

# NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION DRAFT

## Consultation Process

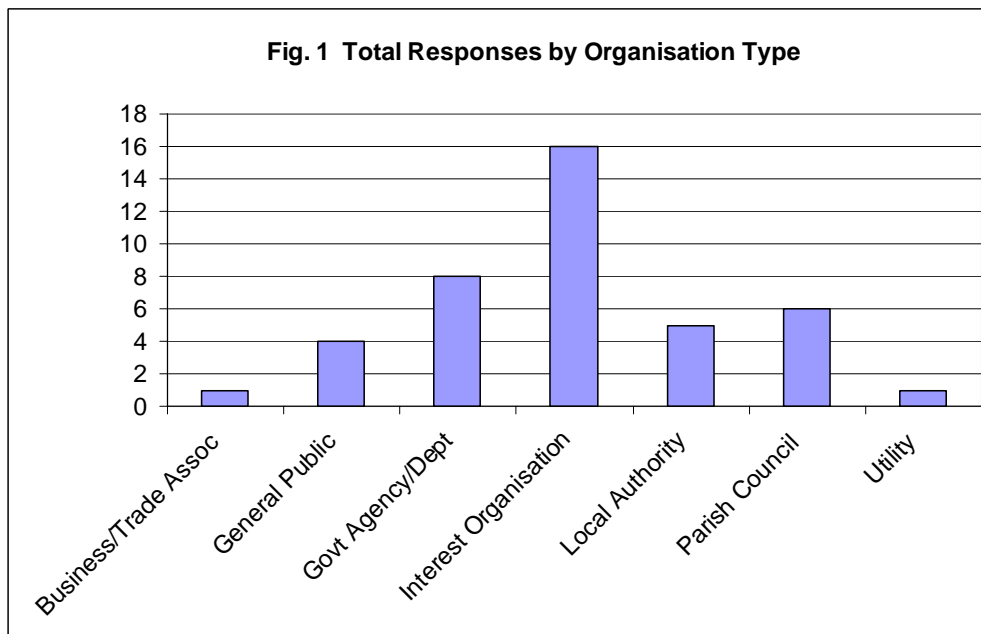
In June 2006 the draft National Park Management Plan together with the detailed Environmental Report (prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan) were sent to a total of 277 authorities and organisations, including all Parish Councils within the Park.

Residents and other members of the public were notified of the consultation on the draft document through publicity on the Authority's website, a major article in the Spring 2006 edition of the 'Dales' newspaper and through press releases that appeared in various local and regional newspapers. This publicity directed people to the Yorkshire Dales website on which both documents were made available along with a proforma for comments. Hard copies were also made available.

The eight-week consultation period ran until the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006. Towards the end of that period, reminders were sent to all Parish Councils and key statutory consultees – and the deadline was extended until 25<sup>th</sup> August to allow a number to respond.

## Response

This consultation generated 41 responses (see list at the end of the document) from a range of statutory bodies, authorities, interest groups, business/trade associations and members of the general public. The balance of these is shown in **Fig. 1**.



The majority of the responses were detailed and comprehensive, commenting on most sections of the draft Plan. Most contained a combination of expressions of support for some objectives whilst recommending amendments or additions to others. Overall no dominant or consistent themes are identifiable from the comments. They are diverse, are

for the most part specific and are, at times, contradictory. However, it was noticeable that a number of the more negative comments were based on either:

- a) a misunderstanding of the purpose of the Plan (that it was a list of things that the Authority was going to do);
- b) having read only certain parts of the document (when some issues e.g. renewable energy are covered in several different sections).

Although responses varied, some of the positive comments express:

- o praise and support for the draft, its balance and structure;
- o praise for the 'Special Qualities' section;
- o general agreement with the issues identified, although in some cases other aspects to these are highlighted;
- o support for increasing the area of native woodland;
- o agreement with the importance of tranquillity (although it is difficult to measure);
- o support for training and employment in traditional construction & countryside skills.

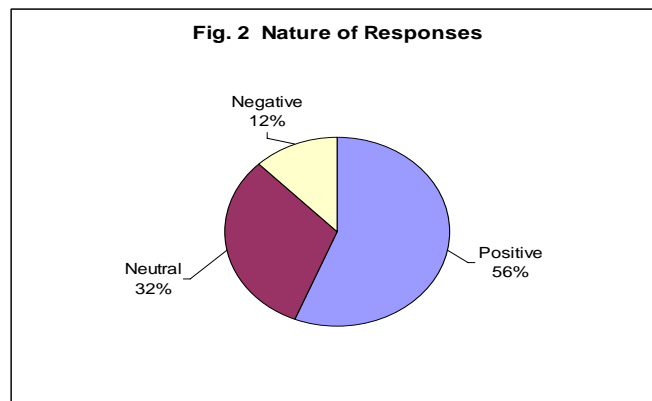
Some of the more critical comments suggested:

- o the importance and role of viable upland farming was understated;
- o more should be said on affordable housing issues;
- o more should be said about the potential of small-scale renewable energy generation;
- o a tougher objective was needed to tackle motorised recreational vehicles;
- o a 'new vernacular' in Dales building design should be accepted;
- o objectives should be made more 'SMART'.

Broadly assessing the comments in each response they have been categorised as:

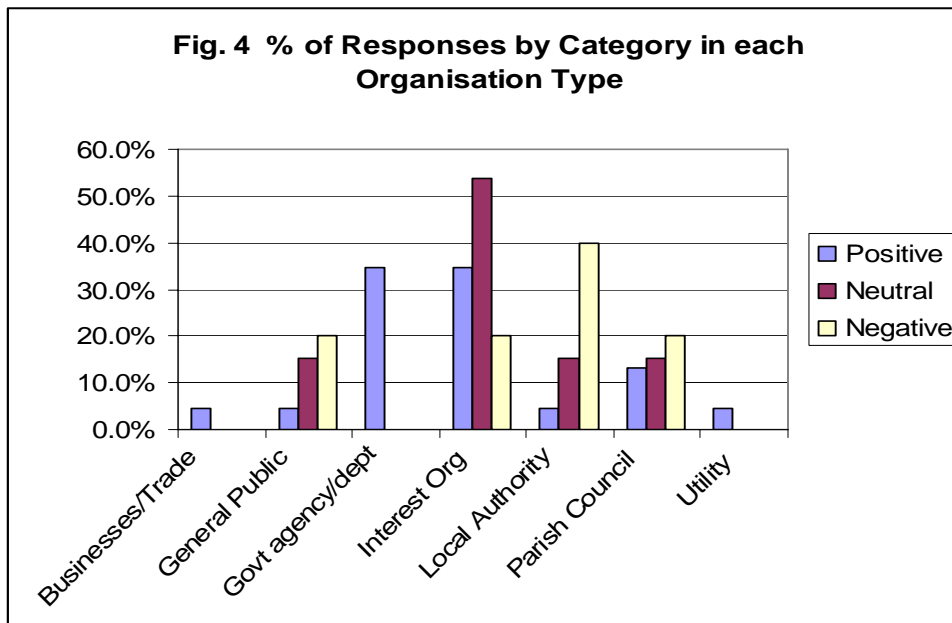
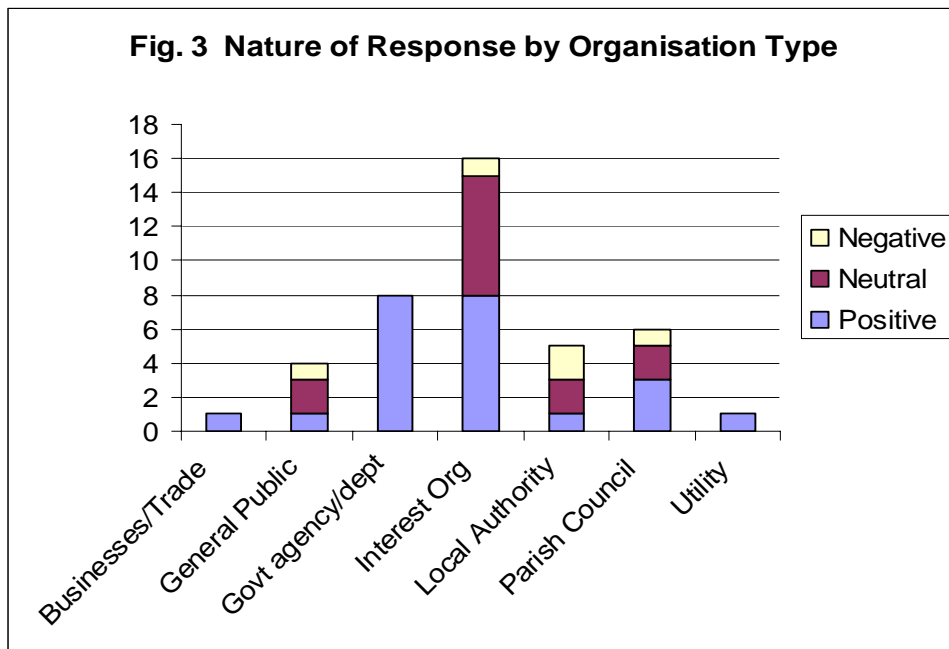
- o generally **positive** about the Plan, indicating general satisfaction and/or support;
- o **neutral**, offering mixed or factual comments or raising issues that whilst needing further consideration are too detailed or outside the scope of the Plan; and
- o on the whole **negative**.

Of the total, some 23 responses were positive, 13 neutral and 5 responses were broadly negative. (**Fig. 2**)



**Fig 3** indicates how the different types of organisation responded while Fig. 4 shows how the three categories of response – positive, neutral and negative – were spread across the different types of organisations that commented.

The breakdown of responses shows that government agencies/departments, business and trade interests and utility companies were generally positive about the Plan. The largest proportion of the more negative responses came from local authorities (albeit only 2). The majority of responses from parish councils and interested organisations were either positive or neutral, although almost without exception raising some issues.



## **Summary of Comments Received**

The following gives outline summaries of comments received. Most, but not all, of these points have been incorporated as recommended amendments in the revised draft.

### ***Special Qualities***

Few comments were received on this section but most indicated support. Those suggesting amendments proposed relatively minor wording changes, the majority of which have been accommodated in the changes recommended.

### ***Issues***

Many respondents commented on the issues facing the Park.

- More specific consideration of the implications of declining economic viability of hill farming on the Park.
- Make fuller reference to housing affordability issues, especially housing to rent, and the implications for local businesses, the wider economy and the structure of communities.
- Ensure the Plan reflects the changing profile of British society and is inclusive in providing opportunities for understanding and enjoying.
- Acknowledge and exploit advances in information and communications technologies in order to improve the quality and accessibility of services.
- Mention proposals for extending the area of the National Park.
- Include a stronger statement on military use.
- Address increases in traffic levels outside peak times as a result of two-way commuting.

### ***Themes***

Whilst comments were not invited specifically on this section, some changes were suggested to reinforce modifications proposed elsewhere in the document, regarding viable upland farming and being inclusive to reach everyone in society. Responses also recommended including a stronger reference to the Parks' potential for contributing to sustainable development, in particular renewable energy generation.

### ***Landscape***

- The aim should also refer to the impact of visitors.
- The principles should recognise farming is a business that needs to remain viable to survive.

- The area's character should be allowed to continue to change. In particular, a 'new vernacular' should be developed.
- The principles should acknowledge that landscape does not stop at the Park boundary.
- Dry stone walls should be given more prominence and historic boundaries should be incorporated in new developments.
- Support for increasing the area of native woodland.
- Support for minimising the impact and reducing the extent of coniferous plantations.
- Make reference to management of existing woodlands, with intervention where self-regeneration is failing.
- Extensions to existing quarries, overhead lines and new or extended car parks should be added to the list of 'detractors'.
- A definition of 'wind farms' is needed.
- There should be dialogue with adjoining authorities on large-scale developments outside but impacting on the Park.
- Tranquillity is important but difficult to measure.
- A code of conduct is needed to tackle problems of dumped waste and scrap on farms.
- Make more objectives SMART.

### ***Community and Culture***

- Make clear that the aim is referring to communities within the Park.
- The emphasis of the aim should be as much about the vibrancy of communities as about sustaining the environment.
- Include a principle about enriching the community and culture of the Dales by encouraging population, businesses and cultural diversity.
- Use culture more, including contemporary culture, to strengthen community cohesion, to enhance better understanding and to benefit the local economy.
- The housing objective should be SMART.
- There is a need for housing to rent that remains affordable in perpetuity. Holiday cottages and former council houses could be purchased for this purpose.
- There are problems of accommodation for unskilled labour on which many businesses in the Dales depend.
- Community transport plays an important role in improving accessibility in the Dales.
- The transport objectives should be more specific and where possible made SMART.
- Specific reference should be made to car parking and car parking plans.

- The objective on access to services gives too much emphasis to taking people to services and doesn't acknowledge there are ways of bringing services closer to people.

### ***Access and Recreation***

- The intention to be comprehensive in inclusion of people and groups should be expressed consistently and succinctly throughout the Plan.
- Strong support expressed for the principle addressing integrated and accessible public transport. This is key to sustainable tourism.
- The focus on the rights of way network means there's too little mention of other forms of suitable recreational activity.
- The objective to manage use of green lanes by motorised recreational vehicles should be strengthened. Cross-boundary collaboration on some routes is needed.
- The sustainable transport objective should be made more specific and SMART; the timescale of 2020 is unchallenging.
- Integration of public transport services should include rail services.
- There should be an objective on the Pennine Bridleway.
- There should be reference to 'quiet lanes' as a measure to enhance enjoyment, improve safety and reinforce landscape character.

### ***Understanding and Enjoyment***

- The value of the Dales as an educational resource for people of all ages is underplayed.
- Partnership working should seek involvement of people that reflect the diversity of society and interests. Diversity is as important as numbers.
- The principle on promoting understanding and enjoyment is too vague and should be re-worded to be more explicit.
- When providing for people with disabilities, those with sensory disabilities should be considered as well as the physically disabled.
- The targeting of objective AR1 is very specific. What about targeting people in the rest of the country or from overseas?
- The objectives should include references to working with the new Area Tourism Partnership.
- The objectives should be made more SMART and where possible more specific.

### ***Nature Conservation***

- The role of viable upland livestock farming in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and semi-natural ecology needs to be recognised.
- The proposed work on the impacts of climate change should include an action plan and could be used to raise public awareness of the connection between lifestyles and the Park's conservation.
- Insufficient attention is paid to the value of roadside verges, which are an example of "natural connections between existing habitat fragments".
- Cross-boundary issues, such as wader conservation, need to be tackled through partnership working with authorities and bodies outside the Park.
- People's enthusiasm about nature and its conservation must be developed as their co-operation and support is needed to deliver objectives.

### ***Historic Environment***

- The focus of this section is on the built environment. A brief explanation is needed of what the Plan is seeking to achieve on the Park's historic landscape.
- The aim refers to "well-designed additions to the built environment". It's hope this means 21<sup>st</sup> century design and materials based on principles of sustainability (see comments on the landscape section).
- There are no objectives supporting principle (h) – that elements of the historic environment should be considered in their wider setting.
- There needs to be integration of historic environment and landscape objectives.
- Dry stone walls should be mentioned. They have historic as well as landscape importance.
- The historic importance of landscapes in the Park should be through the results of multi-discipline landscape assessments, not just an assessment of the number of sites or finds in the HER.
- Working to minimise the impact of infrastructure works should not be exclusive to conservation of the historic environment.
- Encouraging use of local materials, in particular timber from sustainably managed woodland, is supported.

### ***Economy and Employment***

- Recognition of the continuing role of farmers in maintaining special qualities is welcomed.
- The principles should acknowledge the importance of recreational activity to the economy of the Dales.

- The potential of the Dales' ageing population should not be ignored. The 50+ age group includes those seeking self employment opportunities.
- These objectives will need to be delivered in partnership with the district councils and others and should be cross-referenced with objectives and actions of the Community Strategies.
- There shouldn't be too much focus on the already well represented tourist industry. The focus should be more on encouraging a sustainable and diverse economy.
- The objectives should make reference to the new Area Tourism Partnership.
- The objective to train and employ people locally in traditional construction and countryside skills and to establish a centre is supported. It should be used to increase opportunities for and interest amongst young people of different backgrounds.
- Local people and visitors should be encouraged to buy local produce locally.
- There should be flexible tourism policies to allow for expansion of existing accommodation businesses and development of other types of accommodation.
- Economic activity just outside as well as within the Park should be stimulated as this would also benefit the Park area.
- Development of a 'quality of place' brand would need to be co-ordinated with Yorkshire Dales branding activity proposed in 'understanding and enjoyment'

## RESPONDENTS TO CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PLAN

Austwick PC	NEDL
Butterfly Conservation (Cumbria Branch)	NFU
Carlton PC	Nidderdale AONB
Carperby PC	NYCC
Council for British Archaeology	Richmondshire DC
Council for National Parks	Richmondshire Motorclub
Countryside Agency	South Lakeland DC
CPRE	Stainforth PC
Craven DC	Yorkshire Dales Access Forum
Cumbria CC	York Archaeology Department
Cumbria Wildlife Trust	Yorkshire & Humber Transport Roundtable
Disability in Richmondshire	Yorkshire and Humber Assembly
Drystone Walling Association	Yorkshire Dales Public Transport Users Group
English Heritage	Yorkshire Dales Society
Federation of Small Businesses	
Forest of Bowland AONB	
Forestry Commission	
Giggleswick PC	
Huron Future Solutions	
Ingleborough Estate	
LARA	
Malhamdale Initiative & Kirby Malhamdale Parish Council	
Members of the public (4)	
Natural England	