

Natural Beauty, Climate Change and Natural Resources (National Park Management Plan outcomes 3 & 4)

Corporate Outcome A: The landscapes of the National Park are valued for their beauty, character and natural resources and managed to adapt to the effects of climate change by ...

- 1. Ensuring landscapes are characterised, conserved and enhanced in accordance with their enduring and dynamic qualities (Priority level 1)*
- 2. Promoting the importance of the landscapes as assets for the economy, the environment and local and other communities (Priority level 2)*
- 3. Promoting the need to protect the natural resources (such as water, soil and air quality) of the National Park (Priority level 1)*

The key first step of understanding and categorising the landscape is through the production of a Landscape Character Assessment, which was completed in 2008. The second phase, the development of a Landscape Strategy and Action Plan for the Peak District will be completed in the summer of 2009 and will set out priority actions to ensure that Peak District landscapes are protected, managed and planned. We will ensure that the Local Development Framework policy is based on an understanding of landscape character.

We work proactively with farmers and business owners to encourage their contribution to protecting the National Park by securing their participation in environmentally beneficial schemes (such as agri-environment schemes, the Sustainable Development Fund and the Environmental Quality Mark). By the end of 2008/09 86% of the National Park land was managed or owned by those who have changed their practices. For 2009/10 we intend to undertake 375 new engagements with farmers and business owners. An important part of this process is to influence the way in which national environmental schemes are developed and we continue to work on this.

In 2008/09 we achieved over 117,000 hectares of the National Park covered by environmental schemes; we continued restoration of blanket bog through the Moors for the Future Partnership and started removal of overhead wires, in partnership with electricity providers. Energy use is monitored and targets set for reduction in energy use for the 44 current non-farm businesses awarded the Authority's Environmental Quality Mark.

We completed an environmental policy for the National Park and the Authority in 2008/09 and a Climate Change Action Plan is currently in consultation.

A key part of conservation is high priority given to enforcement action where there is a significant impact on the environment due to unauthorised development and ensuring that all planning applications approved are within policy. In 2008/09 95 enforcement actions relating to landscape were taken, significantly higher than the annual average (over the past 4 years) of 62.

Looking ahead to 2009/10

We will be successful in 2009/10 if we maintain the amount of the National Park is conserved and enhanced, due to the change in schemes supporting this work, and we make 375 new engagements with farmers and business owners

Key actions for 2009/10 include:

- *Completion of Landscape Strategy and Action Plan and establishing monitoring framework for landscape change (L1) PIP 1.1a/3&5, 2.1a/3*
- *Deliver Park-wide countryside and visitor service through Ranger area teams (L1)*
- *Define and remove features damaging to the landscape (L2)*
- *Manage Authority owned woodlands (L2)*
- *Work in partnership with the Peak District Fire Operations Group to reduce the incidence and severity of moorland fires (L2)*
- *Delivery of the Sustainable Development Fund (L2)*

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- Completion of monitoring framework for Climate Change Action Plan (L1) PIP 1.1a/5, 3.1a/1
- Implementation of high priorities of the Climate Change Action Plan
- 375 contacts to support land managers to manage the land sustainably (L2)

Focus on the Climate Change Action Plan – the work begins...

2008/09 saw the development, with partner support, of the Peak District National Park Climate Change Action Plan which sets out the part the National Park can play in helping reach the Climate Change Act's target of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

Much of the National Park captures, stores and transports water for its own and surrounding populations. 450m litres of drinking water a day are provided from the Peak District National Park; the moorlands provide an opportunity to absorb and lock carbon into the peat for centuries to come and the National Park's fast flowing streams and rivers offer us possible small-scale hydro electric sites for the generation of renewable energy. The National Park Climate Change Action Plan tries to focus on the National Park specific actions that may not have previously been fully considered by partner organisations.

What types of action are planned?

- The current review of the Local Development Framework (LDF) includes future policy options to strengthen action on climate change.
- Established partnership projects such as Moors for the Future continue their vital work to stabilise and restore the carbon rich Peak District moorlands – key to water and carbon storage. The worst eroded areas are losing 200 to 300 tonnes of carbon rich peat per year but 70%-80% of this loss is prevented within 18 months of initial restoration.
- New research into how to alleviate flood risks, particularly to urban areas surrounding the National Park.
- Maintaining healthy and diverse ecosystems which are better able to cope with the effects of climate change
- The National Park's Sustainable Development Fund supports studies and projects that will lead to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.
- Continuing to reduce the carbon footprint of the National Park Authority.
- The new Live & Work Rural programme will support communities and businesses to explore ways they can reduce their environmental impact whilst contributing to the conservation of the Peak District National Park.

For a full copy of the Climate Change Action Plan see www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/climatechange .
For update on moorland research and restoration work see www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk