

8. PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK NATURE RECOVERY PROSPECTUS (SLF)

1. Purpose of the report

To inform Members about the Peak District National Park's Nature Recovery Prospectus 2021 – 2031 and how it fits with National Parks England Delivery Plan for Wildlife, our National Park Management Plan and Local Plan and the reviews currently taking place.

Key Issues

- The Peak District National Park's (PDNP's) Nature Recovery Prospectus is one of ten, one for each of the ten English National Parks. These nature recovery prospectuses set out the high-level ambitions under National Parks England's (NPE's) Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks.
- The Authority intends to use the PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus as the starting point for developing one Nature Recovery Plan for the PDNP, working locally with landowners, environmental Non-Government Organisations (eNGOs), farmers, land managers and other stakeholders.
- The proposal is to use the one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan as the nature recovery element of the next National Park Management Plan (NPMP) and the Local Plan.
- As discussed in the earlier report on NPE's Delivery Plan for Wildlife it is still not clear whether Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) will be at a County or other level. So, the PDNP's one Nature Recovery Plan will also need to stand on its own as a LNRS or be split in different ways e.g. County, National Park, National Character Areas.

2. Recommendations(s)

- 1. To note how the Authority is currently taking forward the Peak District National Park's Nature Recovery Prospectus in the Peak District National Park and how it is informing our future National Park Management Plan and Local Plan.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks (2010)

The vision for English National Parks and the Broads includes that by 2030 they should be places where: "wildlife flourishes and habitats are maintained, restored and expanded and linked effectively to other ecological networks. Woodland cover has increased and all woodlands are sustainably managed, with the right trees in the right places. Landscapes and habitats are managed to create resilience and enable adaptation".

4. The National Park Management Plan.

The PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus and the future one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan will be able to 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 4 - Landscapes that tell a story of thousands of years of people, farming and industry, 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.

It will also be able to contribute to 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 and 6 - Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy.

Emerging findings from the initial NPMP review consultation has placed nature recovery as one of the top concerns from those who responded.

5. The Corporate Strategy.

The PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus and the future one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan will be able to contribute to many of the outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in particular: -

A sustainable landscape that is conserved and enhanced: -

- Distinctive landscapes that are sustainably managed, accessible and properly resourced - KPIs 1, 2 and 3.
- High quality habitats in better condition, better connected and wildlife rich through nature recovery networks – KPI's 4, 5, 6 and 7.

6. The Local Plan.

The current Local Plan includes policies in order to encourage biodiversity net gain. The review of the Local Plan will seek to link net gain to a full nature recovery plan for the PDNP.

7. The Peak District Landscape Strategy.

The Peak District Landscape Strategy is currently being reviewed to ensure that it supports changes in our landscapes for nature recovery in a way that enhances rather than detracts from its special qualities. The Wooded Landscape Plan which is subject to a separate report to this committee also sets out to do the same and in particular ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place for the right reason.

Background Information

8. National Park England's Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks.

The earlier report on National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks has already set out much of the background to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus so only key points have been summarised below.

National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks vision for nature recovery is: "National Parks sit at the heart of the nation's nature recovery network; we are places where wildlife flourishes, habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded, and where everyone can experience nature and wildlife at their best. Strong local partnerships in each National Park will deliver 20% of the government's nature recovery target on 10% of the land, saving/sequestering 330,000 tonnes of CO2 per year".

9. National Park Nature Recovery Prospectuses.

As a first step following on from the completion of the Delivery Plan for Wildlife a Nature Recovery Prospectus for each National Park was developed with funding support from Natural England. The prospectus is seen as a high-level initial step to help influence government and as a starting point for further discussions with partners and other key stakeholders.

10. The Peak District Nature Recovery Prospectus.

Please see the PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus at Appendix 1. So far, the prospectus has been shared with a number of key partners and stakeholders and is to

be shared further with farmers and land managers through the Peak District Land Managers' Forum and other opportunities.

11. Existing environmental protection and land ownership.

As reported in the earlier report only 33% of the national park is protected by designations (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation). To deliver nature recovery the work already done to improve our most important SSSI sites will need to be built on by improving the protection and management of those high-quality sites that do not have statutory protection; increasing the number and area of high-quality habitats; and encouraging measures in the wider landscape to make more intensively managed landscapes more wildlife-friendly.

12. Proper rewards for the delivery of public goods.

Environmental Land Management schemes from 2024 onwards will need to properly reward and incentivise farmers and land managers for the public goods they deliver if nature recovery is to be secured. Other sources of funding particularly through the private sector will increasingly provide more funding opportunities. However, exactly how public and private funds will be blended and work in a complimentary way rather than in competition and without duplication or double funding is yet to be fully worked through and agreed.

13. Local Nature Recovery Strategies

LNRS's will soon be produced to cover the entirety of England with no gaps or overlaps. As the PDNP itself may not be designated as a "responsible authority" for the production of a LNRS this responsibility may be split across six separate responsible authorities (County Councils). To pre-empt the risk of up to six potentially disjointed, work on a plan for the PDNP as a whole has commenced with close collaboration with CC's and other stakeholders a key component.

Proposals

14. The proposals for using the PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus and developing one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan are set out below:

- A dedicated Nature Recovery Officer has been employed by the Authority for one year to work with key partners to develop the one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan.
- A project plan for the development of the one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan is being developed with key partners and will include principles to guide the process, the aims, a time plan with outputs.
- The PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus will continue to be used as a high-level start for wider discussions on nature recovery.
- The recently cleansed and sorted local ecological data held by the Authority together with ecological data held by key partners will be used to help create a baseline of habitats and wildlife in the PDNP. This will add to the ecological data available nationally. This baseline will show where the habitats and species are, their condition and populations.
- The model for nature recovery in terms of the Lawton principles – making our network of sites better, bigger, more and joined up will be developed and set out the priorities for:
 - Protecting what we have while improving its quality with better management
 - Increasing the size of wildlife sites
 - Enhancing connection by creating new wildlife corridors or stepping

- stones
 - Creating new sites
 - Creating more opportunities for wildlife by improving the wider environment including through buffering wildlife sites.
- It is proposed to use the one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan as the nature recovery element of the revised NPMP. It will also be embedded into the spatial maps of the Local Plan to further drive nature recovery through changes to land-use and as part of new development proposals.
- Once developed it is envisaged that the PDNP Nature Recovery Plan will continue to evolve and be updated.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

15. The proposals for the development of the PDNP Nature Recovery Plan as described above are funded but progress will need to be kept under review. Further dedicated resources may be required to complete the one PDNP Nature Recovery Plan and for priority activities and delivery mechanisms.

Current estimates of the cost of nature recovery in line with the Nature Recovery Prospectus indicate that at least £30 Million a year will be needed to deliver nature recovery in the National Park. Continuity and further provision of local bespoke advice and guidance through trusted advisers will also be required.

Risk Management:

16. There is a risk that all partners may not engage but to date there does seem to be a collective will to develop one Nature Recovery Plan for the Peak District. Whilst this is being developed the Authority and partners will continue to deliver their programmes and projects for nature recovery.
17. If the future ELM schemes do not sufficiently reward farmers and land managers for the public goods they deliver then it is unlikely that there will be sufficient uptake to deliver nature recovery. Whilst public purse is currently the mainstream source of funding for nature recovery in the medium to longer term private sector funding and Biodiversity Net Gain are likely to play an increasingly significant role and may be able to offer greater incentives.
18. Continuing uncertainty about the future detail of and level of payments for ELM coupled with the growing impact of the BPS reductions will result in farm and land management businesses seeking ways to remain resilient and sustainable. Some land managers may choose or feel they have no option but to try and replace lost BPS payments through increasing agricultural production e.g. increasing stock numbers. Such agricultural intensification may have associated negative environmental and biodiversity impacts. Influencing ELM design, ELM payment levels and how public and private funds will be blended together in a way which delivers nature recovery remains key.

Sustainability:

19. Our work on wildlife and nature recovery directly improves the sustainability of the Peak District landscape

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 the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will help enable the Authority to be educators in climate change through the maintenance, enhancement, restoration, expansion and increased connectivity of its habitats.
 - b. **Exemplars of sustainability**

Delivering to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will enable the Authority to demonstrate how nature recovery can lie at the very heart of developing a strong economy and sustaining thriving local communities
 - c. **Protecting the National Park**

Delivering to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will help enable the Authority to protect the special qualities of the National Park in particular special quality 2: Internationally important and locally distinctive wildlife and habitats.
 - d. **Leading the way in sustainable land management**

Delivering to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will help enable the Authority to lead the way in sustainable land management.
 - e. **Exemplars in renewable energy**

Delivering to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will help ensure that proposals for renewable energy are not at the expense of other special qualities such as biodiversity and cultural heritage.
 - f. **Working with communities**

Delivering to the PDNP's Nature Recovery Prospectus will involve the Authority working with communities and in particular the farming and land management community.
2. How does this decision contribute to the Authority meeting its carbon net zero target?

Land management for nature recovery will have positive carbon emissions, sequestration and carbon storage in soils and vegetation implications for the land in its ownership. The Authority may wish to take this into consideration in its own carbon net zero assessments.
3. How does this decision contribute to the National Park meeting carbon net zero by 2050?

Land management for nature recovery will have positive carbon emissions, sequestration and carbon storage in soils and vegetation implications across the PDNP.
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 - Peak District National Park Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus 2021-2031.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Suzanne Fletcher, Head of Landscape, 24 November 2021.