

5. NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND DELIVERY PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT IN NATIONAL PARKS – A PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK UPDATE (SLF)

1. Purpose of the report

To inform Members about National Parks England's Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management 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

- The Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management in National Parks has been devised by National Parks England (NPE) and the ten English National Park Authorities to drive action for farming and land management systems which deliver a 'triple dividend': enhanced environment, improved productivity and more vibrant communities in response to the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- The Authority will deliver its commitments to the Delivery Plan through our Corporate Strategy and National Park Management Plan (NPMP). Both include commitments for the Authority, alongside our partners, for a diverse, working and cherished landscape which enhances the special qualities, in particular by ensuring a sustainable future for farming and land management and working at an even bigger landscape scale.
- The NPE Delivery Plan is part of our evidence base for the current review of the NPMP and Corporate Strategy.
- The decision to leave the European Union has provided the opportunity for the biggest shake up of farming and land management support since the Second World War. The 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government's 30 by 30 ambition and the Government's response to the Landscapes Review collectively demonstrate the ambition for nature recovery and for climate change mitigation and adaptation; and in particular the role of National Parks and other Protected Landscapes in delivering these ambitions.
- A new approach to supporting farmers and land managers is being developed which involves phasing out the Basic Payment Scheme (funding based largely on the area of land owned) and replacing it with an Environmental Land Management (ELM) approach. ELM will use public money to reward farmers and land managers for public good delivery. A range of new farm productivity and diversification support schemes are also being developed.
- In addition, the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme was launched in June 2021 for which members approved delivery arrangements for this National Park at the Authority meeting on the 2 July 2021 (Minute reference 57/21).
- Sustainable farm and land management businesses that deliver a wide range of public goods for which farmers receive a sustainable and realistic income are vital if the Peak District National Park is to be celebrated as a living and working landscape which delivers NPMP aims.

2. Recommendation

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

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The National Park Management Plan.

The Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management will be able to contribute to maintaining and enhancing all seven Special Qualities described in the NPMP 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 5 - Characteristic settlements with strong communities and traditions, 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.

4. The Delivery Plan will also be able to contribute to all six Areas of impact of the current NPMP: 1 – Preparing for a future climate, 2 - Ensuring a future for farming and land management, 3 - Managing landscape conservation on a big scale, 4 - A National Park for everyone, 5 - Encouraging enjoyment with understanding and 6 - Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy.

5. The Corporate Strategy.

The NPE's Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management in National Parks 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
- Cherished cultural heritage that is better understood and looked after – KPI's 8, 9, 10.

Thriving and sustainable communities that are part of this special place: -

- Influencing and shaping the place through strategic and community development KPI's 16,17, Active participation through sustainable projects that connect people to place – KPI 20.

6. The Peak District Landscape Strategy.

The PDNP contains a great variety of landscapes shaped by variations in geology and landform and the long settlement and use of these landscapes by people. The Landscape Character Assessment shows how the landscapes of the National Park and its surrounding area has been divided into a series of Regional Character Areas representing broad tracts of landscape which share common characteristics. Within each Regional Character Area, a number of Landscape Character Types have been defined based upon the pattern of natural and cultural characteristics. The 2009 version establishes a baseline audit of the current character of the landscape and provides a framework for the measurement of future landscape change. The strategy is currently under review and will be brought forward for consideration by Members shortly. The Wooded Landscape Plan approved by Members at the Programmes and Resources Committee on the 3 December 2021 (Minute 40/21) will form part of this strategy but was developed in advance to help ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place for the right reason.

7. The Landscapes Review.

The Government has provided its response to the recommendations of the Landscapes Review and provided the opportunity for stakeholders to respond during a consultation period which ended on the 9 April 2022. Members considered and approved a response to this consultation at the National Park Authority meeting on the 18 March 2022 (Minute No 21/22).

Background Information

8. National Park England’s Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management in National Parks.

In December 2020 NPE published a suite of four interconnected Delivery Plans which set out how National Park’s will:

- protect and enhance the natural environment
- become leaders in tackling the climate emergency
- support thriving communities where sustainable farming and land management deliver a wide range of public goods
- set out their vision to support the health and wellbeing of the whole nation.

9. The NPE’s Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management in National Parks is one of these four delivery plans and is shown at Appendix 1. The vision for Environmental Land Management is:

10. “National Parks in England to be celebrated as living, working landscapes where sustainable farming and land management systems deliver a wide range of public goods; farmers receive a sustainable and realistic income, and National Park Authorities (NPAs) play a central role in shaping those systems for a ‘triple dividend’: enhanced environment, improved productivity and vibrant communities”.

11. The vision will be achieved by: -

- collaboratively working with farmers and land managers, Defra and other partners to develop effective Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes and increase understanding of and buy-in to future farming policy and its focus on delivery of public goods, through supporting Tests and Trials, the National Pilot, and the traditional buildings restoration pilot.
- Linking national priorities to the local context, through an enhanced management plan approach that forms the basis of spatial prioritization within ELM and links with nature recovery and other public benefits.
- Ensuring that the current investment in agri-environment and Basic Payment schemes, estimated at £150m per annum across all English National Parks, is sustained but focused on ‘public payments for public benefits’ that support viable farm businesses.
- Developing the model of NPAs as ‘environmental brokers’, blending public-private and green finance, contributing to resilient rural communities and economies.

12. The aim is that within 10 years, these initiatives will enable: -

- National Parks to be priority areas within ELM
- ELM to provide funding for delivery of a broad range of public benefits that include cultural as well as natural capital
- ELM to be a tool for economic, social and environmental well-being
- Priorities to be identified and agreed at a local level within a national framework
- Resources for advice and facilitation

- Farmers and other land managers to be engaged in design, delivery and monitoring of ELM
- The National Park brand to be recognized as a 'quality mark' for environmental management and high-quality food production.
- NPAs to have a key role as 'environmental brokers'
- A clear and effective regulatory baseline
- Public support

13. **Background statistics.**

The following provides a summary of the Peak District National Park -

- 555 square miles (150,000 ha) of protected landscapes
- 84% farmed land
- All Less Favoured Area - 86% Severely Disadvantaged
- 46% grassland, 32% moor/heath, 8% rough pasture, 8% woodland
- 34.8% nature designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation)
- Shaped by people over centuries with 1,500 to 3,000 farms/smallholdings which are mainly beef, sheep & dairy
- 90% of land privately owned, 47% tenanted.

14. **Nature Recovery.**

An update report on progress in the Peak District National Park in delivering towards the NPE's Delivery Plan for Wildlife was brought to this committee in December 2021. At the same committee a report on the high-level Nature Recovery Prospectus produced for each National Park as an initial step to help influence government and as a starting point for further discussions with partners and other key stakeholders was also shared. The PDNP Nature Recovery Prospectus has been used to help initial discussions with partners and stakeholders. Further work to develop One Nature Recovery Plan for the Peak District is on-going.

15. **Existing environmental protection and land ownership.**

Only 33% of the national park is protected by designations (Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC)). Whilst this Authority, Natural England and the Forestry Commission does own about 5% of the land in the Peak District National Park the remainder is privately owned. Land owning environmental Non-Government Organisations (eNGOs) such as the National Trust (Approximately 12% of the National Park) do have generally aligned nature recovery and climate change mitigation and adaptation ambitions to the Authority.

16. **Public goods.**

The six public goods referred to in the 25 Year Environment Plan are: -

- Clean & plentiful water
- Clean air
- Thriving plants & wildlife
- Adaptation/mitigation of climate change
- Reduction/protection from flooding
- Beauty, heritage, access and engagement.

To deliver an integrated and balanced suite of public goods across the Peak District landscape farmers and land managers need to receive a sustainable and realistic income which rewards the public goods delivered as well as the market place rewarding

for high quality food production.

17. Funding for public goods delivery and future farm support.

As already identified in the current NPMP and Corporate Strategy the delivery of public goods does need to be properly financially rewarded and for the moment the mainstream source of funding for this is national agri-environment schemes.

18. The 25 Year Environment Plan and the more recent Agricultural Transition Plan set out the Government's intentions to revolutionise the support system for farming and land management by looking to reward the delivery of public goods.

19. The PDNP landscape does provide opportunities for farmers and land managers to diversify their income streams such as providing educational access, camping sites etc, subject to any required consents. Delivery of nature recovery will provide further opportunities for diversification and for the wider rural economy but this is within the context of a changing support system.

20. The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) which in essence pays farmers and land managers for the area of land they manage will be phased out over a seven-year period ending in 2027. Current agri-environment schemes will also be phased out and replaced with the proposed Environmental Land Management (ELM) approach from 2024 onwards.

21. ELM will consist of three voluntary schemes: -

- Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) - this focuses on making agricultural activities more sustainable. It will pay for actions that all farmers can choose to take and which can be taken at scale across the whole farmed landscape in order to have the most impact e.g. reducing inorganic fertiliser and pesticide use, taking care of soil and improving farmland biodiversity, water quality, air quality and carbon sequestration. An SFI pilot has been introduced with the learnings feeding in to three standards (Arable and Horticultural Soils, Improved Grasslands Soils, Moorland and Rough Grazing) which will be rolled out later in 2022. Funding will also be available for an annual health and welfare review for livestock. More standards will be introduced incrementally between 2023 and 2025, with the full range available from 2025 onwards
- Local Nature Recovery (LNR) – this is the more ambitious successor to Countryside Stewardship (CS). It will pay for the right things in the right places and supporting local collaboration to make space for nature in the farmed landscape. This scheme will particularly contribute to Government targets for trees, peatland restoration, habitat creation and restoration and natural flood management. LNR will be piloted in 2022/23.
- Landscape Recovery (LR) - this will pay landowners or managers who want to take a more radical and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes through longer-term land use change and habitat and ecosystem restoration. This likely to involve agreements which are bespoke and tailored to each project. Currently there is a call for applications for LR projects as part of an initial pilot for the scheme.

22. It is also proposed to support access and heritage through all three ELM schemes but the details for how this will be delivered are not yet clear.

23. Farmers and land managers will be able to enter a combination of schemes, so long as the actions they commit to in both schemes are compatible and no actions are being paid for twice (double funding). The aim is to have a single, simple service that shows all the available options in one place. The application and agreement process will

move increasingly on line. Broadband connectivity and speed together will virtual working skills and experience become even more important.

24. ELM is due to start fully at the end of 2024, and in the meantime farmers and land managers are being encouraged to look again at the existing Countryside Stewardship Scheme. In protected landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) farmers and landowners are also being encouraged to prepare for 2024 through applications to the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL).

25. FiPL was launched in June 2021 and will run until 31 March 2024. Funding has been allocated to the forty-four Protected Landscapes in England and aims to:

- Foster closer working between Protected Landscape organisations and the farmers and land managers living and working in these special landscapes.
- Deliver outcomes under the four FiPL themes of climate, nature, people and place.
- Deliver outcomes for the Protected Landscapes Management Plan priorities
- Support farmers and land managers to develop and deliver projects which help get their businesses ready for the changes from 2024 onwards.

A national framework has been provided for how FiPL is to be delivered but this does allow for local flexibility which can deliver to local circumstances. This linking national priorities to the local context is one of the asks of the NPE's Delivery Plan.

26. A suite of new national schemes are being launched to support farm business resilience, farm productivity, diversification and innovation. Work is also on-going to pilot approaches to support new entrants to farming. Please see Appendix 2 for a summary of the different schemes.

27. 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.

Proposals

28. As Programmes and Resources Committee Members will be aware from the report in October 2021 it has been agreed that the progress towards delivery of the four NPE Delivery Plans will be overseen by this committee. The Authority is already undertaking many activities, both on our own and in partnership, that assist in meeting the environmental land management ambitions. These activities will also deliver for wildlife and nature recovery.

29. The summary below updates Members on the key environmental land management related activities we are focussing our resources on:

30. Influencing

- The work of the Authority's Officers at national stakeholder meetings representing both the English National Park Authorities and the PDNPA.
- Delivering one of the ELM Tests and Trials, the Peak District Test which explores the use of national character area descriptions as part of the building blocks for the ELM schemes particularly in terms of spatial prioritisation; development of Land Management Plans through which it is likely that farmers and land managers will make their public good offer and monitor progress; collaboration; advice and guidance. Learnings from which will feed into the development of the ELM. The final report will be available on the Authority's website shortly.

- Designing and delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) for Defra. Learnings from FiPL will also feed into the development of the ELM.
- Existing Landscape scale partnerships – Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP) has made very effective use of the previous North Peak Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme (ESA) and the Environmental Stewardship Higher Level scheme (HLS), enabling agreement holders to access and then deliver, through MFFP over £12m of capital works which would not have been possible without the Partnerships intervention. Being able to continue this relationship through ELM will require a financial administration, which supports third party involvement. Without which it will unrealistically place the burden of cash flow on agreement holders.
- The South West Peak Landscape Programme (SWPLP) is nearing completion and has successfully delivered 18 projects which in particular demonstrate the need for facilitation when working with farmers and land managers, that important fungi grassland sites are often not recognised leading to a potential loss of biodiversity interest.
- The White Peak Partnership agreed that the highest priority was to influence the design of ELM which has resulted in the Peak District ELM Test which has provided learnings which now feed directly into the further development of ELM (please see earlier bullet point).
- Peak District Land Manager’s Forum which brings a representative range of farmers, land managers, land owners and organisations together to consider issues and opportunities.
- Moorland Management Group which is working on five key topics – resilient sustainable moorland, visitor engagement, fire risk, moorland birds, rural and wildlife crime.

31. **Delivering**

- The work of the Authority’s farm advisers with farmers and land managers brokering the national agri-environment schemes, the Authority’s own small-scale Land Management Grant scheme and the recently launched FiPL programme.
- Existing Landscape scale partnerships – Moors for the Future, South West Peak Landscape Partnership and the White Peak Partnership.
- A range of smaller-scale projects such as the invasive species project.
- Continuation of the Environmental Land Management Test and Trial small-scale White Peak practical field trials.
- The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme which is delivering under the four themes of climate, nature, people and place. A short summary of the programme including outputs and outcomes from year one of delivery are provided at Appendix 3.
- The Woodland Trust Partnership extending and growing the arrangements for small-scale woodland creation using Nature for Climate funds approved by Members in January 2022.
- The management of the Authority’s own land has long demonstrated innovation and early adoption of environmental land management. Environmental management schemes have been fundamental to the delivery of environmental land management. A recent example includes a major re-wetting project on the Swallowmoss Moors (Warslow Moors Estate).

32. **Regulatory**

- Regulatory work including planning (including Biodiversity Net Gain),
- Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations advice and support.

- Land management consultations e.g. for felling Licences, Section 156 disposals (sale or lease of Water Company land).
33. Partners also continue to deliver in a wide range of ways for nature recovery for example:
- Sheffield Moors Landscape Partnership.
 - Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership led by Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust with a range of complimentary projects.
 - Derwent Catchment Partnership.
 - The Ravine Woodland Project - a partnership project led by Natural England to mitigate the impacts of Ash Dieback on the internationally designated Ash woodlands of the Peak District dales.
 - NE is working towards a greater understanding of how Biodiversity Net Gain can be used to deliver our collective ambitions for nature recovery on the White Peak plateau. They are also working with Severn Trent Water (STW) on specific projects where STW is providing funding for Nature Recovery.
 - Environmental Non-Government Organisations own land e.g. National Trust, RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts.
34. 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.
35. Although we are still at a relatively early stage in the review process, a clear theme in discussions around the vision for the National Park is that landscape and nature recovery must be a central element to it. Therefore, it is likely that there will be a greater emphasis on landscape and nature recovery than in our current framework. NPE's Delivery Plan on Environmental Land Management 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. Sustainable farming and land management will be an essential part of delivering all these aims.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

36. Current activities led by the Authority as described above are funded but progress will need to be kept under review particularly as the continuation of programmes and projects increasingly rely on full cost recovery which is not always available from key funders e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund. FIPL is also using existing staff resources to support delivery and this is likely to continue throughout the life of the programme. This results in reduced capacity to support farmers and land managers with applications to the current national agri-environment schemes.
37. The assessment of the Rural Development Programme total annual funding coming in to the PDNP in 2014/15, when the coverage of land in agri-environment schemes was at its highest (87%), is approximately £30 million. It is anticipated that this figure and more will be needed to provide the public funds required to reward farmers and land managers for the public goods they are already delivering and those that they could deliver. A resilient and sustainable farming and land management business model must be found if the collective ambitions of the NPE Delivery Plans and the current and emerging NPMP priorities are to be delivered. Please see Appendix 4 which shows the breakdown of farm business income for each farm type.

Risk Management:

38. The greatest risk is if farmers and land managers, who own the majority of the PDNP, do not engage with and deliver the public goods desired. If future ELM schemes do not sufficiently reward farmers and land managers for the public goods they deliver, there is unlikely to be sufficient uptake. Whilst the public purse, through national environmental schemes, is currently the mainstream source of funding for public good delivery 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.
39. 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 or through diversification. Whilst such changes could be positive they may also have associated negative landscape, 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.
40. There is also a risk that all partners may not engage or that they may engage with different priorities.

Sustainability:

41. Our work on environmental land management directly improves the sustainability of the Peak District landscape.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

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

43. 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 NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan will help enable the Authority to be educators in climate change through the maintenance, enhancement, restoration, expansion and increased connectivity of its habitats and the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and conservation of its cultural heritage.
 - b. **Exemplars of sustainability**

Delivering to NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan will enable the Authority to demonstrate how environmental land management and a sustainable approach to farming and land management can lie at the very heart of developing a strong economy and sustaining thriving local communities
 - c. **Protecting the National Park**

Delivering to NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan will help enable the Authority to protect the special qualities of the National Park 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 5 - Characteristic settlements with strong communities and traditions, 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.

d. Leading the way in sustainable land management

Delivering to NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan will help enable the Authority to lead the way in sustainable land management.

e. Exemplars in renewable energy

Delivering to NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan 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 NPE's Environmental Land Management in NPE's Delivery Plan 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?

Environmental land management 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?

Environmental land management 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?

The need for a more sustainable approach to farming and land management in the National Park in terms of the public payments made for the public goods delivered being realistic to enable sustainable and resilient farm and land management businesses.

44. **Background papers (not previously published)**

None.

45. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 NPEs England's Delivery Plan for Environmental Land Management in National Parks

Appendix 2 Range of new schemes for farmers and land managers

Appendix 3 Farming in Protected Landscapes Peak District Year 1 2021/2022

Appendix 4 Breakdown of farm business income for each farm type.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Suzanne Fletcher, Head of Landscape, 21 April 2022