Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 9**

National Park Authority Meeting

25 June 2024

National Park Management Plan – Annual Progress Report 2023-24

Purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of the progress made in implementing the objectives set out in the National Park Management Plan 2019-24.

Recommendation

2. That Members:
    a. note and comment on the progress made through the actions of a range of local bodies in implementing the objectives set out in the National Park Management Plan 2019-24;
    b. approve the publication of the 2023-24 progress report.

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 (2019-24) is the most important document for the National Park. It was prepared – and developed through widespread consultation – by the National Park Management Plan Steering Group**.** As most Members will be aware, the NPMP Partnership is a group of 19 local organisations/representatives who have the main responsibility for implementing the objectives. These are shown on page 2 of the attached report.

5. The primary means of reporting progress is via the NPMP website pages. For each objective, a page has been created providing details of the rationale behind the objective, the organisations directly involved in their delivery, and the progress being made. All these pages can be viewed here: https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/

The 2023/24 progress report

6. The Partnership's Annual Report is attached as an **Appendix**. It should be stressed that it is a summary of the collective activity of *many* different organisations, people and businesses.

7. As always, it should be noted that collating progress data from so many different organisations can be challenging, and there are a handful of objectives for which final up to date information is still awaited.

8. Overall, there are:

    - 29 objectives that have either been achieved or remain on course;
    - 15 objectives where there has been some progress;
    - 5 objectives where there has been little or no progress.

9. The summary report highlights the many significant achievements from last year, and these are not repeated here.

10. It is worth noting that, of the 15 objectives where there has been limited progress, three – Barns (A9); Priority habitats (C1); and, Housing (F1) are part of the cohort of six "very ambitious objectives" for which there was no funding in place at the time the Management Plan was adopted.

11. The five objectives where little or no progress has been made are: Priority Species (C2); River water quality (C3); Woodland Management (D1); Invasive Non-Native Species (D7); and, Rail Services (E5).

Conclusion

12. The Partnership's view is that, overall, good progress is still being made in implementing many of the Plan's 49 objectives. This reflects the positive work of a wide range of local organisations, groups and individuals.

13. However, despite best efforts, it has become increasingly clear that there is a significant challenge in relation to the ambitions for nature recovery. This is particularly important as nature recovery is the number one priority identified by both residents and visitors for the new Management Plan. The Nature Recovery Plan agreed last year set out the scale of the action needed to meet the challenge. The good news is that there are now five landscape-scale recovery projects underway or in development in the National Park, but much more action will be needed in the coming years, and this will need to be reflected in the new Management Plan.

Gary Smith
Director of Conservation and Community

17 June 2024

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park

NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019–2024

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2024

Prepared on behalf of the National Park Management Plan Partnership

Members of the Management Plan Partnership

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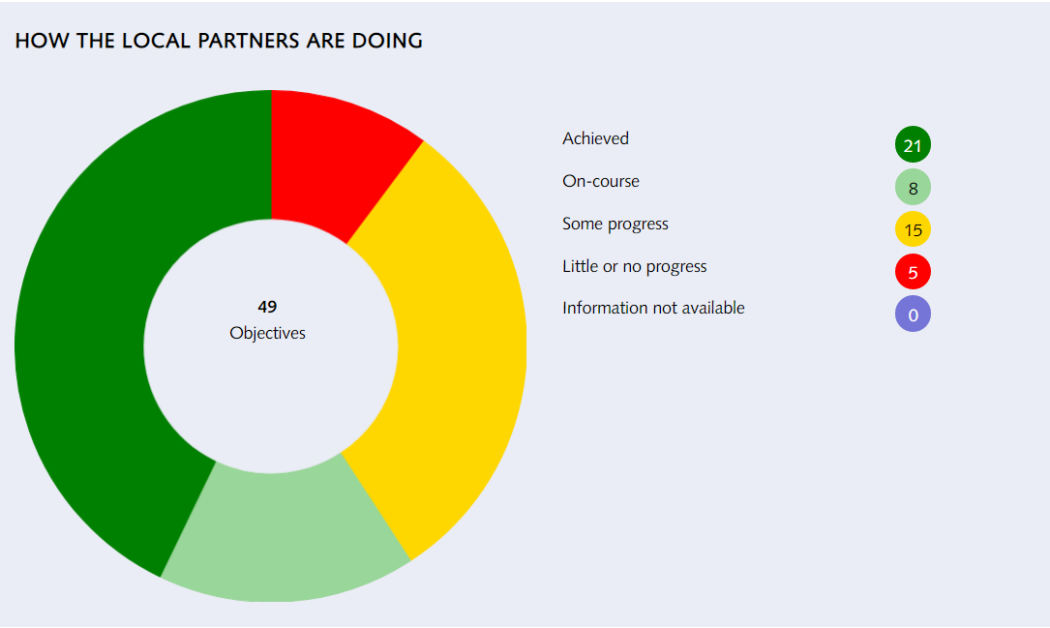
Grace Richardson

Yvonne Peacock
North Yorkshire Council

Youth representative

Yash Wilson

Summary



This report summarises the work undertaken in 2023-24 by **a wide range of local partners** towards achieving the objectives set out in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2019-24. Further details of each objective, the organisations involved, and the progress made can be found at:

https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/

Significant achievements made by local partners in the last year include:

- Northern Powergrid completed works to put 2.6 km of overhead power lines underground at Kilnsey. This brought the total amount of overhead line removed over 5 years to 20.3km, achieving the objective set out in the plan (**A4**);
- The Friends of the Lake District and partners completed the 5-year, £2.6m Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership, which worked with local communities to enhance the landscape, cultural heritage, and visitor welcome (**A7**);
- Defra's *Farming in Protected Landscapes* programme provided £1.4 million to support 59 new agreements with farmers and landowners, including restoration of 20 hay meadows, over 900 ha of habitat management, 30 educational access visits and 1.6 km of new permissive paths. (**A8**);
- A further 18km of routes have been identified as accessible, taking the current total to 266km (10.1%) that are suitable for users of all ages and abilities **(B3);**
- Collectively, the YDNPA, Bolton Abbey estate and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust ran curriculum based outdoor sessions with primary and secondary schools inspiring just over 5,700 young people to engage with nature (**B5**);
- Around 300ha of native broadleaved and mixed woodland were planted through support from the White Rose Forest, Woodland Trust and others. Since 2018 more than 1,400ha of woodland has been planted (**D2**);
- The Yorkshire Peat Partnership completed initial restoration works on a further 3,209 ha of previously damaged peat. The total area under restoration since 2009 is now 26,630 ha (**D3**);

- The most recent available figures (for 2022) showed an 11% real-terms increase in the economic value of tourism compared to the 2017 baseline (**E2**);
- The Cheese Festival and Dark Skies Festival included more than 80 events held by local businesses. A visitor survey showed that 15% of visitors in 2022 were on their first visit (**E6**);
- A further 4 apprentices were supported by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. This takes the cumulative total supported by YDNPA and the Trust to 42 (**E7**);
- Just under £100,000 was awarded in Sustainable Development Fund grants to 21 local projects in 2023/24. Projects covered a variety of themes including electric vehicle charging, reducing light-pollution, and delivering hyperfast broadband (**F5**).

Objectives where there is some progress being made, include:

- Historic England completed Lidar surveys of 172km^2 of the Westmorland area of the National Park, identifying many previously-hidden heritage features (**A5**);
- 8 more traditional field barns were restored, and a further 28 repaired as part of conversion into dwellings **(A9);**
- Public consultation has been completed on a possible multi-user route between Hawes and Garsdale, and showed strong support (**B9**);
- The condition of SSSIs has not improved, and the condition of other priority habitats has declined slightly, but 5 landscape-scale nature recovery projects are now in development or underway in the National Park **(C1)**;
- 50 new dwellings were built and 98 permissions were granted for new housing (**F1**);
- Little change in mobile phone coverage but a significant amount of investment that will yield improvements in future years. Over 30 masts have been approved, some of which have been built – but the majority have yet to be switched on (**F4**).

There are five objectives in the Plan where little or no progress is being made:

- The proportions of priority species whose populations are either stable or increasing has dropped from 81% (2016) to 76% (2021) (**C2**);
- Latest figures (2024) show that 51% of rivers in the National Park were in good ecological status. This is down from 62% in 2020, although it still compares favourably to the national average of 14% (**C3**)
- The proportion of woodland that is in active management has dropped from 65% in 2019 to 61% now (**D1**);
- There has been no progress in the work of the Yorkshire Dales Invasive Non-native species (INNS) Working Group to identify priorities for action (**D7**)
- There has been no progress towards enhancing railway services to, and within the National Park (**E5**)

Park Profile 2023

Area		
Total Park area	218,482 ha	Natural England, 2019
Parishes totally or partly in the Park	110	YDNPA, 2022
Population		
Resident population	22,798	ONS, Census 2021
School and pre-school age (0-15)	14%	ONS, Census 2021
Working age (16-64)	55%	ONS, Census 2021
Pensionable age (65+)	31%	ONS, Census 2021
Housing		
Housing stock	12,688	Royal Mail's Postcode Address File 2019 (Edge Analytics)
Resident households	10,816	
Owner occupied	7,834	
Private rented	2,172	
Social housing	810	
Second homes and holiday lets	2,916[1]	YDNPA 2017
Natural Environment		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	57,366 ha	Natural England, 2020
Area of priority habitat	109,542 ha	Natural England 2024
Land use		
Moorland, heath & rough unenclosed grassland	n/a	
Farmland	n/a	
Woodland	8,148 ha	Forestry Commission, 2023
Developed land	n/a	
Heritage		
Scheduled Monuments	292	Historic England, 2023
Conservation Areas	46	YDNPA, 2024
Listed Buildings	2,143	Historic England, 2024
Grade I	25	
Grade II*	105	
Grade II	2,013	
Recreation		
Total Rights of Way	2,637 km	YDNPA, 2022
Public footpaths	1,754 km	
Public bridleways	793 km	
Other public rights of way	90 km	
National Trails	168 km	Natural England, 2022
Publicly-accessible land	129,680 ha	Natural England, 2017

[1] Indicative estimate based on the pre-1 August National Park area (ONS, 2012)