

Meeting: Finance & Resources

Date: 7 December 2021

Report: PROPERTY STRATEGY 2022 - 2027

Purpose of the report

1. For Members to review and approve the Property Strategy 2022 – 2027.

Recommendation

2. Members are asked to approve the attached draft Property Strategy.

Strategic Planning Framework

3. The information and recommendation contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework, and specifically Corporate Action Plan Objective 39.9, '*Review and revise the 5-year Property Strategy to support the future requirements of blended working and further carbon reductions*'.

Background

4. A detailed strategy setting out how we plan to manage the Authority's property portfolio over the next 5 years is attached to this report as an annex. The overall purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the premises we own or lease remain fit for purpose, and are maintained and managed in such a way as to hold their operational value.
5. The activities needed to manage our property portfolio comprise capital works (development and large scale refurbishment), and more routine maintenance activity. A detailed budget has been prepared, timetabling the work to be undertaken on all of our properties over the period. It is not included in the strategy but is available to Members on request. Expenditure under this strategy falls into two categories:
 - Capital works of £276k, to be funded by an ear-marked property reserve. Note that these are the total costs for the 5-year period. Between preparing each 5-year strategy, a rolling reserve allocation for the following 5 years is ear-marked, adding the new year requirements to the balance; this reserve needs increasing by £74k for year 5 (2026/27), including c£45k for roofing repairs to the Dales Countryside Museum and Colvend Cottage.

- Routine and reactive maintenance costs of approximately £200k for the 5-year period, these are included within the Authority's annual revenue budgets.

Conclusion

6. The Strategy presented here will ensure our property is maintained and kept fit for purpose for the next five years. Much of the cost of delivery will be covered by an existing ear-marked reserve, thereby minimising the impact on the Authority's annual revenue budget.

Jon Tighe
Estates Manager
16 November 2021



Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Property Strategy 2022 - 2027

7 December 2021

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| Lead Officer | Jon Tighe |
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1. Introduction

The National Park Authority holds property represented by land and buildings at a current 'balance sheet' value of just over £9m. This includes offices, the Dales Countryside Museum, three National Park Centres, eleven car parks & toilet blocks, and sundry other buildings, as well as several small areas of undeveloped land, the majority of which have been adopted as local nature reserves. A list of our properties is included in **Appendix 1**.

This strategy sets out the Authority's approach to managing this property portfolio over the next 5 years, including disposals, acquisitions and site development work, and sets standards and responsibilities for maintenance and upkeep. The fully-costed programme to deliver this strategy comprises capital works of £276k (to be covered by a dedicated ear-marked reserve), and in-year routine and annual maintenance costs of approximately £200k.

We last undertook a full review of the Authority's properties and land ownings in 2013, when the decision was taken to seek to dispose of eight landholdings: Threshfield Railway, Ballowfields, Dalegarth, Gordale Lane, Killington, Cleatop Wood, Crookrise and Morpeth Wood. In 2017, Members subsequently agreed to retain Cleatop Wood.

Of these we are still seeking to dispose of five sites (Ballowfields, Dalegarth, Gordale Lane, Killington & Morpeth Wood), an exercise being led by the Head of Park Management. However, none of these sites is likely to yield a significant capital receipt and other work pressures mean that these disposals are not currently being treated as a priority.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this strategy.

2. Future ways of working and requirements

The capital development and maintenance plans linked to this strategy relate to our current property portfolio, in its current use. There are a number of scenarios that may affect these assumptions in the coming years under which we may need to revise this strategy. These include:

Blended working. We don't yet have a clear understanding of the permanent situation with homeworking, and the possible shift to more hot-desking / less office demand. That will develop over the next year, and we plan to review office requirements in 2023/24.

'Changing Places' toilets. Grants are now available to provide Changing Places toilet facilities. If our applications for those grants are successful, we will be extending two existing toilet blocks (Hawes, Grassington); all capital costs will be covered by the grants.

Craven Limeworks site. The possible acquisition of a part of this site by the Authority would create the potential for a purpose-built Ranger/Office base, making Stonedykes Barn workshop, currently leased, surplus to requirements. This could require significant capital works to the new premises, and possibly some works to put good any alterations to Stonedykes.

3. Sustainability

The contribution that property management can make towards reductions in carbon emissions is a consideration in managing the Authority's property portfolio. We also seek to manage our land holdings to improve their potential for carbon sequestration as far as is practicable.

The Authority started a programme of actively reducing its carbon emissions in 2006, and by March 2021 had reduced emissions by 71%.

In 2020 the Authority adopted the following objective:

“By 2030, total greenhouse gas emissions from our operations will have been reduced by at least 95% compared to 2005; and, the annual carbon savings from woodland planting that we have directly funded will be at least 30 times our annual emissions.

As an interim milestone, by 2025 we would expect to have achieved a reduction of 85%, with carbon savings at 7 times our annual emissions.”

To deliver this objective, the Authority agreed a **Carbon Reduction Plan**, which included an extensive number of improvements to be made to our properties in 2020/21, including:

- Solar panels at Colvend office, Dales Countryside Museum, Aysgarth National Park Centre, Malham National Park Centre and additional panels at Yoredale office.
- Air source heat pumps at Aysgarth National Park Centre (to replace electric heating) and Malham National Park Centre (to replace oil heating).
- LED light upgrades at the majority of properties.
- Public electrical vehicle chargers in our 10 public car parks.
- An examination of our land ownership to assess whether these can be better utilised in our efforts to offset our, and the Park's, carbon emissions.

A number of further improvements will be delivered during the life of this Strategy, including:

- Additional Light-emitting Diode (LED) light upgrades and Passive Infrared (PIR) sensors.
- Removal of the last remaining gas heating systems at our sites.
- Additional insulation of windows, door seals and roof voids.
- Possible automatic shut-off systems for the electronic equipment in our properties.
- Identifying alternative heating systems to replace the biomass boilers at Colvend office and Dales Countryside museum. The biomass boilers are eligible for Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payments until 2031.
- Investigate water saving measures and grey/rain water capture at suitable sites.
- Evaluate whether to reinstate the composting toilet at Aysgarth toilet block.
- Install electric vehicle chargers at our staffed properties to facilitate the move to an electric vehicle fleet.

The Estate Manager will continually review these measures and make recommendations of future opportunities for further improvements to the Authority.

4. Property Profiles

A 'whole site' profile for each property is maintained. This records all known details of the properties and, where appropriate, identifies the officer with overall responsibility for a particular site.

Those officers with overall responsibility for a site will:

- Undertake day-to-day management of the site, as required;
- Co-ordinate preparation, and ensure implementation, of site management plans;
- Liaise with other officers with specialist interests in the site;
- Liaise with the Media Officer regarding media issues.

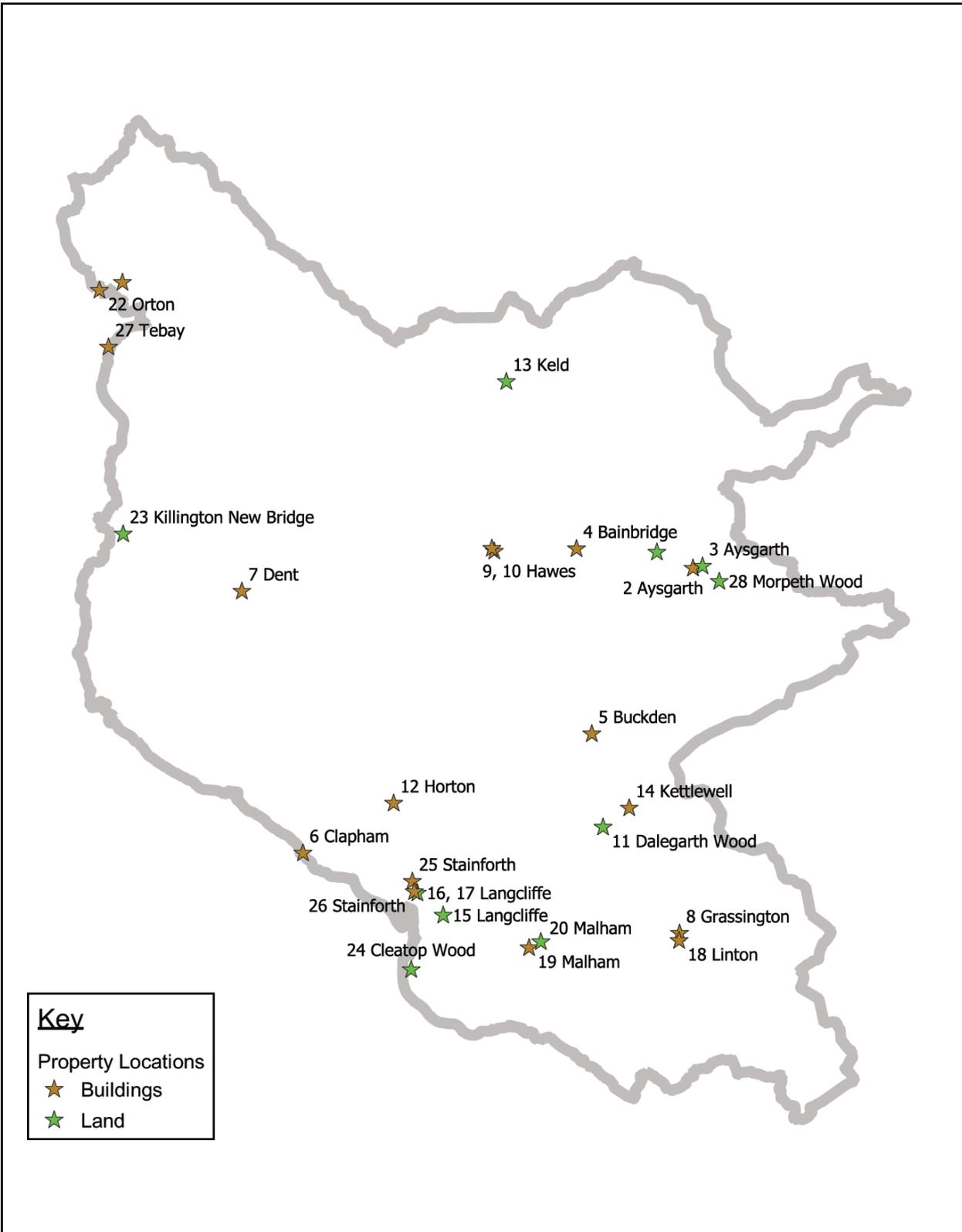
In addition to the information held within the site profiles, regular revaluations of property assets are reported to the Authority each year, as part of the process of preparing the annual accounts. Our policy approach to developing the Authority's property portfolio can be found in **Appendix 2**. This includes how decisions are made in relation to disposals, acquisitions, developments and leases

The Authority's maintenance policy is to 'provide facilities that are fit for purpose and support the efficient delivery of services'. Maintenance and upkeep are a key part of this and further information can be found in **Appendix 3**. This includes our approach to security, insurance and risk.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Property Map

[subtitle]

Scale 1:325000



| | PROPERTY | OWNED / LEASED | DESCRIPTION |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | ASKRIGG | Owned | Ballowfield Local Nature Reserve |
| 2 | AYSGARTH | Owned | NPC, Toilets, Car Park and Woodland |
| 3 | AYSGARTH | Owned | Freeholders' wood and Riddings Field Local Nature reserve |
| 4 | BAINBRIDGE | Owned | Yoredale |
| 5 | BUCKDEN | Owned | Toilets, Car Park |
| 6 | CLAPHAM | Owned | Toilets, Car Park |
| 7 | DENT | Owned & leased out | Leased to Dent Parish Council Toilets, Car Park |
| 8 | GRASSINGTON | Owned | Colvend Offices, Workshop, NPC, Toilets, Car Park |
| 9 | HAWES | Owned | Dales countryside Museum, NPC, Toilets, Car Park |
| 10 | HAWES | Leased | Bruntacres Workshop |
| 11 | HAWKSWICK | Owned | Dalegarth Wood |
| 12 | HORTON | Owned | Toilets, Car Park |
| 13 | KELD | Leased | Wainwath Force |
| 14 | KETTLEWELL | Owned | Toilets, Car Park |
| 15 | LANGCLIFFE | Owned | Langcliffe & Attermire Scars Local Nature Reserve |
| 16 | LANGCLIFFE | Leased | Triple Kiln |
| 17 | LANGCLIFFE | Leased | Craven Lime Works |
| 18 | LINTON | Owned | Toilets, Car Park |
| 19 | MALHAM | Owned | NPC, Toilets, Car Park |
| 20 | MALHAM | Owned | Goredale Lane |
| 21 | REETH | Partnership agreement | NPC Hudson House Ltd |
| | SEDBERGH | Partnership agreement | NPC Sedbergh Community Interest Company |
| | KIRKBY STEPHEN | Partnership agreement | NPC Kirkby Stephen Community Interest Company |
| | KIRBY LONSDALE | Partnership agreement | NPC Kirkby Lonsdale & Lune Valley Community Interest Co |
| 22 | ORTON office | Leased | Ranger office |
| | ORTON workshop | Leased | Ranger workshop |
| 23 | SEDBERGH | Owned | Killington Bridge Local Nature Reserve |
| 24 | SETTLE | Owned | Cleatop Park Local Nature Reserve |
| 25 | STAINFORTH | Owned | Toilets, Car Park and Picnic Area |
| 26 | STAINFORTH | Leased | Stonedynes Workshop |
| 27 | TEBAY | Leased | Office & workshop |
| 28 | WEST BURTON | Owned | Morpeth Wood |

Developing the Authority's property portfolio

The Authority will only hold property that supports the delivery of its objectives. A full review of the Authority's property portfolio will be undertaken on a rolling basis over a five-year period, to identify whether a particular property should continue to be held and also how well it meets its intended use. This assessment will initially be undertaken by the Estates Manager in conjunction with other appropriate officers including those involved in the day to day management of a particular property. Where this suggests a change in use or ownership of a property, a paper will be brought to the Authority.

At the current time there are no recommendations for disposals of property.

Disposals

Disposals will be considered whenever a property is identified as no longer meeting the requirements of the Authority. The process of disposing of property is covered by the Authority's Financial Regulations; legal and 'estate agency' work will be managed by the Solicitor and the Estates Manager respectively. All disposals will start from the assumption that achieving best financial value for the Authority is the primary objective.

Acquisitions

The Authority will only consider acquiring new sites where they are essential for, or relate directly to, the delivery of services. In terms of sites with conservation value, it is considered that far more can be achieved through working with property owners across the whole area of the Park than by owning and maintaining a small number of sites.

Where the acquisition of property for operational purposes is considered, an analysis will be undertaken and presented to the Authority.

There are two exceptions to the general rule on not acquiring property for conservation or non-operational purposes:

- (i) Where ownership is linked to a significant external grant. However, experience has shown that such rare instances generally result in a lease rather than outright ownership.
- (ii) Where the Authority has an opportunity to acquire property which meets our statutory purposes.

The process of acquiring property is covered by the Authority's Procurement procedures, set out in its Financial Regulations.

Developments

New one-off developments and 'alternative use' proposals for existing sites will need to take account of the information contained within the whole site profile, including the reason why the Authority holds the property, and any constraints, whether imposed by the Authority or another body.

National Park Centres and the **Dales Countryside Museum** are subject to regular redevelopment and refurbishment; to ensure the messages they are intended to deliver are presented effectively.

All **public toilets** are refurbished over a five-year cycle and are subject to a continuous programme of planned maintenance.

Leases

Potential new property leases will be dealt with in the same manner as property acquisitions.

- The Authority may find that it is obliged to take out a lease in order to obtain grant funding for conservation work on a particular site. In such instances, a detailed report covering the lease-related aspects of the grant will be presented to the Authority.

The granting of leases against the Authority's property is delegated to the Chief Executive and these are reported to the Authority.

A register of all leases, both to and from the Authority, is maintained. This register identifies who is responsible for each lease and when the lease is due to end, and so will allow an annual timetable for lease renewal to be prepared for the start of each financial year.

For clarification, the above process excludes the granting of short term licences for the use of car parks for certain events, such as festivals. This responsibility is delegated to the Director of Park Services.

Maintenance and upkeep

This has three components: establishing maintenance needs through **condition surveys**, applying maintenance **policy** to those requirements, and **planning** the necessary work.

Officers undertake annual risk assessments of the Health & Safety aspects of the Authority's premises, including fire risk. Any information from these assessments that relates to the condition or nature of the Authority's property feeds into the 'maintenance and upkeep' process.

Condition Surveys

A full cycle of condition surveys for all properties is undertaken every five years. For practical purposes, surveys will be undertaken to a rolling programme, with the work to be managed by the Estates Manager. Other officers are involved in surveys of any property where they have specific responsibilities, for example, woodland, car parks and toilets.

The survey work will establish the repair and maintenance needs of the Authority's property in any one year, enabling the relevant costs to be identified. It does not preclude necessary maintenance work that may arise outside this cycle, but the survey results will direct work of a recurring nature such as decoration.

Maintenance policy

The Authority's policy is to ensure that all of its properties are in a condition that is **fit for purpose** and one that **preserves their asset value**.

The identification of what is 'fit for purpose' is qualitative, but will relate to the pattern of use for each property. This includes the presumption that premises at which the public receives a service will be maintained to a high standard.

Maintenance Planning

Responsibilities for occasional maintenance work are noted on the 'whole site' profiles. Larger scale planned maintenance is the responsibility of the Estates Manager. Responsibility for the maintenance of other land-based assets (field areas, access sites and woodland) rests with the Ranger service.

A five-year cyclical maintenance plan is used to cover all premises, which will:

- Prioritise maintenance work in line with the rolling condition survey work; this prioritisation will take account of any issues identified through routine Health & Safety (including Fire Safety) risk assessments.
- Estimate the cost of the work required, and thus inform the budget setting process.
- Identify the responsibilities of particular individuals for undertaking the work required, and plan the timing of such work to limit disruption, or where the work has a seasonal aspect.

The Authority has a small number of maintenance commitments on property that it does not own or occupy, as residual liabilities from conservation projects. A register of these maintenance requirements is maintained to ensure that any necessary work is included in the overall Maintenance Plan.

Procurement of maintenance work follows 'value for money' principles. Many projects can benefit from a hybrid approach, using a combination of external contractors and staff. Where full outside contracting is deemed the best approach, consideration will be given to amalgamating other available work to achieve both the best price and the most sustainable approach for the work concerned.

Security, insurance and risk

Financial Regulations require that proper security of all assets must be maintained. The responsibility for physically securing buildings is identified within the 'whole site' profiles. The Authority has alarms fitted at all its operational premises (excluding toilets) and maintains a call-out system in response to alarms.

The asset register is shared with the Authority's insurers and insurance advisers, to ensure that optimum levels of property and third party liability insurance are maintained.

The Authority's property is considered within the regular 'whole organisation' review of Risk, in accordance with the Authority's Risk Management policy.