

6 PEAK DISTRICT LANDSCAPE STRATEGY 2023-32

1. Purpose of the report

To seek approval for the Peak District Landscape Strategy 2023-32. This is an update of the Landscape Strategy 2009-18. This document provides internal and external guidance on maintenance and enhancement of the special qualities of landscapes throughout the National Park, based on landscape character.

Key Issues

- **Compliance with national and local policy**
- **Ensuring that the Vision and Objectives (Section 3) are appropriate.**

2. Recommendation

- 1. To adopt the revised Landscape Strategy 2023-32, subject to any further amendments arising from outstanding consultation responses acceptance of which is delegated to the Head of Landscape in consultation with the Authority’s Chair and Deputy Chair.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

National Park Management Plan

- 3.** The National Park Management Plan, Local Plan and Corporate Strategy (which will become the Authority Delivery Plan) together form the Authority’s strategic framework. The current Landscape Strategy has provided a key evidence base for influencing decisions within the Authority. It is used routinely by conservation and planning staff, and is embedded in Local Plan Policy L1A- *Development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, and other valued characteristics.*
- 4.** The revised Landscape Strategy expands on the National Park Management Plan, helping guide proposals affecting landscape character and quality in the Peak District, delivering the National Park Management Plan intention of “maintaining existing landscape scale delivery.” It will also contribute to maintaining and enhancing all seven Special Qualities 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 3- Undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies; Special Quality 4- Landscapes that tell a story of thousands of years of people, farming and industry; and Special Quality 5- Characteristic settlements.

Corporate Strategy

- 5.** In doing so it will contribute to the Corporate Strategy outcome of a sustainable landscape that is conserved and enhanced, and guide all the Corporate Strategy outcomes and National Park Management Plan aims.

Background Information

- 6.** The Landscape Strategy was first adopted in September 2009. It was based on a detailed Landscape Character Assessment of the Peak District and comprised:

- An overall description, issues analysis and landscape conservation/enhancement strategy for each of the 8 main Landscape Character Areas identified by the landscape character assessment.
 - A description and landscape management guidelines for each of the 21 more detailed Landscape Character Types which make up the Character Areas.
 - An Action Plan to deliver landscape conservation and enhancement.
7. It is considered timely to review the strategy and produce a revised version in the light of changing issues, threats, opportunities and priorities; and to benefit from experience of using and implementing the existing strategy. The approach taken has been to largely retain the existing landscape descriptions unchanged, but to revise in particular the analysis of issues affecting the landscape and the ensuing landscape management guidelines. A new section setting out a Vision for the landscapes of the Peak District and more detailed objectives for managing landscape change to achieve that vision have been incorporated. Key issues from the former Cultural Heritage and Access Strategies have been embedded within the revised Landscape Strategy, as are emerging issues from the One Peak District Nature Recovery Plan which is currently being developed with partners.
8. A draft of the Strategy was presented to the Members' Forum on 2 September 2022. Feedback from members has been incorporated into the revised Strategy.
9. Whilst an Action Plan accompanied the original strategy, it is proposed to simplify implementation and to better integrate it with delivery of the National Park Management Plan by incorporating actions within the Authority Delivery Plan.
10. Key issues which have influenced the review have included Defra's 25-year Environment Plan; the Landscapes Review; global focus on the climate and biodiversity emergencies; changes in agricultural support; the England Tree Strategy and UK Peatland Strategy; publication of Natural England's National Character Area profiles; landscape change such as the impacts of Ash Dieback; National Parks England's joint ambitions and delivery plans; and the emerging vision, aims and objectives of the revised National Park Management Plan.
11. The Strategy is written as a plan for the place, in the same vein as the National Park Management Plan, and has been subject to consultation with a wide range of external bodies, notably Natural England, Historic England, the Forestry Commission, the National Farmer's Union, the Environment Agency, local councils, RSPB, the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts, the Eastern Moors Partnership, Friends of the Peak District and the Local Access Forum.
12. 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.
13. The Strategy is based on nine key objectives to help deliver the Vision:
- Enhanced moorland landscapes which deliver greater public goods (including enhanced biodiversity, carbon storage, flood alleviation and water quality/provision)
 - Working with / supporting farmers and land managers to deliver a wide range of 'public goods' by encouraging the take-up and best use of future Environmental Land Management schemes and other funding opportunities
 - A more wooded landscape, where trees and woodlands form part of a wider landscape mosaic
 - The historic built environment and characteristic historic pattern of settlement and enclosure is protected, maintained and enhanced

- A more biodiverse landscape, where Nature Recovery is promoted
- A landscape where new development is necessary, well located, well designed and responds appropriately to the special 'sense of place' and sensitivities of the Park
- Improve the connectivity of open access land and the rights of way network to allow for enjoyment of the landscape by a greater range of users while maintaining character, tranquillity, remoteness and wildness.
- Use our understanding of past human land use and activity to inform our future decision making, find creative ways to use heritage to help the widest range of people engage with National Park landscapes, and ensure heritage is conserved and enhanced.
- Ensuring the landscape qualities (which deliver a diverse range of experiences) are balanced with the sustainable use of the landscape.

Proposals

14. The proposal is that the Authority adopts the revised Landscape Strategy at Appendix 1 and Appendix 1A.
15. The Strategy will provide a framework to influence and inform farmers, land managers and landowners and partner organisations, both at a strategic and individual case level, to ensure the Authority's landscape objectives are met. It will also inform the Authority's approach to managing landscape change across all work areas including planning, input into other regulatory mechanisms, direct delivery, programmes, project work and provision of land management advice and support.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

16. This is a strategic guidance document aimed at influencing decisions affecting the landscapes of the National Park, and as such there are no significant financial issues for the Authority.

Risk Management:

17. The primary risk is that the Vision and Objectives set out in the Strategy do not adequately facilitate delivery of National Park purposes. This is mitigated by the fact that the review is based on 13 years of experience of using the existing Strategy extensively. Where current guidelines have not provided an effective policy base they have been modified. External consultation has ensured that key partners and stakeholders have had the opportunity to input to the Strategy.

Sustainability:

18. Sustainability issues such as carbon management, water soil and air quality, flood risk, climate change adaptation have been considered throughout the document.

Equality:

19. There are no significant equality issues.

Climate Change:

20. The Vision set out in the Strategy includes supporting land uses and management practices that deliver a resilient landscape, which is adaptive to climate change and offers exemplary climate change mitigation.

21. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

22. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Revised Landscape Strategy 2023-32

Appendix 1A- Revised Landscape Strategy- Table of Guidelines

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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