

## **BUSINESS AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**(BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN ) 2004/05**

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Inner rear cover - Map of Exmoor

**[Anyone with impaired vision unable to read the text of this plan should contact  
The National Park Officer at Exmoor House, Dulverton, TA22 9HL or  
Tel: 01398 323665]**

This Plan is also available on our Website: [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)  
The Authority is responsible for the information and assessments set out within the Best Value Performance Plan and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. The Authority is also responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in the Plan have been derived. The Authority is satisfied that those included in the Plan are in all significant respects accurate and complete and that the Plan is realistic and achievable.





## **BUSINESS PLAN 2004/05**

### **(BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN and IMPROVEMENT PLAN)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This Plan sets out the overall achievements and targets for the Exmoor National Park Authority. The Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) is also the National Park Authority's Business Plan for 2004/05 and is integrated with the Authority's Improvement Plan for the year, as the two are interdependent in many ways. It sets out the work programme and budget for our activities, as well as the target levels of performance and any action that has already been identified to improve our level of performance. It is in 3 parts:-
  - Part 1 This is an introduction to the work of the Exmoor National Park Authority and the approach taken to Best Value and to improving the services we provide and the efficiency and effectiveness of those services.
  - Part 2 This provides some specific detail of all the services we provide in a format common to all National Park Authorities. It also sets out specific improvements that have been achieved as well as those that are being addressed in the current year and future aspirations up to 2008
  - Part 3 This comprises a number of appendices supporting the Plan.
2. The Audience for this plan is the Members and Officers of the Exmoor National Park Authority. However, a summary of this Plan highlighting our work and performance is circulated to all households within the National Park during June, inviting comment on the work we have done and the actions we propose. A full copy of the Plan is published on the Web-site ([www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)) and copies are available for inspection in Visitor Centres and local libraries. The Government has also indicated that it finds these plans a useful tool with which to monitor local performance.
3. The Best Value Performance Plan is the main way in which the Authority reports on and justifies both the efficiency and effectiveness of its work and its proposals to improve them. The Plan that follows is the fifth that the Authority has prepared and provides a link between the National Park Management Plan (NPMP), a 5 year vision for Exmoor, published in the Autumn of 2001, with the specific service and financial plans which are required for resource allocation and other purposes so that progress towards the vision can be made.



## PART ONE

### EXMOOR'S APPROACH

#### 1. EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

- 1.1 Exmoor National Park was designated in 1954, one of ten national parks in England and Wales established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- 1.2 Exmoor is located across West Somerset and North Devon. It consists of 693 sq.km of varied wild countryside which includes moorland, woodland, farmland, river valleys and 60 km of magnificent coastline. About 10,900 people live in the National Park which receives an estimated 1.4 million visitors each year. The National Park has been designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area by the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

#### 2. EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

##### NATIONAL PARK PURPOSES

- 2.1 The Exmoor National Park Authority is an independent body that is part of the Local Government structure. Its principal duty is to pursue the National Park purposes as defined by the Environment Act 1995:-

**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.**

The Environment Act adds that in pursuing national park purposes the National Park Authority shall:

**seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park.**

- 2.2 In most cases, the two National Park purposes are mutually supportive but enjoyment today of the special qualities must not impair the natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage of the National Park for future generations. Should irreconcilable conflict between the two purposes occur the Environment Act makes it clear that the first stated purpose must prevail.
- 2.3 The Authority is the sole Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the whole of the area designated as Exmoor National Park and is responsible for the production of the local development plan which guides development control decisions, and for dealing with planning applications.
- 2.4 In addition, the Authority is an 'Access Authority' for the purposes of managing public access to open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and has statutory responsibilities for the maintenance of public rights of way in the National Park area delegated from Devon and Somerset County Highway Authorities.

## MEMBERSHIP

2.5 The Authority has the following membership:

	<b>No.</b>
Somerset County Council appointees	5
West Somerset District Council appointees	5
Devon County Council appointees	2
North Devon District Council appointees	2
Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' appointees	
- to represent national interests	7
- to represent parish interests	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u><b>26</b></u>

2.6 The members of the Authority decide the overall policies and are supported by a staff led by the National Park Officer (The Chief Executive) to implement the policies and carry out the day-to-day work.

## FINANCE

2.7 The overall level of net expenditure for the Authority is set by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which provides 75% of the annual budget through the National Park Grant.

National Park Grant 2004/05	£3090756	(89 %)
Likely self generated income	<u>£ 383500</u>	<u>(11 %)</u>
<b>TOTAL for 2004/05</b>	<b>£3474256</b>	

In addition, the Authority has received the following funding in 2004/05:-

- £200,000 from DEFRA to provide Sustainable Development grants in response to project applications.
- £76353 from DEFRA as a Planning Delivery Grant for improvements to the delivery of planning services and achievement of performance targets.
- A grant is expected from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister towards Implementing Electronic Government, to help enable the Authority achieve the government's vision for the electronic delivery of services by December 2005 wherever possible. The precise amount of grant is not known at the time this Plan is being prepared.
- Significant achievements are also made through local partnership initiatives where the funding is not handled directly by the Authority.

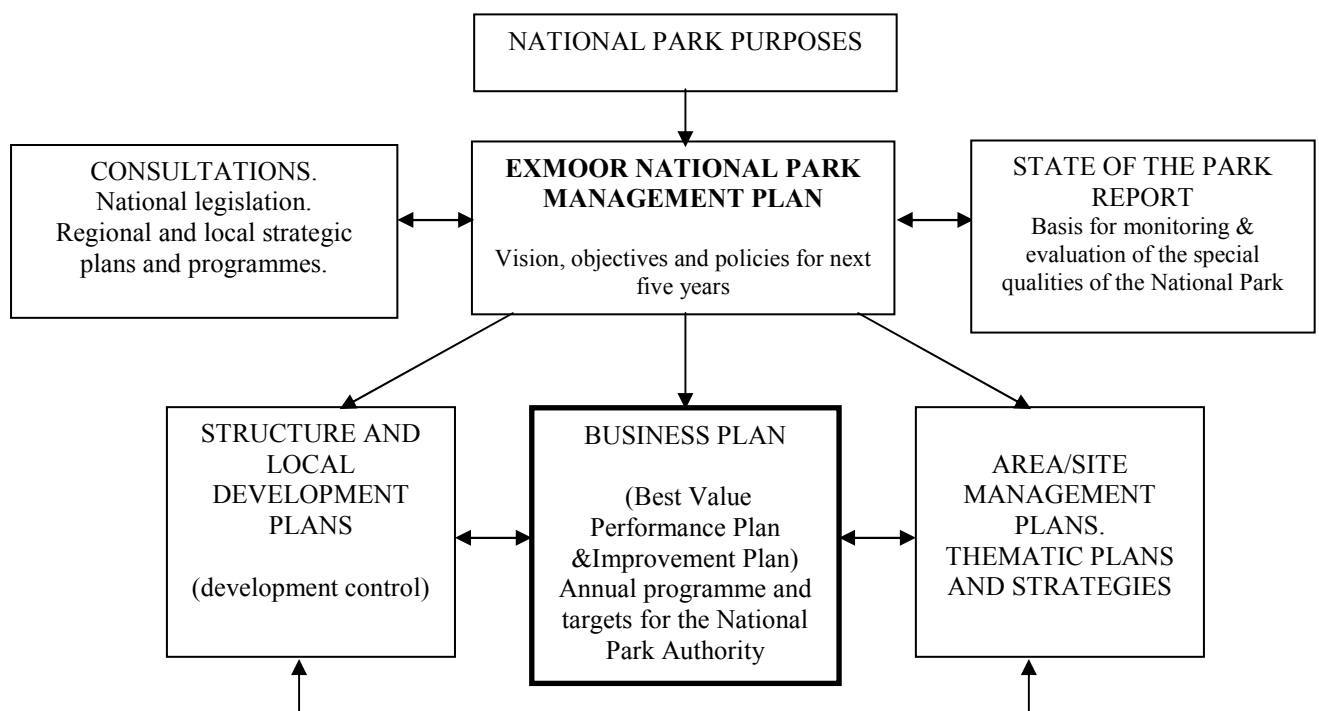
Appendix 1A analyses the overall spending of the Authority across its activities with the costs for each activity shown in more detail in Part 2 of this Plan.

## 3. NATIONAL PARK STRATEGIC PLANS

3.1 The National Park Management Plan is the main policy plan setting out the visions for the future of Exmoor and the measures proposed to achieve them, in line with the National Park Authority's statutory purposes. The Management Plan has evolved over 25 years and reflects changing public views, farming practices, social trends and government policies. The current Plan which was published in September 2001, is the result of wide ranging public consultation, with every organisation and individual with an interest in Exmoor having an opportunity to comment. Preparations have commenced for a new plan to commence in 2006, in line with new guidance being prepared by the Countryside Agency. There will be extensive opportunities for the public and stakeholders to comment on draft proposals in advance of the formal adoption of the new plan by the Authority.

- 3.2 However, it must be emphasised that the National Park Management Plan is for Exmoor National Park as a whole, not just the National Park Authority. The National Park Authority does not exist in isolation; it has to work with others, the public and other organisations in order to secure its objectives. Indeed, the Environment Act 1995 places a duty on all relevant authorities (i.e. any Minister of the Crown, any public body, any statutory undertaker and any person holding public office) to have regard to National Park purposes. There are a wide range of external influences and controls on the work of the National Park Authority ranging from statutory legislation, government departments such as the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and special interest groups as well as the views of the public. The views of a wide range of partners and stakeholders influence the direction and manner of the National Park Authority's work. The practical commitment of bodies such as the Countryside Agency and English Nature can be seen by various projects that are being carried out jointly.
- 3.3 Additionally, the Authority as the sole local planning authority for the National Park, prepares a Local Development Plan, a key document in the delivery of the policies contained in the National Park Management Plan. The Local Plan sets out the policies against which the Authority must judge whether or not to grant planning permission for new development. The existing Plan ran until the end of 2001. The Authority started a review of that Plan in 1999 and a new Local Development Plan is expected to be formally adopted in 2004.
- 3.4 Also reflected are policies adopted by the National Park Authority in pursuit of National and Global sustainability issues including Biodiversity Action Plans.
- 3.5 Within the guidelines contained in the National Park Management Plan individual management plans are also produced for the various sites owned by the National Park Authority, again involving consultation with interest groups, neighbouring landowners etc. This interaction can be shown in the following diagram.

**Figure 1 Role of the Business Plan in achieving longer term objectives of the Exmoor National Park Management Plan**



3.6 Not only does the Authority carry out its activities to pursue the two statutory purposes, but in addition there are many Central Government policies that also influence the approach of the National Park Authority in fulfilling its statutory purposes. These include the following national initiatives:-

- Measures to provide a better and more responsive service by “implementing electronic government”.
- Economic regeneration initiatives.
- The need to take account of the possible affect on crime and disorder in all activities.
- Social inclusion and equality measures.
- Other local cultural and community strategies.

3.7 In particular, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Countryside Agency have identified the 2004/05 priorities for the National Park Authority set out below:-

- Implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in line with DEFRA’s timetable.
- Implementing the Action Plan arising from the DEFRA Review of English National Park Authorities.
- Identify demand for the full range of sporting and recreational activities in the National Park and consider the extent to which these may be accommodated.
- Actively promote understanding and greater use of the National Park by all sections of society.
- Work with English Nature towards the target of bringing 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest into favourable condition by 2010.
- Promote conservation activity by (i) providing a “first stop shop” for advice for agricultural and land management projects and (ii) adding value by providing targeted support for individual projects.
- Support sustainable rural development projects which further Park purposes.
- Seek to develop and promote lottery schemes to support National Park purposes.
- Progress the State of the Park indicators to assist in management of the National Park.
- Work with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Work with DEFRA in implementing the recommendations of the Review of Rural Delivery and in the Best Value framework improve performance and service delivery.

#### 4. **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

4.1 The Authority’s strategic objectives are set out in detail in the National Park Management Plan.

4.2 The Authority is mindful of the Government’s expectations that all authorities need to strive to achieve continuous levels of improvement across all of their activities. It has a thorough framework for identifying improvements and this is set out below. However this will be significantly enhanced in the course of 2004/05 by the likely introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Detailed improvement achievements and targets are set out within the service plans contained in Part 2 of this plan. However there are some overarching and corporate Priorities for Improvement in 2004/05 which comprise-

- Addressing how the Authority will address its approach to Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which will be a significant mechanism for addressing its strengths and weaknesses and future proposals for continuous improvement, with completion of the self assessment the first priority.

- Pursuing the agenda for “Implementing Electronic Government” which gives the opportunity and incentive to re-engineer many processes in order to provide services to the public which correspond to the 24hour society in which we all live today. In particular improvements to the delivery of services will be achieved through:-
  - The introduction of a Document Management System as well as Customer Relationship Management facilities.
  - The introduction of 24/7 public access internet facilities at all visitor Centres.
  - Internet access being provided through a National Parks Internet Portal to provide ready public access to the web-sites of all National Parks in England.
- Implementing the Action Plans resulting from the completed Best Value Reviews. These are set out fully in Appendix 6 and seek to address the comments and perceived weaknesses identified in the Reviews.
- Improving the condition of Exmoor’s moorland. With 2004 being the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of Exmoor as a National Park, and English Nature estimating that 40% of moorland in Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the National Park (but not necessarily owned by the National Park Authority) are not in favourable condition, a commission has been established to report in October 2004 on mechanisms for improving the moorland’s condition.
- Completion of the Revised Local Plan. Not only will this provide the Authority with an updated set of policies, it will assist the National Park Authority and local authority partners to address the issue of affordable local housing to help meet local need.

## 5. VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF EXMOOR

5.1 In September 2001 the National Park Authority published its National Park Management Plan, covering the next 5 years. This plan includes a series of statements that set out a shared vision for the future development of Exmoor National Park.

5.2 *“To conserve and enhance the natural beauty wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park”*

5.2.1 The shared vision for the Natural Environment includes:

- Mixed woodland rich in wildlife.
- Existing moor and heath retained and managed to conserve and enhance the variety of wildlife and landscape.
- Farmland that is managed sustainably.
- A clean freshwater environment.
- Clean coastal waters, rich in wildlife.
- The existing richness and variety of wildlife to be conserved.
- Better understanding of the levels and sources of pollution and their effects on the National Park.
- Increased areas of wild landscape.

5.2.2 The shared vision for Cultural Heritage is:

- A cultural landscape, understood and valued for its expression of the interaction between Exmoor people and their environment over thousands of years.
- Thriving and varied local cultures retaining traditions and skills.

5.3 *“To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public”*

5.3.1 This shared vision for recreation is:

- A National Park which offers maximum opportunities for all to enjoy its special qualities.
- A tourism industry that is healthy, prosperous and based on Exmoor's special qualities.
- A network of Public Rights of Way and permitted paths maintained and improved in a way that satisfies walkers, riders, cyclists, farmers, landowners and local people alike.
- Sufficient sustainable facilities which meet needs and expectations.
- Less reliance on the motor vehicle for access and more control over where vehicles go.

5.3.2 This shared vision for promoting understanding, education and interpretation is:

- An improved record of Exmoor's natural, historic, archaeological and cultural resources.
- Wide understanding and appreciation of the value of protected areas.

5.4 *The National Park Authority also has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local community*

5.4.1 The shared vision for Development Control is:

- An efficient and effective development control system, guided by a development plan framework which can help guide sustainable development.

5.4.2 The shared vision for strategic and forward planning is:

- Use of Exmoor's natural resources in ways which are economically and environmentally sustainable, providing opportunities for present and future generations.
- A strong and diverse economy.
- A housing stock providing a range of accommodation types to meet the needs of all.

The full National Park Management Plan can be found on our web-site: - [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

## 6. IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

6.1 All effective organisations need to have systems in place to measure and achieve improved performance. As part of this process, organisations need to be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they can exploit opportunities for improvement and take steps to improve any areas that are underperforming. A fundamental duty for any Best Value Authority is to secure continuous improvement in the way that functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

6.2 Exmoor National Park Authority has a range of measures in place to monitor its own performance and identify weaknesses and implement improvement, and wherever it can, build on its own strengths and successes. These measures tend to address Economy and Efficiency or Effectiveness.

6.3 **ECONOMY and EFFICIENCY** – Mechanisms for identifying weaknesses and potential improvement.

**Internal Audit.** This work is carried out in accordance with an agreed programme by Auditors from Somerset County Council. In 2003/04 they have reported on audits of the following aspects of this Authority's activities:-

- Agricultural rents
- The Scheme of Members' Allowances
- Creditor Payments
- Salary payments

Reports are considered by the Authority's Chief Finance Officer, who monitors that the agreed recommendations are implemented, and the National Park Officer.

**External Audit.** The Audit Commission has appointed RSM Robson Rhodes to provide external scrutiny of the Authority's financial affairs, and this work is done in close liaison with Internal Auditors. There is also an opportunity for the public to inspect accounts and raise issues direct with the Audit Manager. The areas looked at by the External Auditors in particular are:-

- Systems of internal financial control
- Financial standing
- Standards of financial conduct
- Legality of financial transactions
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Performance Indicators
- Other performance Audit Work.

The Auditor's report is considered by the Authority's Resources Committee and is published. Since the Authority was established in April 1997 it has received an unqualified report each year.

**Performance Indicators** See section 7 below.

**Procurement Strategy.** The Authority has adopted a Procurement Strategy (a copy of which is available on the web-site). This ensures that the principles of Best Value are applied to the purchase of all goods and services and this accounts for about half of the Authority's net budget.

**Environmental monitoring.** The Authority carefully monitors its use of energy, and has taken steps to significantly reduce the use of fossil fuels through its activities. It also monitors the business miles travelled by staff and members of the Authority. Not only does this benefit the environment, and consequently contribute towards the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, but also reduces the financial costs as well. The Authority makes an annual report on its environmental performance - see Appendix 7

#### 6.4 **EFFECTIVENESS** – Mechanisms for identifying weaknesses and potential improvement

**CPA** (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) is intended to help Authorities to deliver better services by providing an appreciation of its strengths and weaknesses and thus provide a basis to improve the quality of services which it offers to the public. The Best Value Performance Plan will record how improvement priorities will be addressed. Although the full approach to be adopted has not yet been fully agreed for National Park Authorities by Defra and the Audit Commission, it is likely to be based on:-

- Setting the scene - A summary of the general context in which the Authority operates, including the key challenges and opportunities it faces, including the likely impact of these.
- A Self Scoring summary against nine themes including Quality of Vision, setting priorities, learning ability, organisational capacity, performance management etc.
- A Corporate Assessment focusing on three key questions of What the Authority is trying to achieve, how it has delivered its vision, and its achievements. This will be informed by peer review and the Authority's self assessment.

The full extent of external inspection and reporting is still to be agreed.

**State of the Park Indicators.** The Performance indicators outlined in section 7 are intended to measure performance that varies from year to year, and which is within the control of the

Authority to influence. However, this Authority has a principal duty to ensure the achievement of National Park purposes including the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage throughout the National Park area. It has been necessary, therefore, to develop a range of “State of the Park” indicators which reflect issues, some of which are outside the Authority’s direct control, but where trends are only apparent over a longer interval of time.

**Consultation Groups** The Authority has a range of Consultation Groups with which it discusses current issues, plans and progress :-

- Twice yearly meetings of the Exmoor Consultative Forum (which engages voluntary groups and organisations whose members work or have recreational pursuits on Exmoor).
- Twice yearly meetings of the District and Parish Consultative Group (comprising all the District and Parish Councils on Exmoor, representing those who live on Exmoor). The timing of these meetings alternates between morning and evening to give all those interested in attending the opportunity to do so.
- Exmoor Area Tourism Advisory Group – brings together representatives of tourism industry on Exmoor.
- Exmoor Archaeology Forum – an annual gathering of all concerned with Exmoor’s historic environment.
- The Local Access Forum set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.
- The Food, Farming and Land Management Panel – where farmers and landowners meet members and staff of the National Park Authority to consider matters of mutual interest.
- Game Shooting Liaison meeting. This brings together around 30 representatives of the Game Shooting industry, which is increasingly significant in economic terms, with National Park officers and members.
- Annual Liaison Meetings – these are held with partners such as English Nature, English Heritage, National Trust, Forestry Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- Annual Tourism Seminar which brings together Exmoor tourism providers.
- Attendance at various local shows to consult widely on the ‘Big Map’, a pictorial representation of a wide range of actual and potential projects.

The Authority is also considering membership of Somerset Influence, a consortium of local interests formed to provide a pool of local opinion on a wide range of matters relating to public services.

**Surveys** The Authority has carried out a variety of surveys to explore the public’s views on its approach to its work, the public’s priorities and the public’ perception of how successfully the Authority pursues its statutory purposes.

Since 2001 surveys have included:-

- People making Development Control applications.
- Parish Councillors to gather views of the planning service from their perspective.
- In developing the Revised Local Plan extensive surveys of the public’s views were carried out using “Planning for Real” techniques.
- Surveys of visitors to visitor centres.
- The perceptions and understanding of visitors and residents of the Authority and its achievements.
- Those schools and students using the Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre.
- The views of users, interest groups and parish councils to the condition of public rights of way.
- Those using the Snowdrop Valley Park and Ride scheme.
- The views of interest groups on aspects of the Authorities that could be done better.
- Those using the Authority’s web-site.

**National Park Management Plan** This is the main policy plan for the Authority and spans 5 years. A new plan will be published in 2006, when the existing plan reaches its end date. Development of the new plan will entail extensive consultation with public, comprising local residents, visitors, interest groups, local business operators and other stakeholders.

**Moorland Initiative** The Authority is currently engaging many people and organisations in a thorough and objective review of the state of Exmoor's moorlands to prepare a comprehensive and compelling plan of action for their future conservation. Local organisations such as the Exmoor Society are making important contributions to this.

**Best Value Reviews.** Since 2000/01 the Authority has carried out 3 Best Value Reviews. These involve a rigorous, consistent and systematic approach for each review using a full methodology which focuses on testing the service against 4 criteria, commonly known as the 4 "C"s. These are:-

- **CHALLENGE** fundamentally the role of the Authority in all of the services it delivers
- **COMPARE** performance against other similar organisations, including the private sector
- **CONSULT** with and involve all those affected by the Authority's services
- **COMPETE** in the delivery of the services through market testing and tendering where appropriate

The object of these reviews is that to produce Improvement Plans (Action Plans) which address priorities for delivering a better service to the public. Reviews carried out so far cover Development Control, Recreation Management and Promoting Understanding. Progress on implementing the improvement plans, including outcomes, is shown in appendices to this Plan.

**Best Value Inspections** The Audit Commission appointed an Inspector to carry out a Desktop review of the Development Control Review. The recommendations arising from this inspection, and the Authority's responses are set out in Appendix 6.

**Performance Management** Improved monitoring of performance, including the current year targets in this plan and the performance indicators, has been introduced, with the targets being introduced to the Staff Review and Development process and regular reviews of overall performance by the Management Team, so that corporate management intervention can be triggered if appropriate. Overall performance monitoring to cover the currency of the National Park Management Plan is also being enhanced to demonstrate specific progress against the objectives set out in the plan.

**Sustainability Group.** This staff group has been set up to monitor and evaluate how the Authority, through delivering its statutory purposes, minimizes any harm it creates for the environment by adopting sustainable ways of doing things. It has a programme to audit projects as well as regular activities in a multi-disciplinary way to identify and promote best practice.

## 7. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Part 2 of this Business Plan gives a full report on how the Exmoor National Park Authority has performed against its original programme of work for 2003/04.

7.2 However, part of Best Value approach is to give the opportunity for comparison with other Authorities and a view of this aspect of performance is given by Performance Indicators. Some Performance Indicators have been determined by the Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister as they cover functions such as corporate performance and planning activities common to local authorities across the country. All Best Value Authorities report on these.

- 7.3 Exmoor National Park Authority, in association with the other National Park Authorities, has developed a further range of performance indicators which are collated and used by all National Park Authorities. This is because all National Park Authorities have identical purposes although their visions may vary because of differing special qualities or local priorities. These Performance Indicators illustrate changes year by year in the level of performance of the National Park Authority.
- 7.4 Performance Indicators help provide a basis for comparison between authorities, and illustrate changes within Exmoor between the years. However, they can be influenced by a wide range of other factors, so included after the Performance Indicators in Part 2 is a brief commentary on the indicators shown putting into context the actual performance compared to the target for 2003/04, and the performance achieved in 2002/03. There is also justification for the proposed targets for 2004/05. As a general rule, all Authorities should be aiming for performance in line with the top 25% of similar Authorities, (although statistically not all can achieve this!)

The National Park Management Plan, this Business Plan and the Performance Indicator targets are tools that are used to measure and manage the performance of the Authority. The overall performance set out is agreed and reviewed by the Resources Committee. The National Park Officer heads a management team that prepares, implements and monitors the Business Plan. The Authority will also be producing and publishing its first "State of the Park Report" that will form a baseline for monitoring longer term change in the National Park

## 8. **AUDIT REPORT ON THE 2003/04 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN AND INSPECTIONS**

- 8.1 The Business Plan for 2003/04 was examined by RSM Robson Rhodes, external auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. The National Park Authority has to prepare a statement of action in response to any recommendations included in the Statutory Audit Report. This has been published on the Exmoor National Park Authority web-site and it is reproduced here as Appendix 4.
- 8.2 The National Park Authority has had no full inspections by the Best Value Inspectorate. However, a Desk Top study of the 2000/01 Best Value Review on Development Control was completed with a satisfactory outcome.

## 9. **CONTRACTS**

- 9.1 The Authority will be recommended to adopt a policy that any contracts awarded which involve a transfer of staff fully comply with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. No contracts were awarded in 2003/04 which involved a transfer of staff.

## PART TWO

### PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR FUNCTIONS

1. Conservation of the Natural Environment
2. Conservation of the Cultural Heritage
3. Recreation Management (inc. Traffic & Transport)
4. Promoting Understanding
5. Development Control
6. Forward Planning
7. Corporate and Democratic Core (incl. Training & Development)

#### Notes

1. If you would like further details of any of the projects proposed for 2004/05, the name of a staff contact is shown. They can be contacted via our switchboard on 01398 323665 or via our web-site - [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)
2. A full list of the National Park Management Plan objectives referred to in the following pages is attached as Appendix 5
3. Financial tables:
  - Staff costs include salaries, employer's contributions to national insurance and pension costs, recruitment costs etc.
  - Other costs include other revenue expenditure such as travel and vehicle costs, general expenses, use of contractors etc.
  - Capital Expenditure relates to all expenditure of a capital nature that exceeds £5000 for any one item.
  - Recharged support costs covers central expenses such as finance, personnel, legal costs, IT and maintenance of Exmoor House, all of which are recharged out to service delivery areas on a proportional basis.
  - Recharged Field Services Team Costs relate to the cost of the direct labour team, materials etc for work on footpaths, car parks, woodland management etc
  - Recharged Ranger costs represent the cost of the Ranger Team analysed across the functional activities
  - Capital costs are an accounting adjustment which represent the cost of deploying the Authority's assets for each functional activity.

1. **CONSERVATION OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

1.1 **Introduction**

The Exmoor landscape of high heather-covered moorland, upland agriculture, dramatic cliffs and ancient woodland with steep wooded combs was the basis for designation as a National Park. The National Park Authority works with those who own and manage land to conserve and enhance the area and the wealth of wildlife it supports.

1.2 **Improvements achieved by the Authority since 2001/02**

- Improved speed of response to consultations. Despite a 500% increase in the number of consultations processed (between 2001/02 and 2002/03) the Authority responded to 86% of consultations within 15 working days, compared with a previous rate of 46%.
- Increased survey and research information to improve the quality of advice given (Surveys of County Wildlife Sites, moorland birds, woodland bryophytes, fungi, invertebrates, bats, dormice, River Jelly Lichen, Ring Ouzels, veteran trees in churchyards and Rhododendron distribution).
- Improvements in the controlled burning of moorland (swaling) by establishing a system of co-ordination with other landowners, improved training & equipment and distribution of a guidance leaflet for all owners of moorland.
- Focus and co-ordination of conservation activity by development of the Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan, a Rivers & Streams Action Plan and a local Native Woodland Accord.
- Improved management of data through the introduction of a Geographic Information System.
- The introduction of an annual review of the Authority’s land holdings to monitor the effectiveness of achieving the Authority’s purposes and objectives.

1.3 **Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04**

<p>Delivering a comprehensive conservation advisory service, responding promptly and authoritatively to requests for advice and information from farmers, landowners, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and other bodies and seeking to develop our role as a “first stop shop” for rural services.</p>	<p>Responded to 541 formal consultations during the year as well as innumerable requests for advice and information. Contributed to Lord Haskins’ Rural Delivery Review and actively involved in evaluating and implementing the recommendations of the Nov 2003 report which has major implications for improving a wide range of rural services currently provided by various organisations.</p>
<p>Contributing to the formulation and delivery of national agri-environment policy, by responding to consultations and lobbying to influence policy emerging from the Policy Commission’s Report on The Future of Farming and Food, the Review of the Common Agricultural Policy and the review of agri-environment schemes</p>	<p>National agri-environment policy that supports a sound economy for the uplands is vital to maintain the fabric of the National Park. The Authority has made full responses to consultations on the Hill Farm Allowances, CAP Reform (especially Single Farm Payments), Capital Payments, Higher Level Agri-environment Scheme, Sustainable Food and Farming Industry in the South West – Delivery Plan, Common Land Management and in support of a joint NPAs</p>

	State Aids application to the EU. In all cases the Authority's aim was to secure an improved outcome for local farmers and landowners to underpin the local environment and economy.
Developing an Exmoor Moorlands Initiative, in partnership with English Nature, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and others, to act as a catalyst for securing the effective, integrated management of Exmoor's moorlands and ensuring that they are in, or moving towards, "favourable condition."	The initial consultation phase attracted strong support and numerous strands are now being pursued in partnership with many other organisations. These will come together at a conference to be held in October 2004 and this in turn will lead to the preparation of a Moorland Action Plan to lead to the improvement of the overall condition of Exmoor's moorland.
Continuing the MIRE Project (in partnership with the Environment Agency and English Nature) by analysing the results at the Exe Head experimental site and seeking to carry out work on 2 additional sites.	Progress has been reviewed and a programme agreed. Monitoring of a site at Blackpits has continued. Heather bales have been used to create 7 dams at a new experimental site at Exe Head. A baler has been purchased so that small bales can be produced from Exmoor for use in this project.
Supporting the UK Biodiversity Action Plan by continuing the moorland restoration programme at Haddon Hill (in partnership with the Environment Agency, English Nature and the Forestry Commission) by managing the 12 ha of open land created by the clear-felling of Hadborough Plantation to ensure its successful reversion to moorland and also by supporting our tenant at Warren Farm in his efforts to diversify 300 ha of impoverished grass moor (in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and English Nature).	6.1 ha of Hadborough plantation have been cleared of conifers. This produced 2000 tonnes of FSC certified standing timber that was sold to support the restoration of this area to heathland. Natural recolonisation is being monitored and fencing has been erected to enable the site to be grazed. At Warren the Authority offered a grant for up to three years towards the moorland diversification project.
Implementing the Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and, in particular, the Farmland BAP and Rivers and Steams BAP by providing grant aid (50% funded by English Nature) for conservation projects, carrying out surveys and preparing costed action plans for Water Voles, Veteran Trees and Bats.	12 BAP projects were supported through the Conservation Grant Scheme in response to Agenda 21. The projects included grassland and heathland management; dormouse and bat box schemes and moth recording. A total of 23 veteran trees were recorded including 13 trees regarded as significant. A bat survey recorded 11 of the 16 known UK species in the Authority owned woodland in the Barle Valley, including the very rare Barbastelle bat. The planned survey of water voles was not completed.
Carrying out a survey, in co-operation with Devon Wildlife Trust, of 60 County Wildlife Sites in the Devon part of the National Park and providing information for the Exmoor Local Plan.	78 sites were surveyed by the Devon Biological Records Centre of which 51 will be recognised as new County Wildlife Sites. 8 existing County Wildlife Sites were re-surveyed.

Working with landowners and managers, the local authorities, countryside agencies and other bodies to secure the co-ordinated management of the Porlock Bay and Marsh area through the preparation and implementation of a management plan.	The Wetlands and Wildfowl Trust has been invited to quote for the preparation of a management plan; a brief for this is in preparation. Consultant archaeologist Richard McDonnell continues to monitor the effect of tidal inundation on the archaeological interest. Management agreement terms have been agreed with a third landowner for implementation under the new National Park agri-environment scheme.
Managing the moorland, farmland and woodland owned by the National Park Authority. In particular we will:	
- produce an annual estate review	This was produced for members of the Authority to aid their oversight of the land managed.
- prepare, in partnership with our tenant, a management plan for Driver Farm.	A Draft Plan has been produced which will, when implemented, lead to significant improvements to this upland farm.
- control invasive scrub on the candidate Special Areas of Conservation at Haddon Hill, near Dulverton and North Hill, Minehead.	100 ha of Rhododendron were cleared from Haddon Hill – 60ha on land owned by the Authority and 40 ha on neighbouring land.
- removing invasive beech seedlings from North Barton Woods.	A thinning programme was implemented in North Barton concentrating on removal of beech in favour of native broadleaves as a conservation project in this ancient woodland. In response to local concern about the objectives and scale of work more detailed consultations are now taking place.
- bringing N. Barton meadow into positive management by clearing bracken and rank grasses and implementing a management plan.	The bracken glades have been cut and raked as part of a conservation initiative.
- thinning ancient woodland and monitoring the new coppice plot at Hawkcombe.	The monitoring has been carried out to ensure satisfactory growth occurred and a second coppice plot of 0.5ha was created.
- restocking 2 ha woodland at Simonsbath.	Balewater Wood was restocked using native species of saplings.
- carrying out 2 ha rhododendron control in the Dulverton Woods.	This project was completed leaving Paddons, Weir Cleave and Newgate woods virtually clear of rhododendron.
- thinning and edge treatment at Hadborough plantation.	This was completed and produced 20 m3 of timber which was used for fencing and gates for the Authority to use.
- seeking NNR status for Hawkcombe and Tarr Steps Woodlands.	Tarr Steps Woods were declared a National Nature Reserve on 27 January 2004. Hawkcombe Woods is expected to be confirmed as a National Nature Reserve during Autumn 2004.
- continue the successful Larcombe Wood project, in partnership with St Margaret's Hospice with the aim of raising £5k for the charity and planting 200 trees.	More than 550 trees have been planted through this project. It is estimated that this will have generated about £14,000 for the hospice. All planted areas have been sprayed to control bracken.

Begin the process of developing Long Term Plans for our 550 ha woodland estate.	A comprehensive review of the work identified in Woodland Grant Scheme approvals, management plans and other commitments for woodland owned by the Authority has commenced.
Launching the Rhododendron Initiative – a partnership project to survey rhododendron, develop partnership arrangements and secure grant aid for the control of rhododendron in our most important woodland sites. We also aim to treat 5 ha of rhododendron and 20 Knotweed sites during the year.	This initiative was launched at a seminar attended by key organisations and major woodland owners in January 2004. Grants totalling £5500 have been allocated to treat 8 ha of rhododendron. The development of a database and methodology for rhododendron recording have been completed, as well as a survey of woodland owned by the National Park Authority. Knotweed is another invasive species and 80 knotweed sites have been identified on Exmoor and 23 of these treated. The others will be treated in 2004. The NPA is working in partnership with the Environment Agency, English Nature, National Trust, and the highway authorities. A Database will be set up by the NPA to hold records from each organisation of all knotweed sites so treatment can be effectively targeted.
Redrafting and signing the Local Native Woodland Accord – part of a national agreement between the Forestry Commission and National Park Authority.	A new Accord was formally completed and signed in January 2004. This encourages the planting of local species of trees.
Commissioning and completing, in partnership with the Badgworthy Land Company, a landscape master plan for the reversion of 30 ha of conifer plantation to natural broadleaves and other habitats, using £8000 of funding already secured from RESTORE U.K.	A plan has been completed for this project that will restore and improve a part of the Exmoor landscape.
Carrying out the second phase of a TPO review by revoking / varying orders as appropriate.	All non-woodland Tree Preservation Orders have been re-surveyed by consultants. A report is in preparation recommending policy for the use of TPO powers and identifying existing orders that should be revoked or varied.
Establishing a new Group Chain of Custody Certification Scheme in partnership with the Forestry Commission and local businesses.	The Forestry Commission has agreed to support this sustainable management initiative with £25000 over three years. Two businesses are already members. A development plan has been produced by Soil Association “Woodmark” and a Draft Operating System has also been developed.
Continuing to develop the innovative Exmoor Woodland Assurance Scheme, in partnership with seven woodland owners and Soil Association Woodmark.	This scheme is developing successfully with expansion planned as other woodland owners are seeking to join.
Continuing to work with those involved in game shooting on Exmoor, encouraging co-operation and good practice particularly through a study of the contribution it makes to the Exmoor economy and environment.	Consultants have been approached and funding applications made to carry out the proposed study of the contribution made by game shooting to the local economy. More awareness is being sought as it is becoming a

	key player in the local economy. A further group is working with Somerset Food Links to improve local markets for game.
Continuing efforts to promote the appropriate use of Exmoor's renewable energy resources, working in partnership with other agencies. Continue to contribute to the development and implementation of regional and sub-regional strategies, plans and targets, carry out a review of existing renewable energy projects on Exmoor and make more information available to the public.	The Authority has introduced renewable energy initiatives in its own buildings at Pinkery, Exford Depot, Exmoor House etc. Pinkery has achieved "eco-centre" status. The Authority has also worked closely with other local authorities and interest groups to explore the potential for renewable energy use throughout the area.
Commencing a focused Best Value Review of our conservation services and activities.	This review which is intended to be a strategic review of this element of activities will be carried out when the implications of the proposed new Comprehensive Performance Assessment have been clarified.

And in addition we have:-

- Published and distributed a new leaflet to give guidance on the management and restoration of Exmoor's hedges.
- With RSPB, commissioned a survey of Ring Ouzels to improve future habitat management.
- Prepared a draft Public Safety Plan to cover the management of hazards identified on Authority land.
- Concluded a Management Agreement with English Nature to improve the management of all land owned by the Authority that has been formally notified as being a site of special scientific interest.
- Joined a project to provide cattle grids to enable more effective conservation grazing & management of coastal heathlands.
- Commissioned a native woodland plan for Lee Abbey woodlands to improve their conservation management.
- Successfully completed the annual programme of moorland burning, and have provided assistance to other landowners to do this.

#### 1.4 Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by:-

- Influencing the activities of 250 landowners/managers by responding promptly (within 15 days) and appropriately to requests for advice and information.  
(Objective 2/1; Defra PSA 3 and 1) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Developing whole farm plans for Farms in the Authority's Farm Conservation Scheme to guide work programmes and to provide a model for whole farm audit.  
(Objective 2/1) [Contact Sarah Hoddinott]
- Publishing an independent report on the State of Farming on Exmoor.  
(Objective 2/3) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Contributing to the national debate about modernising rural delivery.  
(Objective 2/3) [Contact David Lloyd]

- Seeking to influence national agri-environment policy and encouraging entry by farmers and landowners into appropriate schemes where this will help achieve National Park Authority purposes.  
(Objective 2/3; Defra PSA 3 – farmland birds) [Contact David Lloyd]
- Producing an Annual Review of the NPAs estate and its contribution to the achievement of National Park purposes.  
(All NP purposes) [Contact Helen Cudlipp]
- Implementing a management plan for Driver Farm, a farm owned by the Authority and let on an agricultural tenancy.  
(Objective 2/1; 2/2) [Contact Helen Cudlipp]
- Preparing hazard maps for five of the NPA’s moorland properties and five woodland sites.  
(Risk management) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Commissioning an independent study of the economic and environmental contribution of game shooting to Exmoor in partnership with game shooting businesses and organisations.  
(Objective 2/4) [Contact David Lloyd]
- Supporting 6 Landscape Grant Scheme projects (value £6000) in partnership with Somerset County Council at a cost to the Authority of £2000.  
(Objective 2/1; 2/2) [Contact Sarah Hoddinott]
- Reviewing by October 2004 the state of Exmoor’s moorlands and the threats facing them.  
(Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Hosting a conference on Exmoor’s moorlands in October 2004.  
(Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Publishing a moorland report and action plan by March 2005.  
(Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Clearing 20 ha of invasive scrub on NPA-owned moorland at Haddon Hill - South Exmoor SSSI.  
(Objectives 3/1,3/2, 3/3,3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Alison Cox]
- Clearing 10 ha of invasive scrub on North Hill, Minehead - Exmoor Coastal Heaths SSSI.  
(NPMP Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Alison Cox]
- Supporting, through grant aid, advice and advocacy, the tenant of NPA-owned land near Warren Farm - North Exmoor SSSI - in his efforts to diversify 300 ha of impoverished grass moor.  
(Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3;) [Contact David Lloyd]
- Replacing or repairing 6000 metres of fencing on NPA-moorland in the North Exmoor SSSI.  
(Objectives 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 3/4; Defra PSA 3) [Contact Helen Cudlipp]
- Managing 10ha of open land created by the clear-felling of Hadborough Plantation to ensure its successful reversion to upland heath and extending the open area adjoining the South Exmoor SSSI by felling a further 2 ha of conifers.  
(Objectives 3/1; 4/1; 4/2; 4/3; 7/1; UK BAP) [Contact Alison Cox]

- Analysing the effectiveness of ditch blocking at the Blackpits and Exe Head experimental sites (North Exmoor SSSI) as a method of recreating blanket bog and carrying out further work at Exe Head and 2 additional sites (MIRE Project). (Objectives 3/1; 4/1; 4/2; 4/3; 7/1; Defra PSA 3; UK BAP) [Contact Alison Cox]
- Bringing a further 5 of woodland owners into the Exmoor WoodCert Scheme to recognise their efforts to manage woodland sustainably. (Objective 4/1; Defra PSA 1 – woodland birds) [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- Enrolling four firms in the Exmoor Wood Cert Group Chain of Custody Certification Scheme. (Objective 4/1; Defra PSA 1 – woodland birds) [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- Commissioning a survey of woodland invertebrates and developing a monitoring programme. (Objective 4/1; Defra PSA 1 – woodland birds 1) [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- Securing the designation of Hawkcombe Woods as a National Nature Reserve. (Objective 4/1; Defra PSA 1 – woodland birds) [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- Treating 10 ha of rhododendron in NPA-owned woodland at Barle Valley, Dulverton Woods and Hawkcombe SSSIs plus a further 15 ha in other Authority woods. (Objective 4/1; Defra PSA 1 – woodland birds & PSA 3 - SSSIs)[ Graeme McVittie]
- Beginning the process of converting a 30 ha of conifer plantation at Sherracombe to native broadleaved woodland. (Objectives 3/1; 4/1; 4/2; 4/3; 7/1; UK BAP) [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- Publishing the first in a series of annual Exmoor Biodiversity reviews. (Objectives 7/1; 3/1 and 4/1; Exmoor BAP) [Contact Sarah Hoddinott]
- Supporting 6 projects to help conserve and enhance Exmoor's biodiversity by providing grant aid and advice. (Objectives 7/1; 3/1 and 4/1; Exmoor BAP) [Contact Alison Cox]
- Treating 75% of all known knotweed sites on Exmoor. (Objectives 7/1; 3/1 and 4/1; Exmoor BAP) [Contact Sarah Hoddinott]
- Promoting the conservation of purebred Exmoor ponies by constructing new pony handling facilities at Warren Farm and East Anstey Moor. (Objective 7/1) [Contact Helen Cudlipp]

#### 1.5 **Improvement Targets for 2004/05**

- To develop a widely supported agenda for action to guide future moorland conservation and enhancement programmes. *A key priority.* [Contact Graham Wills]
- To have objective more reliable and up-to-date information available on the nature and state of farming on Exmoor identifying key trends and likely responses to anticipated changes. *A key priority.* [Contact Graham Wills]
- To have adopted and disseminated to Parish Councils and others clear guidelines for the use of the Authority's Tree Preservation Order powers. *A key priority* [Contact Graeme McVittie]
- To improve our contribution to the delivery of agri-environment schemes, particularly by developing a model for whole farm audits.

- To improve the condition of moorland SSSIs by clearing 30ha of invasive scrub and repairing or replacing 6000m of fencing to allow grazing management to take place.
- To improve the condition of woodland SSSIs on Exmoor through the treatment of invasive rhododendron and the carrying out of thinning and other woodland management operations.
- To have improved our effectiveness in formulating and delivering Biodiversity Action Plan targets through a review of progress to date and by making targets more realistic.
- To have evaluated the potential of the Countryside Management System software for improving the Authority's efficiency and effectiveness in managing its conservation properties and to have trained at least three staff in its use.
- To improve our contribution to the delivery of agri-environmental schemes particularly by developing a model for whole farm audits.

### 1.6 Improvement aspirations beyond 2004/05

- To manage all Sites of Special Scientific Interest owned by the NPA so that they are in favourable condition by 2010.
- To help avert the decline in farmland and woodland birds through the implementation of national and local agri-environment schemes, Biodiversity Action Plans and other measures.
- To improve arrangements for obtaining and disseminating information on trends in habitats and species within the national park.
- To improve our biodiversity action plans and to have developed more effective arrangements for monitoring progress.
- To improve the provision of advice and information to landowners and managers.
- To improve our contribution to the delivery of national agri-environment schemes, particularly by preparing whole farm audits on behalf of farmers and landowners.
- To have in place a comprehensive landscape characterisation of Exmoor and to use this to identify and prioritise opportunities to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park.
- To achieve improvements in the management of controlled moorland burning including access to better equipment.

### 1.7 Financial table £000

CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	230.8	224.0	254.1	240.8	266.8	284.1
Other costs	198.6	161.5	238.0	235.4	246.2	122.4
Capital costs	162.0	145.2	151.3	155.9	168.9	152.5
Recharged support costs	90.7	74.8	94.8	96.0	98.0	108.1
Recharged Ranger costs	19.2	19.1	21.7	21.8	24.2	26.0
Recharged other costs	7.5	9.4	7.5	7.3	9.9	8.9
Recharged other costs	237.8	237.8	138.8	138.8	138.8	138.8
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>946.6</b>	<b>871.8</b>	<b>906.2</b>	<b>896.0</b>	<b>952.8</b>	<b>840.8</b>
Income - Sales, fees & charges	71.9	79.3	79.6	54.0	59.0	73.7
Income – Other external funding	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.7	0.0	0.0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>874.7</b>	<b>792.5</b>	<b>829.6</b>	<b>823.3</b>	<b>893.8</b>	<b>767.1</b>

## 1.8 Performance Indicators

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	2001 / 02	2002 / 03	2003 / 04	Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04	2004/05
<b>NE2a</b> Number of external consultations completed within the required period (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	No target set-new indicator Achieved 125	Target: 200 Achieved: 288	Target: 250 Achieved: 465	Achieved: 465	Anticipated 350
<b>NE2b</b> Percentage of external consultations completed within the required period. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Forecast: 100% Achieved: 98%	Anticipated 99% Achieved: 46%	Anticipated: 95% Achieved: 86%	Achieved: 100%	Anticipated 95%
<b>Local Indicator 1</b> Is there a local Biodiversity Action Plan	Forecast: Yes Achieved: Yes	Anticipated Yes Achieved: Yes	Anticipated: Yes Achieved: Yes		Anticipated Yes

### 1.9 Summary of Performance in 2003/04

**NE2a** The measures the Authority put in place in response to the significant increase in formal consultations in 2002/03 which had resulted in a decline in performance in that year continue to prove effective. While the number of formal consultations remained high, at 4 times the 2001/02 level, the response rate has improved to 86% being completed within the required period.

### 1.10 Summary of Performance in 2004/05

**NE2a** It is anticipated that the number of formal consultations will reduce during 2004/05 because the number of ESA renewals will decline and it is intended to maintain resources in this area to continue to improve response times towards the top quartile level of performance.

**Local Performance Indicators** will be further developed and linked to the Defra/PSA priorities for Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The aim will be for all SSSIs owned by the Authority to be in favourable condition (or unfavourable but recovering) by 2010. The Local Indicators for the Biodiversity Action Plan are no longer used and it is proposed to make the BAP targets more realistic and to make sure they are framed in ways that allow progress to be monitored more effectively.

## 2. CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

### 2.1 Introduction

The Exmoor landscape and environment of today is the result of man's activity over the centuries. The Authority has a duty to conserve and enhance Exmoor's archaeology, historic buildings and settlements, local culture and traditions.

### 2.2 Improvements achieved by the Authority since 2001/02

- Improved ability to respond to requests for advice and information on Exmoor's historic environment through the appointment of a Countryside Archaeological Advisor (funded by English Heritage).
- Improved understanding of Exmoor cultural heritage through the development of a comprehensive survey and research programme.
- Improved access to information on sites of archaeological significance through improvements to the Exmoor Sites and Monuments Records, setting up the annual Exmoor Archaeology Forum and the establishment of a comprehensive Scheduled Ancient Monuments record.
- Improved participation by young people in the conservation of Exmoor's cultural heritage through the development of an annual Exmoor Archaeology Field School organised with the University of Bristol through the Widening Participation project.
- Improved the focus and co-ordination of research effort on Exmoor and the effective dissemination of information through the development, in partnership with all the key research interests, of a Historic Environment Research Strategy.
- Improved ability to promote practical conservation and enhancement work at sites of archaeological interest through the development and operation of a Monument management Scheme in partnership with English Heritage.
- Improved ability to demonstrate sustainable development in harmony with the conservation of natural and cultural resources through the restoration and re-use of Simonsbath sawmill as the centrepiece of a sustainable countryside management initiative.
- Improved our understanding of (and hence our ability to manage appropriately) the historic resources of the land owned by the NPA. Some 99% of this are has now been covered by baseline archaeological survey completed by specialist consultants.
- Improved availability of advice for land and property-owners, developers and planners through the production and dissemination of a new guide to "The Conduct of Archaeological Work and Historic Building Recording".

### 2.3 Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04

Supporting the Victoria County History Project launched in 2002, in partnership with the County and District Councils and the Exmoor Society, making a further financial contribution of £7,500 to the pilot phase.	Heritage Lottery Fund approval for the Victoria County History project has now been obtained and detailed discussions are in progress. This is the first time that the VCH series has focussed on a National Park.
Developing understanding of the historic exploitation of Exmoor's iron deposits and its significance (in partnership with English Heritage, the University of Exeter and	The "dig" at Sherracombe in August & September 2003 was completed successfully and extended by a further week to allow for further exploratory work.

others) by acting as a lead partner in the Exmoor Iron Project – a four year project with 95% external funding - participating in project direction, fieldwork, training and outreach.	
Working with the University of Bristol to organise and run the annual Exmoor Archaeology Field School - a two week excavation investigating aspects of the historic landscape, addressing specific conservation issues and providing an opportunity for 18 young people to learn about National Park purpose.	The Field School was held in July & August 2003 with 18 participants. It was a very successful event which led to funding for the 2004 event to be confirmed from the Higher Education Funding Council and the University of Bristol Widening Participation project.
Playing a lead role in efforts to conserve, enhance and interpret the former West Somerset Mineral Railway through membership of the newly-formed Project Planning Group (constituted by the Exmoor Society); by helping to formulate a compelling bid for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund and by carrying out management work to land and buildings owned by the National Park Authority.	The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a Grant of £46,000 towards this project and consultants to develop the project have now been appointed. The Project Planning Stage will be completed in October 2004 and will lead to the conservation and interpretation of this very significant site of industrial archaeology.
Continuing the Conservation Area Appraisals Programme commissioning appraisals for Allerford, Bossington and West Lynch, Lynmouth and Wootton Courtenay and producing a leaflet and web page.	The target appraisals, and an additional one for Selworthy, have been completed to increase number of Conservation Areas where appraisals are in use.
Progressing the Monument Management Scheme (50% funded by English Heritage) by carrying out conservation, recording or Interpretation on at least three scheduled ancient monuments, including the Long Stone, Wind Hill and Barlynch Priory as well as various prehistoric standing stones.	This partnership with English Heritage continues to deliver excellent results in enhancing Exmoor's historic environment. The work at the Long Stone was completed in July 2003. The consolidation works at Barlynch Priory were completed and access arrangements developed for the Summer 2004. The Wind Hill scheme is not being pursued but instead plans for the re-roofing and conservation of the historic Roadwater Pill Box have been prepared. An illustrated report of progress with the Scheme has been produced.
Producing three new information leaflets (and web pages) on aspects Exmoor's historic environment including its historic field boundaries.	Two new leaflets were produced rather than three but covered the same breadth of information.
Build on the success of our project to restore the historic water-powered sawmill at Simonsbath by seeking to gather, collate and make available information on the mill and its place in the history of the Exmoor Forest and by seeking to understand more about water use and management in the area, particularly by completing a survey of the Pinkery Canal (in partnership with English Heritage).	Very good progress with this flagship conservation project has been made during the year. The restoration work is now complete and all equipment in place. Interpretation panels were erected in the mill in May 2003 and the official opening ceremony, performed by HRH The Countess Of Wessex, was held 10 June 2003. Commissioning and training programmes are underway to bring the mill into full use.

Carrying out a Buildings at Risk Survey.	This survey has been carried out to provide up-to-date records. Data from the surveys will be made available to the public from the Authority's web-site.
Continuing work to make information on the cultural heritage of Exmoor more accessible (particularly through the Implementing Electronic Government programme), enhancing databases, developing Geographical Information Systems and converting photographs to digital formats.	The first part of this project was completed with 4000 Sites & Monument Records revised to a consistent format. Information has been digitised for sites in the Somerset side of the National Park as a step towards making this information available on the internet.

And in addition we have:-

- Produced a Historic Environment Strategy to guide future work.
- Obtained funding for a new project to inform the public about the activities of the Romans when they occupied this part of the country.
- Commissioned an illustrated reproduction of the Timberscombe Hill Fort.
- Had Pinkery Canal surveyed by English Heritage and a condition survey of standing stones completed.
- Conserved timber found on Porlock beach that dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Obtained a report on the designed landscape of the Simonsbath area.

#### 2.4 Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by: -

- Completing the Historic Environment Research Framework.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Establishing an Exmoor Historic Environment Research Group.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Putting in place a robust management system for the collection, collation, recording, maintenance and dissemination of information on Exmoor's historic resources.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Continuing the air reconnaissance programme (a joint project with English Heritage) with 20 target sites.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Producing and disseminating a guide on "The Conduct of Archaeological Work and Historic Building Recording" and facilitating a training session for planning staff and others.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Continuing to develop understanding of the historic exploitation of Exmoor's iron deposits (Exmoor Iron project) with fieldwork at Blacklake Wood, Horner Wood and New Invention.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Participating in the Portable Antiquities Scheme – Devon, helping to organise a public day in the national park.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Jessica Cowley]

- Furthering the Victoria County History Project through the appointment of an Exmoor-based post and the development of a community archaeology programme to stimulate volunteer involvement.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Progressing the Monument Management Scheme (50% funded by English Heritage) by carrying out conservation, recording or interpretation at four sites.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Jessica Cowley]
- Completing a Scheduled Monuments at Risk survey and producing a strategy document.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Jessica Cowley]
- Completing the archaeological survey of NPA-owned land and reviewing the results to identify priorities for future conservation, interpretation and recording.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Continuing the palaeo-environment survey programme sampling and obtaining dates from blanket bogs and valley mire sites in order to extend our understanding of the history of the Exmoor landscape.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Completing the Conservation Area Appraisals Programme, analysing the results and identifying priorities for conservation, enhancement and interpretation work.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Mark Clitherow]
- Commissioning a survey to establish the form and extent of the designed landscape of Exmoor in order to inform and prioritise future conservation and enhancement action.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Working in partnership on a pilot project to improve the interpretation of Roman activity on Exmoor and prepare and seek funding for, an Exmoor-wide interpretation initiative.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Working with English Heritage on a project to extend understanding of the farm buildings of Exmoor in order to secure their more effective conservation through, in particular, the preparation of guidance for owners, planners, advisors, builders and others.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Gathering, collating and making available more information on Simonsbath Sawmill and its place in the history of the Exmoor Forest, facilitating increased public access to the building and seeking to understand more about water use and management in the area.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Graham Wills]
- Completing the survey of thatched properties and identifying ways to foster the use of thatch on Exmoor.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Mark Clitherow]
- Playing a lead role in efforts to conserve, enhance and interpret the former West Somerset Mineral Railway; carrying out urgent repairs to the boundary of the Incline which is owned by the National Park Authority.  
(Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]

- Working with the University of Bristol, through the Widening Participation programme and the Higher Education Funding Council for England, particularly by organising and running an expanded annual Exmoor Archaeology Field School. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Organising an annual seminar on the archaeology of Exmoor, disseminating the proceedings to a wider audience. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact [Rob Wilson-North]
- Publishing the third in the annual series of reviews of progress with the conservation and understanding of Exmoor's historic environment. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Developing integrated whole farm plans for the farms on the Authority's Farm Conservation Scheme to guide future work on these farms and to act as a model for whole farm audit. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Producing reconstructions, leaflet and events programme for Timberscombe Hillfort. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- Contributing towards the achievement of objectives set out in the Dunster Action Plan including completion of a study into the historic landscape by September 2004; provision of advice and support to owners of historic buildings and structures; completion of a pilot scheme to enhance cobbled areas, and consideration of proposals to enhance the High Street. (Objectives 9/1; 9/2 and 9/3) [Contact Mark Clitherow]
- To improve our contribution to the delivery of agri-environment schemes, particularly by developing a model for whole farm audits that fully reflects historic environment issues. [Contact Rob Wilson-North]

## 2.5 Improvement targets for 2004/05

- To improve our ability to target and prioritise heritage conservation effort by having in place comprehensive and up-to-date records of historic buildings and ancient monuments at risk. *A key priority.* [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- To be able to respond better to requests for advice and information by establishing a more robust management system for the collection, collation, recording, maintenance and dissemination of information on Exmoor's historic resources (with co-ordination through a Historic Environment Research Framework and Exmoor Historic Environment Research Group). *A key priority.* [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- To improve the way in which we interpret and raise awareness of Exmoor's archaeology, particularly by undertaking a pilot project on Roman activity; running an expanded annual Exmoor Archaeology Field School; organising a seminar on the archaeology of Exmoor and publishing a review of progress with the conservation and understanding of Exmoor's historic environment. *A key priority.* [Contact Rob Wilson-North]
- To improve our effectiveness in managing archaeological sites in the ownership of the NPA by completing a baseline survey of all of our properties and analysing the results.

- To improve our performance in identifying and prioritising work to conserve, enhance and interpret Exmoor's 16 Conservation Areas by completing an appraisals programme and analysing the results.

## 2.6 Improvement Aspirations Beyond 2004/05

- To articulate clearer objectives for the conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's cultural heritage through the review of the National Park Management Plan.
- To maintain our capacity to respond promptly to requests for advice and information, and to be able to complete archaeological programmes and projects, by establishing the Countryside Archaeological Advisor post as a permanent, full-time position.
- To improve our contribution to the delivery of agri-environment schemes, particularly by preparing whole farm audits on behalf of farmers and landowners.
- To promote, co-ordinate and prioritise research and survey effort through the mechanism of the Exmoor Historic Environment Research Strategy.
- To make information on Exmoor's historic resources more easily accessible (and to be more effective in responding to requests for advice and information) through the management of systems for the collection, collation, recording, maintenance and dissemination of information on Exmoor's historic resources.

## 2.7 Financial table £000

CONSERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	77.0	76.9	86.9	88.3	92.8	101.8
Other costs	49.2	376.1	45.9	45.2	34.0	7.5
Capital costs	39.7	91.8	36.1	38.1	38.3	35.3
Recharged support costs	8.2	6.8	8.6	8.7	8.9	9.8
Recharged Ranger costs	8.2	8.2	9.3	9.3	10.4	11.1
Recharged other costs	2.8	3.5	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.3
Recharged other costs	5.6	5.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>190.7</b>	<b>568.9</b>	<b>192.9</b>	<b>195.6</b>	<b>190.7</b>	<b>172.1</b>
Income - Sales, fees & charges	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Income - Other external funding	12.0	310.2	10.5	19.0	11.1	12.3
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>178.7</b>	<b>258.7</b>	<b>182.4</b>	<b>176.6</b>	<b>179.6</b>	<b>159.8</b>

## 2.8 Performance Indicators

CULTURAL HERITAGE	2001 / 02	2002 / 03	2003 / 04	Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04	2004/05
<b>CH3b</b> Number of Listed Buildings At Risk rescued through National Park Authority action during the year as a percentage of the Total Number of Listed Buildings "at risk" in the National Park. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Anticipated New indicator – none set  Achieved 0.2%	Anticipated: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Anticipated: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 4%	Anticipated: 0

<b>CH4a</b> Number of statutory and non-statutory cultural heritage consultations completed. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Anticipated 210  Achieved: 372	Anticipated: 350  Achieved: 1130	Anticipated: 400  Achieved: 721		Anticipated: 500
<b>Local indicator 1</b> No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Anticipated 160  Achieved: 161	Anticipated: 161  Achieved: 161	Anticipated: 161  Achieved: 161		Anticipated: 161
<b>Local indicator 2</b> No. of Listed Buildings	Anticipated 926  Achieved: 926	Anticipated: 926  Achieved: 926	Anticipated: 926  Achieved: 926		Anticipated: 926
<b>Local indicator 3</b> No. of Conservation Areas	Anticipated 16  Achieved: 16	Anticipated: 16  Achieved: 16	Anticipated: 16  Achieved: 16		Anticipated: 16
<b>Local indicator 4</b> % of ENP-owned Estate for which archaeological baseline and survey completed	Anticipated 99%  Achieved 98%	Anticipated: 100%  Achieved 99%	Anticipated: 100%  Achieved 99%		Anticipated: 99

## 2.9 Summary of performance in 2003/04

**CH4a** The number of statutory and non-statutory Cultural Heritage consultations completed remained high at twice the 2001/02 level and it is pleasing that nearly 100% were completed within the required period.

**Local Performance Indicators.** It is acknowledged that these are not true Performance Indicators, and could more usefully be regarded as State of the Park Indicators. It is intended to develop more SMART indicators during the current year.

## 2.10 Summary of performance in 2004/05

**CH3b** Ongoing survey work is building up awareness of historic buildings at risk and archaeological monuments at risk during 2004/05 will enable local performance indicators for work in this area to be developed.

### 3. RECREATION MANAGEMENT (including Traffic and Transport)

#### 3.1 Introduction

The comprehensive network of waymarked rights of way covering 631 miles (1015 km) through inspiring scenery is a major attraction for visitors wanting to walk, ride or cycle. Promoting opportunities for the public to enjoy and understand Exmoor's special qualities is one of the Authority's principal purposes.

#### 3.2 Improvements achieved by the Authority since 2001/02

- A regular system of safety checks is carried out in all car parks and toilets to reduce the likelihood of insurance claims for injuries. There have been no claims received since this practice commenced.
- Crew-cab vehicles have been introduced to reduce vehicle useage. It is estimated that this will save approximately 5000 miles each year.
- A Code of Conduct for motorised off-road recreation events has been introduced, which has led to a marked improvement of the organisation and management of some events.
- Electronic vehicle counters have been introduced to provide accurate time related data on the numbers and types of vehicles using particular routes.
- Contributed to the conservation of moorland being damaged by illegal off-road vehicle activity by co-operating with the Police, LARA and others in taking enforcement action in priority areas.
- Improved the Snowdrop Valley Park & Ride by working more closely with local interests and employing a seasonal manager of the scheme.
- Improved accessibility for people without cars.
- Made a major contribution to the design and implementation of a Heavy Goods Vehicle routing and signing scheme by introducing the North Hill bus Service.
- Introduction of specialist equipment to enable maintenance work on rights of way to be carried out more frequently.

#### 3.3 Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04

Completing the replacement of Tarr Steps toilets.	Tarr Steps is one of the most popular places on Exmoor. In March 2004 tenders were sought for this project and an early start is anticipated by the builders.
Completing the re-modelling of Blackmoor Gate toilets.	The toilets had suffered much vandalism and a project to re-model these toilets was completed and has been successful in combatting the vandalism.
Carrying out prioritised improvements identified in the survey of facilities for the disabled in the Authority's public toilets.	A comprehensive survey was carried out to identify the work that was needed. The essential work is being implemented, with priority given to those toilets in key visitor locations

<p>Further reducing the number of litter bins located in car parks and encourage people to take their litter home with them, and reduce the frequency of grass cutting to save resources and introduce a more “natural” appearance.</p>	<p>Litter bins are unsightly and can be counterproductive in keeping sites clean and tidy. 19 bins out of a total of 44 (43%) were successfully removed at the start of 2003. This has improved the appearance of our sites. The frequency of grass cutting has been reduced in some car parks (mainly in perimeter areas) in order to achieve a more natural appearance and provide a more suitable habitat for fauna and flora. This situation has been reviewed with an ecologist to inform plans for 2004/05.</p>
<p>Carrying out improvements at Malmsmead car park.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the year drainage and levelling work was carried out to improve the appearance and safety of this car park.</p>
<p>Operating mobile vending concessions at two car parks on a trial basis in 2003.</p>	<p>The Authority proposed to offer vending concessions on a trial basis at two car parks to provide an improved service to the public and generate income towards the upkeep of the car-parks. This had to be deferred for 12months.</p>
<p>Administering the work of, and providing guidance for, the Exmoor Local Access Forum in commenting on the draft maps of open country and starting work on the Exmoor Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>The Authority has guided the newly established Exmoor Local Access Forum in its task of commenting on the draft access maps arising from the phased implementation of the Countryside &amp; Rights of Way Act. Consultations have been held with Parish Councils on the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan although progress is largely determined at this stage by SCC/DCC, with whom the Authority is co-operating fully.</p>
<p>Collaborating with South West Lakes Trust and West Somerset District Council on a bid for European funding to develop Wimbleball Lake as a centre of excellence for water sports activities and training.</p>	<p>The Authority is collaborating with South West Lakes Trust in bidding for funds to enable developments to go ahead.</p>
<p>Working in partnership with West Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council and the Quantock Hills Joint Management Board on preparation of a bid for European funding for the Coleridge Way (Quantocks and Exmoor Bridleway) Project, including managing the day to day work of a temporary Project Officer to undertake this function.</p>	<p>Route(s) have been surveyed and consultation with the Highway Authority and landowners has been undertaken. A bid for external funding will be submitted in 2005.</p>
<p>Completing a bid for European funding for “Cyclex” (working title); a project to create new facilities and tourism opportunities for cyclists on Exmoor.</p>	<p>The Authority has collaborated with WSDC on preparation of a funding bid. Work is continuing with Devon County Council and others on the extension of the North Devon Cycle Route through Exmoor.</p>
<p>Undertaking a pilot project to study the impact of illegal off-road motorised activity on the ecology of sensitive areas of the National Park, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, to provide information as a basis for improved management of such activity.</p>	<p>The study started in September 2003 and is now likely to become a continuing activity. All motorised RUPP use is now being monitored and liaison with the Police taking place with a view to action being taken against future transgressors.</p>

Improving the National Park Authority's web site to provide information on opportunities for active recreation.	There has been close liaison with West Somerset District Council, Active Exmoor and the private tourism sector on promotion of active recreation opportunities to provide an improved range of information.
Seeking opportunities for innovative approaches to managing the pressures on the natural and built environment from visitors to the National Park through park and ride and other public transport schemes.	A new bus service has been piloted on North Hill (Sundays and Wednesdays). Performance will be measured annually.
Concluding the adoption of an Accord with the County Highway Authorities on design of, and consultation on, highway improvement and other schemes.	The draft has been revised to reflect recent changes in policy and Government guidance for further discussion with County Highway Authorities so that this accord can be completed.
Publishing the Exmoor Traffic and Transport Strategy in partnership with the County Councils.	The Strategy which will guide future initiatives to improve the management of traffic and transport on Exmoor has been reviewed and re-drafted in the light of changes in policy and Government guidance for further discussion with County Highway Authorities.
Continuing to work in partnership with the private sector, other local authorities, the Countryside Agency and other Government bodies to implement the QUEST Project (Quality Underpins Sustainable Tourism on Exmoor).	The Project has achieved its first year objectives, particularly the publication of the Strategic Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism, which has been adopted by principal stakeholders in tourism in the greater Exmoor area.
Developing the National Park Authority's web site to provide improved information on using public transport to access the National Park for recreation and tourism purposes.	The preparatory development work has been completed and will be linked on the Authority's web-site with ideas for days out in the 2004 summer season.
Improving the footpath through the meadow at Tarr Steps as part of the Tarr Steps Jubilee Trail.	The footpath has been improved to enable all visitors, including those using wheel-chairs to enjoy this part of Exmoor.

And in addition we have:-

- Extended the Field Services depot at Exford to provide better facilities and storage accommodation.
- Carried out monthly safety checks on all "A" category footpaths and bridleways, and an annual check on all other routes initiated.
- Carried out a re-organisation of the way in which volunteers assist the Authority in its work and devised a varied programme of work for them.
- Introduced further mechanical equipment to enable rights of way to be maintained more effectively and frequently.

### 3.4 Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by: -

- Completing the replacement of the public toilets at Tarr Steps.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact John Dunscombe]

- Installing a log boiler at the Field Services Depot so that off-cuts and waste wood can be used to provide heating instead of storage heaters and propane gas.  
[Objective 22/2] [Contact John Dunscombe]
- Anticipating the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act by
  - monitoring the present level of open access to set areas.
  - working with the Exmoor Local Access Forum.
  - maintaining close links with owners and managers of open access land.  
[Objective 13/3] [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- Monitoring vehicle use in quiet areas of the National Park.  
[Objective 8/2] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Completing the definition of route(s) for the Coleridge Way project, agreeing route(s) with landowners, establishing business networks, and submitting a bid for funding to Rural Renaissance/Objective 2 in partnership with SCC, QHJMB, and WSDC.  
[Objective 11/1] [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- Starting to implement the Cyclex Project, developing facilities and services to enhance opportunities for cycling on Exmoor.  
[Objective 11/1] [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- Working with the British Horse Society to produce a revised “Exmoor on Horseback” booklet, linked to the Somerset equine tourism project.  
[Objective 11/2] [Contact Robert Downes]
- Co-operating with Somerset County Council, West Somerset District Council and the Quantock Hills Joint Management Board to implement the Somerset equine tourism project.  
[Objective 11/2] [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- Promoting and expanding the visitor payback scheme.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Working in partnership with West Somerset District Council on implementing the Greater Exmoor Events and Festivals Project.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Publishing the Exmoor Traffic and Transport Strategy as an initiative for consultation with County Highway Authorities and District Councils.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Concluding the adoption of an Accord with the County Highway Authorities on design of, and consultation on, highway improvement and other schemes.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Undertaking a review of highway signage on Exmoor roads and in the wider area to eliminate unnecessary signs and ensure that all signing is effective.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Overseeing the implementation of the traffic management and parking proposals in the Dunster Action Plan by appropriate agencies.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]

- Establishing a programme to monitor traffic and parking in Lynton and Lynmouth in partnership with DCC and NDDC.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Publishing advisory coach and caravan routes.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Repeating the North Hill bus service with improvements during summer season.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Implementing a pilot bus service to the Brendon valley in North Devon.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Seeking opportunities for shuttle, or park and ride, schemes to reduce the impact of vehicles on the National Park.  
[Objective 15/7] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Contributing towards the achievement of objectives set out in the Dunster Action Plan including completion of a pilot scheme of events in September 2004; completion of a survey of visitors to Dunster during summer 2004, and collating data on traffic movements and parking.  
(Objectives 12/1; 12/2 and 12/3) [Contact Martin Evans]

### 3.5 Improvement Targets for 2004/05

- Implementing revised arrangements for the cleaning and maintenance of some toilets in order to achieve a more responsive level of service.  
*A key priority.* [Contact John Dunscombe]
- To ensure adequate access is available for the public by completing the assessment of requirements for access to open land (CRoW Act) and provide clear information to the public on implementation of the open access land provisions.  
*A key priority.* [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- To make an effective contribution to the preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans for Devon & Somerset. *A key priority.* [Contact Paul Hawkins]
- Carry out an annual check of all rights of way that are identified on the Definitive Map.
- Develop opportunities for local walk leaders and provide all necessary training in Health & Safety.
- Implementing an agreed programme to rationalise the public toilets provided by the Authority so that more resources can be directed towards toilets at key locations.
- Carrying out improvements to the car parks at Exford and Horner in order to improve the appearance and overcome long-term parking problems.
- Improve the response time for dealing with work on footpaths and bridleways.
- Improve the management of mountain bike activities by co-operating on the provision of purpose built facilities.
- Improve consultation procedures with Devon & Somerset County Councils on highway matters.

- Improve traffic by publishing advisory coach and caravan routes on the web-site and in leaflet form.
- Develop further the Exmoor Conservation Volunteer activities.

### 3.6 **Improvement Aspirations Beyond 2004/05**

- Remodelling the public toilets at Porlock Weir to provide facilities which are smart, easy to maintain and which comply fully with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Effectively operate the system for recording and publicising the availability of access land, and restrictions of access, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, to ensure that the public enjoys the new rights of access fully and that landowners' interests are protected.
- Improve facilities for off-road cycling to reduce pressure on vulnerable rights of way and conflicts with other recreation activities.
- Establish Exmoor as a centre of excellence for cycling.
- Integrate the development of opportunities for recreation with the development of sustainable tourism on Exmoor.
- Set up monitoring programmes for the recreational use of rights of way to provide information for policy and decision-making.
- Agree strategic guidance on managing traffic and transport on Exmoor which reflects the special qualities of the National Park.
- Set up and maintain effective consultation procedures with the County Councils on highway works likely to affect the character of the National Park.
- Encourage improved bus/rail interchange around the National Park to enable the promotion of public transport as a means of getting to the National Park.
- Set up additional park and ride and shuttle bus schemes to provide access to popular locations within the National Park without the need to use the car.
- Create up to 20km of new permissive routes and work to achieve the dedication of existing permissive paths.
- Improve and extend existing access for all routes and create new routes in popular areas through the Rights of Way Improvement Plans, including circular routes and easy access trails.
- Recruit a volunteers co-ordinator.

### 3.7 Financial Table £000

RECREATION MANAGEMENT	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	110.9	103.7	96.6	135.3	127.0	139.3
Other costs	156.5	165.7	223.0	239.3	154.4	139.4
Capital costs	87.3	82.4	87.8	102.6	88.3	91.3
Recharged support costs	313.3	258.3	327.5	331.7	338.6	373.3
Recharged Ranger costs	195.2	194.0	219.7	221.0	245.8	263.8
Recharged other costs	25.2	15.3	17.0	19.2	21.0	6.2
Recharged other costs	100.5	100.5	58.3	58.3	58.3	58.3
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>988.9</b>	<b>919.9</b>	<b>1029.9</b>	<b>1107.4</b>	<b>1033.4</b>	<b>1071.6</b>
Income - Sales, fees & charges	33.1	28.3	18.0	22.1	19.7	21.5
Income - Other external funding	0.0	17.2	0.0	56.4	0.0	0.0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>955.8</b>	<b>874.4</b>	<b>1011.9</b>	<b>1028.9</b>	<b>1013.7</b>	<b>1050.1</b>

### 3.8 Performance Indicators

	2001 / 02	2002 / 03	2003 / 04	Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04	2004/05
<b>RM1</b> The percentage of total length of footpath and other rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Anticipated 96%  Achieved: 96%	Anticipated 97%  Achieved: 96%	Anticipated: 96%  Achieved: 96%	   Achieved: 89%	Anticipated: 97%
<b>RM2</b> Percentage of public rights of way signposted where they leave a road.* (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Anticipated 96%  Achieved: 96%	Anticipated 97%  Achieved: 96%	Anticipated: 96%  Achieved: 96%	   Achieved: 92%	Anticipated: 97%
<b>TT2</b> Percentage of National Park Authority public meetings, events, walks and talks that are accessible by means of public transport. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Anticipated 45%  Achieved: 40%	Anticipated 50%  Achieved: 45%	Anticipated: 50%  Achieved: 43%	   Achieved: 80%	Anticipated: 50%

\* Some of these footpath signs omit the word “public” and so do not strictly meet the requirement of the 1968 Countryside Act. However, this will be changed when signs are replaced.

### 3.9 Summary of Performance in 2003/04 Rights of Way

**RM1** This is identical to the indicator BVPI 178 used by Highway Authorities. It is pleasing to note that this Authority is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> of all NPAs, underlining its reputation as excellent walking and riding country.

**RM2** Exmoor is the best performing NPA in this category.

#### Traffic & Transport

**TT2** Problems are encountered when attempting to promote meetings, events, walks and talks which can be accessed by public transport due to the poor coverage of the National Park by bus services. The lack of public transport is due in large part to the low and dispersed population, the concentration of people in a few centres, mainly along one

bus route, high levels of car ownership and Exmoor's relative remoteness from larger urban centres. These factors lead to low levels of demand for bus travel and poor coverage by bus services.

### 3.10 **Summary of Performance in 2004/05**

#### **Rights of Way**

**RM1 & RM2** In the spirit of continuous improvement, this authority will be working towards a target of 97% for the current year. Rights of way recording is being computerised during the year to improve the accuracy of this indicator.

#### **Traffic & Transport**

**TT2** Although every effort is made to arrange events, walks and talks for visitors to the National Park which can be accessed by public transport, these cannot be limited to locations served by the few bus routes. Similarly, opportunities to access meetings to serve the local community by public transport are very limited, particularly as evening bus services are sparse.

Opportunities will continue to be sought to both improve public transport and to arrange events which are aligned with public transport.

#### 4. **PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING**

##### 4.1 **Introduction**

Exmoor attracts well over 1million visitors each year. The Authority promotes opportunities for regional, national and international visitors as well as local people to understand more about Exmoor.

##### 4.2 **Improvements achieved by the Authority since 2001/02**

- Established closer working relationships with the tourism industry and tourism stakeholders generally through the QUEST\* Project, which has been facilitated by the Exmoor National Park Authority. ( \*QUEST stands for Quality Underpins Exmoor’s Sustainable Tourism)
- Played an important enabling role to help establish the Visit Exmoor partnership as the single organisation for tourism development on Exmoor.
- Undertook “Exmoor Awareness” training for tourism providers to improve understanding of the special qualities of the National Park.
- Contributed to the development of equine tourism on Exmoor by participating in partnership working with other local authorities and private sector interests.
- All visitor centres are now included in performance assessment surveys.
- Staff training has been delivered on “customer care” and “diversity awareness”.
- A review has been completed of the location and provision of countryside site boards.

##### 4.3 **Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04**

Updating the Interpretation at Blackmoor Gate in collaboration with Combe Martin Parish Council, Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council, Devon County Council South West Lakes Trust, National Trust etc.	Modern, up to date panels have been produced in the Authority’s corporate style. They provide improved information on opportunities for activities/enjoyment in the immediate surrounding area.
Developing a programme to upgrade accommodation at the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education to ensure all bedrooms have en suite shower facilities by 2005/06.	A programme has been developed to enhance accommodation facilities at the Pinkery Centre.
Achieving ‘Eco Centre’ status for the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education in 2003/04.	Pinkery Centre achieved “eco-status” in 2003/04 so that it can further demonstrate sustainable living. The renewable energy project and eco centre status have significantly enhanced the teaching and learning opportunities for visiting groups by offering first hand experience of what can be achieved by individuals within their own environments.
Developing detailed plans (by end 2003/04) and seek funding for the development of the County Gate Visitor Centre.	Detailed plans were developed and used in extensive consultations with the local community. As a result of local views on the project the decision was taken not to proceed further at this point in time.
Retaining Adventurous Activities Licence for the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor education.	The Centre was successful in retaining this licence for another year.

Working with partners and the local community, develop plans for development of the Lynmouth Pavilion.	Development proposals for this part of Lynmouth are continuing, and these will lead to the replacement of the present Visitor Centre.
Supporting an Exmoor 'Artist in Residence' to deliver two workshops involving at least four underrepresented groups using art to interpret Exmoor's special qualities.	This was successful and led to 46 participants from communities that are generally underrepresented getting directly involved with the special qualities of the National Park. Also the 'Exhibition' engaged with audiences in Taunton and other areas.
Involving a minimum of four underrepresented groups in activities relating to the special qualities of the National Park.	The environmental education team are increasingly demonstrating that the 'inclusion agenda' audience development is mainstreamed and is now part of routine Authority activity.
Implementing a programme of special events to mark the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary on National Park designation.	The programme commenced during 2003/04 and is intended to improve awareness and understanding of National Parks.
Reviewing the 'Exmoor Resource' concept in line with implementing electronic government advice and the developing national portal for National Parks.	This concept has been reviewed as part of the 4 year "Implementing Electronic Government" project. The "Exmoor Resource", an archive of information and publications about Exmoor, will be made available to the public digitally as part of the National Parks' Web Portal project.
Reviewing and enhance the Authority's digital image library.	The Authority picture library is now of higher quality. These images are routinely requested by other organisations and publishers.
Reviewing the role and function for tourism and the local community of the 12 local information points maintained by the National Park Authority.	The first stage in the review of the Local Information Points has taken place.
Working in partnership with West Somerset District Council on implementing the Greater Exmoor Events and Festivals Project.	The Authority has collaborated with West Somerset District Council on this important project. The business plan has been revised to meet the requirements of Government Office South West and preparations being made for the appointment of a project officer.
Developing the scope of the Exmoor Paths Partnership to include conservation projects, to promote partnerships between the National Park Authority and other organisations and to seek sponsorship from businesses.	The first edition of a newsletter has been published detailing the path improvement work which has been taking place on Exmoor using funding from visitor payback.
Continuing to work with the tourism industry to influence approaches to marketing Exmoor, to respond to the need for training and to facilitate networking of businesses to improve the quality of the tourism "product" on Exmoor.	The QUEST Project has developed a programme of action which includes market research, visitor surveys and training for tourism providers. The Authority has played a major part in establishing the Visit Exmoor Partnership which will market and promote sustainable tourism on Exmoor.

**And in addition we have:-**

- Through support for the Somerset Rural Youth Project helped the project attract £98000 from other sources to further the project.
- supported 2 'Big Green Days' at Nettlecombe Court which involved 10 schools in activities centred around recycling, renewable energy and mini-beasts. This was a

growth of 100% on the last year with plans to hold three events in 2004/05.

- Produced ‘Exmoor Explained’ – a summary of the State of the Park Report for education and general use.
- Installed 5 public internet access kiosks in three visitor centres - Lynmouth[1], Dunster [2] and Dulverton [2].

#### 4.4 **Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05**

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by: -

- Implementing a programme of events to mark 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Exmoor as a National Park - to be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2004.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Audience development to engage with ‘new’ groups to tackle social exclusion.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Dave Gurnett]
- Developing an ‘interpretation framework’ for Exmoor National Park working with partners and relevant organisations.  
[Objective 16/2] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Upgrading Pinkery Centre accommodation facilities by installing en-suite showers in the remaining bedrooms - to be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2005.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Alan Bailey]
- Evolving the State of the Park indicators to inform the planned National Park Management Plan consultation process.  
[Objective 16/1] [Contact Brian Pearce]
- Supporting partnership working with Exmoor based education teams and activity providers (eg GEEEF, South and North Exmoor Activities Officers, Somerset Rural Youth Project, Exmoor Curriculum).  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Developing a ‘menu’ of options for Education Team/Pinkery Centre activities and programmes.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Holding an ‘Eco Schools/Eco Centre’ workshop to disseminate good practice across Exmoor National Park.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Alan Bailey]
- Producing the annual Exmoor Visitor newspaper and two editions of Exmoor Parklife community newspaper.  
[Objective 16/4] [Contact Clare O’Connor]
- Developing action plans for Visitor Centres as a result of access audits completed in 2003/04.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Migrating the National Park website to agreed national portal systems and design.  
[Objective 16/1] [Contact Tim Braund]

- Installing Public Access Kiosks in Visitor Centres at Combe Martin and County Gate.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Implementing a signing and orientation project as part of the Dunster Action Plan.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Maintaining and developing partnerships with AONBs through (particularly) Southwest Protected Landscapes Forum and (eg) Southwest Coastpath Team.  
[Objective 16/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Supporting developments for the Lynmouth Pavilion Project including a visitor centre.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Supporting implementation of International Woodcarving Symposium targeting local schools and groups but also engaging new audiences.  
[Objective 14/1] [Contact Dave Gurnett]
- Publishing an updated FILEX series.  
[Objective 16/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Working with Southwest Lakes Trust, Calvert Trust and Forest Enterprise at Wistlandpound to develop an ‘all ability’ facility.  
[Objective 16/1] [Contact Tim Braund]
- Continuing the review of the role and effectiveness of Local Information Points and adopting a revised approach to provide regular training and an appropriate contribution to local businesses providing the service. This will include “re-branding” and refurbishing the LIPs, with preparation of free material for visitors and the local community.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Establishing the “Visit Exmoor” organisation in partnership with WSDC and the tourism sector and seeking funding to enable the organisation to function fully in the period 2005-2008.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Preparing for a major survey of visitors to the National Park in 2005 in partnership with UK national parks and other organisations.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Publishing the first ‘state of tourism’ report for Exmoor in 2004/5.  
[Objective 12/1] [Contact Martin Evans]
- Contributing towards the achievement of objectives set out in the Dunster Action Plan including completion of a study into signing and interpretation by end of September 2004; development of proposals for village trails etc.  
(Objectives 16/2 and 16/3) [Contact Tim Braund]

#### **4.5 Improvement Targets for 2004/05**

- Contribute to the operation of the Visit Exmoor Partnership to improve the promotion of sustainable tourism in the greater Exmoor area.  
*A key priority* [Contact Martin Evans]

- Help to secure the financial independence of Visit Exmoor, in co-operation with partners, by developing proposals for obtaining external funding.  
*A key priority* [Contact Martin Evans]
- Increase awareness of environmental issues by working more closely with local tourism providers to encourage environmentally sustainable business operations.
- Promote greater understanding of tourism on Exmoor by preparing a “State of Tourism” report.
- Complete a report on the future development of the National Park Authority’s Local Information Points to enable them to provide information more effectively to visitors and the local community.
- Establish key baseline sets of data to improve the measurement of performance.
- Develop and encourage new audiences to be engaged and involved with the National Park.
- Use Art as a medium to develop interpretation opportunities.
- Provide internet access for all staff at Visitor Centres.
- Carry out a feasibility study into the use of a wood-chip boiler to provide space and water heating at Pinkery, to almost eliminate the use of fossil fuels in operating the premises.

#### 4.6 **Improvement Aspirations Beyond 2004/05**

- Introduce an environmental accreditation scheme for tourism businesses to promote sustainable operation and to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of tourism.
- Introduce a programme of research and survey to provide information, particularly, on visitor perceptions and expenditure.
- Work with others on the creation and maintenance of an effective destination management system for the greater Exmoor area.
- Establish Exmoor as a premier destination for equine tourism in the UK.
- Develop the Authority’s Local Information Points an enhanced role as an integral part of the system for providing information to visitors.
- Extend the opening hours of Visitor Centres to provide a year round service for visitors.
- Develop an annual programme to re-furbish the interpretation and exhibition material at Visitor Centres.
- Provide improved ICT and Internet connections to the remote Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre.
- Further develop and enhance the Authority’s web-site.

#### 4.7 Financial table £000

<b>PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT</b>	<b>2002/03 BUDGET</b>	<b>2002/03 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2003/04 BUDGET</b>	<b>2003/04 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2004/05 ESTIMATE</b>	<b>2005/06 BASELINE</b>
Staff costs	257.9	285.0	309.3	302.8	358.8	363.1
Other costs	201.8	150.8	201.5	240.9	161.3	158.2
Capital costs	137.5	144.8	183.3	199.1	163.1	167.4
Recharged support costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged Ranger costs	52.2	51.9	58.8	59.1	65.8	70.6
Recharged other costs	13.2	16.5	13.1	12.8	11.9	15.7
Recharged other costs	75.5	75.5	43.8	43.8	43.8	43.8
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>738.1</b>	<b>724.5</b>	<b>809.8</b>	<b>858.5</b>	<b>804.7</b>	<b>818.8</b>
Income - Sales, fees & charges	161.2	173.9	153.4	175.3	165.3	181.4
Income – Other external funding	3.0	67.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>573.9</b>	<b>482.8</b>	<b>653.4</b>	<b>680.2</b>	<b>636.4</b>	<b>634.1</b>

#### 4.8 Performance Indicators

	<b>2001 / 02</b>	<b>2002 / 03</b>	<b>2003 / 04</b>	<b>Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
<b>PUI</b> National Park Visitor Centre effectiveness rating – average percentage score. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Target: 93% Achieved: 93%	Target: 93.5% Achieved: 84%	Target: 90% Achieved: 93.1%	Achieved: 86%	No survey is planned for 2004/05
<b>Local Indicator 1</b> No. of visitors to National Park Authority Visitor Centres	Target: 340000 Achieved: 366579	Target: 335000 Achieved: 377320	Target: 377000 Achieved: 347813		Target: 350000
<b>Local Indicator 2</b> Customer satisfaction rating (media, website, visitor centre users etc.)	Target: 80% Achieved: 89%	Target: 90% Achieved: Survey not carried out	Target: No survey Achieved: Survey not carried out		Target: 92%
<b>Local Indicator 3</b> Customer satisfaction rating – users of Pinkery Education Centre	Target: 95% Achieved: 98%	Target: 96% Achieved: 98%	Target: 97% Achieved: 96.7%		Target: 98%
<b>Local Indicator 4</b> Total Ranger contacts (Rights of Way issues, parish council matters etc)	Anticipated: 8500 Achieved: 8116	Anticipated 10000 Achieved: 9910	Anticipated: 10500 Achieved: 10117		Anticipated: 10500
<b>Local Indicator 5</b> Total number of volunteer days on projects led and/or supported by the National Park Authority. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Target: 675 Achieved: 357	Target: 540 Achieved: 578	Target: 500 Achieved: 353		Target: 500

#### 4.9 Summary of Performance in 2003/04

**PUI** A more robust and consistent surveying methodology was introduced which has confirmed confidence in the findings of the previous results. Also, a range of additional

training has been provided to staff in Visitor Centres which is likely to have contributed to these results. Exmoor National Park has come top in the customer satisfaction survey for the second time in three years.

**LI1** The number of visitors to Visitor centres has reverted to a level nearer that of 2000/01, before the impact of the events of 9/11 reduced the numbers holidaying abroad in the immediate aftermath.

**LI2** No survey was carried out in 2003/04.

**LI3** Although the target was not quite achieved, the Authority is pleased with the high satisfaction level shown and feels it reflects well on the work of the staff concerned and the continuing investment made in the centre.

#### 4.10 **Summary of Performance in 2004/05**

**PU1** It is not planned to carry out a survey in 2004/05. Standards of performance for National Park Visitor Centres are being reviewed with the intention of setting higher, improved standards for subsequent surveys.

**LI1** Early indications are that visitor numbers are likely to be similar to those in the previous year.

**LI2** A survey will be carried out this year and a target has been set to achieve a 92% satisfaction survey, compared with 90% in 2002/03, reflecting the effectiveness ratings of the centres in 2003/04 as well as the additional training provided to staff.

**LI3** The target satisfaction level has consistently increased each year and the Authority is confident that the input from the staff at the centre together with continued investment in facilities at the centre will prove that the target is realistic.

5. **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

5.1 **Introduction**

The NPA is the sole Planning Authority for the National Park area and deals with all planning applications. This forms part of the NPA’s remit for the conservation and enhancement of the special features of the area.

5.2 **Improvements Achieved by the Authority since 2001/02**

- Improvements have been made to the availability of planning advice by providing a weekly planning advice surgery in Porlock, increasing the amount of planning information on the Authority’s website and having a member of staff dedicated to dealing with general planning inquiries.
- The percentage of planning applications determined within 8 weeks has improved by 33%.
- All planning decisions have been in accordance with the Local Plan; there have been no departures.
- The quality of built development has improved due to better monitoring of compliance with planning conditions.
- Improved relations with Parish Councils through introducing a system to give feedback and explanations of planning decisions.

5.3 **Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04**

<p>Ensuring Members’ development control training visits take place to assess the quality of design and materials used in recently built development and to carry out planning training for parish councils on the development control process and the parish council role in planning.</p>	<p>The Development Control training tour for members took place on 12<sup>th</sup> September. This provided the opportunity for members to assess the quality of recent built housing development. It highlighted the importance of using quality, traditional and natural materials in new housing development and will assist the future performance of the Planning Committee with decisions in relation to the design of any new housing development.</p> <p>A parish council workshop programme was devised and five successful workshops were held. These are being evaluated in terms of success in improving the knowledge of the Authority’s planning role and of its perception by local communities and parish councils.</p>
<p>Maintaining the Authority’s position in the top 25% of all local planning authorities in relation to the speed of planning application determination.</p>	<p>The Authority succeeded in meeting the Government target of determining at least 80% of all applications within 8 weeks. In the third quarter of the year it was the second best performing National Park Authority.</p>
<p>Ensuring the planning delivery Grant is allocated to ensure that performance indicators are met and Best Value Inspector’s recommendations are implemented, - specifically to :</p>	

Produce comprehensive set of publicity/guidance leaflets/Planning Charter	These leaflets are in preparation, and will be on the Authority's web-site.
Extend planning surgery to Porlock/Wheddon Cross/Dunster	Arrangements made for a Planning Surgery to be held in Porlock which will increase accessibility of planning advice to local people and those unable to travel to Dulverton or Lynton.
Appoint development control planning assistant.	This appointment was made in October 2003 to provide improved accessibility of planning advice to the public.
Ensuring that the Implementing Electronic Government timescale in relation is met during the year and specifically to ensure that the Authority's PACS computer system is made compatible with the Planning portal to enable planning applications to be made on-line.	The overall timescale will be met to provide the public with various ways to contact the Authority at their convenience. It is intended to provide improved planning information pages on the Authority's web-site which will include more information and guidance on procedures and the level of service to be expected as well as an easily downloadable range of application forms.
Ensure that the agricultural occupancy survey is 75% complete by the end of the year.	This is important to ensure that planning conditions are being complied with and to maximise housing availability, but progress has been slower than planned as the focus of much work has been on meeting government targets on determination of planning applications.

And in addition we have:-

- Completed the 2003 Annual House Price Survey for Exmoor which guides decisions on affordable housing by demonstrating trends in prices etc.
- Instigated the under-grounding of the telephone wires from the Authority car park at Tarr Steps towards the River Barle to remove an eye-sore.

#### 5.4 Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by:-

- Implementing a programme of Members' development control training, consisting of a site visit tour to assess the quality of new development permitted in the National Park, particularly the quality of design and materials in relation to the special qualities of Exmoor and in the context of sustainability principles in new buildings.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]
- Completing the programme of Parish Council Planning Workshops and evaluating the effectiveness of the training in relation to improvements in the knowledge of the NPA's planning role and its perception by local communities and parish councils.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]
- Seeking to maintain the Authority's position within the top 25% of National Park Authorities in relation to meeting government targets on the determination of planning applications. Preparing a comprehensive set of publicity/guidance leaflets relating to the Authority's Planning policies and guidance on farming diversification opportunities.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]

- Appointing consultants to undertake a review of the Design Guide, together with local consultation with residents and architects to provide guidance on new development within the National Park which will include sustainability principles and energy efficiency and renewable energy in building design.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]
- Allocation of the annual Planning Delivery Grant to ensure that performance indicators are met in relation to Development Control and Local Plan preparation. Completing the plotting of all back histories of planning application files onto the computer system to improve IT support for planning applications and Local Searches.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]
- Ensuring that the Implementing Electronic Government timescale in relation to Planning is met during the year and specifically to ensure that the Authority's computer system is made compatible with the national Planning Portal to enable planning applications to be made on-line.  
[Objective 21/2] [Contact Chris France]

### 5.5 Improvement Targets for 2004/05

- Publish a comprehensive set of publicity and guidance leaflets on the Authority's planning policies and farm diversification opportunities.  
*A key priority.* [Contact Chris France]
- Publish an updated design guide which includes reference to sustainability principles, energy efficiency and renewable energy in building design.  
*A key priority.* [Contact Chris France]
- Provide an improved level of training for members of the Planning Committee.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training given to Parish Councils to inform future training provision.

### 5.6 Improvement aspirations beyond 2004/05

- To ensure the development control service is fully e-enabled by December 2005, so that applications and representations can be submitted electronically and applications can be 'tracked' on-line.
- To implement a document management scanning system so that applications are held in electronic format and that past applications are archived.
- To operate the planning service in a way which meets the internal sustainability performance targets as identified by the Authority's Sustainability Group.
- To implement improvements to the service in relation to its contact and involvement with Parish Councils, arising from the evaluation of the Planning Parish Workshops held in 2003/04.
- To review the efficiency of the Planning Committee, in relation to its size in the light of external recommendations from the Audit Commission and Standards Inspectors.
- To consider improvements to the accessibility of planning advice to farmers/landowners through improved joint working (including joint site visits) with officers of West Somerset and North Devon District Councils.

## 5.7 Financial table £000

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	210.7	213.7	207.2	213.9	243.2	264.9
Other costs	23.0	18.5	37.9	27.7	25.0	26.7
Planning Delivery Grant	0.0	0.0	75.0	75.0	76.4	76.4
Recharged support costs	102.9	99.4	117.9	121.2	135.5	126.6
Recharged Field Services Team costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged Ranger costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged other costs	6.6	8.2	8.4	8.2	11.9	10.0
Capital costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>343.2</b>	<b>339.8</b>	<b>446.4</b>	<b>446.0</b>	<b>492.0</b>	<b>504.6</b>
Income – sales, fees & charges	58.7	58.1	59.8	61.6	64.2	67.7
Income – Other external funding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>284.5</b>	<b>281.7</b>	<b>386.6</b>	<b>384.4</b>	<b>427.8</b>	<b>436.9</b>

## 5.8 Performance Indicators

	2001 / 02	2002 / 03	2003 / 04	Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04	2004/05
<b>BVPI 106</b> Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 80% Achieved: 10%	Target: 50% Achieved: 71%	Target: 60% Achieved: 64%	Achieved: 80%	Target: 60% (a target set by the Govt.)
<b>BVPI 107</b> Planning cost per head of population. (ODPM national indicator) NB: Excludes Planning Delivery Grant	Anticipated £22.65  Achieved: £29.42	Anticipated £38.16  Achieved: £36.85	Anticipated: £32.77  Achieved: £33.81	Achieved: £31.30	Ceases to be a National Indicator.
<b>BVPI 109</b> Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the Government's new development control targets to determine: (ODPM national indicator)					
(a) 60% of major applications in 13 weeks.	Target: 60%  Achieved: No major applications	Target: 60%  Achieved: No major applications	Target: 60%  Achieved: No major applications	Achieved: 50%	Target: 60% (a target set by the Govt.)
(b) 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks.	Target: 65%  Achieved: 74%	Target: 65%  Achieved: 75%	Target: 75%  Achieved: 76%	Achieved: 76%	Target: 65% (a target set by the Govt.)
(c) 80% of other applications in 8 weeks.	Target: 80%  Achieved: 55%	Target: 80%  Achieved: 79%	Target: 80%  Achieved: 84%	Achieved: 84%	Target: 80% (a target set by the Govt.)
<b>BVPI 111</b> The percentage of applicants satisfied with the service received. (ODPM national indicator)	New indicator for 2003 /04		Target: 75% Achieved: 92%	Achieved: 87%	Target: 75%

<b>BVPI 188</b> The number of decisions delegated to officers as a percentage of all decisions. (ODPM national indicator, but becoming a Local Indicator from 2004/05)	Target: 80% Achieved: 66%	Target: 75% Achieved: 80%	Target: 80% Achieved: 84%	Achieved: 84%	Target: 80%
<b>BVPI 200</b> Plan making a) Is there a development Plan that has been adopted in the last 5 years ? b) Are there proposals for an alteration or improvement? (ODPM national indicator)	New indicator for 2003 /04	Achieved: a) No b) Yes	Target: a) Yes b) No  Achieved: a) No b) Yes	Achieved: a) No b) Yes	Target: a) Yes b) Yes
<b>BV 204</b> - The percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications.	New indicator for 2004/05				Anticipated: Less than 50% above the national average – a Govt. expectation
<b>BV 205</b> Quality of service checklist	New indicator for 2004/05				Target: 75%
<b>Local Indicator 1</b> Number of planning applications received.	Anticipated 375 Achieved: 295	Anticipated 350 Achieved: 332	Anticipated: 350 Achieved: 369		Anticipated: 375
<b>Local Indicator 2</b> No. of local searches processed.	Anticipated 450 Achieved: 461	Anticipated 450 Achieved: 446	Anticipated: 450 Achieved: 266		Anticipated: 450

## 5.9 Summary of performance in 2003/04

**BVPI 109** This has been a good year for improvements to the development control service in the context of meeting government performance targets in relation to determination times for planning applications. Targets for all categories of planning application were met, with 80% of all planning applications determined within the eight week limit. This has been achieved by the effective allocation of the Authority's Planning Delivery Grant, awarded in April 2003 which has enabled a new assistant planning officer post to be created to focus on minor applications and to deal with general planning inquiries.

**BVPI 188** The level of delegation to officers has also been maintained at 80% of all applications determined, as a result of confirmation of the permanent adoption of the new scheme of delegation in November 2002.

**BVPI 200** Further progress has been achieved in the formal process of the Local Plan Review with the publication of the revised Deposit Plan at the start of the year and the Public local Inquiry held in December 2003. The completion of these formal stages is recognised by the amount of Planning Delivery Grant Award and this enabled the Authority to receive over £76,000 additional funding for further improvements to be made to the planning service in 2004/05.

## 5.10 Summary of anticipated performance in 2004/05

**BVPI 109** Again, the main allocation of the Planning Delivery Grant reflects the importance of maintaining adequate resources to provide an effective service and the continuation of the Assistant Planning Officer post will help the team to maintain the achievement of the government targets relating to planning application determination. PDG will also reflect the Authority's performance in relation to the outcome of Section 78 Appeals and particular attention will be given to this area which is now introduced as a separate indicator as BVP 204.

**BVP188** This target ceases to be a National Indicator, though it is still a valuable measure of an Authority's ability to perform an efficient, yet transparent and democratic planning service. It is therefore to be retained as a Local Indicator.

**BVPI 200** With regard to progress on the Local Plan review, it is anticipated that the final two formal stages of preparation will be completed, following the publication of the Inspector's Report in June 2004. These are the publication of the Modifications to the Plan in August and the resolution to adopt the Local Plan Review before the end of the calendar year. The initial formal stages of the new Local Development Framework will also commence under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, with the preparation of a Local Development Scheme and Consultation on the Strategy and Core Policies of the LDF by the end of March 2005. Additionally, as joint strategic planning authority, it is anticipated that the Somerset and Exmoor Joint Structure Plan will be adopted before the end of the year, following the Examination in Public in November.

**BVP205** A new quality of service checklist has been introduced to enable an assessment of an authority's performance in relation to quality measures in addition to quantity. The indicators relate to the availability of specialist advice available to planning officers (e.g., design, landscape and Archaeological expertise), the availability and quality of pre-application advice and the accessibility of the planning service electronically. It is anticipated that the NPA will score well on these issues, with a well established system of pre-application advice and in-house specialists available and a top quartile figure has been set.

## 6. FORWARD PLANNING

### 6.1 Introduction

For the National Park Authority to do its work it needs accurate and plentiful information on which to formulate plans for the future, be it for planning control or for wider strategic purposes. The Authority has a newly adopted strategic five year Management Plan and is in the process of reviewing its Local Development Plan and Joint Structure Plan in conjunction with Somerset County Council.

### 6.2 Improvements achieved by the Authority since 2001/02

- An indicative Park-wide housing needs target has been produced based on 7 parish surveys to inform the Local Plan Review to inform the Local Plan Review.
- The external funding attracted to Exmoor has increased as a result the Authority's decision to contribute to the funding of 2 European Advisor posts by West Somerset District Council

### 6.3 Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04

Implementing the local needs housing policies within the Local Plan by completing the Review. The key dates are :	This is progressing on schedule and the Inspector's report is expected to be received in April 2004.
Local Plan Revised Deposit published April 2003	
Public Local Inquiry – November 2003	
Publish Inspector's Report – April 2004	
Contributing to the preparation of Sub-Regional Planning Strategies in relation to the National Park.	The Authority has been fully involved in consultations regarding the treatment of National Parks within the Regional Spatial Strategy. There is a draft agreement for district and county councils and National Park Authority's to undertake specific strategic planning work on behalf of the South West Regional Assembly. The Authority is represented on the Rural Issues Task Group which will ensure input to specific rural matters and the issues to be addressed in the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategies.
Contributing to the preparation of the Exmoor Countryside and Coast LSP Community Strategy.	The Authority was closely involved in the preparation of this strategy and will ensure it retains its importance by ensuring compatibility between the Community Strategy and the National Park Local Development Framework.
Continuing to work through the Rural Housing Enabler Project to produce 4 parish housing needs surveys within the National Park during the year.	Seven housing needs surveys have been completed within the National Park to assist in the provision of affordable housing for local people.
Setting up an Independent Grant Advisory Panel for the Sustainable Development Fund and appoint Sustainable development Fund Officer	The Independent Advisory Panel was established and a Project Officer appointed. 35 projects were offered grant aid from 112 expressions of interest, benefiting 1700

to administer the Fund and provide advice and assistance in external funding bids for NPA projects.	young people and over 800 businesses and involving 78 community and voluntary groups through 45 new partnerships. The total value of the 35 supported projects is £1,354,146 with the SDF offering £352,478 (26%) matching £879,731 (65%) of other funding and £121,937 (9%) of gifted time and materials.
Submitting bids for Regional Development Agency funding through County Rural Renaissance programmes and a South West National Parks Rural Renaissance bid.	The Authority worked with Somerset & Devon County Councils to submit a bid for funding from Rural Renaissance funds and is working on a delivery plan so that various socio-economic projects can proceed.
Contributing to the RDAs Coastal and Market Towns Initiative, ensuring that National Park projects are included in programmes for Minehead, Lynton, and South Molton.	The Authority is actively engaged with this initiative in order to realise improvements in various parts of the National Park.
Contributing to the Lynmouth Pavilion Marine Project as part of the Lynton and Lynmouth Coastal Towns Initiative.	The Authority is keen to have improved Visitor Centre facilities in Lynmouth and has worked closely with North Devon District Council.

And in addition we have:-

- Obtained a successful sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan Review.
- Commenced the Review of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Structure Plan which will provide an interim opportunity to update some policies and objectives.

#### 6.4 Performance and Plan of Action for 2004/05

During the year we will be implementing the objectives set out in the Exmoor National Park Management Plan by: -

- Completing the Review of the National Park Local Plan, by publication of Inspector's Report, preparation of Modifications to Policies and Adoption of the new Plan.  
[Objective 20/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance on Housing Policies in the Local Plan to assist applications submitted for local needs affordable housing.  
[Objective 20/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Providing input to the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy to ensure adequate recognition and strategic protection of National Park purposes to cover the eventual removal of Structure Plan policies.  
[Objective 21/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Completing the Alteration of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan – ensuring that policies relating to Exmoor are acceptable in terms of safeguarding National Park purposes.  
[Objective 20/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Completing the third year of the first phase of the Rural Housing Enabler project.  
[Objective 20/2] [Contact Trudy Robinson]
- Continuing the second year of the Sustainable Development Fund.  
[Objective 20/2] [Contact Phil Cookson]

- Continuing involvement as a partner in the ‘Channel Life’ Lynmouth pavilion project and providing input to the funding submission.  
[Objective 19/2] [Contact Chris France]
- Completing the Draft Local Development Scheme setting out the scope of the Local Development Framework and its timetable for submission to the Government Office.  
[Objective 20/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Completing the options for the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework by March 2005.  
[Objective 20/1] [Contact Ruth McArthur]

#### 6.5 Improvement targets for 2004/05

- Have an updated Local Plan Framework to guide the determination of planning applications. *A key priority.* [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Assist local needs affordable housing planning applications by producing Supplementary planning guidance on housing policies.  
*A key priority.* [Contact Ruth McArthur]
- Ensure the Regional Spatial Strategy has adequate recognition of and strategic protection of national park purposes.  
*A key priority.* [Contact Ruth McArthur]

#### 6.6 Improvement aspirations beyond 2004/05

- To adopt the new Local Development Framework by March 2007.
- To adopt an effective and workable Design Guide to help produce sustainable and appropriate contemporary development within the National Park.
- To improve joint working with the district councils to produce joint supplementary planning documents on appropriate topics.
- To ensure effective community participation and contribution to planning policy documents produced by the NPA.
- To produce and implement a programme of Action Plans and Conservation Area Enhancement Schemes to address the issues, opportunities and problems within Exmoor’s built environment.

#### 6.7 Financial Table £000

FORWARD PLANNING	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	107.0	115.5	53.9	99.2	65.4	71.7
Other costs	131.4	53.3	84.4	76.6	124.8	2.8
Sustainable Development Grant allocation	125.0	125.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	200.0
Recharged support costs	64.7	49.2	41.3	50.8	55.8	32.4
Recharged Field Serv. Team costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged Ranger costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged other costs	4.7	5.9	5.6	5.5	4.0	6.7
Capital costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>432.8</b>	<b>348.9</b>	<b>385.2</b>	<b>432.1</b>	<b>450.0</b>	<b>313.6</b>
Income – sales, fees & charges	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Income – Other external funding	28.6	40.8	0.0	37.7	0.0	0.0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>404.2</b>	<b>303.7</b>	<b>385.2</b>	<b>394.4</b>	<b>450.0</b>	<b>313.6</b>

7. **CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC CORE**  
(*ie Corporate Management & Administration*)

7.1 **Objectives**

To provide the corporate management of the Exmoor National Park Authority and the effective and efficient administration of support activities.

7.2 **Improvements Achieved Since 2001**

- The Authority has had a rigorous approach to budgetary control and financial prudence and has introduced performance management to improve efficiency. Unqualified Audit Reports have been received and the authority has kept within budgets each year.
- Provided a Management Development Programme for senior managers (2001/02), Line Managers (2002/03) and potential managers (2003/04).
- Implemented a programme to tailor training opportunities to job requirements and carry out a thorough evaluation of training that is provided. An annual training programme is now prepared.
- Carried out a job evaluation exercise to ensure it complies with equal opportunities legislation.
- Altered the cycle of committee meetings so as to hold fewer full meetings and allow more flexible member involvement through working and advisory groups.
- Introduced co-ordinated purchasing of protective clothing and uniforms to achieve a corporate style for as well as lower prices through economies of scale.
- Sourced all electricity supplies from a “green” source, to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.
- Increased the monitoring of all fuel use with a view to reducing CO2 emissions resulting from the activities of the Authority.
- Provided additional training and awareness opportunities to members to increase their knowledge and understanding of National Park matters.
- Achieved and maintained Investor in People status.
- Improved the communications infrastructure by installing a new phone system.
- Developing the web-site so that many application forms are available on-line.

7.3 **Proposed Actions and Actual Achievements for 2003/04**

Completing the job evaluation review.	The job descriptions of all staff have been updated for the first time since the Park Authority was established and changes made in line with a revised salary structure.
Appointing an Independent Remuneration Panel and produce a revised scheme of allowances for members.	A new scheme of Members’ Allowances was introduced on 1 October as a result of changes to legislation, and a decision was made to prepare job descriptions to cover the role of members.

Completing the second year of the Implementing Electronic Government programme	The Authority was successful in obtaining funding for IEG – Year2 and the funding was fully spent on achieving the agreed objectives.
As part of the IEG process preparing to introduce a Customer Relations Management system to enable a more comprehensive service to be provided to the public.	The Lake District is currently piloting this during 2003/04, with this Authority monitoring progress with the intention of implementing it in 2004/05, unless in practice the functionality of the Document Management System already undergoing installation provides an adequate alternative solution.
Procuring a Document Management system to provide better access to information.	After thorough evaluation, a Document Management System has been acquired. When installation is complete, early in 2004/05 it will provide the Authority with a more efficient and effective way of managing the information it receives and generates.
Completing the re-location of the central bookstore.	A redundant store building already owned by the Authority near the main offices has been renovated so that a lease on the existing inconveniently situated store a mile away can be relinquished. The new store is in use and has increased efficiency.
Retaining Investor in People status.	A corporate training programme has been introduced and a Management Training programme (phase III) delivered as part of the Authority's on-going efforts to ensure it retains the Investor in People award.
Developing a prevention of Stress at Work policy.	The stress at Work policy has been drafted and has the potential when implemented to improve efficiency by reducing staff absence.
Carrying out a periodic inspection of fixed electrical systems within our properties	This was successfully completed and a programme to carry out the identified improvements is under preparation in order to provide an improved level of safety.
Considering more use of staff secondments with other National Parks, Countryside Agency etc. (Defra review recommendation)	The Authority agreed to consider staff secondments which were advocated in a review of National Park Authorities by Defra to promote greater exchanges of ideas and understanding of how others operate and so improve the way such bodies work together.
Reviewing decision making structures with the aim of achieving more streamlined processes and structures. (Defra review recommendation)	The Authority considered a report on working groups and implemented the recommendations from Sept 2003 and has achieved an improved system with more appropriate member involvement.

And in addition we have:-

- Commissioned Somerset Scientific Services to carry out a survey of various properties in April in order that the Authority can comply with requirements of new regulations concerning asbestos in buildings.
- Drafted a Risk Management strategy to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the long term and which should be implemented during 2004/05.

- Obtained survey reports on all premises relating to access under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act.

#### 7.4 Performance and Plan of Action 2004/05

This includes the corporate management of the Authority together with the work of the Monitoring Officer, internal and external auditors etc. Much of the other work is listed here because the activities are Authority wide and underpins the endeavours of the organisation in delivering the objectives of the National Park Management Plan in an economic, effective and efficient manner and ensures the Authority operates within legislative requirements. However, in accordance with accounting codes of practice much of the ongoing work, such as payment of accounts, secretarial services, personnel services and IT are re-charged on a proportionate basis to the other functional areas of activity.

Within the agreed budget and in support of front line operational staff implementing the National Park Management Plan we will:-

- Complete surveys of premises to check for the presence of asbestos, so that a register can be compiled and any necessary action taken. [Contact John Dunscombe]
- Review the operation of the new Scheme of Members Allowances after 12 months use. Take the opportunity to introduce a flat rate scheme of mileage allowances for members using their own vehicles to encourage the use of more fuel efficient vehicles. [Contact John Dunscombe]
- Carry out a revaluation of land and property to aid decisions on the deployment of assets. [Contact Charles Burrows]
- Review the Authority's Publications Scheme. [Contact John Dunscombe]
- Undertake the self assessment process as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. [Contact Charles Burrows]
- Maintain an IT equipment replacement programme. [Contact Ian Mitchell]
- Adopt a comprehensive equality policy. [Contact Rachel Oxenham]
- Review the Authority's Financial Regulations. [Contact Charles Burrows]
- Introduce revised Standing Orders relating to contracts. [Contact Charles Burrows]
- Undergo an Investor in People re-assessment process to maintain IIP status. [Contact Rachel Oxenham]
- As part of the Implementing Electronic Government process:-
  - Establish the National Parks Internet Portal on the internet.
  - Provide training for staff to increase IT skills.
  - Introduce mapping facilities for a wider range of staff.
  - Implement the Document Management System.

[Contact Ian Mitchell]

## 7.5 Improvement targets for 2004/05

- Introduce a Document Management System and a Customer Relations Management system in order to provide a more efficient service to our customers, by enabling all staff to be able to retrieve data. *A key priority.* [Contact Ian Mitchell]
- Introduce an ICT help desk and improved systems for dealing with any ICT problems. Ensure unplanned downtime of the computer network between 9am and 5pm does not exceed 0.5%. *A key priority.* [Contact Ian Mitchell]
- The arrangement where Somerset County Council provided a conveyancy service will be replaced by the Authority making its own arrangements in order to obtain a more responsive service, with a target of ensuring all correspondence relating to these transactions is dealt with within 5 working days.
- In partnership with others introduce e-procurement facilities with a target of e-enabling orders for goods and services.

## 7.6 Improvement aspirations beyond 2004/05

- Provide a purpose built Committee Room.
- Ensure all premises fully meet all requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Provide a lift for disabled people in the Town Centre offices, in collaboration with the Dulverton Heritage Centre.
- Become a full member of “Somerset Influence” to obtain the benefits of their public consultation opportunities and expertise.

## 7.7 Financial Table £000

CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC CORE	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
Staff costs	522.1	492.0	552.4	541.9	602.7	653.7
Other costs	411.4	409.0	492.7	560.9	470.4	448.7
Implementing Electronic Government project	200.0	83.8	200.0	316.2	250.0	150.0
Capital expenditure	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged support costs	-735.9	-738.0	-771.8	-829.8	-828.6	-797.5
Recharged Field Serv. Team costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged Ranger costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recharged other costs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital costs	46.4	46.4	35.3	35.3	35.3	35.3
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>444.0</b>	<b>308.2</b>	<b>508.6</b>	<b>624.5</b>	<b>529.8</b>	<b>490.2</b>
Income - sales, fees & charges	48.1	66.7	46.5	73.7	42.4	51.0
Income - other external funding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>395.9</b>	<b>241.5</b>	<b>462.1</b>	<b>550.8</b>	<b>487.4</b>	<b>439.2</b>

## 7.8 Performance Indicators

	2001 / 02	2002 / 03	2003 / 04	Top Quartile English National Parks 2003 / 04	2004/05
<b>BVPI 2a</b> The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms. (ODPM national indicator)	New indicator	Target: Level one of the equality standard  Achieved: This Authority has not yet adopted the equality standard for Local Govt.	Target: Level one of the equality standard  Achieved: This Authority has not yet adopted the equality standard for Local Govt.	Achieved: Equality standard adopted	Target: Level one of the equality standard
<b>BVPI 8</b> The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services, which were paid by the Authority within 30 days of such, notices being received by the Authority. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 97.5%  Achieved: 96.25%	Target: 100%  Achieved: 95.7%	Target: 100% (Target set by Govt.) Achieved: 96.8%	Achieved: 96.3%	Target: 100% (Target set by Govt.)
<b>BVPI 12</b> The number of working days/shifts per employee lost due to sickness absence. (ODPM national indicator)	Anticipated: 5.5  Achieved: 5.8	Anticipated: 5.0  Achieved: 5.3	Anticipated: 5.0  Achieved: 10.9	Achieved: 5.3days	Anticipated: 5.0
<b>BVPI 14</b> The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill health retirements) as a percentage of the total workforce. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%
<b>BVPI 15</b> The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 0% Achieved: 0%	Target: 0% Achieved: 0%	Target: : 0% Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%
<b>BVPI 16A</b> The number of Authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition as a percentage of the total NPA workforce. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 1%  Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 2.1%	Target: 1%
<b>BVPI 16B</b> The number of economically active disabled people within the National Park area compared with the number of economically active. (2001 census) (ODPM national indicator)	New indicator	Anticipated: Not set  Achieved: 14.4%	Anticipated: Not set  Achieved: 14.4%		Anticipated: 14.4%
<b>BVPI 17A</b> Minority ethnic community staff as a percentage of the total NPA workforce. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 1%  Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 1%	Target: 1%

<b>BVPI 17B</b> The number of economically active ethnic community people within the National Park area compared with the number of economically active. (2001 census) (ODPM national indicator)	New indicator	Anticipated: Not set  Achieved: 0.53%	Anticipated: Not set  Achieved: 0.53%		Anticipated: 0.53%
<b>BVPI 156</b> The percentage of Authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 0%  Achieved: 0%	Target: 33%  Achieved: 0%	Achieved: 85%	Target: 15%
<b>BVPI 157</b> The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a percentage of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery. (ODPM national indicator)	Target: 25%  Achieved: 45%	Target: 55%  Achieved: 45%	Target: 54%  Achieved: 56%	Achieved: 74%	Target: 80%
<b>CDC1 Percentage</b> changes in energy use per head of staff in all National Park Authority operational buildings. (Indicator used by all National Park Authorities)	Target: Not set  Achieved: -4%	Target: -2%  Achieved: -4.7%	Target: -2%  Achieved: -2.6%		Target: -2%
<b>Local indicator 1</b> Number of training days per member	Target: 5  Achieved: 3.9	Target: 5  Achieved: 3.5	Target: 5  Achieved: 3.25		Target: 5
<b>Local Indicator 2</b> The number of complaints in a financial year to the Commission for Local Government Administration in England that were classified as maladministration’.	Forecast: 0  Achieved: 0	Anticipated: 0  Achieved: 1	Anticipated: 0  Achieved: 0		Anticipated: 0
<b>Local Indicator 3</b> Persons who leave the employment of the Authority voluntarily as a percentage of employees in post.	Anticipated: 10%  Achieved: 7.7%	Anticipated: 10%  Achieved: 11%	Anticipated: 10%  Achieved: 6.5%		Anticipated: 10%

## 7.9 Summary of performance in 2003/04

**BVPI2a** The National Parks are working collectively to pursue this. Good progress has been made and adoption of this policy by the Authority is now imminent.

**BVPI8** The Authority’s performance improved over the previous year and it investigates identified delays in order to work towards the Government target.

**BVPI12** There have been a number of long term absences which account for the particular increase in sickness absence. If these cases are discounted, performance would have been as anticipated.

**BVPI16A** The authority has drafted an equal opportunity policy in line with current legislative requirements. Because of the small number of staff, the success of one person declaring that they are disabled would enable the Authority to achieve its target.

**BVPI17A** The census revealed that there are few economically active people from ethnic communities within Exmoor and this obviously has an impact on the numbers seeking employment.

**BVPI 156** An Audit has been carried out of all the Authority’s buildings, including toilets etc, to identify the extent of the work required to “score” under this indicator. The definition of this indicator is based on current Building Regulation requirements, and it is

not easy to achieve this level of compliance as few of the Authority's buildings are new. Two are Listed Building where it is not feasible to make adaptations such as changes to stairs etc in order to comply.

**BVPI 157** Good progress has been made and the Authority is on target to e-enable many services.

#### 7.10 **Summary of anticipated performance in 2004/05**

**BVPI2a** An equality policy and implementation framework will be considered by the Resources Committee at its July meeting.

**BVPI8** It is hoped to maintain the continuous improvement on this indicator in order to work towards achieving the Government's target.

**BVPI12** A stress policy has been adopted by the Authority, which it is hoped will help to reduce the level of long-term absence that prevailed in 2003/04. Generally, sickness absence compares favourably with other organisations.

**BVPI16A/17A** The Authority will soon be adopting an Equality policy, as set out above.

**BVPI156** The Authority will be pursuing this and ensuring that its interpretation of this indicator is comparable with others. In the meantime it is ensuring that facilities meet the needs of disabled people in its stock of toilets – although these do not come within the scope of this indicator.

## DETAILED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	2002/03 BUDGET	2002/03 ACTUAL	2003/04 BUDGET	2003/04 ACTUAL	2004/05 ESTIMATE	2005/06 BASELINE
<b>EXPENDITURE:-</b>						
Conservation of Natural Environment	829.1	768.8	782.3	770.9	820.6	697.9
Conservation of Cultural Heritage	171.4	550.4	172.2	174.8	168.5	147.7
Recreation Management	455.2	452.3	465.6	535.6	428.0	428.3
Promoting Understanding	672.6	781.1	938.0	968.5	727.0	732.5
Traffic & Transport	21.2	21.9	11.8	26.1	16.1	0.0
Rangers, Field Services & Volunteers	706.2	645.7	758.7	790.3	810.6	883.5
Development Control	336.6	331.6	513.0	437.8	480.0	418.1
Forward Planning	428.1	218.0	379.6	226.6	446.0	306.9
Corporate & Democratic Core	443.9	308.2	508.5	624.5	529.8	490.2
Training & Staff Development	38.9	48.5	42.5	41.7	45.7	50.9
Capital costs included above	-473.8	-473.8	-283.6	-283.6	-283.6	-283.6
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3629.6</b>	<b>3652.4</b>	<b>4288.6</b>	<b>4331.3</b>	<b>4188.6</b>	<b>3872.4</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE FUNDED BY:-</b>						
National Park Grant	2201.1	2201.1	2339.2	2339.2	3090.8	3090.8
Levies on Principal Authorities (Replaced by increased NPG from 2004/05)	733.7	733.7	779.7	779.7	0.0	0.0
Additional Grants:-						
Additional NPG	0.0	0.0	200.0	200.0	0.0	0.0
Implementing Electronic Government	200.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	250.0*	150.0*
Sustainable Development Grant	125.0	125.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	200.0*
Planning Delivery Grant	0.0	0.0	75.0	75.0	76.4	76.4*
Income	435.8	890.8	661.0	576.3	383.5	355.2
Transfers to (-)/ from earmarked reserves	-66.0	-498.2	-166.3	-38.9	187.9	0.0
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3629.6</b>	<b>3652.4</b>	<b>4288.6</b>	<b>4331.3</b>	<b>4188.6</b>	<b>3872.4</b>
* Estimated						
Total recharged support costs	735.9	738.0	771.8	829.8	828.6	797.5

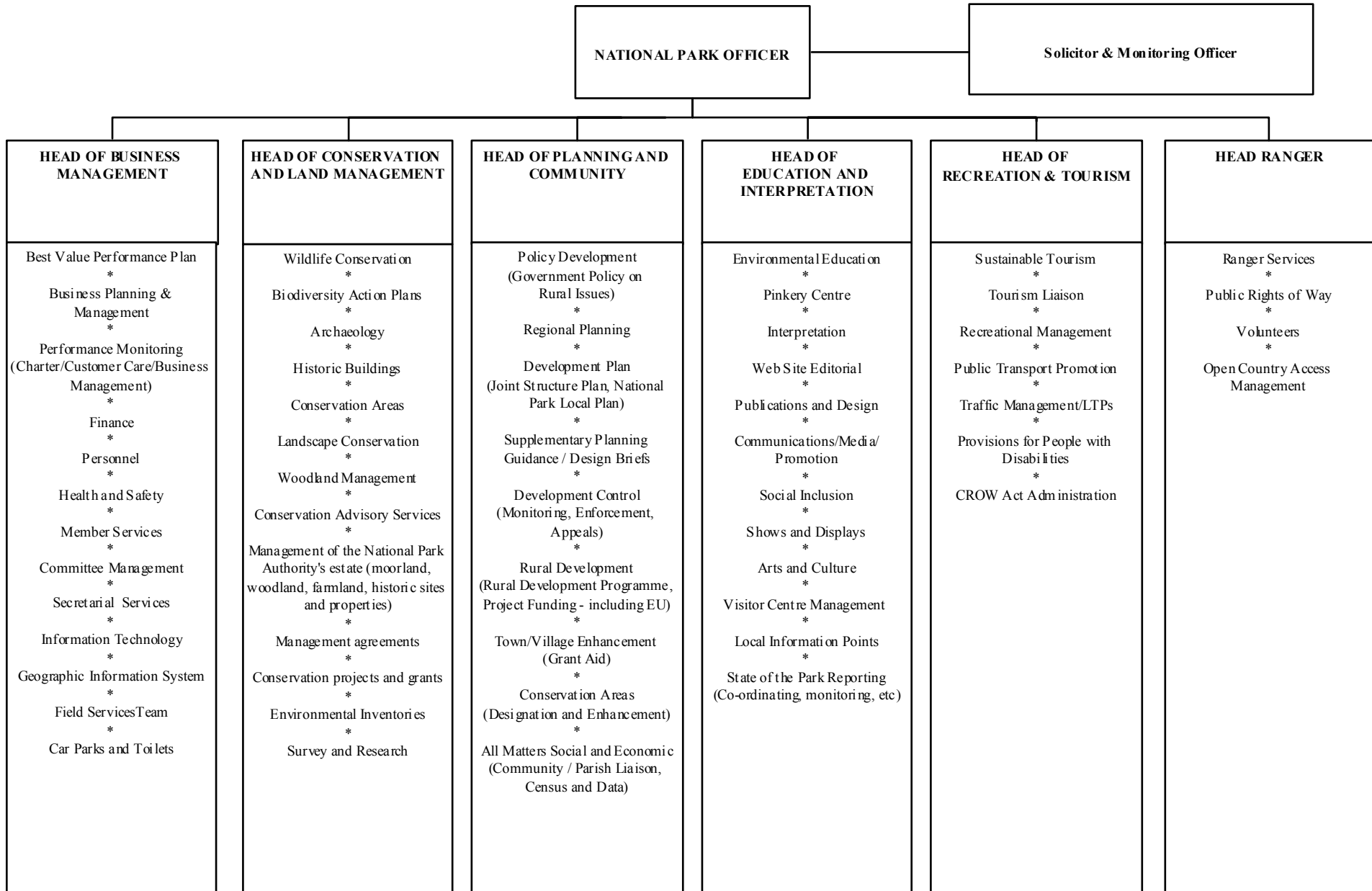
## PROJECTS WITH FUNDING FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES

The National Park Authority works with many partners to help achieve the National Park purposes.

Projects which have attracted significant external funding to the Exmoor area include:-

PROJECT <i>with overall cost</i>	CONTRIBUTION FROM NPA		
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Simonsbath Sawmill Restoration -£522000	£102793	£17952	£32270
Conservation Grants Scheme - £16000	0	£3000	£5000
English Heritage Iron working project - £150000	£5000	£5000	£1500
Monument Management Scheme £10000pa	£5000	£5000	£6500
Victoria County History - £60000	£4000	£7500	0
QUEST - £90000	£4500	£5000	£5000
Coleridge Way Project - £15000	0	£2000	0
Rural Housing Enabler - £60000	£1000	£1000	£1000
Sustainable Development Fund - Total value of projects to date amounts to £1354146	£125000	£200000	£200000

# Exmoor National Park Authority Allocation of Duties and Functions



## HUMAN RESOURCE PLAN

## STAFFING LEVELS

Function	31 March 2003		31 March 2004		31 March 2005	
	Number	FTE	Number	FTE	Number	FTE
Conservation of the Natural Environment	8	8	9	9	8	8
Conservation of the Cultural Heritage	3	3	3	3	3	3
Recreation Management	6	4.3	10	6.6	9	5.6
Promoting Understanding Education and Information	25	14.1	25	14.1	25	14.1
Traffic and Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rangers, Estate Team and Volunteers	22	22	22	22	22	22
Development Control	7	7	10	9	10	9
Forward Planning	5	5	6	6	6	6
Corporate – Democratic and Core	21	19.2	22	20	23	20.2
Training and Staff Development	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>87.9</b>

**The change in staff numbers between 2003 and 2004 comprises:-**

The appointment of a temporary Conservation Officer to provide Maternity cover.

The appointment of an Access Officer for work arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

The Coleridge Way Project Officer, a fixed term appointment for a jointly funded project, is being hosted by this Authority.

Two part-time seasonal car park attendants have been appointed to work at Malmsmead.

The appointment of a Sustainable Development Officer, as encouraged by Defra when establishing the Sustainable Development Grant fund.

The Planning Development Grant was used to employ 3 staff (2 FTE) on fixed term contracts.

The appointment of part-time Personnel Officer.

**The forecast change in staff numbers between 2004 and 2005 comprises:-**

The need for a temporary Conservation Officer for maternity leave cover will cease.

The Coleridge Way Project Officer appointment will have ended.

As Somerset County Council is no longer able to carry out conveyancing work on behalf of this Authority, a part-time appointment will be made to handle this work.

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

## Park Profile 2004

Topic	Figure for National Park	Data sources
<b>Area</b> Total Park area Somerset Devon Parishes totally\ partly in the Park	692.8 sq km 491.9 sq km 200.9 sq km 43	Monitoring Landscape Change Monitoring Landscape Change Monitoring Landscape Change OS\Designation maps
<b>Population</b> Population normally resident Age 0-15 Age 16-74 74 plus	10873 1503 8008 1362	ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census
<b>Housing</b> Households Owner occupied Private rented\housing association Local authority Vacant housing stock Household spaces Spaces not used as main residence	4896 68.26% 30.6% 1.14% 3.8% 5675 563	ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census
<b>Employment</b> Economically active Unemployment	63.% 2.8%	ONS derived from 2001 census ONS derived from 2001 census
<b>Nature conservation</b> SSSIs National Nature Reserve Section 3 coast\foreshore Section 3 moorland Section 3 woodland	193.7 sq km 4.07 sq km 7.85 sq km 169.11 sq km 49.84 sq km	English Nature English Nature Section 3 Map (hand measured) Section 3 Map (hand measured) Section 3 Map (hand measured)
<b>Heritage</b> Scheduled Monuments Conservation Areas Grade 1 Listed Buildings Grade II* Listed Buildings Grade II Listed Buildings	162 16 22 63 926	English Heritage Listings ENPA files English Heritage Listings English Heritage Listings English Heritage Listings
<b>Leisure</b> Public Footpaths Public Bridleways Other PRoW Visitor days\year Day visitors days Days\staying outside park Days\staying inside park	438 km 464 km 64 km 1,397,000 23% 45% 31%	Definitive Map \GIS Definitive Map \GIS Definitive Map \GIS All Parks Visitor Survey 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey 1994

**STATE OF THE PARK INDICATORS.**

In 2002/03 Defra carried out a review of National Park Authorities to with the objective of making a series of recommendations to Government on improvements that could usefully be made to the working of the Authorities, the framework in which they operate and their relationships with partners and other key stakeholders.

In recognition of the need for accurate, clear and consistent information, the Review recommended a range of "State of the Park" indicators be produced to show how parks are faring across a range of areas.

The following indicators have been agreed across all of the English National Parks. Some of the data requires input from third parties, and where we are not able to provide information for this plan, our intention is that all information will be included as soon as it is available. A full version of a State of the Park is published on our Web Site.

(Some of these indicators are also Annual Performance Indicators shown in the tables in Part Two of this Plan)

Conservation		
	Total Area managed in line with NPA objectives	24160 ha (Estimated)
	Percentage of area of Park managed in line with objectives	34.9%
	Change of area managed in line with objectives	
Cultural Heritage		
	Number and percentage of Listed Buildings and Ancient Monuments at risk	Listed Buildings 0.3%
Natural Resources		
	Percentage of main rivers rated as good / fair	100%
Access		
	Percentage of Public Rights of Way that are easy to use	96%
	Percentage of Public Rights of Way that are signposted	96%
	Area and percentage of National Park defined as Open Countryside	Information not yet available
Traffic		
	Sample average daily traffic flow	8750
	Percentage change between years 2000 and 1995	-7.4%
Tourism		
	Number of jobs within different sectors of the tourism industry	Model under development by QUEST project
	Revenue generated by tourism	Model under development by QUEST project



## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES**

### **CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Objective 2/1 - Farmed land managed to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the wildlife, natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Objective 2/2 - To increase semi-natural habitats and richness and variety of native species within farmland.

Objective 2/4 - To ensure that game shooting is managed sustainably to avoid adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife and public safety.

Objective 3/1 - To retain existing moor and heath and improve management to increase the age structure and dominance of heather and the diversity of other native species.

Objective 3/2 - To extend and enhance important moor and heath habitats.

Objective 3/3 - To research techniques for the re-establishment of moor and heath and select sites for implementation in order to achieve restoration targets set out in the Exmoor Biodiversity Action Plan.

Objective 3/4 - To ensure the variety, populations and ranges of species on moor and heath are maintained and research, survey and special management is carried out to ensure the survival of important and vulnerable species.

Objective 4/1 - Exmoor's woodlands to be managed in line with National Park purposes.

Objective 4/3 - To conserve individual trees, orchards and woodland features where they are characteristic of the Exmoor landscape or important for wildlife.

Objective 4/5 - To gain deeper understanding of Exmoor's trees and woodlands through research and survey work derived from the Exmoor Woodland Research Strategy.

Objective 5/1 - To conserve and enhance the cliffs and foreshores (and the littoral and sub-littoral zones offshore).

Objective 6/1 - To maintain the biological diversity of Exmoor's rivers, ponds and wetlands.

Objective 7/3 - To increase knowledge and understanding of species, their distribution and importance.

Objective 8/5 - To reduce overall consumption and increase the proportion of energy used which is derived from renewable and non-polluting sources where compatible with National Park purposes.

### **CONSERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Objective 9/2 - To improve understanding of the cultural heritage and historic environment and provide and maintain an appropriate database.

Objective 9/3 - To conserve historic features, traditions and customs that are locally distinctive.

### **RECREATION MANAGEMENT**

Objective 11/1 to broaden and improve opportunities for recreation and provide support and advice to recreational users who seek to enjoy Exmoor's special qualities.

Objective 11/2 To ensure recreation activities are compatible with the principle of quiet enjoyment and the activities of persons living and working in the National Park and seek to achieve harmony between the recreation and conservation purposes of the National Park.

Objective 11/3 To protect and improve the quality of experience for people who seek Exmoor's special qualities, in particular opportunities for exploration, solitude and closeness to nature.

Objective 11/4 To enable the public to enjoy quiet recreational activities on Exmoor at minimum of risk to them.

Objective 14/1 To improve the quality and sustainability of facilities appropriate to the needs of visitors wishing to enjoy unspoiled countryside.

Objective 15/1 To develop an integrated approach to managing transport and traffic on Exmoor.

Objective 15/3 To reduce the impact of vehicles and the highway infrastructure on the environment while ensuring that the social and economic interests of the local community are not harmed and that road safety is not compromised.

Objective 15/4 To achieve a shift in travel modes, from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport.

Objective 15/5 To encourage more sustainable travel behaviour by raising awareness of transport issues and influencing public attitudes to travel.

Objective 15/6 To improve accessibility to jobs, services and facilities for local communities.

Objective 15/7 To improve opportunities for access on Exmoor for all people, irrespective of their mobility or other physical abilities.

Objective 15/8 To integrate development and the use of land with transport policy.

## **PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING**

Objective 16/1 – To increase the availability of information about Exmoor in support of National Park purposes.

Objective 16/2 – to increase awareness of the special qualities of Exmoor and how they may be experienced and enjoyed.

Objective 16/3 – To improve understanding of Exmoor by fostering appreciation of its special qualities.

Objective 16/4 – To encourage understanding of the purposes and special qualities of National Parks and the environmental issues they face, and to develop a sense of responsibility resulting in behaviour that sustains such qualities.

Objective 17/1 – To achieve and sustain awareness of and support for objectives, policies and actions that fulfil National Park purposes.

Objective 12/1 To develop tourism on Exmoor that is based on, and helps conserve and enhance, the quality and value of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.

Objective 12/2 To ensure that environmentally sustainable tourism brings economic and social benefits to the people who live and work on Exmoor.

Objective 12/3 To obtain information about visitors to Exmoor to enable the National Park Authority and the tourism industry to plan effectively for management of visitor pressures and for other purposes related to the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park.

#### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

Objective 21/2 To improve the quality of the built environment and ensure that all new development enhances the character and special qualities of the National Park and the local distinctiveness of its settlements.

Objective 21/3 To improve the quality and efficiency of the planning service provided by the National Park Authority through improved communication and greater involvement of local communities.

#### **FORWARD PLANNING**

Objective 20/1 To ensure that all new-build housing within the National Park meets an identified local need.

Objective 20/2 To develop an up to date understanding of the housing needs of local people.

Objective 21/4 To improve databases relating to development and social and economic characteristics to inform policy development, decision making processes and 'state of the park' reporting.

Objective 19/2 To ensure that Exmoor continues to benefit from rural development/regeneration programmes and EU structural funds to help achieve local environmental, economic and social objectives.

## IMPROVEMENT PLANS ETC

The Government has stressed its desire that Authorities demonstrate their progress in delivering local and national priorities and in implementing improvement measures together with the outcomes from, and impact of, improvement measures implemented over the last 3 years. Set out below are:-

- 1 Best Value “desk-top” inspection of Development Control – Recommendations and Actions Taken
- 2 Best Value Review – Development Control Improvement Programme
- 3 Best Value Review – Promoting Understanding Improvement Programme
- 4 Best Value Review Recreation Management Improvement Programme
- 5 Local Priorities – Targets and achievements.
- 6 Best Value Review – Recreation Management

### 1 BEST VALUE INSPECTION - DESK TOP STUDY

#### DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
The Authority should provide a better service to customers by:-	
Expanding the range of outlets for information.	Standard planning application forms are available at District Council offices at Bamstaple and Williton, and the number of planning surgeries is being expanded.
Obtaining feedback from all elements of the service	This is addressed through the new user satisfaction indicator (BVPI 111).
Improving the training and guidance for key partners	A “training” programme for parish councillors is commencing in 2003.
Assessing the need for more formal contact with architects and agents	This will be kept under review, but in smaller Authorities such as Exmoor good working relationships already exist with local agents and architects.
Make sure the service is cost effective by:-	
Undertaking a detailed comparison with other councils	Further work is scheduled to benchmark costs with other National Parks in particular.
Market testing elements of the service	In view of the limited resources available have not used formal tendering to market test, and will re-consider when further cost comparisons have been completed.
Exploring whether some or all of the service could be delivered more effectively by others or in partnership with others	As above
Make clear to customers what they can expect and how it contributes to the Authority’s purposes by:-	
Identifying its purpose in all correspondence	This recommendation is being addressed.
Producing a document that outlines the level of service to customers	This is in preparation.
Developing Performance Indicators focussed on the service to customers.	Local performance indicators have now been established for monitoring, enforcement and administration of planning applications.

## 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FOLLOWING BEST VALUE REVIEW

Action	Progress
<b>Understanding / effectiveness of the Development Control service.</b>	
1) Promotion of the understanding of the work of the development control team through articles in Park-Life, Parish Magazines, and local press and through internal communication methods.	ONGOING An article on Development Control will appear in each issue of 'Park Life.' Articles on Satellite Dishes and windfarms and small scale wind turbines have been featured. Articles on Conservation Areas – and possible Article 4 Directive – uPvc window frames have been programmed. The Development Control role will also be explained at the Authority's Open Day in July 2004.
2) Consider the image and design of planning correspondence to increase awareness amongst applicants that planning within a National park is distinctive and special (eg incorporate strap line on application forms).	COMPLETED. Updated application forms prepared and also available on web site.
3) Move towards a public perception of development control as a positive tool rather than a regulatory process, helping to achieve the National Park Authority's corporate objectives.	ONGOING A more regulatory rather than "control" culture has been instigated at the national level by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
<b>Planning Enquiries/Pre-Application Discussion and Advice</b>	
1) Ensure that the Planning Surgery in Lynton is widely publicised so that all Parish Councils/residents in the North Devon section of the National Park are aware of the facility. Information about the service (and its non-availability during holiday/illness periods) should be provided at National Park Visitor Centres and Village Information Agencies.	COMPLETED Lynton Surgery is operating well. Information about absence due to holidays or illness is dealt with by staff who notify the Town Council.
2) Consider setting up a Planning Surgery at Wheddon Cross Livestock Market to provide accessible planning advice direct to the agricultural community in line with statements in the Rural White Paper.	ONGOING It is planned to extend the planning surgery to Porlock and Cutcombe in 2003/04 as a result of extra resources from the Planning Delivery Grant. The Porlock arrangement began in April 2004.
3) Ensure that a review of office accommodation, including working space, interview rooms and meeting facilities is implemented and acted upon as a matter of priority.	The first phase of the building work was completed in 2003. A new interview room has been provided and an office extended. Additional improvements are scheduled to take place during 2004.
4) Monitor effectiveness of telephone response times as a result of the newly introduced phone manager system, particularly the public response to the voice mail facility.	COMPLETED Report on Incoming phone calls, including increasing use of voice mail considered was considered by the Management Team.
5) Consider the use of acknowledgement cards to written correspondence to improve response times to letters.	COMPLETED Agreed that the Authority target of responding within 10 working days was adequate as acknowledgement

	cards can have a delaying effect on the final letter.
6) Introduce a system for recording pre-application advice (including telephone advice) eg in individual officer record books, on computer or using pro-forma which can then be filed on subsequent planning application file.	Awaiting installation of a customer relationship management software system now programmed for 2004.
7) Use Planning Admin staff to deal with more straightforward planning enquiries to reduce the burden of simple enquiries on planning officers (this will have training and staff resource implications – which are already being addressed).	COMPLETED Planning Admin Officer now dealing with more planning enquiries as result of planning training provided by the successful completion of the first year of the Planning Certificate course at Bristol. Using the new Planning Delivery an Assistant Development Control Officer post has been created to free up senior DC Officers from more basic applications and enquiries.
8) Introduce a 'site visits rota system' so that there is always adequate officer presence at Exmoor House.	While informal arrangements exist, the effectiveness is to be reviewed. However no public complaints received about accessibility of officers which came out as strong point in Best Value Review. An office cover and site visit rota was implemented in 2004.
<b>Initial Administration/Registration</b>	
1) Set targets to improve speed of performance on initial registration stage: 3 working days from receipt of an application to registration and 4 working days from receipt of application to assignment to a case officer.	COMPLETED Targets have been met and exceeded with applications registered by next working day. But need to ensure targets are maintained. A monthly statement of PIs has been produced since Sept 2002.
2) Implement actions identified regarding changes to initial consultee identification and input of application details/type (this will have some training and staff resource implications for the admin. team).	COMPLETED New role for administrative staff in relation to consultations and registering of applications implemented.
3) Continue to refine and enhance the PACS system to resolve/remove consistent minor problems which create delay in the admin process.	COMPLETED Computer system upgrade implemented.
4) Establish a sample audit of initial processing of applications to identify causes of any delay or blockages in the system which have implications for performance.	COMPLETED Process and procedure map produced.
5) Ensure staff resources are adequate within the planning admin function to meet identified performance targets and improve service delivery as expected.	COMPLETED Appointed an administrative assistant in 2003.
<b>Consultation and Notification</b>	
1) Investigate the cost of externalising the following discrete areas of work: Design/Development Briefs, Appeals, Major Development Applications, Conservation Area Character Assessments.	The appraisals have been completed and local consultation to be arranged.
2) Examine the role of the Authority's Historic Buildings Officer in relation to the processing of 'stand alone' Listed Building	COMPLETED Agreed it is more effective and efficient to process within the planning admin system but only a very

Consent Applications with the aim of removing existing areas of overlap with planning case officers.	small number of applications are received.
3) Consider the use of in-house Land Agency staff to provide technical input into agricultural need for proposals put forward for agricultural development in both planning applications and GDO Notifications, where appropriate	Corporate decision not to use internal staff due to potential conflict of roles. Private consultants used, and core budgets adjusted to reflect this.
4) Monitor response times of internal consultation responses to ensure compliance with required time limits.	COMPLETED Need for a protocol on internal specialist advice.
5) Prepare a set of standard conditions in conjunction with specialist internal staff for ecological, archaeological and historic buildings implications.	Conditions prepared and now subjected to consultation.
6) Re-examine the structure/format of internal response forms to ensure consistency of approach and encourage clear and concise comments.	COMPLETED see (4) above.
7) Encourage personal communication/contact between parish council clerks and development control staff to establish good working relationships which will allow flexibility in parish council response times.	ONGOING This was addressed as one of the issues for improvement at a series of Parish Planning workshops.
8) Improve contact between planning case officers and officers of statutory agencies, particularly the two Highway Authorities through increased joint site visits and personal visits to Exmoor House.	COMPLETED Better liaison is now occurring.
9) Introduce a system to inform applicants/agents when an application is to be considered and what the recommendation will be. Consider providing a copy of the officer's report.	COMPLETED Applicants are notified of the time scale and recommendation. A standard letter is sent to applicants/agents and those making representations during the week before the Committee meeting.
10) Consult parish councils on whether they wish to receive a copy of the monthly Planning Committee report (about 50% already do).	Planning Committee Agendas now all on Web. Site – Regular review of need to send out paper copies are carried out.
11) Encourage field staff and Parish Councils as well as planning officers (and even members) to remove out of date planning application site notices, in the interests of sustainability and visual amenity.	ONGOING
12) Introduce a programme of Planning training for Parish Councils concentrating on material planning considerations, in conjunction with Somerset and Devon Community Councils and the two District Councils.	The programme was completed in July 2004. 7 events were provided to cover all Parishes. The effectiveness of the workshops is to be evaluated.
13) As an interim measure, prepare and distribute a brief guide for parish councils on material planning considerations in assessing planning applications.	The need for this will be re-assessed in the evaluation.
14) Consider sending copies of the weekly	COMPLETED

list of applications to all National Park Visitor Centres and Village Information Agencies.	Now all on Web-site.
<b>Assessment and Negotiation</b>	
1) Set target of 5% increase in the percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks, subject to no reduction in the quality of the decision and end result.	ONGOING Target has increased to 80% in 2003/04.
2) Set target of 8 weeks for average determination time on all applications.	COMPLETED Original target met. Ongoing monitoring is taking place.
3) Continue the annual development control Member's Tours to review the quality of the outcomes on an annual basis.	ONGOING Annual tours well established.
4) Consider entering high quality schemes for national and local design/development awards and use as a quality performance indicator.	ONGOING
5) Assess the information obtained during the planning for real events in relation to public opinion on the quality of built development in the National Park.	This will be included in the scheduled review of the Design Guide.
6) Select a number of schemes which demonstrate substantial 'added value' in the development control process during the last year (this can arise from a negotiated improvement on an application; planning gain or the rejection of an unsound application). Compare the determination times of those applications which have required detailed negotiation in order to achieve an improved end result.	Still to be completed.
7) Develop a protocol for development control, monitoring and enforcement site visits.	Charter to be prepared using Planning Delivery Grant resources.
8) Include in the team's annual training plan, specific training to enhance staff awareness of customer care issues, negotiation skills, assertiveness and conflict management.	Ongoing.
<b>Documentation</b>	
1) Decide on the range and form of advice leaflets necessary and establish a programme for their production.	Planning Delivery Grant funding has been allocated for this during 2004/05.
2) Ensure that all correspondence with the public is designed to be read and understood by the general public.	COMPLETED. Also, a file of all letters is produced every month and circulated to ensure all planning staff are aware of what each other are doing.
3) Review the wording of all standard letters, including consultation, acknowledgement and notification letters.	COMPLETED.
4) Review format of all application forms, update and redraft, as necessary.	COMPLETED.
5) Prepare and publicise a Planning Charter which sets targets, and includes	Planning Delivery Grant funding has been allocated for this.

arrangements for monitoring them across the core development Control (including Monitoring and Enforcement) activities.	
6) Ensure adequate resources are available to develop the Web site to include a range of planning information and to ensure that it is regularly updated.	Planning Delivery Grant funding has been allocated for this.
7) Review the fee structure charged to the public for photocopying planning documents.	Rates have been updated to reflect inflation etc and are regularly reviewed.
<b>Decision Taking and Planning Committee</b>	
1) Consider reviewing the current scheme of delegation to allow for greater delegation to officers particularly for minor development which complies with policies but has received an objection.	COMPLETED New scheme of delegation was implemented from Nov 2001 and reviewed and adopted by the Authority in Nov 2002.
2) Continue to monitor the number of decisions made contrary to policy/officer advice/parish council view with the aim of producing a report on the frequency and likely reasons for future debate.	ONGOING Required also in relation to numbers of approvals for local people contrary to recommendations.
3) Continue to prepare and implement a program of joint planning training for members and officers, in conjunction with District Councils and Dartmoor National Park where appropriate.	Ongoing. Regular dates are set aside for member training.
4) Produce an 'aide memoir' on development control for Members and Parish Councils, in liaison with District Councils.	Still to be completed.
5) Re-define objective criteria for holding Committee Site Visits.	COMPLETED. No problems experienced – works well.
6) Monitor the Committee room acoustics, layout and presentation method at meetings in the light of recent improvements and make adjustments as necessary.	COMPLETE. Adaptations carried out but may need re-evaluation in the light of comments from the Independent Standards Committee.
7) Through consultation, establish the level of public confidence in the form or nature of public question time.	Still to be completed.
<b>Decision Notification</b>	
1) Consider informing objectors/supporters of application decisions either by standard letter, or by sending a copy of the decision notice.	COMPLETED Standard letters now issued.
2) Set a target of 3 working days for decision notices to be sent out following a Planning Committee Meeting.	COMPLETED.
3) Continue the practice of sending parish councils letters of explanation when a decision is not in accordance with their views.	COMPLETED Ongoing practice established.
4) Review the wording of all conditions and reasons to ensure that they are clearly expressed and in plain, easily understood language.	COMPLETED All conditions now redrafted.
5) Prepare and formally adopt a clear	COMPLETED.

policy on dealing with minor amendments to planning applications.	Implemented.
<b>Monitoring and Enforcement</b>	
1) Review the informal agreement with WSDC and NDDC on the role of building control officers in monitoring planning conditions and approved developments, in the light of the appointment of the Planning/ Monitoring Officer.	COMPLETED It was agreed to formalise the existing satisfactory arrangement in writing.
2) Prepare a policy statement on monitoring and enforcement which should be adopted and widely circulated as soon as possible.	To be implemented using the Planning Delivery Grant.
3) Review and refine the procedure established for monitoring compliance with planning conditions.	COMPLETED A new monitoring system was installed in 2001.
4) Prepare local performance indicators for the monitoring function as a whole.	COMPLETED Indicators now prepared.
5) Investigate alternative IT systems to improve the administration of both the enforcement and monitoring functions.	COMPLETED New system installed.
6) Consider ways of improving publicity and public awareness of the proactive monitoring approach of the Authority.	ONGOING
7) Implement a programme of Member training specifically on monitoring and enforcement to raise awareness of the important link between these functions and the rest of the planning service of the Authority.	Not yet implemented.
8) Consider the use of external field staff (eg, Rangers) and Parish Councils in monitoring development.	The pilot use of Rangers was successful in relation to unauthorized signs.
9) Introduce six-monthly progress reports to Members on the Monitoring and enforcement functions.	A monthly progress report generated automatically by the computer system to be circulated to Members and NPO on a quarterly basis has not yet been implemented
10) Set targets for response times to notification of breaches of planning control (variation will depend on prioritisation of case): Written response within 10 working days. Site Visit within 10 working days. Site visit following expiration of enforcement or breach of condition notice - 5 working days.	COMPLETED Targets agreed.
<b>Cost of the Development Control Service</b>	
1) Establish the real cost of the core development control service and market test elements/tasks to obtain a comparison with external service providers.	Detailed work is required with other National Parks to ensure valid comparisons are made. Discussions have been held with other National Park Authorities in the context of BVPI 107.
2) Review the fee structure for all areas of the service for which there is currently an	COMPLETED

internal charge and consider whether a fee for any other elements of the service could be 'introduce'.	
3) Investigate whether any parts of the service can be carried out with reduced costs, without reducing the quality of service provision.	ONGOING Main recommendation of Best Value Review Report.

### 3 IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING FOLLOWING BEST VALUE REVIEW

#### Service Improvements 2001/02 – 2003/04

#### ACTION PLAN OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOLLOWING BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW 2001/02

<b>PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Include all 5 Visitor Centres in future assessment surveys.	COMPLETED, and ongoing All Authority Visitor Centres included survey since 2002/03  Survey results: 2001/02 93% 2002/03 84% 2003/04 93% National working group will be reviewing 'minimum standards' 2004/05 – therefore no survey to be undertaken.
Review operation of Local Information Points in the light of new National Minimum Standards adopted December 2000.	Review group to meet 2004/05
Identify areas for improvement as a result of 2001 survey and implement recommendations.	COMPLETED Staff training in 'customer care' and 'diversity awareness' delivered. Access Audits completed for all Visitor Centres in 2003/04. Action Plans to be developed 2004/05
Prepare development plans for Visitor Centres.	ONGOING <b>County Gate Visitor Centre</b> to be the main focus for the development of a new interpretation facility (2003/04). County Gate development proposals prepared. Following public consultation, project suspended.  <b>Lynmouth Visitor Centre</b> to be considered in partnership, possibly 2004/05. North Devon District Council (as lead agency) have submitted expression of interest to GOSW.  Greater use to be made of <b>Dunster Visitor Centre</b> lecture/meeting room. In excess of 60 meetings/events held in lecture room in 2003/04. 2004/05 has seen the first use as the lecture room as an 'exhibition space'.  Community groups to be encouraged to make use of <b>Combe Martin Visitor Centre</b> for small displays/promotions. 3 small displays held at Centre – space very limited.  2003/04: 5 public access terminals installed in three visitor centres to increase availability of information and services electronically to the local community and visiting public consistent with IEG targets. Remaining two Visitor Centres to have installations 2004/05.
Undertake evaluation of interpretation provision within Centres (one Centre/year).	Formal evaluation yet to be implemented. Visitor Centre surveys evaluate satisfaction and effectiveness of service provision. Evaluation of interpretation to be undertaken when planning for refurbishments.
Continue financial support for Porlock Visitor Centre.	Financial support continued. Meetings held with partners to investigate opportunities for internal refurbishment.
Complete access and interpretation strategy for Exmoor Forest Estate.	COMPLETED Interpretation of sawmill and restoration in partnership with Environment Agency completed. Wider access and interpretation strategy for Exmoor Forest not started.

Review location and provision of countryside site boards.	COMPLETED. Review undertaken. New boards appropriately located; some existing boards removed. 2001/02: 5 new orientation panels located at key car parks. 2002/03: new interpretation panels at Old Burrow and Pinkery Centre 2003/04 : New information panels installed at Blackmoor Gate and 'Snowdrop Valley'
Develop website in the light of IEG (implementing electronic government).	ONGOING. Website being developed. Interactive forms for some services in place. National Parks National Portal project well underway. Content managers group assessing requirements; other specialist groups (eg GIS) also developing projects. Likely migration of ENPA website to 'national portal' design during 2004/05.
Ensure that programmes and materials cater for people with differing needs.	ONGOING. Social inclusion as a priority cross cutting theme highlighted. Support for Artist in Residence, Somerset Rural Youth Project and MOSAIC Project ongoing.  2003/04 – completion of MOSAIC project and Artist in residence. New and ongoing contacts with Education Team as a result of MOSAIC networking. New audiences engaged year on year particularly through Education Team. Social inclusion 'task and finish' group established and action plan produced.
Ensure consistent corporate style.	COMPLETED Use of corporate logo and resulting style improved.
Identify and develop partnership working opportunities.	ONGOING Partnerships developed with AONBs, education providers. New partnerships with underrepresented groups established through the MOSAIC Project. Ongoing work with SWPL Forum at a regional level; continuing partnerships with adjacent AONBs (Quantocks and Northern Devon). Greater Exmoor Environmental Education Forum - Big Green Days being extended. Increasing 'formalised' links with YHA through SDF and 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme (3 specific weekends programmed for 2004/05). Partnership activity with South West Coast Path Team in terms of interpretation and safety messages.
Establish 'approved' list for printers/publishers/designers.	Formal list not yet established.
Undertake evaluation of effectiveness of service.	Repeat survey to be undertaken 2004/05
Ensure design and content of materials/publications is appropriate for target audience.	COMPLETED Wider use of interpretive planning now employed; interpretation objectives set.
Develop accessibility of publications for people with special needs.	ONGOING - to reflect changing needs Most Authority publications now web enabled and accessible through the Authority website. Alternative formats available on request. Accessible Exmoor publication to be reviewed 2004/05
Implement evaluation system for environmental education service.	COMPLETED Evaluation system piloted.
Implement Pinkery Business Plan to expand client base in 'shoulder' season.	COMPLETED Business Plan implemented; limited success in attracting new clients to 'shoulder' season. Significant progress made towards Pinkery Centre as an exemplar of living sustainably in a remote location – wind turbine, photo-voltaic roof and Eco Centre status achieved.
Investigate 'long-term' tracking for evaluation purposes.	Programmed for 2004/05. (Longer term aspiration).
Pilot 'MOSAIC' Project.	COMPLETE 2003/04. 3 underrepresented groups engaged through MOSAIC Project. MOSAIC Project Authority 'task and finish' group established and an action plan produced. Diversity of groups using Education and wider services better monitored.
Outreach projects to Barnstaple/Bridgwater.	ONGOING Potentially excluded/excluded young people involved through Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education.

Develop and implement Environmental Education Strategy.	COMPLETED Draft strategy produced. Wider Interpretation framework to be developed 2004/05 encompassing education strategy.
Develop links with N. Devon / E.Devon College, Ilfracombe Community College.	ONGOING 2003/04 North Devon College vocational course students engaged through Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Education; East Devon 'travel and tourism' students engaged through Education Team – contact to be made through volunteering opportunities linked to special needs at the CARE Village. Ilfracombe Community College approach regarding sustainable development fund and renewable energy projects. (NB. Many of the Devon side primary schools, with whom we have contact, feed into Ilfracombe College)
Establish central data collection facility	NOT STARTED
Evaluate effectiveness of services as per programme identified	Education Team Service evaluated Media/events/publications to be surveyed 2004/05

#### 4 IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR RECREATION MANAGEMENT FOLLOWING BEST VALUE REVIEW

Action	Progress
<b>RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGEMENT</b>	
1 The National Park Authority should make representations to Government, jointly with other national parks and on its own account, to seek a commitment to provide adequate additional funding to meet the responsibilities imposed by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.	COMPLETED Recent National Park Grant settlements have reflected additional costs of implementing CROW Act on Exmoor in accordance with the proposed timetable.
2 The underlying objectives of the Exmoor Paths Partnership are sound and should continue to be supported. A comprehensive review of options for delivering this aspect of rights of way management on path erosion, and for developing visitor payback as an effective source of funding, should be undertaken as a priority. (This should involve all relevant sections of the Authority, including the Estate Team and Recreation and Tourism Team.)	Report to National Park Authority on costed options for continuing the work of the Paths Partnership completed, and considered by consultative groups. EPP to be re-launched. Immediate work to maintain project required – publication of regular newsletter, collection of donations, etc
3 Effective systems for monitoring rights of way performance indicators, to assess progress towards achieving targets, must be established by the start of the 2001/2002 financial year.	COMPLETED Rights of way survey methodology established and survey commenced. GPS systems introduced.
4 The National Park Authority should carry out surveys of "stakeholders" views on rights of way management at least every three years. Surveys of farmers and landowners and groups representing disabled people should be undertaken within 6 months and the results added to the Best Value report.	The next review is scheduled for completion in 2004/05.
5 The National Park Authority should establish a documented system for rights of way inspections in areas prone to increased risk of hazard to path users	COMPLETED As part of a Risk Management strategy, a hierarchy of paths has been established and these will be inspected, the frequency

	reflecting amount of usage, and results recorded using a computerised database.
6 Systems should be developed to regularly review path condition and establish routine maintenance requirements	COMPLETED – as above.
7 The National Park Authority should ensure that all its operations in respect of rights of way management are carried out with due regard for the impact on the environment by judging them against pre-determined criteria. Such criteria should be adopted as soon as possible and should form part of any tender process for contracted works.	COMPLETED The National Park Authority has established a “Sustainability Group” to monitor its own internal practices and procedures. It has produced a sustainability checklist which will be used by its own staff and the outside contractors it engages.
8 A review of alternative ways of delivering services, particularly monitoring rights of way, identifying problems and undertaking management work, should be carried out as a priority. Particular emphasis should be given to greater involvement of parish councils and landowners, and to examining the scope for increasing the responsibility of the Field Services Team for monitoring condition and specifying work.	This is ongoing.
<b>ACCESS TO OPEN LAND</b>	
9 The National Park Authority should put in place systems for monitoring both the impact of the new rights for access to open land by the public and the detailed costs of managing this access.	COMPLETED. Two new Assistant Rangers were appointed in the summer of 2002 and an Access Officer was appointed in 2003. A new GIS system has been established.
10 The National Park Authority should undertake as soon as possible a detailed assessment of the work required to meet the management responsibilities for access to open land implied in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. As much preparatory work as possible should be undertaken before the Access Maps are drawn up.	Preparatory work carried out on workload, predicted resource implications etc. The publication of the CROW Draft Map in March 2003 has enabled more accurate quantifying of the work involved. Management Plans for each new area are being prepared
11 The National Park Authority should publish information for the public about the location and accessibility, by all modes of transport, of open access land in relation to its own estate and other private land as soon as agreement has been reached with landowners on the practical details of access.	COMPLETED. Interim information on access to the NPA estate has been published. Permitted access to NPA land (s16 CROW Act) has been reviewed.
12 Keep under review arrangements for managing access on open land and prepare report for the National Park Authority as soon as the responsibilities and implications of the new legislation are known.	ONGOING Reports considered by NPA at every stage in process of implementing CROW Act to date.
<b>RECREATION MANAGEMENT</b>	
13 There should be a review of policy and practice for dealing with motor events	COMPLETED. Draft guidelines for motorised sport were approved by NPA in September 2002

<b>CAR PARKS</b>	
14 A study should be undertaken, in consultation with the Parish Council and landowners, of the possibilities for rationalising the amount of car parking on Porlock Common and for improving the appearance of parking areas.	See 16 below.
15 The National Park Authority should carry out a review of leased car parks to identify opportunities for management responsibilities being taken over by the owners.	See 16 below.
16 Under-used car parks and lay-bys managed by the NPA should be considered for reversion to grass verge or offered to the Highway Authority for future management. Consultation should be undertaken with parish councils before any decision is taken.	A review is to be carried out of the usage of all of the car parks it manages. This will help to inform decisions on future management possibilities. It also needs to be considered in tandem with the review of toilets, as in some instances both car park and toilet are leased from the same organisation and decisions on car parks will also affect toilets etc.
17 The National Park Authority should aim to make its car parks self-financing over the next three years by reducing responsibility for maintenance and increasing charges. Research should be undertaken to establish which car parks are suitable for increased charges, the appropriate level of charges and how charges can be collected cost-effectively.	In 2003/04, the income received from car park fees exceeded the cost for the upkeep of the premises (not including Field Services team costs)
18 A programme of car park landscaping and improvement works should be developed over a ten year rolling programme, together with a review of interpretation provision	This is being developed in conjunction with the car park review. The frequency of grass cutting has been reduced in some car parks (mainly in perimeter areas) in order to achieve a more natural appearance and provide a more suitable habitat for fauna and flora. This situation has been reviewed with an ecologist to inform plans for 2004/05.
19 Litter bins should be removed from car parks and other sites as far as possible and visitors requested to take their litter away	COMPLETED Litter bins are unsightly and can be counterproductive in keeping sites clean and tidy. 19 bins out of a total of 44 (43%) were successfully removed at the start of 2003. The litter situation is being carefully monitored.
<b>PUBLIC TOILETS</b>	
20 The District Councils continue to act as agents for the National Park Authority for cleaning and vandal repairs to the public toilets. The North Devon District Council and West Somerset District Council are both cost effective agents and the Authority would not be able to provide the same	Discussions have been held with both councils. North Devon District Council has indicated it wishes to cease cleaning and maintaining ENPA toilets and alternative arrangements are being investigated. The Authority is

service at the same price. There would need to be formal contracts written setting out the roles of the District Councils as agents, as discussed above.	more involved with the management of its toilets in the West Somerset area.
21 West Somerset District Council should continue to carry out painting and structural maintenance for the facilities within their area, liaising with the Park Authority over the annual maintenance programmes.	As a result of staff changes within the National Park Authority, responsibility for maintenance work has reverted to the NPA.
22 For the facilities in North Devon District Council's region, it is recommended that the Business Management Department of the National Park Authority take over the responsibility for the painting and structural maintenance.	See 20 above.
23 An approach should be made to The National Trust, seeking a contribution to them for cleaning and maintenance of the toilet facilities adjoining their properties.	Discussions have been held and the outcome will be considered by members of the Authority in 2004.
24 The public toilets at Tarr Steps should be replaced and toilets at County Gate should be altered and refurbished to bring them into line with modern standards.	Replacement of the toilets at Tarr Steps commenced in April 2004. The County Gate toilets were upgraded, but replacement has been put in abeyance.
25 The standard and condition of other toilets should be reviewed to compare them to modern standards and to identify opportunities for improved information provision.	Ongoing. Blackmoor Gate toilets were upgraded in July 2004. Implementation is awaiting availability of resources.
26 Discussions should be held with the two District Councils to consider overall toilet provision to see whether any rationalisation of toilet provision is possible.	COMPLETED.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

DEFRA has published guidelines on how to report environmental performance. The intention is that this will help larger organisations measure, and set targets to reduce, the use of energy and raw materials. It also provides the opportunity to inform the public about commitment to improving environmental performance.

An objective set out in the Authority's Management Plan is "to reduce overall consumption and increase the proportion of energy used on Exmoor which is derived from renewable and non-polluting sources where compatible with National Park purposes".

The Authority has achieved a reducing trend in the CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gas emissions attributable to its activities in several ways:-

- A photo-voltaic roof was installed at Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre.
- A wind turbine was also subsequently erected at Pinkery.
- A water powered sawmill at Simonsbath has been restored and brought into use.
- During 2003/04 supplies of electricity were switched to a "green" energy source.
- New toilets under construction at Tarr Steps will have lighting and mechanical ventilation from solar power.
- A log boiler will be installed during 2004/05 to provide heat and hot water at Exford Depot from waste wood.

Overall it is encouraging to see the consumption of CO<sub>2</sub> per member of staff reducing year on year.

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
<b>Electricity Consumption</b> (Exmoor House, Exford Depot and 4 Visitor Centres)	289967Units (124686 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	273963 Units (117804 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	259800 Units* (111714 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )
			*Estimated
<b>Gas</b> (Dunster Visitor Centre)	12173 kWh (2313 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	10484 (1992 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	9163kWh (1741kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>Calor Gas</b> (Pinkery and Bookstore)	12131 Litres (18318 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	12029 Litres (18164 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	8111 litres (12248kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>Fuel used by ENPA Vehicles</b> (Rangers, Estate and Education Teams)	38961 Litres (104415 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	35512 Litres (95172 kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )	37849 litres (101435kg of CO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>TOTAL CO<sub>2</sub> EQUIVALENT</b>	249732 kg	233132 kg	227138 kg
<b>TOTAL CO<sub>2</sub> PER MEMBER OF STAFF</b>	3133 kg	2822 kg	2586 kg
<b>OTHER INFORMATION</b>			
Total Climate Change Levy	£1071	£1164	£821
<b>Water Consumption</b>	348 cubic metres	482 cubic metres	515 cubic metres
Total business miles travelled by staff using own cars	108408 miles	124528 miles	124762 miles
Average business miles travelled per member of staff	1360 miles	1508 miles	1391 miles
Total business miles travelled by members using own cars	39876 miles	32414 miles	40227 miles
Average business miles travelled per member	1534 miles	1247 miles	1547 miles



## APPENDIX 9