

Climate Change October 2019 Programmes and Resources Draft Text

Our Policies and Legal Obligations

As an Authority, we are obliged to adhere to the 2008 Climate Change Act. This set a nationwide goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels). In 2019, the goal was updated to a 100% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

The UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks (2010) places climate change as central to National Park Authority objectives.

The Vision and Circular refers to the climate change role of National Park Authorities in the following ways:

- The Authorities are educators and in the area of climate change they have a vital role to play. They should spread important messages about the impacts of climate change and how individuals, especially visitors, can play their part in tackling it in ways which motivate lifelong behaviour change.
- The Authorities have a role here as exemplars of sustainability in enabling the natural environment to adapt to predicted changes (and being resilient to unpredictable events), in supporting the delivery of ecosystem services and in developing more resilient infrastructure (such as rights of way that are less vulnerable to flood damage).
- The Parks themselves will be threatened by climate change and the Authorities must ensure that they protect the public assets which the Parks represent.
- The Authorities should lead the way in sustainable land management to prevent further carbon loss from soils and to encourage carbon storage in trees and fens.
- The Parks should be exemplars in renewable energy.
- Authorities need to work with local communities to reach a position where renewable energy is the norm in all Parks whilst not compromising their overriding duty under the 1949 Act.
- The Authorities should promote energy efficiency within the Parks, reduce the emissions from their own operations and from those associated with visits, including through sustainable low carbon transport use.

The Authority is aiming to achieve these roles through its current and future policies and actions, both independently and in partnership.

The Act and Circular are reflected in the Authority's plans and policies. The Authority has to prepare a National Park Management Plan and review it at least every five years. The National Park Management Plan 2018-23 has an Area of Impact of 'Preparing for the future climate'. The delivery plan action for this Area of Impact is to undertake a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment on the top 25% of the National Park features. However, as climate change is a cross cutting area, other Areas of Impact contribute to reducing climate change, so other delivery plan actions are relevant too.

Our Corporate Strategy 2019-24 has eleven key performance indicators (KPIs) that are relevant to climate change, and these are across all strategy outcomes. The relevant indicators are as follows.

KPI 1: Influence the development of a support system that properly rewards farmers and land managers for delivering a full range of public benefits.

KPI 2: Natural beauty conserved and enhanced.

KPI 3: Increase the amount of carbon captured and stored as part of routine land use and management.

KPI 4: Area of moorland blanket bog moving towards favourable condition.

KPI 5: Sustain the area of non-protected, species-rich grassland through retention, enhancement and creation.

KPI 6: Area of new native woodland created.

KPI 18: Number of Peak District National Park Authority interventions facilitating community development.

KPI 19: Number of individuals and groups actively using Peak District National Park Authority digital channels for community development.

KPI 20: Number of residents involved in community life as a result of Peak District National Park Authority grants.

KPI 26: To have a corporate Asset Management Plan.

The KPIs and targets for 2024 and 2040 are shown in appendix 1.

Background

Climate change is the greatest long-term threat to our upland landscapes. It has the potential to change the features that make up the National Park's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. Climate change will modify the Peak District National Park's special qualities and alter the opportunities for the public to enjoy them. It will also alter the benefits the Peak District National Park provides. At this time, it is uncertain what the effects will be.

Responsible and inventive management can help to mitigate the effects of climate change by creating and maintaining resilient landscapes. Resilient landscapes consist of fully functioning ecosystems that allow nature and people to adapt to climate change. This will aid wildlife and communities within the Peak District National Park, as well as those that feel a knock-on impact - regionally, nationally and even globally. The challenge is balancing the need to actively manage our contribution to climate change with the desire to conserve and enhance the special qualities.

Greenhouse gases contribute to climate change. This will change some of the habitats that are special to the Peak District National Park. We need energy production that does not produce greenhouse gases. However, this must not result in harm to the National Park's special qualities. For instance, the development of wind and solar farms, along with their access tracks, power-lines and ancillary buildings, could have a major impact on the landscape. Biomass burners need regular access for large vehicles. Therefore, we will work with the landscape and with communities to ensure we are forward thinking about climate change and find renewable energy solutions that are of an appropriate design and scale, so that they do not compromise the special qualities of the Peak District National Park.

Travel is one of the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in the Peak District National Park. We need to balance the need to travel for residents, businesses and visitors with the ambition to have a net zero carbon Peak District National Park by 2050. A hierarchy of travel will assist in achieving the ambition. Advances in technology, and with a consistent level of service across the National Park, such as broadband will enable home working and video conference calls to continue to reduce the need to travel. The hierarchy for remaining travel is active travel (walking and cycling), sustainable travel (public transport) and alternative fuel sources (e.g. electric vehicles).

Proposal

In line with national policy, the Authority's ambition for climate change is 'A net zero carbon Peak District National Park by 2050'. The Authority is already undertaking many activities, both on our own and in partnership, that assist in meeting the ambition. These are set out in appendix 1 to this report. This illustrates our ambition and scope of activities that are currently assisting in achieving this.

Member Engagement

The activities outlined in appendix 1 to this report are all at different stages of development, however, there are opportunities for Members to engage with some key projects at the following meetings. Some Members will be attending the National Park Management Plan Summit on climate change on 15 October 2019. At the November 2019 Forum, there will be updates on the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Carbon Management Plan 2, the National Park Management Plan Climate Change Summit and Recreation Hubs Policy. At the December 2019 Programmes and Resources committee, Members will be asked to approve the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Environmental Management Annual Report 2018/19 and Carbon Management Plan 2. There will also be a report on the Hope Valley Explorer first year feedback and thinking for next years' service. In Autumn 2019, the Member Steering Group for the Local Plan will consider the scope of review, engagement planning and early thinking on evidence needs for the Local Plan review. Finally, the January 2020 Programmes and Resources committee will be asked to approve the Moors for the Future 2020/21 Operational Plan.

Funding

The scope of current activities set out in appendix 1 have funding and resources identified to deliver them. Funding would need to be found for any further projects.