

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE AIM OVERVIEW**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To inform Members about the Peak District National Park Management Plan climate change aim, the Authority Plan climate change objective, and the Authority's progress in responding to climate change since October 2021 and what this means for the future.

#### **Key Issues**

- The Climate Change Act 2008 as amended in 2019 commits the UK government by law to net zero by 2050.
- The July 2022 Authority meeting agreed to align the programmes for Programmes and Resources to the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 aims, and that the first paper would be on climate change.
- Climate change is prominent in the vision, is one of the aims and has three associated objectives in the National Park Management Plan 2023-28. These are outlined at paragraph 7.
- Since the last report on the climate change programme to Programmes and Resources in October 2021, the Authority has undertaken many activities, both on our own and in partnership, that assist in meeting our climate change ambitions. These are outlined at paragraph 11.
- As the climate change Member steering group has successfully embedded it in the Authority Plan and National Park Management Plan, the steering group will cease to exist at the end of March 2023, as outlined in paragraph 12.
- Paragraph 13 outlines climate change actions where the Authority is the lead or a key delivery partner in the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 that help the National Park to be carbon net zero.
- Paragraph 14 outlines actions in the Authority Plan 2023-28 that will assist in the Authority as a business to achieve net zero.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 1. To note the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28 aim on climate change, progress in responding to climate change since October 2021 and what this means for the future.**
- 2. To recommend to Authority that Members should not be appointed to the Member Climate Change Steering Group at the July 2023 Annual General Meeting reflecting that climate change is now fully embedded in the Authority Plan and National Park Management Plan 2023-2028.**

#### **How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. The Climate Change Act 2008 as amended in 2019 commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.
4. The UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks (2010) places climate change as central to National Park Authority objectives and describes their role in the following ways.
  - The Authorities are educators and in the area of climate change they have a vital role to play. They should spread important messages about the impacts of climate change and how individuals, especially visitors, can play their part in tackling it in ways which motivate lifelong behaviour change.

- The Authorities have a role as exemplars of sustainability in enabling the natural environment to adapt to predicted changes (and being resilient to unpredictable events), in supporting the delivery of ecosystem services and in developing more resilient infrastructure (such as rights of way that are less vulnerable to flood damage).
- The Parks themselves will be threatened by climate change and the Authorities must ensure that they protect the public assets which the Parks represent.
- The Authorities should lead the way in sustainable land management to prevent further carbon loss from soils and to encourage carbon storage in trees and fens.
- The Parks should be exemplars in renewable energy.
- Authorities need to work with local communities to reach a position where renewable energy is the norm in all Parks whilst not compromising their overriding duty under the 1949 Act.
- The Authorities should promote energy efficiency within the Parks, reduce the emissions from their own operations and from those associated with visits, including through sustainable low carbon transport use.

### **Background Information**

5. Members agreed at the 22 July 2022 Authority meeting to align the programmes for Programmes and Resources to the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 aims (minute reference 65/22). The same paper also agreed that climate change would be the first aim reported to Programmes and Resources. This paper fulfils that commitment, and provides a template for when the other three aims of the National Park Management Plan are presented to the Programmes and Resources Committee.
6. Members adopted the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 at the 2 December 2022 Authority meeting (minute reference 98/22). In terms of climate change, this is prominent in the 20 year vision for the document, which is as follows. “By 2043 the Peak District National Park is exemplary in its response to climate change and nature recovery. Its Special Qualities and resilience as a living landscape have been significantly enhanced. It is a welcoming place where all are inspired to care and communities thrive.”.
7. One of the four 20 year aims for the National Park Management Plan is focussed on responding to climate change, which reads as follows. “The Peak District National Park is more resilient and net-zero by 2040 through its exemplary response to climate change.” The five year objectives that underpin this aim, and prioritise delivery over the plan period, are as follows.

Objective 1: To lower greenhouse gas emissions significantly, focussing on the largest emitters within our influence.

Objective 2: To sequester and store substantially more carbon while contributing to nature recovery.

Objective 3: To reverse damage to nature, biodiversity, cultural heritage and particularly the built environment caused by a changing climate.

In terms of objective 1, the emitters that are in scope are ones that partners are able to mitigate through the Management Plan. As such, emissions within the remit of national or international decision-making are excluded. The three largest emitters within our influence are land management, energy for premises and road travel – these will be our focus over the next five years.

8. The targets that relate to the National park Management Plan climate change objectives are as follows.

Objective 1 target: By 2028 there will be a 25% reduction in total greenhouse emissions in the Peak District National Park.

Objective 2 target: By 2028 there will be a 2,878 tonnes net decrease in carbon emissions from moorlands.

Objective 3 target: By 2028 we will secure funding for four measures that increase the resilience of existing habitats and species, cultural heritage and the built environment

9. At the 2 December 2022 Authority meeting (minute reference 98/22) Members also adopted the Authority Plan. The Authority Plan sets out how we will deliver to the statutory purposes and duty of the National Park and our commitment to the National Park Management Plan. Along with supporting the four National Park Management Plan aims the Authority has an additional aim of enabling delivery.

Enabling delivery Aim: The Authority is inspiring, pioneering and enabling in delivering the National Park vision.

This captures key elements of the National Park Authority's own essential business and management of transformational change. It sets out objectives for all areas of the Authorities operations.

10. The enabling delivery objective relating to climate change is as follows.

Objective H (Climate Change): To reduce the Authority's greenhouse gas emissions.

Objective H target: Achieve a further 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 2017/18 baseline.

### **Proposals**

11. As Programmes and Resources will be aware from the report to this Committee in October 2021 that noted how the National Parks England Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership was informing the future National Park Management Plan (minute reference 27/21), the Authority is already undertaking many activities, both on our own and in partnership, that assist in meeting our climate change ambitions. The summary below updates Members on the climate change related activities we have focussed our resources on since October 2021.

- Development, with the Member Climate Change Steering Group and partners, of the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28 vision, which directly refers to net zero, climate change aim, objectives and actions outlined in the delivery plan.
- Development, with the Member Climate Change Steering Group, of the climate change indicator and actions in the Authority Plan 2023-28.
- Provided an Essential Member Training Workshop in February 2022 on climate change, which was well received by attendees.
- Implementation of the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2. An update on this work is on the same meeting agenda as this report.
- Further development of a consistent carbon baseline for the National Park. We have continued to oversee the consultant working to develop a carbon budget baseline for this National Park that is consistent with all ten National Parks (minute reference 28/21). The headline data from this has been used to identify the three biggest emitters

in our influence in objective 3 of the National Park Management Plan 2023-28. At an appropriate time, further information on this will be reported to Programmes and Resources.

- The Peak District Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (minute reference 32/20) has been used as a key element of the evidence base for the National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan. It is now being used by partners to inform land management strategy in key areas of the park. We have also provided Heads of Service with an easier to use presentation of the recommendations so they can take forward relevant ones in their service plans.
- The January 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee was informed about proposals for a Sustainable Transport Project for the National Park and sought approval to develop this further (minute reference 7/22). It was agreed that the Member Climate Change Steering Group would steer this work.
- Our work on climate change through land management activities is being taken forward in a number of ways, as summarised below.
  - The April 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee received an update on the National Park England's Delivery Plan on Sustainable Farming and Land Management and reported on the Environmental Land Management test and trial result and use of the Farming and Protected Landscapes Programmes for carbon projects (minute reference 15/22).
  - The April 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee supported the Moors for the Future Operational Plan 2022-23 and approved the Moors for the Future Partnership Interim 2022-23 Business Plan (minute reference 16/22).
  - The April 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee supported the Moors for the Future extending peatland restoration works through the Accelerated Flood Defence Funding route (minute reference 17/22). The same Committee further supported the Great North Bog Project 2022-30 (minute reference 18/22).
  - The July 2022 Programmes and Resources Committee supported undertaking projects with the Moors for the Future Strategic Management Board from 2022 to 2030 (minute reference 27/22).
- A review of planning policies with respect to Climate Change. The Local Plan review is considering the scope to seek enhanced requirements for energy efficiency, low carbon construction and renewable energy potential. Reports on this will be presented to Authority at appropriate times. Furthermore, the spatial strategy will continue to advocate the need to reduce the need to travel by private car, foster a move a low carbon travel, and seek stronger contributions from new development to nature recovery.

12. Approval was given by this Committee in December 2019 (minute reference 12/19) to create a Member Climate Change Steering Group and the group has met regularly since January 2020. Over the last two years, the group has been instrumental in ensuring that climate change is at the forefront of the Authority's work and for the National Park, with some highlights below.

- Successfully steered development of the Peak District Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment so it was adopted in October 2020 and the Authority's second Carbon Management Plan so it was approved in July 2020.
- Involved in developing climate change actions that were added into the National Park Management Plan 2018-23.
- Instigated an additional section on climate change in the Authority's committee template.
- Increased the group's knowledge of climate change and initiated annual essential climate change training for Members.
- Assisted in greening our fleet including reducing the number of operational vehicles and introducing electric vehicles into our fleet.

- Steered developments of the climate change aim and objectives in the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28 and Authority Plan 2023-28.
- Raised the profile and awareness of climate change within the Authority and externally.

As climate change is now fully embedded into the Authority Plan and National Park Management Plan, it is central to all the work that we do. These will be regularly reported to Authority as part of performance monitoring, and the work will be visible to Members without the need for the steering group. Therefore, the group will continue to meet until the end of the current plans period of 31 March 2023, and then cease to exist, with no Members being appointed to the group at the July 2023 Annual General Meeting.

13. The National Park Management Plan 2023-28 sets out actions that will assist in the National Park as a place achieving net zero. Future climate change actions where the Authority is the lead or a key delivery partner in the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 that help the National Park to be carbon net zero are as follows.

CC.1 Increase understanding, enabling, incentivising and implementing appropriate land management to reduce emissions, sequester and store more carbon.

CC.2 Implement at least one pilot project in carbon reduction technology in traditional or listed buildings and use findings as exemplars for wider scale delivery.

CC.4 Adopt Local Plan policies that strengthen carbon reduction in new buildings and refurbishment of existing buildings.

CC.5 Develop a National Park sustainable travel framework that delivers reductions in greenhouse gases, a sustainable visitor economy that cares for special qualities and supports sustainable communities by improving connection to services.

CC.6 Develop a sustainable long-term business model delivering the vision of the Moors for the Future Partnership.

CC.7 Produce and implement the Moors for the Future Partnership annual Operational Plan to deliver the partnership's vision.

CC.8 Encourage and enable implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change through improving the condition of uplands, including moorlands and blanket bog to lock in and store more carbon.

CC.9 Encourage and enable implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change through managing land so that soils, particularly peat soils, are healthy.

CC.10 Encourage and enable implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change through implementation of the Wooded Landscapes Plan to deliver the right tree in the right place to lock in carbon.

CC.11 Encourage and enable implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change through restoring, creating and managing species-rich grasslands to lock in and store more carbon.

CC.12 Encourage and enable implementation of nature-based solutions for climate change through improved water management for inside and outside the National Park to improve the quality of drinking water and reduce flood risk.

CC.13 Encourage and enable implementation of the Peak District Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment 2020.

CC. 14 Encourage and enable implementation of the One Peak District Nature Recovery Plan in a way that increases the recovery and resilience of existing habitats and species.

CC. 15 Encourage and enable a strategic approach to actively managing the prevention and mitigation of uncontrolled fires on moorland.

14. The Authority Plan 2023-28 sets out actions that will assist in the Authority as a business achieving net zero. The climate change objective in the Authority Plan 2023-28 is to reduce the Authority's greenhouse gas emissions, with a target of a further 30% reduction by 2028 against the baseline. Future climate change actions in the Authority Plan 2023-28 that help the Authority to be net zero are as follows.
- Support the Member Climate Change Steering Group in working towards the Authority's plan for carbon net zero
  - Implement and keep up to date the Carbon Management Plan (CMP2).

**Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

**Financial:**

15. The activities in the early years of the Authority Plan 2023-28 and National Park Management Plan 2023-28 have funding and resources identified to deliver them. The resources for activities in future years will be identified as we move through the delivery period.

16. **Risk Management:**

The main risk of the Authority being unable to deliver to the climate change aim is the resource challenge of both our partners and the Authority in terms of a flat cash settlement. However, this risk is mitigated by focussing on the three priorities that the objectives outline.

**Sustainability:**

17. Our work on climate change directly improves the sustainability of both the Authority as a business and National Park as a place.

**Equality:**

18. There are no direct implications for equalities in the activities contained within this report. Indirectly, responding to climate change could have a positive impact on the nine protected characteristics by providing a more resilient environment.

19. **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 the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to be educators in climate change.

b. Exemplars of sustainability

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to be exemplars of sustainability.

c. Protecting the National Park

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to protect the special qualities of the National Park.

d. Leading the way in sustainable land management

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to lead the way in sustainable land management.

e. Exemplars in renewable energy

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to be exemplars in renewable energy.

f. Working with communities

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to work with communities on climate change.

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

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to be aligned with other National Park Authorities' commitment to be carbon net zero.

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

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim will help enable the Authority to be aligned with other National Park Authorities' commitment for National Parks to be carbon net zero.

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

None.

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

None

21. **Appendices**

None

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Emily Fox Head of Information and Performance Management, 12 January 2023  
emily.fox@peakdistrict.gov.uk