

9. PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK WOODED LANDSCAPES PLAN

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval for a draft Wooded Landscapes Plan for the Peak District, providing internal and external guidance on opportunities for increasing tree and shrub cover, based on landscape character.

Key Issues

- **Compliance with national and local policy**
- **Ensuring that the overarching principles (Section 6) and the priorities for each Landscape Character Type (Section 7) are appropriate.**

2. Recommendations(s)

- 1. To adopt the Wooded Landscapes Plan, subject to any further amendments arising from outstanding consultation responses acceptance of which is delegated to the Head of Landscape in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Programmes & Resources Committee.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

National Park Management Plan

- 3. The Wooded Landscapes Plan will help guide an increase in tree and shrub establishment in the Peak District, delivering the National Park Management Plan intention of “identifying the most beneficial tree planting which can occur in the National Park.” It will also contribute to maintaining and enhancing all seven Special Qualities and in particular: Special Quality 1 - Beautiful views created by contrasting landscapes and dramatic geology, Special Quality 2 - Internationally important and locally distinctive wildlife and habitats, Special Quality 6 - An inspiring space for escape, adventure, discovery and quiet reflection and Special Quality 7 - Vital benefits for millions of people that flow beyond the landscape boundary.**

Corporate Strategy

- 4. In doing so it will contribute to KPI 2 (Natural Beauty Conserved and Enhanced), KPI 3 (Increase the amount of carbon captured) and KPI 6 (increase the area of new native woodland). It will also help safeguard and enhance biodiversity, cultural heritage and people’s enjoyment and wellbeing.**

The Landscape Strategy

- 5. In addition to contributing to National Park Management Plan and Corporate Strategy objectives, the Wooded Landscape Plan has been written as a stand-alone part of the Authority’s Landscape Strategy, providing more detailed guidance on increasing tree and shrub cover in the National Park. Please note that the current Landscape Strategy is under review but this element has been brought forward so that the Authority and its partners are clear about where more trees are wanted.**

Background Information

- 6. The Plan has been produced to fulfil the National Park Management Plan intention referred to above, and members’ request to produce a woodland planting strategy.**
- 7. The Authority has limited ability to directly influence tree/shrub establishment. The Plan**

is therefore written as a plan for the place, in the same vein as the National Park Management Plan, and has been subject to consultation with a wide range of external bodies, notably Natural England, Historic England, the Forestry Commission, the National Farmer's Union, the Moorland Association, RSPB, Small Woods Association, Country Landowners' Association, the Wildlife Trusts and two local private estates. Natural England has already provided comments but has requested additional time to provide further comments on what they consider as an important plan for the National Park.

8. Ash Dieback is now widespread in the Peak District and is likely to have a significant impact on our wooded landscapes in the future. Whilst measures are underway, through the LIFE in the Ravines project led by Natural England, to mitigate the impact in the ash woodlands of the limestone dales, the Wooded Landscapes Plan will help guide mitigation elsewhere, such as replacement of field boundary trees.
9. National Park England's Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks sets out the high-level ambitions for nature recovery across the ten national parks. One of the Peak District National Parks' contributions to this target, as set out in the Peak District Nature Recovery Prospectus, is 4,000 hectares of new native woodland creation by 2031. The Wooded Landscapes Plan will help inform delivery of this target to best effect.
10. The Plan is based on a number of key principles:
 - Landscapes have continuously evolved, and change should be seen as acceptable provided the overall environmental quality of the area is maintained or enhanced.
 - Woodland currently covers approx. 8.35% of the Peak District, significantly lower than the national average of 13%. There is therefore considerable scope for an increase in tree and shrub cover, providing potential increased range of public goods such as natural beauty, carbon capture, biodiversity, economic, flood risk, water and air quality, wellbeing and amenity benefits.
 - The realisation of those benefits, however, depends on ensuring the benefits outweigh any potential negative impacts on existing features of environmental (nature and culture) importance, i.e. "the right tree in the right place for the right reason".
 - These benefits can be realised not only by "closed-canopy woodland", but also by a wide range of measures to increase tree/shrub cover such as wood-pasture, parkland, copses, shelterbelts, scattered trees/shrubs, boundary and in-field trees, riverside trees, village trees, scrub and hedgerows. These options can extend the potential benefits of increased tree/shrub cover into areas where closed-canopy woodland may not be appropriate or economically viable, and allow wooded landscape creation to complement other land uses.
 - Different landscapes will be better suited to accommodating different types of increase in tree/shrub cover. The Plan therefore draws on the existing Landscape Character Types identified in the Landscape Strategy and tailors recommended priorities for tree/shrub establishment to each of these distinctive landscape types.

Proposals

11. The proposal is that the Authority adopts the draft Wooded Landscapes Plan at Appendix 1 as a policy document, subject to any final amendments being agreed with

the Chair and Vice-Chair of Programmes & Resources Committee.

12. The Plan will then provide a framework to influence any direct work the Authority undertakes with regard to increasing tree/shrub cover, including planning policies to achieve net gain in tree/shrub cover, collaborative and externally funded projects and management of the Authority's landholdings. It will also be used to influence and inform landowners and partner organisations, both at a strategic and individual case level, to ensure tree and shrub establishment is carried out to maximum effect in the Peak District.
13. The intention is to produce a simplified leaflet version based around illustrations as a guidance document for landowners/managers.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

14. Whilst increasing tree/shrub cover will have significant financial implications, this will largely be achieved through existing and future incentive schemes for landowners. This is a strategic guidance document aimed at influencing implementation of such schemes, and as such there are no significant financial issues for the Authority.

Risk Management:

15. The primary risk is of individual schemes not complying with guidance in the Plan. This is mitigated by the external consultation that has been carried out. In addition, the Authority is likely to be consulted on the majority of woodland creation schemes in the National Park, offering the opportunity to encourage compliance.

Sustainability:

16. The Plan will help ensure that tree and shrub establishment schemes in the Peak District are implemented in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Equality:

17. There are no significant equality issues.

18. Climate Change

Woodland creation and an increase in tree/shrub cover will benefit carbon capture and provide individual landowners with an opportunity to contribute towards climate change mitigation. The Plan will help ensure that such proposals are designed with other environmental considerations in mind, and to maximum effect.

19. Background papers (not previously published)

The Peak District Landscape Strategy.

20. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Wooded Landscapes Plan

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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