

9. CLIMATE CHANGE AIM OVERVIEW 2026/27

1 Purpose

To inform Members about the Authority's progress in responding to climate change since September 2025.

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). The first report was received at the 26th September 2025 Authority meeting (minute reference 94/25). This paper is the second of those reports on the NPMP Climate Change Aim.

3 Proposals

Policy Context

- 3.1 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).

- 3.2 The UK Government's Third National Adaptation Programme (2023-2028) highlights the need to strengthen resilience to climate change across England and introduces a requirement that all National Parks must have in place a Climate Adaptation Plan by 2028. Reflecting this national policy direction and updated Defra guidance, the Authority intends to embed climate adaptation priorities and interventions in the forthcoming review of the National Park Management Plan. This will build upon the recommendations set out in the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and work with Natural England around climate smart adaptive management, and on completion will serve as the Authority's Climate Adaption Plan.

Progress since September 2025

- 3.3 Members will be aware of the Authority Plan progress report for 2025-26 that was approved by Members at the May 2026 Authority meeting (Minute reference 40/26). Therefore, already reported progress on the Authority's climate own change aim can be viewed [here](#).
- 3.4 Members will also be aware of the National Park Management Plan 2025-26 progress report that was approved at the May 2026 Authority meeting (Minute reference 41/26). 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 2026/27.
- 3.5 At the May 2025 Authority meeting, Members agreed to establish and host the Landscape Observatory (LO) funded by Defra, via National Parks England and delivered through the Protected Landscapes Partnership (Minute reference 59/25). At the January 2026 Resources meeting, Members approved funding for the LO of an expenditure of up to £650,000 for 2026/27. The LO continues to develop the evidence base and methodologies to facilitate landscape adaptation to climate change and its interaction with other landscape factors.
- 3.6 PDNPA have started collaborating with the Landscape Observatory, Natural England and the Protected Landscapes Partnership to develop practical tools and approaches to use climate smart adaptive management within Management Planning. This provides the opportunity to pilot new approaches in the review of the Peak District National Park Management Plan.
- 3.7 PDNPA continue to implement the Authority's Carbon Management Plan 2. A full report of our performance over 2025/26 will be shared at a future Authority meeting.
- 3.8 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. As of March 2026, Active Travel England have provided a further 18 months of funding to allow the development of proposed schemes for active travel infrastructure through to being delivery ready.
- 3.9 As of April 2026, the Moors for the Future Partnership has implemented a sustainable business model for the programme to 2030, including a confirmed capital programme that will increase the pace and scale of peatland restoration. In addition to its ongoing partnership work, MFFP have also started to work collaboratively with National Highways to fund peatland restoration in the habitat corridors adjacent to the A628 and M62. This has been developed on the basis that restored and healthy peatlands result in enhanced ecosystem service outcomes, which can benefit climate resilience for roads infrastructure (flood/fire reduction). The first peatland restoration within this innovative new collaboration was completed in March 2026 on Crowden. This project was the first of its kind nationally and has since been the subject of national level attention, where peatlands and nature have been demonstrated as being Critical National Infrastructure. The MFFP team is now working with National Highways to build further funding into the MFFP programme in tandem with funding from water

company partners from next year. The past year has also seen the successful completion of one Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme project in the MFFP programme, with one further project continuing in delivery up to March 2027 addressing wildfire damage in the Goyt valley, and which also includes significant public engagement activity around fire risk. In the past review period, MFFP has successfully completed a restoration plan for Stalybridge (an area damaged by fire in 2018) through funding from a Water Restoration Fund grant. The peatland restoration works carried out in 2025-26 (2900 gully blocks / 1.6 million sphagnum plug plants planted) resulted in an estimated additional 429 tonnes of carbon emission reduction on top of the cumulative annual total emissions derived each year through the MFFP programme to date.

- 3.10 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 £8 million for projects which deliver for climate, nature, people and place with £1.7 million spent on projects in the 2025/26 financial year. In the last financial year, FiPL has funded the planting of 6091 individual trees, 5525m hedgerow and the restoration or creation of 301ha wildlife-rich habitat. The outcome of the latter is enhanced carbon sequestration and storage alongside benefits for nature and landscape. FiPL has also been involved in over 1900ha of land where direct interventions have been implemented to improve soil health including soil carbon
- 3.11 The Peak District National Park continues to experience an increase in wildfire frequency and intensity. In 2025, 1,504 hectares of moorland were affected by wildfires, and the impact is expected to be even greater this year. As such, the Authority is working with partners to consolidate lessons learned from recent wildfires. Following an internal staff workshop in early September, the Authority is working collaboratively with partners to develop a more focused and joined-up approach to wildfire planning, prevention, response and recovery.
- 3.12 The UN's Race to Zero campaign for which Members approved the joining of along with all 15 UK National Parks at the September 2023 Programmes and Resources Committee (minute reference 37/23), has evolved into what is now known as the Net Zero Recognition Framework (NZRF). There is a pilot phase being undertaken by the UN as of February 2026. For National Parks, commitments remain the same under the new framework and the Authority will submit a Carbon Disclosure Project report in September 2026, which will produce a score and will be used to measure both the Authority's own and National Park's collective progress compared to last year's submission.

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 moving through the delivery period.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

This report outlines progress towards the National Park Management Plan aim on climate change, which 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'.

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 the National Park Management Plan climate change aim and participating in the Carbon Disclosure Project will support progress towards net zero. It will also help the PDNPA to share and learn from best practice.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

7. Appendices

None

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