

## Jersey's Coastal National Park – Interim Working Group

### Status of UK Parks – how and why were they established?

UK National Parks were established in under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The purposes of National Park designation are enshrined in national legislation. First set out in the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, and amended by the Environment Act 1995, the two **purposes** of National Park designation are:

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

The National Parks of England, Wales and Scotland are living and working landscapes where many of the characteristic qualities that give them their appeal are as much the result of human activity, especially farming, as of natural forces. It is in the interests of maintaining the close connections between local communities and economies and environmental conservation that the National Park Authorities have an additional **statutory duty**:

- In pursuing the purposes to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters.

Whilst in most cases the two purposes are mutually supportive and have equal status, if an occasion arises where there is an acute conflict between the two purposes, the Environment Act 1995 applies greater weight to the first purpose, that concerned with conservation and enhancement. This is sometimes referred to as the '**Sandford Principle**'.

In Jersey, the National Park was established by policy within the Jersey Island Plan (2011) as a development control mechanism, with the proposal to develop and adopt a National Park Management Plan developed through public consultation with similar purposes to those of the UK Parks.

### Who is responsible for fulfilling the National Park purposes in the UK?

National Park Authorities were set up as special purpose local authorities under the Environment Act 1995. The Authority being a freestanding local authority governed by appointed Members.

The National Park Authorities comprise of **elected** representatives from the relevant Parish Councils and Local Authorities (County Councils), as well as

Members **appointed** by the Secretary of State to ensure the local interests are balanced by a national interest. Prior to 1995, National Parks were administered as committees of local County Councils.

Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 makes it a duty for all relevant authorities (for example, Government departments and agencies, utility companies and parish councils) to have regard to National Park purposes when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities. This duty safeguards National Park interests and also encourages pursuit of the purposes by a wide range of bodies and organisations. Relevant authorities are expected to be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled their Section 62 duty.

The Government has worked with National Parks England to develop a joint vision for the Parks. This is intended to guide the long-term planning and strategic decision-making of the National Parks.

### **Who has responsibility for the National Park Management Plan in the UK?**

The Management Plan is the single most important plan for the future of any National Park. It provides an opportunity to bring together a wide range of people and organisations around a set of common goals. It is the strategic plan for the National Park, one that will guide decisions affecting the Parks' future over the coming years. The Management Plan is for the National Park as a whole and not just for the National Park Authority, although the Authority, along with many other stakeholders and the local community, will be key to the delivery of the Management Plan, the plan is for all who care about the Park and its future. The role of the Authority is to draft the Plan, with the engagement of stakeholders, to review the Plan and to report back to central Government through State of the Park reporting.

The purpose of the Management Plan is to:

- Set out a joint, long term vision and ambitions for the Parks.
- Provide the framework for partnership working through the priorities and action plans.
- Provide the framework for all policy and activity in the National Park, coordinating and integrating other plans, strategies and actions (including the Local Plan).
- Provide the basis for focusing resources and drawing in funding.
- Communicate what is important about the Park and the priorities for action to the wider community.
- Provide a focus for the work of the Authority and how it accounts to Government Illustrate how partner organisations contribute to National Park purposes.