

Annex 3: Summary of Public Consultation Responses

Between February and April 2024, the North York Moors National Park Authority held an online consultation on the contents of the draft Nature Recovery Plan. In total we received 309 responses. The farming chapter received the most responses, followed by the moorland chapter and the woodland and landscape chapters got equal numbers of responses. Overall, the responses were broadly positive with 77% of respondents agreeing with the priorities set out.

Landscape

80% of respondents agreed with the priorities in this section. 18% of respondents said they felt that the targets were achievable but not ambitious, 15% didn't think they were achievable or ambitious but did not provide further comments, and 31% thought they were the right balance of achievable and ambitious. There were several comments made against the management of grouse moor, and a minority who are very against these suggestions vs a minority who feel that this is far too light touch and not good enough for nature recovery.

Farming

In total 78% of respondents were supportive of the priorities identified. Comments were broadly supportive suggesting that the plan "Strikes the right balance between nature and farming", but that further emphasis on food production is needed within the plan. 20% of responses with comments felt that farmers are currently doing enough for nature recovery and further intervention was not needed or not economically sustainable, vs 80% of respondents with comments who thought that further transition to nature friendly farming practises was needed within the National Park. The largest proportion of respondents on this chapter were landowner/farmer/land manager within the National Park (38%).

Moorland

This chapter was the most divisive amongst respondents, with 61% agreeing with our priorities and 39% disagreeing. Of those that disagreed 70% wanted to see the cessation of managed grouse moor within the national park and the cessation of burning. 16% of respondents supported the existing management of the moorland, and 14% did not comment on why they disagreed. There were an equal number of responses for and against shooting/burning from landowners/managers, but only one resident response showed support for shooting/burning and no visitor responses did.

Grassland

This chapter had the lowest number of responses at only 26 responses. 85% of responses agreed with our priorities, and of the 15% that did not, 50% felt the plan was not sufficiently ambitious and 50% felt that we should leave it as it is and interventions proposed were not achievable.

Trees and Woodland

82% of respondents agreed with the priorities, and the majority of comments supported both woodland creation and emphasised the importance of woodlands. Only one response was completely against increasing woodland planting, though several commented on a desire to see less plantation coniferous/non-native woodland and more broadleaf (14% of responses). There were a small number of comments here which were against the release/feeding of pheasants. Comments from an Employee of an Environmental Organisation felt that the tone was slightly too negative about plantation woodland but reflected with the negative comments regarding plantation woodland from the public consultation, it is considered that there is a reasonable balance within the current text between the two points of view.

Rivers, Water and Wetlands

This chapter had the most overwhelmingly positive response with 91% of respondents agreeing with the priorities. The 9% of responses that disagreed all cited water quality and noted that the priorities ‘do not go far enough’ and sewage treatment overflows needed to be replaced urgently.

Species Targets

73% of respondents agreed with our species priorities. This number is slightly lower than for others, and the general comments were unsure why species were being included, as they felt that habitat was the more important consideration. There was some pushback on the inclusion of freshwater pearl mussel, as it has already had lots of funding over the last 15 years, with no observable benefit thus far. 40% of comments explicitly mentioned beaver reintroduction and were supportive, and 50% of comments were strongly supportive of eliminating raptor persecution- several other comments felt that this was too ambitious ‘no crime can ever be eliminated’.

Do you agree with our priorities?	Farming	Moorland	Woodland	Rivers	Grassland	Landscape	Species
Yes	54	39	36	30	22	35	22
No	15	24	8	3	4	9	8
Total	69	63	44	33	26	44	30

Do you agree with our priorities?	Farming	Moorland	Woodland	Rivers	Grassland	Landscape	Species
Yes - Landowner/farmer/land manager within the National Park	19	9	11	7	5	8	8
Yes - Resident within the National Park	18	15	11	8	7	9	7

Do you agree with our priorities?	Farming	Moor land	Woodland	Rivers	Grass land	Landscape	Species
Yes - Resident outside the National Park	16	14	12	13	5	17	7
Yes - Employee of environmental organisation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
No - Landowner/ farmer/land manager within the National Park	7	7	2	1	1	4	2
No - Resident within the National Park	2	7	1	1	0	1	0
No - Resident outside the National Park	4	9	3	1	3	4	3
No - Employee of environmental organisation	0	1	1	0	0	0	0