



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007 – 2012

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2008

Prepared on behalf of the National Park Management Plan Steering Group

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SUMMARY

Overall, good progress is being made, with three quarters of the objectives either achieved or still on course to be so. Major achievements include:

- 70% of the Park is now covered by agri-environment agreements, with over 40,000 ha in the new Environmental Stewardship scheme;
- the National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund funded 19 projects, worth over £950,000, which are bringing economic, social and environmental benefits;
- 89% of highly-sensitive 'green lanes' now have management plans in place;
- 90% of the Pennine Bridleway route through the Dales is now completed;
- the area of SSSI land in 'favourable or recovering' condition has increased by 2,000 ha, and now stands at 80%;
- 166 hectares of native broadleaf woodland have been planted over the last two years;
- the number of Listed Buildings 'at risk' fell for the third year running – down to 72 (4%).

There are only 3 objectives where no real progress is being made. These are:

- AR6 Improving the integration and use of sustainable transport for leisure and everyday life in the Park
- AR9 Designation of a network of 'quiet lanes'
- NC4b) Creation of 100 hectares of floodplain wetland.

The Steering Group will be keeping these areas under review in 2008/09.

Finally, there are 3 objectives where there is insufficient data to give any meaningful assessment yet. These all relate to the status of habitats and species across the Park. The Authority completed a 5-year survey of habitats across the Park in 2007 and the results will be publicly available later this year.

More detailed information on progress on each of the objectives is available on-line at a special site within the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's website:

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/index/looking_after/yorkshire_dales_national_park_management_plan.htm

Summary of progress on NPMP objectives

Landscape		Community and Culture		Access and Recreation		Underst. and Enjoyment		Nature Conservation		Historic Environment		Econ. and Employment	
L1		CC1		AR1		UE1		NC1		HE1		EE1	
L2		CC2		AR2		UE2		NC2		HE2		EE2	
L3		CC3		AR3		UE3 a)		NC3 a)	?	HE3		EE3	
L4 a)		CC4		AR4		UE3 b)		NC3 b)		HE4		EE4	
L4 b)		CC5		AR5		UE4		NC4	?	HE5		EE5	
L4 c)		CC6		AR6 a)		UE5		NC4 a)		HE6		EE6	
L4 d)		CC7		AR6 b)		UE6		NC4 b)		HE7		EE7	
L5		CC8		AR6 c)		UE7		NC4 c)		HE8		EE8	
L6 a)		CC9		AR6 d)		UE8		NC4 d)		HE9		EE9	
L6 b)		CC10		AR7		UE9		NC5	?	HE10		EE10	
L7				AR8		UE10		NC6					
L8 a)				AR9				NC7					
L8 b)				AR10				NC8					
L9								NC9					
L10								NC10					

	Achieved or on course
	Some progress
	Little or no progress
?	Insufficient data

CONTEXT

The thematic overviews that follow identify a number of issues in terms of achieving particular objectives. However, there are a number of more general issues that provide important context for what is happening in the Park already or will do so in the future. They include:

Climate change

Climate change remains at the top of the environmental agenda, with an increasing expectation that national parks should be leading the way in demonstrating sustainable solutions. There is increasing recognition of the critical role of peat in the uplands as a major store of carbon; and a major source of carbon if its condition deteriorates. The importance of the Dales for future regional water management is also being recognised. Work is ongoing nationally and regionally to assess the likely impacts of climate change, and this will need to be kept under review.

Rising costs of farming

Increases in fuel and feed costs – combined with the wider impacts of managing disease control (Foot and Mouth and Bluetongue) - have contributed to another difficult year for upland livestock farming. While these have been partially offset by increases in agri-environment funding coming into the Park and rising stock prices, livestock farming within the Park remains marginal. If these trends continue it may lead to further mergers of existing holdings or pressure to diversify into other agricultural products.

Heritage Protection Bill

The Bill is likely to be introduced to Parliament in the coming year. It includes measures to simplify the current designation system for heritage features, and to delegate more decision-making down to local planning authorities. This will have implications for owners of historic features and buildings, as well as the National Park Authority and its partners.

National Park boundary

Natural England has deferred the public consultation on the possible extension to the National Park boundary in the North West, pending completion of the Public Inquiry into the proposed South Downs National Park.

Regional development

Regionally, economic development is increasingly being structured around so-called 'city regions'. Much of the National Park, like other rural areas of North Yorkshire, lies outside the Leeds City Region. There are also proposals – as part of the 'Sub-National Review' – to reform the delivery of regional economic development. It will be important to ensure that the Regional Development Agency's future plans recognise — and investment reflects — the vital role that the National Park plays in supporting the regional economy.

Park Profile

The table overleaf provides a statistical summary of contextual information relating to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

PARK PROFILE 2007/8

ITEM	STATISTIC	DATA SOURCE
Area		
Total Park Area	176,180 ha	Ordnance Survey, 2008
Within Craven District	80,420 ha	Ordnance Survey, 2008
Within Richmondshire District	74,540 ha	Ordnance Survey, 2008
Within South Lakeland District	21,220 ha	Ordnance Survey, 2008
Within North Yorkshire	88%	North Yorkshire County Council, 2001
Within Cumbria	12%	South Lakeland District Council, 2001
No. of parishes totally or partly in the Park	83	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Population		
Resident population	19,654	Office of National Statistics, 2001
School and pre-school age (0-15)	17.5%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Working age (16-64)	61.5%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Pensionable age (65+)	21%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Population density (people/sq. km)	11.1	Office of National Statistics, 2001
No. of settlements with 1,000+ population	3	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Housing		
Housing stock	10,236	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Resident households	8,363	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Owner occupied	73.5%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Private rented	13%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Rented with job/other	7%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Housing association	2%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Local Authority	4.5%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Second and holiday homes	15%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Average house price	£277,116	The Land Registry 2007
Employment		
Economically active	68%	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Unemployment	0.6%	NYCC Unemployment Records, January 2008
Mean household income	£30,595	CACI Household Income Paycheck Data 2006
Nature Conservation		
Site of Special Scientific Interest	50,578 ha	Natural England, 2007
National Nature Reserves	1,278 ha	Natural England, 2007
Local Nature Reserves	85 ha	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Land use		
Moorland	92,500 ha	Countryside Commission, 1991
Woodland	6,000 ha	Countryside Commission, 1991
Farmland	71,800 ha	Countryside Commission, 1991
Length of dry stone walls	8,689 km	Countryside Commission, 1991
Length of hedgerows	1,016 km	Countryside Commission, 1991
Length of main rivers	486 km	The Environment Agency, 2005
Heritage		
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	203	English Heritage, 2008
Conservation Areas	37	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Listed Buildings		
Grade I	18	English Heritage, 2008
Grade II*	68	English Heritage, 2008
Grade II	1,711	English Heritage, 2008
Recreation		
Public footpaths	1,455 km	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Public bridleways	619 km	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
By Ways Open to All Traffic	41 km	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Day visitors (including Gateway Towns)	7,720,000	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2003
Staying visitors (including Gateway Towns)	1,390,000	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2003
Members		
No. of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Members	22	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS

LANDSCAPE

Changes to Park Profile

Woodland makes up less than 4% of land cover but within this there has been a steady increase in broadleaved planting and a reduction in conifer plantations.

Progress against Objectives

Progress has been encouraging, with five of the ten objectives showing a clear trend towards meeting objectives' targets. In particular:

- The 'Countryside Quality Counts' assessment, published in 2007, shows that landscape character in the Yorkshire Dales and Howgill Fells JCAs was maintained between 1999 and 2003 (**L1**).
- Around 70% of the Park is now covered by agri-environment agreements (**L2**), with over 40,000 ha now in Environmental Stewardship (35,000 in Entry Level and 5,000 in Higher Level).
- A 3-year project to conserve and enhance important roadside verges has just started in North Yorkshire, whilst in Cumbria verges are already cut according to botanical classification (**L4**).
- All geological SSSIs in the Park are in 'favourable condition' (**L6**).
- Water quality in Dales' rivers continues to be good, with over 95% in the top two categories of quality (**L9**).

Issues

The area of existing conifer plantation has been significantly reduced (by 85 ha) but a little less than the annual amount that will be needed to meet the objective (**L3**).

The electricity distribution companies covering the Park have adopted different priorities for placing overhead power lines underground (**L4d**). CE Electric is focusing on lines in villages rather than open countryside. As a result, the total length of line placed underground may be shorter than originally estimated. However, the works will produce equally valuable landscape improvements.

A programme of road-sign rationalisation and minimisation has started in North Yorkshire (**L8**) but there has been no progress yet in developing the planned design guide.

There's growing interest in small-scale renewable energy development (**L10**) but, as yet, no meaningful target against which to measure progress.

Summary Assessment

A sound start has been made. For all landscape elements covered by the objectives, the situation has either been maintained or improved.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Changes to Park Profile

The resident population of the Park continues to show a modest rise, standing at 20,071 in 2005 (an increase of 417 since 2001).

The number of houses provided through social housing schemes has increased, by 28 units since 2005, with a further 23 units due for completion and occupation in the near future. House prices have continued to rise, to an average of £277,116 in 2007.

Progress against Objectives

Not all of the objectives contain specific targets so making judgements on progress is more subjective. Progress so far is mixed. Six objectives remain on course, with good progress in particular on:

- A range of events, activities and exhibitions have celebrated and shared cultural heritage (**CC7**). These have included an oral history project, a project recording dialect, and a 'hidden history' exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum.
- Environmental awareness of wider issues (**CC8**) has been raised through establishment of district LSP task groups and action plans, which should lead to a number of specific projects in 2008.
- The National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund (**CC10**) funded 19 projects, worth over £950,000, bringing economic, social and environmental benefits.

Issues

The National Park Authority has consulted on but not yet set specific targets for increasing affordable and local needs housing (**CC1**). A target will be set as part of the process of preparing the Local Development Framework but this is unlikely to be adopted formally until 2009.

Only one walking and cycling route (**CC3**) is currently under investigation within the Park, and no funding has yet been confirmed for any such projects.

NYCC has initiated the development of two area Traffic Management Strategies (Hawes and Settle), and over the next 5 years further strategies will be developed to cover other areas of the National Park (**CC4**).

Summary Assessment

Initial progress has been mixed, perhaps reflecting the fact that several of the objectives are not due to be completed until 2011. There is, therefore, still time to catch up.

It's too early to say whether the recent downturn in the housing market will have any significant, long-term effect on prices in the Dales. It's probable that specific actions will continue to be needed to provide housing that's affordable.

ACCESS AND RECREATION

Changes to Park Profile

The development of the Pennine Bridleway has been an important addition to the Park's network of over 2,000 km of rights of way.

Progress against Objectives

There's been good progress on 6 of the 10 objectives. In particular:

- 82% of highly-sensitive 'green lanes' now have management plans in place (**AR2**).
- All three Definitive Maps of rights of way have been digitised (**AR3**), and are now being checked before being made available to the public.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans have been developed for North Yorkshire and Cumbria (**AR4**)
- 90% of the Pennine Bridleway route through the Dales is now completed (**AR10**).

Issues

Despite a very significant programme of improvement work, the percentage of rights of way that are 'easy to use' has dropped from 83% in 2006 to 77% in 2007 (**AR1**). There is a strong likelihood that this reflects the vagaries of the sampling system (only 5% of routes) but this will need to be kept under review.

Public transport services to and within the Park have declined and fewer events are now accessible by public transport (**AR6**)

The length of routes accessible to wheelchair users and those with limited mobility (**AR7**) has increased (by 0.4 km and 13 km respectively) but this is less than the amount needed to meet the objective by 2010.

No 'quiet lanes' schemes have been identified or planned in the Park (**AR9**)

Summary Assessment

A largely positive picture, with good progress in several areas. The key issue is around physical access – both to and within the Park. While there is still plenty of time to achieve the relevant objectives, early indications are that a more sustained level of resources may be needed in coming years.

UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT

Changes to Park Profile

None.

Progress against Objectives

Recent and planned actions should ensure that nine of the ten objectives will be achieved. In particular, good progress has already been made in relation to:

- A survey of 500 visitors in eight locations in 2007 revealed that 99.9% were aware that they were in a National Park (**UE2**).
- Anecdotal and interim evidence suggests progress is being made (**UE3**). A more diverse range of visitors are seen in the NP; 2% of visitors taking part in an access survey classed themselves as other than 'white'; and an interim 'Beyond the Boundary' survey in Bradford in 2006 confirmed that 12% of the Asian community could name the Yorkshire Dales National Park (8% in 2004). More specific evidence will be available in 2010.
- A survey of young people, including work with focus groups, was carried out in 2007 (**UE6**). The results have been used to develop the 'Go Dales' project, which is intended to provide young people with an enjoyable and 'relevant' experience of the national park
- The Tourism Partnership has over 600 events listed on its database, including 'Walking for Health' events (**UE9**).
- 95% of the target tourism businesses have signed up to the Authority's five point action plan for sustainable tourism (**UE10**).

Issues

There are a number of objectives (notably **UE1** and **UE3**) on which progress can only be measured through large, infrequent surveys. While there's no reason to suppose these objectives are not on course, we will not know for sure until the surveys are carried out in 2010.

Nationally, the number of people who can name the Yorkshire Dales as being a national park has increased from 7% in 2001 to 9% in 2007. However, the original objective (10%) will now not be achieved until 2010 (**UE8**) – when the next national survey is carried out.

Summary Assessment

A good start with two objectives already achieved, and seven others still on course.

NATURE CONSERVATION

Changes to Park Profile

The area of broadleaf native woodland continues to increase, although still making up little more than 2% of the Park.

Progress against Objectives

Good progress has been made on the following:

- The area of SSSI land in ‘favourable or recovering’ condition has increased by 2,000 ha, and now stands at 80% (NC3b);
- 53 ha of hay meadows have been restored or enhanced (NC4a) through the Haytime project;
- 166 ha of native broadleaf woodland have been planted over the last two years (NC4d)
- The Park-wide habitat map is 95% complete and will be made publicly-accessible via the North & East Yorkshire Data Centre in 2008 (NC7);

Issues

Until the habitat map is completed in July 2008, there is no available data on the condition and extent of species and habitats beyond SSSIs. As a result, it is not possible at this stage to judge progress on a number of objectives (notably **NC3a**, **NC4a and c**, and **NC5**).

No floodplain wetland has yet been created (**NC4b**).

While the area of broadleaf woodland has increased significantly, even higher rates of planting will be needed if the objective is to be achieved (**NC4d**).

Summary Assessment

Overall, a lot of progress has been made, notably in relation to improving the condition of the most important wildlife sites (SSSIs). Outside of these sites, the position is still unclear but significant progress has been made towards providing the necessary data, and this will be available later this year.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Changes to Park Profile

The number of Listed buildings and structures has fallen to 1,797 following the discovery that three Listed milestones have disappeared from their recorded locations. It is not known when the milestones were taken.

Progress against Objectives

All ten objectives remain on course to be achieved. Progress has been especially good on the following:

- Almost 2,000 new records were added to the Historic Environment Record in 2007 (**HE2**) and a number of actions are seeking to ensure information is available and accessible.
- All data on the condition of designated buildings, monuments and features is now less than 5 years old and a programme is in place to ensure this continues to be the case (**HE3**).
- Action was taken to remove 5 Listed Buildings from the 'at risk' register (**HE4**) – taking the total number at risk down to 72 (4.0%)
- 40% of Conservation Areas now have up-to-date character appraisals (**HE9**)

Issues

English Heritage will be launching a new 'Heritage at Risk' Strategy in July 2008. This will include an outline on the condition and vulnerability of Scheduled Monuments compiled as part of a national Scheduled Monuments at Risk Survey. Following this there will be a need to work with English Heritage and other partners to draw up a programme to meet the long-term objective of getting 95% of Scheduled Monuments in optimal condition by 2020.

Summary Assessment

At this early stage, there can be confidence that most, if not all, of the objectives will be achieved on time. Good progress is already being made, even on those with long timescales.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Changes to Park Profile

Unemployment is very low (0.6% in 2008) but many jobs are part-time or seasonal, and are low paid. The average household income in 2006 was below the national average at £30,595.

Progress against Objectives

Not all of the objectives contain specific targets so making judgements on progress is more subjective. However, progress so far is generally positive, with seven of the ten objectives on course, and some progress on the other three. Notable achievements include:

- An initial bid, for the 'Wider Yorkshire Dales' to become a LEADER area was successful. This allows a full bid to be made this summer which, if successful, will release regeneration funding up to 2013.
- Some 1.77ha of the 9. ha of employment land allocated in the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan has been made available and developed since the Local Plan was adopted in 2006 (**EE6**)
- A significant step was taken to further develop the Dales' recreational infrastructure (**EE8**) with completion earlier this year of the feasibility study for a coast to coast mountain bike route.
- North Yorkshire County Council's Adult Learning Service has improved access to a wide range of adult learning opportunities through the use of village halls and community access points (**EE10**). A mobile ICT Unit has also taken learning into more remote National Park communities.

Issues

There's been little progress in developing a 'quality of place' brand (**EE1**). While the current application for Europarc charter for sustainable tourism, if successful, will raise awareness of the area's special qualities, this will not provide the specific branding proposed by the objective.

Delays in securing European Commission approval for the new Rural Development Programme for England, meant that new regional programmes to support the competitiveness of agriculture and wider rural development could not start until January 2008.

Summary Assessment

Good progress is generally being made although that assessment is, of necessity, largely subjective. The recent launch of the economic strands of the RDPE, and the prospect of long-term funding through the Dales Leader bid, offer further reasons to be positive about achieving the Plan's objectives.