

Nidderdale National Landscape: An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Management Plan 2025 to 2030



Nidderdale
National
Landscape

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Plan Overview

Nestled in the heart of North Yorkshire, Nidderdale National Landscape is a designated area of outstanding natural beauty. From windswept moorlands and steep river valleys to rolling pastoral scenes, woodlands, and tranquil waters, this is a working landscape that is rich in cultural heritage, wildlife and beauty.

This Management Plan is a high-level strategy that provides a framework for action designed to conserve and enhance the National Landscape. It is the single most important policy document for the National Landscape. The Management Plan is a plan for the area and for everyone who has an interest in the National Landscape.

Our long-term vision is that the National Landscape 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 continues to be made to reduce climate emissions and 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 great abundance and diversity of wildlife as described in the Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan
- A welcoming destination for a wide range of people seeking opportunities for recreation
- A place where people can experience tranquillity and improve their health and wellbeing

The Plan sets out objectives for the coming 5 years across a range of key areas that will enable significant progress to be made towards this vision.

Climate Change

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and safeguard carbon stores through positive land management. Adapt to a changing climate by increasing landscape resilience. Raise awareness of climate impacts.

Understanding and Enjoyment

Provide opportunities for a wide range of people to visit and enjoy quiet recreation in Nidderdale by improving visitor information, enabling access to the countryside and maintaining and enhancing rights of way.

Nature Recovery

Safeguard existing habitats. Restore and enhance peatlands. Increase species-rich grasslands and improve soil health. Create new broadleaf tree cover and improve woodland management. Increase wetland habitats. Support species recovery.

Heritage and Historic Environment

Reduce heritage assets at risk and support historic property owners to conserve their properties. Increase understanding of cultural heritage. Provide training to help people look after the built and natural landscape.

Living and Working

Support farmers and land managers to increase resilience, profitability and environmental sustainability. Work with the tourism industry to enhance the tourism offer. Support local community needs for affordable housing and services.

Landscape

Develop and implement planning policy that conserves and enhances the National Landscape. Improve the condition of rivers, streams and watercourses. Deliver landscape-scale conservation initiatives.



Photograph © Paul Harris



1 Our Landscape

An Overview of the National Landscape

Nidderdale National Landscape covers 601km² in the foothills of the Pennines in North Yorkshire. It is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This is a living and working landscape, home to 12,700 people who live in Pateley Bridge and the villages, hamlets and farms across the area. The major land uses are upland livestock farming, driven grouse shooting, forestry, recreation and the water industry. The area is important for wildlife with 40% of the landscape recognised as priority habitat, much of which includes sites with international, national or local conservation designations. The 125 Scheduled Monuments, 569 Listed Building and 4 Parks & Gardens recognise the National Landscape's historical significance. An estimated 1.3 million tourists visit the area every year to enjoy the National Landscape's natural beauty.

Designation

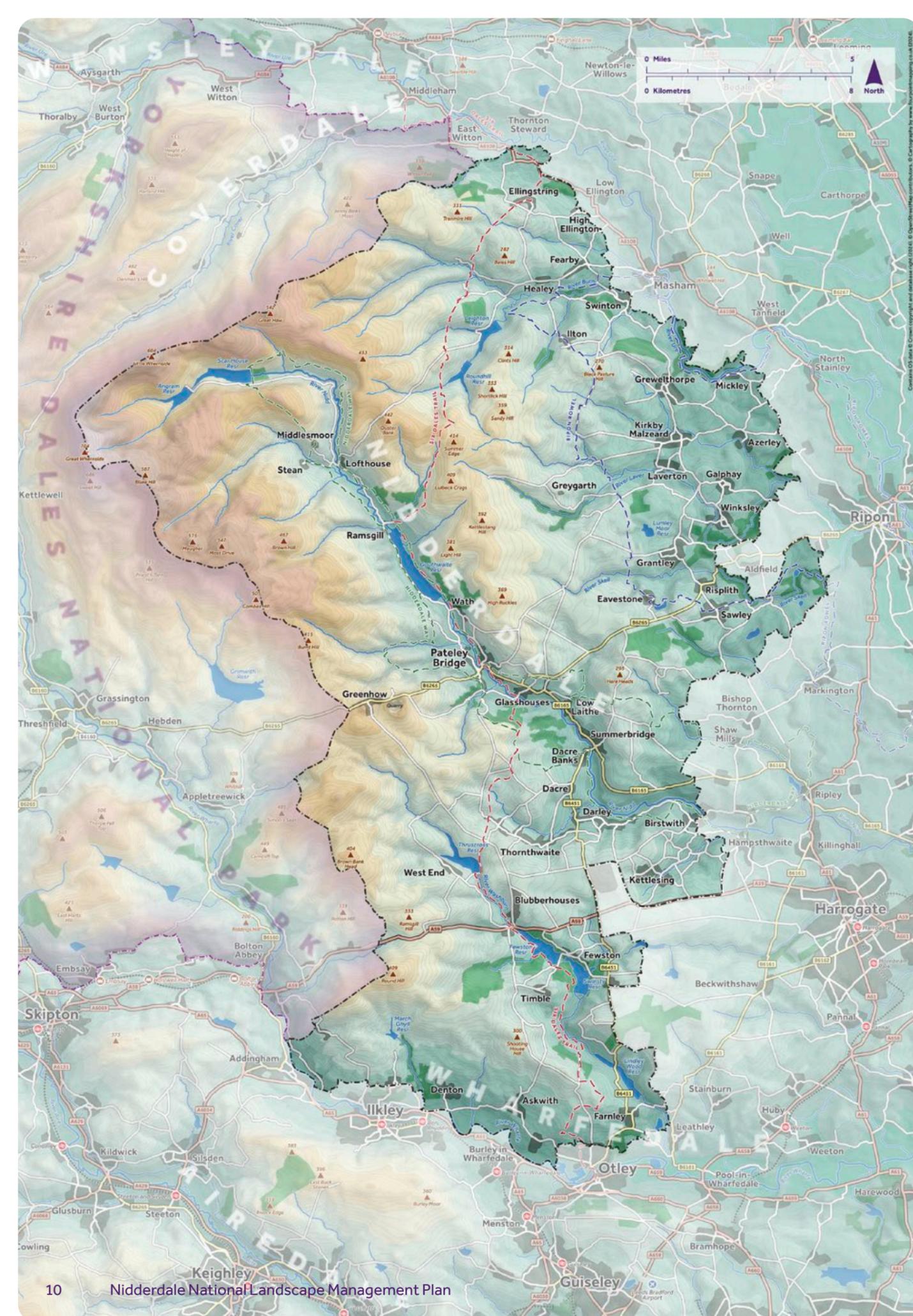
Nidderdale National Landscape is one of 46 areas within England, Wales and Northern Ireland safeguarded in the national interest for its distinctive character and beauty. Nidderdale National Landscape is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The legal framework for AONBs began with the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act when local authorities were given powers to administer AONBs and has been progressively strengthened by subsequent legislation.

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 National Landscape designation remains to this day to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed new responsibilities on local authorities including a statutory duty to prepare and review management plans and a duty for all 'relevant authorities' to have regard to AONB purposes. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 enhanced this duty, and relevant authorities must now "seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area" when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Landscape.

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



Management Plan Purpose and Development



The purpose of the management plan is to be the high-level strategy for Nidderdale National Landscape, setting out a vision and a set of objectives that provide a framework for action that will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape.

The Management Plan is a plan for the area and all those groups and organisations that have an interest in the National Landscape. This includes farmers, foresters, gamekeepers, land managers, landowners, members of rural communities, third sector bodies, the local authority and Government agencies. Responsibility for implementing the Plan's objectives is shared by a broad-based alliance of people and organisations across the National Landscape and beyond.

The Plan has been developed in collaboration with a wide stakeholder group and through public consultation, under the guidance of the National Landscape's Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). In spring 2024, the JAC considered the issues that the new Management Plan would need to address. During summer 2024, a public survey asked members of the public their views on what is most valuable about the National Landscape and what are the most significant issues. This survey was both online and via a postcard delivered to all households within the National Landscape.

Following an evidence-gathering phase, a stakeholder workshop in autumn 2024 brought farmers, landowners, conservation organisations, community representatives and local authority officers and members together to identify the types of action needed to address these issues. The National Landscape Team used the output of this workshop and the public consultation to develop the draft objectives for the Plan, which were approved by the JAC in spring 2025 and shared with the Management Plan stakeholder group for comment, prior to completion of the full draft Management Plan in summer 2025.

Nidderdale's Natural Beauty

Nidderdale National 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 moorlands are fringed by rough pastures that support breeding wading birds, such as curlew. The National Landscape's moorlands also provide endless opportunities for people to access this rugged 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 National Landscape'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, historic 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.



Photograph © Barry Carter

Landscape

The moorland plateau landscape is characterised by an exhilarating feeling of openness, elevation and exposure. This landscape is crisscrossed by routes that allow people to access these areas and enjoy the sense of remoteness and tranquillity they give. It has the darkest skies within the National Landscape with low levels of light pollution providing dramatic night sky views. The gritstone geology that underlies the moorland plateau is visible in places where it forms dramatic rock outcrops that overlook river valleys. At Brimham Rocks, the gritstone has formed striking weathered tors which are nationally important for their geological significance. People living and working in the area have traditionally made use of local gritstone as a building material, creating a sense of unity and harmony in the landscape.



Photograph © Paul Harris

Farming is the dominant feature of the grassland plateau that lies to the east of the moorland area. Here 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 moorland and grassland plateau in the west and the gently rolling landscapes that merge with the Vale of York to the east, as well as the difference between the moorland plateau and its enclosed valleys, creates a landscape that is full of distinction. The dale and valley landscapes are enclosed and pastoral with semi-natural grazing on the moorland fringes, meadows, woodlands, stone villages and parklands. The field boundaries are delineated by dry stone walls and hedges, with stone boundaries often found in the west part of the National Landscape, while hedgerows become more common to the east. Water is a key feature – in rivers and streams and in the National Landscape’s 11 reservoirs with their elaborately constructed dams, spillways, reservoir lodges and aqueducts that date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

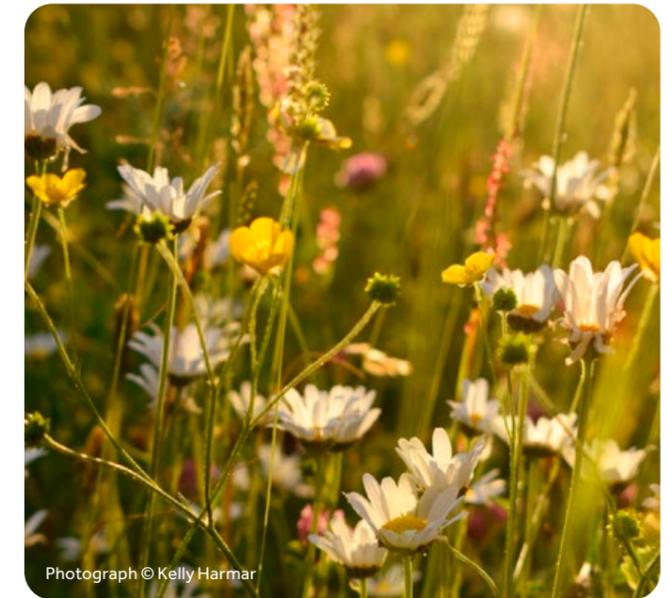


Photograph © Will Askew

Wildlife

Most of the National Landscape’s moorlands are nationally and internationally important for wildlife. The moorland designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest is also 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 wetter flushes and native broadleaved woodland in gills on the edges of the moors dominate the scenery, with the heather turning the moors purple in summer.

The moorlands 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. Lapwing and curlew calls in the spring resonate across the landscape, with many people keenly listening for the first curlew call of each year. Reptiles including adder, slow worm and common lizard are locally frequent.



Photograph © Kelly Harmar

Across the National Landscape below the moorland line there are still important areas of species-rich meadows, unimproved grassland and other semi-natural grassland alongside fields that have been improved to produce silage crops. Wet, rough acid grassland on the moorland fringes is important to support breeding wading birds. Undisturbed grasslands support internationally important grassland fungi. Species rich calaminarian grasslands occur in areas formerly used for 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 rivers and streams. Otters and water voles are regularly recorded here and both brook and river lampreys are widespread. Freshwater ponds are prevalent across the National Landscape thanks to the underlying gritstone geology.



Photograph © Martin Whipp



Features of the moorland landscape associated with grouse shooting, such as shooting lodges and butts are also important components of cultural heritage. Remnants of the medieval landscape, such as John of Gaunt's Castle, are still extant and archaeological research and recording has identified settlement evidence from the Iron Age / Romano-British period and from the earlier Bronze Age. Mysterious cup and ring marked rocks point to the earliest evidence of people living in the area and are thought to date to the late Neolithic around 5000 years ago.

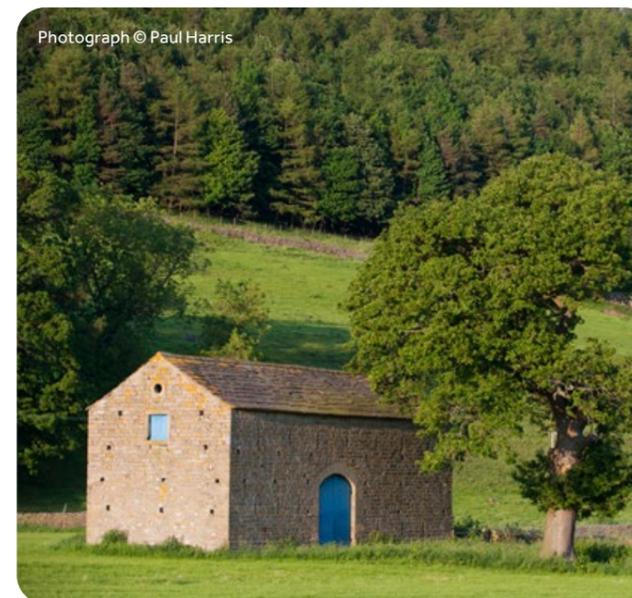


Photograph © Kelly Harmar

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 National Landscape and many non-designated gardens, orchards and parks.

The National Landscape'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. The farmed landscape includes numerous field barns, farmsteads and drystone walls, which combine to form a characteristic scene.



Photograph © Paul Harris

Landscape Challenges



The primary purpose of the Management Plan is to set out the shared ambitions that will address the main issues currently affecting the National Landscape. This section considers what the main environmental, economic and social challenges that will affect the special qualities of the National Landscape are.

Environment

Climate change

Climate change is affecting the National Landscape now and its impact will inevitably only increase over time. The Met Office's climate projections show that by the end of the century Nidderdale will very probably have higher temperatures year-round, lower rainfall in summer and higher rainfall in winter. Changes in the frequency and intensity of weather events are already causing impacts on local communities and the natural environment. Effects include increased flooding and erosion on one hand and increased drought and wildfire risk on the other. Natural habitats are being affected, for example the impacts on tree health and the consequent need to adapt woodlands to climate change. Human activity is a significant driver for increasing global temperatures due to atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. The most recent estimates for greenhouse gas emissions within the National Landscape from 2023 are 196.6 kt CO₂e. Although this is a fraction of the total UK emissions, there is a moral and legal imperative to act quickly to reduce these emissions.

State of nature

Nidderdale National Landscape is a very important place for wildlife with a wide range of habitats that support many species. Although there are some positive changes, we can identify that many of our species and habitats are following national and regional trends of a continuous decline in nature for many decades.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust-led *State of Yorkshire's Nature* report identifies declines in abundance and range of a significant number of native plants, insects and breeding birds, notes the significant role played by wetland habitats and concludes that nature in Yorkshire is in a state of flux. While some species have increased and there have been some new arrivals, the species that are declining are nationally much rarer whereas the increasing species tend to be generalists and more common. This is leading to a large loss of diversity of animal and plant life in Yorkshire. The loss of species-rich grasslands across the National Landscape over the last 70 years and the precipitous decline in breeding success for Curlew nesting on farmland are two local examples.

Water issues

The National Landscape's rivers, streams and waterbodies are affected by pollution from a range of sources, including from agriculture and sewage, leading to poor water quality in many of them. The ecological classification for the 19 defined waterbodies in the National Landscape is 1 good, 16 moderate, 1 poor and 1 bad. Some tributaries have specific problems caused by heavy metal pollution as a consequence of historic lead mining activity. Many waterbodies are affected by invasive plant and animal species, for example Himalayan Balsam and Signal Crayfish, and the rivers and streams are also one of the primary mechanisms for invasive species spread. Across the National Landscape, better recognition is needed for the importance of conserving wetland habitats.

Rural Economy

Farming

Following the UK's exit from the European Union and the consequent end of the Common Agricultural Policy for UK farmers, there have been significant changes to agricultural policy in England, which continue to evolve. The Agriculture Act 2020 established the principle of public money for public goods and a new environmental land management scheme was created but continues to be modified. This has created a continuing sense of significant uncertainty across the farming sector, which make up 35% of registered businesses in Nidderdale National Landscape. At the same time, pressure on farm business finances remain, particularly for those farming in less-favoured areas, alongside other long-term issues such as the average age of farmers.



Photograph © Paul Harris



Photograph © Paul Harris

Tourism

The Covid pandemic caused major impacts across society. In the context of the National Landscape's rural economy, the reduction in tourist numbers and the subsequent loss of income and jobs in the tourism sector during 2020 and 2021 was particularly significant with income from tourism falling to below 50% of pre-pandemic levels, matched by an almost equal drop in employment from 1347 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2019 to a low of 746 FTE jobs in 2020. By 2023, the tourism industry in the area had recovered to pre-pandemic visitor numbers, income and employment and is worth £150M per year with nearly 2 million tourist days per year. This difficult period serves to underline the importance of the tourism sector both as the principal way that people access and enjoy the National Landscape and as a significant part of the local economy.

Society

Deprivation

On average residents of Nidderdale National Landscape enjoy a higher quality of life than the average for England in terms of factors such as health, home ownership and socio-economic status. This, however, can mask the issue that an important minority (9%) of the area's population experience deprivation across two or more dimensions of employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding. This has implications for the community's health and wellbeing as well as for the local economy's potential.

Housing affordability

According to the Office for National Statistics, the median house price in the former Harrogate District area was £310,000 in 2024, which is 9 times the median salary of £33,708. While an improvement on previous years that saw this ratio reach 11 times median salary, many young people and those on wages associated with land management remain effectively priced out of the area. Alongside this, there is a shortage of affordable and social housing and rental property.

Population demographics

27% of the National Landscape's population is aged 65+, compared with 18% in England. In line with national trends, the proportion of the population aged 65+ is expected to continue to increase over the Management Plan period. This growing number of older people are likely to increase demand for health and social care services, although access to the National Landscape's high quality green spaces and active opportunities such as volunteering provide valuable mechanisms to maintain a healthy lifestyle for longer.

Disability

14% of the population living in Nidderdale National Landscape is disabled as defined by the Equality Act. Although lower than the average of 17% for England, it is important that services are in place to cater for needs across the community and to take account of additional difficulties that can arise through living in a rural area, such as access to services.

Inequality

Looking beyond the National Landscape boundary, surrounding urban areas are home to much more diverse populations considering factors such as age, ethnicity and income. While many people are able to visit Nidderdale if they wish to, a significant number of nearby communities, such as ethnic minority communities or deprived urban areas, face barriers to access. These can be practical issues such as lack of transport and a lack of awareness but may also involve concerns about how they will be received when visiting an unfamiliar place.



Principles

Five guiding principles are embedded in the Management Plan. They are woven into the objectives that form the core of the Plan.



Importance of Landscape

Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’. The National Landscape is made up of physical, biological and cultural elements that combine in a way that can be described quantifiably, but it also has an intrinsic value to society that generations of people have campaigned to protect. Management Plan aims are designed to conserve and enhance landscape features, such as oak woodland and ancient monuments, but they are also intended to safeguard the integrity of the landscape as a whole.



Addressing climate change

With ever-increasing impacts of climate change seen locally, nationally and globally, the Management Plan objectives address the need to adapt to and mitigate climate change. This will be done by increasing the resilience of the landscape and its communities to the impacts of a changing climate and, in parallel, by locking in carbon through ensuring carbon-rich habitats are in good condition and playing our part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Delivering Nature Recovery

The Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan, published in 2024, set out detailed descriptions of nature recovery over the coming three decades across moorland, grassland, woodland and freshwater habitats, alongside a set of shared aims and targets. The approach follows the well-established Lawton Principles of “more, bigger, better and joined” for conservation activity to deliver nature recovery. These ambitions are incorporated into the Management Plan objectives. Delivering nature recovery also provides a range of co-benefits through the enhancement of the area’s natural capital, including economic benefits for land managers, providing resilience to climate change and giving people the opportunities to access and enjoy nature.

Supporting the farming sector and wider rural economy

Farmers, landowners, gamekeepers, foresters and other land managers are the people who manage the land every day and are at the forefront of conserving and enhancing the National Landscape. The Management Plan recognises their critical role in delivering many of the climate and nature objectives. Management Plan objectives seek to support farming practices that deliver environmental benefits, with a particular focus on soil health and higher nature value farming, and sustainable farm businesses, which are important for the future of the National Landscape. Sustainable shooting has an important role in environmental land management, for example in helping woodland conservation through appropriate deer and grey squirrel control. The tourism industry enables people to visit, stay in and enjoy the National Landscape and the Management Plan seeks to support this important component of the rural economy.

Promoting access and inclusion

Everyone has a right to visit and enjoy the National Landscape, but the ability to do this is not equal for all and Management Plan objectives are designed to reduce the different barriers to access that exist for different parts of society. This will enable as diverse a range of people as possible to responsibly enjoy the high-quality green space and experiences of tranquillity and remoteness offered by the National Landscape, with the physical and mental health benefits this can bring.



2

Ambition and objectives

Vision to 2050

By 2050, the National Landscape 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 continues to be made to reduce climate emissions and 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 buildings, barns and walls, and parkland filled with veteran trees
- Home to a great abundance and diversity of wildlife as described in the Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan
- A welcoming destination for a wide range of people seeking opportunities for recreation
- A place where people can experience tranquillity and improve their health and wellbeing

Climate change

Climate change is affecting the National Landscape and its special qualities, with impacts on the landscape, natural environment, communities and cultural heritage. These impacts on people, farming and land management and habitats and species will only increase over time. The UK Climate Projections show an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extremes. We need to play our part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and we must continue to adapt to a changing climate to make our landscape and communities more resilient. It is important that our approach is evidence-based and recognises that climate, biodiversity and food production are interlinked.

Emissions from agriculture, moorlands, transport and housing make up the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions within the National Landscape. We want to develop plans to reduce the emissions from these different sectors to help mitigate climate change, in tandem with accelerating those actions that we already know have a positive impact such as restoring peatland, installing appropriate green energy systems, improving public transport and active travel opportunities, and retrofitting houses. We also need to look after the carbon already locked away, for example in our well-managed grasslands and hedgerows.



Equally we need to increase our ability to adapt to the impacts of the changing climate, for example addressing flood and wildfire risks, dealing with invasive species and improving habitat resilience, for example working with land managers to improve the resilience of woodlands across the National Landscape. This is often interlinked with mitigation actions, for example where land management actions can improve flood resilience and sequester carbon. Again, it is important that we have a clear plan that identifies the climate risks we face and sets out the actions we can take to address them.

Farmers, foresters and moorland land managers will be at the forefront of positive land management practices that reduce emissions and increase landscape resilience, but it is also important that we find ways to communicate about and support action on climate change across the wider rural community.

Climate Change Objectives for 2025–2030

CC-1: Develop and implement a pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the National Landscape to net zero before 2050.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, North Yorkshire Council (Environmental Services, Planning), NNL Team, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority

CC-2: Work with farmers and landowners to safeguard and increase carbon stored in the landscape through positive land management including restoring 80% of peatland and creating 375 ha of new native tree cover.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural England, NNL Team, White Rose Forest, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Peat Partnership, Yorkshire Water

CC-3: Develop and begin to deliver a landscape-scale climate adaptation plan for the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, Historic England, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), NNL Team, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust

CC-4: Work with farmers and landowners to improve soil health across the National Landscape to increase landscape resilience, including supporting 25% of farm holding to adopt nature-friendly regenerative farming practices.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, Natural England, NNL Team, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Water

CC-5: Raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on Nidderdale's rural communities and the actions they can take to increase resilience.

Delivery organisations: National Trust, Nidderdale Plus, NNL Team, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

CC-6: Support the installation of small-scale renewable energy infrastructure where it is compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and avoids cumulative impact on landscape character.

Delivery organisations: Nidderdale Plus, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), NNL Team, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Nature Recovery

Nidderdale National Landscape is already a special place for nature, home to a wide range of habitats and species, which are a crucial component of the area's natural beauty. 40% of the National Landscape's area is priority habitat and 35% is designated through European, national or local wildlife designations. Nevertheless, we recognise that – as is the case across Yorkshire and the rest of the UK – nature is, in general, declining. This can be seen locally in examples such as the loss of many species-rich meadows over the last 70 years, and the low breeding success for Curlew nesting on farmland. Significant effort will be required to reverse this trend and help nature to recover. We can achieve this by continuing, strengthening and expanding the partnerships that exist between Nidderdale's farmers, gamekeepers, foresters, other land managers and the wide range of land management and conservation organisations operating in the area.

The *Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan*, published in 2024, describes the four main habitat types in the National Landscape of moorland, grassland, woodland and freshwater and sets out what needs to happen for nature recovery in each of them. Enhancing the condition of existing habitat and improving the connectivity between high-quality areas through targeted habitat creation is key.

For moorland we will focus on peatland restoration and habitat enhancement, with small areas of new moorland mosaic habitat creation. For grassland, priority will be given to increasing the area of species-rich grassland, safeguarding our good quality semi-improved grassland and improving overall grassland soil health through regenerative farming techniques. For woodland we will focus on existing woodland management, particularly ancient woodland, alongside new trees, hedgerows, and woods. For freshwater our priorities will be improving rivers and streams and increasing and enhancing wetland habitats such as ponds.

Alongside this broad habitat work, there are species-specific issues that we also need to address, for example how to increase fledging success for ground-nesting birds, preventing illegal persecution of birds of prey and conserving fungi-rich grasslands.

Nature Recovery Objectives for 2025–2030

NR-1: Ensure effective species recovery, so that the diversity and abundance of species within the National Landscape increases.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, Natural England, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), NNL Team, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

NR-2: Work with landowners and moorland gamekeepers to enhance moorlands by restoring peatland for nature and climate, creating strategic new moorland mosaic habitat and working to get 80% of moorland SSSI on track to achieve favourable condition.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, National Trust, Natural England, Yorkshire Peat Partnership, Yorkshire Water

NR-3: Work with farmers and landowners to support grassland conservation by restoring or enhancing 500 ha of priority grassland habitats and supporting farm holdings to participate in appropriate grassland agri-environment options.

Delivery organisations: Natural England, NNL Team, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Yorkshire Water

NR-4: Work with farmers and landowners to increase new native tree cover, support 70% of existing woodland into good management and restore 100 ha of plantation on ancient woodland.

Delivery organisations: Forestry Commission, Natural England, NNL Team, White Rose Forest, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Water

NR-5: Work with farmers and landowners to create or restore 150 wetland habitats, ensure 50% of existing wetland habitat is in good management and work to enhance the ecological status of the National Landscape's watercourses.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, Natural England, NNL Team, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Water

NR-6: Continue work with landowners, moorland managers, the police and others to safeguard birds of prey and prevent their illegal persecution in the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: British Association for Shooting & Conservation, Moorland Association, Natural England, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Police

Living and Working

Nidderdale is a living and working landscape, home to around 12,000 people who live in Pateley Bridge and the villages, hamlets and farms across the area. The National Landscape's rural communities are key to the sustainability of the area. While not affecting everyone who lives and works in Nidderdale, these rural communities – in common with many other rural areas – face a variety of pressures such as access to services and appropriate housing. The farming and tourism sectors are important parts of the local economy that also face specific challenges.

Nidderdale's landscape has been and continues to be shaped predominately by farming. At a time of ongoing uncertainty and challenges facing the future of upland farming, we need to work with and support the industry to try and increase the resilience, profitability and environmental sustainability of farm businesses, whose management of the land is crucial to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty.

Sustainable tourism is another important sector that enables people to visit, stay in and enjoy the National Landscape and its special qualities. In Nidderdale the tourism sector currently lacks coordination in comparison with other tourism destinations, which may mean that tourism businesses are not benefitting as much as they could from visitors. We want to do more to connect and strengthen businesses and build a stronger, bolder tourism offer to retain jobs in this sector.

More broadly, the National Landscape's rural communities require housing and services that are appropriate to local needs. For those without access to private vehicles, we need to ensure public or community transport options are available. We also need to move from open market housing towards genuinely affordable housing solutions so that people, particularly young people and families who work in the area, can remain living in the area.



Living and Working Objectives for 2025–2030

LW-1: Work with farmers and landowners to encourage farming practices in the National Landscape that support profitable farm businesses and improvements for the environment, with 70% of farm holdings participating in agri-environment schemes.

Delivery organisations:

Natural England, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Water



LW-5: Improve public transport and active travel opportunities for visitors to travel to the area and for local residents to access the employment, education and services they need so they can remain active and independent in their communities.

Delivery organisations:

Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company, National Trust, Nidderdale Plus, North Yorkshire Council (Passenger Transport, Highways & Infrastructure), Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority

LW-6: Provide support and advice for Nidderdale's rural businesses that supports a scale of development appropriate to the location and that is compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

Delivery organisations:

Nidderdale Plus, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Economic Development), York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority

LW-2: Work with tourism businesses to develop and promote a joined up, high quality tourism offer based around what is special about Nidderdale National Landscape so that the sector can retain at least the same number of jobs.

Delivery organisations:

National Trust, Nidderdale Plus, North Yorkshire Council (Planning, Tourism)

LW-3: Create a more appropriate housing supply suited to local community housing needs, particularly for working families and younger people, with a focus on affordable housing.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, Nidderdale Plus, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Planning & Housing), York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

LW-4: Support community organisations to help provide services to reflect Nidderdale's population demographic.

Delivery organisations: Nidderdale Plus, North Yorkshire Council (Localities)



Understanding and Enjoyment

Visitors and residents alike value opportunities to access and enjoy the natural beauty of the National Landscape, where they can find tranquillity and experience nature while exploring the many different landscapes through the seasons.

Visitors need high quality and up-to-date information about what to do and where to stay in the area to allow them to make the most of their stay and to encourage repeat visits. Once here, the public rights of way network is the principal means for people to get out and explore the National Landscape. We need to use innovative approaches to ensure this network is in good condition so that people can access the area, while also promoting responsible use of the countryside.

Many people visit Nidderdale, so careful management is needed to ensure they can enjoy the area without causing adverse impact on the National Landscape's special qualities. Motorised recreational vehicles on sensitive 'green lanes' can damage these historic routes, cause impacts to the wider environment and affect the enjoyment of other countryside users.

Everyone should be able to come to the National Landscape for quiet recreation, but there are many people that live nearby who have never experienced it or who face challenges accessing the countryside. We want to help open the landscape to them, so they can connect with it in a way that suits their needs.

This needs an approach that allows people to decide how they want to experience the National Landscape, alongside more traditional access enhancements to routes on the ground. Engaging with the landscape can make a tangible difference to people's health and well-being, so we can help people to connect with nature, whether through volunteering, active leisure or simply enjoying time in the countryside.



Photograph © Leanne Fox

Understanding and Enjoyment Objectives for 2025–2030

UE-1: Work with farmers and landowners to maintain and improve the condition of public rights of way and unsurfaced, unclassified roads across the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: British Horse Society, North Yorkshire Council (Countryside Access), NNL Team, Ramblers Association, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

UE-2: Reduce the impact of motor vehicular use of unsurfaced, unclassified roads and byways open to all traffic on sensitive routes if this is having an adverse impact on the National Landscape's natural and cultural heritage and its enjoyment by the public.

Delivery organisations: NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Countryside Access), Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Alliance

UE-3: Work with tourism businesses and others to enhance Nidderdale National Landscape's tourism offer and profile, and the sustainable travel opportunities to visit the area.

Delivery organisations: National Trust, Nidderdale Plus, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Tourism), Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

UE-4: Develop links with community organisations to co-design engagement activities that enable new more diverse audiences to experience the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company, National Trust, NNL Team, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

UE-5: Work with farmers and landowners to increase Access for All provision so that as wide a range of people as possible can understand, access and enjoy the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: Open Country, National Trust, North Yorkshire Council (Countryside Access), Yorkshire Water

UE-6: Develop new partnerships with the health sector to provide more opportunities in the National Landscape for people to improve their physical and mental well-being.

Delivery organisations: Natural England, Nidderdale Plus

Heritage and Historic Environment

Nidderdale has been home to thriving communities and industry for hundreds of years, shaping a rich archaeological, industrial and cultural heritage, all of which contribute to the area's special qualities.

However, many of the National Landscape's historic structures no longer have a viable economic use and some are declining in condition. This includes some of our Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings, alongside remote field barns and other heritage features in the landscape. We need to find ways to halt this decline and conserve them for the future, including making them resilient to climate change impacts.

The wider built environment of towns and villages is a hugely important part of Nidderdale's character, particularly the large number of 19th and early 20th century stone buildings. We want to support local communities and people to look after the heritage housing and traditional farm buildings that they own, for example through advice and training on maintenance and repair, as well as exploring the potential for retrofitting to make them comfortable in a 21st century climate.

We want to continue to celebrate the stories, traditions and local culture that are so integral to the character of Nidderdale, finding new ways to link these into the narrative of the landscape. There are opportunities for the different organisations working on cultural heritage to join up more, as well as looking at working intergenerationally and involving young people more in shaping the future of the landscape.

Providing people with the appropriate skills and training is a very important part of this conservation effort and need to reflect the needs of today's landscape. This means that 'traditional' heritage skills such as dry-stone walling, hedge-laying, roofing, lime-mortar repairs and stone masonry remain important, but we also need people trained in newer skills such as retrofitting historic properties, adapting farming to climate change, and carrying out peatland restoration.

Heritage and Historic Environment Objectives for 2025–2030

HE-1: Identify heritage assets at risk and work with landowners to support activities that improve their condition, including reducing the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, National Trust, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), NNL Team



Photograph © Steven Nightingale



Photograph © Paul Harris

HE-3: Support owners of historic properties and structures to conserve and enhance them, including appropriate climate retrofitting measures, and enable people to understand their significance.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, North Yorkshire Council (Planning), York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority

HE-2: Increase understanding and appreciation of the National Landscape's cultural heritage and historic environment.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, National Trust, Nidderdale Museum, NNL Team

HE-4: Develop programmes to train the next generation in how to look after an evolving historic built and natural landscape.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, National Trust, York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Yorkshire Peat Partnership

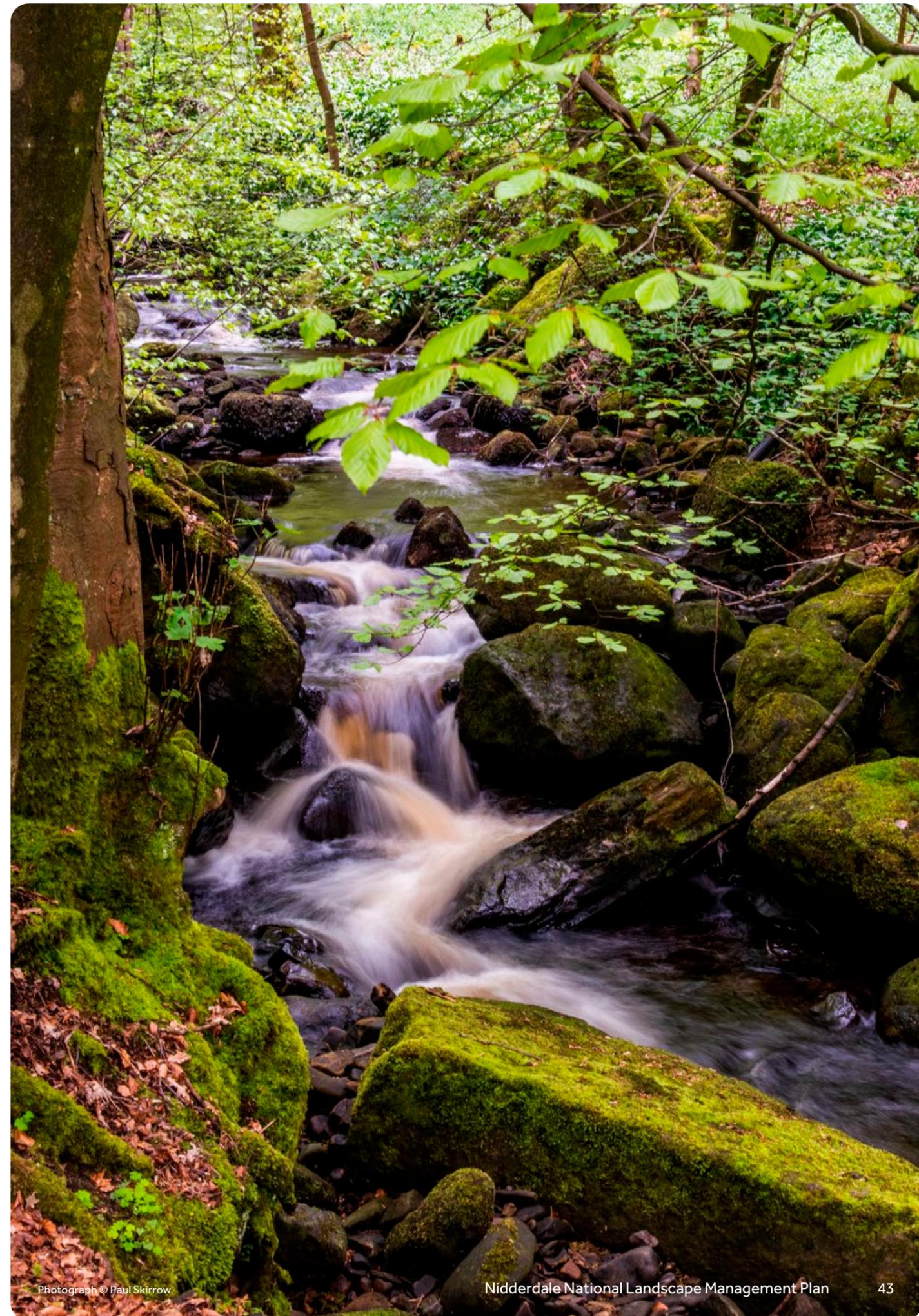
Landscape

The National Landscape is designated and valued by people for the natural beauty of its landscape. While everything in this Management Plan concerns landscape in some way, there are a range of issues that affect Nidderdale particularly in terms of the landscape as a whole, as set out in the Plan's Principle on the Importance of Landscape. These range from light pollution and issues around water quality and flooding to impacts such as overhead powerlines and inappropriate development.

Only one of the National Landscape's waterbodies currently has 'good' ecological status and improvements can best be delivered through catchment-scale approaches. Similarly, many other conservation initiatives such as natural flood management and habitat enhancements need to be delivered at a landscape-scale to be effective and we aim to develop new, landscape initiatives that enhance the National Landscape's special qualities during this Management Plan period. We will also continue efforts to underground overhead powerline cables where they have a landscape impact.

Having the appropriate policies in the new North Yorkshire Local Plan (currently being developed by North Yorkshire Council) will be a crucial to ensure that any future development is consistent with National Landscape designation. The new Local Plan will also provide opportunities to help deliver many of the objectives in this Plan, including nature recovery through links to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, dark skies conservation, heritage conservation and action on climate change. We must also continue to ensure that relevant policies to conserve and enhance the National Landscape, in both the current and emerging Local Plans, are applied to development proposals. Current and new landscape character assessments will provide detailed guidelines on how to conserve and enhance the landscape.

Importantly, we also need to continue to raise the profile of what makes Nidderdale special and the importance of looking after this landscape for future generations. This includes reducing light pollution that affects our dark skies, which we will address through planning controls and education around appropriate lighting schemes.



Photograph © Paul Skirrow

Landscape Objectives for 2025–2030

LA-1: Work with farmers, landowners and water companies to improve natural river processes and water quality across the National Landscape, including actions in place to achieve good ecological status or potential on 70% of watercourses.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, NNL Team, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Water

LA-2: Develop planning policy that ensures all new development is appropriate in terms of scale, location and design quality in the context of Nidderdale National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: Historic England, Natural England, NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Planning)

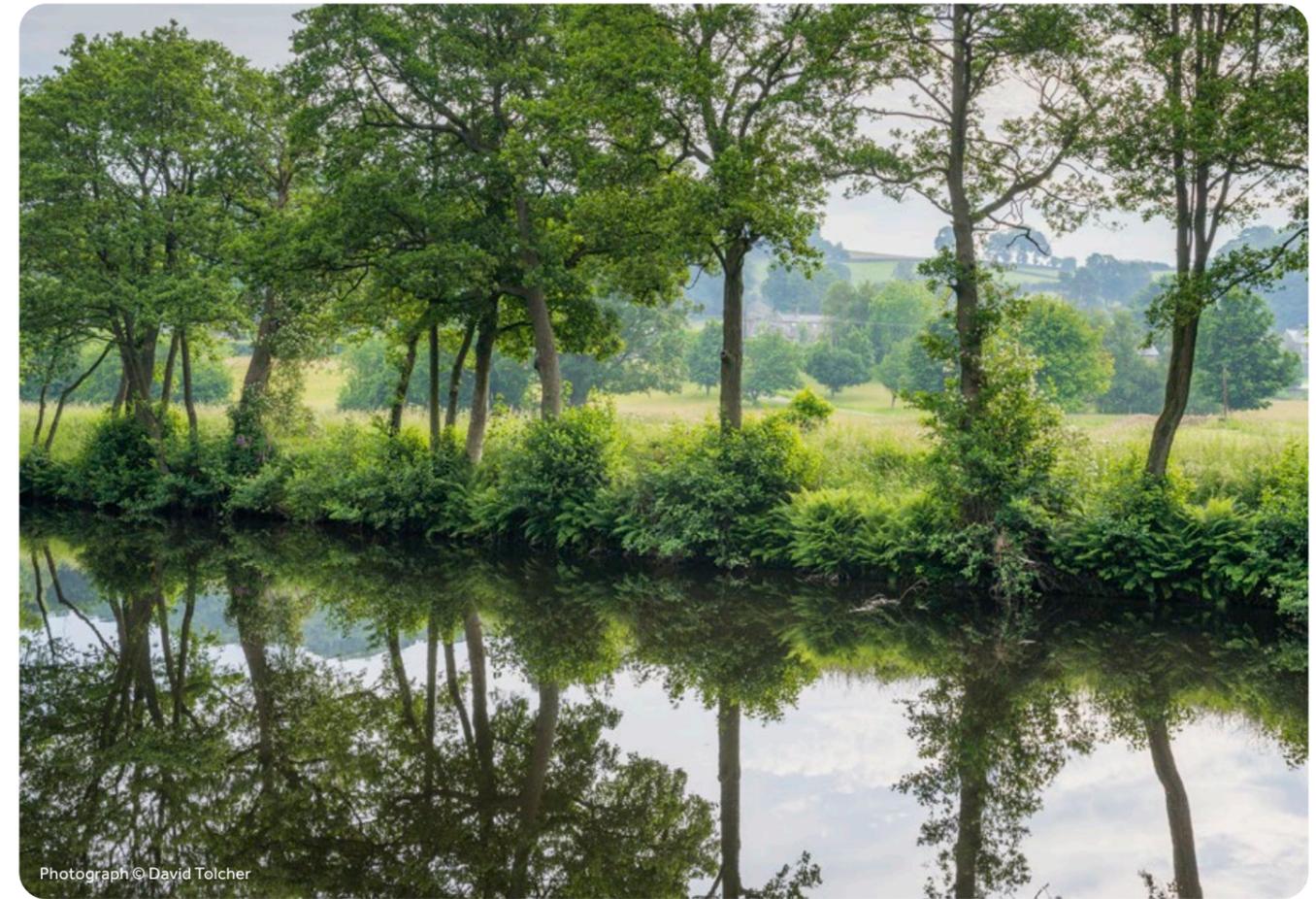
LA-3: Ensure all development applications are consistent with conserving and enhancing natural beauty, both in the National Landscape and its setting, and oppose proposals for major development, other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

Delivery organisations: NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Planning)



LA-4: Reduce levels of light pollution and increase awareness of Nidderdale's nationally significant dark night skies.

Delivery organisations: NNL Team, North Yorkshire Council (Planning)



LA-5: Develop and deliver landscape-scale initiatives in partnership with farmers and landowners to conserve and enhance the National Landscape including catchment-level natural flood management, invasive species control, undergrounding overhead powerlines and a new Landscape Connections programme.

Delivery organisations: Environment Agency, National Trust, Natural England, Northern Powergrid, NNL Team, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Peat Partnership, Yorkshire Water, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

LA-6: Promote and celebrate the special qualities of the National Landscape.

Delivery organisations: NNL Team



3

Context and Delivery

Policy Context

International

IUCN Category V Protected Landscapes

National Landscapes are part of the international family of protected areas. As cultural landscapes, produced through the interaction of humans with nature over time, they have a special significance being recognised (together with UK National Parks) by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Category V – *Protected Landscapes* defined as:

“A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.”

European Landscape Convention

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention (2000) ratified by the UK government in 2006 provides a definition of landscape as “An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.” This puts people at the heart of landscape, recognising the distinctive character and meaning to those who inhabit or visit it.

Global Biodiversity Framework

The UK has committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30), to support the global 30by30 target within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework agreed at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022. Conservation efforts in National Landscapes are central to helping achieve this target.

National

Environment Improvement Plan

The Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) was published by the UK Government in 2023 to set out actions to restore nature and tackle environmental pollution. Subsequently the Government published the *Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework* (see below for more detail), which sets out their ambition for how Protected Landscapes (National Landscapes and National Parks) will contribute to achieving key outcomes of the EIP. At the time of writing, Defra are carrying out a review of the EIP and a revised version is expected to be published soon.

Climate Change Act

The Climate Change Act sets out UK policy on climate mitigation and adaptation. Originally published in 2008, it was amended in 2019 to set a target for UK greenhouse gas emissions to reach net zero by 2050. The Act provides for the development and implementation of national carbon budgets to reach net zero, the functioning of the Committee on Climate Change, and the requirement to report and plan for the impact of and adaptation to climate change. Meeting the requirements of the Act feeds directly into National Landscape Management Plans, via the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, through the objectives to develop and implement a pathway to net zero and to develop and begin to deliver a landscape-scale climate adaptation plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

In 2024 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 the NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development it is important to note that this only applies unless “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” (in the case of plan-making) or “provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed” (in the case of decision-taking).” The policies referred to by the NPPF include those relating to National Landscapes (alongside other important designations and heritage assets).

The NPPF places an obligation on local planning authorities to ensure that in developing planning policies and making planning decisions “great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.” The NPPF also recognises that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas.

Regional

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The emerging York & North Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies appropriate actions and suitable locations to enhance existing habitats, or create new habitats, where this is most likely to provide the greatest benefits for nature and the wider environment. The strategy includes a set of actions for nature recovery developed with stakeholders and a nature network and Local Habitat Map that provides a spatial representation of the LNRS. Implementing many of the National Landscape Management Plan's objectives (particularly for climate, nature recovery and landscape) will directly contribute to delivering LNRS priorities within the Nidderdale National Landscape area and links with the National Landscape's Nature Recovery Plan.



Local Plan

The Harrogate District Local Plan covers most of the National Landscape area and is the current relevant local planning policy document. It includes policy GS6 which has the overall aim that "the natural beauty and special qualities of the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced." A new North Yorkshire Local Plan is in preparation and will supersede the legacy district plans once published.

An important aspect of planning policy is landscape character assessment. The current Harrogate District Local Plan refers to the importance of both the Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment, which divides the district into local character areas and identifies landscape guidelines to protect and improve their character and distinctive features, and the Natural England National Character Areas (NCA), of which NCA 21 – Yorkshire Dales and NCA 22 – Pennine Dales Fringe are of principal importance for Nidderdale National Landscape. The NCA key characteristics and Statements of Environmental Opportunities are an important reference for planning matters. A new North Yorkshire landscape character assessment is being developed as part of the new North Yorkshire Local Plan.



Climate Change

North Yorkshire Council published a Climate Change Strategy in 2023 as one of the early actions of the new unitary authority. The strategy sets out how North Yorkshire Council will respond to the climate emergency by reducing North Yorkshire's emissions, preparing North Yorkshire for climate impacts, helping the natural world to thrive and becoming a Climate Responsible Council. The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Routemap to Carbon Negative sets out the region's ambitious plans to reach net zero carbon and then become carbon negative. The Combined Authority is also coordinating a new York and North Yorkshire climate adaptation study that will identify climate risks and actions to address these risks.

Health, Transport and Tourism

The North Yorkshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2030 sets out the ambition to reduce the gap in life expectancy, increase years of healthy life expectancy and reduce differences between health outcomes across North Yorkshire's population. It includes objectives around reducing health inequalities in rural communities and making best use of the natural environment. North Yorkshire's Local Transport Plan 2016–2045 includes objectives to improve access to services, to address climate change by managing the adverse impact of transport on the environment and to promote healthier travel opportunities. The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Economic Framework 2024 makes affordable and sustainable travel a thematic priority. The Framework also recognises that there are major economic benefits from heritage and culture, particularly driving tourism. The North Yorkshire Destination Management Plan 2024–2034 provides an overarching plan for the visitor economy and recognises the importance of North Yorkshire's Protected Landscapes as part of what makes the area highly attractive for visitors and residents.

Delivery and Monitoring

Partnership Delivery

Delivery of the Management Plan is a collective effort that can only succeed by continuing, strengthening and expanding the wide range of partnerships that exist between everyone with an interest in Nidderdale National Landscape. This means that there are important active partnership roles for:

- farmers, landowners, gamekeepers, foresters and other land managers;
- tourism and hospitality businesses;
- local communities and their representative organisations; and
- local government, government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Within this wider partnership approach, each objective identifies Delivery Organisations who will take a leadership role in helping to deliver that aspect of the Management Plan. Since the objectives are high-level strategic goals, it is recognised that different Delivery Organisations will contribute in different ways to each overall objective, and that these contributions will vary during the timeframe of the plan. These different contributions will be captured via an action-planning process that will be coordinated by the National Landscape Team.



Monitoring Progress

Gathering information on progress against delivery of each objective will be carried out on an annual basis, with the Delivery Organisations invited to report on activities they have undertaken relevant to their objective(s). This process will be coordinated by the National Landscape Team. Reporting will be non-prescriptive, allowing each Delivery Organisation to set out their achievements in the most appropriate way (which could be quantitative, qualitative or a combination).

It is important to note that the objectives make use of appropriate targets where available (for example from the national Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework), but do not attempt to impose numerical targets where we do not have suitable evidence or where it is not appropriate. Relevant numerical data where available, including the annual national statistics produced for the Targets and Outcomes Framework, will also be recorded as part of the monitoring process.

This information will then be collated into an annual Management Plan monitoring report for the Joint Advisory Committee, which will provide a commentary on progress against each objective.



Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

Government has published a Protected Landscape Targets & Outcomes Framework, which sets expectations for delivery across the English Protected Landscapes (i.e. the 10 National Parks and 34 National Landscapes). Government has defined these targets as being:

- For the place, with all land managers and stakeholders supporting delivery
- Focused on those goals in the Government’s Environment Improvement Plan relevant to Protected Landscapes
- National targets, with each individual Protected Landscape setting their own contribution supported by NE, to be embedded in management plans.

There are 10 targets which cover issues including habitat restoration and creation, SSSI condition, nature-friendly farming, net zero, peatland restoration, woodland creation, access to the countryside and heritage at risk.

During the development of the Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan, the partnership set targets for 2050 (with interim targets for 2030 and 2040). These targets for the National Landscape also translate into Nidderdale’s contributions to the Targets and Outcomes Framework.

The following table sets out each of the national targets, the contributions that Nidderdale National Landscape expects to make and links to the relevant sections of this Management Plan.

	National Target	Nidderdale National Landscape target	Relevant Management Plan objectives
Target 1:	Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline)	Restore or create 2,506 ha of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Nidderdale National Landscape, outside protected sites, by 2040	CC-2, NR-2, NR-3, NR-4, NR-5
Target 2:	Bring 80% of Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042	80% of moorland SSSI in favourable condition by 2040	NR-2
Target 3:	60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having ‘actions on track’ to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028	80% of moorland SSSI on track to achieve favourable condition by 2030	NR-2
Target 4:	Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042	Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042	NR-3, NR-4, NR-5
Target 5:	Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030	70% of farm holdings in agri-environment schemes by 2030	LW-1
Target 6:	Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by at least 2050 relative to 1990 levels	Develop and implement a pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the National Landscape to net zero before 2050	CC-1
Target 7:	Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050	100% of peatland (8,270 ha) restored for nature and climate by 2040	CC-2, NR-2
Target 8:	Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline)	Create 1875 ha of new native tree cover by 2050	CC-2, NR-4
Target 9:	Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using metrics based on those in our Access for All programme	Work with farmers and landowners to increase Access for All provision so that as wide a range of people as possible can understand, access and enjoy the National Landscape	UE-5
Target 10:	Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes	Identify heritage assets at risk and work with landowners to support activities that improve their condition, including reducing the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk	HE-1

Guidance for Relevant Authorities

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amended Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to introduce a revised duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the conservation and enhancement of protected landscapes. The legislation now states that: "In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty."

This is a statutory duty, which has been in force since December 2023. The use of the word 'duty' in the legislation means that it is something all relevant authorities must do; it is not discretionary. The duty is considered to be a strengthening of the previous s.85 'duty of regard' and seeks positive outcomes for the natural beauty, in its holistic sense, of National Landscapes.

The duty relates to any functions that a relevant authority might undertake 'in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding beauty' (National Landscape), i.e. functions which are not only within a National Landscape, but also, for example, affecting its setting.

The definition of relevant authorities in the context of National Landscapes can be found in the CRow Act 2000 – Section 85 (2), and includes:

- Any Minister of the Crown (this includes all Government departments, non-ministerial departments, agencies and other advisory bodies, etc.);
- Any public body (this includes a unitary authority, county council, county borough council, district council, parish council);
- Any person holding public office;
- Any statutory undertaker.

The s.85 duty must be considered in parallel with other statutory duties or obligations on relevant authorities (such as for example duties within the Highways Act 1980, the Water Industry Act 1991, the Water Resources Act 1991, and the Town & County Planning Act 1990); each duty or obligation must be met, and none takes priority over any other.



The duty is considered to require an active approach on the part of the relevant authority. Relevant authorities should be able to demonstrate, with evidence, that they have fulfilled the duty and how compliance with the duty has been embedded in all their processes, including for example preparing strategies, work programmes and budgetary allocations, operations manuals/internal codes of practice/protocols, including routine maintenance, and project planning and decision-making.

Natural England have provided good practice advice that relevant authorities must take all reasonable steps to explore how the statutory purposes of the Protected Landscape can be furthered.

It is important to ensure that 'to conserve and enhance' is treated as a singular purpose, i.e. both parts are considered together.

It is important to remember that 'natural beauty' is holistic. 'Natural beauty' is not just the look of the landscape (or 'the view'), but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features, and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries. It comprises multiple aspects such as the landscape and scenic quality, natural heritage (geology, species and habitats), wildness (including sense of remoteness), tranquillity (including dark skies), and cultural heritage (including the built environment and cultural traditions and associations) which taken together justify an area's designation. Historic England have made clear that the historic environment is fundamental to the distinctive character, sense of place and natural beauty of each National Landscape.



It is the conservation and enhancement of all these aspects of natural beauty that is the primary purpose of designation, and that relevant authorities must consider in discharging their duty under CRow Act (2000) s.85.

The Management Plan for the National Landscape is a statutory document, adopted by the Local Authority and which 'formulates their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it'. It is the principal vehicle for ensuring that the statutory purposes of the National Landscape are met. It is a material consideration in the planning process.

Supporting Document: The NNL Nature Recovery Plan

In July 2024, the National Landscape's Joint Advisory Committee approved the publication of the Nidderdale National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan¹. The Nature Recovery Plan sets out collective, long-term ambitions to enhance biodiversity across Nidderdale National Landscape. It was produced through consultation with the many different partners who have an interest in land management and conservation across the National Landscape, including farmers, land managers, government agencies and environmental NGOs.

The Nature Recovery Plan follows the well-established Lawton Principles of "more, bigger, better and joined" to identify action across the four main habitat types of moorland, grassland, woodland and freshwater that are found in the National Landscape. It sets out the shared vision for each habitat and the issues that need to be addressed, which leads to a narrative of how partners will work together so that nature recovery can take place. Opportunity mapping, using the best currently available data, demonstrates in spatial terms where efforts should be focused to maximise enhancing existing habitat and new habitat creation.



Each of the four habitat plans has targets with milestones at 2030, 2040 and 2050 and example actions required across land management, knowledge building, partnership and finance and policy to help achieve these targets. Where relevant, these targets link directly to the biodiversity-related targets in the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (see above).

The Nature Recovery Plan's targets to 2030 have been incorporated into the objectives for this 2025–2030 Management Plan, and the Management Plan vision sets out the ambition for the National Landscape to be home to a great abundance and diversity of wildlife as described in the Nature Recovery Plan.

¹Available to download from the National Landscape's website via <https://nidderdale-nl.org.uk/about-us/nidderdale-national-landscape-nature-recovery-plan/>



The development of this Management Plan was overseen by the Nidderdale National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee, which includes representation from:



Representatives from Parish Councils

