

# Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024



© John Flinn

# Contents

AONB Designation	3
Nidderdale’s Natural Beauty	4
Nidderdale and Other Protected Landscape Designations	6
Nidderdale AONB and Local Authorities	7
About the Management Plan	8
Links to Other Plans, Policy and Legislation	10
Guiding Principles	13
Vision	16
Management Plan Policies and Objectives	17

# Summary

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status means that Nidderdale is one of the country’s finest landscapes. The special qualities of Nidderdale AONB are embedded in the working nature of the landscape, which supports a wide range of nationally and internationally important habitats and wildlife, and a fascinating cultural heritage.

Nidderdale’s Management Plan is a high-level strategy that provides a framework for action designed to protect the AONB’s special qualities. The Plan is for everyone with an interest in the AONB.

## A long term vision

Our Vision is for Nidderdale AONB to be

- A vibrant working landscape where rural communities, land managers and other rural businesses are working collaboratively together to protect natural beauty
- A place where environmental limits are widely respected and concerted effort is being made to reduce carbon emissions while seeking opportunities to increase carbon storage
- Made up of a resilient landscape renowned for its high windswept moors, ancient woodlands, livestock-grazed pasture, flower-rich meadows, historic country houses and parkland filled with veteran trees
- Home to a greater abundance and diversity of wildlife compared to the 2019 State of Nidderdale’s Nature report

- A welcoming destination for people seeking opportunities for recreation
- A place where people can experience tranquility and improve their health and wellbeing

## A focus for 2019 - 2024

Over the next five years work in a number of key areas aims to make significant progress towards this Vision.

Wildlife

Work with land managers and partner organisations including Natural England will focus on ensuring designated sites and getting priority habitats outside of these designations into favourable or recovering condition.

Future wildlife conservation work will be based on comprehensive and accurate data that will form the basis for targeted action on wildlife. Over the next five years the AONB will collaborate with partners including the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership to try and reverse the decline in populations of characteristic upland species, like curlew and adder for example, as well as continuing The Wild Watch and ensuring that robust wildlife data is made widely available.

## Landscape

Work on the National Lottery funded Skell Valley project with the National Trust, contributing to development of the the new Environmental Land Management scheme, helping land managers to bring ancient woodlands into active management and implementing the second phase of The Wild Watch project will be priorities in the period covered by this Management Plan.

Promoting understanding of the AONB's natural beauty and landscape is also important; the emphasis will be on monitoring landscape change, safeguarding the tranquility of the AONB and increasing awareness of threats from invasive non-native species and diseases like ash die back.

The planning system has a critical role in ensuring that the openness and unspoilt character of the AONB's landscape is protected and playing an active part in the planning process will continue to be a priority for the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee.

## Living and Working in the AONB

Nidderdale's farming industry is at the heart of what makes this landscape so special. At a time of unprecedented uncertainty about the future of upland farming, the Management Plan commits the AONB to work with the industry to try and increase the resilience, profitability and environmental sustainability of farm businesses.

Sustainable tourism initiatives will also be supported through AONB led events as well as through work with tourism partners including Visit Harrogate.

## Climate Change

Work on climate change will focus on initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and increase the AONB's capacity for carbon storage for example through restoring its precious peat habitats, significantly increasing the amount of woodland cover and actively supporting installation of renewable energy infrastructure where this does not result in harm to landscape.

Climate change adaptation measures will include implementing a targeted habitat expansion linkage and creation programme, tackling invasive non-native species and natural flood management for example.

## Heritage and the Historic Environment

Thousands of years of human activity have given rise to Nidderdale's rich industrial and agricultural heritage. Maintaining the legacy of the Landscape Partnership's work on the archaeology and heritage of Upper Nidderdale will be priority alongside a major investigation of the archaeology and heritage of the Skell Valley in conjunction with the National Trust. The AONB will also use its role in the planning process to protect heritage features from harm.

## Understanding and Enjoyment

With 820km of public footpaths and bridleways, the rights of way network in the AONB is key to providing opportunities for enjoyment. A range of activities will focus on improving the quality of rights of way, making them more accessible and improving information about their condition.

Increasing the profile of the AONB; helping people to understand its designation and promoting its special qualities are fundamental to the Management Plan.



## AONB Designation

---

There are 46 AONBs in England and Wales. The boundaries were originally drawn in the 1940's when local authorities were given powers to administer AONBs by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

The 1949 Act states that 'the natural beauty of an area shall be construed as including references to the preservation or, as the case may be, the conservation of its flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features'.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

The legal framework has been progressively strengthened since the 1940s by subsequent legislation including the Countryside Act (1968), the Environment Act (1995), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in particular reaffirmed the importance of AONBs as part of the family of designated landscapes by placing new responsibilities on local authorities including a statutory duty to prepare and review management plans and a duty of all 'relevant authorities' to have regard to AONB purposes.

AONB status means that Nidderdale is one of the country's finest landscapes. National planning policy confirms that AONBs share the highest level of protection alongside National Parks.



## Nidderdale's Natural Beauty

The AONB's landscape is diverse, full of contrasts and rich in wildlife. The scenery to the west is dominated by heather moors that have internationally important conservation status. The AONB's moorlands also provide endless opportunities for enjoying the countryside.

To the east, as the landscape broadens and flattens, is a softer, more pastoral landscape with historic parks and gardens and great country houses like Swinton Castle, and the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site.

The AONB's special qualities have been strongly influenced by farming and industry. The remains of 19th century mines and quarries, and the dams and reservoirs constructed by the water industry, are still prominent in the landscape. Earlier phases of settlement, farming and industry define the form of villages and towns, transport routes and field patterns. The historic environment is a key feature of natural beauty. The following account summarises special qualities under three headings - landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage:

### Landscape

The moorland plateau landscape is characterised by an exhilarating feeling of openness, elevation and exposure. This landscape is accessible to walkers under Open Access provisions. The gritstone geology that underlies the AONB's moorland plateau outcrops in places to form crags that overlook river valleys.

Elsewhere gritstone has formed striking weathered tors at Brimham Rocks, which is nationally important for its geological significance. Gritstone is widely used as a building material, creating an appearance of unity and harmony in the landscape.

Farming is the dominant feature of the grassland plateau to the east of the moorland line. Farmsteads, often associated with small broadleaved woodlands, are distributed across a landscape that is dominated by the strong and regular grid pattern formed by drystone walls.

The transition between the upland plateau and the gently rolling landscapes that merge with the Vale of York, as well as the difference between the moorland plateau and the enclosed valleys, creates a landscape that is full of distinction. The dale and valley landscapes are enclosed and pastoral with meadows, woodlands, stone villages and parklands. Water is a key feature – in rivers and streams and in the AONB's 11 reservoirs with their elaborately constructed dams, spillways, reservoir lodges and aqueducts that date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### Wildlife

Most of the AONB's moorlands are nationally and internationally important for wildlife. Moorland designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest also forms part of the North Pennines Special Protection Area and the North Pennines Special

Area of Conservation. Diverse and species-rich mosaics of dwarf shrub vegetation interspersed with native broadleaved woodland in gills on the edges of the moors dominate the scenery, turning the moors purple in August. They support strategically important populations of birds including red grouse, merlin, and golden plover alongside other Red Listed birds such as curlew and lapwing that breed in the adjoining meadows and pastures. Their calls in spring dominate the landscape. Reptiles including adder, slow worm and common lizard are locally frequent, and there are still areas of flower-rich meadows on the grassland plateau alongside fields that have been improved to produce silage crops. Species-rich examples also occur in areas formerly given over to lead mining where characteristic plants like spring sandwort and mountain pansy thrive. Ancient broadleaved woodlands dominated by oak and carpeted with bluebells in spring clothe the sides of the valleys, while alder forms extensive areas of wet woodland alongside river and streams. Otters and water voles are regularly recorded here and both brook and river lampreys are widespread.

### Cultural Heritage

The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site is the most renowned representative of an extensive network of designed landscapes, including Hackfall, a string of parklands overlooking the Wharfe in the south of the AONB and many non-designated gardens, orchards and parks that have been identified and recorded in recent years.

The AONB's 14 Conservation Area villages contain many Listed Buildings associated with the area's industrial past that was dominated by mining, quarrying and textiles. The development of the water industry in the nineteenth century has left a legacy of huge and imposing gritstone reservoir dams in an upland setting where numerous field barns and farmsteads combine to form a characteristic scene.

Features of the moorland landscape associated with grouse shooting, such as shooting lodges and butts, track ways and stone gateposts are also important components of cultural heritage.

Remnants of the medieval landscape, such as John of Gaunt's Castle, are still extant and recent research has begun to piece together features of under-recorded prehistoric landscapes.



© Chris Lacey

## Nidderdale and Other Protected Landscape Designations

---

### International

AONBs and National Parks in the UK are part of a global network of protected landscapes defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [IUCN] as 'Category V landscapes'. Their distinguishing feature is a set of distinctive ecological and cultural characteristics that are the result of the interaction between people and nature.

The importance of human influenced landscapes was recognised by the UK Government in 2007 when it adopted the European Landscape Convention. It defines landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the

result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. Landscapes encompass ecosystems that deliver vital benefits to society like drinking water and carbon sequestration, and the Convention also recognises the importance of landscape in creating a sense of local identity.

### Landscapes for Life – the National Association for AONBs

The National Association for AONBs works at a national level alongside National Parks England to promote the interests of UK protected landscapes. Nidderdale is a member of the National Association and shares its objectives to:

- Support the economic and social well-being of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty
- Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future
- Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and encourage people to take action for their conservation
- Value, sustain, and promote the benefits that the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty provide for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being

### Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership

The aims of the Northern Upland Chain LNP are to:

- Help to create a place where our special natural qualities, including our breeding wading birds, our blanket bogs, our hay meadows, our tumbling rivers and our upland woodlands, are valued for their beauty, and for their contribution to the nation's economic, physical and spiritual well-being
- Support a living and working upland landscape, a place where an environment-based economy thrives and where development and growth take place in balance with the conservation of the natural world on which they are reliant

The LNP's territory covers five protected landscapes in the North Pennines including Nidderdale, the Forest of Bowland and North Pennines AONBs together with the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland National Parks. The LNP is working to improve collaboration and joint-working at a landscape scale between AONBs, National Parks, RSPB, Rivers Trusts, water companies, farming and landowning organisations and representatives of Government bodies including Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England.



## Nidderdale AONB and Local Authorities

Local authorities act as accountable bodies for the AONB. North Yorkshire County Council covers the whole of the designated area and the majority of the AONB is part of Harrogate District. Harrogate Borough Council is lead authority for Nidderdale AONB. A smaller area of land to the north is within Richmondshire and Hambleton Districts.

The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 contains commitments to health promotion and makes specific reference to “social prescribing” which is about getting more people more active more often. Mental health, obesity and loneliness are some of the conditions causing great pressure on the NHS and the AONB is an untapped resource that GPs, hospitals and others can exploit to tackle these issues.

Nidderdale AONB policy and programmes designed to implement policy are overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee. The Committee, which aims to be the guardian of this nationally important landscape, acts as an adviser to organisations whose work has an impact on the AONB so they can better align their work to the objectives of AONB designation.

The Joint Advisory Committee also oversees the work of an AONB staff team funded by Defra with financial support from local authorities, including North Yorkshire County and Harrogate Borough Councils.



## About the Management Plan

---

### Management Plan Purpose

Publication and review of AONB Management Plans is a statutory requirement. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) placed an obligation on local authorities to 'prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty AONB'. AONB Management Plans must be reviewed every five years.

Nidderdale's Management Plan is a high-level strategy that provides a framework for action designed to protect the AONB's special qualities. The Plan is for everyone with an interest in the AONB, including land managers, members of rural communities, third sector bodies, local authorities and Government agencies. It is a spatial strategy, and responsibility for implementing the Plan's objectives is shared by a broadly-based alliance of people and organisations across the AONB and further afield.

The Business Plan contains a range of specific, measurable actions geared to each of the objectives in the Management Plan within a financial and administrative structure that is set out in the Business Plan.

### Management Plan Monitoring

The Management Plan is intended to be an aid to more effective and efficient action on the ground. It may have to be updated before 2024 to take account of changes that could be brought about by the UK's

negotiations with the European Union. The Plan may also require updating when the Government publishes the results of its Review of National Parks and AONBs.

Reliable information about performance in meeting the Management Plan's objectives is essential to provide partners, stakeholders and the wider community with the means to evaluate progress. It will also provide feedback to organisations involved with implementing the Plan so that they can make tactical modifications to their delivery programmes. Monitoring will take place on two levels:

#### ***Strategic-level Monitoring***

The condition of the AONB's environment is the key test of the Business Plan's effectiveness in meeting the designation's aim of conserving natural beauty. Monitoring will take place over the five year period of the Management Plan by reference to a set of key indicators derived from the 'Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes'.

Criteria contained in the monitoring framework being developed by Defra to measure progress towards achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan will be incorporated into the AONB's monitoring work when the framework becomes available.

#### ***Business Plan Monitoring***

Objectives in the Management Plan represent high

level priorities for the Joint Advisory Committee, AONB staff and the wider partnership. The Business Plan translates Management Plan objectives into an annual programme of targeted actions. The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee will formally review the Business Plan every 12 months. A summary of performance published in the Annual Review will be available for public scrutiny on the AONB's website.

### Management Plan Process

Consultation on the scope of the 2019 - 2024 Management Plan included an exercise to gather views on key issues. A postcard inviting people to say what they liked about the AONB, and asking them to identify the two most important questions for the Plan to address was sent every address in the designated area. The issues most frequently raised were the need to protect the AONB's landscape and wildlife from inappropriate development. Opportunities to enjoy the countryside via the rights of way network is important and continued investment in needed to ensure these opportunities are maintained.

Partner organisations and representatives of groups working closely on AONB programmes took part in thematic workshops on Engagement and Enjoyment, Sustainable Development and Planning, Land Management and Farming and Tourism. A Management Plan Steering Group comprising representatives of key partners met to consider issues raised in more detail.



## Links to Other Plans, Policy and Legislation

---

### International

European legislation on the protection of biodiversity adopted by the UK applies to the AONB. The Habitats and Birds Directives confer internationally important conservation status on most of the AONB's moorlands. Other relevant international agreements include the Convention on Biodiversity signed by 167 countries in 1992 and a further 29 since, the Water Framework Directive incorporated into the Water Environment Regulations by the UK Government in 2017 and the European Landscape Convention. These commitments form an international dimension for Nidderdale's Plan.

### National

#### ***A Green Future***

In January 2018, the Government published 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'. It sets out the Government's objectives for improving the environment, within a generation. The Environment Plan's Goals and Targets on Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change Clean Air, Clean and Plentiful Water, Thriving Wildlife for example will drive new policy and legislation that is likely to have a profound effect on the AONB's rural communities, farmers, businesses and how the landscape looks. The Environment Plan includes a commitment to Enhancing Beauty, Heritage and Engagement with the Natural Environment, and a

commitment to a new Northern Forest that includes Nidderdale in its proposed boundary.

The Environment Plan recognises that difficult choices are inevitable, but they should take account of the full value of benefits derived from the environment by adopting a natural capital approach. Natural capital is 'the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and seas. These are all elements of nature that directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large'. The AONB has large stocks of natural capital such as peat, woodland and clean water. Management of these assets by land managers is making a significant contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change, reducing flood risk and maintaining or improving the quality of life for people living elsewhere in the region. To ensure these ecosystem services continue to be delivered in future, it will be crucial to retain the skills and knowledge of Nidderdale's land managers in the years to come.

The Environment Plan also contains a strong commitment to AONBs: 'the creation of designated landscapes – which also include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty AONBs – has been among the outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years'.

#### ***National Planning Policy Framework***

In 2018 the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It sets out the Government's current planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied by local planning authorities.

Although NPPF contains a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' it is important to note that it does not apply in protected landscapes like AONBs: 'the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development'. The policies referred to by NPPF are those relating to 'habitats sites and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets.'

NPPF places an obligation on local planning authorities to ensure in that coming to a decision on a planning application 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty' in AONBs, which, alongside National Parks, 'have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues'.

### Local

AONB Management Plan aims and objectives are reflected in Local Plans produced by District Councils and the Minerals and Waste Local Plans published by North Yorkshire County Council. Harrogate's Local Plan, which covers approximately 85% of the designated area, contains a stand-alone policy on the AONB in its Growth Strategy in the forefront of the Plan. It states that 'The natural beauty and special qualities of the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced and the impact of proposals on the AONB and its setting will be carefully considered'. The policy signals the planning authority's opposition to 'Development proposals or land management practises that would have an adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB'.

The Management Plan is also aligned to the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Trust's World Heritage Site Management Plan for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.





## Guiding Principles

---

Six Guiding Principles are embedded in the Management Plan. They are woven into the aims and objectives that form the core of the Plan:

### The Importance of Landscape

Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention, which came into force in the UK on 1 March 2007, as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. The AONB's landscape consists of physical, biological and cultural elements that combine in a way that can be described by reference to quantifiable evidence, but it also has a value to society that generations of people have campaigned to protect.

Management Plan aims are designed to protect landscape features, such as oak woodland and ancient monuments, but they are also intended to protect the integrity of the landscape as a whole. This is how the AONB is experienced by people who value tranquillity and its unique sense of place - a feeling of being close to nature and remote from the pressures of daily life. Implementation of Management Plan objectives should keep this overarching theme in the foreground.

### Combatting Climate Change

Recently published reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Committee on Climate Change established by the UK Government

following the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Environment Agency have injected a new sense of urgency into the debate about how best to limit global temperature rise. In the preface to a report published in November 2018, the Chair of the Environment Agency wrote 'Humanity's greatest challenge requires us to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for heatwaves, wildfires, storms, rising seas, shifting crop patterns, the spread of disease - and all of the ways those impacts will affect populations around the world.'

The changing climate has already had a noticeable impact locally over many years. Record-breaking summer temperatures and a lack of rainfall in 2018 for example threatened Nidderdale's drinking water resources and the amount of winter forage for livestock. Although Nidderdale was not affected, the prolonged dry weather was implicated in the large-scale wildfires on Saddleworth Moor in 2018 and in Wharfedale and Calderdale in 2019. Wildfire damages sensitive habitats and has significant climate change impacts.

The Management Plan contains a series of aims and objectives to reduce the harmful effects of climate change, such as restoring degraded peat, planting new woodland designed to the UK Forestry Standard and increasing the resilience of existing woodland threatened by climate change-related threats from invasive non-native species as well as

pests and disease. The Plan also advocates creating links between wildlife habitats to accommodate future changes in species' range. They are examples of Management Plan objectives that signify a commitment to work in partnership with others to combat climate change and to develop adaptation responses where necessary.

### Managing Natural and Maintaining Cultural Services

Defra's 'A Green Future' defines natural capital as the 'sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas'. 'A Green Future' proposes that an understanding of natural capital should be at the forefront of decision-making that combines economic and accounting methods with the best natural science understanding to ensure that environmental assets are properly valued in considering proposals that could cause environmental harm.

Land managers have a vital role in maintaining the AONB's stock of natural capital. They pass on the benefits to people across the region including carbon sequestration, drinking water, and high quality food. These benefits, which are called Ecosystem Services, make a significant contribution to the quality of life for people living in urban areas surrounding the AONB and to the wider community.

---

There is growing evidence that human health and well-being is linked to a rich and diverse historic environment as well as an environment that is full of wildlife. Action to protect cultural services produced in management of heritage, including local traditions as well as Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, is reflected in the section on Heritage and the Historic Environment contained in the Management Plan.

#### Promoting Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015 aims to build on the Millennium Development Goals contained in Agenda 21 and to address actions that have not yet been completed. The 2030 Agenda commits the signatories to ‘achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner.’

This acknowledges that new development will be necessary in Nidderdale, as elsewhere, to meet existing needs more effectively and to ensure that the components of well-being are distributed more equitably. But human activities invariably exceed environmental thresholds that are often poorly considered even when every effort is made to avoid, minimize and restore. Aims in the Management Plan are seeking to ensure that sustainable development delivers a environmental net gain.

#### Supporting the Farming Industry and the Rural Economy

It has always been difficult to make a profitable living from farming in the uplands. Work carried out by the AONB since 2017 clearly shows that many farms are struggling to survive despite the best efforts of farmers and their families. The Government’s announcement on the end to the Basic Payment Scheme could have a significant impact on farm businesses, depending on how post-Brexit agriculture policy evolves in the coming years. However, farming is fundamentally important to the task of maintaining the AONB’s landscape and, as many individual farmers are already doing, enhancing the quality of landscape features.

Aims in the Management Plan commit the AONB to doing whatever it can to retain a profitable farming industry and to support farmers and land managers in sustainable land management practice.

Nidderdale’s shooting industry contributes to the maintenance of valued landscape features. Despite widespread examples of good practice, many of Nidderdale’s internationally designated moorland sites are defined by the Government’s conservation advisers as in need of modified management. Aims in the Plan commit the AONB to working with the industry to promote best-practice while at the same time working with industry representatives, the police and others to put an end to the illegal persecution of birds of prey.

Aims elsewhere in the Management Plan acknowledge that landscape change brought about by development is necessary to meet the social and economic needs of local residents and visitors. The AONB will continue to resist harmful development while working constructively with applicants and local planning authorities to facilitate small-scale development that results in a environmental net gain.

#### Enjoyment

Visitors to the AONB, attracted by the quality of its environment, are the lifeblood of many AONB businesses and there is now robust evidence showing that active recreation outdoors, volunteering and the experience of tranquillity can lead to significant improvements in many aspects of mental and physical health, from depression, loneliness and autism to obesity, diabetes and respiratory conditions. Management Plan aims and objectives are designed to reflect this.



## Vision

---

By 2050, the AONB will be:

- A vibrant working landscape where rural communities, land managers and other rural businesses are working collaboratively together to protect natural beauty
- A place where environmental limits are widely respected and concerted effort is being made to reduce carbon emissions while seeking opportunities to increase carbon storage
- Made up of a resilient landscape renowned for its high windswept moors, ancient woodlands, livestock-grazed pasture, flower-rich meadows, historic country houses and parkland filled with veteran trees
- Home to a greater abundance and diversity of wildlife compared to the 2019 State of Nidderdale's Nature report
- A welcoming destination for people seeking opportunities for recreation
- A place where people can experience tranquillity and improve their health and wellbeing



## Management Plan Aims and Objectives

---

This is a statutory plan. Government agencies, local authorities and other public bodies have a legal duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), to 'have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'.

This is also a Plan for the partnership. As well as public bodies, the Plan is for the broad coalition of community groups, volunteers, farmers and landowners, local businesses, schools and universities that have been instrumental in delivery of the objectives contained in previous versions of the AONB's Management Plan. The 2019 - 2024 Plan will build on these robust and long-standing foundations.

The Management Plan is a high-level strategy covering a five year timeframe. Progress by the partnership towards achieving the Plan's objectives will require a different tactical response over this period. Specific actions geared to the objectives will be incorporated in the annual Business Plan. The Annual Review will provide a record of progress.

Implementation of the objectives will be achieved by project-based partnerships made up of different combinations of the AONB's partner organisations.



## Climate Change

### Aim (CC1)

Reduce carbon emissions and seek opportunities for increased carbon storage

#### Objectives

1. Support work by moorland land managers and the Yorkshire Peat Partnership to increase the carbon storage capacity of Nidderdale's moorlands
2. Increase woodland cover to bring the AONB into line with nationally agreed targets and review Nidderdale's 2006 Woodland Opportunity Plan to identify new areas for woodland expansion and creation
3. Provide help and advice to farmers on emissions reduction by supporting preparation of farm business plans with carbon reduction targets and climate change adaptation measures
4. Work with planning authorities and regulatory bodies to ensure expansion of renewable energy generating capacity does not have an adverse impact on wildlife or landscape
5. Work with land managers and partner organisations to reduce the risk of moorland wildfires

### Aim (CC2)

Adopt climate change adaptation measures

#### Objectives

1. Implement a habitat expansion, linkage and creation programme based on Habitat Suitability Models for species of conservation concern
2. Support work to reduce the impact of invasive non-native species
3. Implement natural flood management measures on the AONB's river catchments

## Living and Working in the AONB

### Aim (LW1)

Increase the resilience, profitability and environmental sustainability of the AONB's farming industry

#### Objectives

1. Support the preparation and implementation of whole farm plans that encourage the setting of goals based on rigorous budgeting and financial analysis
2. Provide advice to farmers and land managers seeking planning permission to diversify their businesses
3. Provide farmers and landowners with practical help and advice on Environmental Land Management scheme grant applications
4. Work with partners and local businesses to create apprenticeships linked to land management
5. Support farming industry-led initiatives including Facilitation Funded groups in Upper Nidderdale and the Skell Catchment, the Northern Upland Chain Farmer Panel and the Yorkshire Dales Farmer Network
6. Work with the Farming Community Network to combat the effects of rural isolation and uncertainty about the future of the industry
7. Support Yorkshire Water's plans to expand the network of 'Beyond Nature' farms

### Aim(LW2)

Facilitate development that meets the economic and social needs of the AONB's rural communities where this does not cause harm to natural beauty

#### Objectives

1. Work with business to ensure proposals for new development do not harm natural beauty and deliver a net environmental gain where possible
2. Work with land and property owners to develop innovative ideas for new land uses that enhance natural beauty and opportunities for people to enjoy it
3. Work with tourism businesses on proposals for new initiatives that are founded on sustainable principles and avoid landscape harm

## Landscape

### Aim (L1)

Increase understanding of AONB special qualities

#### Objectives

1. Implement and monitor a PR campaign targeted at the AONB's key audiences
2. Monitor landscape change by publishing data in an annual report
3. Revise and update the 2004 Landscape Character Assessment of the AONB to create a vibrant portrait of what makes Nidderdale's landscape distinctive, different and nationally important
4. Secure International Dark Sky Reserve status for Nidderdale in conjunction with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

### Aim (L2)

Maintain and enhance the AONBs natural beauty

#### Objectives

1. Work with Defra to ensure the new Environmental Land Management scheme delivers a positive outcome for natural beauty
2. Increase active management of the AONB's woodland to improve the landscape and wildlife value of semi-natural ancient woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites
3. Underground overhead power lines where they cause harm to open landscapes, the setting of heritage assets and features of the historic environment
4. Safeguard the tranquility of the AONB

### Aim (L3)

Oppose proposals for major development and applications for smaller scale development that conflict with the purposes of designation within the AONB and outside the designated area where this would affect land within it

#### Objectives

1. Work with applicants to ensure development proposals are consistent with AONB objectives
2. Contribute to the evolution of planning policy affecting the AONB
3. Work with community organisations to adapt planning policy to local circumstances

## Understanding and Enjoyment

### Aim (UE1)

Create more opportunities for people to enjoy the AONB

#### Objectives

1. Gather comprehensive, reliable and up-to-date information on the condition of rights of way and prioritise route maintenance
2. Support work by partner organisations and others to develop the Nidderdale Greenway
3. Improve the condition of the Nidderdale Way
4. Provide environmental advice to organisers of large events
5. Work with health organisations to develop plans for environment-based therapies and social prescribing

### Aim (UE2)

Reduce the impact of vehicular use of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads where this is having an adverse impact on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB and its enjoyment by the public

#### Objectives

1. Seek to prevent illegal vehicular use on public footpaths and bridleways
2. Carry out an environmental assessment of all Unsurfaced and Unclassified Roads
3. Publish an action plan for all Unsurfaced and Unclassified Roads currently used by recreational vehicles

## Wildlife

### Aim (W1)

Ensure designated sites are managed to the highest standards in accordance with national guidelines

### Objectives

1. Ensure that at least 25% of designated wildlife sites are in favourable condition by 2024
2. Ensure that at least 50% of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are maintained in accordance with conservation management plan objectives by 2024

### Aim (W2)

Improve the condition of the AONB's priority habitats and species

### Objectives

1. Improve management of priority habitats outside designated sites so that 50% are in favourable or recovering condition by 2024
2. Work with land owners, moorland managers, the police and others to safeguard birds of prey and prevent their illegal persecution in the AONB
3. Continue to monitor populations of wildlife species targeted by The Wild Watch and continue The Wild Watch's Citizen Science initiatives
4. Publish a 2019 State of Nature Report and a Nature Recovery Plan and work with the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre to ensure access to verified data on Nidderdale's wildlife habitats and species is available to everyone who needs it
5. Work with the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership on habitat restoration and expansion for curlew and adder
6. Conserve, enhance and restore aquatic and riparian habitats
7. Increase awareness of the impact of Chalara on ash trees to promote the benefits of woodland management in responding to threats from pests and diseases

## Heritage and the Historic Environment

### Aim (HH1)

Support innovative proposals for sustainable future use of historic buildings and structures where this does not cause unacceptable harm to the asset or the wider landscape

### Objectives

1. Work with Nidderdale's Landed Estates to produce Whole Estate Plans covering multiple features of heritage interest
2. Reduce the number of heritage assets in the AONB listed in Historic England's 'At Risk' register

### Aim (HH2)

Support initiatives designed to increase awareness and understanding of archaeology and the historic environment

### Objectives

1. Work with local historians and archaeologists on development of a heritage hub to act as a network for identifying new areas of research, to coordinate storage and collation of research outcomes and to organise talks, training and other events
2. Record and conserve the historic landscape of the Skell Valley
3. Deliver the Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership Legacy Plan





**Nidderdale**

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Get in touch:

Nidderdale AONB, The Old Workhouse  
King Street, Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, HG3 5LE

T: 01423 712950

E: [nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk)

W: [nidderdaleaonb.org.uk](http://nidderdaleaonb.org.uk)