

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AIM OVERVIEW

1. Purpose

To inform Members about the Authority's progress in responding to climate change since September 2023 and present the focus of our work on climate change over the next year.

2. Context

- 2.1 The 26 July 2024 Authority meeting agreed the Programmes and Resources themes would continue to align with the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) 2023-28 aims (minute reference 65/22). This paper is the first programme of the NPMP aims.

3. Proposals

Progress Since January 2023

- 3.1 Programmes and Resources will be aware of the Authority Plan progress report for 2023-24 (decile 2) that was approved by Members at the May 2024 Authority meeting (Minute reference 40/24). Therefore, already reported progress on the climate change aim can be viewed [here](#). Members will also be aware of the National Park Management Plan 2023-24 progress report that was approved at the 26 July 2024 Authority in July (Minute ref 75/24). Therefore, already reported progress of where the Authority is undertaking climate change activities in partnership can be viewed [here](#). The summary below further updates Members on our climate change related activities in 2024-25.
- 3.2 A training workshop was undertaken with Members in June 2024. A similar session was undertaken with staff across the Authority after the Member training. These sessions were run jointly between the Authority and Sheffield University. They were designed to start us thinking about how we need to change our approach to climate change in order to meet net zero in a protected landscape context. The partnership with Sheffield University continues to support development of our understanding of how landscape change is perceived and how we can better articulate, share and evaluate the difficult choices we need to make in the face of climate change.
- 3.3 We continue to implement the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2. A full report of our performance over 2023-24 is detailed in another report that is on this meeting's agenda.
- 3.4 Road transport being one of the priorities in the National Park Management Plan. Out of an action identified at the transport symposium in February 2023, a Sustainable Travel officer has been recruited. This post's focus is developing and delivering the Sustainable Travel Framework action in the National Park Management Plan. We are currently consolidating the evidence base to provide the focus for the Sustainable Travel Framework. This will be discussed with Members at the November Forum.
- 3.5 The Local Plan review continues to consider the scope to seek enhanced requirements for energy efficiency, low carbon construction and renewable energy potential. The 26 July Authority meeting approved an Issues and Options consultation.
- 3.6 The Moors for the Future team do not carry out any capital works between April and late July due to the bird breeding season. A substantial works programme is about to commence, including bare peat stabilisation and re-vegetation, gully blocking of

eroding watercourses, and planting of bog-building sphagnum mosses. All of these required considerable planning and consenting by the Conservation and Land Management Team. Meanwhile, the Communications Team have carried out 235 “Bogtastic” engagement activities within this period, directly interacting with 2,716 people to spread the “fire aware” and other messages to encourage people to care for our peatlands. The Science Team are setting up sphagnum trials to inform best practice in re-instating this bog-building moss, using funding brought in by the Business Development Team, and continue to facilitate trials by the Universities of Manchester and Durham to monitor greenhouse gas flux at our bund construction site on Close Moss.

- 3.7 Authority Farm Advisers have continued to provide advice and application support for farmers and land managers to obtain Countryside Stewardship Capital Grant Schemes and the Sustainable Farm Incentive. These schemes provide annual payments and capital work grants for activities which deliver for regenerative farming and conservation management. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has now allocated £2 million for projects which deliver for climate, nature, people and place. As many nature projects also deliver for carbon sequestration approximately half this funding is supporting our climate ambitions e.g. up to 50 hectares of grassland has been programmed for restoration as species rich hay meadows this year.

Update on Race to Zero

Members approved joining the United Nations Race to Zero along with all 15 UK National Parks at the September 2023 Programmes and Resources Committee (minute reference 37/23). The UK’s National Parks have now become the first in the world to join the ‘Race to Zero’ initiative, committing to drive action to halve carbon emissions within their landscapes by 2030 and become significant net carbon sinks by 2050. The UK’s National Parks collective ambition will actively drive us towards net zero landscapes by around 2040, meeting the central ambition of the Race to Zero initiative (global net zero emissions by 2050) a decade ‘early’, and becoming significant sources of carbon capture after that point.

- 3.8 As noted in the last climate change progress report, individual consumption based emissions modelling reports for each National Park were completed in late 2023. The high level findings of the Peak District National Park were used to underpin development of the National Park Management Plan (minute reference 37/23). More specifically, it was used to identify the three highest emitters in the National Park within our influence – these are land management, road travel and energy for premises. Progress on these targets is in the report highlighted in paragraph 3.1 above.
- 3.9 In July a [‘Synthesis Report’](#) combining the consumption based emissions for all National Parks into a single model has been used to underpin the Race to Zero application. Halving emissions by 2030 (6 years) and reaching net zero as places by 2040 (16 years) will require all stakeholders in protected landscapes to take immediate action to reduce emissions and achieve a step change in carbon sequestration. The Synthesis Report proposes areas and targets for National Park family emissions reductions, which are outlined in appendix 1 (sect 1.1) of this report. Our approach delivering these targets is set out in paragraph 3.11 of this report.

Focus of work in the future

3.10 There are a number of development activities related to climate change which will form the focus of our work over the coming months and beyond. These relate to the following.

- Increasing demands to report climate change progress to a number of external bodies.
 - Race to zero disclosure report (2024) and developing a Race to Zero action plan in 2025.
 - Incorporating the Defra Targets and Outcomes Framework into the National Park Management Plan in 2025.
 - Developing a climate change adaptation report and reporting as part of the UK national adaptation programme collectively with the Protected Landscape family in late 2024.
 - Incorporating ‘Scope 3’ emissions into our reporting
- Considering our approach to climate change adaptation and the re-evaluation of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment in light of this.

Each of these areas are at the early stages of thinking by staff and require further development, including ensuring we undertake these as efficiently as possible so we are not duplicating work or data sets. However, as these are significant areas that will impact on the current and the next NPMP and Authority Plan, a summary of our emerging thinking on each of these development activities is below.

- 3.11 The first Race to Zero disclosure report for the Peak District will need to be completed in September 2024 and be undertaken annually thereafter. In 2025 we are also required to produce our first Race to Zero action plan. We are in a good position to develop our action plan, as we already have agreed actions with partners in the NPMP that deliver to the targets in the Synthesis Report with the exception of reducing emissions from food. Therefore, we can use the agreed existing actions and develop actions around food and this will then flow into our thinking regarding the next NPMP.
- 3.12 The Targets and Outcomes Framework (TOF) are drawn from the goals in the 2023 UK Environment Improvement Plan (see appendix 1 sect. 1.2) There are 3 targets that Defra directly associate with climate change.

Target 6

Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.

Target 7

Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.

Target 8

Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

The other TOF targets associated with habitats, SSSI's, and farming will have impacts on carbon mitigation, sequestration and climate change adaptation (The complete list is in Appendix 1 sect. 1.3).

We will need to report on these targets for the first time in July 2025 which we will do alongside the NPMP. We will need to develop the next NPMP with the TOF targets as an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation of the plan. As Members will be aware, the next NPMP is due to be developed with a start date of 2028 at the latest.

- 3.13 As Members may be aware, we are required to develop a climate change adaptation plan for the National Park by 2028. To ensure alignment and provide efficiencies,

similar to other Protected Landscapes, ours will form part of the next NPMP. In advance of this, all Protected Landscapes have been invited to collectively report in the fourth round of UK climate adaptation reporting. This will inform the UK's fourth statutory Climate Change Risk Assessment and improve the government's understanding of the impact of climate change in a protected landscape context. Authority staff are represented on the working group compiling the report on behalf of all protected landscapes which will be submitted in late 2024.

- 3.14 Members will be aware that our Carbon Management Plan (CMP) doesn't currently include Scope 3 emissions – those that are indirect to the Authority's emissions. This decision was taken as there was no clear methodology or way of easily capturing these emissions in a meaningful way when the CMP was developed. However, from next year we will be required to report these to Defra via the Carbon Trust. This will require staff developing an appropriate and proportionate methodology, and will impact on our emissions, as the baseline will increase. Further detail on this can be found in the full report of our performance of Carbon Management Plan over 2023-24, which is another report that is on this same agenda. The protected Landscape Family are all facing the same change and we are working closely with colleagues in the Protected Landscape Climate Change & Energy officers Group to share best practice.
- 3.15 We have an action in the current NPMP to ensure the recommendations of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) are known and used. As Members will be aware from the recent Member training, our next step is to test the CCVA findings in terms of our capacity to manage the most important features in the landscape. We and partners recognise that climate change means climate variables are no longer fixed pattern, broadly predictable factors, which will lead to change at landscape scales. A summary of the workshops will be circulated to staff and members later in September. We hope to continue the close collaboration with colleagues at Sheffield University, Exeter University and Natural England to inform our management of the national park using the new approaches explored at the workshops. This is critical early preparation for the next iteration of the National Park Management Plan which must prioritise climate change adaptation (noted above).

4. Recommendations

- 1. That this progress report in delivering to the National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan climate change aims and targets be noted.**
- 2. That the development work to assist the Authority in meeting net zero, climate change reporting and developing the approach to climate change adaptation for the Authority and National Park be noted.**

5. Corporate Implications

a. Legal

Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 imposes a statutory duty on the UK Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. At the CoP 26 Climate Conference in Glasgow in 2021 the UK Government made further commitments to achieve at least a 68% fall of 1990 levels by 2030.

The UK Government Vision and Circular for National Parks (2010) places climate change as central to National Park Authority objectives. The UK Government Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) and the Fourth Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting (2023) sets out the requirement for protected landscapes to

produce a Climate Adaptation Management Plan to be embedded in or linked with their management plans by 2028. In addition, the UK Government Policy Paper, Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, requires National Park Authorities to incorporate various targets into their management plans with a view to achieving outcomes from the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.

There are no direct implications for equalities in the activities contained within this report. Indirectly, responding to climate change could have a positive impact for everyone, including those most at risk from climate-related effects, by providing a more resilient environment.

b. Financial

There are no immediate budget implications associated with these proposals. 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 resource needs for additional activities will be identified as we move through the delivery period.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

The National Park Management Plan aim on climate change is: The Peak District National Park is more resilient and net-zero by 2040 through its exemplary response to climate change. The Authority Plan objective is: To reduce the Authority's greenhouse gas emissions. This report is reporting on progress and emerging thinking on how we meet this aim and objectives into the future.

d. Risk Management

The main risk to delivery of the climate change aim and objective is the resource challenge of both our partners and the Authority in terms of a flat cash settlement. This risk is mitigated by the focus of the three priorities that the NPMP objectives outlines.

e. Net Zero

Delivering to the National Park Management Plan climate change aim and joining the 'Race to Zero' initiative will align the Authority with other National Parks commitment to be carbon net zero. It will help us to share best practice and make the case more effectively with different stakeholders. It will also give us stronger opportunities where a collective voice may be needed for additional funding and support.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Land use and Emissions targets for UK National Parks

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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