

5. **ADOPTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-28 AND AUTHORITY PLAN 2023-28**

1. **Purpose of the report**

This report seeks approval to adopt the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 and Authority Plan 2023-28.

Key Issues

- Section 66 of 1995 Environment Act requires National Park Authorities to produce and update a National Park Management Plan every 5 years.
- National Park Management Plans are the over-arching strategic document for the place and set the vision and objectives that guides the future of the National Park.
- Our Authority Plan is structured around our organisational aim of being inspiring and pioneering in how we deliver our contribution to the four National Park Management Plan aims. The actions are a combination of those we will undertake independently to deliver to the National Park Management Plan aims and those that enable the Authority to deliver these aims.
- In an appendix, our Authority Plan outlines all the National Park Management Plan where the Authority is the lead or key delivery partner.
- We have engaged extensively internally and externally throughout the review of the National Park Management Plan.
- The Member Task and Finish Group has met frequently over the review period to steer development of the National Park Management Plan.
- The Members' Forum has regularly been updated with progress and consulted on the National Park Management Plan review.
- Early in the review period we undertook an online public consultation on the National Park Management Plan.
- We have engaged partners in the National Park Management Plan review through the newly established Leaders Group, Operational Group and Working Groups, and continued to engage with the existing Advisory Group.
- Members are being asked to adopt the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 and Authority Plan 2023-28 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively from 1st April 2023.
- Members should note that the Management Plan and Authority Plan will be reviewed periodically and we are currently awaiting new Defra guidance on an Outcome Framework for Protected landscapes and Management Plan Guidance which may trigger a further review.

2. **Recommendations**

1. **That Members adopt the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28 provided at Appendix 1.**
2. **That Members adopt the Authority Plan 2023-28 provided at Appendix 2.**
3. **That any changes needed in the final National Park Management Plan as a result of giving partners notice to adopt the Plan are delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority.**

3. How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

- 3.1 Section 66 of 1995 Environment Act requires National Park Authorities to produce a National Park Management Plan (NPMP) 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.
- 3.2 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.'
- 3.3 The Authority Plan sets out how the Authority will deliver its commitment to the National Park Management Plan and work to the purposes and duty of the National Park. The Authority Plan is structured around of the four aims of the National Park Management Plan and a fifth aim of Organisational Health. The actions are a combination of National Park Management Plan ones where the Authority is the lead or supporting partner, all other actions we will undertake on our own to deliver to the National Park Management Plan aims and objectives and actions that sustain our Organisational Health.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 We have engaged extensively internally and externally throughout the review of the National Park Management Plan. In terms of internal engagement, Members agreed at the May 2021 Authority meeting (minute reference 40/21) to establish a Task and Finish Group to provide a way for Members and officers to engage with each other on developing the Authority's approach to reviewing and aligning the National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan. The group has met frequently over the review period to steer development of the strategy, performance monitoring, delivery plans and partner engagement. Alongside engagement with the Task and Finish Group, all Members were provided with the opportunity to engage with the review at the September 2021, May 2022, July 2022 and November 2022 Members' Forum meetings. The Member Climate Change Steering Group have been steering the climate change aim and Member Champions have been feeding into development of aims relevant to their area.
- 4.2 In terms of external engagement, early in the review period we undertook an online public consultation on the National Park Management Plan that ended in July 2021. We had significantly more consultation responses than we have had for any consultation on previous National Park Management Plans. This set of evidence has been used alongside other more technical evidence and professional opinions to develop the National Park Management Plan.
- 4.3 We established a Leaders Group with representations from organisations such as Natural England, local councils, National Farmers Union, Youth Hostel Association, Historic England, National Trust, D2N2, Business Peak District and Chatsworth. The group met three times to shape the vision, aims, objectives and delivery plan. To enable us to engage with the detail of the plan, we worked with an Operational Group and Working Groups that had similar organisations to the Leaders Group represented.

- 4.4 We have continued to engage with the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group, which oversees delivery of the 2018-23 Management Plan. They have actively engaged with shaping the vision, aims, objectives and delivery plan.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 As outlined at the November Members' Forum, officers have continued to liaise with partners to finalise the actions that form the National Park Management Plan delivery plan. We have continued to engage with the Member Task and Finish Group and Member Climate Change Steering Group. This has resulted in the final National Park Management Plan that forms Appendix 1 to this report.
- 5.2 Members are asked to approve adopting the National Park Management Plan 2023-28, as set out in Appendix 1, from the 1st April 2023. This will provide all partners, including the Authority, the ability to ensure that the actions relevant to their organisation are in their business plans, many of which will start in January or April 2023.
- 5.3 To comply with the Environment Act 1995, we have recently circulated the National Park Management Plan 2023-28, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, to all lead and supporting partners to give notice that we plan to adopt it at this meeting. To ensure we are able to take any appropriate observations from these partners into consideration, recommendation 3 of this report delegates any changes to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority.
- 5.4 Officers have also finalised the Authority Plan 2013-28, which forms Appendix 2 to this report. The Authority Plan outlines the Authority's contribution to the National Park Management Plan and all other strategic actions that it will undertake on its own over the plan period. The structure of the Authority Plan is the four aims from the National Park Management Plan and a fifth aim around the Authority being an effective organisation so we can deliver to the National Park Management Plan vision.
- 5.5 Members are asked to approve Authority Plan 2013-28, as set out in Appendix 2, from the 1st April 2023. This will provide the framework for setting the 2023-24 budget, developing annual service plans and undertaking staff appraisals so that implementation can start from 1st April 2023.
- 5.6 We are aware that work to update the guidance for National Park Management Plans is about to commence. In addition, Defra is developing an Outcome Framework for Protected landscapes, which will establish a number of targets for each National Park. This may mean that we choose to update the National Park Management Plan earlier than usual, but the Environment Act would allow for this, as Management Plans have to be updated at least every five years.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

6. Financial:

Adoption of the Authority Plan 2023-28 will enable the 2023-24 budget to be developed inline with this. Adoption of the Authority Plan 2023-28 provides the framework to plan for activities across the five year period and align the budget and medium term financial plan accordingly.

7. Risk Management:

We are aware that work to update the guidance for National Park Management Plans is about to commence. In addition, Defra is developing an Outcome Framework for Protected landscapes, which will establish a number of targets for the National Park. This may mean that we choose to update the National Park Management Plan earlier than usual, but the Environment Act would allow for this, as Management Plans have to be updated at least every five years, so we could choose to undertake a review sooner. Therefore, these risks are mitigated.

8. Sustainability:

National Park Management Plans are 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 have been undertaken as part of the review.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

To comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the National Park Management Plan as part of the review.

10. Human Resources:

Adoption of the Authority Plan will enable us to plan our workforce for 2023-28.

11. Climate Change

The National Park Management Plan 2023-28 sets the framework for climate change in the National Park. Achieving net zero is in the vision of the Management Plan, and this is underpinned by an aim and 3 associated objectives. This aims to coordinate the action of partners in a concerted effort to address this challenge.

12. Background papers (not previously published)

None

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 - National Park Management Plan 2023-28.

Appendix 2 - Authority Plan 2023-28.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Phil Mulligan, Chief Executive, 24 November 2022