

OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL REPORT 2005-06

The Chair of the OSCENVWB

LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Lead Member: Councillor Tony Johnston

Summary of issues in 2005-06.

The overwhelming issue for the LDNPA in the period 2005 – 06 was the need to achieve financial stability in the short and medium terms and to embed financial structures that will, hopefully, lead to financial stability in the long term. The most positive aspect of this process was the arrival of a new Finance Director who was able to lead a difficult, and at times painful, process.

The NPAPA – National Park Authorities Performance Assessment & the equivalent of our CPA – revealed, in addition to the financial problems referred to in the opening paragraph, significant deficiencies in corporate management and in professional leadership. These issues are being addressed.

Some success stories:-

1. The very successful launch of CROW - Countryside Rights of Way.
2. The introduction of a new vision for the Lake District National Park for the period 2006 – 2030. This vision is encapsulated in the following bullet points (to be read whilst keeping in mind that roughly 70% of Copeland is within the National Park):-

1. The LDNP will be an inspirational example of sustainable development in action.
2. The LDNP will be a place where a prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and its cultural heritage.
3. Local people, visitors and the many organizations working in the NP or having a contribution to make to it, must be united in achieving this.

While I deplore the use of the “Vee” word these are aspirations that should resonate with Copeland BC.

These points* are developed further to give the following:-

A prosperous economy – Businesses will locate in the NP (Copeland) because they value the quality of opportunity, environment and lifestyle that it offers.

World class visitor experiences - High quality and unique experiences for visitors within a stunning and globally significant landscape.

Vibrant communities – People successfully living, working and relaxing within upland valley and lakeside places where a distinctive local character is maintained and celebrated.

A spectacular landscape – A landscape which provides an irreplaceable source of inspiration, whose benefits to people and wildlife are valued and improved.

This is a vision that fits Copeland's aspirations and is one that we need to work with and influence so that Copeland gets its entitlement.

*For a full version of these points see the statement agreed by The Lake District National Park Partnership on the 4th of May 2006.

This new vision for the LDNP has not yet been endorsed by Copeland, a member of the partnership, and this omission needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

Action Points arising for Copeland Borough Council.

Despite the fact that we have not, as yet, endorsed the new vision Copeland is an active partner with the Lake District National Park Authority and has contributed, and continues to contribute to the overall picture contained in the "**Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001 – 2016**". We also influence the delivery of said plan via related strategies and initiatives concerning issues such as economic development, affordable housing and the like. We, Copeland, need to continue to work in partnership with the LDNPA and, and this is only my opinion, to develop, for starters, a dialogue on the twin issues of "Renewable" and "Clean" energy and also on "Sustainability".

Regarding "Renewables" and "Clean" energy we can seek accommodation on the issue of new build at Calder Hall while seeking, in partnership, to prevent the establishment of wind farms on the periphery of the National Park and adjacent to local areas of outstanding natural beauty. Following the recent Energy Review there is a potential synergy here – keep windmills out of landscape sensitive areas with tourist potential and, as a trade off, push, jointly, for new reactors at Calder.

On the issue of "Sustainability" there are a couple of points that I'd like to make. I'd like to see a greater level of support, by Copeland, for such local initiatives as the Eskdale Biomass Project and the Wilding of Ennerdale Project. This support doesn't have to be financial, but rather in the field of increasing public awareness and facilitating partnerships. While there would be some cost it could be kept at a very low level and there would be positive feedback in the form of public

recognition of our environmental credentials. We could also stress our commitment to sustainability by giving yet more emphasis to our ongoing recycling programme. We could argue, in partnership with the LDNPA, for area heating, as with the EBP, using locally generated waste and biomass and try to influence developers to consider a move away from the traditional, vernacular, use of building materials and to look at such materials as rendered straw and timber roofing – all of which could be produced locally by existing enterprises, such as the Forestry Commission, or by farmers wishing to diversify.

Finally, I'd like to stress that while we need to continue with and to strengthen our partnership working with the LDNPA we do need to be more proactive and work to identify potential synergies and to set agendas. Looking, as I've suggested, at energy issues and sustainability might be a good starting point.

Tony Johnston. July 2006.

Copied to Jayne Murray, Liam Murphy & Elaine Woodburn.