

Peak District National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21

Foreword

The third year's delivery of the 2018-23 Peak District National Park Management Plan has been one nobody could have anticipated. In a year like no other, we are still waiting patiently for what everyone hopes will be the last restrictions after lock down to lift.

As we start to reflect on the year that has gone, I must say thank you to all our communities, volunteers and rangers who have stepped up to deal with the impact of waves of new visitors who were often quite unfamiliar with the areas of the countryside they were exploring. As well as the numerous individuals who have risen to the diverse challenges of the pandemic.

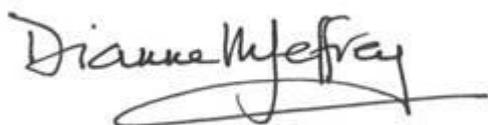
With resources directed to dealing with the pandemic and facilities closed, many work programmes have been put on hold. However despite these constrained times essential work has also gone on undeterred. Appreciation goes to the Moors for the Future Partnership for the completion of their largest annual work programme in their history with 1036 Ha of sphagnum planted and almost 10,000 dams installed plus a wide variety of other work to secure our upland landscape. Also several bird of prey species showed encouraging breeding successes, thanks to collaboration between landowners, gamekeepers and raptor workers. Peregrine falcons had their best year in a decade, with all six known nesting attempts being successful, resulting in a record 14 fledged young. The levels of occupied bird of prey territories continue to present an ongoing challenge, but the progress of peregrine and goshawk this year shows us what can be achieved.

Though the end now seems in sight, for the National Park there are still more questions than answers. Will visitors surge back to the place and continue to do so once alternative venues are fully open? What long term impact will all this have on the hospitality sector and local economy?

For land management the future also looks less than certain, but hopefully promising. The tests and trials to inform the new farming support package are now complete and have reported their findings. Potentially this could usher in a new era of supporting farmers more directly for the public goods they provide, bolstering working protected landscapes such as the National Park.

Looking forward, the pressing matter of climate change must not slip from the agenda as we seek to build back stronger and develop our green recovery. In these uncertain and changeable times the strength of our partnerships will be key to making an effective recovery which endures. The following pages provide more detail on our progress in 2020/21 delivery of the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23. Please feel proud of what we have achieved so far and consider how you may continue to support delivering these intentions in the future.

Yours sincerely



Dianne Jeffrey
Independent Chair of the Peak District National Park Management Plan Advisory Group

Introduction

The National Park Management Plan provides the framework that encourages everyone to work together to achieve national park purposes. It is not a plan for an individual organisation or group but a plan for the place. It is, therefore, a partnership plan. It is the single most important strategic document for the Peak District National Park. It shares with everyone what the main issues and priorities are. It then sets out how, together, we are going to tackle those issues over the next five years.

Since 2007 the National Park Management Plan has been overseen by an Advisory Group of partners who have monitored delivery and provided advice to the organisations involved. The group contains representatives from the following organisations:

Business Peak District
Derbyshire County Council
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Farmers & Land Managers Forum
Friends of the Peak District
Local Access Forum
National Park Authority
National Trust
Natural England (coordinating input from the Environment Agency, Historic England and Forestry Commission)
Peak Park Parishes Forum
Rural Action Derbyshire
Sheffield City Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Experience Peak District and Derbyshire

The management plan is organised around six main themes known as Areas of Impact, which are in turn broken down into a series of intentions.

Areas of Impact

- 1: Preparing for a future climate
- 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management
- 3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale
- 4: A National Park for everyone
- 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding
- 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

Area of Impact 1: Preparing for a future climate

Intention 1.1: Reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities

To reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities, we will know which special qualities are most affected by climate change, and focus action on reducing these impacts. We will undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment on the special qualities of the National Park & produce a mitigation/adaptation plan setting out priority actions.

Update

The climate change vulnerability assessment on the National Park's special qualities has been completed and was adopted by the National Park Authority in December. It will now form part of the evidence base for the next review of the Management Plan ensuring climate change has prominence in our thinking as we plan ahead. Part of our ambition to have a working assessment of all the Park's area based emissions is now complete, as we now have data from the Government cut to the National Park's boundary and are looking to develop this further to gain a more nuanced understanding of the National Park's carbon footprint with demand based modelling.

Our work to address the impacts of climate change is progressing.

Sustainable Transport

In a difficult year work behind the scenes continues to develop our integrated low carbon travel ambitions. We are looking to develop integrated travel partnerships across various transport authority areas, using the Hope Valley Explorer as a demonstration area with scope to roll the principles out more widely across National Park.

Peatland restoration

Development of the Great North Bog is under way, looking at expanding opportunities for peatland restoration across the entire North of England in collaboration with other peatland partnerships and practitioners. This is vital work as the area is estimated to release 3.7 million tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year due to the condition of the peat. A grant is now in place from Defra and the Environment Agency to support the setting up of the Great North Bog initiative and an interim Board is in place. Work is underway with Defra on proposals for the Nature for Climate Fund in order to be best placed to access the funds when they become available.

Over the winter 20/21 a peat mass density analysis of the whole Bamford catchment was completed, this will give a landscape scale assessment of carbon content at a high level of accuracy and will provide a benchmark for assessing the rest of the Dark Peak and South Pennines.

Grasslands for carbon

To improve carbon awareness amongst farmers and land managers the carbon data which the Peak Carbon Tool uses has been updated to make it more accurate. In addition, two further updated versions of the carbon ready reckoner have been created for the Dark and South West Peak National Character Areas, as part of the second phase of the Defra Environmental Land Management Test. The South West Peak carbon ready reckoner is being expanded to include soil carbon as an indicator of soil health, where land managers can input actual soil test results. Currently the ready reckoner has been shared with 27 farmers and land managers through four virtual workshops.

The Peak Carbon Tool has been shared with representatives of the 44 English Protected Landscapes and there is interest in developing the tool to apply to other parts of the country.

Trees in the Landscape

New targets for additional trees in the landscape have been agreed to match the ambition set out by the national Climate Change Committee. The draft Wooded Landscape Plan, which will form the basis of this, has been shared with partners and was well received with good levels of engagement and insightful comments. The plan has been amended to reflect these comments and the final draft will be shared in early 21/22.

Area of Impact 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management

Intention 2.1: Secure funding for future land management to benefit all

To secure funding for future land management to benefit all, we will seek to create an ideal future farming and land management payment scheme in the Peak District National Park which helps to conserve and enhance the special qualities.

Update

The final report on the White Peak Test has been completed and submitted to DEFRA. The Test intended to determine whether a National Character Area (NCA) could be used to design some of the building blocks for Environmental Land Management support, as well as help improve the relationship between Government and land managers. The NCA was found to be a good framework for Environmental Land Management. Participants recognised their holdings in the description and could use it to identify which public goods they could deliver.

The Government's response to the Environmental Land Management Policy Discussion Document has now been published and the design of the future approach has continued to be developed. It now includes three schemes: Sustainable Farm Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery.

Phase 1 of the Sustainable Farm Incentive national pilot has been launched with an invitation for farmers and land managers to make expressions of interest in the pilot scheme by April 2021.

In addition, further opportunities have been provided for any areas of design not already covered by existing tests and trials. Further tests have started in the Dark and South West Peak National Character Areas to expand on the work completed in the White Peak. So far four workshops have been held, two with existing Countryside Stewardship Farmer Facilitation Groups and two with participants being drawn from across the area who are not part of an existing farmer group.

At a National level there has been on going promotion of available agri-environment schemes across all England's 44 protected landscapes resulting in a workshop attended by over 500 farmers and land managers.

Future Actions:

To have a new support package available from 2023.

Note: The new Agriculture Bill and policy statement provides a planned timescale of 2025 to have new environmental land management arrangements in place

Intention 2.2: Ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits

To ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits; we will seek to restore populations of birds of prey to at least the levels present in the late 1990s, with the addition of hen harrier as a regularly successful breeding species.

Focusing on:

1. Fire risk
2. Visitor engagement
3. Resilient sustainable moorland
4. Moorland birds

Regular monitoring of progress against these areas of focus is carried out in partnership between Natural England, the Moorland Association and the National Park Authority. There is also an annual up-date on progress and agreement on the focus for the future year's activity with moorland owners, agents and keepers.

Update

Fire Operations Group

The surges in visitor numbers heightened the wildlife risk but this season the number of wildfires has been lower than the previous year thanks mainly to the weather and also the constant vigilance of land managers. Several wildfires were caught early and thus major fires were prevented. Work with supermarkets not to stock disposable BBQs has helped but there is still more to do manage the public expectations and understanding of the dangers that they pose.

Moors for the Future Partnership is working with moorland owners to incorporate the ignition risk map into wider estate fire planning. They now have moorland resilience projects in place with Calderdale and Kirklees with other moorland containing Local Authority areas considering joining to increase the resilience of the habitat to fire.

A template Wildfire Plan approach is being developed and with support from a private landowner, the plans will be tested using a risk model to see if they are fit for purpose. This work will then be fed into DEFRA's wider approach to this critical issue.

Access and Engagement

The Countryside Code has been reviewed and updated but concerns still remain about increased visitors to the National Park once the lockdown is eased. Therefore proposals are being developed for further media work around being considerate when visiting and not bringing BBQs into the National Park area.

This will complement the work undertaken through the #PeakDistrictProud campaign. More details on which can be found under Intention 5.1

Sustainable Moorland Management Group

The England Peat Restoration Fund team is now in place and are currently determining how the funding will be allocated and what delivery partners need to do to receive funding going forward.

The restriction on burning blanket bog habitat is being addressed through DEFRA's development of a requirement for estates to apply for a Burning Licence. It is expected that the new arrangement will be in place ahead of the next burning season which is due to start 1st October 2021.

Natural England has funded a historical mapping project with MFFP to collect and make available the history of restoration works to date. The moorland restoration map is now near to completion, and shows what work has been accomplished, where and over what timescale. This will be launched in 21/22.

Moorland Birds

The final Bird of Prey Initiative report for 2020 showed that it was a relatively good year.

Peregrine falcons had their best year in a decade, with all six known nesting attempts being successful, resulting in a record 14 fledged young. This was the first year, since the Initiative was launched in 2011, when all known nesting attempts have successfully fledged young, and is double the previous maximum of 3 successful nests. Goshawks, which breed in woodlands on the moorland edge, also had a successful season, with 7 of the 9 known nests successfully fledging a total of 16-17 young, surpassing last year's 12 young from 8 nests. The last two years have seen a welcome increase in the number of goshawks successfully breeding in the Dark Peak.

Six incidents of illegal bird of prey persecution were confirmed by the police, up from two in the previous year. Plus an egg collector was arrested and convicted, following an alert to the police by local gamekeepers in the northern Peak District.

The Initiative continues to be dependent for monitoring data on the local Raptor Groups, partner staff and volunteers, and on those gamekeepers who report sightings to the Raptor Groups. The Initiative would like to express its thanks for the hard work this involves. The levels of occupied bird of prey territories continue to present an ongoing challenge, but the progress of peregrine and goshawk this year shows us what can be achieved.

Area of Impact 3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale

Intention 3.1: Establish monitoring at a landscape scale

We want to work with partners to help us to understand how and why the landscape is changing, whether changes are positive or not and how we should address the changes to conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park.

Update

We have identified a programme of research to assess how the Peak District landscape is changing in a meaningful and practical way. Landscape incorporates many components; this means that a single project or indicator cannot explain landscape change. The programme of research aims to measure change across the following themes;

- Land Cover (including long term change) – *what is happening on the ground?*
- Landscape Quality – *what are the features and factors impacting positively and negatively on the landscape?*
- Public Perception – *how people feel and respond to change?*
- Built Development – *extent and visual influence and impact?*

- Recording areas of known change e.g. *what impact have our restoration activities had; what do we know about the impact of moorland fires?*
- Climate Change – *What are the vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity of National Park features?*
- Landscape metrics – *how do data and Environment Plan indicators contribute to environmental and landscape change?*

The intention is that these themes will be brought together in a comprehensive Landscape Assessment every 5 years.

The proposals have been delayed by the impact of Covid19, which has restricted partner availability and prevented access to land and facilities. . However, work with Cranfield University has progressed and funding is being sought for a wider application of the approach than initially proposed. This expanded approach is being led by the University. Progress has been made with the repeat of landscape description unit photographs and a draft methodology for interpretation has been produced.

Intention 3.2: Develop a White Peak partnership

The White Peak Partnership has been key to the delivery of Intention 2.1 securing funding for future land management for the benefit of all, and further information is provided under that section.

The White Peak Project tested the following:

- Use of a National Character Area framework to deliver public goods and the 25 Year Environment Plan in language accessible to land managers.
- Development of a ‘ready reckoner’ to show the public goods being delivered e.g. carbon.
- Trial of a nature recovery network.

The tests on the use of National Character Areas in spatial prioritisation of new agri-environmental support were considered a success and have been expanded to other areas. The practical field trials have continued and funding has been secured from Defra to share the on-going findings with others during 21/22. A report on the activities and findings so far has also been produced and shared.

The Natural England led LIFE in the Ravines application to the EU LIFE fund was successful and started in September with a five-year programme. The project aims to restore and improve 876ha of our internationally important ash woodlands as part of the response to ash dieback. At present a project board is being established and recruitment to posts. Initial safety work has led to discussions with local communities about the links to natural flood management.

An application to the Natural Environment Investment Ready Fund has been made for consultancy time to explore the use of private funds for the delivery of biodiversity outcomes on private land. This seeks to build on the experience of the White Peak DEFRA tests. A newsletter on the activities of the Partnership and in the White Peak has been produced and shared.

Intention 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery

To maintain existing landscape scale delivery we will develop a clear long term vision, plan and have funding in place for the Dark Peak and South Pennines to 2050. We will develop a clear

future plan and funding to develop and continue landscape scale delivery on the South West Peak.

Moors for the Future Partnership

This year has seen Moors for the Future Partnership's (MFFP) successful completion of their biggest programme of works to date, with £5.2 m of project delivery; including 28.6 ha of bare peat stabilised to prevent rapid erosion, 1,036 ha of sphagnum moss plugs planted to restart the creation of new peat, almost 10,000 dams and gully blocks installed to raise the water table and slow erosion, nearly 15 km of drip edges and other actively eroding peat reprofiled for stability. 1.25 km of footpath has been restored (with a further 0.5km to be completed by the end of April) in support of the Mend our Mountains campaign, allowing better access while preventing further damage.

The annual vegetation and dipwell surveys were completed by staff and volunteers, providing monitoring data on 211 long-term vegetation quadrats and 600 dipwells to improve our understanding of how effective our conservation work is and help to assess and quantify the benefits delivered across the Peak District and South Pennines. Four academic journal papers were published in collaboration with the Partnership.

The partnership also promoted its activities and messaging through engagement with 13,000 people at 35 events, both online and in person. Media coverage on 94 occasions including national news. A wildfire log was created to enable a unified system for wildfire recording across the Peak District and South Pennines.

Yorkshire Water Services and Severn Trent Water now have peat restoration projects organised through MFFP up to 2025. Further to this, all three water utilities (Severn Trent Water, Yorkshire Water Services and United Utilities) are interested in working through the Partnership on Ofwat's Price Review 24 (PR24), which will lead to the next set of Asset Management Plan 8 projects from 2025 to 2030. Bidding work is underway to replace the EU funded project, which has just a year left to run. The new Strategic Management Board is now in place and will be providing high-level advocacy for future business across the working area of the Partnership.

South West Peak Landscape Partnership

The full programme review has been completed and approved by the Partnership Board and National Lottery Heritage Fund. Delivery continued this winter, including: small-scale tree planting schemes, buffer strip fencing, access improvements, cultural heritage asset recording, preparation for restoration to two field barns, wild play activities for children and families.

Additional funding of £56,000 was secured by the partnership for moorland restoration work on the Warslow Moors Estate, and the partnership is currently in discussion with partners, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water, regarding potential future funding agreements. A programme of future funding opportunities is under development.

Future Actions:

Agreed targets for the percentage of blanket bog in the Dark Peak and South Pennines in improved ecological condition:

- 30% of Blanket Bog across the Southern Pennines to be in state 6 by 2050
- 90% of Dark Peak Blanket Bog moved out of state 2 by 2023 (bare peat to be revegetated)

- 25% of the Southern Pennine Blanket bogs to be moved out of state 2 by 2023

Area of Impact 4: A National Park for everyone

Intention 4.1 and 4.2 Overcome physical and perceived barriers to access

By 2023 we will be encouraging a wider range of people to enjoy the Peak District National Park at an appropriate scale and adding value to the visitor economy.

Update

The Discover England Fund (DEF) Phase 2 programme provided £158,000 to support and market, tourism opportunities in the National Park. This funding concluded at the end of year 20/21. A range of activities have been delivered including local business online networking, training, marketing support and the launch of a new, searchable consumer-facing website promoting National Park Experiences and bookings. An updated trade brochure has also been produced. 90 businesses were engaged through the programme, and almost 70 experiences remain within the scheme. International trade promotion is currently paused due to Covid-19 impacts in Europe.

Work has progressed on the ambition to develop a partnership approach to integrated visitor hubs and gateways to embrace accessibility for all to the National Park whilst supporting responsible visiting and reducing impact of visitors. More specifically, progress has been made with the approval of the visitor management recreation hub partnership vision workshop and paper to Peak District National Park Authority Programmes & Resources committee in December. This work is being complemented by a national working group being formed to learn and share best practice led by Tom Hind from North York Moors National Park.

Area of Impact 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding

Intention 5.1: Balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment

To balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment we provided a refreshed Countryside Code underpinning a Peak District brand which all relevant partners could promote equally and consistently. #PeakDistrictProud (#PDP) shares the positive ways in which people can help care for the national park; from taking home your litter and avoiding BBQs, to keeping your dog a lead.

Throughout 20/21 the focus has been on providing clear messages to all visitors around government guidelines and responsible behaviour in the countryside. On the 1st April 2021, a new national Countryside Code was officially launched by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales. All our partners will support and promote the new national Countryside Code messages and #PeakDistrictProud actions will be used to complement these national messages as they are promoted.

#PeakDistrictProud continues to provide a foundation for cross-stakeholder working within the National Park. The newly formed Peak District Communicators Forum, convened by the

Authority, will be using #PDP as the basis for visitor messaging alongside the Countryside Code to provide local relevance and ownership. It will also underpin activities such as the Peak District Ambassadors scheme that will be implemented during the first part of 2021/22.

We welcomed the support from partners and communities who pitched in to help with litter collections to compliment the work that rangers, gamekeepers and other land managers undertake. The Authority and partners would record that it is much appreciated. As the lockdown lifts, community volunteering under #PDP is to be promoted initially around litter picking as a way to support responsible visiting and empower local communities.

The important role that the Peak District National Park has for the communities that live in, and around it, to provide breathing spaces and a place for quiet recreation that supports their physical and mental wellbeing has never been clearer. During a very difficult 12 months we have needed to work together to ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit from what our protected landscapes have to offer. We have set up multi-agency coordination groups across both visitor planning and communications, to help prepare for the easing of lockdown so we can collectively work to mitigate impacts and welcome people who come to responsibly enjoy the countryside.

Last year we saw many more people choosing to travel to the Peak District by car and the issues this caused. The Authority worked with the highways authorities to manage this by providing car park information, implementing double yellow lines where appropriate in areas like the Upper Derwent, Upper Padley and Thorpe/Dovedale. Linked to this the police and highway authorities have been actively enforcing parking restrictions. The introduction of an alert system to inform visitors when an area was reaching full capacity was well received and on its first weekend of operation was seen by over 720,000 people. Our long term ambition is to see visitors being able to access the National Park more sustainably and to benefit from the reductions in carbon and pollution that comes with this.

Intention 5.2: Ensure shared responsibility

To ensure shared responsibility we will review and develop the current arrangements for events management in the Peak District.

The events notification system has been replaced with event guidance and a code of conduct for event organisers to sign up to. If event organisers agree to the code of conduct, their events will be added to a calendar and promoted on the National Park Authority website. Very few events have taken place due to Covid19 restrictions, which makes any review of the new guidance and listing of limited value when considering how to refine our approach at present. However, we continue to monitor the impact of events that take place as lock down eases, in what we expect to be a very busy year for the National Park.

Intention 5.3: Develop an awareness and understanding of the benefits of the Peak District National Park

Utilising the valuable work of Inspired by the Peak District and the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark, consider a revised approach to the promotion of the peak District brand so we establish a provenance which is coherent and effective at promoting the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park.

A group was convened in 2019 to promote the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park. A series of discussions have taken place on how we can influence Local Industry with a focus on "Clean, green productivity linked to a high quality of life" and using "Positive planning powers; allied with a proactive enabling role from District Councils". There has been no progress on this during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the District Councils have been responding positively by supporting local businesses through difficult times.

Area of Impact 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

Intention 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

To support thriving and sustainable communities and economy, we will first define what is meant by thriving and sustainable communities, in the context of the National Park Management Plan.

We have defined what is meant by thriving and sustainable communities in the context of the National Park. A draft version of the thriving and sustainable definition was arrived at through combining ideas supplied by the Peak Park Parishes' Forum (PPPF) and comments received from parishes through the Parish Statement process. This draft version was then consulted on in the last quarter of 2020 and was further developed, with the agreement of the PPPF, using comments received during this consultation. Final comments were invited from our constituent Council in April 2021, which has resulted in a final definition. . Formal endorsement of the definition will be sought at the May 2021 National Park Authority meeting to be used in plans and policies such as the National Park Management Plan and Local Plan.

Intention 6.1: Improve access to services

To improve access to services we will work with providers to improve broadband and mobile connectivity across the National Park in line with the UK's Next Generation Access (NGA) standards.

In July 2020 the Heads of Planning for National Parks and National Parks England held a meeting with Mobile UK, the industry body for the four main mobile operators to discuss the new Shared Rural Network programme. This is a joint industry and Government initiative to improve rural mobile coverage which would also give improved broadband coverage through the use of shared masts and sites. The programme started in 2020. To facilitate this the Government is proposing to extend permitted development rights, including within National Parks. National Parks England and National Parks Authorities have expressed concern over the potential landscape impacts, but are willing to respond positively to the need for improved coverage. Further discussions have taken place with mobile providers about the new Shared Rural Network and the use of the emergency services network, being rolled out by EE on behalf of the Home Office, to develop the public mobile phone network by using the same site infrastructure.

An interactive map of the current situation in Derbyshire is available via this link; [MAP](#) and Staffordshire via this link: [MAP](#). The coverage of the National Park is improving gradually, but communities and businesses are still likely to have difficulties in the most isolated areas.

Intention 6.2: Support the provision of locally needed housing

To support the provision of locally needed housing we will work through the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group Housing Sub-Group to address the local need for appropriate housing in the National Park.

National Park Officers are still developing the required evidence for the next planning review and discussions with constituent authorities are ongoing regarding statements of common ground

and the strategic cross boundary planning issues that need to be addressed in our respective plans.

An update on the planning permissions granted for housing during the period will be provided when the updated information is available.

Intention 6.3: Enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and wherever possible enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park

To enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and, wherever possible, enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, we will assist the development of businesses in conjunction with relevant bodies. Linking business support, grant aid, planning and economic development.

Whilst there has been no progress from the working group during 2020, the District Councils have been responding positively by supporting local businesses. The Authority has maintained a Planning service throughout this period, prioritising business critical applications. Work has commenced on significant business developments on the Riverside Business Park in Bakewell, including the new bridge access to the A6.

Looking forward, the new shared evidence for our respective local plan reviews will include the need for new employment space. Evidence collection for the Local Plan will continue through 2021 with an aim of informing issues and options consultation later in the year.

An update on the planning permissions granted for retail and business premises during the period will be provided when the updated information is available.