

Date: 27 June 2023

Report: PROGRESS ON AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES IN 2022/23

Purpose of the report

1. To assess the Authority's performance in achieving our objectives in 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Members note the progress made in 2022/23 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**
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](#).

Summary of overall performance

5. The **Annex** gives a brief assessment of progress on each of the objectives, including an explanation for any that were not achieved. Those objectives that relate to last year's priority programmes are shown in **bold**.
6. Of the 39 objectives 28 (72%) were achieved or remained on-course. Key organisational objectives where good progress was made include:
 - Almost £900,000 was provided to local farm businesses through the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme [1];

- Restoration works were completed on 9 traditional farm buildings – 3 through Natural England’s grant scheme, 3 through FiPL; 2 through Westmorland Dales; and, 1 with funding from the Authority and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust [4];
 - With funding from Historic England, 172km² in the Westmorland Dales have been mapped for historical features through a LIDAR survey [6];
 - Carried out a Park-wide programme of repairs that meant 91% of rights of way were ‘easy to use’ [7];
 - Delivered educational and skills-based activities to over 4,000 school children from in and around the National Park [11];
 - More than 7,000 volunteer days were provided, with under-represented groups accounting for over a fifth of those [12];
 - Over £50,000 was raised during the year to support repairs to the Three Peaks route [13]
 - The Coast to Coast Path National Trail was formally designated by the Secretary of State in October 2022 and implementation of the route has commenced [15];
 - Completed year 2 of the *Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected* programme, including restoring 16 ha of hay-meadow and creating 45 ha of native woodland [18];
 - Through the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme, advice and assistance was provided to 160 farmers to help reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture [20];
 - With funding from the Woodland Trust, White Rose Forest and others, we facilitated and supported the creation of 97 ha of new native woodland; [24];
 - Granted planning permission for 62 new dwellings, taking the average over the last 4 years to 91 [25];
 - Supported 16 local community and business projects, with grants of £185,000, through the Sustainable Development Fund;
 - Determined 86% of ‘minor’ and 93% of ‘other’ planning applications within Government target times [28];
 - 3 apprentices and 3 new trainees were recruited, taking the cumulative total to 21 apprentices and 6 trainees since 2018 [30];
 - Generated external income to support gross expenditure of over £10 million [34];
 - Retained the ‘Customer Service Excellence’ Award for the 13th year [36];
7. Of the objectives that related to priority programmes, there were 2 ‘near misses’:
- We were unable to spend the full allocation of funding for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme as a result of 3 significant projects being withdrawn by the applicants close to the end of the financial year [1];
 - As reported to Members in December, the Local Plan timetable has had to be pushed back until the end of 2024 because of additional work to try to identify suitable housing sites for allocation [29].
8. There were also three priority objectives where no progress is being made (priority habitats; priority species; woodland management). These are long-standing issues that have been reported on at length in previous years. In December, Members

approved a new interim objective on habitats and species for 2023/24, prior to the approval of a new Nature Recovery Plan for the National Park (September 2023).

Conclusion

9. After 2 years marred by restrictions from Covid, 2022-23 provided a very different set of challenges for the Authority – trying to deliver a greatly expanded programme of activity, primarily funded from external sources. Much was achieved through these programmes (Farming in Protected Landscapes; Westmorland Dales; Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected; and, Grow Back Greener), although – perhaps unsurprisingly – none delivered 100% of their original ambitions for the year. It is noteworthy that our access and engagement work has now fully bounced back to pre-Covid levels, with all the relevant objectives being achieved (or remaining on course).

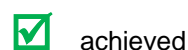
Gary Smith
Director of Conservation and Community

9 June 2023

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

Objective	Target by March 2023	Progress	Status
1. <i>During Brexit transition, support farmers and landowners to continue to deliver a range of public benefits through national agri-environment scheme agreements and similar initiatives, including the FiPL programme.</i>	£1.3 million in FiPL grants	Programme target was reduced in-year to £1.16 million. Final grants value was £885,000 as a result of 3 significant projects being withdrawn in February and March.	≈
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.	Dark Sky Reserve designated	Annual Report to IDA submitted December 2022 for retention of Dark Sky Reserve status.	☑
3. Deliver co-ordinated programmes of activity that enhance the distinctive landscape, geology and cultural heritage of the 'Westmorland Dales' (by 2023).	Complete Year 4 of programme	Programme extended to February 2024, all projects within the programme on track for completion by that date. Undergrounding projects completed.	✓
4. By 2024, secure significant funding to repair, restore, and, where appropriate, find adaptive new uses for traditional field barns, particularly those in Swaledale, Arkengarthdale and Littondale.	30 barns restored or re-used	3 barns restored through NE project plus 1 barns in Swaledale restored using legacy and YDMT funds. 3 barns restored using FiPL grant funding. A further 29 barn conversions completed taking total to 38.	✓
5. 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.	12 SM at risk 80 LB at risk	10 Scheduled Monuments (3.4%) and 74 Listed Buildings (3.5%) are currently at risk.	✓
6. Use DCM and HER 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.	Lidar surveys underway	172km ² have been mapped as part of a LIDAR survey with funding from Historic England. A rolling programme will continue with completion by March 2024.	✓



achieved



on course










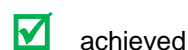
near miss



not achieved

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

Objective	Target by March 2023	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.	89%	91% of routes were easy to use in March 2023.	
8. 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.	4,000 people	Just over 4,000 people attended activities in 2022/23 which informed them about the National Park's special qualities including 'Go Wild', Water Safety, TeesSwale, DCM and Dark Skies events.	
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.	247km (9.4%)	A further 17km of routes have been identified as accessible in 2022/23, taking the current total to 248km (9.5%) that are suitable for users of all ages and abilities.	
10. By 2024 provide 5,000 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.	3,000 people [cumulative]	The NPA provided activity days to well over 1,000 people from under-represented groups in 2022/23 bringing the cumulative total for the Corporate Plan to 4,406.	
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.	1,500 young people	The Authority has delivered activities in the National Park for over 4,000 school children, well exceeding the target of 1,500.	
12. 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 days	More than 7,000 volunteer days were provided with 22% of those days from participants coming from under-represented groups.	
13. 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	Raise £25,000 for 3 Peaks	Code of conduct promoted through social media, the Three Peaks notification scheme, the Three Peaks App and directly with the organisers of the largest events. Income £56,000k.	



achieved



on course






near miss







not achieved

End of year progress on Corporate Plan Objectives 2022/23

Annex

14. 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	97% compliance in calendar year 2022, slightly up on previous year.	
15. 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.	C2C 'added value' report completed	Coast to Coast Path designated as National Trail Oct 2022. Implementation and management work costings submitted to Natural England. Coast to Coast Path team recruited.	
16. Promote and encourage responsible cycling by supporting world class events that showcase the National Park, enabling the development of two 'cycle hubs', and creating at least one further family-friendly cycling route by 2024.	2 cycle hubs	2 'cycle hubs' have already been developed (Reeth and Settle). Consultation completed on possible multi-user route between Hawes and Garsdale.	

Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England

Objective	Target by March 2023	Progress	Status
17. 30% of the priority habitats outside nationally-designated wildlife sites are in good condition by 2024;	24%	The 2021 Trends and Status Report reported that 19% of priority habitats outside of SSSIs were in 'good condition' (a decrease from 22% in 2016).	
18. Deliver a co-ordinated 5-year programme of investment to support nature recovery through the Tees-Swale: naturally connected programme, and identify other potential landscape-scale 'nature recovery areas'.	Complete year 2 of Tees-Swale programme	Year 2 of Tees-Swale programme completed. The Three Dales project and the Woodland Trust's Snaizholme landscape-scale nature recovery project have commenced.	
19. 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.	82%	The 2021 Trends and Status Report showed 75% of priority species have populations that are either stable or increasing (a drop from 81% in 2016).	
20. 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.	62%	Most recent figures state that 62% of rivers are in good ecological status. Advised and supported 160 farmers/landowners in the 2022/23 year through one-to-many events and 1:1 Visits.	

67



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

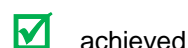
21. Work with moorland managers and other stakeholders to end illegal persecution of raptors, including independent and scientifically robust monitoring, and co-ordinated hen harrier nest and winter roost site protection.	Local coordination of nest and roost protection	Local group continuing to agree co-ordination of nest & roost monitoring led by NE, and second annual report published.	≈
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Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces

Objective	Target by March 2023	Progress	Status
22. Work with farmers and landowners to deliver landscape-scale natural flood management projects in the Aire, Eden, Ribble, Lune, Swale, Ure and Wharfe catchments.	Projects in at least 4 catchments	Facilitation Fund groups ended in Ribblesdale and Swaledale and York Innovation NFM commenced covering Swaledale and Wensleydale. Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme continues until 2025.	✓
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.	321 ha	Almost 100 ha of native broadleaved woodland was planted in 2022/23, taking the cumulative total to almost 600 ha, plus 700 ha other woodland (wood pasture etc)	☑
24. Work with farmers and landowners to ensure that at least 70% of all woodland is in active management by 2024, including positive management of conifer plantations to increase suitable habitat for red squirrels and black grouse.	67%	The proportion of woodland in active management at the end of March 2022 was 60% (down from 64% the previous year). Awaiting updated figures from FC for 2022/23.	X

Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need

Objective	Target by March 2023	Progress	Status
25. Encourage and facilitate high quality proposals for new housing in a range of tenures, sizes, types and prices, such that around 85 new dwellings are approved each year.	85 dwellings approved	Permission for 62 dwellings was granted in 2022/23. Numbers fluctuate from year to year but the average number approved each year (91) since the objective was set is still above the target.	☑



achieved



on course



near miss



not achieved

End of year progress on Corporate Plan Objectives 2022/23

Annex

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 year 4 of programme	Draft Local plan will include permanent residency conditions which will prevent new housing from becoming second homes or holiday letting property.	≈
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 new projects funded	The full budget of £185,000 was awarded in SDF grants to local projects in 2022-23, bringing the total invested by the Authority over the SDF's 20 years of operation to more than £3.4million.	✓

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 2023	Progress	Status
<i>28. Provide an efficient development management service, 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.</i>	65%/80% of applications determined on time.	86% of 'minor' applications and 93% of 'other' applications were determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extension of time.	✓
<i>29. 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.</i>	Full draft Local Plan prepared	Potential housing sites identified and public consultation has been completed. Complexity of that work means consultation on the full draft version of the Local Plan has been put back to the end of 2023.	≈
30. By 2023, provide at least 20 apprenticeships that focus on the skills that are essential to maintaining the National Park's special qualities.	17 Apprentices	3 new apprentices (Comms, Rangers and Wildlife) and 3 new trainees (Tees-Swale [2] and Education & Engagement) recruited this year. This takes the cumulative total to 21 apprentices and 6 trainees.	☑
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.	14% first time visitors	The YDNPA Visitor survey 2022 found that 15% of visitors interviewed were visiting the National Park for the first time.	☑

☑ achieved

✓ on course

≈ near miss

✗ not achieved

End of year progress on Corporate Plan Objectives 2022/23

Annex

32. 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.	3% growth	The most recent figures (for 2021) showed a 13% <i>reduction</i> in the economic value of tourism compared to the baseline (2017). However, this is a significant improvement on 2020 (-50%).	X
33. 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.	4 visitor hubs created	Sites in Aysgarth, Grassington, Hawes & Malham have all had new orientation boards with waymarked walks, free maps & key seasonal messages. Ongoing programme of enhancements to signage.	☑

An effective organisation, providing high quality services

Objective	Target by March 2023	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	Income to support expenditure of £8.5m.	Generated external income to support gross expenditure of £10.8m.	☑
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	CSE assessment was carried out during the summer, and accreditation has been maintained.	☑
36. Operate governance arrangements that are fit for purpose, as reported through the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report.	Unqualified External Audit opinion	Annual Governance Statement and Governance Report completed to schedule. However, national delays in public sector audit regime mean the External Audit has still not been carried out.	≈
37. <i>Ensure that we have HR 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</i>	Maintain IIP accreditation	IIP interim review was carried out Nov 2022 and accreditation has been maintained. HR policy/procedure reviews undertaken during the year	☑

☑ achieved

✓ on course


≈ near miss


X not achieved

End of year progress on Corporate Plan Objectives 2022/23


Annex

<p>38. <i>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.</i></p>	<p>Unqualified VfM opinion</p>	<p>Internal audit completed and received substantial assurance but still awaiting a date to commence the external audits for 2021/22 and 2022/23 from Ernst & Young.</p>	<p>≈</p>
<p>39. <i>By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our operations by at least 95% compared to 2005/06, and achieve annual carbon savings from woodland planting of at least 30 times our residual annual emissions.</i></p>	<p>73% reduction</p>	<p>A 1.8% reduction was achieved in 2022/23, taking the cumulative reduction of emissions to -71% since 2005 target.</p>	<p>≈</p>

 achieved

 on course

 near miss

 not achieved