YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY **ITEM 9**

Date: **12 December 2023**

Report: **GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ON NATIONAL PARKS**

Purpose of the report

1. To provide an update, analysis and the opportunity for Members to discuss the recent Government announcement concerning Protected Landscapes.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Members consider their initial response to the Government announcement.

Strategic Planning Framework

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

Background

4. The Government published a Written Ministerial Statement on 29 November 'Restoring our natural heritage'. The Statement is attached as an **Appendix** for Members information. The Statement sets out the Government's proposals for dealing with a number of issues that relate to Protected Landscapes in general and National Parks in particular. Unfortunately, the timing of the release coincides with the deadline for producing these Authority papers, meaning there has been no time to do any analysis of the detailed content. It is intended to carry this out before the Authority meeting on 12 December and present an oral report to Members.

5. In the meantime, a separate Briefing is being provided to Protected Landscapes in early December at which we hope to find out more detail on the substance of the announcement.

David Butterworth
Chief Executive
29 November 2023

Statement made by

Steve Barclay
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Statement

Tackling climate change and restoring nature go hand in hand. As we prepare for the next international climate discussion at COP28, today we are delivering a package of measures to steward and restore our natural heritage, connect people with nature and strengthen our global environmental leadership. Together, these measures are a huge step forward in delivering our Environmental Improvement Plan.

From rare British rainforests in our countryside to the trees in our towns and cities, we are investing in nature and ensuring more people can enjoy its benefits. We will work in partnership with businesses, communities and farmers to restore nature across the country.

We know that access to the countryside boosts our wellbeing and the rural economy. Getting out into nature can help our physical and mental wellbeing. Natural England research shows that we could save the NHS more than £2 billion a year if everyone had good access to green space.

Every year there are 270 million visits to National Parks and National Landscapes (the new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in recognition of their importance to the nation) but we need to do more to make sure everyone, especially those unfamiliar with the countryside, have the chance to enjoy it responsibly.

To deliver on our manifesto commitment, we will start the process to designate a new National Park. To support existing National Parks and National Landscapes, government will publish the final response to the Landscapes Review and provide an additional £10 million in the new year to help them achieve more for people and nature. Government is also making an additional £5 million available this year, for Protected Landscapes teams to apply for, to improve the water environment in these special places.

To restore nature and support responsible access to the countryside we are:

- Taking forward a further 34 new Landscape Recovery projects, involving over 700 land managers across the country. Together these projects will restore more than 35,000 hectares of peatland, sustainably manage more than 20,000 hectares of woodland, including some temperate rainforest, create over 7,000 hectares of new woodland, and benefit more than 160 protected sites (SSSIs), alongside the sustainable production of food. The successful round 2 projects will now be awarded a share of around £25

million in development funding to finalise delivery plans, and secure money from private investors through green finance. This builds on the success of the first 22 Landscape Recovery projects that are already underway, aiming to restore more than 600 km of rivers and targeting the conservation of more than 260 flagship species.

- Publishing a plan to recover England's temperate rainforests, a globally rare and important habitat found in, for example, Cornwall, Devon, and Cumbria.
- Creating two new community forests in Tees Valley and Derbyshire – locally led projects planting trees near to where people live and work.
- Launching a competition for a second National Forest - inspired by the existing National Forest in the Midlands, this competition will support the creation of a new forest for the nation in England, helping to increase public access to woodlands, boost tree-planting, support nature recovery and tackle climate change.
- Publishing the Woodland Access Implementation Plan to protect, improve and expand access to woodlands, enabling more people to spend time in nature.
- Delivering our Biodiversity Net Gain package so new homes improve the local environment.
- Giving residents a say on the future of street trees in their neighbourhood, implementing a new duty to ensure communities are consulted before trees are cut down.
- Dedicating £2.5 million of funding to connect more children with nature, building on the success of the Generation Green project. The funding will help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience the wonders of our most beautiful landscapes.

These announcements today will build on our environmental leadership and help us to deliver our commitments to protect 30% of land by 2030. We have already created or restored wildlife habitats the size of Dorset and passed the world-leading Environment Act with long-term targets to restore nature. At COP28, we will once again champion nature as a vital ally to tackle climate change and commit to get more people out into nature.

A full list of the successful projects in the second round of Landscape Recovery can be found in Annex A

Annex A – Full list of Landscape Recovery round two projects

The successful projects in the second round of Landscape Recovery are:

- Arlington Estate nature recovery and connection to Exmoor
- Brit Catchment Recovery Project
- Brock and Calder Landscape Recovery Project
- Calder and Colne Landscape Links (CCaLL)
- Central Dartmoor Landscape Recovery
- Denton Park Estate
- Greater Sedgemoor Landscape Recovery Project (GSLRP)
- Habitat enhancement & connectivity in Gainsborough & Constable Country
- Hadrian's Wall Wetland - Landscape Recovery
- Heart of the Dales
- Heaths to Sea: Landscape recovery of the lower Otter Valley
- High Peak Nature Recovery
- Landscape Recovery in the Lower Chew
- Lincoln and Witham Valley Farming and Nature Network (LWFNN)
- Linking Levisham
- Luppitt Landscape Partnership
- Moccas Park Landscape Recovery (River Wye)
- Morridge Hill Country
- North-West Norfolk Coast Project
- Ock and Thame Farmers: Freshwaters and Floodplains Restoration Project
- Ouse Washes Landscape Recovery – Farming for Food, Nature and Climate
- Penrith2Kendal Arc Landscape Recovery Project
- Penwith Landscape Recovery
- Resilient Glenderamackin
- Reviving Exmoor's Heartland
- Small is Beautiful – Landscape Recovery on the Isles of Scilly
- The Walkham Valley Landscape Recovery Project
- Upper Irthing PRISM (Peatland, Rivers, Invasives, rare Species & Meadows) Project
- Ure Dales
- West Norfolk Nature Network (WNNN)
- West Pennines More Nature Partnership (WPMNP)
- 'Win'ning the Allen
- Wyescapes; Food, Nature, Water
- Wylye Chalk Stream Project