

Peak District National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22

Foreword

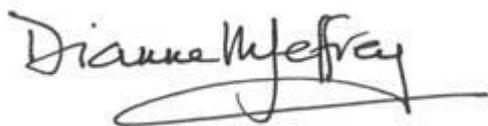
The fourth year of the 2018-23 Peak District National Park Management Plan has been one of challenges and opportunity. With the worst of the pandemic now behind us but its presence casting a continued shadow over events I must state the pride I feel in being associated with the resilience and fortitude shown by so many. The need for a green recovery has never been more pressing and I am glad to say that the Peak District National Park has played its part.

The last two years has demonstrated the vital benefit people get from protected landscapes and the Peak District National Park has been at the forefront of this with its unique location providing a beautiful landscape rich in cultural heritage on the door step of millions. At times like these it is essential to stay 'on the front foot' and guide the development of public engagement, to ensure people continue to get the most from their time here. Therefore I am delighted to see the contribution we are making with the welcome return of the Hope Valley Explorer alongside plans to expand sustainable transport and continued promotion of the #PeakDistrictProud campaign now in multiple languages.

Our work to protect the landscape continues and despite the restrictions of the pandemic, the Moors for the Future Partnership has had one of its most successful delivery years, investing over £5m in a single season which blocked erosion in over 20,000 gullies and planted 12 square kilometres of new sphagnum moss. Sustainable farming is an essential element of the National Park and through the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes Scheme, we have supported 72 projects which deliver better outcomes for the climate, nature, people and the place.

The following pages provide more detail on our progress in 2021/22 delivering the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23. Please feel proud of what we have achieved so far and consider how you may continue to support delivering these intentions in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Jeffrey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the bottom.

Dianne Jeffrey
Independent Chair of the Peak District National Park Management Plan Advisory Group

Introduction

The National Park Management Plan provides the framework that encourages everyone to work together to achieve national park purposes. It is not a plan for an individual organisation or group but a plan for the place. It is, therefore, a partnership plan. It is the single most important strategic document for the Peak District National Park. It shares with everyone what the main issues and priorities are. It then sets out how, together, we are going to tackle those issues over the next five years.

Since 2007 the National Park Management Plan has been overseen by an Advisory Group of partners who have monitored delivery and provided advice to the organisations involved. The group contains representatives from the following organisations:

Business Peak District
Derbyshire County Council
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Farmers & Land Managers Forum
Friends of the Peak District
Local Access Forum
National Park Authority
National Trust
Natural England (coordinating input from the Environment Agency, Historic England and Forestry Commission)
Peak Park Parishes Forum
Rural Action Derbyshire
Sheffield City Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Visit Peak District and Derbyshire

The management plan is organised around six main themes known as Areas of Impact, which are in turn broken down into a series of intentions.

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

Area of Impact 1: Preparing for a future climate

Intention 1.1: Reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities

To reduce the effects of climate change on the special qualities, we will know which special qualities are most affected by climate change, and focus action on reducing these impacts. We will undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment on the special qualities of the National Park & produce a mitigation/adaptation plan setting out priority actions.

Update

The outcome of the climate change vulnerability assessment is now imbedded in the service planning process of the National Park Authority helping to strengthen our work linked to adaption and resilience in the face of inevitable climate change. It will also form an integral part of the evidence base for the review of the National Park Management Plan. The results of this work are available to all partners via the following link: [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment \(peakdistrict.gov.uk\)](https://peakdistrict.gov.uk/Climate-Change-Vulnerability-Assessment)

Sustainable Transport

After an enforced break during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, The Hope Valley Explorer returned in 2021 on weekends and bank holidays from 24th July through to 30th October (30 days in total). During this time, the service carried a total of 1,811 passengers, an average of 60 passengers per day. Currently plans are in place to extend the operational service to run from Saturday 14th May until Saturday 3rd September, covering all weekends and Bank Holidays.

At a national level The Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy for England was published which directed transport authorities to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Delivery of the plans is subject to securing additional government funding. Derbyshire County Council have been success in their bid for funding and we are awaiting confirmation of the final details of the award.

The Travelling Light Project was launched in July 2021 with the aim to bring about change in the way local people and visitors travel to, from and within the Hope Valley. The project aimed to promote walking and cycling for everyday purposes, encourage the use of bus and rail, and reduce the current high dependency on vehicles powered by fossil fuels. During 2021 the project focused on engagement, research and the development of a 'Scene setting document'. Now the focus has shifted to securing funding for the five-year delivery stage.

Peatland restoration

The new initiative to set up a Great North Bog covering the 7,000 km of upland peat across the North of England is now formed. It includes six partnerships, one being the Moors for the Future Partnership, and will be instrumental in bidding for funding from the peatland capital grant scheme within the Nature for Climate Fund. This is vital work as the area covered by the six partnerships is estimated to release 3.7 million tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year due to the condition of the peat.

Grasslands for carbon

The Management Plan intends to support regenerative agriculture for improved soil health and carbon retention. Specifically encouraging the use of carbon tools, which take emissions, sequestration and permanent storage into account. In line with this the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme is providing a new opportunity for farm carbon assessments with a number of individual farmers and 2 estates developing applications for funding to deliver detailed carbon assessment.

Trees in the Landscape

Targets for additional trees in the landscape are included in the Management Plan to match the ambition set out by the national Climate Change Committee. To support our targets a four-year partnership with the Woodland Trust has been established which will create 105 ha of small-scale woodlands. This is supported through the Nature for Climate funding. Farming in Protected Landscapes has funded 6 hectares of wood pasture creation, the enhanced management of 7 hectares of woodland, the establishment of 507 in-field and boundary trees, 2,511 metres of new hedgerows and restored 996 metres of existing hedgerows. The Local Authorities Treescapes Fund has supported the planting of 2300 trees on Authority owned land. Our aspirations for establishing more trees in the landscape remain a significant challenge but these positive actions are an important step in the right direction.

The Wooded Landscape Plan has been approved and a final designed version will be shared with partners in 22/23. This will form part of the revised Landscape Strategy for the National Park.

Area of Impact 2: Ensuring a future for farming and land management

Intention 2.1: Secure funding for future land management to benefit all

To secure funding for future land management to benefit all, we will seek to create an ideal future farming and land management payment scheme in the Peak District National Park which helps to conserve and enhance the special qualities.

Update

As part of the Government's Agricultural Transition Plan, funding has been made available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme. This will fund projects that:

- Support nature recovery
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- Protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place

Here in the Peak District we have so far used the funds to support 72 projects; including 10 which diversify farm businesses, delivered 135m of restored drystone wall, 620m of riverbank protection and 106 Ha of improved habitat, plus six projects to make landscapes more inclusive to visitors. There has also been support for a wide range of specific projects to aid farming and land management operations that benefit the objectives of the scheme.

Future Actions:

To have a new support package available from 2023.

Note: The new Agriculture Bill and policy statement provides a planned timescale of 2025 to have new environmental land management arrangements in place

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

To ensure that the management of upland moors delivers environmental, social & economic benefits; we will seek to restore populations of birds of prey to at least the levels present in the late 1990s, with the addition of hen harrier as a regularly successful breeding species.

Focusing on:

1. Fire risk
2. Visitor engagement
3. Resilient sustainable moorland
4. Moorland birds

Regular monitoring of progress against these areas of focus is carried out in partnership between Natural England, the Moorland Association and the National Park Authority. There is also an annual up-date on progress and agreement on the focus for the future year's activity with moorland owners, agents and keepers.

Update

Fire Operations Group

This group brings together six fire services, National Park Rangers, National Trust Wardens, water companies, major land owners and game keepers to draw up fire plans, oversee specialist fire-fighting equipment, raise awareness of moorland fires and the consequences and train for emergencies. It also:

- Carries out regular training exercises
- Monitors conditions on the ground in dry weather
- Setting up fire watches when necessary to give early notice of any moorland fires.
- Publicises the risk of moorland fires by posters at moorland access points to advise and inform the public.

The fire modelling and matrix work being developed with support from moorland owners is progressing well and should provide a Peak District wide view of fire risk and then possible intervention and restoration options.

Access and Engagement

The countryside code has now been refreshed and released. It has also been recorded in 21 different languages which will enable it to be available and useful to Peak District communities and those surrounding the national park. This will complement the work undertaken through the #PeakDistrictProud campaign. More details on which can be found under Intention 5.1

Sustainable Moorland Management Group

Natural England has funded a historical mapping project with Moors for the Future to collect and make available the full history of restoration works undertaken to date. The moorland restoration map is now completed, and shows what work has been accomplished, where and over what timescale.

The map can be viewed here: [Map](#)

Moorland Birds

The final Bird of Prey Initiative report for 2021 showed that it was an extremely good year for short-eared owls which is linked to it being an a good year for voles which they feed on. This led to at least 30 breeding pairs, which is double the highest number previously recorded by the initiative.

The successful fledging of four hen harriers from a nest on National Trust land was perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the season. This is the third successful nesting attempt by hen harriers in the last four years. Unfortunately, Peregrine falcons failed to repeat the nesting success of 2020 with eight nesting territories occupied of which only three were successful. One confirmed incident of theft and two further cases where circumstances suggest this had been the case indicate that persecution continue to be an issue for this species. The numbers of goshawk have continued to increase and have now regained their peak population of 17 pairs. While this is most welcome, the numbers of successful nests has remained fairly constant and now stands at 54%. Hopefully this will improve in future years to support a sustainable population.

The Initiative continues to be dependent for monitoring data on the local Raptor Groups, partner staff and volunteers, and on those gamekeepers who report sightings to the Raptor Groups. The Initiative would like to express its thanks for the hard work this involves.

Moors for the Future Partnership co-ordinated the 2004 and 2018 surveys of breeding birds. The surveyed area covered 500 square kilometres in the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA), roughly equating to the size of 70,000 football pitches. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) analysed the survey results and drew comparisons to the previous two surveys to give an insight into breeding bird populations.

After the publication of the Peak District Moorland Breeding Bird Survey report in November 2019, the Partnership became aware that the original survey data had not been processed in the same way as the previous surveys of 1990 and 2004. These discrepancies have now been resolved to produce a scientifically robust set of results.

The revised analysis showed that between 2004–2018, 19 species had increased in number, including Lapwing, Golden Plover, Curlew, Snipe, and Ring Ouzel. These positive population trends of breeding waders (Lapwing, Golden Plover, Curlew and Snipe) across the Peak District Moors SPA contrast with the national declines in wader populations.

Area of Impact 3: Managing landscape conservation on a big scale

Intention 3.1: Establish monitoring at a landscape scale

We want to work with partners to help us to understand how and why the landscape is changing, whether changes are positive or not and how we should address the changes to conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park.

Update

The programme of landscape monitoring was defined to consist of; land cover including long term change, landscape quality, public perception, built development, areas of known change, climate change and landscape metrics. Progress with the seven areas of research has been partial but does include areas of positive progress. Including the repeat of a fixed point photography exercise linked to the Landscape Description Units. The full interpretation of this work should be available next year.

Historically landscape change has been monitored through the manual interpretation of aerial photography. This mapped the land cover to a very high accuracy but was a resource intensive undertaking requiring almost 3 years to complete for the UK's National Parks. The Peak District National Park together with Cranfield University have started to explore ways to address this problem through automatic classification of land-cover and land-cover change; through the use of automatic segmentation and machine learning for land cover classifications. Results from the initial trials showed a 70-75% accuracy at a detailed classification level. Although this is 10% lower than the manual stereoscopic interpretation, there is much potential for improvement with further refinement. Funds are currently being sought to extend this research into 2022/23.

Intention 3.2: Develop a White Peak partnership

The White Peak Partnership has been supporting the implementation of The Peak District Environmental Land Management Test. This has been completed and the final report approved by Defra. Farmers and land managers across the White, Dark and South West Peaks strongly supported: local spatial prioritisation and public goods delivery based on National Character Areas (NCA); local decision-making and advice; Land Management Plans framed by their NCA, focusing on the key public goods that can be delivered; local, expert and trusted advice as an essential element of ELM particularly for a collaborative landscape scale approach.

Intention 3.3: Maintain existing landscape scale delivery

To maintain existing landscape scale delivery we will develop a clear long term vision, plan and have funding in place for the Dark Peak and South Pennines to 2050. We will develop a clear future plan and funding to develop and continue landscape scale delivery on the South West Peak.

Moors for the Future Partnership

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, the Moors for the Future Partnership has had one of its most successful delivery years, investing over £5m in one season. This has involved a raft of science communications and conservation work, including over 20,000 blocks in eroding gullies

between the Roaches and Ilkley Moor and the planting of over 12km² of Sphagnum moss. The new initiative to set up a Great North Bog covering the 7,000 km of upland peat across the North of England is now formed. It includes six partnerships, one being the Moors for the Future Partnership, and will be instrumental in bidding for funding from the peatland capital grant scheme within the Nature for Climate Fund.

South West Peak Landscape Partnership

The final elements of the Heritage Lottery funded partnership are now nearing completion as this five year programme of work to link communities, landscape, wildlife and heritage draws to a close. Many of the project will continue beyond the funding due to the support of local volunteers and partner organisations.

High lights include the relocation of over 5000 White-clawed Crayfish to safety in seven locations within the South West Peak. Now safe from the impact of the North American Signal Crayfish, which have decimated their numbers. Restoration of a major field barn plus the consolidation of a historic limekiln.

Buxton Wild Weeks in May and July was extremely successful engaging over 1000 young people. This is now set to become an annual event delivered by volunteers. External partners have also committed to continue delivery of the following: Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will continue white-clawed crayfish conservation, estate and visitor management at the Roaches and wild play within Staffordshire. Cheshire Wildlife Trust are looking to take forward slowing the flow and grassland projects. The RSPB will continued focus on upland breeding waders, especially curlew and will continue to support the 'wader warden' volunteers in the South West Peak area.

Future Actions:

Agreed targets for the percentage of blanket bog in the Dark Peak and South Pennines in improved ecological condition:

- 30% of Blanket Bog across the Southern Pennines to be in state 6 by 2050
- 90% of Dark Peak Blanket Bog moved out of state 2 by 2023 (bare peat to be revegetated)
- 25% of the Southern Pennine Blanket bogs to be moved out of state 2 by 2023

Area of Impact 4: A National Park for everyone

Intention 4.1 and 4.2 Overcome physical and perceived barriers to access

By 2023 we will be encouraging a wider range of people to enjoy the Peak District National Park at an appropriate scale and adding value to the visitor economy.

Update

The Visitor Management Group established to bring stakeholders together and share best practice during the pandemic, has become a permanent group due to its success and the ongoing need for cooperation and support. This is looking to pilot an area management approach going forward to focus its attentions more effectively on local area issues.

There has been delivery of teacher training to 10 Sheffield teachers in partnership with Sheffield City Council and ESCAPE project. To help build our shared ambition for every Sheffield child to have a Peak District experience as part of their education.

Linked to the landscape review and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan; Generation Green is part of an ambitious £2.5 million project delivered by the Access Unlimited coalition a body formed of six leading charities, with the aim of connecting more young people with nature. As part of the programme more than 1000 opportunities to connect young people to nature have been delivered in the Peak District. These have included residential experiences and work with school and youth groups. The work prioritises young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and trains green champions to be our future ambassadors.

As part of Generation Green the UK National Parks Youth Voice residential was hosted in the Peak District, with 31 young people attending from 13 National Parks.

Area of Impact 5: Encouraging enjoyment with understanding

Intention 5.1: Balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment

To balance opportunities for enjoyment with conserving a fragile environment we provided a refreshed Countryside Code underpinning a Peak District brand which all relevant partners could promote equally and consistently. #PeakDistrictProud (#PDP) shares the positive ways in which people can help care for the national park; from taking home your litter and avoiding BBQs, to keeping your dog a lead. The initiative also help to foster a sense of community belonging and association with the place for local businesses and residents.

The Peak District Communicators Forum continues to meet and the Authority has curated early spring 2022 content for the bird nesting and lambing season, which is shared with stakeholders and partners to amplify a consistent message. The #PeakDistrictProud website now includes five additional language translations of the countryside code and this will promoted via the Authority's 2022 visitor guide.

Intention 5.2: Ensure shared responsibility

To ensure shared responsibility we will review and develop the current arrangements for events management in the Peak District.

The events notification system has been replaced with event guidance and a code of conduct for event organisers to sign up to. If event organisers agree to the code of conduct, their events will be added to a calendar and promoted on the National Park Authority website. Due to the disruption of the Covid19 restrictions, there have been far fewer events in the national park than usual and therefore we use the experience for the full year of 2022/23 to inform further development of the events system. The current web based system has been modified to include an interactive map, which makes it easier for people to see what is planned in their area at a glance.

Intention 5.3: Develop an awareness and understanding of the benefits of the Peak District National Park

Utilising the valuable work of Inspired by the Peak District and the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark, consider a revised approach to the promotion of the peak District brand so we establish a provenance which is coherent and effective at promoting the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park.

A group was convened in 2019 to promote the link between business development, the special qualities and the unique offer of the Peak District National Park. A series of discussions have taken place on how we can influence Local Industry with a focus on “Clean, green productivity linked to a high quality of life” and using “Positive planning powers; allied with a proactive enabling role from District Councils”. This initiative is continuing and contributing towards the Local Plan review by seeking to understand the land-use needs for new business in settlements, on farms and other opportunities that may be available through the adaptive re-use of traditional buildings.

Area of Impact 6:

Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

Intention 6: Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy

To support thriving and sustainable communities and economy, we will first define what is meant by thriving and sustainable communities, in the context of the National Park Management Plan. This has now been completed and will be used to develop the National Park Authorities approach to supporting community development and help to inform the production and update of parish statements.

Intention 6.1: Improve access to services

To improve access to services we will work with providers to improve broadband and mobile connectivity across the National Park in line with the UK's Next Generation Access (NGA) standards.

The Shared Rural Network programme is a joint industry and Government initiative to improve rural mobile coverage which would also give improved broadband coverage through the use of

shared masts and sites. The programme started in 2020. The National Park Authority has now been approached by 3 and other mobile operators working with the Government to explore sites to improve 'Not Spots' in the National Park. The National Park Authority is currently engaged with Derbyshire Broadband to overcome landscape issues and deliver a sustainable service close to Glossop and is also seeking to work with small business to find sites in the National Park that support local access to wireless broadband.

An interactive map of the current situation in Derbyshire is available via this link; [MAP](#) and Staffordshire via this link; [MAP](#). The coverage of the National Park is improving gradually, but communities and businesses are still likely to have difficulties in the most isolated areas.

Intention 6.2: Support the provision of locally needed housing

To support the provision of locally needed housing we will work through the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group Housing Sub-Group to address the local need for appropriate housing in the National Park.

Consultation on the issues is still underway. Discussions with the constituent authorities is ongoing regarding statements of common ground and the strategic cross boundary planning issues that need to be addressed in our respective plans. Currently the National Park Authority is working with Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council to determine our housing needs.

An update on the planning permissions granted for housing during the period will be provided when the updated information is available.

Intention 6.3: Enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and wherever possible enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park

To enable local businesses to thrive in a way that is compatible and, wherever possible, enhances the special qualities of the Peak District National Park, we will assist the development of businesses in conjunction with relevant bodies. Linking business support, grant aid, planning and economic development.

There are on going discussions with the District councils on new shared evidence for our respective local plan reviews, which will include the need for new employment space. Evidence collection will continue throughout 2021/22 with the aim of informing an issues and options consultation later in the year. To increase local understanding a joint presentation from EQM and National Park Officers was delivered as part of Business Peak District's programme of talks.

An update on the planning permissions granted for retail and business premises during the period will be provided when the updated information is available.