

## Year End overview by Chief Executive

Red and Green status of KPIs: Green = 15, Red = 13  
Red and Green status of strategic interventions: Green = 41, Red = 6

I am proud of the achievements that we have made in this fourth and final year of our Corporate Strategy.

Great work has been carried out as part of our Landscape aim this year, with our influencing role being instrumental in shaping and influencing key landscape-scale policies such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. This year also saw the development of the One Peak District Nature Recovery Plan as well as excellent achievements in decreasing carbon emissions from moorland and restoring degraded blanket bog. However, we haven't achieved our target for monitoring at a landscape scale and we also haven't planted as many trees as anticipated due to larger-scale planting proposals taking time to come to fruition. We are now changing our methodology and will be carrying this (and many other pieces of work) on into the new National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan for 2023-28.

This year has seen significant growth of our Engagement work, where we have worked with partners to reach additional audiences through Ambassador Centres and Ambassador Schools as well as growing our work in health and wellbeing and boosting our work through diverse communities through the 'Championing National Parks for Everyone' project. However, we didn't meet our income generation target due to mixed performance and some areas including car parks and cycle hire not performing as well as expected.

Regarding our Community work we are getting back to normal following Covid-19 changes. This year we have developed our Local Plan Issues and Options for consultation and purchased an online consultation tool for future use. We are also restarting direct engagement with communities relating to new housing, neighbourhood plans, and community projects. However, we haven't carried out as many interventions facilitating community engagement as we hoped due to a pause on direct engagement with communities.

In terms of Our Organisation, during 2022/23 we were awarded the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Award at Silver level and the Health and Safety internal audit report provided us with Reasonable Assurance. We have also formalised our hybrid working offer and developed the new National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan for 2023-28. However, our staff sickness levels are higher than we had aimed for due to a combination of Covid and long-term sickness.

## Outcome: **A sustainable landscape that is conserved and enhanced**

Red and Green status of KPIs: Green = 5, Red = 6  
Red and Green status of strategic interventions: Green = 14, Red = 2

The Authority has continued to work with other English National Park Authorities, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks England (NPE) and Defra to shape and influence the design and delivery of the Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs), the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme and improvements to the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme. Despite concerns last autumn about a change of Government direction away from public good delivery towards business growth, the recent Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 and Defra ELMs update has confirmed the direction of travel. The Defra update sets out proposals for the three ELM schemes; the Sustainable Farm Incentive is live with an increasing number of options and more options being developed including one for wall maintenance; due to the improvements and increased uptake of CS, Defra has decided not to create a new Local Nature Recovery scheme but to continue to improve and evolve CS instead; a second Landscape Recovery pilot application window is planned for Q1 in 2023/24 and is likely to support projects that explore the blending of public and private sector funding. Additionally, the Protected Landscapes Partnership is being established this year and will focus on nature recovery and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Delivery of FiPL has continued and the 2022/23 £1.2 million project fund allocation has been spent and is helping to support 141 projects; making an overall total of 213 projects delivering for climate, nature, people and place, and for the Peak District National Park Management Plan priorities. FiPL has been successful and is highly regarded nationally and locally. The recently launched EIP included confirmation of an additional fourth year for the FiPL programme together with increased funding, details of which will be confirmed early in 2023/24. A second national promotional leaflet is planned.

Development of the One Peak District Nature Recovery Plan has continued, working with the partner and key stakeholder steering group, the Peak District Land Managers' Forum and farmer / land manager / land owner workshops. A draft Peak District Nature Recovery Plan will be shared through a consultation process in Q1 in 2023/24 with the plan being completed in Q2. The Nature Recovery Plan will then form part of the National Park Management Plan 2023-28 and the Local Plan once revised.

Our partner work on landscape scale projects continues. The Moors for the Future Partnership (MFFP) has had a very challenging financial year facing short term and difficult to access funding. MFFP has shifted its income focus into a more mixed model with less reliance on grants. Success is building with corporate and public contributions and a major opportunity from 2025, collaborating with the Environment Agency and United Utilities on a 5 year flood risk management and water quality initiative, with a prospective value of £15m. MoorLIFE 2020, the biggest LIFE grant ever given to a UK conservation project and the largest project across the blanket bog landscape of Europe came to an end this year. A raft of significant guides and research from the project are available on the MFFP website. MFFP is about to make its second bid to Defra Peatland capital grant scheme with an expected value of £3m. The South West Peak Landscape Partnership Programme (SWPLP) was completed in Q1 with the programme legacy continuing in a variety of ways e.g. FiPL projects, the cultural heritage volunteering role and improved working relationships across organisations, farmers, land managers and the wider community.

## Outcome: A National Park loved and supported by diverse audiences

Red and Green status of KPIs: Green = 2, Red = 2  
Red and Green status of strategic interventions: Green = 9, Red = 0

The external environment has had a significant impact on this area of work over the period of this Corporate Strategy, Covid-19 being the most significant. Due to Covid restrictions, most engagement activities were greatly impacted, paused or ceased for significant periods of time, impacting income generation and programmes of work. Our front facing staff showed great resilience and adaptability to ensure the National Park remained open to all, providing breathing spaces and a place for quiet recreation that supports people's physical and mental wellbeing. There have also been positive impacts, such as changes to our visitor profile with people finding a value and connection to the National Park on their doorstep. We have switched some activities to new online methods of delivery, which will now form part of our permanent offer. During Covid-19 closures, we have been able to complete the refurbishment at Bakewell and Upper Derwent visitor centres, which has greatly improved our visitor offer.

During this Corporate Strategy, we celebrated our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in a more subdued fashion than planned due to Covid. One of the great successes of this was the social media campaign '70 people for 70 years' that reached 2.7 million people. The NHFL recovery grant Generation Green enabled work with targeted audiences, piloting programmes, testing new approaches and building partnerships. We have developed new ways of working with our partners to reach further with programmes like Ambassador Centres and Ambassador Schools that have been successfully launched. Diversifying income to balance income generation and develop more grant funded income has been highly successful. Health and wellbeing has been an area of growth with new partnerships, delivery of NHS test and learn pilot projects and successful delivery across the teams. The successful NHLF application for 'Championing National Parks for Everyone' project has given our work with diverse communities a real boost and will continue to do so as we move in to 2023/24.

Despite previous fluctuations during Covid-19 and global changes, our overall social media audience increased on some key channels (e.g. Twitter) by +7% year-on-year to around 145,000 people, with Facebook in particular benchmarking highly within the UK national parks family. 'Engagement' – direct interaction with our online posts - also increased by a third across the year. The closure of *ParkLife* saw a migration to our new *Welcome Guide* with 35k copies ultimately distributed and a strong representation of our constituent diverse audiences within, and similarly across, our digital outlets. Multi-lingual content was also rolled out via #PeakDistrictProud and on interpretive schemes. Commercial filming revenues rose to around £8.5k for the year, with statutory requirements and other restrictions being limiting factors to additional fees.

The Peak District National Park Foundation was launched during this time and continues to grow. New Peak Partners are joining and the Foundation is now looking to employ staff directly with continued financial support from the Authority. Other commercial activity continues to develop with the successful renovation of Cattis Side cottage as a holiday let and developing income from car parks. This area of work will continue to be vital for the PDNPA to achieve its ambitions.

## **Outcome: Thriving communities that are part of this special place**

Red and Green status of KPIs: Green = 0, Red = 2

Red and Green status of strategic interventions: Green = 2, Red = 2

During 2022/23, we started to return to greater engagement with communities following the constraints of the Covid-19 period. The Policy and Communities Team also invested considerable effort developing our Local Plan Issues and Options for consultation, working closely with a Member steering group. An online consultation tool has been purchased and readied for launch during 2023.

While the actual number of people and communities we engaged with is below our target this year, the overall direction of travel is good with some positive foundations laid during this year which will allow much greater engagement into our strategic review of planning policies.

Encouragingly, officers have also begun a process of regaining ground on direct engagement with communities on community policies and local projects. 103 individual acts of engagement have been recorded across the year which involve the enabling of communities in shaping their place. Key examples include support to communities in looking to promote new housing, close support in developing neighbourhood plans and a growing number of communities supported with community projects (through our small grant), including within core themes such as renewable energy and sustainable transport.

In 2022/23, this included:

- 15 community grants
- Advice and assistance to 4 neighbourhood plan groups
- Advice and assistance to 10 parish council or community group
- Support to Hope Valley Climate Action
- 2 Parish Bulletins.

## An agile and efficient organisation

Red and Green status of KPIs: Green = 8, Red = 3  
Red and Green status of strategic interventions: Green = 16, Red = 2

Sickness levels remain higher than they have been for years, with 8.16 days lost to sickness per full time equivalent; lower than last year, but still 2.16 days above target. 14% of days were lost to sickness related to mental health/chronic reasons such as stress, anxiety and depression (a 34% decrease from the previous year). Covid accounts for the third highest loss in hours due to sickness, and is the highest occurring reason for absence.

Despite this, a great deal was achieved during the final year of our Corporate Strategy. We were awarded the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Award at Silver level and the Health and Safety internal audit report provided us with Reasonable Assurance. We have formalised our hybrid working offer, with our new Hybrid Working Policy being presented to Members for approval in Q1 of 2023/24. We continue to diversify our income by moving some staff within Aldern House to enable us to accommodate more external tenants.

To ensure the Authority continues to operate effectively, a variety of essential governance, finance and performance related activities are undertaken in Q1. Our Financial Accounts for 2021/2, Annual Governance Statement and Performance and Business Plan were all completed by the statutory deadlines. The July Authority meeting received the Business Continuity, Visitor Centres and Income and Debtors internal audit reports, which were all given the highest level of Substantial Assurance.

The December 2022 Authority meeting approved our 2023-28 Authority Plan and National Park Management Plan, which set out our ambitions for the Peak District National Park. The Authority Plan sets out our contribution to partnership actions and things we will implement on our own to meet the same ambitious vision. The April 2023 Authority meeting approved the five year progress report on the previous 2018-23 National Park Management Plan, which outlined our achievements despite resources being diverted elsewhere in the five year period due to Covid.

The January 2023 Programmes and Resources Committee meeting received a report outlining how the Authority is delivering to the National Park England Delivery Plan for Climate Change. As the Member Climate Change Steering Group for climate change has embedded climate change into the Authority Plan and National Park Management Plan, the same paper approved ending the group. A report outlining that we had achieved a 6% reduction in carbon emissions from the Authority's emissions in 2021/22, bringing us closer to net zero, was approved at the same committee.

The February 2023 Authority meeting approved an Organisational Change Process proposed by the Chief Executive that will deliver a resilient and affordable organisation. The report outlined what the Chief Executive is minded to do and created a working group to develop details so that formal consultation on change can start in Q1 of 2023/24.

The March Authority meeting approved the Capital Strategy 2023-28 and the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy. Our Customer Services team dealt with over 10,500 customers on the phone and logged over 2,500 enquiries. Our information technology services have continued to work with a supplier on a new Planning database, move our maps onto an improved system and improve our IT infrastructure.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in July and the Authority welcomed one new Local Authority Member who completed their induction during Q2 and the newly appointed Chief Executive who joined us in September.