2. Where we are now - National Park Portrait

2.1 A review has been carried out to:

- identify what are the Park’s key attributes
- identify key messages in relevant Acts, Plans and Strategies for the National Park
- show what is going well for the Park and what key matters need addressing
- show what matters the Authority as well as various stakeholders\(^{18}\) consider to be of significance
- explain the Park’s role in the wider regional and national context.

This portrait can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 What has emerged through the above analysis are six key priority issues that need to be addressed by this Local Development Plan. These issues must be addressed within a context of needing to achieve National Park purposes which are:

- Conservation and enhancement ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage\(^{19}\) of the National Parks.’\(^{20}\)
- Understanding and enjoyment ‘to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the Parks] by the public.’\(^{21}\)

2.3 These are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of irreconcilable conflict.\(^{22}\) Reflecting that National Parks are living landscapes with a resident population, the Authority also has a duty in taking forward the park purposes to: ‘foster the economic and social well-being of local communities, within the National Park….’ This duty should be fulfilled in the pursuit of National Park purposes.\(^{23}\)

Key issues to address

National Park Purposes

- Ensuring that government planning policy which is unique to National Parks is appropriately applied.

A. Special qualities

- How can the National Park’s special qualities be protected for future generations? Can opportunities be taken to enhance those special qualities with new development?

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\(^{18}\) See Glossary of Terms
\(^{19}\) See Glossary of Terms
\(^{20}\) Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995
\(^{21}\) Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995
\(^{22}\) Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995
\(^{23}\) Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995
B. Major development, the potential for growth

- In trying to meet the needs of local communities how to make rational choices or decide on priorities where the need for land for development is greater than supply of suitable land. The Park is unable to accommodate all demands.\(^{24}\)

- Given the shape and nature of the National Park it is important to recognise that it is highly dependent on the strategies of Pembrokeshire and of the wider West Wales area, in particular spatial strategies.

C. Climate change, sustainable design, flooding, sustainable energy

- More has to be done to address factors contributing to climate change, and to manage and adapt to the effects of climate change.

D. Visitor economy, employment and rural diversification

- How to find an approach to development in the countryside which helps sustain and diversify rural communities yet guards against unsustainable development in countryside locations.

- How in land use planning terms can the National Park tackle seasonality in the visitor economy?

- The visitor economy does over-dominate in certain locations in the Park and this needs proactive management.

- How to maintain and enhance the visitor economy.

E. Affordable housing\(^{25}\) and housing growth

- How to tackle the backlog of affordable housing need\(^{26}\) in the Park as well as dealing with emerging need.

F. Community facilities

- How to continue to protect and enhance our range of community facilities in the National Park which are highly valued and needed facilities many of which are in locations remote from larger centres.

- How to ensure the existing town, district and smaller shopping centres of the Park which serve local need and the needs of visitors remain attractive, diverse and viable.

- How to improve accessibility\(^{27}\) to and within the National Park whilst recognising the need to reduce the impact of motorised traffic and travel on the environment.

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\(^{24}\) The ability of the National Park landscape to absorb development for this Plan period is tested using the methodology set out in the Background Paper ‘Site Criteria’. In terms of constraints to development the predominant issue is impact on landscape character.

\(^{25}\) See Glossary of Terms

\(^{26}\) See Glossary of Terms

\(^{27}\) See Glossary of Terms.