

6. NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND DELIVERY PLAN FOR CLIMATE LEADERSHIP (EF)

1. Purpose of the report

To inform Members about National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership in National Parks, what this means for the Peak District National Park and how it fits with our National Park Management Plan and the review currently taking place.

Key Issues

- In December 2020 National Parks England published its Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership in National Parks setting out a common ambition for climate change action.
- The Delivery Plan vision is 'We will work together, and at scale, to achieve rapid action towards net zero in National Parks'.
- The Authority will deliver its commitments to the Delivery Plan through our Corporate Strategy and National Park Management Plan.
- The Corporate Strategy and National Park Management Plan include commitments for the Authority, alongside our partners, to reduce the impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the National Park.
- The Delivery Plan is part of our evidence base for the current review of the National Park Management Plan and Corporate Strategy.

2. Recommendation

- 1. To note how the Authority is currently taking forward National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership in the Peak District and how it is informing our future National Park Management Plan.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The Climate Change Act 2008 as amended in 2019 commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.
4. The UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks (2010) places climate change as central to National Park Authority objectives and describes their role 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 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.

Background Information

5. In December 2020 National Parks England published its Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership in National Parks (a copy of which can be found at appendix 1) with the vision 'We will work together, and at scale, to achieve rapid action towards net zero in National Parks'. This vision is to be implemented through a climate action programme for National Parks that has the following commitments.
 - Leads to a rapid escalation in tackling the climate emergency and establishes NPAs as leaders in meeting the challenges it presents.
 - Increases our understanding, and those of others, around the impacts of Climate Change.
 - Uses our Partnership Management Plans to deliver action on reducing emissions and adapting to Climate Change at a landscape scale, making them exemplars for action.
 - Demonstrates how a rapid response and transition to low-carbon living can be achieved.
 - Promotes the principle of achieving 'Net Zero with Nature'.
 - Works collectively, and with constituent authorities, towards becoming 'Net zero' by 2040.
 - Promotes nature-based solutions and supports behaviour change beyond our boundaries.
 - Leads by example, through achieving 'net zero' National Park Authorities by 2030 wherever practicable.
6. It is envisaged that this will deliver an enhanced understanding of emissions and net zero with nature embedded, leading to rapid, innovative and well-targeted actions, and resulting in significantly lower emissions and more resilient National Parks.
7. The Delivery plan outlines a number of ways that this will be done. The strategic delivery mechanisms are as follows.
 - Establish a consistent Carbon Budget baseline for all ten National Parks to understand how and where to prioritise actions to reach net zero by the fastest possible time.
 - The Management Plans for each National Park will codify this and set out a clear strategy and delivery plan.
 - Developing a communications plan for the overall programme (National Parks England), with tailored plans for each park resourced from within existing allocations.
 - We will also embed our net zero vision into existing and future programmes.

Proposals

8. As Programmes and Resources will be aware from the report to Programmes and Resources in October 2019 when the committee agreed the four original programmes to be overseen by this committee (minute reference 5/19), the Authority is already undertaking many activities, both on our own and in partnership, that assist in meeting the climate changes ambitions. The appendix to the report set out the current activities that were being undertaken to achieve the ambitions, and subsequent reports to this committee have updated Members on those activities. Alongside the formal committees, the Member led Climate Change Steering Group has been working with officers to understand and steer on these activities.
9. The summary below updates Members on the climate change related activities we have focussed our limited resources on since October 2019.

- Implementation of the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2. An update on this work is provided at agenda item 8 for this meeting.
 - A consistent carbon baseline for the National Park. An update on the work to develop a carbon budget baseline for this National Park that is consistent with all ten National Parks is provided at agenda item 7 for this meeting.
 - The Peak District Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment was approved by Members at the December 2020 Programmes and Resources committee (Minute reference 32/20). This is a key element of the evidence base for the National Park Management Plan and Corporate Strategy Review.
 - The September 2021 Authority Committee Chief Executive's Report provided an update on our work on sustainable travel (Minute Reference 64/21).
 - Our work on climate change through land management activities is being taken forward in a number of ways. The report at agenda item 9 for this meeting outlines an element of our approach to peatland restoration. At the April 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee an update on the National Park England's Delivery Plan on Sustainable Farming and Land Management will report on the Environmental Land Management test and trial result and use of the Farming and Protected Landscapes Programmes for carbon projects.
 - A review of planning policies with respect to Climate Change. The Local Plan review will consider the scope to seek enhanced requirements for energy efficiency, low carbon construction and renewable energy potential. Reports on this will be presented to Authority at appropriate times. Furthermore, the spatial strategy will continue to advocate the need to reduce the need to travel by private car, foster a move a low carbon travel, and seek stronger contributions from new development to nature recovery.
10. At the April 2021 meeting of the Member led Climate Change Steering Group, officers presented the Group with a detailed matrix of how the Delivery Plan is being taken forward in the Peak District. This exercise demonstrated that we are fully aligned with the areas of the Delivery Plan that are relevant to the Authority (it has some actions that are for National Parks England only). Paragraphs 11 to 14 of this report provide a summary of the matrix. The two delivery mechanisms are our Corporate Strategy and the National Park Management Plan, both of which have actions and performance indicators that are related to climate change.
11. Our Corporate Strategy 2019-24 has the following seven key performance indicators (KPIs) that are directly linked to the Delivery Plan.
- KPI 1: Influence the development of a support system that properly rewards farmers and land managers for delivering a full range of public benefits.
2024 target: At least an additional 10% of Peak District National Park in environmental land management schemes.
 - KPI 2: Natural beauty conserved and enhanced.
2024 target: a) Assessment of landscape changes achieved b) 100% of planning decisions in accordance with strategic policy
 - KPI 3: Increase the amount of carbon captured and stored as part of routine land use and management.
2024 target: 3,650 tonnes net decrease in carbon emissions from moorland.
 - KPI 4: Increase the area of moorland blanket bog moving towards favourable condition.
2024 target: Restoration activities on 1,500 hectares of degraded blanket bog completed.
 - KPI 5: Sustain the area of non-protected, species-rich grassland through retention, enhancement and creation.
2024 target: Sustain at least 5,000 hectares of non-protected, species-rich grassland.
 - KPI 6: Increase the area of new native woodland created.
2024 target: Create at least 400 hectares of new native woodland.
 - KPI 23: To have a corporate Asset Management Plan.
2024 target: Plan to be adopted in 2019/20 and then implemented.

12. Our Corporate Strategy has the following actions that are directly linked to implementing the National Park England's Delivery Plan.
- Establish a consistent Carbon Budget baseline for all ten National Parks to understand how and where to prioritise actions to reach net zero by the fastest possible time. (An update on this work is provided at agenda item 7 for this meeting.)
 - Influence the design of the future post-Brexit scheme for roll out in 2025. Influence and deliver tests, trials and pilots for the new scheme through to 2025. Make the case for and influence the design of transitional arrangements.
 - Continue to support land managers to access current and future schemes.
 - Develop methodology for strategic sustainable landscape monitoring with partners, and assess whether the changes conserve and enhance natural beauty.
 - Ensure all planning decisions are in accordance with strategic policy.
 - Further develop our knowledge and insights of total carbon captured and stored to tell the carbon management story of the Peak District.
 - Continue to carry out a range of moorland restoration work to revegetate bare peat and reduce carbon emissions.
 - Develop the climate change vulnerability assessment and implement the key outcomes.
 - Continue to have a clear voice on the outcomes we expect to see from moorlands. Support the development of and implement a resilient, sustainable moorland management model.
 - Continue restoration activities on degraded blanket bog to move it towards favourable condition with a focus on reducing the amount of bare peat and rewetting as far as possible in years 1-3.
 - Use the new FCERM (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management) strategy and water companies AMP7 programme to support our moorland restoration work.
 - Identify opportunities for new native woodland, scrub, wood pasture, small plantings and individual trees based on the approach of the right trees in the right places for the right reasons.
 - Implement a Carbon Management Plan 2 for the Authority. (An update on this work is provided at agenda item 8 for this meeting.)
13. In response to feedback from the Member led Climate Change Steering Group, officers are further developing our communications around climate change messages to ensure they are consistent and clear. – The Group felt that this was an area of the National Park England Delivery Plan where the Authority could improve.
14. The National Park Management Plan 2018-23 has the Area of Impact 'Preparing for the future climate'. The delivery plan has the following actions to be delivered in the plan period.
- Implement the recommendations of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.
 - Create a low carbon sustainable transport offer for all which supports and encourages a new sustainable travel hierarchy promoting the following.
 - Active travel encouraging low carbon and active transport such as walking and cycling allowing enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities.
 - Sustainable public transport encouraging mass transit and shared travel to and within the National Park.
 - Low emission car based travel through greater opportunities for electrically charged vehicles. Promoted by integrated and promotional ticketing.
 - Peatland restoration: Seek to expand current work programmes to match the ambition required to achieve 50% Peak District moorlands in good (grade 6) condition.
 - Grasslands for carbon: Support Regenerative Agriculture for soil health and carbon retention.

- Integration of more trees into the landscape: Expanded tree cover which assists in reducing the impacts of climate change on the National Park and complements the special qualities of the National Park. Target of 528Ha by 2023.
15. In terms of future plans and strategies, as Members will be aware, we are currently reviewing our Corporate Strategy and the National Park Management. At the September meeting of Authority (Minute reference 67/21), Members committed to aligning these two plans and strategies so that we have one vision for the National Park. This will ensure that what the Authority seeks to achieve will be the same as what we are seeking to achieve with partners.
16. Although we are at a relatively early stage in the review process, a clear theme in discussions around the vision for the National Park is that climate change must be a central element to it. Therefore, it is likely that there will be a greater emphasis on climate change than in our current framework. The National Parks England's Delivery Plan on Climate Leadership is a key part of our evidence base for the review so that we ensure we are delivering the relevant elements of it in the future.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

17. The activities in the current Corporate Strategy and National Park Management Plan have funding and resources identified to deliver them. The resources for activities in future plans and strategies will be agreed as part of the review process.

18. Risk Management:

The main risk of the Authority being unable to deliver to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership is if this is overlooked when developing the next National Park Management Plan. This is mitigated, as it is part of the evidence base for the plan review.

Sustainability:

19. Our work on climate change directly improves the sustainability of both the Authority and National Park.

Equality:

20. There are no direct implications for equalities in the activities contained within this report.

21. Climate Change:

1. How does this decision contribute to the Authority's role in climate change set out in the UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks?
 - a. Educators in climate change
Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to be educators in climate change.
 - b. Exemplars of sustainability
Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to be exemplars of sustainability.

c. Protecting the National Park

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to protect the special qualities of the National Park.

d. Leading the way in sustainable land management

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to lead the way in sustainable land management.

e. Exemplars in renewable energy

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to be exemplars in renewable energy.

f. Working with communities

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to work with communities on climate change.

2. How does this decision contribute to the Authority meeting its carbon net zero target?

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to be aligned with other National Park Authorities' commitment to be carbon net zero.

3. How does this decision contribute to the National Park meeting carbon net zero by 2050?

Delivering to the National Park England Climate Change Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership will help enable the Authority to be aligned with other National Park Authorities' commitment for National Parks to be carbon net zero.

4. Are there any other Climate Change related issues that are relevant to this decision that should be brought to the attention of Members?

None.

22. Background papers (not previously published)

None

23. Appendices

Appendix 1 - National Parks England Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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