

North York Moors National Park Authority

29 June 2026

Item 16, Update to Land Management Agreement rates

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To recommend and seek Member approval to changes in payment rates for NPA Land Management Agreements.

2. Background

2.1 For at least 15 years the National Park Authority has been providing landowners an offer of grant aid to manage habitats with high ecological value. In more recent years, the Land Management Agreements have been offered for five-year terms. This has been done through several delivery mechanisms including, Ryevitalise, Esk and Coastal Streams and the Land Management conservation agreements. These were and still are targeted at landowners who are managing land in ways which meet management plan objectives.

2.2 The NPA's Land Management Agreements are specifically targeted at land that is ineligible or impractical to be introduced into one of the publicly funded schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) or Countryside Stewardship (CSHT). The current total budget of the NPA's Land Management Agreements is £50,000. All funding comes from the Woodsmith section 106 landscape and ecology envelope.

2.2 Discussions with Land Management Agreement holders who held expiring agreements have identified that the rates offered by the NPA no longer adequately reflect the cost and income foregone of the desired land management. In response, an independent piece of work was commissioned to put together a revised suite of rates which reflect the economic and agricultural situation in 2026 and to develop a template that can be readily utilised by the NPA to undertake future payment reviews.

2.3 The work was undertaken by Cumulus who have extensive experience in this work having completed similar work for Defra in compiling new rates for the Countryside Stewardship scheme.

2.4 The current area payments are included in the table below with the proposed new rates.

3. Security of agreement implications

3.1 Current agreement holders will not find it viable to maintain desirable management as secured under the agreements and therefore will be unable to renew agreements as they expire. This will result in land previously secured under long term beneficial management being lost to the scheme. As most land in the Land Management Agreement scheme is not covered by other legal protections such as SSSI and often ineligible for national schemes this risks a reversal to ecologically unfavourable management and a loss of wildlife (and/or culturally rich) features which will increase

the challenge of delivering on Management Plan outcome 2 of securing 'A nature rich, more biodiverse landscape' and potentially compromise achievement of PLTOF targets

4. New proposed rates

4.1 Based on the work undertaken by Cumulus to calculate income forgone for the various land management scenarios above the following rates are suggested, also included are the current rates from the previous 2016 rate review:

Rate Name	Old rate	Proposed rate
Valley pasture	£90/ha	£90/ha
Upland pasture	£80/ha	£115/ha
Traditional hay meadow	£125/ha	£170/ha
Enclosed rough grazing	£50/ha	£60/ha
Upland wood pasture	£70/ha	£170/ha
Restoration & management of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats & Land managed for target species*	£130/ha	£570/ha
Maintenance of hedgerows**	£0.16/m	£0.16/m
Maintenance of dry stone walls***	£0.20/m	£0.68/m
Maintenance of traditional farm buildings	£0.70/m ²	£3/m ²
Basic Payment Scheme woodland	£140/ha	Removed due to cessation of Basic Payment scheme
Conservation woodland (previously non-BPS woodland)	£30/ha	£110/ha
Permissive access linear	£0.18/m	£0.78/m
Permissive access area	£35/ha	£90/ha
Permissive access lump sum****	£50	£950

Rivers agreement rates

Riparian buffer	£440-614/ha	£765/ha
Marshy grassland	£130-290/ha	£340/ha
Wetland	N/A	£929/ha

- *This rate will be used primarily as a bridging payment for sites intending to move into another Environmental Land Management Scheme such as Countryside Stewardship or SFI where these may be available.
- **to be used for hedgerows identified as of particularly high ecological value which cannot access similar national schemes.
- *** to be used in consultation with HE team for walls identified as having significant cultural value.
- ****This rate was previously used in Farndale due to visitor landowner issues around the daffodil walk. We will continue to have this rate using a sliding scale

should any other similar situations arise. All access payments will be utilised on advice from the Ranger team.

- 4.2 The payment for BPS conservation woodland has been cut due to the cessation of Basic Payment Scheme/ delinked payments on farmland.
- 4.3 A number of the rates set out above relating to boundaries, traditional buildings and permissive access are not currently used in active Land Management Agreements, however they have been included in the review to ensure the Authority has access to a viable current rate, approved by members, should the need to include one or more of these options in future agreements arises.
- 4.4 The template developed by Cumulus provides us with the ability to undertake future reviews, with the intention that the NPA will conduct an internal rate review every 3-5 years to ensure rates remain appropriate.
- 4.5 Whilst some of the rates may appear to be a significant increase it is important to recognise that we currently have a very small hectareage of land in our Land Management Agreements.

5. Financial and staffing implications

- 5.1 The financial implication of the amended rates is relatively small. The proposed rates would see a total uplift of £769 for Conservation agreements and £844 for the Coastal Stream agreements. The grants are fully funded through contributions from the Woodsmith Mine s106 Landscape & Ecology contributions. There are no staffing implications raised by this report.

6. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

- 6.1 Land Management Agreements contribute towards the achievement of Outcome 2 – a nature rich and biodiverse landscape.

7. Legal and sustainability implications

- 7.1 In order to meet the Authority's obligations under for the UK Subsidy Control rules, the Land Management Agreements are offered under the terms of the 'Environmental Improvement through Agriculture, National Parks (England and Wales) Scheme, which has been established in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). The AoA requires that payments made under the scheme are calculated on an income foregone basis. This payment review has been carried out in accordance with this requirement. There are no other legal implications. Failure to increase payment rates may compromise effective land management.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Members approve the increase in payment rates for NPA Land Management Agreements set out in the table at paragraph 4.1 above.

Contact Officer:

Jacob Lawson

Conservation Officer, 01439 772551