Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 5**

31 March 2026

Cultural Heritage Strategy 2025/26

Purpose of the Report

1. To ask the Authority to adopt the proposed updated Cultural Heritage Strategy

Recommendation

2. That subject to comments from Members, the Authority adopts the proposed Cultural Heritage Strategy as shown in the **Annex**

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

   Corporate Plan 2026-27 Objective 18:

   Help local people to record, restore, repair and – where possible - bring back into use historical sites, buildings and features.

Background

4. Conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Dales National Park is a fundamental part of the Authority's statutory purposes. 'Cultural heritage' refers to the combination of the tangible (historic buildings and structures) and more intangible (customs, skills, dialects etc) elements of the living history of the National Park. As such, its relevance goes far beyond 'pure' conservation work. It makes a significant contribution to the quality of life, providing opportunities for: recreation and enjoyment; economic regeneration; tourism; education and sustainable development. Most obviously, it helps to provide a beautiful place to live, work in or visit.

5. The cultural heritage is a key component of many of the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, which are recognised in the National Park Management Plan 2025-30. The Management Plan also contains a number of specific objectives that relate to cultural heritage.

6. A Cultural Heritage Strategy was previously adopted by the National Park Authority in December 2019, to support achievement of the objectives in the previous Management Plan (2019-24).

Consideration

7. As in 2019, the proposed new strategy sets out in concise terms what the Authority intends to do to meet those cultural heritage objectives outlined within the new National Park Management Plan. It has been developed with a realistic eye on the constraints and issues surrounding the work required in meeting those management plan targets. The content is, therefore, realistic about what can be achieved within the current funding and the Authority's priorities. As with any other area of work, the strategy would need to be revisited if either of these change significantly.

8. The strategy has been developed with input from the Member Champion for Cultural Heritage and from officers across the Authority – reflecting the fact that the cultural heritage is integral to much of what we do.

9. For each objective, the strategy provides a summary of the current position, an outline of our future approach, and some specific actions that will be carried out by the Authority over the next five years. The key elements are:

    - Achieve positive outcomes for heritage assets and the wider historic landscape through agri-environment schemes, including Farming In Protected Landscapes (FIPL), Landscape Recovery Projects and peatland restoration initiatives;
    - Use FIPL funding, and the development management process to target Listed Buildings that are at risk;
    - Support projects and promote schemes that encourage the adaptive re-use of traditional farm buildings for agricultural and other low impact purposes.
    - Work with Historic England, seek ways to improve the risk status of the two Barns & Walls Conservation Areas, including producing a Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Littondale;
    - Monitor listed buildings and scheduled monuments at risk within the National Park. This will be achieved through the reinstatement of volunteer-led condition surveys of Scheduled Monuments and the updating of the Buildings at Risk register annually using planning data, and seeking both opportunities for quick-win repairs and more complex cases requiring sustained support;
    - Advise on appropriate measures to maintain and enhance heritage assets through the Town and Country Planning process;
    - Maintain and enhance the Historic Environment Record (HER) in line with the Authority's potential statutory requirements under the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023;
    - Secure funding for community heritage projects, including through Landscape Recovery Schemes and the National Heritage Fund, and deliver them through our links with universities and the many local History and Archaeology Societies that operate within the National Park;
    - Expand heritage engagement at the Dales Countryside Museum, through projects like "Going Places," and strengthened university partnerships.

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications over and above the normal annual budget allocations.

Legal Implications

11. None

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

12. The Cultural Heritage Strategy provides various opportunities to involve volunteers in the work of the Authority such as help with surveying sites and buildings and carrying out research.

Conclusion

13. Through the National Park Management Plan 2025-30, the Authority is committed to supporting the achievement of a number of specific objectives relating to the outstanding cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The Cultural Heritage Strategy sets out more precisely what the Authority will do to help achieve these objectives. Subject to Member approval, these activities will be fed into the Authority's future Action Plans to ensure that they are monitored and achieved.

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