Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Biodiversity Reporting Duty 2026

1. Introduction

The Yorkshire Dales National Park was designated in 1954. This was in recognition of its extraordinary natural beauty, the diversity of its wildlife habitats, its rich cultural heritage and its fantastic opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The statutory purposes of English National Parks are set out in Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995. These are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks

The Authority's first statutory purpose means that the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the National Park is intrinsic to all aspects of its work.

2. The Biodiversity Duty

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduced. This means that, a public authority:

> "Must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity."
>
> "After that consideration the authority must (unless it concludes there is no new action it can properly take):
>
> a) determine such policies and specific objectives as it considers appropriate for taking action to further the general biodiversity objective, and
>
> b) take such action as it considers appropriate, in the light of those policies and objectives, to further that objective."

National Park Authorities have a statutory requirement to publish a National Park Management Plan, and update it within 5 years. This Management Plan – and its regular and transparent public reporting of progress – provides the basis for meeting most of the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty.

3. Action to comply with biodiversity objectives

The Authority's objectives for biodiversity are set out in the statutory National Park Management Plan. The Authority and its local partners monitor and report progress towards the achievement of those objectives each year.

The Final Progress Report for the National Park Management Plan 2019–2024 details the progress that has been made since the start of the Biodiversity Duty reporting period.

4. Policies and Objectives

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2025-30 was published in October. This plan is for the whole National Park and so has brought together the policies, plans and strategies of many different stakeholder organisations. It sets out the specific objectives that the Authority and its partners are seeking to achieve. It includes eight ambitious objectives to support the Plan's ambition for the Yorkshire Dales National Park to be "home to the finest variety of wildlife in England" by 2040.

The biodiversity objectives in the Management Plan are underpinned by a more detailed Nature Recovery Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This sets out the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum's aspirations for action between now and 2040, aiming to conserve and enhance the biodiversity within the National Park. It includes a monitoring plan for *Category 1* species that need bespoke conservation action(s), that are above and beyond generic management of a specific habitat. The Nature Recovery Plan was adopted by the National Park Authority in September 2023 – and has been used to inform the content of the three Local Nature Recovery Strategies that cover the National Park. The Authority has been actively involved in supporting the relevant authorities to produce those strategies, all of which have now been published.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021 includes provisions that make the achievement of 10% biodiversity gain mandatory for most developments under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory for all developments in April 2024. All development must evidence a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) post-development unless the development meets the criteria for an exemption.

As the local planning authority for the National Park, the Authority has put the following in place to ensure that Net Gain targets are being met:

- Setting new local policies and standards around BNG including updating guidance documents and validation requirements
- Knowledge shares and presenting BNG to key stakeholders, committee and internal colleagues
- Providing experienced Ecological advice to consult on BNG applications
- Enforcing BNG in the planning system
- Working towards an off-site market through development of local habitat banks

The vast majority of planning applications that the Authority receives are small-scale and, are exempt from the General BNG Condition. Within the reporting period of February 2024

to January 2026, the Authority approved 22 applications with the General BNG Condition applied. Of these, 20 are on-site gains and two have both on-site and off-site gains. There were no requirements to buy statutory credits for BNG.

4.1 Gain Plans

Gain plans are required to discharge the General Biodiversity Net Gain Condition. During the reporting period there were a total of ten applications to discharge Gain Plans and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans. All of these have been approved. The remaining one has missing or incorrect information but will likely be approved in the coming months once issues are resolved. A summary of the habitats and biodiversity gains resulting or expected to result from biodiversity gain plans approved by the authority are detailed in **Annex A**.

Of the ten developments that have applied to discharge the General BNG Condition, nine are on-site units and one development is both on-site and off-site units. There are no developments that have just off-site units. There are no developments requiring statutory credits.

There are currently no biodiversity gain plans that have impacted irreplaceable habitat. The majority of developments requiring BNG have a monitoring period beginning in year 1. All ten current and expected approved BNG developments have not yet been subject to monitoring as these applications were approved within 2025/2026, meaning 2025/2026 is year 0 of monitoring.

4.2 Habitat Banks

The Authority has explored the provision of habitat banks within the National Park that are secured by a S106 agreement. Two agreements have been secured to provide habitat banks within the National Park. Overall, these two sites provide 195.04 biodiversity units (**see Annex B**).

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

As only ten gain plans and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans have been approved within the reporting period, there is currently no requirement for monitoring until year 1 post-development habitat creation/enhancement.

Biodiversity gains resulting or expected to result from biodiversity gain plans approved by the authority during the reporting period.

Reference	On-site or Off-site?	Baseline habitats	Baseline Units	Post-Development Habitats	Post-Development Units	Total net unit change	Percentage gain
C/45/627F/DIS1	Both	On-site: Other Neutral Grassland Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface Developed land; sealed surface Rural tree Built linear features Off-site: Cereal crops	2.34 and 0.44	On-site: Developed land; sealed surface Mixed scrub Rural tree Built linear feature Off-site: Traditional orchards	2.62 and 1.29	+0.91	38.95%
C/33/18Y/DIS1	On-site	Modified grassland Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.33	Modified grassland Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Rural tree	0.37	+0.04	13.09%
S/01/158A/DIS1	On-site	Developed land; sealed surface Rural tree Modified Grassland	0.12	Developed land; sealed surface Rural tree Other Neutral grassland	0.14	+0.01	10.24%
R/49/33F/DIS1	On-site	Modified Grassland	0.9352	Other neutral grassland	1.0487	+0.11	12.13%
E/11/38A/DIS1	On-site	Modified Grassland Built linear features Ponds (non-priority) Tall forbs Other coniferous woodland Other woodland; broadleaved Other woodland; mixed Other rivers and streams	4.21 and 0.29	Other woodland; broadleaved Other woodland; mixed Other coniferous woodland Modified Grassland Developed land; sealed surface Bare ground Built linear features Ponds (non-priority) Tall forbs	4.73 and 0.33	+0.52 and +0.04	12.42% and 14.94%

Annex A

Reference	On-site or Off-site?	Baseline habitats	Baseline Units	Post-Development Habitats	Post-Development Units	Total net unit change	Percentage gain
				Other rivers and streams			
S/03/385L/DIS1	On-site	Developed land; sealed surface Modified Grassland Other neutral grassland Other coniferous woodland Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	1.16	Developed land; sealed surface Other neutral grassland Other coniferous woodland Ponds (non-priority)	1.38	+0.22	19.24%
S/01/150G/DIS1	On-site	Developed land; sealed surface Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Other neutral grassland	0.40	Developed land; sealed surface Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Other neutral grassland	0.44	+0.04	10.01%
S/03/774/DIS1	On-site	Developed land; sealed surface Vegetated garden	1.72	Mixed scrub and rural trees	1.89	+ 0.18	10.48%
S/11/7B/DIS1	On-site	Modified grassland Native hedgerow	0.32 Area and 0.22 Hedgerow	Rural tree retained modified grassland native hedgerow	0.35 area and 0.24 hedgerow	+ 0.0343 area 0.0235 hedgerow	10.83% area 10.67 hedgerow
C/09/43C/DIS1	On-site	Developed land; sealed surface Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Modified grassland	0.03	Modified grassland Rural tress	0.07	0.04	154.07%

Section 106 Habitat Bank Agreements

Whiterow Woods – West Burton

Whiterow Woods habitat bank is located in West Burton, it is a total of 20.07 ha and the immediate surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural land, predominantly modified grassland for grazing. Walden Beck is located approximately 250 m to the west of the Site; the closest priority habitat of upland heathland is adjacent to the east Site boundary. There are no designated sites within 2 km, the closest Walden Meadows SSSI is 2.5 km to the south.

The baseline habitat is comprised of 11.46 ha of upland acid grassland in poor condition and 8.61 ha of bracken which totals 20.07 ha (72.52 biodiversity units). Enhancement is proposed of 13.19 ha of bracken and poor condition upland acid grassland to good condition upland acid grassland, which totals 130.14 biodiversity units. Proposed creation will be 5.58 ha of moderate condition other woodland; broadleaved and 1.3ha of good condition mixed scrub, totaling 42.65 biodiversity units. Resulting in the delivery of 100.27 biodiversity units.

Monitoring in the form of field surveys will be taken every year for the first three years and then every five years starting from year 5, where a report on the progress and condition of the habitat will be produced and submitted to the Authority for review.

Scrafton Pasture – West Scrafton

Scrafton Pasture habitat bank is located in West Scrafton, it is a total of 28.25 ha and the immediate surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural land, predominantly modified grassland for grazing. The Site is bisected by two small tributaries, Thack Sike, a tributary to Graystone Gill which flows to the east of the site and northwards to Great Gill and the River Cover and Sandy Dike, a small tributary which flows northwards and outfalls directly into Great Gill. The closest priority habitat purple moor grass and rush pasture habitat is found within the site. The North Pennine Moors SAC and SPA and East Nidderdale Moors SSSI are the closest designated sites, less than 850 m from the Site.

The baseline habitat is comprised of 10.3 ha of modified grassland in moderate condition and 17.95 ha of poor condition purple moor grass and rush pastures, which totals 28.25 ha and 184.80 biodiversity units. The proposal is to enhance the 10.3 ha of modified grassland to good condition, other neutral grassland and the 17.95 ha of purple moor grass and rush pastures to good condition. This totals 279.57 biodiversity units, resulting in the delivery of 94.77 biodiversity units.

Monitoring in the form of field surveys will be take place every year for the first three years and then every five years starting from year 5, where a report on the progress and condition of the habitat will be produced and submitted to the Authority for review.