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## 1 Introduction

This is the annual Operational Plan produced by Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP). It is the Partnership's strategic approach to our programme of work for the 2022/23 financial year. It covers:

- The contractual commitments of work which we will deliver in 2022/23 - these are projects which already have funding and approval.
- The pipeline of expected new work which:
  - we anticipate will come forward for approval, or
  - have in principle approval but contracts are not yet in place, during this Operational Plan period.
- Future business development – projects that we are developing for partners during this Operational Plan period or in subsequent years.

This document is a look forward; it sits alongside our annual report “A Year in Review” which is the look back at the previous year's activities.

This Plan for 2022/23 also sits alongside a Business Plan, currently in development following the Moor Business project, this is likely to require reviewing on an annual basis due to the rapidly changing work landscape through COVID-19, post-Brexit changes and a funding landscape which is also subject to rapid change. The Operational Plan, Business plan and the Year in Review are our public facing documents supported by the Programme Tracker, the Programme Progress Log (the work on the books which monitors the delivery of this plan) and the Strategic Business Route Plan (the document giving a future steer for the Partnership's activity overseen by the Strategic Management Board).

Each project mentioned in this plan has separate project governance and steering arrangements which are appropriate to the requirements of the funder and complexity of the project and within PDNPA Standing Orders.

The longer term vision which guides the work of the Partnership is available through the planning documents of our partners such as the National Park Management Plan, Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan and Peat Strategy for England. The Ofwat Price Review process will guide the investment of our Utility Company partners to 2025 and beyond.

### **What is Moors for the Future Partnership?**

Moors for the Future is a partnership of organisations that since 2003 has been working together across the Dark Peak, South and West Pennine Moors to restore and conserve the most degraded upland landscape in Europe.

The Moors for the Future staff team, employed by the Peak District National Park Authority - which also acts as the lead and accountable body - delivers the work of the Partnership.

The current core funding partners include the Environment Agency, National Trust, RSPB, Severn Trent Water, United Utilities, Yorkshire Water, Pennine Prospects and the Peak District National Park Authority.

In addition, Natural England and representatives of the moorland owner and farming community advise the Partnership.

### **Executive Highlights of 2022/23 Activities**

The Partnership is now entering its 19th year of activity and continues to successfully deliver a range of technical solutions that address our mission - “to restore the quality of the South Pennine Moors, to improve its benefits as a water quality catchment area, a diverse ecological, recreational and agricultural resource which will be managed to ensure the enduring legacy of these benefits.” This mission is delivered through the three objectives in the next section.

The contractual commitments make up the bulk of the delivery items in this plan and the resources to deliver these are in place. If the most confident expectations on future bids are also included, the current pipeline of items in the Strategic Business Route Plan, project spend this year is anticipated to be £2.9m.

As well as continuing to deliver existing projects, the continuing challenge for this year will be to identify and develop new funding and projects which will continue the vitally important restoration programme, particularly beyond 2022 when the MoorLIFE 2020 project comes to a close.

The near horizon for the Partnership appears to be significantly volatile, some careful planning is needed, this year led by our Strategic Management Board. There are significant opportunities on the horizon offered by new funding from, for instance, the Nature for Climate fund and the building interest in natural capital payment schemes. There are also significant issues to overcome from the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the approaching end date of major projects and an expected reduction in the availability of public funding. Working through the delivery aspirations of the Peak District National Park Management Plan, the plans of all our partners and in particular Defra’s 25 Year Environment Plan, the new England Peat Action Plan and the Asset Management Plans of the utility companies (AMP7 which started in 2020 and working towards AMP8 starting in 2025). Combined with opportunities to continue the work of the Partnership to protect the upland landscape of the South Pennine Moorland Special Area of Conservation. Work will continue to provide advisory, communications and science delivery in a wider area to meet the requirements of the Partnership. The Partnership will continue to influence strategic planning such as responding to future government consultations particularly considering the need to recover from COVID-19 and support new UK conservation legislation post-Brexit. Continuing to influence resources and policy supporting the moorland landscape.

A key priority will be to seek funding to focus on the business of the Partnership:

- to put large structural projects together continuing the restoration priorities;
- to continually evaluate and refine our business model;
- to develop a future funding strategy to support business development;
- to increase the effectiveness of our processes; and
- to enhance the Partnership’s standing as a leader in this field.

Our key means of delivering this through 2022/23 will be to action the advice of our Strategic Management Board.

## **2 The Purpose of the Operational Plan**

The purpose of the Operational Plan is to bring all of the Partnership's projects together in one document to give easy visibility of the whole programme, as well as explaining how, why and when we will develop business development opportunities in the coming year. A Programme Progress Log (PPL) on a quarterly basis monitors the progress of delivering this plan. The PPL reports (in support of the Programme Tracker) to the Resource Management meeting of the PDNPA (as the equivalent of the PDNPA Service Plan reports). The various Project Boards of the individual projects then deliver the main actions of the PPL. The Strategic Management Board will give a forward direction and set the future business aspirations of the Partnership. The progress of this will be monitored through a new governing document, The Strategic Business Route Map. Items coming to fruition through this Route Map will then be put forward to be accepted for delivery onto the books of the PDNPA or another partner's financial facilitation.

This Operational Plan forms the public facing "shop front" for both the Strategic Business Route Map and the Programme Progress Log. Together they give partners a means of monitoring progress against the outcomes required.

MFFP's strategic objectives are:

- **Objective One – Awareness Raising**

*"To raise awareness and promote positive action for the conservation of the moorland landscape"*

- **Objective Two – Conservation Management**

*"To develop and deliver sustainable land management for these important upland resources, ensuring appropriate consideration of all of their benefits"*

- **Objective Three - Science**

*"To develop expertise for the sustainable management of moorlands ensuring that the programme is properly resourced with the capacity and capability to achieve this"*

## **3 The Policy and Funding Landscape Surrounding the Partnership in 2022/23**

The success of the Partnership to date has been shaped by the support of longstanding partners and their commitment to restoration of the uplands, facilitated by significant funding from the European Union and shaped by its regulatory guidance. The UK's exit from the EU and its existing environmental legislative framework may still pose significant risks to the environment, if current drivers for environmental protection and improvements are weakened, e.g. the Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and the Birds Directive. The citation dedicating the South Pennine Moorlands as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has been a major driver for the recent conservation efforts. During this year the programme team will continue to engage with consultations on new policy and bidding into new funding such as the initial success into the Nature for Climate Fund and emerging opportunities in natural capital funding from major business.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan remains a major delivery driver now supported by the recently launched Peatland Action Plan. Following the high visibility and support for the conservation of

peat at COP26 there is this year great opportunity to build on support and develop business. The recent success with bidding the Esmee Fairbairn also brings business development support to approach CSR and public giving support with a dedicated officer. The Future Farming support is becoming clearer and the Government response to the review of protected landscapes is now published. The Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy is giving more priority to natural solutions to assist with the increasing flood risk to the communities surrounding the Partnerships working area. This is a major driver for us. This will all add up to a very busy year, bringing existing projects to a close, in particular MoorLIFE 2020, the biggest ever conservation grant given to the UK by the EU LIFE programme. The year ahead brings opportunities for the Partnership on a much bigger stage playing a leading role in initiatives which deliver on these big new areas of policy and interest in the environment, especially the upland environment. A good example of this is the creation of the Great North Bog initiative. The plans of our partners such as the work Pennine Prospects have done in creating the South Pennine Park, the delivery of the Peak District National Park Management Plan, and the Asset Management Plans of the utility company partners, all give a solid driver for the work of the Partnership.

### **The strategic importance of our upland landscape**

Blanket bog, a key peatland habitat of previous EU Species and Habitats Directive, supporting a nationally and internationally important assemblage of wildlife has been well transferred and embedded in UK policy by COP26. With the recovery of nature a priority, peatland is a priority for the UK in addition to action under the UN Convention on Peatlands and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands.

The hydrological function of blanket bogs have critical impacts on the UK's inhabitants as they are vital habitats for supplying clean water throughout the year, sequestering carbon to reduce climate change and reducing flood risk. It is now well understood that the cost of inaction on these priorities, in terms of climate change impacts alone, could reach billions of pounds. The Partnership will continue to use its influence to impact on future environmental policy in the UK and on the UK's wild habitats.

The Partnership (led by the Peak District National Park Authority) has a unique and important view of this environmental policy area, because it has implemented a high proportion of the landscape-scale conservation work across the English uplands. The programme team will continue to represent the Partnership and will stay alert and responsive to new opportunities which will benefit the Partnership. We will contribute to debates and initiatives, supporting Defra and partners in discussions and development of new instruments to support the upland landscape.

### **Natural capital and civic resilience opportunities**

The interest in climate change has seen a dramatic increase throughout the past 2 years and this has brought about an urgency in maximising the benefits that the upland landscape can offer to society. The Government's stated wish in both the 25 Year Environment Plan and through farming support is to focus on paying for environmental benefits. This could have a big and positive impact in the uplands. In addition, the continuing high risk of moorland fires and drought conditions have shown how the upland landscape needs to be in the best ecological condition to withstand the shocks and stresses of a changing climate in order to deliver positive benefits for the downhill, downstream and downwind communities in local communities such as Manchester.

## 4 This Year's Activity – 2022/23

### Ongoing projects

#### MoorLIFE 2020

During the EU LIFE Mission to the project in Oct 2021, the project was invited to apply for an extension to the project to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The project submitted an extension request in Mid-December and received approval for the extension in early 2022 from the EU LIFE Programme. The extension focused is on the Science deliverables and continuing to deliver the Bogtastic experience.

The project achieved all of the conservation and land management deliverables and KPIs by December 2021. The project are currently capturing the GIS records of this restoration work ready for the project's Final Report due to be delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

The science reporting for the project is progressing as the teams are finalising the trajectory reports from the field labs and the earth observation reports. Final data collection from the project happened in August 2021 and the teams are conducting the analysis and completion of the findings for inclusion into the Final MoorLIFE 2020 Report.

The project communications team is producing the Laymans Report and helping finalise the project report deliverables. The team are also finalising this year's Bogtastic Van season, this additional season will continue raising awareness within the general public of the risk and impact of wildfire and how to avoid increasing these risks throughout the summer and early autumn. The Wildfire Risk Map will be used to focus the Bogtastic experience on specific audiences and areas ahead of periods of high fire risk. The Wildfire Log that was launched in October 2020 will be promoted during of the 2022 wildfire season. We will continue to build on the excellent relationships that we have developed with land managers and owners at a time of significant change in the business environment in which they operate.

#### Moor For Climate: Nature for Climate Discovery Project

MFFPs Discovery project under the **Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS)** started in January 2022 and which will be ongoing until April 2023.

This project is focused on removing barriers to peatland restoration across MFFP's core working area. This will be a 15 month project from Jan 2022 to April 2023 during which time MFFP will co-produce with our Partners detailed restoration plans for circa 14,000 ha of degraded blanket bog, and bid into the two remaining capital bidding rounds to secure restoration capital under the grant route. These are anticipated in summer 2022 and summer 2023.

This project will see the MFFP team co-ordinating with and collaborating over forward restoration plans and bidding with key Partners and stakeholders across 18 water body catchments. This with a view to strategically securing capital funding through the grant route up to 2025 with a view to optimising the amount of priority restoration we can achieve through the grant route.

The Discovery project is revenue only and does not involve any capital works. The project aim is to address the barriers to restoration that have been identified in relation to the areas included within the bid.

The geographical areas included within the bid were scoped into the project during the bidding period in summer 2021, when all MFFP's partners were invited to input on their restoration priorities, and where there is also firm opportunities for match funding. The bidding work was also fully co-ordinated with our Partners across the Great North Bog (GNB).

The restoration planning work and bidding on this project will be ongoing throughout 22/23, and if MFFP is successful with o planned capital bidding into the next round (summer 2022), this could see the first capital work to come from this grant route potentially entering delivery in autumn/winter 22/23. We also have firm plans for bidding into the spring summer 2023 capital bidding round for capital works to commence from winter 2023. All potential restoration work that may be awarded in the future will have until 2025 to complete from their start date.

The project provides MFFP with the remit and opportunity to remain in a central convening and delivery role for the Partnership up to 2025 and beyond, and is a strategically valuable project enabling vital planning work across our core working area and Partner base to address restoration priorities at a landscape scale.

### **Overland Flow Monitoring project (RSPB/UU)**

Following RSPB and United Utilities (UU) successful capital grant award under the **Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS)** for a Restoration Grant on Dovestones, MFFP have been engaged to deliver the monitoring element of this project evidencing the impacts of restoration in addressing the issue of overland flow as linked to the degraded hydrology of the peatlands.

This topic is highly relevant to gaining further insight into moving the sites (and by extension the regions) peatlands towards favourable condition. This project provides the opportunity to gather robust data on the subject evidencing the impacts of planned restoration interventions that will be valuable in informing future decision making about applying restoration techniques and approaches.

This project was bid for in 2021 by the RSPB and UU independently of MFFP partnership's wider bidding to the Discovery Grant. MFFP involvement commenced in Q4 of 2021/22. The work of the project will be ongoing until January 2025.

This project will deliver a science-based rationale for installing bunds on parts of the site, and designing and delivering a monitoring programme for these bunds. The project will help to build the evidence base behind bunding as a restoration technique. This project seeks to improve our knowledge of the benefits and impacts of bunding on blanket bog habitats. This will provide data which is critical to enhance our understanding of bunding as a restoration technique.

The deliverables will be:

- Literature review
- Design overland flow demo trial
- Monitor overland flow demo trial

- Design full trial and bunding works
- Surveying and identifying mini catchments
- Design for full trial and bunding works
- Installation/monitoring of full trial
- Analysis of data and final report

MFFP has a respected position among the community of peatland practitioners throughout the South Pennines and beyond, taking a leading role in development and delivery of research to inform and support peatland restoration techniques and approaches. This project offers an opportunity to support partners in delivery of a project while building our understanding and experience of a growing restoration technique.

Bunding is increasingly being seen as potentially valuable solution to degraded peatlands, in the case of this project primarily for Natural Flood Management benefits, but also across wider benefits (re-wetting, biodiversity, facilitating conditions for moorland species to grow, water quality etc). Building the evidence base for bunding is crucial both in maximising the benefits delivered using this technique, but also understanding risks and implications for the landscape.

Bunding specifically targets the restoration of the acrotelm, an element which is highly degraded on Dovestone due to a long history of industrial pollution, erosion, and wildfire. Bunding also offers potential to reduce wildfire risk, diversify dominating vegetation such as *Molinia*, and improve growing conditions for native bog species, improving biodiversity in these locations.

Delivering research work for partners is part of the core working of MFFP, and therefore strategically fits well in the Partnership's Research and Monitoring Programme.

### **Private Lands Portfolio (PLP)**

#### **Overview**

By autumn 2019 the Partnership's delivery of Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) funded capital works had functionally come to completion. As a result of focused engagement between NE and land managers with MFFP in support, two HLS projects were able to secure short extensions from RPA in financial year 2021/22 to allow outstanding capital items to be delivered, having up to that point been both on hold pending NE and agreement holders agreeing forward plans and/or RPA confirming the funds in place. These works were subsequently delivered by MFFP for and on behalf of the relevant agreement holders. This included one HLS site where hydrological restoration (gully blocking) and sphagnum planting was yet to be delivered and a second site, which included urgent bare peat restoration. The outstanding works on both projects were successfully completed on site by the end of the 21/22 financial year.

#### **Cost Recovery**

The only other remaining activity beyond the end of the 2021/22 financial year on this project is to complete the cost and income recovery for the portfolio. This will include submitting the PDNPA's claims for the capital works delivered in 2021/22 to RPA for payment, and recovery of the corresponding VAT owing following the capital expenditure in year. The VAT will be claimed by the HLS agreement holders from HMRC as per the established protocol on this project and thereafter repaid to the PDNPA. MFFP

will also invoice HLS agreement holders directly for the management costs associated with the delivery which the HLS agreement holders will claim back from RPA, again as per the established protocol.

In addition to the recovery of costs on the project from the 2021/22 financial year MFFP will also complete the recovery of one remaining long term outstanding debt with a HLS agreement holder as linked to PLP capital works delivery. The recovery of this outstanding debit was re-baselined in 2019/20 and cost recovery plans were formalised through the PDNPA Legal Services. Outstanding cost repayments have been ongoing throughout the 2021/22 financial year and we are now on track to have fully recovered all outstanding debits within the 2022/23 financial year.

Upon completion of our income/debit recovery work in 2022/23 (as highlighted) this project will be closed-out and no further capital work is anticipated for delivery on this project. This has been a long lived and successful project through which a great deal of vital restoration has been delivered working in partnership with NE and a large number of HLS agreement holders.

### **Future opportunities to achieve peatland conservation through Agri-Env Schemes**

During 2020 and 2021 MFFP had as highlighted in our previous Operational Plan, been engaged with investigating the potential with our Partners for further restoration opportunities through Agri-Env schemes, particularly in relation to Country-side Stewardship (CS). MFFP produced a number of PA2 feasibility studies to assist NE and agreement holders to establish new CS agreements, but since that time we have not become aware of any of these being made live, and we have no plans as at the time of writing for piloting the delivery of capital works through CS.

In 2020/21 MFFP also contributed to Defra consultations on the incoming new scheme (ELMS) which will shortly replace CS. This scheme is yet to start, and the Partnership will remain open to, and proactive around working with Partners to assess any forward opportunities for undertaking peatland restoration with the landowning and managing community through this scheme once established.

Conceptually this could involve a future successor project to the PLP based around delivering restoration through ELMS. Within this MFFP would also seek to develop synergies with emerging opportunities for working with Natural Capital based financing for peatland restoration that MFFP are working on currently through our Moor Green Investment Project. This would potentially open the opportunity for dovetailing public and private funding around payments for ecosystem services (public goods), a topic which is to be a firm focus within ELMS.

### **PROTECT-NFM: Optimising Natural Flood Management in Headwater Catchments Project**

A NERC funded research project led by the University of Manchester, investigating the impact and optimisation of management of upland headwater catchments on downstream Natural Flood Management (NFM) benefit, which is working in tandem with ongoing restoration works on Stalybridge.

In 2022/23 MFFP will continue as a key delivery partner on the PROTECT-NFM project. This is a collaborative project between University of Manchester, MFFP and EA. While the capital works element of the project is now completed, data continues to be collected and analysed into 2022. These experiments are evidencing the NFM benefits of the suite of gully blocking techniques in common usage by MFFP and other peatland restoration initiatives, in addition to testing NFM optimised versions. The output of this will be robust evidence for the NFM benefits of these techniques, leading to a greater

evidence base with which to attract further investment into healthy peatlands/uplands from funding streams linked to flood risk mitigation. Following baseline monitoring being set up in 2019/20, post-intervention monitoring has been ongoing throughout 2021/22. As at the time of writing a number of academic papers are going through the peer review process in which MFFP have recognition/co-authorship. As further analysis of the experiments continues in 2022/23 further academic papers evidencing the NFM benefits of the hydrological restoration of degraded peatlands are expected.

The PROTECT-NFM project has also taken on monitoring of the upland woodland monitoring sites, listed in previous operational plans as “Upland Woodland Monitoring”.

### **Etherow Monitoring**

The project ensures the continuation of long-term monitoring in the River Etherow catchment. Since 2016, this monitoring has been funded through a partnership initiative proposed and delivered by MFFP and funded by Yorkshire Water, Severn Trent Water and United Utilities.

In 2022/23, MFFP will continue to deliver the ongoing ammonia sample collection at NE LTMN site (Upper North Grain); ongoing rain sample collection at Precip-Net site (Woodhead); ongoing river sample collection (near Woodhead Tunnels).

MFFP will continue to sub-contract the chemical analysis of the Etherow River sample to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), who have managed the site and analysed samples previously collected from the site; therefore ensuring consistency in data quality from the site. CEH will also provide a report including the provision of full water chemistry dataset and graphical representation of full time series by the end of July 2022 in respect of data collected for the 12 month period ending the first week of March 2022.

The cost of analysing the PrecipNet samples will be covered by the Environment Agency (EA).

### **Natural Capital Investment Readiness (Moor Green Investment Project)**

As identified through the Moor Business project, there is a business need to develop opportunities to unlock sustainable sources of funding for conservation work, which move beyond traditional grant funding.

Faced with the challenge of shrinking funding streams, and the UK exit from the European Union, MFFP bid for, and were successful in being awarded a grant from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Defra and the Environment Agency in 2020 for a development project to enable an opportunity to establish a Natural Capital based investment scheme for restoring a degraded peatland. This funding is enabling MFFP to develop a Natural Capital Investment Pilot proposal to put to potential investors, and in the process develop our skills in stakeholder management, financial structuring and commercial acumen.

This project started in 2020 later than planned as a result of the impacts of the pandemic on our ability to meet with and work closely with our Partners. This work is continuing into the 2022/23 financial year and making positive progress.

This is an innovative project that is future facing in its aim to unlock sources of private finance to extend and accelerate peatland restoration as a much needed supplement to traditional grant funding. This is urgently required in the face of the climate emergency, and there are strong opportunities being investigated against a back-drop of growing public, corporate and government recognition of the key role healthy peatlands must play in reducing global CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. The project is contributing towards the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23, specifically Area of Impact 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery. By developing opportunities to grow our sources of project funding through the Natural Capital agenda, (which is completely in line with the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan) we can contribute towards developing a clear long term strategy to secure funding for the conservation of the Dark Peak and South Pennines to 2050.

Since the project was launched in October 2020 Triodos Bank were appointed as the project financial consultants, and we have worked collaboratively with our Partners to identify an optimum test case site to develop a pilot proposal at the 'Site-scale' level. As we move in 2022 we have identified a viable test case site with firm opportunities for revenue potentials from a suite of stackable ecosystem services. Our engagement with potential buyers of these services will remain ongoing in 2022/23 as we work together to develop the financial underpinning and governance of the place based scheme we've collectively identified as a potential pilot project.

As at the time of writing we are approaching an advanced stage in our negotiations and work to develop a proposal that is investable with viable revenues, and as such we have secured a time only extension into the 2022/23 financial year to enable enough time for MFFP and our Partners to work through all the complexities involved (iterative) with our proposed investment model.

### **Moor Water: Water Company Asset Management Plan 7 (AMP7): Development of conservation proposals with Water Company partners**

In May 2020 PDNPA ARP committee gave MFFP the authority to establish a new AMP7 based project for working with our water company partners, called Moor Water. In Sept 2021 an increase of the project spend up to £7.5 million was approved by Authority, This project will run between 2020/21 and 2024/25 and will continue MFFPs delivery of water company outcomes. The project will include capital works with a biodiversity focus including (where applicable) integrated science and communications. Due to the partnership decision not to bid to the EU for further LIFE funding, any contracts for conservation works in AMP7 will be direct with MFFP rather than as match funding.

#### **Severn Trent Water**

A partnering agreement is in place with Severn Trent Water that will enable us to work together on STW AMP7 programme until 2024/25. The project will include capital works including integrated science and communications activities within the Bamford Water Treatment Works Catchment.

#### **Yorkshire Water**

Work with Yorkshire Water on their AMP7 programme has progressed under a framework agreement in two areas of their organisation, the owned SSSIs and the non-owned catchment. MFFP has produced detailed peatland restoration plans for Yorkshire Water's owned SSSI sites. These plans have identified restoration works for the sites to be delivered under the AMP7 programme. These works are expected to start in 2022/23.

For the non-owned catchment, detailed restoration plans have been created for three of the eight catchments in 2021/22, three will be created in 2022/23 and two in 2023/24. Works delivery has commenced in 2021/22 and will continue to 2024.

### **Natural Flood Management – Phase 1 Opportunity Mapping**

MFFP project team are working with the Environment Agency (EA) to identify Natural Flood Management opportunities in the EA's East Midlands Region. The project worked with EA Communities at Risk and pluvial Flow GIS data sets to identify areas for future NFM projects. The project delivered NFM Opportunity Mapping Reports for the East Midlands, the Upper Don and the Greater Manchester areas in December 2021. The output of this work across the three EA areas offers the opportunity to highlight areas of peatland restoration that have significant NFM potential for consideration by the EA for future funding under the Accelerated Flood Funding Route. A workshop with the EA to look at the prioritisation of Accelerated Flood Funding has been scheduled for end of February. The first part delivery of the Accelerated Flood Funding work is due to be completed with a gully blocking project on the North Lees Estate. The North Lees priority was identified and agreed after recommendations made in the East Midlands Report.

### **Moor Resilience**

This initiative provides the hosting for multiple projects up to 2025 to deliver projects in the region working collaboratively with Local Authority Partners to improve the resilience of the peatland landscape in their areas to Climate Change and its varied impacts.

### **Calderdale Peatland Condition Assessment**

Working with Calderdale Council (and in time the aspiration is to also work with others), this project is developing an assessment methodology allowing for MFFP to undertake a detailed assessment of peatland resilience to the impacts of climate change from a range of perspectives including resilience to wildfires.

This is the first project on its kind, and it is planned to be a stepping off point in allowing for the peatland resource across the Peak District and South Pennines to be assessed for resilience to the impacts of climate change. This assessment will then lead onto the development of site-specific restoration and practical proposals that will enable greater habitat resilience to climate change to be achieved at a landscape scale. This initial project is a desk and field study activity with the potential for the development and delivery of future capital works.

The project will specifically collate information and map the condition of blanket bog in Calderdale according to Natural England's 6 States of Blanket Bog. Further to this, the likely wildfire severity will also be assessed, (i.e. how severe will a wildfire be), and site specific recommendations will be proposed to mitigate future instances and severity of wildfires in the landscape. These will include the consideration of water resources, means of access, and habitat management including rewetting opportunities.

The first stage includes: Confirmation of methodologies for assessing blanket bog condition and likely wildfire severity, including consultation with Calderdale FRS, Natural England, and academia. This will be

followed by engagement with the landowning and managing community and identification of permissible survey areas.

The second stage includes: Carrying out surveys (desk-based initially followed by ground-truthing – pending permissions).

The output will be a map indicating wildfire severity risk, similar to a heat-map, and a Blanket Bog Condition map. The maps will be supported by a written report submitted in November 2022.

## **The Great North Bog: Phase 2**

The Great North Bog is an ambitious, landscape-scale, peatland restoration project that will be delivered in partnership with Moors for the Future Partnership (acting as lead partner for North Pennines AONB Partnership, the Yorkshire Peat Partnership). The Great North Bog initiative will target peatland restoration and conservation across nearly 7,000 km<sup>2</sup> of peatland soils across the uplands of the North of England, currently storing an estimated 400 million tons of carbon. The Protected Landscapes of the Great North Bog represent around 92% of the upland peat in England. The Great North Bog includes four National Parks and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the proposed South Pennines Park. The Great North Bog aspiration would be to also overflow benefits into the surrounding unprotected areas through follow-on projects.

With multiple partnerships having worked independently on the peatlands of the Pennines for nearly two decades, the drive of the Great North Bog is not to create another partnership body, but to engage in high level support and advocacy across the landscape of the northern uplands, supporting the existing partnerships, to achieve a more joined up approach to conservation and management.

The Great North Bog aspiration is to bring together organisations, to promote collaboration and reduce competition, for more efficient and effective restoration of peatlands across the north of England. With the UK's peatlands largely falling into protected areas (SSSI/SAC/SPA), a united approach is the best solution to deliver restoration works, monitoring, and communications, working with local and regional organisations for synergistic national benefit. Restoring the Great North Bog will increase local contractors' skills and capacity, benefitting rural economies.

As peatlands form the headwaters of most of our catchments, restoration of degraded peat has the potential to significantly contribute to flood risk reduction to OM1 and OM2 EA targets, as well as offering contributions to carbon restoration plans and OM4 targets. The Project will also offer an opportunity to utilise blended finance initiatives to deliver benefits through a mix of public and private funding and will be heavily linked to the Environment Agency, Defra, Triodos Bank, Esme Fairburn 'Investment Readiness' project to develop new models in financing.

Following successful completion of Phase 1 funded by the EA and DEFRA in setting up the governance structure, a communications and funding strategy, and GNB mapping and ecosystem services review, the project will move into Phase 2. The second Phase has been initially funded by the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, supporting much needed staff time to continue to develop and take the GNB into delivery Phase.

**Phase 2 includes at the local level: CSR and Giving** 1 fte for 2 years. A post to create a self-sustaining resource, tools and processes to engage with the charity sector and the Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) opportunities from the dense population and industry surrounding the Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP) working area. This is in addition to MFFP work elsewhere to look into natural capital investment which Esmee are already involved in. The CSR and public giving opportunities should be significant at the southern end of the GNB due to the population density and the industrial activity of the Northern Powerhouse on the doorstep. MFFP currently do not have the skills or facility to engage with this adequately and as such a significant financial sustainability opportunity is being missed. This would also include a lot of engagement to reduce our risks and build financial support, and support the community end of science, which we have proved works well in this area with good public accessibility to blanket bogs on the doorstep. This will also build a more organised approach to working with the academic institutions. This would bridge a gap in current capacity to properly capitalise on the growing interest to invest in peatland restoration from the public. It would provide clear shovel ready project/s for business, and would be expected to be self-sustainable within 12 -24 months. The Esmee funding will deliver on a stand-alone project if necessary, however our optimum aim is to use the Esmee funding and additional funds being bid for to Highways England to bring together a large National Lottery Heritage Fund project which will support and extend the outline of the project described here.

**Phase 2 includes at the local level: Project Development** 1 fte for 5 years. Resource to develop new shovel ready project initiatives and funding for peatland restoration, research and public. These would target public and private funding initiatives over the next five years. It is currently almost impossible to fund business development within our public sector configuration and this would, in league with the resource above, create both projects ready to go, and funding all or match fund their delivery in a sustainable way. Part of this role will be bringing funding opportunities into a cohesive programme.

**Phase 2 includes at the GNB level: Programme Administrator** - 0.5 fte for 2 years. Part time post to support GNB Administration in order to make the GNB Exec Board and operational communications function well.

### **Helping Hands for Nature - Great North Bog**

This project will involve sphagnum planting on a peatland site in the Peak District or South Pennines area of the Great North Bog (GNB), and provide opportunity for Worley employees to participate on two '*sphagnum planting & skills sharing volunteering days*'.

Worley employees as volunteers will have opportunity to help undertake hand planting of sphagnum moss plug plants on degraded peatlands, alongside employees from MFFP including Conservation Works Officers, Science and Monitoring, Youth Engagement and Communications & Engagement Officers. This will provide opportunity for MFFP employees to share their knowledge about the importance of peatlands and MFFP restoration work, whilst Worley employees as volunteers can share their professional knowledge and expertise. This will allow synergies to be drawn between the two organisations and help identify a potential productive working relationship that could be harnessed for future works within the wider GNB, and develop scope for future Worley Foundation projects. This may include, for example, aspects of project management, data science & management, hydrological modelling or Environmental, Social, Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA).

Worley employees as volunteers can help make a difference to an area of peatland within the Great North Bog.

The practical conservation activity will be meaningful and tangible, delivering results on the day and providing a sense of achievement and a real contribution in making a difference on the ground; by hand

planting sphagnum moss, volunteers will help rewet the moors and improve blanket bog. The area of blanket bog enhanced on a volunteer day, by each individual volunteer, through their planting of sphagnum moss, could make a direct contribution of up to 0.25ha per day!

The volunteers will also benefit from engagement with MFFP employees sharing their knowledge about the importance of peatlands and the restoration work we do, which will give greater insight and build understanding into practical conservation of peatlands to help mitigate against climate change. Importantly, this project will provide a networking opportunity for further developing synergies between MFFP and Worley, and identifying additional opportunities for skilled volunteering as part of the Great North Bog initiative, and development of such opportunities into future Worley Foundation project submissions.

The Worley volunteers may also benefit from being in the great outdoors and being close to nature. There is increasing evidence that a connection to nature improves wellbeing. Helping Hands for Nature - Great North Bog allows people to experience the benefits of being in nature within a vast landscape, planting sphagnum moss, a fundamental component of blanket bogs, absorbing carbon as it grows.

## **Pipeline and Business Development**

### **Moor Water: Yorkshire Water AMP7 Works**

As of January 2021 MFFP have entered into a framework agreement to provide expert support to Yorkshire Water for their AMP 7 Delivery. This will underpin the collaboration between YW and MFFP on the project. With this now in place, the project design and staff resources requirements are in the process of being agreed, after which this project will commence delivery.

### **BMC Climate Project**

The BMC launched a fundraising campaign in March 2020 to provide a means of collecting donations from members and outdoor industry. The funds raised so far amount to approx. £70,000. This funding will be used to work collaboratively with the BMC to deliver a project that includes volunteer sphagnum planting and awareness raising of the importance of blanket bog. By working with the BMC we will be able to reach a key target audience of moorland users. It is likely that the donations will be used as match funding for a larger engagement project.

### **Peak District Foundation**

A positive relationship is also being developed with the Peak District Foundation. Donations from the Peak District Foundation will be used as above, as matched funding to deliver a public engagement project that will include sphagnum planting alongside other ways of raising awareness of the importance of protecting blanket bog.

### **Environment Agency: Accelerated Flood Funding 2022- 24**

As highlighted earlier in the document under the NFM Opportunity Mapping Project, the purpose of this project is to prioritise EA funding available through the Accelerated Flood Funding Route up to 2024

towards peatland restoration within areas of East Mids, GMC and Yorkshire. This restoration will be targeted on degraded peatlands where restoration will have a benefit to communities at risk of flooding, where they do not qualify for a traditional flood defence schemes through the EA Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA).

By the end of the 2021/22 financial year MFFP will have completed an initial restoration scheme on North Lees under this funding route, and completed all our Opportunity Mapping work and identified those schemes to be taken forward for delivery in 22/23 and 23/24. MFFP will be assisting the EA with the development of business cases for restoration project to be taken forward early in the 2022/23 financial year with a view to establishing a portfolio of EA funded restoration that will commence from Autumn 2022. This portfolio is anticipated to comprise a number of restoration locations across all three EA regions where our analysis has identified NFM relevant peatland restoration needs, and will work with a budget of up to circa £850k up to 2024 for capital works and management costs.

## **Programme Management**

### **Continued monitoring across our programme of monitoring sites**

#### **Trials for Diversifying Molinia Swards with Sphagnum Plugs**

Following five years of monitoring, funded by Natural England, Yorkshire Water, and National Trust, data is currently showing excellent growth of Sphagnum plugs in Molinia dominated habitat, but not the reduction in Molinia cover which was expected.

### **Research Facilitation**

#### **Student Placements**

The Partnership is currently hosting our fourth student placement from Manchester Metropolitan University. Despite COVID-19 limitations impacting the delivery of the placement (which would normally involve a lot of fieldwork experience) this has been successful in supporting the Partnership's research work, and providing varied experience in the placement. Pending further COVID-19 lockdowns, there will be a review of whether the Partnership can support another placement student in the 2021/22 year.

We were investigating the opportunity for supporting a short term PhD placement in 2020/21, but unfortunately COVID-19 restrictions prevented this from going ahead.

#### **Student Projects**

In 2022/23 we continue to support student projects at Universities across the country. Following an increased interest in existing datasets for students to analyse (with COVID-19 restrictions causing fieldwork difficulties), our science team are currently looking at producing a "pack" of data which could be distributed to academic supervisors to facilitate analysis based projects.

#### **Student Projects supported**

We will continue to support two PhD studies in 2022/23:

- Joe Glentworth, University of Manchester: Socio-economic impact of rewilding the English uplands. Joe is currently seeking an extension as COVID has heavily impacted delivery of this project.

New PhD opportunities will be identified, developed and acted on as appropriate to the needs, resources and capacity within MFFP.

### **Research Collaborations**

Through 2022/23 we will continue to support external research proposals which advance and develop the knowledge base around moorland restoration and protection. These are particularly valuable to produce supporting theoretical and conceptually aligned work, which is often difficult to fund through the Partnership's main funding sources.

### **Advice and project delivery**

We are keen to use the expertise that we have developed over the last 18 years, in project delivery, communications and working at a landscape-scale in the uplands, (particularly on peatlands and woodlands), to help other organisations and protected landscapes achieve improvements in biodiversity and ecosystem function.

### **Recording and reporting**

We will produce reports and make claims during the year for the MoorLIFE 2020 project, Moor for Climate Project, River Etherow Monitoring, Great North Bog Phase 2, and the Private Lands Portfolio. We will also produce quarterly reports for the Environment Agency, PDNPA and other partners according to commitments.

### **Communications**

The programme team will take every opportunity to make the most of communications opportunities in new projects, however, the end of MoorLIFE 2020 will mean that capacity for communications and engagement may be reduced. A Communications Plan for 2022/23 will be developed and implemented to pull together project communications into a unified programme. This approach allows us to target efforts and maximise the effect of our scarce resources.

The team will continue to identify opportunities to work with partners on aligned issues and we will be seeking further opportunities to work with partner communications teams to promote the importance of the Peak District National Park and South Pennine Park.

### **Advocacy and events**

The team will continue to represent the Moors for the Future Partnership and its interests at a wide range of relevant regional, national and international meetings and initiatives and disseminate the results of our work and share best practice. Findings from our research and monitoring programme will be used evidence future land management initiatives and best practice. Innovation in conservation techniques and new communication tools will be showcased wherever we can.

### **Training and Development**

The Moors for the Future Partnership is a learning organisation which is pioneering innovation in the science of moorland remediation and management. We will continue to develop the skills and capability of our staff as identified in the annual learning and development plans. A robust training and development plan has been developed following the Moor Business project and we will continue pursue this during the year. Our aim is for all our project managers to hold a professional qualification (e.g. Prince

2) which will continue our consistent project management and is a strong advocacy for continued business development.

**Programme Management - 2022/23**

**Table 1: Core Funding 2022/23**

Contracted/approved	Core funding £	Core funding from projects £	Total core funding £
<b>Operational Partners</b>			
PDNPA	75,000	20,000	95,000
Core funding partners	25,00	0	35,000
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>130,000</b>
<b>Project Partners</b>			
Multiple partners	0	138,200	138,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>158,200</b>	<b>268,200</b>

Pipeline	Core funding £	Core funding from projects £	Total core funding £
<b>Operational Partners</b>			
National Trust	10,000	0	10,000
RSPB	7,500	0	7,500
<b>Project Partners</b>			
Environment Agency – Accelerated Flood Funding	0	5,000	5,000
BMC Climate Project	0	7,000	7,000
Nature for Climate Restoration Grant	0	3,400	3,400
RSPB/UU Monitoring (Phase2 )	0	1,500	1,500
GNB England Peat Map	0	4,100	4,100
<b>Pipeline total</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>38,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117,500</b>	<b>179,200</b>	<b>296,700</b>

The ‘multiple partners’ figure above is income from multiple projects where we are able to cost in programme management input. Our basic establishment costs are c.£303,000 - to support the current core team of 5 permanent staff with additional technical, and administration staff assistance (approximately 0.5 fte) where required. This amount includes a small amount for costs not directly funded by projects (e.g. business development, partnership visits, and advocacy). Currently (April 2022) we are £6,300 away from balancing our core funding for 2022/23. This is in common with the start of previous financial years.

**Table 2: Project Funding 2022/23**

Projects contracted/approved	ARP/P&R minute Reference	Anticipated gross expenditure of project work 2022/23 (£)	Funders
<b>MoorLIFE 2020</b>	38/15	299,450	PDNPA, EU LIFE, STW, UU, YWS, NT, PP, RSPB
<b>Nature for Climate Fund</b> (note the max £ between 2021/22 – 2025/26, details below)	30/21	[8,000,000]	NE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moor 4 Climate (Discovery Grant)</li> </ul>		872,056	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bidding support for staff costs</li> </ul>		28,814	PDNPA underspend
<b>River Etherow Monitoring</b>	RMT 46/16	13,814	STW, UU, YWS
<b>Favourable Condition Project</b>		7,919	YW, NE
<b>Moor Resilience</b> (note this max between 2020-25) details below:	17/20	[1,000,000]	Various
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calderdale Blanket Bog Condition Assessment</li> </ul>		37,155	Calderdale Council
<b>Moor Green Investment</b>	RMM 12/19	32,203	Esmée Fairbairn, Triodos Bank, Defra, EA
<b>Moor Water: AMP7 Works Delivery 2020-24</b> (note this max between 20/21-24/25 details below)	16/20, 65/21	[7,500,000]	STW, YWS, UU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severn Trent Water</li> </ul>		200,000	STW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yorkshire Water</li> </ul>		1,589,246	YW
<b>The Great North Bog</b> (note this max between 20/21 – 25/26, details below)	65/20	[1,200,000]	Various
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peatland Partners Resilience Fund</li> </ul>		153,808	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping Hands for Nature</li> </ul>		20,000	Worley Foundation
<b>Monitoring the impact of Nature for Climate (RSPB &amp; UU)</b>	50/30	19,626	RSPB, UU
<b>The Green House Gas Project</b>	n/a	2,601	University of Manchester
<b>MFFP Research &amp; Monitoring Legacy</b>	n/a	21,250	PD Foundation
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>3,297,942</b>	
<b>Pipeline – approved, subject to contract</b>			
<b>Moor Green Futures: Development Phase</b>	72/21	75,000	National Lottery Heritage Fund
<b>EA Accelerated Flood Funding</b>	tbc	520,861	EA
<b>Nature for Climate – Peatland Restoration Grant</b>	30/21	[8,000,000]	NE

(note the max £ between 2021/22 – 2025/26, details below)			
• Restoration Grant 1		1,000,000	
<b>Natural England Peat Map</b>	tbc	44,090	NE
<b>RSPB/UU N4C Monitoring (Phase 2)</b>	tbc	18,228	RSPB
<b>BMC Climate Project</b>		35,000	Donations
<b>Peak District Foundation</b>		20,000	Donations
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>1,713,179</b>	
<b>Total (Projects Approved and Pipeline)</b>		<b>5,011,121</b>	

The Core team:

Head of Programme Delivery - Chris Dean

Communication Programme Manager – Debra Wilson

Programme Manager – Conservation and Land Management - Matt Scott-Campbell

Programme Office Manager – Kate Morley

Science Programme Manager – Vacant

With additional support from Programme Administrator and Administration Officers and GIS Officers.

**The core team is responsible for leading on:**

- Business development and leadership
- Advocacy and opportunity creation
- Financial monitoring and management
- Providing expert advice, techniques and methodologies on topic areas which MFFP has developed
- Programme management – resourcing and logistics
- Performance management and reporting
- Communications and branding
- Staff management, recruitment and induction
- Trouble shooting and emergency cover
- Setting and monitoring protocols

**Table 2: Project Funding 2022/23**

Partners (abbreviations where used):

PDNPA	Peak District National Park Authority
BMC	British Mountaineering Council
EOCA	European Outdoor Conservation Association
EA	Environment Agency
EPIP	East Peak Innovation Partnership
EU LIFE	European Commission - Environment - LIFE Programme
GMC	Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire
NE	Natural England
NT	National Trust
PP	Pennine Prospects
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
STW	Severn Trent Water
UU	United Utilities
YWS	Yorkshire Water Services

### **Project Teams**

Further recruitment will take place as appropriate for project delivery in accordance with programme planning and approval.

## **5 Risk Management**

The Moors for the Future Partnership's risk register for 2022/23 is attached as an annex to this plan. Programme Management risks are monitored on a quarterly basis. Any changes in risk will be identified to PDNPA (as lead partner) and significant risks highlighted on the Programme and/or Corporate Risk Register. Strategic Management Board will be advised. In addition, individual project issues are identified on the Programme Progress Log and reviewed at our monthly project management meetings. Project managers constantly monitor their individual Risks, Issues and Dependencies (RID) logs and report to a weekly programme status update.

The shortage in core funding (projected £303k, current secured £268,200k with an additional £38,500 pipeline) is the highest priority for the programme team and partnership manager. We will be working to our funding strategy to new partners and develop our business development during 2022/23.

## **6 Look forward - Business Development**

We will continue to work with existing partners alongside developing relationships with new partners and will use the Future Business Route plan as guided by the new Strategic Management Board to set the bidding and business development work.

### **Core Funding**

Most of the partner Statements of Intent are currently coming to an end. We are engaging with current partners to establish new Memoranda of Understanding and negotiate core funds / membership fees into the future. We will also look to bring on board new funding partners who either manage land or can benefit from our work and support our mission. Significant work has also been carried out in better extracting an appropriate level of costs on future projects, establishing a route to funding through natural capital payments and engaging with the charitable trust sector.

The funding of the core support is essential to service business development requirements into the future, and to fully capitalise on the projects currently being delivered. This is without doubt the most difficult area to fund but without this resource, it is not possible to continue to develop the programme of work.

Experience has shown that opportunities to develop new projects and bid for new funds arise during the year, requiring constant vigilance and a quick response to deliver our vision, aims and objectives.

The team will continue to keep funding opportunities under constant review through the Future Business Route Plan and will explore all of those, which have strong possibilities for funding the Partnership's objectives.

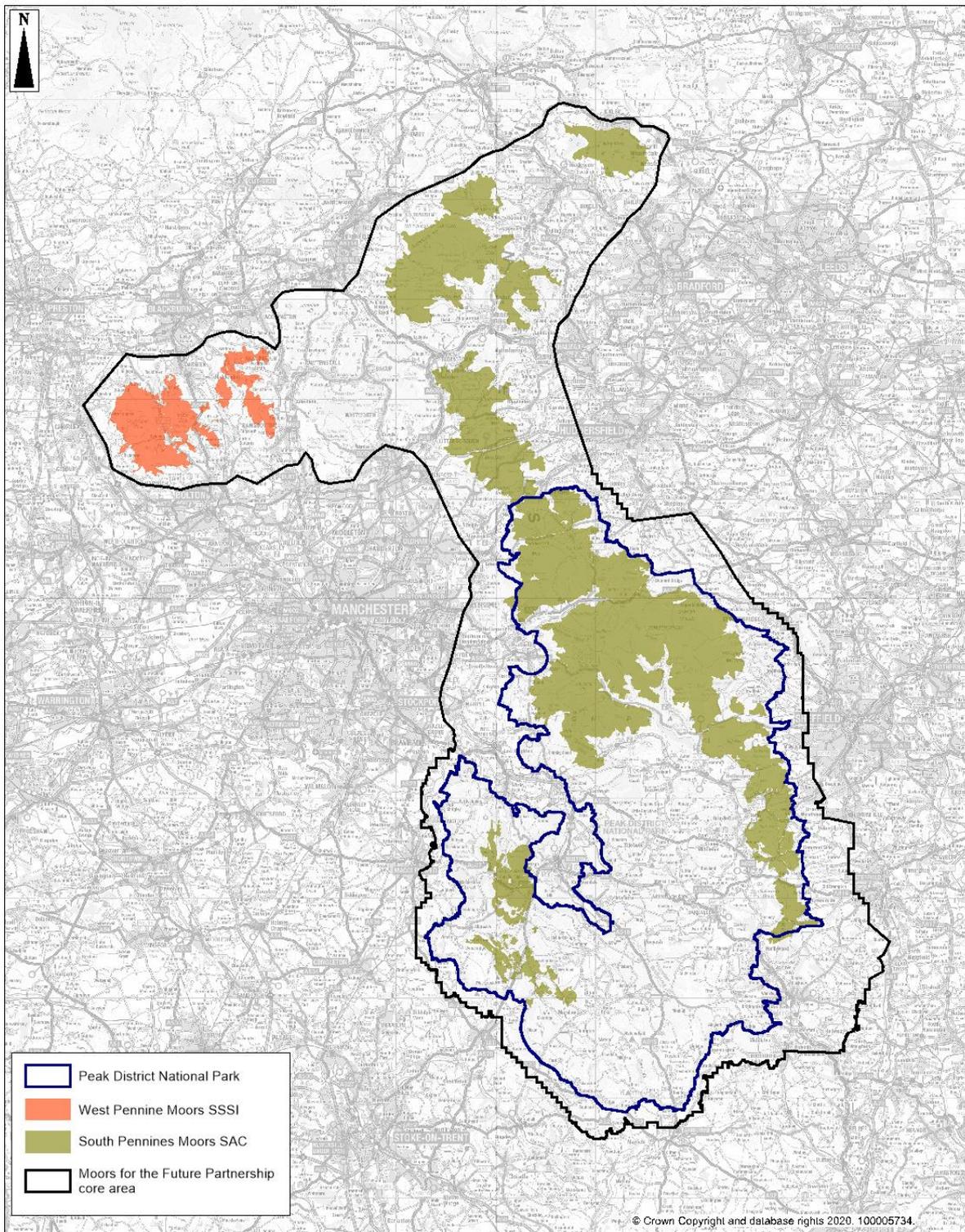
## **7 Monitoring This Operational Plan**

We produce a Programme Progress Log four times a year which identifies approvals and financial values of projects - with issues identified through a Red/Amber/Green assessment - and includes brief summaries of progress highlights. Income and Expenditure is monitored by the by the MFFP Programme Tracker, currently presented monthly to the Resource Management Meetings The Future Business Route Plan will also be reviewed on a quarterly basis dependant on the meeting cycle of the Strategic Management Board which is yet to be confirmed.

We update our funding approval records on a monthly basis to take account of the need of probity of the approvals processes of our accountable body, the Peak District National Park Authority.

Reports on individual projects are presented to those individual project steering groups/boards and an overview of the programme finances is undertaken by the Peak District National Park Authority.

# Moors for the Future Partnership Core Working Area



-  Peak District National Park
-  West Pennine Moors SSSI
-  South Pennines Moors SAC
-  Moors for the Future Partnership core area

0 6 12 18  
Kilometres  
Scale: 1:300,000



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Drawing Name:  
Moors for the Future Partnership  
Operational Plan  
Drawn by: JA Date: 21/01/2020