

**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE LAKE DISTRICT  
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION PACK  
FOR COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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# LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## 1. BACKGROUND

The Lake District National Park was created by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and came into being on 15 August 1951.

Covering 885 square miles, the Lake District National Park is the largest of England's National Parks. It includes one third of the County of Cumbria from Caldbeck in the north to Lindale in the south, from Ravenglass in the west to Shap in the east.

The grandeur of its scenery was a major factor in bringing about statutory protection and recognition of this north western corner of England. The present National Park Authority was set up under the Environment Act 1995 and took over the running of the National Park in April 1997.

## 2. THE VISION

During the winter of 2004-2006 we initiated a process that brought people and organisations together to agree a Vision for the Lake District National Park in 2030. The process also planned how to achieve this Vision by working together in partnership towards common aims, reducing duplication and conflict.

The Vision identified and tackles challenges in an honest way. It shows that the Lake District National Park's sustainable future relies on bringing together all influences, the economy, the environment, our communities and visitors. And it recognises that no single influence can be managed alone. The organisations and people who care for the Lake District National Park need to work collectively to address these influences.

The Business Plan (enclosed) sets out our plans under the four themes of the Vision over the next three years:

**A prosperous economy** - Businesses will locate in the National Park because they value the quality of opportunity, environment and lifestyle it offers - many will draw on a strong connection to the landscape. Entrepreneurial spirit will be nurtured across all sectors and traditional industries maintained to ensure a diverse economy.

**World class visitor experiences** - High quality and unique experiences for visitors within a stunning and globally significant landscape. Experiences that compete with the best in the international market.

**Vibrant communities** - People successfully living, working and relaxing within upland, valley and lakeside places where 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. A landscape whose natural and cultural resources are assets to be managed and used wisely for future generations

### **3. DEFRA ROLE PROFILE FOR AUTHORITY**

- 3.1 The National Park Authority was established to conserve the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District and to promote wide public understanding and enjoyment of the area. The LDNPA is also charged with working with others seeking to foster the economic and social well being of communities in the Park.
- 3.2 The LDNPA has worked with its partners and other stakeholders to translate its statutory purposes into an overall Vision for the Lake District National Park in 2030. The Vision has the following outcomes:
- A prosperous economy
  - World class visitor experiences
  - Vibrant communities
  - A spectacular landscape.
- 3.3 If the LDNPA is to deliver on the Vision it is important that the Authority is in a position to make an effective contribution to the challenges ahead. The Authority has therefore added a further outcome of “Achieving Excellence” in preparing its own Business Plan 2006-2009. The Plan sets out the priorities for LDNPA as it makes its contribution to the achievement of the Vision.
- 3.4 Purpose of the Role of Members**
- 3.5 The overall purpose of the Chair and Members is to ensure that the Authority fulfils National Park purposes and in a way that best suits the special characteristics of the Lake District.
- 3.6 Members have a duty: -
- To achieve the efficient, effective and accountable governance of the Authority in the best interests of the Lake District
  - To provide leadership, scrutiny and direction for the organisation as a whole in pursuing the aim of sustainable development.
- 3.7 In fulfilling these duties Members are required to balance and integrate environmental, social and economic considerations.
- 3.8 The primary purpose of the role of the Member is to work with the Chair, National Park Officer and other Members to discharge the functions of the Authority and to steer and champion the management of the Authority so that it delivers benefits to the nation and its local communities.
- 3.9 A Members role is not to micro-manage the Authority, staff are employed to run the business of LDNPA, but performance information needs to be available so that Members can be certain that the organisation is delivering against its Business Plan and other approved plans and strategies.

### 3.10. Key Functions

- Act with independent judgement
- Use their skills, experience and knowledge for the benefit of LDNPA
- Participate collectively in the development of policy direction, strategic thinking and innovation within the Authority, through the strategic planning framework and participation in the activities of the Authority's working groups
- Independently scrutinise the workings and policies of the Authority
- Be committed to working in the best interests of the Lake District
- Influence the Authority to help it come to informed and balanced decisions
- Seek clarification of policy and action proposals as appropriate
- Challenge proposals that exceed or go against the statutory obligations of LDNPA
- Accept collective responsibility for the decisions of LDNPA
- Approve and monitor programmes to implement LDNPA's policy framework
- Contribute opinions and advice from a local, regional or national perspective
- Work with Members, staff, partners and stakeholders to apply the principles of sustainable development to decision-making
- Be an ambassador for the Lake District and for LDNPA
- Help to promote the profile and effectiveness of the family of national parks both through the work of LDNPA and also through cooperative action with those organisations concerned with the national parks.

### 3.11 In order to achieve this, Members are expected to: -

- Attend and contribute to regular meetings of the Authority, its committees and working groups and raise issues of concern through the established procedures and mechanisms adopted by the Authority
- Read and understand, and seek clarification from senior managers of briefing material provided for meetings in order to be properly prepared for any debate on issues across the range of the Authority's responsibilities
- Champion and represent LDNPA as an effective mechanism for promoting conservation of the Park's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, increasing public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities and maintaining the social and economic well being of local communities
- Attend appropriate training courses, briefing sessions and events
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Authority
- Embrace the Government's programme for Implementing Electronic Government

### 3.12 There will be opportunities to:

- Serve on committees and working groups dealing with particular issues affecting LDNPA
- Champion or lead a specific area of work
- Talk about the work of LDNPA to local community groups
- Learn about the LDNPA and other protected landscape matters on field visits and fact finding tours
- Meet other people responsible for national park matters.

### 3.13 Performance Measurement

The Government, with the English National Park Authorities Association, is working up ideas for measuring the effectiveness of Authorities and their individual Members. In the meantime, the following proxy measures provide a starting point for Members and others to gauge the contribution which they are making to the life of the Authority: -

Attendance at main Authority meetings - the measure being the % of full Authority meetings and approved duties actually attended which that Member could have attended.

**Target:** at least 75% and 75% of each specific meeting

**Purpose:** to monitor participation and commitment.

Representation of the Authority at approved external meetings and events. -

**Purpose:** to ensure an even distribution of workload, and to monitor this workload in line with 'reasonable expectations' of time commitment.

## 4. ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR AUTHORITY MEMBERS

### Context

- 4.1 The Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) was established to conserve the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District and to promote wide public understanding and enjoyment of the area. The LDNPA is also charged with working with others seeking to foster the economic and social well being of communities in the Park.
- 4.2 The LDNPA has worked with its partners and other stakeholders to translate its statutory purposes into an overall Vision for the Lake District National Park in 2030. The vision has the following outcomes:
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### 4.4 Key roles

- 4.5 Collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate functions commensurate with the role of a non-executive:-
- Ensuring compliance with the priorities and values of the Authority and with its Code of Corporate Governance and Members' Handbook.
  - Setting or approving policies and budgets to achieve those priorities, and monitoring performance against them.
  - Ensuring the financial strength and good performance of the Authority.
  - Ensuring that the Authority complies with all relevant laws, regulations and requirements of its regulators including DEFRA and the Audit Commission.
  - Dealing with the appointment (and if necessary the dismissal) of the National Park Officer.
  - Managing the performance of the National Park Officer with particular reference to organisational leadership, external relations and the relationship with Members.
  - Setting and maintaining a framework of delegation and internal control.
  - Agreeing or ratifying all policies and decisions on matters that might create significant risk to the Authority, financial or otherwise.
  - Maintaining an appropriate level of understanding on those national, regional and local issues that impact upon the work of the Authority.

### 4.6 Rights and duties

- Members must comply with the Code of Conduct (Section 2 of the Members' Handbook)
- Members will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Authority as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.

- Members will not make public information that is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Authority or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Member or officer entitled to know it. For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in sections 100A and 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.
- Members are bound by an overriding duty to act reasonably at all times and in the interests of the Authority.
- Members must act personally and not as the representative of any group or organisation regardless of how that person was nominated.
- Members must ensure that they remain independent.

#### **4.7 Generally to:**

- Take all decisions concerning resources and priorities in accordance with the corporate planning framework and budget set by the Authority.
- Recognise the broad agenda for the work of the Authority including national government policy and the wider national parks movement.
- Focus on the strategic direction of the Authority and avoid becoming involved in day to day operational decisions and matters that are properly delegated to staff.
- Contribute to the achievement of the Authority's priorities, targets and activities as set out in the Business plan.
- Promote and develop partnership working.
- Attend meetings of committees and the Authority, as well as outside bodies, to which they are appointed, in compliance with Standing Orders.
- Promote, and participate in, Member development and training.



# LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## Committee Structure

