

7. **NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 (MM)**

1. **Purpose of the report**

This report provides Members with monitoring information for the end of the fourth year of the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23.

Key Issues

- Section 66 of 1995 Environment Act requires National Park Authorities to produce and update a National Park Management Plan every 5 years.
- At the end of our fourth year (2021/22) of the National Park Management Plan, an annual monitoring report has been produced, which forms appendix 1 to this report. This provides a more detailed update on all sections of the Management Plan referred to in this report.
- Progress has been made against the majority of the intentions identified in the National Park Management Plan, with 26 delivery actions being shown as ‘green’, which is on schedule, on the quarterly performance table. Eleven actions are shown as ‘red’, as the delivery actions have not been achieved and a further four rated amber due to risks arising which may threaten their delivery. Further detail are provided at paragraphs 12-18. A list of all the actions is provided in appendix 2.

2. **Recommendations(s)**

1. **That Members approve the National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22.**
2. **That any necessary changes to the proposed wording of the Annual Monitoring Report are delegated to the Interim Chief Executive.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. **Requirement to produce and update the National Park Management Plan**

4. Section 66 of 1995 Environment Act requires National Park Authorities to produce a National Park Management Plan which ‘formulates policy for the management of the relevant Park and for the carrying out of its functions in relation to that Park’ and should reflect national park purposes. This should be updated at least every 5 years.

5. The UK Government vision and circular 2010 for the English National Parks and the Broads states that ‘Park Management Plans are the over-arching strategic document for the Parks and set the vision and objectives which will guide the future of the Park over the next 10 to 20 years. The Park Management Plans are for the Parks and not just the Authorities. They should be supported by clear strategies with evidence of significant ‘buy-in’ from key partners and stakeholders, including communities, land owners and land managers. The Government expects public agencies and authorities active within or bordering a Park to cooperate in the development of the Park Management Plan and the achievement of the Management Plan objectives.’

6. This means the National Park Management Plan is not a plan for the work of the National Park Authority, or of any one organisation, but about what can be achieved by everyone

with an interest in the National Park and its future. The plan is therefore a partnership plan reflecting ambitions across the whole National Park and reflects the input of numerous organisations.

7. Through Our Corporate Strategy 2019-24, the National Park Authority delivers its contribution to the National Park Management Plan.

Background Information

8. The Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23 was adopted by the Authority at its meeting on the 25th May 2018 (minute reference 21/18). The Management Plan focuses on six areas of impact:

1: Preparing for a future climate

2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management

3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale

4: A National Park for everyone

5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding

6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

Proposals

9. Delivery Progress

10. Under each Area of Impact, there are a set of intentions that provide further detail on what we would like to achieve. In total there are fifteen Intentions. An Annual Monitoring Report is produced at the end of each year to outline the progress made in terms of implementing actions in the delivery plan. The 2021/22 Annual Monitoring Report can be found at Appendix 1. Members are asked to approve this Annual Monitoring Report.

11. Further detail on delivery of specific actions in the National Park Management Plan delivery plan is outlined in Appendix 2. Each action has been assigned a traffic light rating of red, amber or green (RAG) to give a clear indication of progress.

The RAG rating used to assess performance indicates the following.

Green – the delivery action is achieved or is on schedule to be achieved in the future.

Amber – the delivery action is at risk of not being achieved on schedule.

Red – the delivery action was not achieved

12. Progress has been made in the majority of the intentions identified in the National Park Management Plan, with 26 delivery actions being 'green' or on schedule. Eleven actions are shown as 'red', as the delivery actions have not been achieved and a further four actions are rated 'amber' due to risks arising which may threaten their delivery. The actions which are rates as red or amber are described in the following paragraphs (13-17)

13. Under intention 1.1: Reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities.

Four of the actions relating to sustainable transport are rated as red. These cover the development of a sustainable transport plan to be piloted and implemented within a two year timescale. In practice elements of this have been delivered and are continuing to develop but at a slower pace than was anticipated when the plan was written. The local Transport Authorities have now all written their Bus Service Improvement Plans and subject to further government funding these will deliver a proportion of our ambition for sustainable transport in the National Park. The Hope Valley Explore has completed its first season post Covid and there are plans in place to extend the operational service to run from Saturday 14th May until Saturday 3rd September, covering all weekends and Bank Holidays.

Four of the milestones relating to the Integration of more trees into the landscape are also rated red. These relate to expanding the local rate of woodland establishment to match the expectations of the Climate Change Committee. Meeting this would require an establishment rate of 176 Ha per year. This is an ambitious target which requires a step change in the historic rate of woodland establishment. While the target has been missed, some progress has been made. Previous rates of establishment were in the order of 10-15 Ha per annum. This year 20 Ha has been established and it is anticipated that 30-35 Ha will be delivered next year. A further 150 Ha is at the project development stage but the actual delivery date for this is uncertain.
14. Under Intention 3.1: Establish monitoring at a landscape scale, two of the actions are rated as red. Specifically: We will have agreed and established a system of monitoring at a landscape scale encompassing landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, with objectives set in 2018 and the methodology agreed in 2019. The outline programme of research necessary was identified in 2019/20, but the proposals were delayed by the impact of Covid19, which restricted partner availability and limited access to land and facilities. Since that time developing priorities such as Farming in Protected Landscapes and preparing for the new Nature Recovery Plans have prevented this area of work receiving sufficient priority to be progressed. However, specific elements have progressed well including work with Cranfield University to undertake land cover change monitoring and progress has been made with the repeat of the landscape description unit photographs.
15. Under Intention 4.1: Overcome physical barriers to access - Create a programme to develop a sustainable visitor economy that encourages the Peak District National Park to be a welcoming place for all. We aimed to produce and adopt a Recreation Hubs Supplementary Planning Document in 2020. Work had been undertaken to complete the necessary definitions and vision statement with an expectation that it would have been complete in April 2021, but following the impact of Covid19 the work has been included in the wider review of the Local Plan.
16. A further four actions have been recorded as amber. Two of these related to Grasslands for Carbon, which sits under intention 1.1: Reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities. Specifically these are: Identify the benefits of livestock as part of a sustainable upland farming system with particular reference to grassland; and Promote discussion on the future of upland meat production. Improve routes to market and market presence for stock reared solely on grasslands managed for public goods e.g. carbon. Though valuable work has been completed through the Environmental Land Management tests and trials connected with grassland farming systems no work has been completed which directly addresses these actions. With just a single year remaining it seems unlikely that significant progress will be made during the life of this management plan.
17. The other two actions recorded as amber relate to Intention 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery. The Moors for the Future Partnership is facing challenges

securing its long term financial position but has at present managed to secure sufficient funding to cover the 2022/23 financial year. The South West Peak Landscape Partnership has concluded its work and while the partnership itself will no longer receive funding a significant proportion of the projects it initiated will continue with the support of volunteers and external bodies.

18. This likely to be the last annual monitoring report to be produced because the end of 2022/23 will coincide with the initiation of the new five year management plan.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

19. The delivery plan elements of the NPMP that the Authority is responsible for will be funded through the usual delivery plan mechanisms.

Risk Management:

20. The greatest risk to the delivery of the NPMP is ensuring that there is support from partners and stakeholders, especially the elements of the delivery plan where their contributions are essential. This risk has been mitigated by liaison with partners and stakeholders throughout the delivery of the NPMP and monitored by the Advisory Group.

21. Please note that the National Park Authority is the Sponsoring Partner in 30 of the 41 delivery actions. Therefore eleven of the delivery actions are led by external bodies and all of the delivery actions require the cooperation of multiple partners to be successful.

Sustainability:

22. National Park Management Plans were subject to the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is delivered via a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), and are also subject to the Habitats Regulation and require a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). The SA and HRA were undertaken prior to the adoption of the NPMP.

Equality:

23. The National park Management Plan's vision contains the aspiration to be a sustainable, welcoming and inspiring place for all. This is expanded through Area of Impact 4: A National Park for everyone, with actions under overcoming physical and perceived barriers to access.

24. The vision also aspires to thriving and sustainable communities and economy. This is expanded through the intention to improve access to services and support the provision of locally needed housing.

25. 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

The National Park Management Plan sets the framework for addressing climate change in the National Park. The plan sets out the aspirations and the need for action to protect the special qualities of the National Park. The Annual Monitoring Report

makes public the performance of the National Park Authority and its partners in addressing climate change at a park wide level.

b. Exemplars of sustainability

The Management Plan contains ambitious targets for action to improve: sustainable transport, peatland restoration, grassland management for carbon sequestration and the establishment of more trees in the landscape. These are a comprehensive set of actions which directly relate to the core purpose of the National Park and demonstrate our local leadership in this respect.

c. Protecting the National Park

The Management Plan resulted in the production of a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for the special qualities of the National Park. This is an essential first step completed in anticipating and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

d. Leading the way in sustainable land management

A substantial proportion of the Management Plan relates to sustainable land management including the following high level intentions:

Intention 2.1 (sponsoring partner): Secure funding for future land management to benefit all

Intention 2.2 (supporting partner): Ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits

Intention 3.1 (sponsoring partner): Establish monitoring at a landscape scale

Intention 3.2 (sponsoring partner): Develop a White Peak partnership

Intention 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery

e. Exemplars in renewable energy

Though renewable energy contributes to sustainable transport which is promoted by the management plan; renewable energy is not a significant priority within the current Plan.

f. Working with communities

NA

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

The National Park Authority's work to achieve carbon net zero within its operations are separate from the National Park management Plan and therefore this report is not relevant.

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

The Management Plan contains the agreed actions and targets at a park wide level which contribute to meeting the objective of being carbon net zero by 2050.

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

No

26. Background papers (not previously published)

None

27. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23 Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

Appendix 2 - Peak District National Park Management Plan Actions Table April 2022

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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