

Dartmoor National Park Authority's Submission to the Government's Consultation on the Landscapes Review



April 2022



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Government Response to the Landscapes Review: Supporting Statement by Dartmoor National Park Authority

1 Background

- 1.1 The [Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment](#) contained a specific commitment to undertake an independent review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Julian Glover was appointed to lead the review in 2018 and the [report of the independent panel](#) that supported him was published in September 2019.
- 1.2 The [Government's formal response to the Landscapes Review](#) was published in January 2022. The response combines a statement of how they will take forward some of the proposals in the Landscapes Review with a public consultation on proposed changes that would require primary legislation.
- 1.3 This document details Dartmoor National Park Authority's response to the public consultation (see appendix 1) and a supporting statement that puts our response to the consultation in context and addresses issues that are not subject to consultation questions such as the proposed National Landscapes Partnership and resources.

2 Supporting Statement

Vision and Ambition

- 2.1 The Government's response sets out a bold new vision for protected landscapes which we support. There is clear recognition that National Parks have an important part to play in the ecological, climate and public health crisis that society faces. The proposed changes to National Park purposes are largely positive – especially the focus on 'nature' and being proactive in terms of access by all parts of society. The Authority is supportive of this vision and ambition but with one important caveat – the response is largely silent on cultural heritage.
- 2.2 Our National Parks are living, working landscapes – they are cultural landscapes. The cultural heritage (from archaeological remains to customs and traditions) is a key component of what makes these places special: it helps shape the genius loci or sense of place. It is essential that the Government recognises this importance and ensures that cultural heritage remains core to what National Parks do: a key part of our statutory purposes, reflected in Government guidance and embedded within the new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

Resources to Deliver

- 2.3 There is a serious and growing gap between the Government's vision and ambition and the resources to deliver. This is a critical weakness. Setting a bold and ambitious vision needs to be accompanied with the resources and tools to deliver: recovering nature and ensuring all parts of society can enjoy our National Parks will require investment. It is not

sufficient to suggest that such ambitions – true public benefits – can be delivered by leverage of private finance and through greater commercial acumen.

- 2.4 We have seen a decade plus of successive real-term reductions in our core funding – real terms cuts in excess of 40%. This has led to severe pressures on our key resource and means to achieve National Park purposes – our staff. We recognise that there have been, and continue to be pressures, on the public purse but if the Government is serious about realising its vision and ambition for protected landscapes it needs to invest in core funding.
- 2.5 The Landscapes Review recommendation on core funding for National Parks was limited in ambition: existing budgets to be secured in real terms and sustained for at least five years. Since the Landscapes Review was published the Government have effectively ‘ignored’ this recommendation and continued to cut our core funding in real terms. We are looking at a scenario of almost 20 years of continued real term cuts to the core funding of National Park Authorities. With inflation currently at 5.5% and forecast to rise to over 8% by the end of the year the implications are serious and mean that we will need to look at potential further job losses in order to set a balanced budget.
- 2.6 The reality of the situation we face is that we often employ one professional officer in each of our key service areas. For example, one full-time ecologist to support statutory services like planning as well as deliver our ambition on nature enhancement. Whilst we have been successful in securing external grant income (an investment worth over £15 million [over several years] secured in 2021/22 alone) this requires staff to develop the bids, match funding and staff to manage the programmes (few external grant programmes provide for full cost recovery).
- 2.7 We support the proposal to give greater powers and resources to AONBs but this should not be at the expense of National Parks.
- 2.8 We assume that in supporting “the principle of proposal 27” (of the Landscapes Review) the Government will be reviewing the funding formula. This needs to be done in a timely manner. It should look at a system of floors and ceilings: a floor in terms of a base level of funding that no National Park Authority should ‘fall below’ and a ceiling in terms of maximum amounts of core funding from central government. The formula needs to consider the ability to generate commercial income as this varies considerably across the National Park and wider protected landscape family.
- 2.9 If the Government is unable to invest in National Parks or, at the very least, sustain spending in real-terms then this needs to be reflected in the Government’s expectations. We feel that there is currently a ‘reality gap’ - between the Government’s expectations and the level of core funding.

Practical Purposes – the need to retain Special Qualities

- 3.0 The proposed changes to National Park purposes are largely positive but it is really important that the wording is correct and we would welcome reassurance that National Park Authorities will be involved in the drafting of the new purposes. We assume that any new purposes would be accompanied by an assessment of the required resources to deliver these purposes?

- 3.1 It is essential that the phrase 'special qualities' is retained within the purposes. It is an important policy and planning tool. It provides an opportunity for each National Park to identify the qualities that make its landscape special, aiding local distinctiveness. The phrase is used in the major development test, cited in appeal decisions and is clearly relevant to work on landscape character and design.
- 3.2 There is a potential, if not actual tension, between the aim of 'recovering nature' and being proactive in encouraging access. This tension can be managed but requires resources and tools – for example, promotion of the Countryside Code within schools and to the wider public; a proactive approach to engaging and influencing visitors; and visitor management initiatives in key areas. This will require resources.
- 3.3 We understand and support the need for 'nature recovery' but the phrase can disempower and alienate land managers and farmers who have done a lot to sustain nature within our protected landscapes. We have used the phrase 'nature enhancement' as it better reflects our ambition to continually enhance - recover implies time limited action to recover nature to a specific level. We also need to guard against 'recovery' to a past condition – this can be an issue with Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the notion of 'Favourable Condition'. We need to be thinking ahead: managing the environment to be resilient and productivity; resilient to the extremes of climate change and productive in terms of nature, other public benefits and food and fibre.

Working Together

- 3.4 Dartmoor National Park Authority supports the ambition to ensure that collectively protected landscapes deliver more for the nation and achieve more than the sum of their parts. We are strongly opposed to a 'centralised' National Landscape Service and creeping centralisation through, for example, the appointment of Chairs by the Secretary of State.
- 3.5 Whilst supportive in principle of the proposal for a non-statutory National Landscapes Partnership there is very little detail about how this partnership will be constituted, its precise roles and powers; how it will be funded and its relationship with other, existing national bodies. We would not wish to see the National Landscapes Partnership effectively take away money from front line delivery and become a 'talking shop'. We suggest that there are some key questions that need to be addressed in developing the National Landscapes Partnership, including:
 - How will it ensure that the purposes and potential of protected landscapes are embedded in Government policy (i.e. not just Defra)?
 - How will it protect the independence and local flexibility (key to effective and efficient operation) of individual National Park Authorities?
 - How will it develop private sector income streams: will these provide funding for key public services run by National Park Authorities? For land managers/farmers to undertake practical projects? Or for both?
- 3.6 There is a suggestion that National Parks Partnerships LLP (NPPL) might play a role in the National Landscapes Partnership. NPPL is jointly and equally owned by

all 15 UK National Parks and with a specific remit. It exists to generate commercial income/sponsorship for the equal benefit of all 15 UK National Parks; we are not clear how this will potentially be affected by any Defra funding that requires NPPL to generate benefit for English AONBs. This is an area that needs further consideration and we request that individual National Park Authorities are involved in the work to develop an operating model for the National Landscapes Partnership. We would also like to see the business model that underpins this investment.

- 3.7 We would welcome greater recognition within Defra that the existing National Park Authorities, as free-standing special purpose local authorities, provide Defra with a local delivery mechanism that covers the most important 10 percent of England's landscapes. They provide a mechanism for leadership, delivery and practical experience that is too often overlooked in policy development and programme implementation. We hope that this role can be better reflected in the revised 25 Year Environment Plan/new Environment Improvement Plan.

Outcomes, Targets and the Means to Achieve

- 3.8 The proposed National Landscapes Strategy and outcomes framework could be positive developments if they are accompanied with the 'means to achieve' (resources and tools). Specific targets for National Park Authorities (as opposed to National Parks) can be useful if the ability to deliver is within the control and influence of National Park Authorities and resources are linked to targets. We assume that work on an outcomes framework means that there will be underpinning data sets that are 'cut' to National Park boundaries? If so, this is a useful development. Will there be an assessment of the tools and resources required to deliver the outcomes?
- 3.9 We are concerned that the advent of a National Landscapes Partnership, National Landscapes Strategy, national outcomes framework, potential appointment of Chairs to National Park Authorities by the Secretary of State and 'merit based appointments' might lead to 'creeping centralisation'. A key strength of National Park Authorities is their connection to local communities, constituent local authorities and other partners; their ability to act quickly and respond to local priorities. These could be at risk if we see 'creeping centralisation'. Bodies such as the National Landscapes Partnership or a re-invigorated Natural England should not act as gatekeepers for access to Ministers by individual National Park Authorities. As noted below, we already link our work programmes to national priorities and there are other, potentially more effective, ways to ensure strategic direction.

Engage, Educate, Enforce

- 4.0 The Government's vision for protected landscapes is to ensure our finest landscapes are available for all in society, the response is silent on how this will be achieved yet jumps from positive ambition to proposed new enforcement powers.
- 4.1 It is essential that the Government considers a visitor engagement spectrum: we want to welcome visitors; engage with them before, during and after their visit; and, ensure they develop a passion for our National Parks that can be harnessed to help look after these assets. Enforcement is a last resort and will not, alone, tackle the

issues of anti-social behaviour that we have witnessed from some visitors. Key priorities should be: resources to ensure that the Countryside Code, National Parks and other protected landscapes are embedded within what is left of the National Curriculum; that we are working to ensure every school child has an opportunity to enjoy the special qualities of a National Park in a meaningful way (as envisaged by National Parks England's 'night under the stars in a protected landscape' proposal); increased numbers of rangers to engage with the public both within and beyond our boundaries; and ensuring that outdoor activities and understanding of the environment, are key parts of formal and informal education. We believe that this spectrum of engagement will be a more effective tool in influencing behaviour patterns than a narrow reliance on enforcement. There is considerable evidence to show that access to the countryside at an early age can alter lifestyles - enforcement tackles the symptoms, engagement and education tackle the cause.

Private Money for Public Benefit?

- 4.2 We agree that there is a role for private sector finance but this should not replace public funding or be used as a reason to reduce public funding. The focus on private sector finance is not without risks: six years of practical experience by all 15 UK National Parks, working in partnership, demonstrates that there is not ready access to a 'crock of gold'. As the Government response acknowledges, much of the projected private sector finance will be generated through the developing markets for carbon and biodiversity net gain. These payments are likely to go direct to the landowners and managers delivering carbon sequestration and/or biodiversity net gain. It is not clear how the role of National Park Authorities as 'environmental brokers' and 'place shapers' will be funded via this mechanism. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with Defra officials.
- 4.3 The Government's response refers to a 'huge, missed opportunity' in terms of commercial income generation. Dartmoor National Park Authority have actively considered and pursued opportunities for commercial income generation. We have very few assets from which to generate commercial income but have sought to be innovative (the Moor Otters public arts trail is a good example of this – combining income generation with delivery of other objectives such as supporting local businesses and attracting new visitors). From a Dartmoor National Park perspective we do not agree that there is a 'huge, missed opportunity'. It would be helpful for the Defra experts who have identified this commercial opportunity to review our approach and help us identify new opportunities. To provide examples of the constraints we face: we have looked at the potential to develop café or restaurant facilities at our Visitor Centres but are not able to do so due to restrictions in our leases and/or restrictive covenants on the land; and the small amount of land we do own is not suitable for commercial activity.
- 4.4 We are also concerned about the unintended consequences of pursuing commercial and private sector income: we may end up competing with farmers, land managers and landowners, as well as environmental and recreation NGOs (non-governmental organisations), for access to private finance. This will then alter our relationship with these key partners – from trusted, honest broker to active competitor? There is also a question as to how a focus on commercial income might interact with public procurement rules, wider ethics and the potential for distorted priorities in the pursuit of private pounds.

4.5 As noted above, there is a risk that private sector finance will be focused on carbon and nature recovery. These are areas of current Government investment creating the potential for a ‘double whammy’ whilst core services continue to ‘dwindle and decline’.

Local and National Accountability and Delivery

4.6 There is a risk that the proposed changes to National Park governance could undermine local accountability and partnership working, for example:

- Whilst we support the principle that underperforming members should be removed via a streamlined process it is not clear who defines ‘underperforming’, how and whether there is an appeal process, and how this would impact on ‘elected’ members?
- Use of local advisory panels is for local determination not national direction.
- There is no detail regarding the concept of ‘merit-based’ appointments – who sets the criteria and assesses whether the potential appointee meets the criteria? Such an approach could easily lead to tensions with the democratic process.

4.7 A weakening of local accountability would have a negative impact on our ability to deliver national, as well as local priorities.

4.8 We do not support the proposal that Chairs (of National Park Authorities) should be appointed by the Secretary of State. This could lead to the politicisation and centralisation of National Park Authorities. National Park Authorities are special purpose local authorities and not QUANGOs. It is more appropriate for Chairs to be appointed locally via election by the other Members of an Authority. If the driver for this is ‘greater strategic alignment’ then it would be helpful to understand Defra’s concerns as there may be better options to address this concern e.g. regular meetings between Chairs and Ministers. Plus the proposed National Landscapes Strategy and outcomes framework will also contribute to ‘strategic alignment’. If you review Dartmoor National Park Authority’s Business Plan and the Dartmoor Partnership Plan we believe that you will see a close alignment with national priorities: our Business Plan clearly sets out the link between key actions and Government policies/drivers but it blends these national priorities with local priorities.

4.9 In response to the final report of the Landscapes Review the Authority established a Task and Finish Group comprising Members and Officers of the Authority. The Group came forward with a series of proposals that could improve the governance of the Authority (see Box 1). These ideas have been presented to Defra and we look forward to a discussion about their merits and how they might fit with any governance reforms instigated by the Government.

Box 1: Dartmoor Governance Proposals

Proposals from a task and finish group involving Members and Officers of the National Park Authority:

- A reduction in the size of the Authority, potentially from 19 to 12 Members.
- Retention of the three categories of Member: national appointees; local authority appointed Members and a new category of directly elected Members from the population living within the National Park.
- The three categories would have an equal number of Members i.e. 4 per category.

Direct elections would be paid for, in full, by Defra on top of existing National Park Grant. The elections would be on a fixed-term cycle.

Environmental Land Management

- 5.0 The Landscapes Review set out a clear recommendation for protected landscapes to have a central place within the new ELM schemes. ELM will be the key tool to deliver National Park purposes and contribute to the socio-economic well-being of local communities. Dartmoor National Park Authority fully supported Proposal 5 in the Landscapes Review and are disappointed that the Government response fails to adopt this recommendation, instead, offering limited options.
- 5.1 Giving protected landscapes (especially National Parks) a central role in ELM provides an opportunity to build on long running and trusted relationships between the farming, land management, land owning community and the Authority. For example, the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project is a joint venture between farmers (as members), the Duchy of Cornwall and the Authority. It would build on the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. We see some key ingredients or a skeleton for this approach that includes:
- Ring-fenced funding for protected landscapes.
 - Resources for local advice and facilitation.
 - Role for National Park (and AONB) Management Plans in setting local and spatial priorities.
 - An integrated approach that combines environment (public benefits in their widest sense) with the farm business and wider rural economy.
 - An environmental broker role for NPAs in blending public and private finance.
- 5.2 There are important lessons to learn from Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), including: value of advice and facilitation, local decision-making, integrating national and local priorities and flexible funding. FiPL should not be seen as an alternative or competitor to ELM schemes: it is helping with the transition to ELM but could still fulfil an important role beyond 2024 in terms of funding for innovative projects – a form of challenge fund for protected landscapes reflecting their local qualities and helping to deliver their respective management plans.

Positive Planning

- 5.3 The Government's response is largely silent on land use planning, referring to the ongoing consideration of planning reforms. It is essential that the special role that protected landscapes hold within the planning system is sustained and enhanced. We welcome the recent recognition in the National Planning Policy Framework that development in the setting of protected landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts. We would like to see further amendments to the NPPF, including
- Incorporating para 78 of the current Circular on National Parks into the NPPF so it is clear that Government recognises that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and does not therefore provide general housing targets for them.
 - Articulating the duty to have regard to (as amended) so it is clear that it is for other local planning authorities (i.e. not just National Park Authorities) to consider National Park purposes in reaching planning decisions and formulating planning policies.
- 5.4 The Landscapes Review called for a review of Permitted Development rights and made a clear point that permitted development rights for residential and business uses in deeply rural areas are frequently at odds with both local and national sustainability goals. In response the Government state that it will "*continue to monitor the use of permitted development rights in protected landscapes...*". It would be helpful to understand how the Government monitors the use of such rights given the lack of information at a local level. We would like to see a proper review with a focus on how such rights relate to promoting National Park purposes and not just continued monitoring

Thriving Communities

- 5.5 National Parks are not just about scenic beauty they are also (as noted above) living, working landscapes. The Dartmoor approach is to treat the two National Park purposes and the duty that relates to the economic and social well-being of local communities as three equal components – in pursuing conservation projects we look for ways to engage the public and ensure positive economic impact and vice versa.
- 5.6 We note that the Government has ruled out creating a new statutory purpose to foster the economic and community of the area. Preferring instead to rely on government guidance and sharing best practice.
- 5.7 We would like to see a 'Thriving Communities' fund that would enable us to develop our role as 'community wealth builders'. This could be modelled on the former Sustainable Development Fund which was cheap to administer and had a lower cost per job created than other economic development grants. This should be seen as part of the Government's levelling up agenda which is not just about North/South but also about rural/urban. It should be a sub-part of the rural element of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

- 5.8 The Government's response is weak on the issue of affordable housing in National Parks. Whilst we did not support the proposed National Landscapes Housing Association it is important that there is a clear and stable policy for the provision of affordable housing (to rent and buy) in National Parks. Affordable housing provision in perpetuity is essential, without it we lose the trust of landowners and communities and a lack of exception development sites. The 'threat' of 'right to buy' on exception sites meant that it stalled several sites as landowners awaited clarity, worried that they would release land at exception site value for the community, only for a homeowner to potentially 'cash in' at a later date. There needs to be clearer recognition that housing costs (building and living) and housing needs can be at their most extreme in National Parks. This should be reflected in Homes England funding and in additional powers – the potential to control second homes via change of use.
- 5.9 As the Government develops policy and guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain we would like to see greater clarity that National Parks are not appropriate places for large-scale development, and areas where the principle aim is conservation and nature recovery, but that they could or should be recipients of net gain where this cannot be delivered on site in neighbouring areas. We would like to see Net Gain extended to include consideration of visitor management in all its forms (new facilities, infrastructure, erosion and people management) associated with housing development within the hinterland of National Parks. This could help lever in the private sector investment in National Parks that the Government is seeking.
- 5.10 We remain concerned that additional guidance alone will not be sufficient to ensure that National Parks are benefiting from next generation broadband and good mobile coverage.
- 5.11 We are disappointed that our proposal (with Devon County Council) to be a sustainable transport pilot has not been acted on. This offered the opportunity to address poor public transport links for local communities, provide a viable alternative to the private motor car for visitors and help support local businesses by making them accessible by public transport.

Appendix 1: Government Response to the Landscapes Review Consultation - Response by Dartmoor National Park Authority

NB: The question numbers relate to the questions posed in the Government's consultation. We have chosen not to answer questions that relate solely to reforms for AONBs.

A stronger mission for nature recovery

6. Should a strengthened first purpose of protected landscapes follow the proposals set out in chapter 2?

We welcome the acknowledgement that protected landscapes have “enormous potential to deliver environmental ambitions including the 25 Year Environment Plan goals, Environment Act 2021 forthcoming targets and reaching net zero” (p.9).

We support the proposal to amend the first purpose but are concerned that revised purposes will not alone achieve anything. Our practical experience is that the wording of the current purposes is not restricting our activity or our ambition: the reality is that lack of resources is the key constraint. As stated in our submission to the Landscapes Panel: “it is essential that National Park Authorities (NPAs) have the right tools and resources to do the job...We see this as a priority above any amendment to the statutory purposes.”¹

The Government's response is not clear on the proposed wording of a new first purpose. If the first purpose is to be changed then we would recommend words to the effect: *conserve and enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity, natural capital, cultural heritage and special qualities of the National Park*

We would not include ‘recover’ as this should be a time limited action and relates more to resources and tools to do the job than to purposes. If we are serious about nature recovery and delivery of environmental ambitions then the Government needs to consider whether NPAs should have specific powers for encouraging more wildlife and better habitats including a review of the powers of other organisations with respect to wildlife and how they could be transferred / shared with NPA's. Powers should flow from the purposes. At present there is currently no wildlife specific legislation in National Parks and this needs to be addressed.

It is important that the reference to “Special Qualities” is not lost in re-drafting the proposals (see below). These have become an important planning and management tool. They enable us to capture the *genius loci* or sense of place that makes each National Park special and to use these to shape local priorities to conserve, manage and enhance the special qualities.

7. Which other priorities should be reflected in a strengthened first purpose?

For us the essence of our National Park model is people, nature and culture together in a living, working landscape. This approach puts people at the heart of our efforts to manage the landscape. It is essential that natural beauty and cultural heritage are retained within any revisions to the first purpose.

¹ Dartmoor National Park Authority (2018) Submission to the Government's Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Agricultural transition

8. Do you support any of the following options as we develop the role of protected landscapes in the new environmental land management schemes. Tick all that apply.

The Landscapes Review (Proposal 5) argued for a central place for national landscapes in the new environmental land management schemes. We fully support this recommendation and would like to see this reflected in the design of the new schemes.

Designing the environmental land management schemes in a way that works for all farmers and land managers, including the specific circumstances for those in protected landscapes, recognising that farmers in these areas are well-placed to deliver on our environmental priorities.

This option implies a universal scheme. It is important that ELM schemes can be tailored to meet the circumstances of each protected landscape. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) provides a potential model for this: it already combines national and local priorities with some flexibility for local decision-making and delegated budgets.

Using Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to identify projects or habitats within protected landscapes.

This option:

- only provides for part delivery of the purposes of protected landscapes given that LNRS will focus on nature recovery;
- fails to build on the integrated approach of FiPL;
- does not address the proposals in the Landscapes Review for a 'central role in ELMS' based around facilitation and advice and role for Management Plans in setting local priorities.
- if LNRS are prepared at a county or unitary level it will mean a fragmented approach with many protected landscapes having to input into more than one LNRS
- a county or unitary basis for LNRS will not provide for easy engagement with land managers in their preparation – it will be too 'coarse a scale' for meaningful engagement.

Monitoring the effectiveness and uptake of the new environmental land management schemes in protected landscapes. Using this to inform whether further interventions are needed to ensure we are on track for wider nature recovery ambitions.

Monitoring is essential and it would be helpful if data sets can be cut to a protected landscape boundary. However, this is not an 'option' that on its own would deliver the proposal in the Landscapes Review. There are questions as to how the monitoring should be undertaken and by whom. Statistics on uptake are important but more important is the actual impact of schemes. For too long we have neglected the monitoring of existing agri-environment schemes. There appears to have been a blind assumption that management prescriptions will deliver the desired outcomes. This approach has not always worked (for upland areas). We would like to see an approach that empowers land managers, creates incentives for innovation and 'stretch targets' and involves land managers in monitoring with public sector or third-party organisations providing quality assurance. This approach will require investment

in facilitation and skills development but has the potential for long-term benefits and more cost-effective delivery.

Creating a clear role for protected landscape organisations in the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Our recent LNRS consultation specifically asks for views on the role of different organisations in the preparation of LNRSs, including protected landscapes.

We would like to see an option for protected landscapes to prepare their own LNRS (as a subset of a wider LNRS or as part of a 'nested approach'). This would be a flexible option i.e. not relevant to all protected landscapes. The advantage of this approach include:

- it ensures a focus on a protected landscape whilst maintaining links to the wider ecological hinterland;
- provides for continuity with National Park or AONB Management Plans;
- is a more meaningful scale for engagement with individual land managers/farmers/owners and wider community engagement
- provides for a more tailored approach relevant to the special qualities of each protected landscape.

However, this approach does not address the limited focus of LNRS (see above) and thus their ability to deliver National Park (or AONB) purposes

Building on FiPL, empowering protected landscapes to support decision-making and delivery against agreed priorities, including through dedicated project coordinators and advisers.

This option has the greatest potential to deliver schemes that work for each protected landscape. We see some key ingredients or a skeleton for this approach that includes:

- Ring-fenced funding for protected landscapes.
- Resources for local advice and facilitation.
- Role for National Park (and AONB) Management Plans in setting local and spatial priorities.
- An integrated approach that combines environment (public benefits in their widest sense) with the farm business and wider rural economy.
- An environmental broker role for NPAs in blending public and private finance.

9. Do you have any views or supporting evidence you would like to input as we develop the role of protected landscapes in the new environmental land management schemes?

Priority areas for ELM spend

Protected landscapes need to be priority areas for ELM in order to both manage the existing landscape and to enhance it – to achieve maximum potential. The National Parks alone have the potential to deliver 20% of the government's nature recovery target on 10% of the land, saving/sequestering an estimated 330,000 tonnes of CO2 per year. Prioritising ELM spend in protected landscapes enables us to achieve this. This investment would be a step change in delivery of the 30 x 30 target.

The potential is not just limited to nature and climate. An ELM scheme that delivers access management and improvements will help open up our protected landscapes for more to enjoy in sustainable ways. It would also provide funding for heritage assets that are essential to the character and special qualities of our protected landscapes: approximately 20% of England's designated heritage assets are within National Parks.

Farming and forestry are significant sectors in the economy of protected landscapes. In the National Parks agriculture, forestry and fishing accounts for around 24% of all businesses and nearly 10% of total employment in the National Parks, around 13,500 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs. Reduced funding will disproportionately impact on the economies of our protected landscapes (especially those in upland areas and with traditional forms of grazing). Basic Payment Scheme and agri-environment agreement payments equate to over 90% of farm business income in Less Favoured Area grazing livestock farms and on average 70% for lowland grazing livestock.

Farming and forestry activities help manage the high quality environment that attracts visitors, supports the tourism and creative industries and delivers wider public benefits. The National Parks and surrounding areas attract 94 million visitors per annum, support a tourism economy worth £5bn per annum and employing circa 75,000 FTEs. ELM will be essential to management of this environmental and economic resource.

Farming and forestry are significant direct employers within protected landscapes (1 in 10 jobs with National Parks are within these sectors). Farming and forestry are important contributors to the socio-economic well-being of the local community and often at the heart of cultural traditions that contribute to the sense of place: for example the tradition and practice of commoning on Dartmoor.

As well as these direct contributions to the local community and economy, farmers and foresters are the primary managers of our protected landscapes.

The design of ELM – what can we learn from FiPL?

FiPL provides:

- an integrated approach that reflects the statutory purposes of our protected landscapes with four priority themes: nature, climate, people and place. It appears likely that ELM will only focus on two of these themes (nature and climate) which:
 - limits its potential to help manage and enhance our protected landscapes
 - reduces the scope to deliver value for money: rather than 'stacking' public benefits that can be achieved on a holding there will be an artificial limit
- embeds local advice and facilitation at the heart of the programme and thus plays to the strength of protected landscape teams in terms of their role as 'place shapers and convenors'.
- revenue and capital funding.
- Local priority setting through AONB and National Park Management Plans.

FiPL does not provide a sustained revenue income to replace the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and we know that without increased income many farmers in marginal areas will struggle to survive.

From a protected landscape perspective it is really important that ELM addresses the full suite of public benefits and does not just focus on 'nature' and 'climate'. We should be seeking to deliver multiple environmental benefits from a parcel of land (ideally a whole farm approach) rather than a narrow focus on one or two.

As well as a focus on environmental benefits and public access ELM needs to link to farm productivity and wider rural development. FiPL starts to address this but not in a wholly integrated way.

FiPL should not be seen as an alternative or competitor to ELM schemes: it is helping with the transition to ELM but could still fulfil an important role beyond 2024 in terms of funding for innovative projects – a form of challenge fund for protected landscapes reflecting their local qualities and helping to deliver their respective management plans.

A formal role for Protected Landscape Teams as project co-ordinators and advisers.

NPAs have considerable experience and skills in working with the farming and land management communities: relationships developed over decades. Relationships are important to delivery of outcomes. These relationships provide a potential firm foundation for ELM delivery. Using Defra parlance, we would like to see a local convenor role for protected landscapes as well as resources for advice and facilitation. The envisaged local convenor role for ELM has a close correlation to the work that many protected landscapes already do in terms of 1:1 advice and facilitation of clusters/landscape action; securing funding and identifying priorities.

Protected Landscape Deals/Delegation

The principles of a deal have been established in the context of levelling-up and governance of major cities. Delegation of ELM or an ELM 'deal' could extend this to rural areas.

It offers the potential to:

- Empower protected landscapes to deliver ELM, building on their track record of engaging with the farming/land management community and FiPL delivery.
- Combine national priorities with local objectives and priorities – with the value of added of greater understanding and engagement.
- Provide for private sector investment (e.g. opportunities to blend private and public money as is already happening on peatland restoration/catchment management) and in the future through Biodiversity Net Gain and investment in social capital (social impact bonds to reduce sickness absence through access to greenspace and co-ordinated volunteering activity).
- Deliver a focused approach cognisant of the status of protected landscapes but combined with a wider 'universal' offer.
- An integrated approach that links environmental land management with business and wider rural development (i.e. meets some of the objectives of the National Food Strategy and the wider levelling-up agenda).
- Public involvement in nature and landscape recovery education, understanding and actual involvement in environmental land management.
- Builds on the cluster and catchment-scale work already being led by many protected landscapes.
- Delivers against 30 x 30 target at scale (see above).

This 'deal' or 'delegation' could operate for Landscape Recovery but ideally needs to combine Landscape Recovery and Local Nature Recovery elements of ELM with wider rural development.

A stronger mission for connecting people and places

11. Should a strengthened second purpose of protected landscapes follow the proposals set out in Chapter 3 to improve connections to all parts of society with our protected landscapes?

We are pleased that the Government have recognised that our National Parks are good for people – both physically and mentally. We would support the proposed revisions to the second purpose but it is essential that reference to the ‘special qualities’ is retained. As per our comments on question 6. Amending National Park purposes per se will not improve connections to all parts of society. To achieve this will require necessary tools and resources and action by players other than NPAs. In our original submission to the Landscapes Panel we outlined a proposal for ‘Health Rangers’. These could be linked to each National Park or to a cluster of protected landscapes but operated through the new Integrated Care System. We would also like to explore the potential for Social Impact Bonds as a way of funding working to improve public health and well-being.

The focus on attracting new visitors and ensuring ‘equality of access’ is important but the Government’s response fails to address the problems with current access in terms of maintenance of the infrastructure and management of visitors (see below).

On Dartmoor alone there is an estimated maintenance backlog on public rights of way of circa £250,000 per annum compared to annual budget of £43,000. This backlog is being exacerbated by extreme weather occurrences as a result of climate change (e.g. sudden intense rainfall).

12. Are there other priorities that should be reflected in a strengthened second purpose?

Please refer to our comments about retaining reference to ‘special qualities’.

Managing visitor pressure

13. Do you support any of the following options to grant National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority greater enforcement powers to manage visitor pressures?

We welcome the fact that the Government's response to the Landscapes Review recognises the pressures on National Parks in terms of visitor management and anti-social behaviour.

The response focuses narrowly on new enforcement powers. This is tackling the problem after it has occurred, more important is the need to tackle the problem at source: prevention is better than enforcement. We would like to see more effective promotion of the Countryside Code, incorporation of this in what remains of the National Curriculum, an active programme of providing opportunities for young people to visit our National Parks (the proposed night under the stars for every child) and resources for additional rangers to engage with users of our National Parks to help them enjoy the landscape and look after it.

Issue Fixed Penalty Notices for byelaw infringements – support but this will require additional resources to enforce and we are concerned that our Rangers should not become a 'form of Police'.

Make public spaces protection orders – we are not convinced that these are appropriate for National Parks. We would prefer a streamlined process for making and revising byelaws. Also, a strengthened Section 62 duty could assist in getting local authorities and the police to actively support measures to address anti-social behaviour in some National Parks.

Issue Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to control the amount and type of traffic on roads – This would be a useful tool but we do not currently have the capacity or expertise to issue and administer TROs. A more effective operational model would be clear guidance from Government that existing highway authorities should do this via an enhanced duty to further National Park purposes rather than just have regard to National Park purposes (see below).

14. Should we give National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority and local highway authorities additional powers to restrict recreational motor vehicle use on unsealed routes?

If this power is introduced for National Park Authorities it will require additional resources. It could be argued that an enhanced Section 62 duty on highway authorities might be a more effective way of dealing with issues where they exist.

Questions 14 - 17 Concerning powers for Traffic Regulation Orders

This is not a priority for Dartmoor National Park Authority. If this power is introduced for National Park Authorities it will require additional resources. Our preference would be an enhanced Section 62 duty on highway authorities and facilitate them using such powers with the Authority as a statutory consultee.

Local governance

21. Which of the following measures would you support to improve local governance?

DNPA have submitted ideas for a reduction in the size of the Authority and direct elections rather than Secretary of State parish appointees. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with Defra.

Improved training and materials – support.

Streamlined process for removing underperforming members – there is no detail about how this would operate: who defines ‘underperforming’, is there an appeal process etc. Without this detail it is difficult to comment other than to say that we support the principle of addressing underperformance.

Greater use of advisory panels – we suggest that this is a matter for local determination.

Greater flexibility over the proportion of national, parish and local appointments – the current balance provides ‘national’ and ‘local’ representation. It is important this is retained. The current system also provides a system of ‘checks and balances’ - no one category of appointee is dominant - this leads to a more consensual and partnership based style of governance which, from our experience, works well for National Parks.

Merit-based criteria for local authority appointments – we do not understand how this would operate in practice: who sets the criteria and assesses whether the appointee meets the criteria? It could lead to tensions with democratic processes – an elected councillor being deemed inappropriate for appointment to an Authority when judged against set criteria. It would require resources to operate. Further information is needed before we can comment in detail on what might be proposed.

Reduced board size – we have proposed a potential reduction in the size of DNPA but with a clear caveat that the three categories of member are retained: national appointments by the Secretary of State, constituent authority appointments; and direct elections (funded by Defra) to replace the parish election and Secretary of State appointment process.

Secretary of State appointed chair – we do not support this proposal as it could lead to the politicisation of NPAs and confuses NPAs with QUANGOs – we are special purpose local authorities. It is more appropriate for Chairs to be appointed locally via election by the other Members of an Authority.

Clearer role for public bodies

22. Should statutory duties be strengthened so that they are given greater weight when exercising public function?

We assume this question pertains to Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995. The duty as currently worded is essentially negative and represents a minimalist approach:

- It requires a process but not a positive outcome (an organisation could have regard to National Park purposes but still determine to carry out an action detrimental to them); and
- It lacks the ambition inherent in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, namely, to enhance the environment.

We would support a legal duty on relevant bodies to 'further National Park purposes'.

This would address the weaknesses highlighted above – is stronger, focused on adding value and delivering positive outcomes.

Consideration would also have to be given to the definition or list of relevant authorities. These have traditionally been public sector organisations but with the blurring of public/community/private boundaries (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships) it will be important for the Secretary of State to have the power to up-date the list of relevant authorities in terms of any amendments to Section 11A/Section 62.

23. Should statutory duties be made clearer with regards to the role of public bodies in preparing and implementing management plans? YES

Please see above. As well as a clearer requirement on relevant bodies to further National Park purposes we would like to see a duty to collaborate/co-operate in the preparation of National Park Management Plans. This could be modelled on the duty to co-operate between local planning authorities, county councils and other prescribed bodies for the purposes of the preparation of development plan documents that was introduced by Section 33a of the Localism Act 2011.

As with our comments under Question 22, there will need to be flexibility in the definition of organisations that this duty should apply to: it should not be limited to public bodies. We would like to see a statutory requirement for management in the National Park to be in accordance with the National Park Management Plan as this would provide real weight to the Management Plan. This would provide a spatial expression to the legal obligation on relevant authorities to further National Park purposes (see above). The intention is not to seek to control the precise management of individual parcels of land but to ensure that environmental land management schemes and management at a landscape scale is in accordance with the Management Plan and delivering the vision for the National Park developed through the Management Plan process. For example, applicants to the Government's new Environmental Land Management schemes would be required to demonstrate how their individual land management plans/applications/proposals contribute to deliver of the Management Plan vision. This is an approach already being used via Farming in Protected Landscapes.

This strengthening of the Management Plan will be important, as and when, private sector markets for natural capital are developed. It would provide a transparent framework for the management of the National Park and a mechanism to ensure that public interest inherent in National Park designation is managed alongside private payments for land management.

General power of competence

24. Should National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority have a general power of competence?

We would support a general power of competence for National Park Authorities and clear guidance from central government on what this might enable us to do. We do not see this new power as a panacea in terms of assisting us in generating significant commercial income.

Overall

25. If you have any further comments on any of the proposals in this document, please include them here.

Refer to supporting statement.