

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE AIM OVERVIEW 2025/26**

### **1. Purpose**

To inform Members about the Authority's progress in responding to climate change since September 2024 and present the focus of our work on climate change over the next year.

### **2. Context**

- 2.1 At the 9th May 2025 Authority meeting, Members agreed that progress reporting of delivery of the four National Park Management Plan aims, the 'projects and programmes' element of the Programmes and Resources committee programme, would transfer to Authority (minute reference 54/25). This paper is the first of those reports on NPMP aims.

### **3. Proposals**

#### Progress Since September 2024

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the Authority Plan progress report for 2024-25 (decile 4) that was approved by Members at the May 2025 Authority meeting (Minute reference 57/25). Therefore, already reported progress on the Authority's climate own change aim can be viewed [here](#).
- 3.2 Members will also be aware of the National Park Management Plan 2024-25 progress report that was approved at the May 2025 Authority meeting (Minute reference 56/25). Where the Authority has undertaken climate change activities in partnership can be viewed [here](#). The summary below updates Members on our partnership-based activities in 2025/26.
- 3.3 The Knowledge Exchange project funded by the University of Sheffield supporting our understanding of climate-based decision making and landscape change has come to an end. This research partnership with the University of Sheffield will continue through the work of the Landscape Observatory, which grew out of the collaboration.
- 3.4 At the May 2025 Authority meeting Members agreed to establish and host the Landscape Observatory (LO) funded by Defra, led by National Parks England and delivered through the Protected Landscapes Partnership (Minute reference 59/25). The LO's is developing the evidence base and methodologies to facilitate landscape adaptation to climate change and its interaction with other landscape factors. This work will support the Authority, and all other protected Landscapes, in the production of management plans focused on climate change adaptation in accordance with the new Defra [Management plans for Protected Landscapes in England](#) published in June 2025 noted in previous reports.
- 3.5 We continue to implement the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2. A full report of our performance over 2024/25 will be detailed in a report to the November Authority meeting.
- 3.6 The Peak District National Park Authority adopted a draft version of the Peak District Walking, Wheeling, Cycling and Horse-riding Infrastructure Plan in May 2025. The Plan was developed using funding from Active Travel England and identifies a strategic high-level network for active travel within the National Park. This network focuses on the existing Trail network, Sustrans routes and the Derbyshire Key Cycle Network.—We have identified a number of proposals to develop connectivity and accessibility of the existing network, including from

National Park gateways, recreation hubs, and settlements. An economic business case was undertaken jointly with Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

- 3.7 The Moors for the Future team do not carry out any capital works between April and late July due to the bird breeding season. The Conservation and Land Management Team have spent the summer planning and gaining consent for a substantial works programme which is about to commence, including bare peat stabilisation and moorland species revegetation, gully blocking of eroding watercourses, and planting of bog-building sphagnum mosses. Meanwhile, the Communications Team have carried out 24 “Bogtastic” face-to-face engagement activities within this period, including events, talks and youth engagement. They have also carried out an experimental wildfire awareness social media campaign in partnership with Instagram and Tik Tok influencers which has gained over 6 million views, targeted directly at Peak District visitors. The Science Team have set up some inspiring research including a PhD study of microbes living in peat and sphagnum moss in relation to site methane and carbon monitoring, and experiments about the control of *Molinia* on the moorlands using funding facilitated by the Business Development Team. They continue to facilitate trials by the Universities of Manchester and Durham to monitor greenhouse gas flux at our bund construction site on Close Moss, and by the University of Derby on Combs Moss.
- 3.8 Authority Farm Advisers and Defra funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) advisers have continued to provide advice and support for farmers and land managers to secure grants for regenerative farming and conservation through Countryside Stewardship Capital Grant Schemes and the Sustainable Farming Incentive. These grants support lower carbon-input methods, as well as greater carbon sequestration, on upland farms. The FiPL programme has now allocated over £6 million for projects which deliver for climate, nature, people and place with £2.6 million spent on projects in the 2024/25 financial year. Climate focussed projects include 3 collaborative carbon auditing projects which were completed in spring 2025 and involved over 15 farmers, with learnings from these audits shared amongst three farmer groups and through educational visits. In the last financial year, FiPL has funded the planting of 7487 individual trees, 6476m hedgerow and 4 ha of woodland alongside the restoration or creation of 356ha wildlife-rich habitat. The outcome of the latter is enhanced carbon sequestration and storage alongside benefits for nature and landscape. In addition, the creation of 31.47ha of woodland was facilitated by FiPL using Northern Forest funding. FiPL has also been involved in over 50ha of land where direct interventions have been implemented to improve soil health including soil carbon.
- 3.9 A Tourism Charter has been created through the NPMP Partnership group in order to collaboratively address issues resulting from visitor pressure, primarily related to visitor travel. Constituent authorities and large land managers have been invited to a partnership meeting in October to discuss taking this work forward, with the aim to implement parking management strategies and develop public transport within the National Park. The Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) of East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester have been invited to attend, as elected Mayors of these Authorities came together in August at a ‘Peak Partnership Summit’ which promised to deliver developments to transport infrastructure across the wider Peak District region. Gaining support from the MCAs would support opportunities to manage visitor travel as a result of their enhanced powers and budgetary capacity relating to transport.

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 The second Race to Zero disclosure report for the Peak District National Park has been submitted alongside the other UK NPs in September 2025 using the Carbon Disclosure Project reporting tool. We are now awaiting a score which will be used to measure both our own and National Park's collective progress compared to last year's submission.
- 3.12 The next stage in our work towards net zero, alongside all other protected landscapes, will involve writing an action plan to set out the National Park's pathway to incorporating climate change adaptation in to the next Management Plan. This is in line with the requirement set out in the carbon targets and actions. This will also involve ongoing work to incorporate the Resist-Accept-Direct decision-making framework, which is being developed by the Landscape Observatory, into the next National Park Management Plan.
- 3.13 The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) is drawn from the goals in the 2023 UK Environment Improvement Plan. 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 PLTOF targets associated with habitats, SSSIs, and farming will have impacts on carbon mitigation, sequestration and climate change adaptation. Members approved the incorporation of these targets into the NPMP at the July 2025 Authority meeting (Minute reference 81/25). We will be working with the Natural England local and national teams, Defra colleagues and NPMP partners to develop local targets and actions over the next months.

#### **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 outlines 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

None

**Responsible Officer, Job Title**

Emily Fox, Head of Resources

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

Emmott Baddeley, Data, Strategy and Performance Officer, September 2025