Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 15**

National Park Authority

24 June 2025

Progress on Authority Objectives 2024 - 25

Purpose of the report

1. To report on the Authority's performance towards achieving our objectives in 2024/25.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the progress made in 2024/25 towards achieving the Authority's objectives.

Strategic Framework

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

   - **Corporate Plan objective**
     30. Plan and manage the Authority's work so as to make the most effective use of its resources, including generating sufficient income to maintain expenditure at the same level as 2014/15 in real terms across the extended National Park area.

Background

4. Each year, the Authority produces a Corporate Plan setting out our objectives - the major things we want to achieve over the next few years. Many of these are taken directly from the National Park Management Plan 2019-24. In each case, the Plan includes an indication of the progress that we hope to have made by the end of that particular financial year.

Summary of overall performance

5. The **Annex** gives a brief assessment of progress on each of the objectives, and a status is reported for each objective as follows:

   - **Achieved** (we have achieved the objective by the due date);
   - **On course** (we are on course to achieve the objective by the due date);
   - **Near miss** (we were, or will be, close to achieving the objective by the due date);
   - **Not achieved** (we were not, or will not be, close to achieving the objective by the due date).

6. An explanation is included in the **Annex** for any objectives that were a near miss or not achieved. The assessment is based on the progress towards the objective, not the target by March 2025. Those objectives that relate to the Authority's priority programmes are shown in **bold** and are prefixed with 'priority'.

7. Of the 35 objectives, 26 (74%) were achieved or remained on-course.

8. Outstanding achievements were made in the following priority objectives:
    - £2.45 million in grants were paid to farmers and land managers in 2024/25 through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, far exceeding the target of £1.6 million [1];
    - 92% of Public Rights of Way were reported to be 'Easy to Use', well above the target of 88% [6];
    - Over 7,900 people attended events run by the Yorkshire Dales National Park, which was nearly double the target of 4,000 people [7];

9. Other **priority** objectives that were achieved or are on course include:
    - 12% of visitors using Miles without Stiles routes had a disability/long-term health condition [8];
    - Year 4 of Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected was completed [18];
    - Planning permission was granted for 86 new dwellings, taking the average over the last 6 years to 92 per year [23];
    - 82% of 'minor' and 91% of 'other' planning applications were determined within Government target times [25].

10. Other achievements include:
    - 44 barns were repaired/restored/re-used, including 18 funded by FiPL [3];
    - Over 8,000 people from under-represented groups attended activity days [9];
    - Over 1,500 young people attended educational activities in the park [10];
    - Over £29,000 was secured for the Three Peaks route [12];
    - The Authority retained its Customer Service Excellence accreditation. [31].

11. Of the objectives that related to priority programmes, there was one near miss:
    - We will not have an updated Local Plan by the end of 2025. However, submission to the Planning Inspectorate is on course for August 2025. The delay was caused by an additional round of Regulation 18 (Plan preparation) consultation.

12. Of the objectives that related to priority programmes, 3 were not achieved:
    - 72 hectares of meadow and species-rich grassland were restored/managed through Authority projects but delays to the roll-out of the national Countryside Stewardship higher tier scheme mean we are not likely to get near the target of 500 ha by March 2027 [17];
    - Only 51% of rivers (target 70% by 2025) were in good ecological status in March 2024. We are awaiting 2025 figures from the Environment Agency, however given the March

2024 figure it is very unlikely that 70% will have good ecological status by the end of 2025 [19];

- Incidents of illegal persecution of raptors are still being reported and successful nests are down this year [20].

Financial Implications

13. None

Legal Implications

14. None.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

15. None.

Conclusion

16. 74% of objectives were achieved or on course, which is higher than for 2022/23 and 2023/24 (72% and 69%, respectively).

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