

NPMP Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday 8 November 2023
10:00 – 12:00
Via MS Teams

Notes of meeting

Present:

Adrian Thornton-Berry - Rural Estates (Yorkshire)
Anthony Bradley – Farmer Network (Yorkshire)
Cllr Yvonne Peacock – North Yorkshire Council
Crispin Thorn – Forestry Commission
David Sharrod – Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Grace Richardson – Youth Representative
Jim Walker – Cumbria Tourism Businesses
Jonathan Smith – Yorkshire Tourism Businesses
Karen Horrocks – Yorkshire & Humber Office for Health Improvement & Disparities
Laura Day – Youth Representative
Martin Christmas - Environment Agency
Matt Williams (sub) – Westmorland & Furness Council
Neil Heseltine - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority;
Paul Duncan - Natural England
Sarah Tunnicliffe – Historic England

Secretariat: Gary Smith (GS); Peter Stockton (PS); Josie Wilson (JW)

Other: Mark Sadler (YDNPA)

1. Apologies

David Butterworth - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority; Lord Shuttleworth – Rural Estates (Cumbria/Lancashire); Jim Beary (Farmer Network (Cumbria/Lancashire); Andrew Leeming (York & North Yorkshire LEP); Angela Jones (Westmorland & Furness Council)

2. Terms of Reference

GS presented the paper, making members aware of the changes to the membership of the group. Local government reorganisation meant that the 4 previous district councils that were represented on the group, now became two with the creation of the new unitary councils. The Authority had also decided to add three additional organisations to the Steering Group reflecting Government emphasis on climate change and increasing engagement with all parts of society and supporting public health.

The Terms of reference state: *Each body listed in Annex A shall have a named representative and **one** named substitute.* The group discussed this and agreed that on occasion different representatives could attend, but recommended the named individual aim for continuity.

3. Prospectus for producing NPMP 2025-2029

GS presented the report on the prospectus for producing the next NPMP.

The group agreed the broad principles set out in Annex A of the paper. In discussion it was suggested that further points be added: connecting with other strategies; the importance of local context; and striking the right balance between 'realism' and 'ambition'. There were differing views about whether 'Steering Group' was more appropriate than 'Partnership'

The group agreed the main stages of producing the Plan (Annex B) and the timetable (Annex C). The Annual Forum would be held in April/May 2024 to feedback evidence, consultation results and agree the 'strategic direction' for the drafting groups.

Action: *GS to amend Annex A in line with the comments.*

Chair and Deputy to determine whether to change the name of the group

4. First Public Consultation

GS and Mark Sadler presented the paper setting out some proposals for the first public consultation. The initial consultation was intended to be 'broad and shallow', providing opportunities for a wide range of people to participate. The plan is to use platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, X etc to connect with different audiences.

A draft film that was being produced to raise awareness of the 'special qualities of the National Park. The group had also been provided with the first draft text for a 30-second version that would be used specifically to promote the public consultation.

The consultation itself needed to be relatively simple and straightforward to complete. It was proposed to identify a relatively small number of 'key issues' and ask people to rank them in order of performance (plus a space for people to add other issues).

In discussion, the following points were made:

- the full film felt like a powerful advert for the value of the National Park (which is what it is intended to be);
- the 'special qualities' film needs to include footage of local villages/communities;
- we need to collect the consultation data in a way that will allow the results to be differentiated (e.g. between residents and visitors, or different age groups).
- it would be useful to know why people don't visit the Park, and look at how we could make people feel like the Park is *for* them;
- many of the potential issues on the list were unlikely to be relevant to younger people;
- it would be important to face up to some of the more 'unpalatable' issues – like the fact that some of the impacts of climate change (wildfire, flooding etc are now unavoidable.

Actions: *Secretariat* to re-circulate the links to the films, the copies of the scripts, and the list of potential issues for the consultation questionnaire;

All to provide any comments on the films/scripts, and consultation issues by 20 November.

Chair, Deputy Chair and Grace Richardson to sign off the final film/scripts and consultation issues list.

5. Youth Engagement

GS presented the paper written by Rebecca Greenfield, YDNPA's Head of Access & Engagement. The intention was to provide an opportunity for young people to share their perspectives on the issues that will affect their future, our natural and cultural heritage and their enjoyment of this special place; and to develop policy which will implement the change they want to see.

The Group approved the proposed approach to engaging with younger people. In discussion, the following points were made:

- different age cohorts of younger people tend to use different social media;
- it would be important to engage young people from other groups and networks, like Young Farmers, not just those that the NPA has direct contact with;
- it would be good to include engagement with local schools;
- the representation on the 6 drafting groups could come from several different sources.

Actions: *Secretariat* to write to steering group members to seek support for extending the reach of the consultation to other groups and networks;

Secretariat to liaise with the Chair and Deputy Chair to determine the arrangements for selecting 6 young people to participate in the 'Drafting Groups'

6. Evidence reports

GS introduced the paper. The intention was to produce 6 reports that would provide the evidence to support the production of an effective Plan. The versions that had been circulated were still very much in draft. At this stage, the Group was just being asked to comment on the overall style, length etc of the documents.

The Group were supportive of the format and style of the reports. In discussion, the following points were made:

- some wording (e.g. on peat condition) was now out of date, or reflected issues that had largely been resolved (e.g. woodland planting on peatland);
- the text on breeding waders should acknowledge that predator control was a factor in retaining viable populations here;

National Park Management Plan Steering Group

- the drafting of the reports should reflect the Group's previous decision to give priority to the ambitions for nature and climate (i.e. the reports for the four other ambitions should show how they would help support the two priority ambitions)
- the reports were a really handy source of information that could be used for many other purposes by other organisations.

Action: *Secretariat to re-circulate the six draft evidence reports;*

All to provide comments, suggestions on the reports by 8 December.

7. Update on Government changes

The paper provided a brief update on legislative changes that would affect the production and implementation of the Management Plan. In particular, new legislation had been included as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB) placing a stronger requirement on partner organisations to contribute to the production and implementation of National Park Management Plans;

Action: *GS to bring a report to a future meeting with further information on the implementation of the requirements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.*

8. Partner updates on NPMP objectives

- YDMT's [small grants scheme](#) for wildlife, landscape and nature going well. They have also secured new funding to support woodland management.
- Historic England's pilot scheme in 5 National Parks (including Yorkshire Dales) funding traditional rural buildings coming to an end. Further funding has been found and will be available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. HE also has a project in the pipeline on research in to boundary features and drystone walls, which will include the Dales.
- North Yorkshire Council's consultation on a new [housing strategy](#) open until 11 December.
- Forestry Commission has seen an increase in higher tier applications for woodland. New guidance has been issued on [Woodland and breeding waders](#) and [Woodland on Peatland](#)
- [Swaledale and Wensleydale Environmental Farmers group](#) is being set up to maintain and enhance nature, provide climate mitigation and carbon sequestration, and to improve water quality in the catchment for the public good, alongside sustainable agricultural activities and moorland management; Significant issue that farmers still in HLS Higher Tier agreements cannot access the new SFI payments.
- Westmorland & Furness Council has re-established a number of bus service routes, including some to/from the National Park, with temporary funding. Public being told 'use it' or 'lose it'.

National Park Management Plan Steering Group

- £1.6m in grants have been awarded to farms in the National Park this year through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme;
- The formal submission of evidence to retain International Dark Sky Reserve status will be submitted in December – light meter readings indicate skies now darker than at time of original application;
- The Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership's 5-year programme of investment will come to a close in December.
- Smardale Lime Kilns has been restored, and are no longer on HE's register of monuments at risk;
- 2022 saw a significant increase in the value of tourism in the National Park (up 11% in real terms compared to 2017);
- 34 apprentices have now been supported through YDNPA, YDMT and other local businesses.

Action: ***Matt Williams** to let GS have details of the new bus routes linking to settlements in the National Park.*

9. Minutes from previous meeting

All actions completed other than objective C1.

Action: ***GS** will pick this up with Paul Duncan as part of gathering evidence for the forthcoming national targets.*

10. AOB

For those that have MS Teams installed you can access all the 'chat' after the meeting – for instructions how to do this click on this [link](#).

11. Date of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Action: ***Chair and Deputy** to determine whether the meeting will be in-person, via MS Teams or hybrid.*