

**Paper - National Trails Representational Options**  
**Discussion Paper**  
**14 July 2017**

**Purpose of this report**

1. At its meeting of the 20 October 2016 representatives from the National Trails considered the options for setting up a National Trails body to aid future management of the family of National Trails. **Annex 1** Draft Discussion Paper National Trail Options
2. The purpose of this report is to update representatives as to progress and to seek **clear direction** on a way forward.

**Background**

3. Progress on moving forward has proved very difficult because there appears to be a lack of consensus of opinion as to whether **a National Trails Body is required and whether there is support from each of the individual partnerships for such a body?** This needs addressing before we can even consider what form that body might take?
4. It is appreciated that these decisions can not be made by the individual Partnerships until they know exactly what is being proposed. However, to get to be able to get to that point there is potentially a significant amount of work to be done and therefore a commitment from the Partnerships is required to the principle of forming a body to be able to proceed.
5. There has since October been an opportunity to examine further some of the options outlined in the previous paper which is worth updating representatives before any decisions are made.

**Status quo**

Over the last few months the National Trails have shown that they can come together and address specific topics as required. The work in relation to the original announcement in the reduction of funding, public affairs campaign pack and the Discover England Fund National Project demonstrates that this is possible and has been successful.

This potentially may be the simplest option, but might not address the wider issues of continued advocacy, generating income, impact of the England Coast Path, etc on behalf of the family of National Trails. It also depends on Partners willingness to either, contribute financial assistance (public affairs work) or in-kind or both, to a specific topic.

This option would also allow for Partnerships to continue acting independently (which will happen anyway) or for some or all to join together as required.

**Sub Trust or Organisation**

As previously outlined there are a number of existing Trusts and organisations (Ramblers, National Trust, Walk Unlimited etc) that may well be interested in acting as a body to represent National Trails. There are also organisations currently representing National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that may be interested in also campaigning on behalf of National Trails.

It should be noted that these are either directly funded by individual partners (NPAs and AONBs) or will potentially require some level of funding to provide a specified role.

The National Parks Partnership (NPP) has been touted as a possible model to investigate. The NPP is specifically looking at corporate sponsorship and to date has been financially supported by each of the UK National Parks. Although still early stages, the NPP has recently announced a value in kind deal with Columbia Clothing. However, this is for uniforms and not direct financial contributions to the National Park family although this will free up some spending for each NPA over a period of time.

Two other organisational models have also been mentioned the Canals and Rivers Trust and Historic England, both have received significant government funding to be set up and supported for a set period of time. It should be noted that both of these organisations have significant assets which in themselves can generate income unlike National Trails. These comparators have been considered as part of the scope of the consultancy led work commissioned by Natural England to develop an Income Generation Strategy for National Trails. This report has not yet been shared beyond the steering group but we understand the recommendation is that if the National Trail family are required to reduce their reliance on funding on Natural England funding in the future then a capacity building grant is required along the lines of these comparators.

### **Charitable Trust with Charitable Trading Elements**

There is a wealth of other potential forms a National Trails body could take, however what appears to be coming out strongest is something based around a Charitable Trust with Charitable Trading elements.

6. As in the last paper and by way of a Health Warning this document has been prepared without the benefit of legally qualified advisors but the option for Heritage Lottery (HL), Resilient Heritage Fund (RHF) has been investigated further.
7. A meeting with HL in Leeds with Huw Davies, Natural England, Heather Procter, Pennine National Trails Partnership Manager and Alan Hulme, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority attending explored further the RHF option. **Annex 2** Notes of the meeting. Huw subsequently followed up with a meeting with Newcastle City Council (NCC).
8. From the meetings there appears to be two options developing.

### **Option 1**

#### **Series of Phased Applications to HLF Resilient Heritage**

First phase to establish the aims and objectives of the body, the potential governance model, how it fits with Natural England and securing support from the individual partnership trails. It would also need to consider how we work with new Coastal Access authorities and also Walk Unlimited.

Further phases would follow for development (specifically legal/funding governance), implementation and ongoing running of the body. These various phases would be identified with clear objectives as part of Phase 1.

## **Option 2**

### **Single Application** (for all elements based on the NCC work and application **Annex 3**)

In brief NCC have outlined the following (further information can be provided verbally during the phone conference).

- Endowe 21 Parks and Spaces into a Charitable Trust
- Create a legal structure independent of the Council
- Managed by Directors and Trustees
- Create a sustainable trading capacity

NCC have identified considerable expenditure to develop work to this point, as well as identifying within the project application significant set up and running costs.

9. If we want to go down the road of a HL RHF application then it is imperative that there is support for this across the Partnerships and goes back to the initial point in Paragraph 3.

## **Conclusion**

10. In conclusion the Partnerships are being asked to do two things:

- I. Decide on whether a more formal National Trails body is required?
- II. If yes, provide clear direction and support for the preferred way forward? If Option 2 we could request bid development funding from Defra/Natural England but recommend that one partner leads this whilst reporting to all.