

Date: 30 June 2020

Report: PROGRESS ON AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES IN 2019/20

Purpose of the report

1. To provide an assessment of the Authority's performance in achieving our objectives in 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Members note the progress made in 2019/20 towards achieving the Authority's objectives.

Strategic Planning 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**
34. Plan and manage the Authority's work so as to make the most effective use of its resources....

Background

4. Each year, the Authority produces a Corporate Plan setting out its objectives - the major things we want to achieve over the next few years.
5. Last year's Corporate Plan contained a new set of objectives; most taken from the (then) new National Park Management Plan 2019-24. This overlap means that the analysis of performance repeats some information in the previous report but viewed through the lens solely of the Authority's own contributions. This report also includes some additional 'organisational' objectives that are not part of the Management Plan.

Summary of overall performance

6. 36 of the Authority's 38 objectives were achieved or remained on-course. Key organisational objectives where good progress has been made include:
 - We helped over 100 farmers to enter into new agri-environment agreements (1);
 - Improvements to rights of way so that 90% of footpaths are now 'easy to use' (7);

- We continued to expand our learning and engagement programme, providing
 - ‘activity days’ for almost 1,000 people from under-represented groups (10);
 - educational and skills-based activities for almost 1,900 young people (11).
 - We helped to provide over 8,700 volunteer days, an increase of over 1,000 on the previous year (13);
 - A further 131 ha of new woodland is being funded through the partners in the Dales Woodland Restoration programme (23);
 - 79% of minor and 91% of ‘other’ planning applications were determined within Government target times (28);
 - We supported 10 apprentices, including 4 recruited as part of the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership (32);
 - Through the Sustainable Development Fund, we provided £175,000 of grants to help support 36 local community and business projects (27);
 - We secured £8.3 million of income, exceeding our objective by £400,000, and helping to fund a series of new projects and initiatives across the National Park (34)
 - We retained the ‘Customer Service Excellence’ Award for the 10th consecutive year (35);
7. All the objectives for our priority programmes remain on course, other than in relation to woodland management (objective 22), where the Forestry Commission reports a small drop last year.
8. There is just one objective (no. 25) that is clearly not on course. Last year saw the highest level of new housing *permissions* (118) in the National Park since 2005. However, housing *completions* are still running well below the levels needed to meet the current objective. It has not been possible to get definitive figures because of Covid restrictions, but our best estimate is that no more than 30 new dwellings were built last year. Members agreed at the Authority meeting in December that this objective be amended in future Corporate Plans to reflect the fact that the Authority itself has no direct role in house-building. Rather, our responsibilities relate to our role as planning authority and, in granting sufficient housing *permissions*. Members will note that, if judged against that new objective (at least 85 permissions per year), performance was well above target.

Conclusion

9. The new set of objectives agreed for 2019-20 give a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the breadth and scale of the work in which the Authority is now involved. Overall, good progress was made on almost every objective, and several areas of work significantly ‘over-achieved’ – notably in relation to rights of way, woodland creation, and securing external funding.

Gary Smith
Deputy Chief Executive

12 June 2020

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

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Year end status
1. During Brexit transition, support farmers and landowners to continue to deliver a range of public benefits through national agri-environment scheme agreements and other similar initiatives, and monitor take-up.	Assist 100 new agreements	Assisted with over 100 agreements (93 mid tier CSF applications and enquiries; 3 BEHTA surveys for farmers entering CS HT; 4 full mid-tier applications, 3 CS HT applications and 3 Woodland HT applications)	
2. Maintain the National Park as a place where a true sense of tranquillity, remoteness and solitude can be found, and by 2021 obtain Dark Skies Reserve status to enhance and promote enjoyment of its night sky.	A Light Management Plan	The Light Management Plan is well-developed, and is due to be completed in June 2020. The application for Reserve status is largely complete.	
3. Use DCM and the Historic Environment Record to help local heritage groups to research, record and promote the stories of the National Park area, including completing the enhancement of the HER for the new area of the National Park by 2024.	Complete 'Rich Seam' project	The Rich Seam project has been completed, with the installation of the Kettlewell water-wheel and the new textile gallery at the Dales Countryside Museum.	
4. Help local people to restore, repair and - where possible - bring back into use nationally-important historical sites, buildings and structures so that fewer than 4% of scheduled monuments and listed buildings are 'at risk' by 2024.	10 SM at risk 77 LB at risk	At the end of 2019/20, 10 scheduled monuments (3.4%) and 76 listed buildings (3.6%) remain at risk.	
5. Deliver co-ordinated programmes of activity that enhance the distinctive landscape, geology and cultural heritage of the 'Ingleborough Dales' (by 2020) and the 'Westmorland Dales' (by 2023).	Complete IDLP and year 1 of WDLP	Westmorland Dales launched in March 2019. First year of programme successfully completed. National Lottery Heritage Fund has agreed to extend IDLP until December 2020.	
6. By 2022, secure significant funding to repair, restore, and, where appropriate, find adaptive new uses for traditional field barns, particularly those in Swaledale, Arkengarthdale and Littondale.	5 barns restored	2 barns restored through the Muker Barns project. 3 barns restored through the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership.	



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

A friendly open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
7. Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023.	86%	Sample survey shows 90% of routes are easy to use (up from 84% in 2018) – but note that the figures can fluctuate from year to year.	✓
8. Maintain and promote the Pennine Trails and other recognised long-distance routes, and campaign for the Coast-to-Coast footpath to become a National Trail by 2024.	Funding secured for 3-year programme	Annual maintenance programmes delivered. Government issued 1-year funding settlement for 2020/21. Conservative election manifesto included a pledge to make the Coast-to-Coast a National Trail.	✓
9. Carry out works to improve access on appropriate public rights of way and established permissive routes so that 262km (10%) are suitable for users of all ages and abilities by 2024.	196km suitable for all users	Through an audit of the new area of the national park a further 18km of routes have been identified as being suitable for all users taking the total to 198km.	✓
10. By 2024 provide 6,000 people from under-represented groups with activity days that enable them to access the special qualities of the National Park, and so increase their understanding, enjoyment, health and well-being.	Activity days for 900 people	Engaged with almost 1,000 people from under-represented groups, including people from BAME backgrounds, in a range of activities including walks, arts and skills based activities.	✓
11. Through educational and skills-based activities, inspire 1,500 young people from in and around the National Park to explore and enhance their environment each year.	Activities for 1,500 young people	We provided 1,892 young people with opportunities to learn about the National Park and to develop new skills through practical conservation work.	☑
12. Run a cohesive programme of inspirational, participatory activities that attract at least 4,000 people each year to find out more about the National Park's special qualities.	Activities for 4,000 people	More than 4,500 people took part in activities, including 680 on guided walks, 802 at Go Wild / family days and 3,136 attendees at Dark Skies events.	☑



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

13. Give people from all backgrounds an opportunity to enjoy and contribute to the National Park by providing at least 7,000 volunteer days per year, with 15% coming from under-represented groups.	7,000 volunteer days	7,778 volunteer days have been provided by the Authority, up by over 1,000 from the previous year. 17.5% came from under represented groups.	☑
14. Work with organisers of large-scale events to ensure they are well run, benefit local businesses, and contribute to the maintenance of the National Park's natural capital, for example funding the cost of maintaining the Three Peaks route.	Raise £20,000	£31,000 income received from donations and merchandise sales to fund maintenance of the 'Three Peaks' route.	☑
15. Promote and encourage responsible cycling by supporting world class events that showcase the National Park, enabling the development of four 'cycle hubs', and creating at least one further family-friendly cycling route by 2023.	1 hub	2 'cycle hubs' have been developed – at Reeth and Settle. UCI World Championship events and a stage of the Tour de Yorkshire were held in the National Park in 2019.	✓
16. Maintain 'green lanes' and, where appropriate, manage use by recreational motor vehicles, including enforcing any restrictions imposed by Traffic Regulation Orders.	90% compliance with TROs	Maintenance programme undertaken. Data shows compliance with TROs.	✓

Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
17. a. 30% of the priority habitats outside nationally-designated wildlife sites are in good condition by 2024;	n/a	Most recent figure is 22% (2016). Updated figures not available until 2020 Trends and Status Report issued (March 2021).	✓
b. at least one landscape-scale 'nature recovery area' has been created by 2021.	Submit Tees-Swale project bid	Full Stage 2 bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund for £8.5m programme was submitted in March. Match funding secured from Esmee Faibairn Foundation (£300k) and Richmondshire District Council (£50k).	✓



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

18. Work with farmers and landowners to achieve and maintain stable or increasing populations for 90% of priority species by 2026, including the UK 'red-listed' upland birds — for which the National Park is renowned.	n/a	Most recent figure is 81% (2016). Updated figures not available until 2020 Trends and Status Report (March 2021) but no reason to think objective won't be achieved	✓
19. Work with farmers and landowners to improve the condition of the Aire, Eden, Lune, Ribble, Swale, Ure and Wharfe so that at least 90% of all rivers achieve 'good ecological status' by 2027.	47% of rivers	Yorkshire Dales Catchment Partnership for the Swale, Ure, Wharfe and Aire has completed all objectives, influencing approx. 300 farmers and encouraging 100 farmers to apply for Countryside Stewardship mid tier.	✓
20. Work with farmers in Wensleydale to demonstrate the benefit of 'high nature value', low-input farm systems through a 5-year trial of a 'payment by results' approach to agri-environment funding.	Complete 4th year of trial	Fourth year of trial completed with 18 farmers in the scheme. All monitoring work completed. Launched report of the original EU-funded pilot.	✓
21. Work with moorland managers and other key stakeholders to end illegal persecution of raptors, including independent and scientifically robust monitoring, and co-ordinated hen harrier nest and winter roost site protection.	Establish local raptor group	Local raptor group established. National Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group publish national tactical action plan in November 2019.	✓

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

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
22. Work with farmers and landowners to ensure that at least 70% of all woodland is in active management by 2023, including positive management of conifer plantations to increase suitable habitat for red squirrels and black grouse.	66% in management	Forestry Commission figures show 64% of woodland currently in active management, down from 66% the previous year (although these figures are still being checked).	≈
23. Support landowners to create at least a further 450 hectares of native broadleaved and mixed woodland that enhances the National Park's landscape by 2024.	180 ha created	131 ha funded in the National Park in 2019/20, taking the cumulative total to 221 ha.	✓



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

24. Work with farmers and landowners to deliver landscape-scale natural flood management projects in the Aire, Eden, Ribble, Lune, Swale, Ure and Wharfe catchments.	7 projects	5 projects funded by CS Facilitation Fund (Swaledale; Wensleydale; Lunesdale; Wharfedale, Ribblesdale). Additional projects in Bishopdale and the Upper Aire (YDRT and EA) and Lunesdale (Lune Rivers Trust).	
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Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
25. Support the completion of 400 dwellings in a range of tenures, sizes, types and prices by 2024.	135 dwellings	118 new permissions were granted, taking the total for this objective to 182. No accurate data available on completions but best guestimate is approx. 30, taking the total to 55.	X
26. Undertake a 5-year programme of measures to promote the National Park as a place to live for younger, working age households (18-44) to help halt the decline in their numbers	Complete first year of programme	First year programme of activity completed, including: a socio-economic study of the National Park; a Strategic Housing Market Assessment; and promotional material on the Authority's website.	
27. Use the Sustainable Development Fund and other funding sources, to support 20 new local projects each year that bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the National Park.	20 local projects	£175,000 has been provided to support 36 local projects.	



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

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

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
28. Provide an efficient development management, including ensuring that 65% of minor and 80% of 'other' planning applications are being determined within eight weeks and at least 80% of applicants are satisfied with the service provided.	65%/80% of applications determined on time.	79% of minor applications and 91% of 'other' planning applications were determined within time limits. Satisfaction survey n/a for this year end. Latest figure was 88%.	
29. Improve the quality, variety and marketing of the tourism 'offer' to encourage more overnight stays and more visitors in the quieter months, so that the value of tourism grows by at least 5% in real terms by 2024.	1% increase	Data for 2019 not yet available because of impact of Covid-19. 2018 data showed that the value of tourism increased by 3% in real terms compared to the 2017 baseline	
30. Promote the National Park as a leading sustainable tourism destination, including enhancing the locations of 4 National Park Centres to create 'visitor hubs' that promote local distinctiveness and assist destination promotion.	2 visitor hubs created	1 visitor hub already created at Aysgarth NPC. Final completion of re-development at Grassington NPC has been delayed by Covid-19 lockdown but the overall objective will still be achieved on time.	
31. Develop and promote new events, festivals and attractions based on the National Park's special qualities and local distinctiveness so that at least 10% of visitors each year are coming for the first time.	10% first time visitors	Measured via the Customer Survey every 5 years (due 2022). In 2019 approx. 3,800 people attended the Cheese Festival activities and events. More than 3,000 people joined in with the Dark Skies events.	
32. By 2023, provide at least 20 apprenticeships that focus on the skills that are essential to maintaining the National Park's special qualities.	12 apprentices	10 apprentices employed during 2019/20 (including 4 from the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership), taking the cumulative total to 14.	
33. Work with neighbouring authorities to produce a single, updated Local Plan for the whole of the National Park by 2023, which will help achieve the vision and objectives in the National Park Management Plan.	Public consultation on issues	Public consultation on the issues for the Local Plan held Dec-Feb 2020, generating 275 responses.	



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

An effective organisation, providing high quality services

Objective	Target by March 2020	Progress	Status
34. 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.	£7.9 million	Actual income achieved was £8.3m, an increase of £0.5m on the previous year.	
35. Provide high quality, efficient and effective services and communications to the public and other stakeholders, and so maintain the Customer Service Excellence standard every year.	CSE standard retained	Assessment completed in October 2019, CSE standard met.	
36. Operate governance arrangements that are fit for purpose, as reported through the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report.	Unqualified audit opinion	Unqualified audit opinion achieved. Other governance actions are on course to be achieved, with exception of Review of Membership.	
37. Ensure we have personnel policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the Authority's work effectively, as evidenced by accreditation under the Investors in People standard.	Maintain IIP accreditation	IIP accreditation obtained beginning of 2019 – and is valid for three years. Mid-term assessment completed November 2019. Implementation of IIP action plan ongoing.	
38. Provide facilities and IT systems that are fit for purpose and support the effective delivery of our services, as evidenced by the external auditor's annual 'value for money' opinion and internal audit's reporting on relevant systems.	Implement 2019/20 IT plan	Auditors' reports completed September and March respectively, confirming that appropriate systems are in place	



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved