

WHITE PEAK AND LANDSCAPE RECOVERY

Project Area

The Development Phase bid submitted in September 2023 included land in the target area shown on the map. This included 44 holdings where farming is central to the business, in addition to 14 smallholders, conservation organisations, estates and quarry companies – a total of 58 signatories. It is hoped in the medium to long term to extend this to the whole of the White Peak, though this depends on interest from farmers and may take some years to achieve.

The Ambition

The aim is to develop a programme of works that will enhance the high value habitats in the limestone dales and extend and link these across the White Peak plateau. Everyone involved will help decide what the project covers which could include:

- traditional and nature-friendly mixed farming with legume-herb swards
- planting scattered trees along field edges and corners
- enhancing existing flower-rich grasslands, hay meadows and limestone hilltop grasslands
- low-input woody pasture or agro-forestry on the dale-tops

Through the development of appropriate structures and an attractive package of works the aim is to fund this landscape change through a mix of green finance and core Defra grant.

Background

The White Peak is recognised as the most fragmented of all National Park National Character Areas with the dales separated by a highly fertile plateau. The project seeks to deliver the Lawton principles of Bigger, Better, More and Joined to effect change at a landscape scale and address both Nature Recovery and ambitions for Net Zero. The project builds on a range of existing or earlier initiatives including the White Peak ELMS Test run by the PDNPA, the White Peak Trials (a partnership between the PDNPA, NE and farmers), ongoing Catchment Sensitive Farming work (NE), the Wye Valley Nature Recovery Project (NE), a suite of individual farmer-led projects funded through Farming in Protected Landscapes, and the Protected Sites Strategy Pilot in the Peak District Dales (NE).

Proposed Project Structure

The Development Phase bid includes funding for a Project Manager, Farm Advisers and a Green Finance officer supported by an Ecologist, a specialist in Stakeholder Engagement and an Administrator. At least the Project Manager, the Farm Advisers and the Administrator will be hosted by the PDNPA. It is hoped to recruit at least some of the posts from the local farming community. Additional funds have been requested to support cultural heritage work, carbon audits and appraisals and bring in specialist land agency advice and independent consultants to advise on appropriate payment rates.

NB. Please note that if the application is successful final details will need to be agreed with Defra during the enrolment period so the number of Authority officers may change.

