



Management Plan

2022-2027



North York Moors
National Park



Foreword

One thing is certain about British landscapes – they will change – and change continually.

The North York Moors is no exception. It is a landscape of breath-taking visual and sensory contrasts and one that has been influenced by human activity for several thousand years.

We are, however, facing a number of new challenges today that are undoubtedly more pressing than at any other time since the National Park’s designation in 1952 – the effects of climate change, loss of biodiversity, the pressures on farming, to name a few.

Despite global concern about the future of our environment and climate, there remains a hint of optimism and a large swathe of new thinking. This thinking is reflected in the North York Moors Management Plan.

It includes a shared vision for a National Park that is even more beautiful, richer in wildlife and makes its full contribution to protecting against climate change. It also sets out to promote a National Park that remains tranquil and welcoming to all, a place where people can come to relax, reflect, exercise and enjoy nature, and a place that provides a great life and livelihood for its communities.

Visitor figures show that the National Park, 70 years after its creation, has never enjoyed as much popularity or support. It confirms that the need for National Parks such as the North York Moors has never been greater. Whilst change will inevitably occur, we must grasp the opportunity to work together so that our shared vision for this remarkable landscape is now delivered.

Patrick James
Chair, Management Plan Working Group

Why have we **prepared this Plan?**

This North York Moors Management Plan has been prepared at a time when a daunting set of challenges requires an urgent response from us all. These include recovery from the COVID pandemic, threats from escalating climate change, declining species and habitats, increasing mental and physical health problems among the general population, and the need to change the way we look after our landscapes.

Overcoming all these issues requires an agreed and co-ordinated plan of action that delivers a vision for this cherished landscape within a rapidly changing world. That is the purpose of this Management Plan.





What is the Management Plan?

The National Park is a special place, designated for the nation to enjoy and for its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. The Management Plan is the most important document that the National Park Authority produces. It sets out a long-term vision for the National Park and describes the objectives, policies and goals that the National Park Authority, other public bodies and stakeholders will pursue to achieve it. The Management Plan highlights the key priorities for action over the next twenty years to help address the challenges that the National Park will face.

This new Management Plan for the North York Moors was prepared with the help and support of many individuals and organisations who contributed their expertise and thoughts as the Plan was produced.

It is important that we understand the wider context in which the Management Plan is being compiled, so a brief explanation of the ‘key drivers’ that have informed the Plan is also included. The scale of these drivers, whether it’s climate change, the future of farming policy or our health and wellbeing after the global COVID pandemic, tells us that the National Park is facing a period of significant challenge and opportunity.

A separate ‘State of the National Park Report’ has been published alongside that offers facts and figures about this National Park, which have helped inform this Plan. It is also supported by an accompanying Delivery and Monitoring Plan which will be used to drive implementation of the Plan’s outcomes and objectives and check whether its aims are being delivered on the ground. This Plan will be reviewed every five years.

This Plan:

- 1. Includes a set of ‘Special Qualities’ that defines the essence of what makes this National Park so distinctive.
- 2. Sets out a collective ‘Vision’ for how we want the National Park to be in twenty years’ time.
- 3. Describes six main outcomes that we want to see happening over the next twenty years.
- 4. Sets out 24 supporting objectives that will help us achieve the vision and outcomes.

About the North York Moors National Park



North York Moors National Park – a place of great beauty and tranquillity, where far-reaching heather moorlands give way to tree-topped skylines, deep wooded dales, babbling becks and a rugged coastline. A place to marvel at stars, revel in rich heritage and reconnect with nature. A place that is protected for this and future generations.

The North York Moors National Park lies 20 miles north of the City of York and extends to the southern fringe of the Tees Valley. It is home to 554 square miles of stunning, diverse landscapes, including 26 miles of outstanding coastline, with the popular coastal towns of Whitby and Scarborough lying just beyond its edges.

It is home to 23,135¹ residents who continue to contribute to the culture, community, economy and upkeep of the National Park. Over eight million people a year come and visit the North York Moors to enjoy this landscape, generating £750 million locally through visitor and tourism business expenditure.² It is one of the most deeply rural areas in England – with just 0.16 residents per hectare, and many of its larger settlements lie on its edges.

Its high moorland plateau was forged by ancient ice to form a central backbone cut to each side by deep, narrow dales. Stand on top of the moorland and extensive views are available in all directions.

To the north, the edge of the Cleveland Hills drops down over Eston Nab to the flat Tees lowlands. To the east, dramatic coastal scenery and high cliffs offer views out over the North Sea. To the south, the Tabular Hills offer a vantage point over the Vale of Pickering, while to the west, the Hambleton Hills escarpment, some 1,000 feet high, looks out over the Vale of Mowbray to the distant Pennines, a place noted by author and local vet James Herriot³ as the “finest view in England.”

Originally designated in 1952, it is one of ten National Parks in England which together cover around ten percent of the country. These areas were designated to protect landscapes and enhance wildlife and cultural heritage, and to encourage their use by people from nearby cities and towns.



The statutory role of National Parks

The ‘dual role’ of English National Parks – peaceful settings and natural beauty and as a place of enjoyment for all – is enshrined by two key legal ‘purposes,’ set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the 1995 Environment Act:

- “To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park,” and
- “To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.”

Since 1995 there has been a legal duty (through the Environment Act) on the National Park Authority when pursuing these purposes:

- “To seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities.”

The same legislation also requires public bodies and local authorities to have regard to the two statutory National Park purposes.

The Management Plan must deliver against both statutory purposes and the duty if it’s to be successful. This will require a careful balancing exercise – especially as regards changing land use in the National Park – and it is the role of this Management Plan to consider how best to achieve that balance.

The North York Moors “contains, within a relatively small compass, an amazing wealth and variety of beauty. Indeed, there are few places elsewhere in Britain which can offer such extensive and remote tracts of wild and unspoilt scenery within such easy reach of populated areas.”

The 1947 Report of the National Parks Committee, chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse, which led to the designation of the North York Moors.

Images left to right:

North York Moors National Park volunteers
© Tony Bartholomew

Triangular meadow at Sutton Bank
© Lizzie Shepherd

‘Wanderlust Women’ volunteer task
© Amira Patel

¹Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020.

²STEAM data for 2019

³The pen name of vet Alf Wight

Special qualities of the North York Moors National Park

The statutory role of the National Park refers to the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its ‘Special Qualities.’

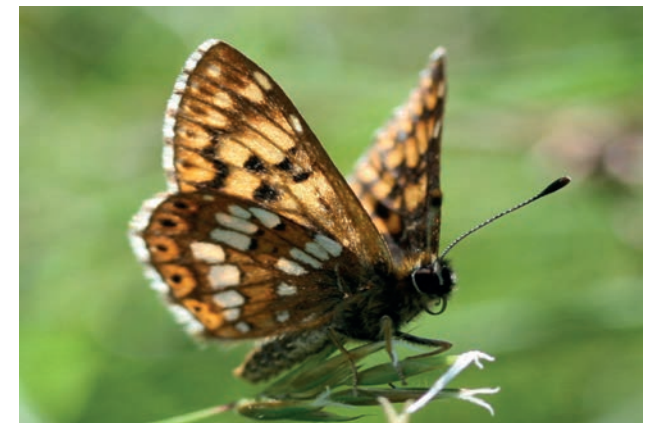
These define what makes the North York Moors distinctive and explain why the National Park is of so much value to the nation. They help promote the National Park and paint the canvas on which its policies are set. Our Special Qualities are:

Images left to right:

High Baring workshops, Rosedale
© Tom Mutton

Robin Hood’s Bay from Ravenscar
© Mike Kipling

Duke of Burgundy butterfly
© Tammy Andrews



1. A surprising range of contrasting landscapes, with extensive views

Few other English National Parks have such a range of contrasting landscapes in such a defined area. It is home to a diverse mix of dense forests, leafy glades, deeply cut dales, meandering rivers and a dramatic coastline, all linked by open heather moorland unique in its extent in England.

- It has one of the greatest concentrations of veteran trees in northern England – ancient woodland and multi-purpose forests create wonderful, accessible opportunities for conservation and recreation.
- Steep hills rise dramatically from surrounding lowland vales and valleys. These define the edge of the National Park and provide exceptionally far-reaching views from the moorland tops, across the green dales to the surrounding lowlands and from coastal cliffs out to the North Sea.
- The Jurassic-era coastline combines high cliffs, wooded bays, sandy coves, sheltered harbours and jutting headlands. The coastal villages are bywords for tradition and distinctiveness; the coastal geology is exceptional.

2. A diverse mix of upland, lowland and coastal habitats, home to a rich variety of wildlife

The landscapes are full of life, from shoreline rockpools to moorland ponds. Our geology, geography and centuries of working the land have helped create a mosaic of habitats that support many rare and internationally important wildlife species.

- The upland plateau is important for moorland-nesting birds such as merlin, golden plover and curlew. Rare butterflies, such as the Duke of Burgundy, can be found in the limestone grasslands in the south, while fens, bogs, flushes and springs support very rare soldier flies and whorl snails.
- Our rivers and streams teem with life, from mayflies to Atlantic salmon. The River Esk has its source in the high moorland and runs to the North Sea. Valuable work on the Esk and the Rye rivers helps support threatened species, such as white-clawed crayfish and the freshwater pearl mussel.
- The coast is a place where woodland, scrub, heath and flush vie for space. Marine creatures abound, but this is also an environment for grazing cattle, flowering yellow gorse and tree-clad gills.
- Our woods and forests provide an important refuge for species like nightjar and goshawk and support the only breeding population of turtle dove in the north of England. And in the ‘windy pits’ (a network of roofed-over fissures) there are nationally significant numbers of bats, including the Alcahoie bat.





3. A place with strong, visible links to its cultural heritage

For over three hundred generations, and thousands of years, people have shaped our landscapes. Whether farming, fishing or mining – or managing the moorland or planting the dales – you can see the story of people’s lives and labours played out across the land.

- Iron Age forts, Bronze Age burial mounds, ancient stone crosses and boundary stones, medieval castles, ruined abbeys and Victorian industrial relics are found across all corners of the National Park.
- A wealth of archaeology helps tell the tale of former human activity, from Mesolithic hunters and Roman occupation to monastic sheep-farming and 20th-century wartime training.
- Local traditions, songs, festivals and folklore help reinforce cultural identity.
- The landscape continues to inspire creative endeavour, with artists and artisans alike drawing inspiration from the natural fabric of the North York Moors.

Images left to right:

Byland Abbey
© Ebor Images

Traditional thatched cottage at Rievaulx
© Ebor Images



4. A variety of distinctive places and communities creating a sense of local identity, culture, traditions and pride

Settlements are rooted in the curves and folds of the landscape. Where people have settled, they have built strong, welcoming local communities with a distinctive character of their own.

- The buildings reflect the local geology, with limestone used to the south and sandstone in the north. Traditional roofing materials are widely used – predominantly red clay pantiles, but also thatch, and Welsh or Westmorland slate, which creates an architectural style which is clearly identifiable as belonging to the North York Moors.
- Geography, agriculture, forestry, industry and heritage all contribute to the North York Moors’ varied scenery. Isolated farmsteads sit at the heart of a network of stone walls, maintained hedges and enclosed pastures and meadows. Small coastal villages cling to the cliffsides, with buildings jostling for space. Terraced workers’ cottages or estate villages provide some communities with a sense of local identity and Georgian and Victorian buildings reflect periods of wealth and growth.



5. A place of escape from towns and cities, offering a true sense of remoteness and the darkest of skies

The North York Moors location on the doorstep of heavily populated areas provides easily accessible places to escape and experience our wild, beautiful landscapes and star-filled dark night skies.

- Walk onto the moorland and experience a sense of openness, away from the crowds. The big-sky views are astonishing, while the purple blaze of late-summer heather is one of England’s natural glories.
- It’s easy to find quiet riverside meadows, hidden waterfalls and moorland ponds full of darting dragonflies. Cycle into the forest on woodland trails, where deer move silently among the trees and birds nest, sing and soar.
- The darkest of night skies offer a different kind of escape. In this International Dark Sky Reserve, you can often see 2,000 stars – far more than in the nearby towns – including spectacular views of our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

Images left to right:

Blow Gill
© Lizzie Shepherd

Smelling autumn leaves
© Olivia Brabbs



6. A source of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing

The North York Moors isn’t simply just a place, it’s a state of mind. Here – in these landscapes, surrounded by nature, within this living heritage – is somewhere to take stock; somewhere to breathe. It’s:

- A place for calm solitude and finding a deep sense of tranquillity.
- A place to relax – to picnic on a village green, eat ice cream on a sandy beach, stroll through the heather to a rocky outcrop, paddle in an ice-cold stream or look out over a wildflower meadow.
- A place of challenge – cycling, hiking, running and horse-riding on thousands of miles of public bridleways, footpaths, country lanes and forest tracks.
- A place of enrichment, for artists, volunteers, teachers, enthusiasts, children and retired people – for anyone whose health and wellbeing benefits from being outdoors in nature.

The vision for the North York Moors National Park is:

“By 2040 the North York Moors National Park will be a resilient landscape at the forefront of addressing climate change and nature recovery. It will be a biodiverse, beautiful and varied place that’s proud of its cultural heritage, all of which lift the nation’s health and wellbeing. It will be a place with a diverse, innovative, low carbon economy and home to thriving, welcoming local communities.”

The Vision for the North York Moors sets out six key outcomes that we and our partners aspire to make happen:



Outcome
01

A resilient landscape at the forefront of addressing climate change and nature recovery.



Outcome
02

A nature rich, more biodiverse landscape.



Outcome
03

A landscape rich in heritage and highly valued for its sense of remoteness and tranquillity.



Outcome
04

A place that lifts the nation’s health and wellbeing.



Outcome
05

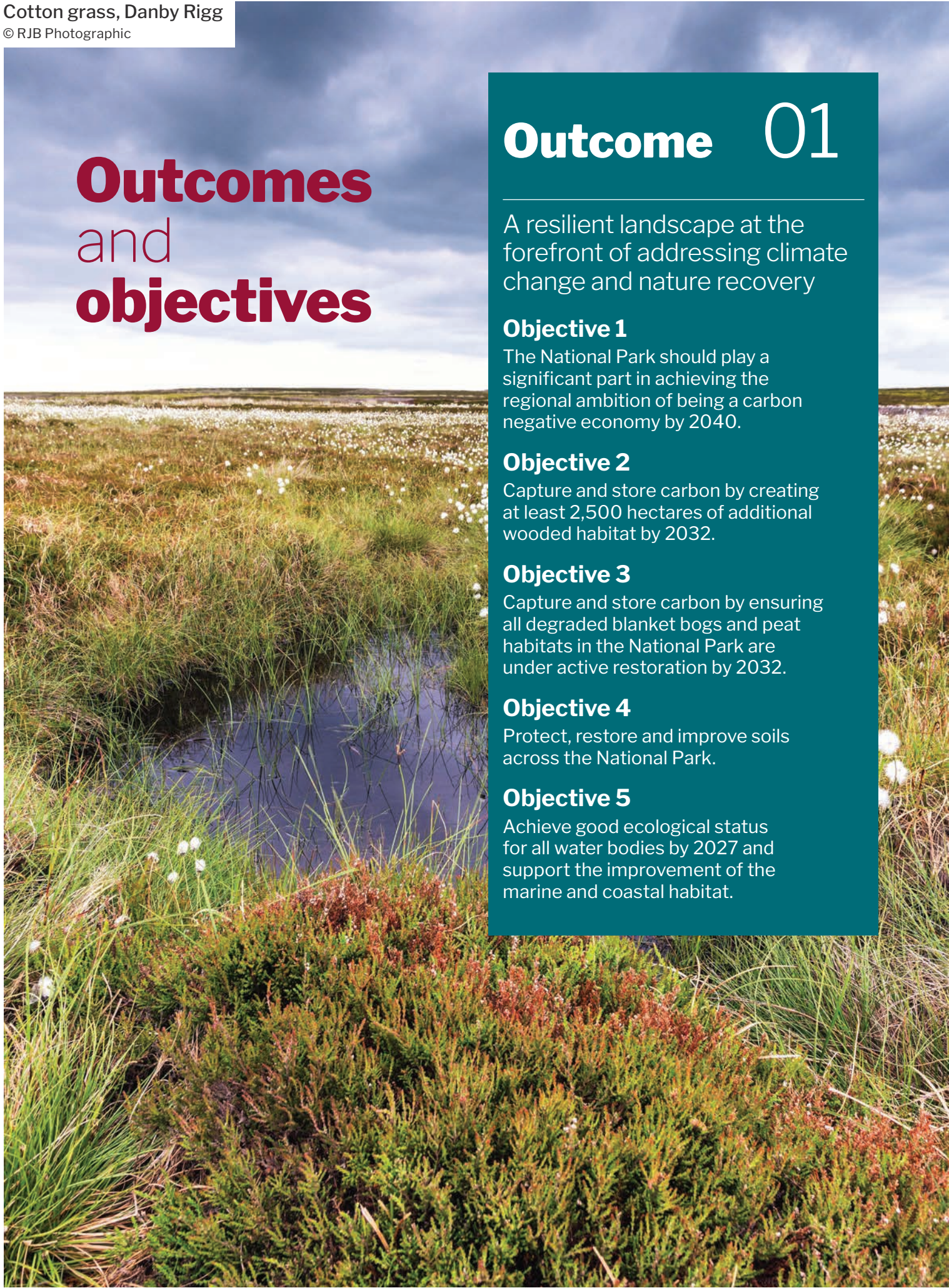
A place that supports a diverse and innovative low carbon economy.



Outcome
06

A place of great beauty where local communities thrive.

A vision for the National Park



Outcomes and objectives

Outcome 01

A resilient landscape at the forefront of addressing climate change and nature recovery

Objective 1

The National Park should play a significant part in achieving the regional ambition of being a carbon negative economy by 2040.

Objective 2

Capture and store carbon by creating at least 2,500 hectares of additional wooded habitat by 2032.

Objective 3

Capture and store carbon by ensuring all degraded blanket bogs and peat habitats in the National Park are under active restoration by 2032.

Objective 4

Protect, restore and improve soils across the National Park.

Objective 5

Achieve good ecological status for all water bodies by 2027 and support the improvement of the marine and coastal habitat.



“This defining year [2020] for the UK’s climate credentials has been marred by uncertainty and delay to a host of new climate strategies. Those that have emerged have too often missed the mark. With every month of inaction, it is harder for the UK to get on track.”

The Climate Change Committee,
2021 Progress Report to Parliament

Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

Adapting to and mitigating accelerating climate change is clearly a priority, if not the priority for this Plan. The challenges around climate and nature cannot be solved in isolation. Restoring and protecting nature boosts biodiversity and the ecosystems that can absorb carbon. Warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers, more extreme weather events, increased risk of wildfire, pest and disease impacts, drought and floods, declining soil health and loss of critical habitats and species are all a consequence of a warming planet.

Climate change is an increasing source of concern for most people – the Government’s public attitude tracker showed that in March 2019, 80 percent of people surveyed were fairly concerned or very concerned about climate change, while 2020 was the year that children in the UK went on a school strike to highlight the urgency of the issue and lack of action from generations before them.

At the 2021 COP26 summit in Glasgow, represented nations also agreed to accelerate plans to reduce CO₂ emissions by 2030.

To help drive action, the UK’s independent Climate Change Committee recommends a seismic shift in rates of tree-planting and peatland restoration. Regionally, the York and North Yorkshire Local Economic Partnership has set out an ambition for the area to be the UK’s first carbon-negative region by 2040. The English National Park Authorities have also committed to work collectively towards becoming ‘net zero’⁴ by 2030.

Addressing climate change concerns is not only about reducing greenhouse emissions, it is also about adapting natural landscapes and land uses to the changing weather and climate. A key point from the Climate Change Committee⁵ is particularly pertinent to the North York Moors National Park: that biodiversity is one of the eight top priorities requiring urgent measures to address climate impacts.

⁴Net zero refers to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions removed from the atmosphere being the same as the amount emitted. Carbon negative is where more carbon dioxide is removed than emitted.

⁵The independent public body, formed under the 2008 Climate Change Act (2008) to advise the Government on tackling and preparing for climate change.



“Look closely at nature. Every species is a masterpiece, exquisitely adapted to the particular environment in which it has survived. Who are we to destroy or even diminish biodiversity?”

E.O. Wilson, American biologist

Outcome 02

A nature rich, more biodiverse landscape

Objective 6
Create bigger, better and more joined-up habitats, with nature-rich wildlife corridors extending beyond the National Park boundaries.

Objective 7
Restore wilder and more naturally functioning ecosystems on at least 2,000 hectares in the National Park.

Objective 8
Work with our moorland community to support the sustainable management of moorland to ensure it retains its intrinsic character and supports a greater variety and abundance of species and habitats.

Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

The UK is committed to supporting the United Nation’s target to protect 30 percent of the Earth’s land and sea for nature by 2030 and led the G7 commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. These are enshrined in the 2021 Environment Act which brings into UK law environmental protections and requires the creation of a national Nature Recovery Network. It also proposes a system of ‘net gain,’ with new development expected to deliver at least a ten percent improvement in the quality of habitats.

The 2019 Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover also recommended that strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including wilder areas, and that nationally protected landscapes should form the backbone of the national Nature Recovery Network. In response, National Parks England has created a Wildlife Delivery Plan setting ambitious targets across the English National Park family to deliver 20 percent of the government’s target for nature recovery on the ten percent of England that is designated as National Parks. Each National Park has developed a nature recovery prospectus, which identifies local priorities that will sit at the heart of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The ‘Nature Opportunities’ map overleaf illustrates the areas of the National Park that could be best used to stimulate nature recovery in the North York Moors.

Some areas are where new habitat can be created, others are where there are opportunities to link habitats, including coastal habitats, together to improve the network and make habitats more resilient. The map also shows areas for improvement that extend beyond the administrative boundary of the National Park. This mapping exercise will be used as the baseline for the forthcoming North York Moors National Park Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

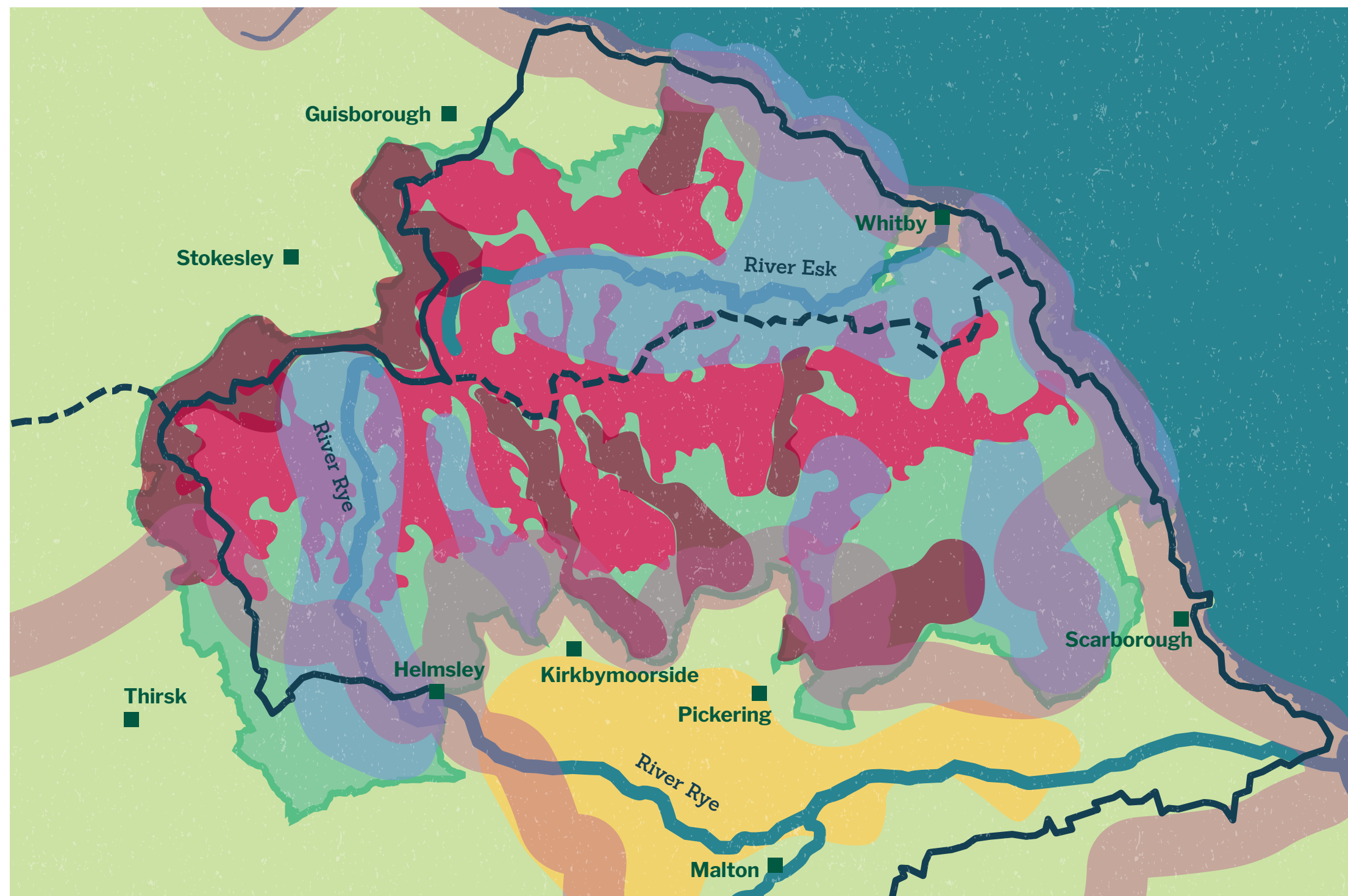
The North York Moors is also home to one of the largest areas of continuous heather moorland in England, which can help contribute to the achievement of this outcome. Most of this moorland is managed to support grouse populations, with game shooting contributing to the economy and communities of the National Park. This Plan seeks to ensure the moorland is managed in a more sustainable way, including finding ways of reducing and finding alternatives to burning, so that the moorland can be managed to not only support existing species but also help introduce new ones.

All stakeholders involved in the Management Plan support and promote a zero tolerance approach to raptor persecution and wildlife crime.



North York Moors
National Park

Nature Opportunities in the North York Moors National Park



- National Park
- Opportunities to retain and improve core nature areas (SSSI)
- Opportunities to create new habitat and increase diversity
- Opportunities to enhance connectivity and join up habitats
- B lines: Buglife insect pathways linking wildlife areas specifically for pollinators
- Opportunities beyond the National Park boundary
- National Trails
- - Coast to Coast Walk – possible new National Trail
- Rivers

Outcome 03

A landscape rich in heritage and highly valued for its sense of remoteness and tranquillity

Objective 9

Increase the intrinsic darkness of the National Park International Dark Sky Reserve by expanding the current dark sky core zone by twenty percent by 2027.

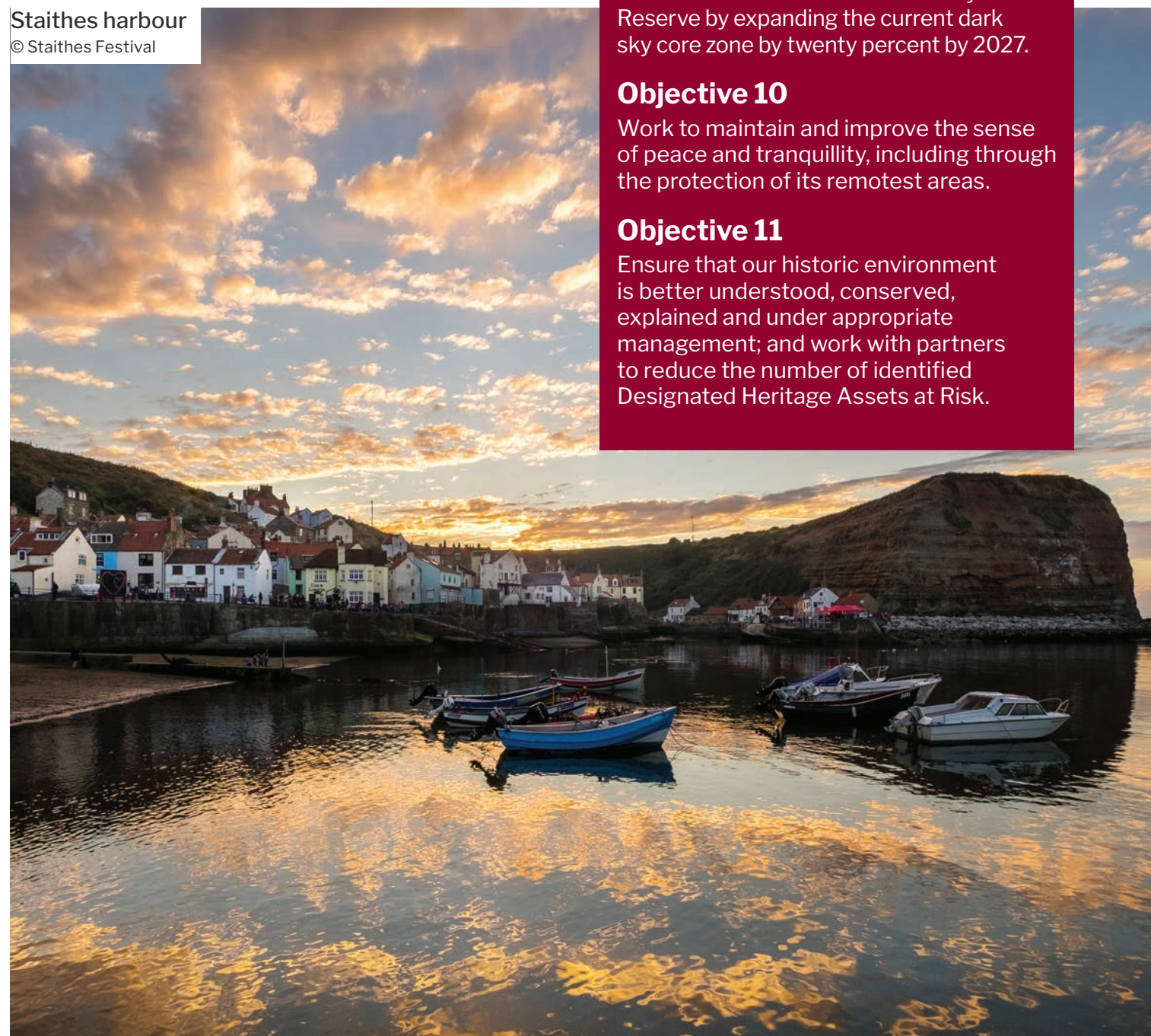
Objective 10

Work to maintain and improve the sense of peace and tranquillity, including through the protection of its remotest areas.

Objective 11

Ensure that our historic environment is better understood, conserved, explained and under appropriate management; and work with partners to reduce the number of identified Designated Heritage Assets at Risk.

Staithes harbour
© Staithes Festival



“It’s not until you’ve been somewhere like the North York Moors that you truly appreciate the beauty – and rarity – of a genuinely dark sky. To stand there, in the middle of a big field, with a huge sky above you, dwarfing you, pressing down on you under the weight of the stars.”

Stuart Atkinson, author of the award-winning ‘Cat’s Guide to the Night Sky’



Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

The North York Moors was designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve in 2020, one of only nineteen in the world. The 2020 Local Plan for the North York Moors also introduced planning policies on tranquillity and the concept of ‘remote areas.’ Surveys of residents and visitors alike point to consistently strong feedback that people enjoy the ‘getting away from it all’ aspect of the National Park and value the peace, quiet and solitude that it offers.

The North York Moors has an exceptionally rich history which contributes to the area’s unique identity. The quality of the historic environment appeals to residents who are attracted by the local architecture and picturesque villages as well as visitors who wish to learn more about its past.

The Authority has a good track record of working with partners, which include Historic England and Forestry Commission, to tackle archaeology at risk and, with 32 percent of the scheduled monuments in the Yorkshire and Humber region found in the North York Moors, this has been a focus of the Authority’s work. Far fewer historic monuments and buildings are now classed as ‘at risk’ – down from 62 buildings and 332 monuments in 2012 to 36 buildings and 44 monuments in 2021 – and we would like to continue this work.



“Allow nature’s peace to flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of autumn.”

John Muir, ‘Father of the American National Parks’

Outcome 04

A place that lifts the nation’s health and wellbeing

Objective 12

Create specific, targeted opportunities to improve mental and physical health and wellbeing by connecting people with nature.

Objective 13

Increase awareness of, and access to, the National Park among underserved communities, particularly those in the surrounding area.

Objective 14

Inspire the next generation to enjoy, learn about and care for the National Park, and support young people’s direct involvement in decision-making about its future.

Objective 15

Ensure that all members of the public are able to enjoy the National Park using easy-to-use, well-marked rights of way and open access land.

Objective 16

Promote the North York Moors National Park as the premier recreational/family cycling destination in the north of England.

Objective 17

Work with businesses to establish regenerative tourism as a guiding principle and encourage visitors to make a positive contribution to the National Park.

Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

The COVID pandemic brought about a seismic shift in people’s attitudes to nature. Successive lockdowns inspired more people and new audiences to enjoy the countryside and the great outdoors, kindling new interest in National Parks as destinations.

According to Natural England’s People & Nature survey⁶ 42 percent of people said they had spent more time outside since COVID pandemic restrictions began and almost 89 percent of people strongly agreed or agreed that nature and wildlife are important to their wellbeing. The challenge now is to sustain and develop this interest, and work with all visitors so that the National Park’s Special Qualities continue to be enjoyed, valued and respected.

Access to nature and cultural heritage can improve people’s health outcomes and play a preventative role in reducing illness. Extensive research has shown that engaging with the natural environment has positive outcomes for wellbeing for both people and communities, helping to prevent ill health. Involvement in arts and culture supports these outcomes and improves wellbeing generally. A 2021 report commissioned by Defra, featuring Middlesbrough as one of four case studies, highlighted that “In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is an even greater imperative to fully realise the contribution that access to nature can make to wellbeing”.

This also has financial benefits. In 2016, a report for the NHS estimated that £34 billion is spent each year on mental health and the cost to the economy is estimated at £105 billion per year – roughly the annual cost of the entire NHS.⁷ The Government is committed to helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces to encourage people to be close to nature, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas. The move by health bodies to roll out Green Social Prescribing is directly supportive of this commitment.

Enabling young people to experience the special qualities of National Parks inspires a deeper relationship with nature. Research shows that people with a positive connection to nature are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviours towards the environment.⁸ Adults who experience nature as children are likely to be motivated to protect the environment, as Dr William Bird notes in his work for the RSPB, “the critical age of influence appears to be before 12 years. Before this age, contact with nature in all its forms, but in particular wild nature, appears to strongly influence a positive behaviour towards the environment”. There are also financial benefits – an evaluation of the North York Moors Explorer Club and Young Rangers programmes shows that for every £1 of investment, there is a £6 return.

Access to the countryside is key to improving health and wellbeing but is dependent on having a high-quality network of public rights of way. The National Park maintains an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and other route classifications totalling around 1,500 miles, which includes routes for specialist use such as easy access and cycling. Walking and cycling are among the key reasons why people visit the National Park. The National Park is already a popular destination for cycling for leisure, and there is an opportunity to further increase travel by bicycle for all journeys, helping to reduce car use. With the increasing popularity of e-bikes, users can travel further and faster with ease, making journeys by bicycle easier and quicker.

⁶Natural England, People and Nature Survey for England Updated monthly indicators for 2020-2021.

⁷www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mental-Health-Taskforce-FYFV-final.pdf

⁸‘Natural Thinking’ (2007). A report by Dr. William Bird for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, p.55.

“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.”

Sir David Attenborough

Outcome 05

A place that supports a diverse and innovative low carbon economy

Objective 18

Provide opportunities that attract, upskill and retain a local workforce working in high-value, knowledge-intensive jobs and the ‘green’ or ‘landscape’ economy.

Objective 19

Maintain a strong and viable farming and land management community that delivers more for climate, nature, people and place.

Objective 20

Increase opportunities for residents and visitors to travel sustainably in the National Park.

Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

Improvements in technology, together with the rapid adaptation of working patterns during the COVID pandemic, have brought about a reassessment for many about where they wish to live and work. The appeal of a high-quality environment and desire for more space at home has the potential to both bring new people and investment into the National Park, but at the same time increases pressure on house prices.

More balanced land management opportunities can help provide the essentials people need whilst living within environmental limits,⁹ and the ‘Green Growth’ agenda can help create new jobs in the green or ‘circular’ economy, especially in identified growth sectors, for example carbon offsetting, the digital economy, traditional building and retrofitting skills. Increasing skills and opportunities in these areas through training, investment, apprenticeships and information-sharing will help those working in the National Park (or wanting to work here) deliver net zero carbon and a richer natural world.

Plans are also being put in place to phase out direct support payments to farmers by 2027 and replacing them with a new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme based on the principle of offering public money for “public goods” – such as better air and water quality, thriving wildlife and soil health. This change is likely to be one of the biggest drivers of landscape change; and given the dependency of farmers in the National Park on direct payments for income, this change in policy will result in major challenges as well as opportunities for the land management sector.

As part of the transition to ELM the Government introduced a ‘Farming in Protected Landscapes’ Programme in June 2021, where funding is open to farmers and land managers to support projects which deliver nature recovery, mitigate the effects of climate change, and provide ways for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape.

Further opportunities also exist to improve access to the National Park in ways that reduce car use. The North York Moors already benefits from rail access to ten villages using the Esk Valley line which runs from Middlesbrough and Whitby. New services on this line have been created in recent years and there remains potential for additional new services to further increase the opportunities for use of the line for both commuting and recreational travel.



⁹This can be usefully thought of in terms of ‘doughnut economics.’ This means living within the ring of doughnut where the hole in the middle represents a place where people lack life’s essentials (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), and the outer edge is the ceiling beyond which human activity would overshoot our pressure on Earth’s life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer (Kate Raworth, Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist, 2017).

Sheep farmer Paul Jones of Biggin House Farm
© Charlie Fox





Outcome 06

A place of great beauty where local communities thrive

Objective 21

Increase the delivery of affordable housing¹⁰ above 2010-2020 levels to build at least 100 affordable homes in villages across the National Park by 2027; and press for changes to control the conversion of housing to second or holiday homes.

Objective 22

Work to establish the North York Moors National Park as a leader in low-cost, low-carbon, housing design through the development of at least one new-build exemplar scheme; and promote the deployment of sustainable materials and responsible retrofitting measures in historic buildings to secure their long-term future.

Objective 23

Enable resilient communities where residents can meet their basic needs, by identifying any existing gaps in provision and developing community hubs to service a wider catchment or areas where services can be shared.

Objective 24

Facilitate local solutions to ensure superfast broadband and/or mobile phone coverage is available to 100 percent of households in the National Park by 2030.

“It’s lovely to be back living in the village and the area where I grew up, where my family live and where I work, and to know there are schemes like this which enable young professionals like us to remain in our communities without it costing the earth.”

Occupier of an affordable home at Osmotherley, quoted in Hambleton Today

“With an ageing population, we do need to think hard as to how we can enable younger generations to stay around – to be able to afford to live and work here and to want to.”

Comment made during the spring 2021 engagement exercise for this Plan



Why do we want to work towards this outcome?

The latest set of mid-year population estimates by the Office for National Statistics show that population levels in the National Park are in decline. Numbers in 2020 were down by around 3.8 percent since 2001, although the year 2019 to 2020 showed a small increase.

The age structure of the National Park population is also changing, with significant increases in the number of older people in recent years. In 2020, 41 percent of the National Park’s population was aged 60 or more, compared to 32 percent for North Yorkshire and 24 percent for England and Wales. It is the younger ‘missing generation’¹¹ who are most affected by some of the key challenges facing the National Park, such as climate change, low paid jobs and housing affordability.

The average house price in the National Park in 2021 was around £297,000, meaning that someone with a ten percent deposit would need an income of £67,000 to £76,000 to buy.¹² Research undertaken in 2016 also revealed that a third of all household incomes were less than £20,000, meaning that affordable rental homes are essential for many residents on lower incomes.

The historic environment is particularly vulnerable to environmental change and with climate change forming a key part of this Plan, there is a need to develop adaption measures to create building resilience. The majority of the building stock within the North York Moors is made up of traditional buildings of solid wall construction. Traditional construction differs significantly from modern construction, as they are made from different materials, construction methods and design and as such perform differently.

A responsible and well understood approach to retrofitting is required if we are to ensure the long-term future of these buildings. Responsible retrofitting is an opportunity to not only improve energy efficiency, but also improve the comfort and health of a building’s occupants.

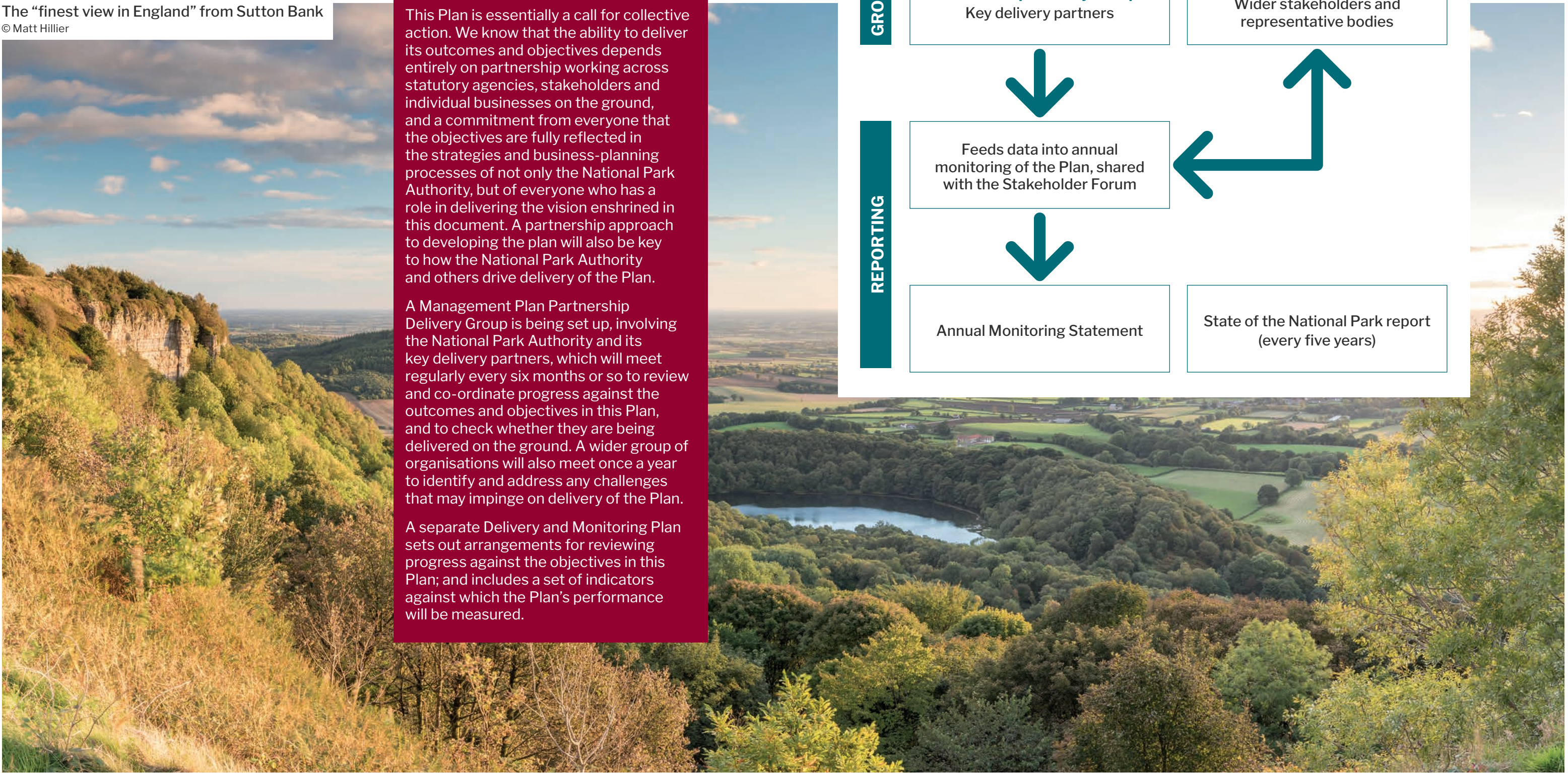
There has also been a decline in local services in recent years, most notably banks and post offices, but also pubs, shops and schools. Whilst many services are now being delivered online, not everyone has access to or wishes to use broadband or mobile phone connections, and there remain significant areas of the National Park without coverage. After current roll-out programmes end in 2023, around ten percent of homes in the National Park will still be without superfast broadband.

¹⁰ As defined in the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (Glossary).

¹¹ A phrase used by the 2021 North Yorkshire Rural Commission Report.

¹² Assuming a 3.5-4 times lending multiplier on a single income.

The “finest view in England” from Sutton Bank
© Matt Hillier

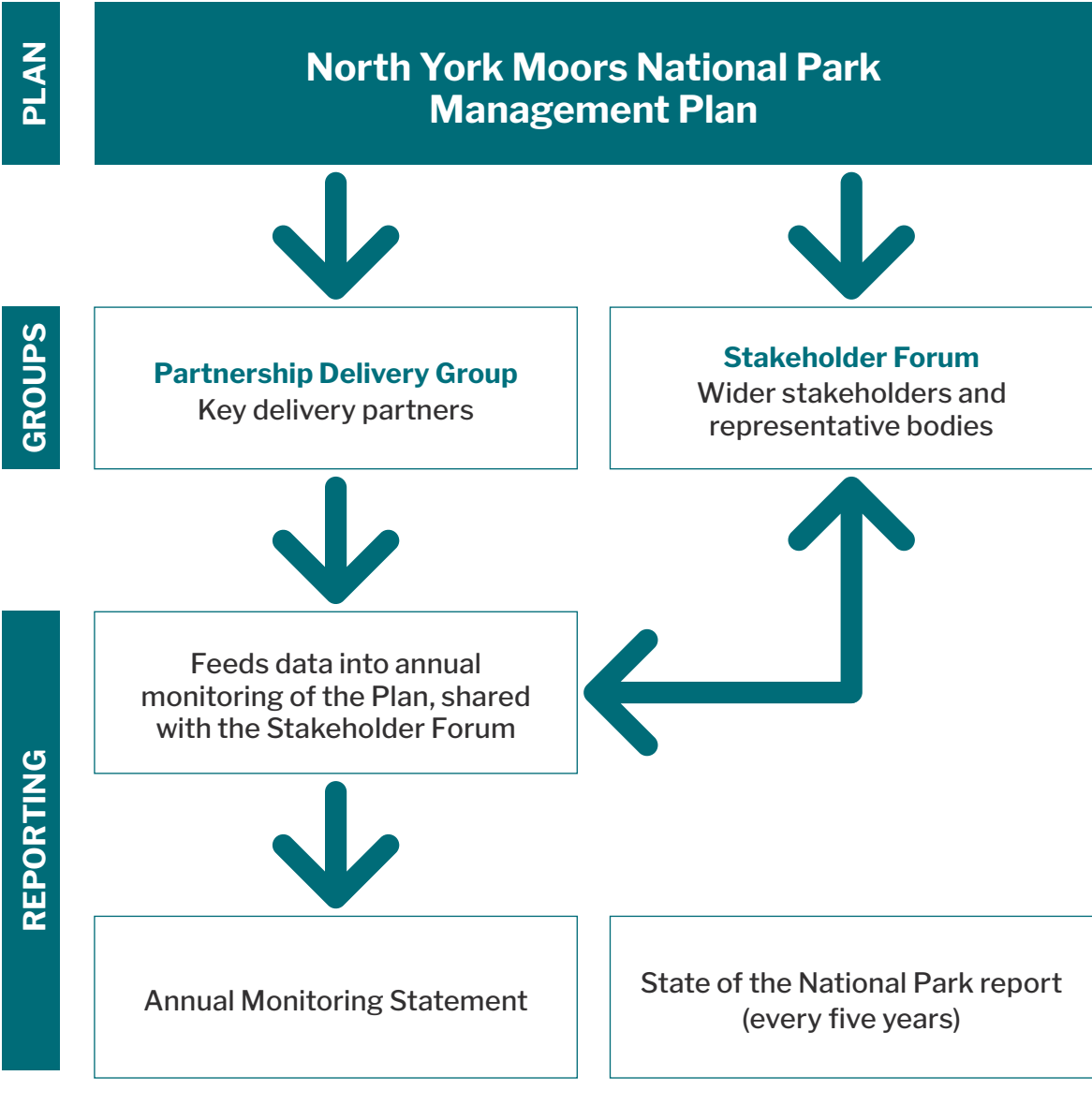


Delivering the plan

This Plan is essentially a call for collective action. We know that the ability to deliver its outcomes and objectives depends entirely on partnership working across statutory agencies, stakeholders and individual businesses on the ground, and a commitment from everyone that the objectives are fully reflected in the strategies and business-planning processes of not only the National Park Authority, but of everyone who has a role in delivering the vision enshrined in this document. A partnership approach to developing the plan will also be key to how the National Park Authority and others drive delivery of the Plan.

A Management Plan Partnership Delivery Group is being set up, involving the National Park Authority and its key delivery partners, which will meet regularly every six months or so to review and co-ordinate progress against the outcomes and objectives in this Plan, and to check whether they are being delivered on the ground. A wider group of organisations will also meet once a year to identify and address any challenges that may impinge on delivery of the Plan.

A separate Delivery and Monitoring Plan sets out arrangements for reviewing progress against the objectives in this Plan; and includes a set of indicators against which the Plan’s performance will be measured.





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North York Moors
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