

29 September 2026

Prioritisation of National Park Authority work programmes for 2027/28

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek confirmation of the Authority's priorities for 2027/28, as the basis for setting the Authority's objectives and developing the draft budget.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members confirm the continuation of the prioritised list of programmes agreed in September 2024.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:
 - **Corporate Plan objective 28.**
Plan and manage the Authority's work so as to make the most effective use of its resources.

Background

4. Prioritising the Authority's work programmes is a fundamental part of our business planning. Identifying the areas of work that are most important to us ensures that staff, partners and stakeholders are clear about where we will direct our efforts.
5. A fundamental review of priorities is carried out every 3 years. The most recent review was carried out in September 2024 and set the direction for the way in which the Authority's resources would be deployed for the following 3 years (2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28). The next fundamental review is scheduled to take place next year.
6. Between the three-yearly fundamental reviews, we undertake an annual 'light touch' review. This involves identifying any changes since Members made their last decision on priorities that are so significant that Members might want to reconsider the priority of one or more programmes. The agreed priorities for 2026/27 are set out in the **Annex**

Light touch review of priorities for 2027/28

7. In March, the Authority received a 3-year funding settlement from Defra that included: a continuation of the additional capital grant; continuation of the Farming in Protected

Landscapes programme; and a new 'Wildlife-rich Habitat' Fund. Defra asked National Park Authorities to consider how that funding could be used to:

- make land greener, wilder, and more accessible to all, and;
 - increase the contribution that protected landscapes are making to Environment Act and EIP targets, measured through the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF).
8. Members are advised that the Authority's existing priorities align closely with the above. Farm Conservation, Wildlife and Woodland ("greener, wilder") are priorities, as are Rights of way, Recreation and Health, and Outreach ("more accessible").
9. Of the targets in the PLTOF, the only one that is not covered by a priority programme is target 10 ("reduce the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk"). This target covers G1 and G2* Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The former in particular is primarily the responsibility of Historic England. The relevant Authority work programmes – Archaeology and Building Conservation – are currently designated as 'adequate' programmes. The PLTOF target is probably capable of being met on that basis – but the position is likely to be clearer next year. If Members were minded to give more priority to e.g. archaeology (and, thus, lower one of the existing priority programmes), it is proposed that would best be considered as part of the fundamental review of priorities next year.

Financial Implications

10. The priorities are used as a guide for decision-making. Any financial implications will be set out as part of the papers on the Authority's budget for 2027-28 onwards

Legal Implications

11. None.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

12. An [Equality Impact Assessment](#) was done for all of the objectives in the National Park Management Plan, which the Authority's work programmes are designed to contribute towards. Of the 8 work programmes identified as priorities, three (Education; Outreach; Recreation & Health) are particularly positive towards equality

Conclusion

13. The setting of consistent priorities over 3-year periods provides a clear framework for allocating resources effectively, enabling the Authority to continue to perform well in those work areas that Members consider most important.

Gary Smith
Deputy Chief Executive

Current Prioritisation

‘Priority’ sub-programmes	
Education	Recreation & Health
Farm Conservation	Rights of way
Outreach	Wildlife
Planning	Woodland

‘Adequate’ sub-programmes	
Apprenticeships	National Trails
Archaeology	Planning Policy (Local Plan)
Barns & Walls	Recreation Management
Building Conservation	Tourism
Dales Countryside Museum	Volunteering
Dark Skies	Water Quality
Landscape Features	Youth Volunteering
National Park Management Plan	

‘Limited’ sub-programmes	
Car Parks	Minerals
Cultural Heritage	National Park Centres
Cycling Infrastructure	Natural Flood Management
Definitive Map	Public Transport
Enforcement	Sustainable Development Fund
Geodiversity	Toilets
Historic Environment Record	Traffic Management
Housing	

Note: sub-programmes are listed alphabetically within each category.

BLANK PAGE