

ITEM 9

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

14 NOVEMBER 2006

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Report of the Head of Education and Interpretation

Purpose of Report:

To present the Authority's proposed Communication Framework 2007-2012

Legal Implications (including Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Issues):

Environment Act 1995

Financial and Risk Implications:

None arising from this report – the report sets out the strategy for the effective use of existing resources.

National Park Authority Business Plan:

Business Plan project B/17.04 Review and revise Communications Strategy in light of the emerging National Park Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members ADOPT the Exmoor National Park Authority Communications Framework 2007-2012

1. In parallel with the development of the emerging National Park Management Plan, a Communications Framework has been developed to ensure that key messages are consistently delivered by the Authority.
2. The Framework is attached as Appendix 1
3. The Framework has been produced primarily for the Members and Staff of the Authority, although it is anticipated that it will be a useful tool to encourage partner organisations and individuals to promote similar messages in support of National Park purposes.
4. The Framework is intended to guide and inform communications effort. Detailed 'communication action plans' should be developed for individual projects within the annual Business Plan.

Tim Braund

Head of Education and Interpretation

14 November 2006

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:-



COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK 2007 – 2012

The purpose of the Communications Framework is to help to achieve the **vision** set out in the National Park Management Plan 2007 - 2012:

VISION

A sustainable future for Exmoor where:

- ***The most distinctive and highest quality landscapes are conserved and in good condition and there is an increased awareness of their importance***
- ***There is an increased extent of semi-natural habitats in good condition; and thriving populations of those species native to Exmoor that are most valued nationally and locally.***
- ***There is an increased awareness of the value of the historic environment, particularly by local people, and the most important historical sites, settlements, buildings and features are conserved and their historical character retained***
- ***Air, water and soil are of high quality; people and communities living and working on Exmoor have more sustainable ways of living, and we are closer to achieving a carbon neutral National Park***
- ***Profitable and competitive farming, forestry and land management enterprises in Exmoor National Park play a lead role in conserving and enhancing Exmoor's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, and make a major contribution to achieving a 'carbon-neutral' National Park to help tackle climate change***
- ***There is increased public awareness and enjoyment of the National Park, particularly by young people and non-traditional users, leading to greater understanding of Exmoor and its way of life and a wider appreciation of the contribution that National Parks and the wider countryside make to quality of life***
- ***There is a warm welcome and high quality experience for everyone who visits Exmoor seeking inspiration, tranquillity and active outdoor recreation, provided by a thriving tourism and recreation economy in harmony with local communities and the environment***
- ***There are balanced communities with a continuity of connection between people and the land; thriving towns and villages; local access to affordable services and facilities, and a strong economy providing diversity of opportunities that benefit from and contribute to the care and appreciation of Exmoor National Park.***

Communication Framework Aims

To communicate clearly to everyone:

1. The nature and importance of the special qualities of the National Park and the opportunities for their enjoyment and understanding by the public.
2. The importance of the National Park designation in order to promote a clear understanding of National Park purposes and encourage everyone to participate in the sustainable management of Exmoor.
3. How everyone can adopt behaviours and attitudes and make choices that support a sustainable future for Exmoor.
4. The role and work of the National Park Authority in achieving National Park purposes.

Communications Framework Objectives:

1. To raise the profile of Exmoor National Park.
2. To raise the profile of Exmoor National Park Authority and its work.
3. To distil and disseminate the key messages of the National Park Authority and partner organisations from priorities identified in the National Park Management Plan.
4. To raise the profile of Exmoor National Park landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage and how these special qualities and local distinctiveness can be understood and best enjoyed by the public to ensure its sustainable future environmentally, economically and socially.
5. To ensure an understanding of how the National Park designation benefits people and adds value to their lives.
6. To ensure an understanding of the pressures for change in the National Park and how change can be sustainably managed.
7. To understand current perceptions of the National Park designation and the Exmoor landscape among different audiences and to ensure that these perceptions are positive.
8. To ensure clear, consistent and accurate communication both internally, among Partners and Stakeholders and to target audiences to optimise the benefits accruing to Exmoor National Park, the communities who live and work here and people who visit.

Key Messages to be communicated

Messages will be linked to Exmoor National Park's **special qualities**:

Exmoor National Park's special qualities

1. Large areas of open moorland, providing remoteness, wildness and tranquillity rare in southern Britain.
2. A distinct and diverse landscape of softly rounded hills and ridges, with heather and grass moors, spectacular coastal views, deeply incised wooded valleys, high sea cliffs, fast flowing streams, traditional upland farms and characteristic beech hedgebanks
3. A landscape relatively free from intrusive development such as major roads, power lines, military activities, quarrying, mining, large scale developments, light pollution and clutter.
4. A mosaic of habitats supporting a great diversity of wildlife, including herds of wild red deer, rich lichen communities, rare fritillary butterflies, bats, and other species uncommon in southern Britain.
5. A complex and rich historic landscape which reflects how people have lived in, exploited and enjoyed Exmoor over the last 8000 years, including burial mounds on ridges, discrete stone settings, ancient farmsteads and settlements, picturesque villages and historic estates.
6. A deeply rural community closely linked to the land, with strong local traditions and ways of life.
7. A farmed landscape with locally distinctive breeds such as Red Devon cattle; Devon Closewool, and Exmoor horn sheep, and herds of free living Exmoor ponies.
8. An exceptional rights of way network and extensive areas of open country, providing superb opportunities for walking, riding and cycling
9. A landscape which continues to provide inspiration and enjoyment to both visitors and local people.

The broad messages are:

A: *Exmoor is a National Park and part of an international family of protected landscapes*

National Parks are designated for the following purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

B: *Exmoor is a special place*

The landscape of Exmoor National Park has been shaped by the interaction between people and nature over thousands of years and is incredibly diverse in terms of wildlife, geology, culture and history. The local distinctiveness, landscape character and historic features of the National Park are irreplaceable, fragile and sensitive to change.

C: Exmoor is a changing landscape

The National Park landscape is under pressure from a number of areas as the economy and social structure of Exmoor evolves. Key forces for change include: agriculture; tourism; rural development; social changes; land use planning and the control of development; governance and rural policy delivery.

Other factors such as climate change and globalisation have potential impacts over which the National Park Authority has little influence or control.

The National Park Authority and Partners will endeavour to identify and manage change in consultation, cooperation and collaboration with local communities, businesses and the visiting public.

D: Exmoor is a working landscape with thriving local communities and a diverse, competitive and sustainable economy

The National Park landscape is a key economic, social and cultural asset for the Southwest of England which embodies a special sub regional character and underpins a high quality of life for everyone.

Tourism, agriculture and field sports provide significant employment. The vitality of these sectors is required to sustain support services and facilities for the wider community in a remote rural location.

E: Exmoor is a biodiverse landscape where the diversity of wildlife is conserved and enhanced

The National Park contains significant populations of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important species and habitats. A landscape scale approach to management of the National Park is required, delivered by local landowners and land managers, and how it is managed in relation to the wider countryside is essential to the conservation and enhancement of the UK's biodiversity.

F: Exmoor is a cultural landscape where the built and historic heritage is readily accessible

The Exmoor landscape has archaeological monuments and settlement patterns of European significance. The visual interest of the National Park owes much to the varied settlement patterns and farm buildings. The traces of over 8000 years of continuous human activity are fragile and irreplaceable.

G: Exmoor is a valued landscape with increasing understanding of its qualities and the active involvement of people in its conservation

There will be a consistent, clear and co-ordinated approach to the management of the National Park, with partners working together and with full involvement of the stakeholders, local communities and the visiting public.

The role of the National Park Authority is to encourage and coordinate collaborative working and innovation to secure a sustainable future for Exmoor.

H: Exmoor is a landscape offering superb opportunities for quiet outdoor recreation for all.

The Exmoor National Park is, along with other National parks in England, Wales and Scotland, identified as one of 'Britain's Breathing Spaces' – a national tourism initiative.

The National Park has a well maintained network of public rights of way and access to significant tracts of open countryside.

The National Park is renowned for walking, cycling and horse riding; and also for reflection, inspiration, exertion, peace, challenge and recreation.

J: Exmoor National Park can demonstrate examples of best practice in delivering ‘sustainable development’

Economic, social and environmental change can be accommodated if the principles of sustainable development are strictly applied. Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The work of the National Park Authority is guided by the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Framework and is underpinned by sustainable development principles.

The National Park Authority administers the DEFRA Sustainable Development Fund. The Fund helps support projects that show new and innovative ways of living and working across Exmoor and preferably involve young people.

The communities, organisations and individuals of Exmoor have particular experience and expertise in renewable energy technologies.

J: Exmoor National Park Authority has a key role in delivering a sustainable future for Exmoor.

The Authority’s mission is:

“Looking after Exmoor’s environment for all to enjoy, in partnership with a thriving community”

In pursuing National Park purposes, the National Park Authority and others have a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well being of the communities that live there.

The National Park Authority works in partnership with local people, local authorities, government agencies and departments, other public bodies and non governmental organisations to achieve National Park purposes and the socio-economic wellbeing of Exmoor communities and the Communication Framework incorporates key messages for respective partners and target audiences.

Section 62(2) of the Environment Act (1995) places a duty on all relevant authorities to have regard for National Park purposes and their activities should support the achievement of those purposes.

The National Park Authority has a range of other duties under a range of statutes and operates as a free standing authority within the local government structure.

The activity of the Authority is guided by the National Park Management Plan which sets out long term visions, strategy, priorities and policies.

The annual work of the Authority is set out in the Business Plan (Best value Performance Plan) which identifies annual targets and work programmes for the organisation.

Communication Framework Actions

Any project requiring a communication ‘product’ will be guided by interpretation objectives:

Learning objectives: what do we want people to know?

Behavioural objectives: what do we want people to do?

Emotional objectives: what do we want people to feel?

Communication actions will form part of the Project Management Framework planning process and as an agreed project identified in the annual Business Plan.

Tim Braund

Head of Education and Interpretation

November 2006.