

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014 - 2019



Your AONB



Enjoy



Wildlife & Habitats



Get Involved



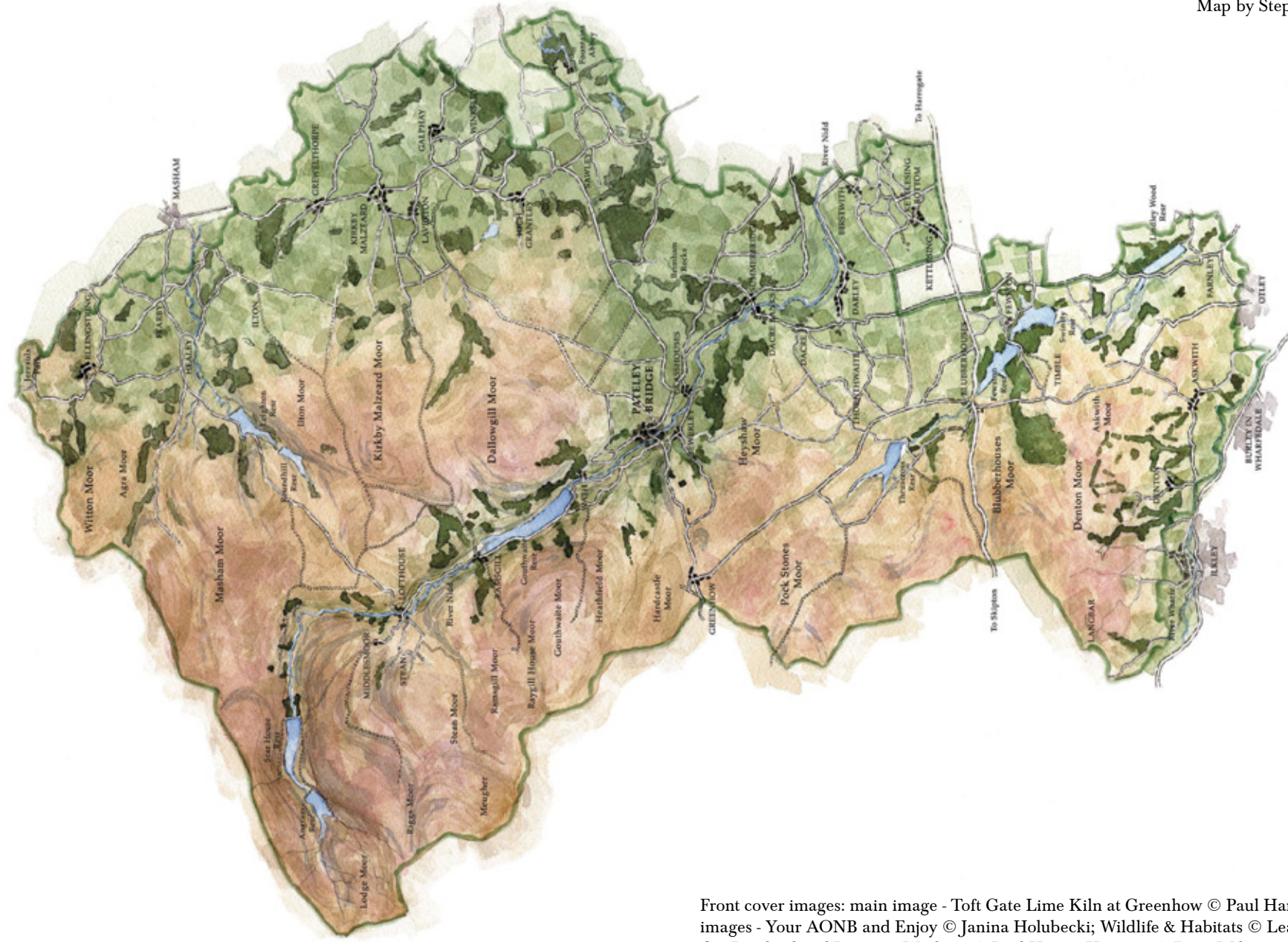
Living & Working



Heritage



Nidderdale AONB



Map by Stephen Huxley

Front cover images: main image - Toft Gate Lime Kiln at Greenhow © Paul Harris; small images - Your AONB and Enjoy © Janina Holubecki; Wildlife & Habitats © Leanne Fox; Get Involved and Living & Working © Paul Harris; Heritage © Dave Wilson.

Contents

Introduction	2
» AONB designation	
» The special qualities of the AONB	
Nidderdale AONB and other protected landscapes	5
About the Management Plan	6
Ecosystem Service Matrix	11
2050 Vision Statement	15
Management Plan Policies and Objectives	17
» Landscape	19
» Natural Environment	23
» Heritage and the Historic Environment	25
» Understanding and Enjoyment	27
» Living and Working	29

Foreword

The Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is one of Britain's finest landscapes. It is marvellous to look at, full of contrasts between heather moors, which have an exhilarating feeling of openness, and a more intimate mosaic of pasture and woodland elsewhere. Its special qualities are plain for all to see, but enjoyment of the landscape is heightened by knowledge of how it has been painstakingly created by past generations, and by an understanding of how people are absolutely at the heart of today's landscape. It is a living and working place, and the purpose of this Management Plan is to act as a blueprint for everyone who cares about conserving the AONB's special qualities, including the local community, visitors and volunteers, farmers and landowners, local authorities and government agencies.

The Plan for the next five years will be every bit as challenging as the period of covered by the 2009-2014 Management Plan, if not much more so. Decisions about the economy and implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy are on the immediate horizon in 2014, alongside the ever-present threat of harmful climate change. Meanwhile, local issues with a national dimension, like affordable housing and availability of rural services will continue to compete for attention, and I have no doubt that new challenges will emerge before 2019 is out.

The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee will need to be as adept at marshalling the talent, energy and commitment of its friends and partners, and volunteers, as it has been over the last decade. I want to thank them for the huge and lasting contribution they made to the last Management Plan, and I look forward to working together on this latest version.

Councillor Nigel Simms
Chair, Nidderdale AONB Joint Advisory Committee



View towards Upper Nidderdale © Janina Holubecki

Introduction

Nidderdale AONB

AONB designation

There are 46 AONBs in England and Wales. The boundaries were originally drawn in the 1940s when local authorities were given powers to administer AONBs by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 1949.

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’.

Government policy on AONBs is based on legislation in the Countryside Act 1968 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:

‘The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.

‘Recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.’

AONB status means that Nidderdale is one of the country’s finest landscapes, and national planning policy confirms that AONBs share the highest level of protection alongside National Parks. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 requires that ‘all relevant authorities shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty’.

The special qualities of the AONB

The AONB’s landscape is diverse, full of contrasts and rich in wildlife. The scenery to the west is dominated by heather moors that contain some of the most famous grouse shoots in the country. The AONB’s moorlands also provide endless opportunities for enjoying the countryside.

To the east, as the landscape broadens and flattens, is a softer more pastoral landscape

with historic parks & gardens and great country houses including Swinton Castle, and the Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site.

The AONB’s special qualities have been strongly influenced by past generations. 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 activity define the form of settlements, 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, natural environment and cultural heritage:

Landscape

The moorland plateau landscape is characterised by an exhilarating feeling of openness, elevation and exposure. Most of this landscape is accessible to walkers. The gritstone geology that underlies the AONB’s moorland plateau outcrops in places to form crags that overlook river valleys. Elsewhere gritstone has formed striking weathered tors in places like Brimham Rocks. It is widely used as

a building material, creating an appearance of unity and harmony in the landscape.

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

The transition between the upland plateau and the gently rolling landscapes that merge with the Vale of York, as well as the difference between the moorland plateau and the enclosed valleys, creates a landscape that is full of distinction. The dale and valley landscapes are enclosed and pastoral with meadows, woodlands, stone villages and parklands. Water is a key feature – in rivers and streams and in the AONB’s 12 reservoirs with their elaborately constructed dams, spillways, reservoir lodges and aqueducts that date from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Natural environment

Most of the AONB’s moorlands are internationally important for conservation. They form part of the North Pennines Special

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

Cultural heritage

The Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal

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

The AONB’s 14 Conservation Area villages contain many Listed Buildings, many associated with the area’s industrial past that was dominated by mining, quarrying and textiles. The development of the water industry in the 19th century has left a legacy of huge and imposing gritstone reservoir dams in an upland setting where numerous field barns and farmsteads combine to form a characteristic scene.

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



Fishermen on Fewston Reservoir © Paul Harris

Nidderdale AONB and other protected landscapes

International

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

Many European 'Category V' landscapes, including Nidderdale AONB are members of the Federation of Natural and Nature Parks of Europe (Europarc). It exists to co-ordinate training and exchange of best practice in the management of protected landscapes across Europe. The AONB and the Yorkshire Dales National Park, which adjoins the AONB, were awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in 2008. Charter status was reaffirmed in 2013.

Landscapes for Life – the National Association for AONBs

The National Association for AONBs works at a national level alongside National Parks England to promote the interests of protected landscapes. Nidderdale shares the National

Association's objectives for AONBs:

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

Nidderdale AONB and the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Nidderdale and the Yorkshire Dales National Park share key landscape characteristics and both face similar challenges. The National Park Authority and the AONB are working closely together on a broad front covering tourism, the Yorkshire Dales Leader partnership, access, and land management. Both organisations were founder members of the Northern Upland

Chain Local Nature Partnership alongside North Pennines AONB and Northumberland National Park Authority.

Nidderdale AONB and Local Authorities

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

Nidderdale AONB policy, and conservation programmes designed to implement AONB policy, are overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee. The Committee, which aims to be the guardian of this nationally important landscape, acts as an adviser to organisations whose work has an impact on the AONB to ensure what they do complements the objectives of AONB designation. The Joint Advisory Committee also oversees the work of an AONB staff team funded by Defra with support from local authorities including North Yorkshire County and Harrogate Borough Councils.

About the Management Plan

Management Plan purpose

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

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

An annual delivery plan will contain a range of specific, measurable actions geared to each of the 57 objectives in the Management Plan within the financial and administrative

structure set out in the 2014 – 2019 Business Plan for the AONB.

Management Plan monitoring

The Management Plan is intended to be an aid to more effective and efficient action on the ground. It may have to be updated before 2019 to ensure it continues to be relevant and useful. It will also be updated in line with any changes that were unforeseen when the Plan was first published in April 2014. The Management Plan will be web-based so that any changes can be made quickly and their rationale explained.

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

Performance measurement will take place on two levels:

Strategic-level monitoring

The condition of the AONB's environment is the key test of the Action Plan's effectiveness

in meeting the designation's aim of conserving natural beauty.

Data will be collected by the AONB and by organisations that have a special responsibility for the AONB under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

Monitoring of landscape condition will take place over the five year period of the Management Plan by reference to a set of key indicators derived from the 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes'.

Delivery Plan monitoring

Progress against actions identified in the Delivery Plan will be reviewed by the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee annually in March, and a summary of performance will be published annually in July.

Management Plan process

The preparation of the Plan has been overseen by the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee's Executive. Two workshops were held during 2013 firstly to agree the scope of the review, to highlight things that have changed since the 2009 - 2014 Plan was published, and to scrutinize and refine draft policies and objectives for 2014 - 2019. A consultation draft of the Plan was endorsed by the Joint Advisory Committee in September 2013. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of policies and actions in the Management Plan has been carried out in accordance with the European Union's (EU) Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report was also produced to comply with the provisions of the EU's Habitats Directive.

Links to other plans, policy and legislation

International

European legislation adopted by the UK Parliament on the protection of biodiversity includes Habitats and Birds Directives that confer internationally important conservation status on most of the AONB's moorlands. Along with the international Convention on

Biodiversity, the Water Framework Directive and the European Landscape Convention, they constitute an international dimension for AONB Management Plan policy.

National

'The Natural Choice' White Paper contains the UK Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. Many of its key themes, including 'Protecting and improving our natural environment', 'Growing a green economy' and 'Reconnecting people and nature' are reflected in policies and objectives contained in this Management Plan. Natural Environment policies in the Plan are aligned to priorities identified in Biodiversity 2020 (the England Biodiversity Strategy) and to Catchment Flood Management Plans produced by the Environment Agency.

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies a strong presumption against harmful development in the AONB: 'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.'

Local

AONB Management Plan policy and objectives are reflected in Local Plans produced by District Councils, and by the Minerals and Waste Local Plans published by North Yorkshire County Council.

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

Guiding principles

Five guiding principles are embedded in the Management Plan. They are woven into the policies that form the core of the Plan and act as a reference point for the objectives:

The importance of landscape

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

European Landscape Convention



Created by the Council of Europe and signed by the UK Government in 2006, the Convention defines landscape as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’. Landscapes encompass ecosystems that deliver vital benefits to society, like drinking water and carbon sequestration, and the Convention also recognises the importance of landscape in creating a sense of local identity. Natural England is coordinating implementation of the Convention, but responsibility for meeting the Conventions aspirations rests with a wide variety of organisations including the AONB.

evidence, but it also has a value to society that generations of people have campaigned to protect.

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

Climate change

The climate is changing and this will have both physical and socioeconomic impacts on the AONB. Action to reduce the harmful affects of climate change by restoring degraded peat, planting new woodland and developing renewable energy sources, like hydro and biomass, are examples of Management Plan initiatives that signify a commitment to work in partnership with others on climate change mitigation.

The Plan also recognises the importance of measures that will enable wildlife to cope with the effects of climate change by enhancing the resilience of semi-natural habitats.

Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services are benefits that a healthy natural environment provides for people including clean air, water and food together with things that improve the quality of life such as inspirational landscapes and opportunities for recreation. The first comprehensive investigation into the state of the global environment, called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, was carried out by the United Nations in 2000. The Assessment concluded that two thirds of ecosystem services were in decline globally or being managed unsustainably.

The AONB exports a range of ecosystem service benefits including drinking water and high quality food alongside other vital functions such as management of carbon deposits in peat and the management of moorlands and riverine habitats to mitigate downstream flood risk. Nidderdale’s landscape also provides opportunities for people to enhance their well-being by taking part in

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment



The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was initiated by the United Nations in 2001. Its objective was to assess the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. The appraisal contained in reports produced by a panel of international scientists concluded that healthy ecosystems are essential to human survival, but their continuing degradation threatens to undermine this essential function and that the earth's reserves of natural capital are being depleted at an unsustainable rate. More recent reports, like the State of Nature published by a coalition of conservation organisations in Britain in 2013, confirm that the downward trend identified by the UN more than a decade ago has continued.

volunteer activities and events. Ecosystem service benefits from the AONB make a significant contribution to sustainability and to the quality of life for people living in urban communities that surround the AONB, and to the wider community.

Sustainable development

In 2005 the Government stated that 'The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and to enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations'. This definition acknowledges that new development is necessary to meet existing needs more effectively and to ensure that the components of well-being are distributed more equitably, but that if environmental thresholds are exceeded it will impoverish existing and future generations.

Innovative new development has the potential to meet existing and future needs by actively improving environmental quality and people's well-being. Policies in the Management Plan signal a positive approach to such proposals, but others are designed to limit harm caused by development that consume scarce resources, including landscape qualities

such as tranquillity, to the detriment of the environment.

Farming and land management

It has always been difficult to make a profitable living from farming in the uplands and the fluctuating fortunes of the agricultural industry across the country coupled with changing public policy priorities make decision-making by individual farmers difficult. However, farming and the management of land for shooting is fundamentally important to the task of maintaining the AONB's landscape and, as many individual farmers are already doing, enhancing the quality of landscape features.

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



View from Coldstones Cut, Greenhow © Paul Harris

Nidderdale AONB: Ecosystem Service Matrix

Management Plan Policy	Ecosystem Service																
	Food provision	Timber provision	Water availability	Genetic diversity	Biomass provision	Climate regulation	Regulating water quality	Regulating water flow	Regulating soil quality	Regulating soil erosion	Pollination	Sense of place / Inspiration	Sense of history	Tranquillity	Recreation	Biodiversity	Geodiversity
L1 – Promote awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the AONB																	
L2 – Maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB’s landscape including priority wildlife habitats and restore damaged or degraded features																	
L3 – Take action to ensure characteristic features of the AONB’s landscape are resilient to climate change by working independently and in partnership with other protected areas across the northern uplands where possible	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
L4 – Resist applications for planning permission for major development, and applications for smaller scale development that conflict with the purposes of designation in and adjacent to the AONB boundary												X	X	X			
L5 – Promote the highest standards of design, choice of materials and environmental performance standards in new development, and in the conversion and restoration of old buildings												X	X	X			
L6 – Encourage sustainable development to create affordable housing, new enterprise based on environmental qualities including farm diversification and green tourism ventures, small-scale renewable energy schemes and other small-scale development that makes a positive contribution to maintaining landscape character and to the repair of damaged or degraded landscape features	X					X									X		

Management Plan Policy	Ecosystem Service																
	Food provision	Timber provision	Water availability	Genetic diversity	Biomass provision	Climate regulation	Regulating water quality	Regulating water flow	Regulating soil quality	Regulating soil erosion	Pollination	Sense of place / Inspiration	Sense of history	Tranquillity	Recreation	Biodiversity	Geodiversity
NE1 – Work in partnership with land managers and conservation organisations to ensure designated sites, including those designated for their geological interest, are managed to the highest standards in accordance with international, national and local guidelines	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
NE2 – Support landowners to improve management of Habitats of Principle Importance so that 90% are in favourable or recovering condition by 2019 and ensure funding is available to create new areas of priority habitat by 2017	X					X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	
NE3 – Work with landowners and partners to secure compliance with Water Framework Directive criteria for ‘Good Ecological Status’ for all rivers and still waters by 2019	X					X	X		X	X					X	X	
HE1 – Protect the historic landscape and features of archaeological importance by resisting inappropriate development and supporting owners and managers to improve condition where possible										X		X	X	X	X		
HE2 – Support innovative proposals for sustainable future use of historic buildings and structures where this does not cause unacceptable harm to the asset or the wider landscape												X	X	X	X		
HE3 – Encourage initiatives designed to increase awareness and understanding of archaeology and the historic environment												X	X	X	X		

Management Plan Policy	Ecosystem Service																
	Food provision	Timber provision	Water availability	Genetic diversity	Biomass provision	Climate regulation	Regulating water quality	Regulating water flow	Regulating soil quality	Regulating soil erosion	Pollination	Sense of place / Inspiration	Sense of history	Tranquillity	Recreation	Biodiversity	Geodiversity
UE1 – Support North Yorkshire County Council’s efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of the rights of way network							X		X	X		X			X	X	X
UE2 – Reduce the impact of vehicular use of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads where this is having an adverse impact on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB and its enjoyment by the public						X	X		X	X		X		X	X		
UE3 – Increase understanding and awareness of the AONB through communications, events and volunteering to deliver AONB statutory purposes												X			X		
LW1 – Work closely with established and new businesses to ensure that changing practices, and plans for growth and expansion, increase business viability and have a positive effect on the AONB	X											X	X				
LW2 – Support growth of tourism businesses that do not cause landscape harm, cause damage to or have an adverse impact on protected wildlife sites, that comply with the principles of sustainable tourism, and that actively contribute to improving environmental quality	X	X			X	X						X	X		X		



Heather moorland overlooking Pateley Bridge © Paul Harris

2050 Vision Statement

Landscape

- Nidderdale's rural communities, together with farmers, landowners and other rural businesses, are working in partnership to protect the special qualities of the AONB, while innovative low carbon development initiated by local people is creating jobs, providing affordable housing and maintaining essential services.
- Environmental limits are widely respected, and the landscape is recognised as a provider of ecosystem services as well as an inspirational place in which to live, work and visit.



Nidderdale © Janina Holubecki

Natural Environment

- Farmers and landowners are instigating and controlling habitat and species management schemes that are creating new areas of priority habitat and ensuring all nationally and internationally designated sites remain in favourable condition.
- Key features of the natural environment are properly recorded and understood, while volunteers, charitable trusts, wildlife groups and universities are working together on conservation programmes funded by private and public investment to improve outcomes for biodiversity.
- The climate change mitigation benefits of the AONB's natural environment, such as peat, soils and woodland, are valued and widely acknowledged.



Washburn Valley © Eric Moss

Heritage and the Historic Environment

- The importance of the historic landscape is understood by everyone and designated assets are being protected and actively cared for.
- There is a strong and recognisable sense of identity which is linked to deep rooted cultural heritage.
- Local people and visitors are actively investigating, enjoying and celebrating heritage, and the value of the AONB's heritage assets is producing economic and social benefits.



Mowbray Castle, Hackfall © Dave Wilson

Understanding and Enjoyment

- Nidderdale is a welcoming place, and people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are enjoying the peace, tranquillity and opportunities for adventure it provides.
- The importance of conserving the AONB will be recognised by visitors, and people living in adjacent urban areas will be aware of the AONB's recreational potential.
- The AONB's landscape is being used as a learning resource by schools, universities and adult education providers.



Living and Working

- The contribution to the wider economy made by AONB-based businesses like farming, tourism, game shooting, quarrying and water supply is being recognised and supported.
- The AONB brand is being exploited by sustainable enterprises capitalising on environmental qualities maintained by a successful farming industry supported by thriving communities.



Images: top - Curlew © Kevin Lewis, www.photosbykev.com; bottom - Dry stone walling near Pateley Bridge © Paul Harris



Management Plan Policies and Objectives

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

This is also a plan for the partnership. As well as addressing public bodies, the plan is for the broad coalition of community groups, volunteers, farmers and landowners, local businesses, schools and universities that have been instrumental in delivery of the objectives contained in previous versions of Nidderdale’s Management Plan. The 2014-2019 Plan will build on these robust and long-standing foundations.

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

Council for the Protection of Rural England		Hanson	
Country Landowners Association		Heritage Lottery Fund	
English Heritage		Moorland Association	
Environment Agency		National Farmers Union	
Forestry Commission		National Trust	
Friends of Nidderdale AONB		Nidderdale Chamber of Trade	
Hambleton District Council		Nidderdale Strategic Partnership	
Harrogate Borough Council		Natural England	

North Yorkshire County Council	
Ramblers Association	
Richmondshire District Council	
Yorkshire Dales Environment Network	
Yorkshire Dales Farmer Network	
Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust	
Yorkshire Water	
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust	
Yorwoods	
York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership	

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

Images: top - Nidderdale Conservation Volunteers © Paul Harris; bottom - Hay fields at Middlemoor © Paul Harris



Landscape

Policy (L1)

Promote awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the AONB

Objectives

1. Monitor landscape change by publishing an annual report on environmental indicators in the 'Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes'
2. Enable local people and visitors to contribute data on landscape change using websites and social media by 2015
3. Promote the Ecosystem Services approach in local decision-making by creating a database of Ecosystem Services by 2016

Policy (L2)

Maintain and enhance the special qualities of the AONB's landscape including priority wildlife habitats and restore damaged or degraded features

Objectives

1. Implement the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Landscape Conservation Action Plan for Upper Nidderdale by 2018
2. Ensure that 50% of the eligible area is covered by a higher level agri environment scheme or equivalent by 2019
3. Improve the conservation value of 75ha of ancient woodland by 2017
4. Publish revised guidelines for protecting landscape character by 2015



Images: top - Pateley Bridge High Street © Janina Holubecki; bottom - Bluebell wood © Paul Harris

Landscape

Policy (L3)

Take action to ensure characteristic features of the AONBs landscape are resilient to climate change by working independently and in partnership with other protected areas across the northern uplands where possible

Objectives

1. Commission research to identify barriers to migration and dispersal of wildlife species and coordinate a programme of landscape-scale habitat enhancement to overcome at least 25% of barriers by 2018
2. Restore of 3000ha of peat before 2019 by providing financial and logistical support for the Yorkshire Peat Partnership
3. Increase the extent of native broad leaved woodland by 350ha by 2019 to bring the AONB into line with nationally agreed targets for woodland cover, and support measures to increase productivity leading to development of a local biomass energy market
4. Develop a Payments for Ecosystem Services pilot and create a habitat bank of biodiversity offsets by 2016

Yorkshire Peat Partnership

Led by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust with support from several conservation organisations including the AONB, the partnership's aim is to restore damage to moorland habitats caused by drainage carried out with Government support until the 1980s, and to restore areas of bare peat.

Andrew Walker, Catchment Manager for Yorkshire Water, is working with the Partnership on a restoration programme in Upper Nidderdale:



“Yorkshire Water owns and manages two large reservoirs in Upper Nidderdale that provide water to Bradford and the surrounding area. We own significant tracts of land across the Pennines, but we do not own all our water catchment land.

“We run our Estate in an open and inclusive way which encourages essential wider partnership working to restore and protect globally important peatlands.

“Whilst upland sources provide 45% of our water supply, they have become more discoloured over the last three decades. Colour costs significant amounts of money to remove from the water, and has led to building more costly and energy intensive water treatment processes. We believe that restoring peatlands has a range of benefits, including stabilising the levels of colour being released, but also building resilience into these environments to mitigate and adapt to climate change.”

Landscape

Policy (L4)

Resist applications for planning permission for major development, and applications for smaller scale development that conflict with the purposes of designation in and adjacent to the AONB boundary

Objectives

1. Provide local planning authorities and their statutory consultees with advice on the impact of major development on the AONB, and publish consultation responses on the AONB's website on a quarterly basis
2. Publish an analysis of planning applications, decisions and outcomes in the AONB Annual Review
3. Organise an annual forum for planning authority representatives

Policy (L5)

Promote the highest standards of design, choice of materials and environmental performance standards in new development, and in the conversion and restoration of old buildings

Objectives

1. Publish an AONB Design Guide by 2018
2. Devise a procedure for providing pre-planning application advice on potential impact of development in the AONB by 2015

Planning scheme

All four planning authorities covering the AONB determine applications for planning permission in line with both national and Local Plan policies that are designed to protect the AONB from harmful development. The AONB's Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement with Harrogate Borough and North Yorkshire County Councils to ensure that the Committee has an opportunity to comment on proposals that affect the AONB. The Memorandum covers:

- Residential development: applications involving 10 or more dwellings (or where a number of dwellings is indicated the site area is 0.5 hectares or greater) except where the site is allocated for residential use in an approved plan
- Other major development: applications for non-residential development involving 1000 square metres of floor space or where the site area is one hectare or more, except where the site is allocated for the proposed use in an approved plan
- Minerals and waste disposal: all applications involving new or extended operational areas of one hectare or more
- Major road proposals: all applications and consultations by the relevant highway authorities
- Utilities and other infrastructure: all applications for the following forms of development:
 - » Overhead electricity lines and facilities for transmission over 33 KV.
 - » Cross-country pipelines or similar installations.
 - » Construction of significant water resource or sewage treatment facilities.
 - » Renewable energy developments.
 - » Telecommunications towers.
- Development of a novel nature which may have an effect on the landscape character of the AONB and or set a precedent.

The JAC's responses to planning applications are approved by Members of the Committee's Executive.

Landscape

Policy (L6)

Encourage sustainable development to create affordable housing, new enterprise based on environmental qualities including farm diversification and green tourism ventures, small-scale renewable energy schemes and other small-scale development that makes a positive contribution to maintaining landscape character and to the repair of damaged or degraded landscape features

Objectives

1. Advise the North Yorkshire and York Local Enterprise Partnership on AONB priorities for sustainable economic growth to include:
 - Improving the resource efficiency of 'High Nature Value' upland farming
 - Developing green, high-quality tourism with a unique, locally-distinctive offer
 - Supporting a locally-led, environment based economy of micro-businesses
 - Developing 'Green Infrastructure' that provides services to the wider economy
 - Provide skills and training, including apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities
2. Ensure that the Local Development Strategy for Yorkshire Dales Leader reflects the aspirations of AONB residents and businesses and facilitate at least 10 grant applications by 2018

Sustainable building – Bivouac

An award-winning tourism development near Masham, Bivouac is founded on sustainable principles.

Bivouac's owner, Lord Masham, commented, "We have a carbon neutral wood chip boiler for all our heating



and hot water requirements at the cafe, shower facilities, reception and camping barn. The wood burners in the yurts and woodland shacks supply heating (and in the case of the shacks hot water also) and the wood chip and logs are sourced from thinnings from the Swinton Estate forestry, a waste product. The larch cladding used in the building of the woodland shacks is also sourced exclusively from the Swinton Estate, and the insulation uses wool sourced from Cumbria."

The development has also resulted in restoration of a Dales farmstead and improved management of Druid's Temple, a Grade II Listed Building.

Natural Environment

Policy (NE1)

Work in partnership with land managers and conservation organisations to ensure designated sites, including those designated for their geological interest, are managed to the highest standards in accordance with international, national and local guidelines

Objectives

1. Support work by land managers and Natural England to ensure that at least 50% of SSSIs are in Favourable Condition by 2019
2. Support work by land managers to ensure that at least 50% of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are maintained in accordance with conservation management plan objectives by 2019

Policy (NE2)

Support landowners to improve management of Habitats of Principle Importance so that 90% are in favourable or recovering condition by 2019 and ensure funding is available to create new areas of priority habitat by 2017

Objectives

1. Create a framework for collecting, storing, sharing and monitoring biological and ecological data by 2016
2. Identify opportunities for extending priority habitats by producing a Habitat Suitability Map by 2017
3. Produce a strategy for tackling Non Native Invasive Species by 2017

Hackfall Site of Special Scientific Interest

Hackfall is a 47 hectare ancient woodland situated on the south bank of the River Ure near Masham. It is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust and Hackfall Trust. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Grade I Registered Park and Garden that contains three Listed Buildings.

“A restoration programme supported by a grant of almost £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund was undertaken and Hackfall was awarded the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage at the Europa Nostra Awards in 2011.

“Hackfall’s designated status has meant that the site managers have to strike a careful balance between its heritage restoration, public access and the delicate woodland habitat. Much of the landscape garden, originally created by William Aislabie, has therefore undergone a ‘partial’ restoration, so that key features can be discovered, but these remain in a natural and undisturbed woodland setting.

“The topography of the site and limitations on use of heavy machinery have also presented a challenge and volunteer practical conservation tasks with the Hackfall and Nidderdale AONB Conservation Volunteers play a key part in the sustainable and ongoing management of the site.

“Thanks to the restoration work and ongoing management the delightful variety of wildlife, follies, cascades, view, vistas and working gravity-fed fountain are once again available for visitors to enjoy.”

Tom Ramsden, Trustee of the Hackfall Trust



© Eric Moss

Natural Environment

Policy (NE3)

Work with landowners and partners to secure compliance with Water Framework Directive criteria for 'Good Ecological Status' for all rivers and still waters by 2019

Objectives

1. Overcome obstacles to fish migration and in the Laver catchment by removing or modifying at least five weirs by 2017
2. Eliminate sources of diffuse water pollution identified in the Catchment Appraisal of the Nidd by 2015
3. Ensure the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee is represented on Catchment Partnerships covering all the AONB's rivers by 2015

Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust

The AONB has been involved in conservation programmes designed to improve the quality of aquatic and riverine habitats since 2006.

Working with key partners including farmers and landowners, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Yorkshire Water and the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, the AONB has led a Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative in Nidderdale and a flood risk mitigation scheme on the rivers Skell and Laver.

The latest project is focussed on achieving good ecological status for the Laver, and on encouraging the local community to enjoy and care for the river.

Dr John Shillcock, a member of the Trust's management board, commented, "Rivers are the lifeblood of Yorkshire's dales, including Nidderdale. The Trust is campaigning to enhance their quality so that the often rare and special wildlife they support continues to thrive.

"Like many conservation bodies, the Trust is limited in what it can accomplish on its own, and is committed to partnership working with others, like the AONB, wherever possible.

"Our joint project on the Laver is also looking at ways of involving people - most may recognise the river when they cross over it on bridges, but how many stop to think about what lives in it, where it comes from and where it's going? The Trust is committed to engaging all sections of the community in its campaigns."

Heritage and the Historic Environment

Policy (HE1)

Protect the historic landscape and features of archaeological importance by resisting inappropriate development and supporting owners and managers to improve condition where possible

Objectives

1. Reduce the number of structures listed in the Heritage at Risk register by 50% by 2018
2. Organise an annual heritage skills training programme
3. Repair and improve access to at least four landmark historic structures in Upper Nidderdale by 2018
4. Develop action plans in consultation with local communities to implement recommendations in at least five Conservation Area Appraisal reports by 2016

Policy (HE2)

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

Objectives

1. Facilitate at least two Heritage Asset Management Plans covering multiple features of historic interest by 2019
2. Increase the value of heritage tourism by creating a 'Travel Through Time Trail' in Upper Nidderdale by 2018
3. Complete the volunteer-led survey of 50% of farm buildings by 2016

Images: top - Toft Gate Lime Kiln © Paul Harris; bottom - Traditional farm building in Upper Nidderdale © Paul Harris



Heritage and the Historic Environment

Policy (HE3)

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

Objectives

1. Implement the HLF-supported research and development plan for a former WW1 training and internment camp by 2016
2. Organise an annual Heritage Forum
3. Organise an annual heritage events programme

Nidderdale AONB and the Great War

The impact of the First World War on the AONB's landscape is the subject of a programme of archaeological research and outreach initiatives focussed on the site of a former training camp in Colsterdale. The site itself, and some of the surrounding land, contains the remains of accommodation buildings, a hospital, firing ranges and a parade ground.

Local farmers, volunteers, schools and universities are working with the AONB to try and better understand how the war and its legacy have affected today's landscape.

Dr Jonathan Finch, of York University's Department of Archaeology is leading the research component of the project, which is supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund:



“Archaeologists have tended to focus on the Western Front and in the recovery of trench systems, battlefields and human remains. This project offers a focus within Yorkshire that will provide an alternative story about the young men who went to war, as well as those who took their places at Breary Banks as prisoners of war. It will therefore tell of the conditions experienced by men on both sides of the conflict; men drawn into fight an international war far removed from their homes and families.”

Understanding and Enjoyment

Policy (UE1)

Support North Yorkshire County Council's efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of the rights of way network

Objectives

1. Make the rights of way network easier to use by reducing the number of obstructed rights of way by 75% by 2019
2. Enable more people to enjoy using the rights of way network by removing stiles and gates from 50km of rights of way
3. Provide advice to event organisers on mitigating the environmental impact of large-scale outdoor activities

Policy (UE2)

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

Objectives

1. Seek to prevent illegal vehicular use on public footpaths and bridleways by erecting signs on all affected routes by 2015, and by encouraging the police to take enforcement action
2. Carry out an environmental assessment of all Unsurfaced and Unclassified Roads by 2015
3. Publish an action plan for all Unsurfaced and Unclassified Roads currently used by recreational vehicles by 2016



Images: top - Walkers near Pateley Bridge © Janina Holubecki; bottom - Mountain biker near Brimham Rocks © Leanne Fox

Understanding and Enjoyment

Policy (UE3)

Increase understanding and awareness of the AONB through communications, events and volunteering to deliver AONB statutory purposes

Objectives

1. Use printed and electronic media to distribute information about the AONB to visitors and local communities via the AONB's website, an annual printed newsletter for visitors and at least quarterly e-news bulletins for residents and volunteers
2. Implement the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Interpretation Plan for Upper Nidderdale by 2018
3. Implement the Heritage Lottery Fund supported plan to raise awareness of Upper Nidderdale in urban communities neighbouring the AONB by 2018
4. Organise an annual programme of public events designed to convey key AONB messages and increase participation by 25% by 2019
5. Encourage participation in volunteering by providing financial and organisational support for existing AONB volunteer groups

Volunteering

Volunteers made a vital contribution to the AONB's work on the 2009-2014 Management Plan. They surveyed wildlife sites, monitored populations of breeding waders, identified flower-rich meadows, made an inventory of vernacular farm buildings and expended thousands of hours on practical conservation tasks. Their work is both indispensable and irreplaceable. It is a reflection of community's commitment to conservation and the AONB.

Here is an account of a conservation project by a member of the Nidderdale Conservation Volunteer Group:



“As a Nidderdale Conservation

Volunteer I regularly receive training in the many skills we need to carry out our conservation work, and get to work in places not normally seen by members of the public. One such training day involved us learning how to do willow spiling on the banks of the River Laver at Azerley. It was a curved section of the river bank that was being badly eroded by fast flowing water. We were required to weave willow stems in and out of fence posts that had been knocked into the water's edge. Of course, in order to do this we all had to don waders and get into the water, which was great fun. The overall effect once we had finished was like a curved willow hurdle. Within just a few months the willow stems had taken root and started sprouting. This living fence gave a good protection for the river bank.”

Living and Working

Policy (LW1)

Work closely with established and new businesses to ensure that changing practices, and plans for growth and expansion, increase business viability and have a positive effect on the AONB

Objectives

1. Provide advice and guidance to farmers and landowners seeking planning permission to expand or diversify their agricultural businesses
2. Ensure AONB businesses are eligible to receive Rural Development funding, including Leader and Structural Investment Funding, by influencing the development of funding strategies by 2015
3. Ensure good quality broadband coverage of the AONB by identifying and helping to overcome environmental constraints on infrastructure development by 2016
4. Support proposals for affordable housing where it does not cause harm to AONB special qualities and ensure that future Local Plan policy reviews retain a commitment to meeting evidence-based need for affordable housing in the AONB
5. Create at least five apprenticeships or bursaries linked to management of heritage features in Upper Nidderdale by 2016

Apprenticeships

Organising training in conservation techniques, land management and forestry is vital to ensure the next generation are able to acquire skills that are necessary to maintain the AONB's landscape. As well as organising training for its volunteer workforce, the AONB has also sponsored several land management apprenticeships.

“As a supporting contractor to the AONB, teaching conservation techniques to the next generation of work force is a strong part of our work ethic. We are based in Nidderdale and employ just under 20 employees all of whom have varied skill sets from herbicide application, fencing, cultivation and sowing of seeds, hard and soft landscaping.



“Over the last few years we have employed several apprentices who have worked on AONB projects and for NYCC learning conservation techniques and land management skills. They have had the opportunity to put these to good use within the local area. Not only do we encourage apprentices within our Company, we also invest in the personal development of the work force via NVQ training. We offer work experience to students from Nidderdale High School and over the last five years we have been able to provide three work experience students full time employment.”

Elaine Clarke, DTMS Group

Living and Working

Policy (LW2)

Support growth of tourism businesses that do not cause landscape harm, cause damage to or have an adverse impact on protected wildlife sites, that comply with the principles of sustainable tourism, and that actively contribute to improving environmental quality

Objectives

1. Provide support to tourism businesses through the Yorkshire Dales Tourism Partnership and Business Network to increase the value of tourism across the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB by 20% by 2020
2. Carry out actions attributed to the AONB in the Yorkshire Dales Strategy for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

Tourism in the Dales

It has long been recognised that tourists and visitors are attracted to the 'Yorkshire Dales' rather than the area administered by Nidderdale AONB or the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The National Park Authority, the AONB and local authorities are working in partnership on initiatives to promote the Dales, and both the AONB and the National Park Authority were jointly awarded the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas by Europarc in 2007.

Julie Barker, Head of Recreation, Tourism and Outreach for the National Park Authority, argues that collaboration between the two protected landscapes makes perfect sense: "First of all, it allows us to operate across the whole of the area that visitors identify with as 'The Dales'. We don't have to stop our work at an administrative boundary that has no relationship to landscape or people's perceptions. It also makes much more sense to the tourism businesses we are working with through the Yorkshire Dales Tourism Business Network. Sharing ideas and resources is another benefit of collaboration, and we have now created a separate identity for a joint work on tourism with the AONB. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership over the next five years."



A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line, repeated down the page.



Nidderdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Get in touch:

Nidderdale AONB, The Old Workhouse

King Street, Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, HG3 5LE

T: 01423 712950

E: nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk