team are collaborating with the OTA case study and working on collaborative burning on priority sites.

• It has been established that future ELMS will encompass Natural Flood Management (NFM). A trip for farmers to see the NFM work being done by Yorkshire Rivers Trust is being organised to illustrate the processes involved.
Appendix 2
Q3 Annual Action Plan Update

2018-2019

The Annual Action Plan 2018-19 provides a monitoring framework for the objectives of the Management Plan (2016-2021). The 2018-19 Action Plan gives partners the opportunity to demonstrate the work that they are doing which contributes to the 5 aims of the Management Plan. The Action Plan is less prescriptive in approach than in previous years and has 8 operational ‘Themes’. These have been developed following Partner contributions to the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Action Plans.

The revised format for the Action Plan reflects Partnership discussions where it was agreed that actions should be place based, linked to other plans, and, wherever possible, allocated under broad themes, such as: Border Uplands Demonstrator Project, Business & Enterprise Support, Preserve and enhance biodiversity or Revitalising Redesdale. The inclusion of these new elements in the Annual Action Plan provides a greater deal of flexibility and guides partners in their reporting. This in turn should prevent partners from being unable to report on individual items.

The outcomes of these themes have been matched to the aims and outcomes in the Northumberland National Park Management Plan and agreed during partnership discussions. The summary of these discussions is a matrix of anticipated linkages in table A.

Table A. Simplified Matrix of Linkages between AAP Themes and NNPMP Aims.

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Q3 2018-19 Performance Highlights

Theme 1. Border Uplands Demonstrator Project

- Work has focussed on strengthening local working through the place based initiatives, consolidating the input into the Borderlands Growth Deal and building relationships with Defra to help inform the development of the new environmental land management support (ELMs) mechanisms. This has been agreed by Defra and in being taken forward by Natural England and Northumberland National Park through the Curlew Contracts trial.

Theme 2. Business & Enterprise Support

- Partners support businesses to make the most of opportunities relation to dark skies and star gazing, including involvement in Northumberland Tourism’s ‘The land that’s just as good with the lights off’ campaign. 2018 marks the 5th anniversary of the International Dark Sky Park, which has been celebrated in Redesdale in collaboration with Revitalising Redesdale.
- Discover England is promoting England’s National Parks and England’s National Trails through the National Parks experiences collection. The Travel Trade website launched on the 31st of January.

Theme 3. Preserve and enhance Northumberland National Park’s biodiversity

- A number of high profile projects contribute to preserving biodiversity in and around the National Park, including the Northumberland Hen Harrier Partnership, Osprey Watch and ‘Restoring Ratty’.
- Less high profile projects have also been taking place including the planting of Red Campion and Willow for the benefit of a wide range of pollinators and habitat improvements and surveys of the existing Freshwater Pearl Mussel population. These projects contribute to improving biodiversity throughout the food web.

Theme 4. Preserve and enhance Northumberland National Park’s, tranquillity, culture and heritage

- Self-guided wildlife themed trails have been developed around Kielder Castle, Bakethin, Tower Knowe and Hawkhope.
- Signage, interpretation and geocaches have been installed and the walks now feature on the View Ranger app.
- Work on trails improvements is happening with communities from Greenhaugh, Stonehaugh and Falstone.
- Revitalising Redesdale have been contributing to this work via community archaeology, restoration of key historic sites including the First World war practice trenches and access improvements.

Theme 5. Revitalising Redesdale Project

- Pennine Way improvements have been delivered through a joint project between the National Trails Partnership and Revitalising Redesdale with work carried out under supervision of Northumberland National Park.
- The Revitalising Redesdale project continues to deliver objectives to the benefit of the three key stakeholders, Natural England, Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Northumberland National Park.

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Theme 6. Rights of Way and Access

- Northumberland National Park in co-ordination with Northumberland County Council and the Joint Local Access Forum are inputting to the regional RoWIP advising on open access land and influencing partnership work to enhance access to the countryside.
- Discussions are ongoing with Natural England and Defra about future funding plans for the maintenance for National Trails and how this will impact Hadrian’s Wall Path and the Pennine Way.

Theme 7. The Sill Activity Programme

- We have hosted three temporary exhibitions and our fourth, Inspired by our Land, runs from November 2018 to February 2019. In 2019 we have 3 temporary exhibitions planned; Flow Country, 70 Years of National Parks and an exhibition in partnership with VARC.
- Northumberland County Council ‘Discover Our Land’ project aims to draw increasing numbers of visitors, businesses and investment to the region and has the National Park at its heart.
- The Activity Programme is performing in line with the target number of activity attendees for project to date, 50,100 vs a target of 52,500.
- Partners continue to contribute to the project through conference bookings (Natural England), training activities (Northumberland Tourism, Historic England) and meetings (Kielder Water & Forest).

Theme 8. Conserve and enhance the landscape of the National Park

- Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Estate Owners have been working with Northumberland National Park on the preparation of forest design plans and moorland management plans.
- Two woodland management plans and one long term forest design plan have received comments and six woodland opportunities are being pursued in the Park.
- Seven moorland management plans are being progressed. Inputting into these schemes helps to ensure stakeholders consider the landscape and National Character Areas of the National Park and ensures visitors have a sense of place.
- The project to underground overhead infrastructure has been progressing well to date but is currently stalled due to delays at the contract awarding stage. Network Distributors are obliged to continue this process as part of an OFGEM price control framework (RIIO – ED1) running to 2023. Projects include; 960m at Ingram (Completed), 1,400m at Twice Brewed, 1,500m at Hareshaw Head and 1,300m at Rochester.
Appendix 3
Q3 Strategic Risk Register Update

2018-2019

Q3 2018-19 Actions Towards Mitigating Strategic Risks

Risk 1. The National Park Authority is unable to adapt to Local / National Government changes
- The Authority is actively engaging with the Glover (Designated Landscapes) Review to pursue the NNPA and NPE case.
- Work is progressing well to provide robust responses, with NPE, to Government Consultations on a wide range of subjects impacted by changes to Stewardship Arrangements.
- The Chief Executive of NNPA is currently lead NPA Officer and is working with NPE to monitor the progress of the Environment Bill and Agriculture Bill.
- Defra climate reporting requirements ARP 3 are being developed and will be incorporated into the next iteration of the Management Plan.

Risk 2. Unable to become an Organisation Fit for the Future
- The Authority is making good progress on its ongoing transformation. The delays in recruitment to Leadership Team have been addressed and a full complement has been in place since the end of Q3.
- IT systems are currently being reviewed in the context of the NNPA Digital Strategy, this seeks to establish how future work flows will affect current infrastructure.
- A governance review began in Q3 to establish the most appropriate control framework for the Authority.

Risk 3. Unable to Manage our Financial Position
- Efficiency savings for FY 2018-19 are fully embedded at the Q3 position. 30% of the savings are in place for 2019-20.
- The Sill Business Plan is behind target but is being closely monitored. A meeting was held with the HLF to discuss alterations to the planned income targets. This was agreed in early Q4, thus significantly de-risking the Sill Activity Programme.
- Sill activities planning is being updated to reflect ongoing experience of best income for staff time. This continues to show improvement but new events and venues take time to develop.
- Overall budget outturn remains manageable for the year, however key challenges in managing the Sill Business Plan, efficiencies and income generation will remain in the coming years.

Risk 4. The National Park Authority lacks the capacity to complete major parts of the Business Plan

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• Capacity remains a risk and this is not likely to be overcome in the short term. Necessary actions are in place and good progress is being made.
• NNPA is moving towards having a lead volunteer in many areas, who can liaise directly with the Volunteer Development Officer and then communicate to other volunteers in that area directly. This works well with groups such as the Heritage at Risk Volunteers, and the Walks Leaders.
• The contribution of our volunteers continues to be acknowledged. Chief Executive attended the Volunteer Gathering in June and thanked volunteers directly and addressed any concerns, there was a good turnout of volunteers to the annual day out in the park alongside staff and members
• Partner capacity remains an issue.
• One off staff or project underspend to improve capacity elsewhere has worked well in the past but will become more difficult due to efficiency savings.

Risk 5. **National Parks become less relevant to society and as a result less valued by the public and national policy decision makers.**
• The 25 Year Environmental Plan specifically mentions improvements to National Parks and their benefit to society.
• The Designated Landscapes (Glover) Review will report in 2019 with the aim of enhancing National Parks for the future.
• Two Secretaries of State have visited the National Park this year.
• The Authority is closely involved in the ongoing development of the North of Tyne and Borderlands growth deals.
• NPW are increasing the relevance, and influence, of National Parks through a number of Joint Accords with other Government Departments.
• The NCC ‘Discover our Land’ project is aiming to place the national park at the heart of this initiative. The project aims to connect businesses visitors and inward investors.

Risk 6. **The effects of climate change damage the environment and reduce the resilience of National Park businesses and communities.**
• Following the significant moorland fire on the OTA during Q2. Work is continuing to enhance habitat quality (re-wetting bogs) and learn lessons to address control measures on the OTA.
• Longer term efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change are not currently prioritised and are under-resourced within the Authority.
• Changes to the ARP 3 reporting framework announced in Q3 will incorporate climate resilience into the next iteration of the Management Plan.