Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 9**

National Park Authority Meeting

24 June 2025

National Park Management Plan 2025-2030

Purpose of the report

1. To adopt formally the final objectives for the updated Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2025-30.

Recommendation

2. That Members:
    a. agree the final set of objectives be adopted as part of the new National Park Management Plan, for implementation between 2025 and 2030;
    b. note the proposed long-term targets that will be published as part of the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.

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.
    - Corporate Plan objective
      In partnership with key organisations, and in consultation with local communities and visitors, update the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) by 2025, giving priority to tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

Background

4. The National Park Management Plan is the most important document for the National Park. The Authority is under a statutory duty to review it "at intervals of not more than 5 years" (s66 of the Environment Act 1995)

5. It is a plan for the National Park – not for the Authority - and guides the work of many organisations. For that reason, the Authority set up the National Park Management Plan Partnership to oversee the production of the Plan. The group is made up of the local organisations/representatives who have the main responsibility for implementing the objectives, including government agencies, local authorities and representatives from rural estates, farming and tourism businesses in the National Park. The Partnership is currently chaired by David Sharrod – Partnership Director at the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

6. Members will be aware that the process for updating the Plan has included extensive consultation and engagement, including:
    a. A public consultation on the priority issues for the Plan to tackle;
    b. NPMP Annual Forum meeting - for local organisations to identify their priorities;
    c. The publication of six detailed evidence reports – one for each of the six 'ambitions' in the Plan - setting out key facts and figures, and the potential challenges/opportunities;
    d. Setting up 6 expert 'drafting groups' (all of which included youth representation, and external organisations) to develop an initial set of objectives;
    e. A public consultation on the Partnership's proposed new set of 40 objectives (results available on the Authority's website here: https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/partnership/the-new-management-plan-2025-2030/.

7. Authority Members have been directly involved in producing the Plan as follows:
    a. A Policy Development Forum in November 2023 to identify Members' priority issues;
    b. All Members consulted as part of first public consultation;
    c. All Member Champions invited to take part in the Annual Forum;
    d. A Member Champion on each of the 6 Drafting Groups;
    e. A Policy Development Forum in March 2025 to give all Members a chance to comment on the proposed new set of objectives, and a report to the Authority meeting in March to discuss and sign off the Authority's collective response;
    f. The Chair of the Authority is the Deputy Chair of the Partnership, and two other Members (Mrs Peacock and Mr Heseltine) are also members of it.

8. Members are reminded that this review is an update and not a wholesale re-examination. As such, the Plan:
    a. Retains the existing National Park 'special qualities';
    b. Retains the 6 long-term 'ambitions' from the current Plan. However, the updated Plan has been drafted to give priority to the ambitions for nature recovery and climate mitigation/adaptation;
    c. The 6 ambitions are now supported by 40 revised objectives (11 fewer than in the current Plan).

9. Whilst Government is yet to give full effect to the provisions of section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act ('duty to seek to further National Park purposes'), the Plan has been produced in line with the existing legal requirements and the wider spirit of the legislation.

Consideration

10. The final set of objectives for the new Plan is attached at **Annex A**. The sections have be re-ordered so that the those dealing with nature recovery and climate change come first.

11. The Partnership met at the end of April to consider the response to the second public consultation, including the views of the Authority. As a result, changes have been made to the wording of many of the objectives. Most of these changes simply seek to improve clarity or emphasis. The more substantive changes are:

    A3 – setting a specific target for 2030 (rather than 2042) for getting priority habitat into management through agri-environment schemes;

    A4 – making clear that the expected plans will be for species recovery, not for species monitoring;

    A5 – to include specific water company commitments to improve water quality;

    A8 – to correct an error in the original draft and amend the target for woodland in management to 75% (not 70%) to match the Dales Woodland Strategy;

    C1 – added 'miles without stiles' projects to be explicit about the intention to continue to increase the length of routes that are widely accessible;

    E5 – to reduce the target number of 'fully-accessible visitor hubs' by 2030 from 10 to 5, to make the target more realistic.

12. Considerably more changes have been made to the detailed 'rationales' that support and explain each objective, and which will be published as part of the full Plan on the Authority's website.

13. Members should note that the Plan contains some objectives that are deliberately very ambitious. Most of these relate to the new national targets that Government now requires be included in Management Plans for Protected Landscapes (see para 15 below). The targets for these have been set in line with what would need to be achieved within this National Park in order to contribute proportionately to those national targets. To achieve these objectives will require very significant investment – the funding for which is not yet readily available.

14. Twenty-four different organisations have lead responsibility for one or more of the objectives; and at least 60 other organisations (or groups of organisations) will help support the delivery of particular objectives.

Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

15. Members will be aware that Government has identified 10 long-term national outcomes for which targets must be set in each Protected Landscape https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework#protected-landscape-targets. The Partnership has chosen to integrate these into the updated Plan, as follows:

    a. 8 are directly incorporated as objectives: A1 (x2); A3; A7; B2; B3; D1 and D3;

b. The climate change outcome is incorporated through the existing ambition for climate change;

c. The access outcome has been incorporated into multiple objectives (C1; C4; C5; E5; F6 etc).

16. The Authority is also required – before the end of June - to publish the long-term target for each outcome. These are set out in **Annex B**. As with the short-term targets these are all targets for the place – to which many organisations will be expected to contribute. They have , therefore, been signed off by the Partnership, including the relevant statutory environmental agencies (Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission) and North Yorkshire Council and Westmorland & Furness Council.

Next Steps

17. Subject to Members' agreement today, the intention is that the new Plan will be launched at the annual Management Plan Forum, which will be held in the Autumn.

18. The final 'printed' PDF version of the Plan will retain the brevity of its predecessor (circa 20 pages). However, it will be supported by considerably more detail on an updated Management Plan website, which will contain:
    - A webpage for each objective, including: the rationale behind the objective; the lead and supporting bodies; the estimated cost (and current funding shortfalls); links to other related NPMP objectives; and, the latest progress;
    - The description of the National Park's 'special qualities';
    - A brief history of the area that now forms the National Park;
    - The long-term local targets for the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes framework;
    - The 6 Evidence Reports and other documents that informed the production of the Plan.

19. Monitoring of progress will take place in a similar way to the existing Plan. The Partnership will prepare an Annual Report to the Authority, with more detailed information on the webpages for each objective (see above).

20. The new Management Plan will, of course, also shape the Authority's own plans and programmes. Those objectives for which the Authority is the lead body, or has a significant supporting role, will be integrated into the next Corporate Plan (for 2026/27), and will be used to inform everything from the setting of the budget to the detailed targets in individual staff appraisals.

Gary Smith
Director of Conservation and Community

9 June 2025

Our Vision

Through their passion for this special place, local people and businesses will keep the Yorkshire Dales National Park a thriving area. Its unique cultural landscape will be treasured for its stunning scenery, exceptional heritage and wonderful wildlife, and every year millions of people will be inspired to be a part of it.

By 2040, the Yorkshire Dales National Park will be:

	Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England.	**Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces**.	
A friendly, open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.	A distinctive, living, working, cultural landscape that tells the ongoing story of generations of people interacting with their environment. .	Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy	Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need.

Achieving each of these 6 ambitions is vital but – in the face of the climate and nature emergencies, and the response to the first public consultation – the ambitions for nature and tackling climate change have been given the greatest priority by the Partnership in this updated Management Plan.

The following sections set out the objectives that the Partnership wants to see achieved over the next five to ten years to make meaningful progress towards each of these six ambitions. Wherever possible, the objectives have been quantified and include a date for completion. To see detailed information about each objective including which organisations have the main role in helping to achieve each one, please go to the website:

Given the integrated approach that has been necessary to develop this Management Plan, every objective will help to deliver at least two of the ambitions. Gaining a full understanding of the range of activity proposed for any one ambition, therefore, depends on looking at the objectives for all the other ambitions too.

A. Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England

A1. Improve the condition of protected wildlife sites so that 60% of features in Sites of Special Scientific Interest are assessed as having ‘actions on track’ to achieve favourable condition by the start of 2028, and at least 45% are in favourable condition by 2030.

A2. Support farmers and landowners to restore and manage landscape-scale mosaics of semi-natural habitats in 6 ‘nature recovery areas’ (‘Cumbria Connect’; ‘Heart of the Dales’; ‘Snaizeholme’; ‘Tees-Swale’; ‘Three Dales’; and ‘Ure Dales’), and develop similar initiatives for at least 3 additional areas.

A3. Increase the area of priority habitat outside of Sites of Special Scientific Interest that is in favourable management through agri-environment or similar funding schemes by 10,000 ha by 2030.

A4. Ensure that recovery plans are in place and being implemented for all ‘priority wildlife species’ by 2030, so that 85% of those species have stable or increasing populations by 2035.

A5. Work with farmers, landowners and water companies to improve the condition of rivers – including significantly reducing the frequency of spills from storm overflows at 10 sewage treatment works - so that 65% are in ‘good ecological status’ by 2031.

A6. Support implementation of the national Wildlife Crime Strategy, so as to end the illegal killing and disturbance of birds of prey and other wildlife by 2028.

A7. Support farmers and landowners to restore or create 5,000 hectares of new wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2030 (from a 2022 baseline).

A8. Support farmers and landowners to bring 75% of woodland into sustainable management by 2030, including positive management of conifer plantations to increase habitat for red squirrels and black grouse

B. Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces

B1. Work with farmers and landowners to support food production through the use of regenerative farming practices, working with natural processes, across at least 100 farm holdings (c15,000 ha) by 2030.

B2. Work with farmers and landowners to bring all remaining degraded peatland (c28,000 ha) into initial restoration and management by 2035.

B3. Work with farmers and landowners to encourage creation of 6,000 ha of native broadleaf and mixed woodland, including, scrub, wood pasture and natural regeneration by 2031, to create a network that increase resilience to climate change and reduce downstream flood peaks.

B4. Significantly increase take up of natural flood management measures to reduce flood risks inside and outside the National Park, including ‘re-naturalising’ 25 km of watercourses by 2030,

B5. Support more services along the Settle-Carlisle Railway and the reinstatement of other rail lines, increase bus and shared transport links to surrounding towns, and improve infrastructure for electric vehicles, so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from travel by 50% by 2030 (compared to 2019).

B6. Support initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and increase small-scale and community renewable energy schemes, so as to reduce energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from industrial, commercial and domestic properties by 50% by 2030 (compared to 2019).

C: A friendly, open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.

C1. Manage and maintain the standard of all public rights of way, so that, on average, 90% remain ‘easy to use’ and create 5 new ‘miles without stiles’ routes that are suitable for a diverse range of ages and abilities.

C2. Manage and promote the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway and Coast-to-Coast National Trails and other established long-distance routes, and improve linkages from the Coast-to-Coast route to 5 nearby settlements by 2030.

C3 By 2030 work with 200 community groups to co-design activity days, support and training to help people from under-served communities to experience the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park more easily.

C4. Provide curriculum-based outdoor learning and skills-based activities to enable 5,000 young people from in and around the National Park to explore and take action to enhance their environment each year.

C5. Give people from all backgrounds an opportunity to enjoy and contribute to looking after the National Park by providing at least 7,000 volunteer days per year, with at least 20% coming from under-served communities by 2029.

C6. Enhance at least five ‘green lanes’ by 2030 and manage use by recreational motor vehicles and motorcycles - encouraging and supporting responsible use and enforcing restrictions where necessary.

C7. Help to tackle health inequalities and improve people’s health and well-being by enabling at least 1,500 people with health conditions to connect with and experience the special qualities of the National Park through ‘social prescribing’ activities by 2030.

D: A distinctive, living, working, cultural landscape that tells the ongoing story of generations of people interacting with their environment

D1 Support farmers and land managers to maintain and improve the outstanding landscape, geology, wildlife and heritage of the National Park, so that at least 80% of land managers have adopted nature-friendly farming or land management on at least 15% of their land by 2030.

D2. Maintain the National Park as a place where a true sense of tranquillity and remoteness can still be found, including taking action to retain international 'Dark Sky Reserve' status.

D3. Help local people to record, restore, repair and – where possible - bring back into use historical sites, buildings and features, including ensuring that no more than 12 nationally designated heritage assets are at risk by 2030.

D4. Support farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape of field barns and drystone walls, so that at least one of the Barns and Walls Conservation Areas (Swaledale & Arkengarthdale and Littondale) is no longer at risk.

D5. Support farmers and landowners to enhance the Dales' landscape, and support nature, climate and farming resilience, including planting field trees to mitigate the impact of ash dieback on tree cover outside woodlands, , and creating or restoring 60 km of hedgerows by 2030 (from 2022 baseline).

D6. Continue to reduce the visual impacts of intrusive infrastructure and equipment, including putting a further 15km of overhead power lines underground by 2028.

E: Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy

E1. Establish an integrated National Park farm advisory service to: support regenerative farming; increase take-up of national agri-environment schemes and green finance opportunities; and, so support the viability and retention of low input livestock farming across the National Park.

E2. Provide advice, training and support for rural and land-based businesses to help them to innovate, diversify, and secure investment in their natural assets and create 'green jobs', so as to retain at least the same number of jobs within the sector.

E3. By 2030 provide at least 30 apprenticeships or traineeships, and wider programmes of training in land management, heritage and green skills, including the new skills needed by businesses to support more nature-friendly farming and tackle climate change.

E4 Improve the quality, sustainability and accessibility of the tourism 'offer' and information to encourage visitors to stay overnight, come 'out of season', and experience parts of the National Park that are currently less visited, so that the value of tourism grows by at least 5% in real terms by 2030.

E5. Make the National Park more accessible to a diverse range of ages and abilities, including by providing 5 locations that all have 'Changing Places' accessible toilet facilities, all terrain mobility scooters, and 'miles without stiles' routes.

E6 Develop and promote events and attractions based on the special qualities of the National Park that will be attractive to a new, more diverse and younger audience, so that 15% of visitors each year are coming for the first time.

E7. Encourage and support farms and estates to provide more opportunities for visitors and schools groups to experience the special qualities of the National Park, including establishing a 'peer mentoring' network to help build capacity by 2029.

F. Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need

F1. Support the completion of 250 new dwellings by 2030, of which at least half will be social housing, affordable or local occupancy homes to attract and retain younger working age households.

F2. Increase the proportion of dwellings that are permanently occupied by requiring all new dwellings to be for principal occupancy, and, encouraging change of use from second homes, so that fewer than 20% of properties are under-occupied by 2031.

F3. Improve local access to services that are essential to the long-term viability of local communities, including providing access to gigabit broadband to 99% of properties in the Cumbrian part of the National Park by 2026, and superfast (over 30Mbs) to 97% of properties in the North Yorkshire part by 2030.

F4. Empower community groups to take on and manage services, take ownership of local assets and develop community wealth initiatives such as shops and community renewable energy.

F5. Improve connectivity by reducing mobile phone ‘not spots’ from 21% of the National Park to less than 10% by 2027.

F6. Produce local plans to improve connections for walking, cycling, wheeling and horse-riding, so it is easier for residents and visitors to travel for work, for school and to access key services and visitor destinations without needing a car, and create at least 2 new multi-use routes by 2030, including one linking Garsdale–Hawes.

Annex B

Yorkshire Dales National Park

Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park

Ref	PLTOF Outcome	NPMP Objective	Target end point
T1	Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).	**A7** 5,000 hectares by 2030	35,000 ha by 2042
T2	Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.	**A1** 45% by 2030.	80% by 2042
T3	60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes to be assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.	**A1** 60% by 2028	Same
T4	Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.	**A3** Increase of 10,000 ha in management by 2030	All priority habitat in management by 2042
T5	Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.	**D1** At least 80% of land managers have adopted nature-friendly farming on at least 15% of their land by 2030.	Same
T6	Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050.	**D - all** Net negative by 2040 at the latest.	Net negative by 2040
T7	Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.	**A2** Initial restoration of 28,000 ha by 2035	28,000 ha restored by 2050

T8	Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline)	**B3** Create of 6,000 ha of woodland by 2031	Create 12,000 ha by 2050
T9	Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme	**C1** Create 5 new ‘miles without stiles’ routes by 2030 **C4** Engage with 5,000 school children p.a. **C5** 7,000 volunteer days p.a. (1,400 from under-served groups by 2029) **E5** Create 5 accessibility hubs by 2030 **F6** Create 2 new multi-use routes by 2030	Same
T10	Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.	**D3** Reduce the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk, so that no more than 12 are at risk by 2030.	Same

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