



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Date: Thursday, 11 November 2021
Time: 10.00 am - 12 noon
Venue: Remote meeting held using Microsoft Teams

Business

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|----------|---|------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Introduction and Apologies | | 10.00 |
| 2 | Minutes and informal notes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 8 April 2021 | (Pages 5 - 10) | 10.05 |
| 3 | Staff team progress reports on the AONB Action Programme 2021/22 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farming in Protected Landscapes• NAAONB and other national activity | (Pages 11 - 18) | 10.15 |
| 4 | Planning and other consultations | | 10.45 |
| 5 | Two minute silence | | 11.00 |
| 6 | Discussion of proposals for future AONB Action programme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of existing strengths• An increase in focus on Glover recommendations• Branding and website refresh | (Pages 19 - 26) | 11.02 |
| 7 | Discussion of administrative arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting content and timing• Local and Defra reporting• Secretarial support• Renew of office lease | | 11.20 |
| 8 | Rural Commission Report (William Worsley) | (Pages 27 - 30) | 11.30 |

9	Any other reports from Partner Organisations (Oral Updates)	11.40
10	Dates of next JAC meetings	11.50
11	Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.	11.55

Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Membership

North Yorkshire County Council (2)	
1	GOODRICK, Caroline
2	PATMORE, Caroline (Vice-Chairman)
Ryedale District Council (2)	
3	DOCWRA, Claire
4	GRAHAM, Susan
Hambleton District Council (2)	
5	WATKINS, Di
6	Vacancy
Parish Councils (2)	
7	PICKLES, Chris (Ryedale)
8	ELEANOR, Nick (Hambleton)
Country Land and Business Association (1)	
9	WORSLEY, Sir William (Chairman)
National Farmers Union (2)	
10	NORRIS, Laurie
11	Vacancy
Forestry Commission (1)	
12	SHALLCROSS, James
Ramblers (1)	
13	Vacancy
Natural England (2)	
14	ROWNTREE, Jenny
15	Vacancy

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Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Teams on 8 April 2021, commencing at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

North Yorkshire County Council: County Councillor Caroline Goodrick
Ryedale District Council: Councillor Susan Graham (part)
Parish Councils: Chris Pickles (Ryedale), Nick Eleanor (Hambleton)
Country Land and Business Association: Sir William Worsley (Chair)
Forestry Commission: James Shallcross
Ramblers: Harry Whitehouse
Natural England: Jenny Rowntree

Officers:

Howardian Hills AONB team: Paul Jackson, Liz Bassindale and Francesca Pert
North Yorkshire County Council: Kate Arscott and Hugh Clear Hill
Ryedale District Council: Rachael Balmer

Observer:

CPRE North Yorkshire: Rosy Eaton

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

158. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillor Caroline Patmore (North Yorkshire County Council, Vice Chair), Councillor Claire Docwra (Ryedale District Council), Councillor Di Watkins (Hambleton District Council), Jennifer Costello (National Farmers Union), Harry Whitehouse (Ramblers), Justine Nelson (Natural England), and officers Liz Small (North Yorkshire County Council) and James Campbell (Hambleton District Council).

159. Minutes of the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on 19 November 2020

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020, having been previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed as a correct record.

With regard to minute 149, Paul Jackson reported that he had received a report that there had been no action on replanting following enforcement action in relation to felling of trees north of Whenby. James Shallcross was asked to check the situation.

With regard to minute 150, Paul Jackson confirmed that there was no weight limit on the road past Coulton Mill, although there is an advisory warning regarding long vehicles.

With regard to minute 154, Paul Jackson updated the Committee that there was a lot of work going on in the background in response to the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes, and further reports would be brought to the Committee as appropriate.

160. AONB Unit Activity

Members considered a detailed report of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the last meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee. This was accompanied by a slide presentation showcasing some of the work undertaken. The Appendices to the report set out the following:-

Appendix 1 - details of the work, meetings and site visits that had been carried out by the AONB Manager and AONB Officers in the period November 2020 to April 2021

Appendix 2 - full details of the projects supported during the 2020/21 financial year

Appendix 3 - details of the consultations that the JAC had received during the year and the AONB Manager's detailed responses to specific applications

Members noted that, due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, officers had had limited access to the AONB area during this period, there had been limited work with volunteers and no events had been possible for children. However, the Team had continued to carry out as much work as possible in the circumstances.

Members raised a number of specific issues in regard to the use of interpretation panels and information signs at various sites.

The AONB Manager confirmed that an expression of interest had been lodged with Natural England for the Yorkshire Wolds to become an AONB.

The AONB Manager reported that the Monument Management Scheme had ended and he would shortly circulate a report on the work of the scheme. The Team intended to continue work to maintain these sites based on the learning from the scheme, especially around tackling brambles and bracken.

The AONB Manager reported on DEFRA funding for an Environmental Land Management Advocacy Project which had gone well.

In relation to budget, the AONB Manager reported that the impact of Covid-19 and a windfall payment had led to an underspend, with reserves now increased to £72k.

Francesca Pert, AONB Officer, gave a presentation on work currently being undertaken to reduce the impact of plastic tree protection on the landscape and to reduce plastic waste. Work currently being undertaken included removing plastic waste to 'clean up the past', and also planning for a more sustainable future. Members enthusiastically welcomed the presentation and the work being undertaken on this extremely important topic.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

At this point in the meeting, due to technical difficulties, the Committee became inquorate, based on the requirement for two authorities to be represented. The meeting continued as an informal meeting.

161. Development within the AONB

The AONB Manager presented a report giving details of the number and type of planning applications determined within the AONB during 2020. This continued to be an unpredictable area of workload for the team.

The AONB Manager noted that there had been a theme of house extensions, some quite significant, and this had raised some new issues in terms of commenting to the planning authorities.

162. AONB Action Programme 2020/21

The AONB Manager presented a report on progress made on implementing the AONB Management Plan during 2020/21. A detailed summary of progress against each objective was provided. 78% of targets were fully achieved; 10% were 25-75% achieved; 7% were less than 25% achieved; and 5% were not progressed at all.

He highlighted the start of work on a Nature Recovery map, which would feed into the Environmental Land Management Scheme; good progress with undergrounding of electricity cables; and the difficulty in completing some tasks due to Covid-19 restrictions. At a strategic level, there had been discussions around the Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the new Agriculture Act and follow-up to the Glover review.

163. AONB Business Plan & Action Programme 2021/22

The AONB Manager presented a report on proposed activity to implement the AONB Management Plan during 2021/22. A detailed set of proposed targets against each objective was provided.

Key activities highlighted included:

- Completing the transition to a new AONB Manager, following Paul Jackson's retirement in the autumn
- Developing and implementing the first year of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, once full details of its operation are available from Defra
- Responding to and starting to implement any changes announced by Defra in relation to changing to a National Landscapes Service model of delivery
- Completion of the Nature Recovery Map, which will be shared with partners when ready. Natural England were also doing substantial work in this area.

Members were supportive of the targets for 2021/22 as contained in the Action Programme.

164. National Activity for AONBs Activity

The AONB Manager presented an update on current national issues and the work of the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) covering the following topics:

- Farming in Protected Landscapes
- The National Landscapes Service
- Environmental Land Management
- Art in the Landscape, including the proposed local Sounds in the City project

Members were supportive of the NAAONB Art in the Landscape Strategy.

165. Reports from Partner Organisations

Members of the Committee shared the following information not already covered elsewhere on the agenda:

Natural England – Jenny Rowntree introduced herself, having started working in this region in January 2021. Following a team restructure, she and Justine Nelson would be covering the AONB, North York Moors, Yorkshire Wolds and York areas, building up their local knowledge of this part of the wider Yorkshire & Lincolnshire region.

She reminded members of the deadlines for applications for Countryside Stewardship schemes of 30 April for higher tier and 31 July for mid tier. Funding would last until 2024. She also referred to the deadline of 11 April for expressions of interest in the pilot Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. The first agreements are expected to be in place in October.

North Yorkshire County Council - County Councillor Caroline Goodrick reported that Local Government Review was in progress. The Driffield Show was due to take place over two days this year.

Sir William Worsley – reminded members that the Great Yorkshire Show would be held over four days this year.

Forestry Commission – James Shallcross reported on the award of a woodland creation grant for around 4.5 hectares near Oswaldkirk, with two new woodland management plans in progress locally. A Woodland Creation Officer had been appointed, to reflect the expansion of work associated with the Tree Planting Partnership.

Ramblers – Harry Whitehouse reported that Ramblers groups had been cleared to restart from 27 March under Covid-19 guidance and requiring advance booking. Groups were exploring various options to minimise public concerns around large groups, and pressure on parking space. The organisation had provided a letter for walk leaders to show if challenged. He also reported that Park Runs were due to restart in June, again with protocols and guidance in place.

Hambleton parishes – Nick Eleanor reported on a much improved path at Crayke which had received funding from the AONB. He thanked the AONB for work related to the pending refurbishment of the Oulston traditional direction sign.

Ryedale District Council - Rachael Balmer reported that the Local Development Scheme had been agreed in February. There would be a consultation on a Call for Sites from late April, which the AONB unit would be invited to respond to. It was noted that this would be dependent on the outcome of Local Government Review

166. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 10 am. Subject to the possibility of reverting to face to face meetings by this time, the next meeting would either be held via Teams or at Amotherby Village Hall.

167. Paul Jackson

Members paid tribute to Paul Jackson's service with the AONB, having been here almost since the AONB was founded and having led the team for 20 years. They

thanked him for the huge amount he had achieved and his significant impact on the landscape, as well as his effective running of the service and the JAC. Members reflected on how well respected he was, and as a result the respect the AONB is held in.

Paul replied by thanking the Committee and colleagues for their support and he wished the JAC the best for the future.

The Chair outlined the recruitment process for Paul's successor as AONB Manager.

The meeting concluded at 11.56am.

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**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
11 November 2021**

Item 3: Staff Team Progress Reports

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To receive details of the work areas and progress achieved by the AONB Unit since the last meeting of the JAC.

2.0 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED

- 2.1 Appendix 1 gives separate details of the work that has been carried out by the AONB Manager and AONB Officers in the period April to October 2021 and the anticipated work in November 2021 – March 2022.
- 2.2 The new Manager, Ellie Hook, started in post on 26 July and Paul Jackson continued to work 2 days per week in a handover period until 8 September.
- 2.3 The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan, opened for applications from 1 July 2021 and runs until the end of March 2024. The scheme has been designed to provide funding support to farmers and land managers in England's 44 protected landscapes - National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Norfolk Broads. Each area has been allocated a budget and will be responsible for assessing and awarding funding for projects. FiPL funds projects that deliver on at least one of four themes - climate, nature, people and place. Examples of potential projects include actions to reduce carbon emissions on farm, conserving historic features on farm, or promoting connectivity between habitats.
- 2.4 The Howardian Hills FiPL programme was allocated a budget for 2021/22 of £209,782 (including an allocation of £28,850 for advice and guidance and £16,970 for admin, leaving £163,962 for project funding). The total funding was lower in 2022/23 and 23/24 at £149,665.93pa, with the same allowances for advice and guidance and administration. Following a re-profiling in October, £40,000 of the project funding has been moved from 2021/22 to 2022/23 to reduce the risk of losing unallocated project funding in the first year.
- 2.5 The FiPL funding is being allocated via a Panel, shared with the NYMNPA who chair it, with Howardian Hills representatives of Ellie Hook (Vice Chair), Alice Hayter (Hovingham Estate, land manager/farmer representative) and Hugh Clear Hill (NYCC). There have been four Panel meetings to date, inc. one training session.
- 2.6 A first draft of the Howardian Hills AONB Nature Recovery Plan map has been produced.
- 2.7 Though the Monument Management Scheme has now formally ended, activity on managing Scheduled Monuments has continued, delivered in partnership with landowners or directly by the Staff Team, mainly bracken and bramble control.

- 2.8 The Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership project is progressing well and Francesca Pert has continued to work as part of the Ryevitalise team for 2 days per week, with a particular focus on the development of the 'Cause and Effect' themed river art exhibition planned for Nunnington Hall.
- 2.9 Work on the Turtle Doves survey, Exmoor Ponies grazing project, Monument Management Scheme bracken control works, Himalayan balsam control and AONB Volunteers Work Plan has been delivered, despite the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. However Ryedale Show was cancelled and Junior Ranger Club sessions have not re-started.
- 2.10 Initial support has been offered to the steering group working to assess the proposal for a new Yorkshire Wolds AONB.
- 2.11 NAAONB work has focused mainly on the future re-branding and re-positioning of AONBs and the implementation of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
- 2.12 The balance of funds carried forward into 2021/22 was approximately £72,000. A small amount of the 'Reserve Fund' has been allocated for use within the 2021/22 budget, mainly for the recruitment costs of the new manager.
- 2.13 The first claim for payment of the 2021/22 grant, for £94,534, was submitted in September 2021 and has been paid.
- 2.14 The final claim for payment of the 2021/22 grant, for £31,512, will be submitted to Defra in early March 2022 for payment by the end of March 2022. A grant allocation proposal and the agreed work programme for 2022/23 is expected to be submitted to Defra in April, once a formal grant offer letter has been received.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received for information.

AONB MANAGER REPORTS

Paul Jackson

June – September 2021

Work during this period has principally consisted of:

- Planning application consultations scrutiny and responses
- Putting in place the initial plans for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme
- 2 x FiPL/Ryevitalise/CS Farm Walks, Hovingham
- Completing preparation of our Nature Recovery Plan map
- Passing template letters and GIS site boundary information to Ryedale DC, NYCC and the Ecological Data Centre for the formal designation of Local Geological Sites.
- Completing a hand-over to Ellie Hook as the new AONB Manager

Other work:

- Procuring restoration projects for a traditional road sign and a traditional direction sign (damaged in road traffic collision)
- Carrying out management works on selected Scheduled Monuments
- Cataloguing a backlog of site photos.
- Tidying-up a myriad of loose ends as best I could!

Ellie Hook

August – October 2021

Work during this period has principally consisted of:

- Familiarisation with the AONB, Team and local contacts, inc:
 - handover meetings with Paul
 - site visits
 - team briefings and monthly progress review meetings
 - meetings with the large landowners
 - meetings with a range of other local contacts
- Familiarisation with the landscape and habitats
- Familiarisation with NYCC, inc induction programme, target setting, training, systems familiarisation
- Planning applications and other consultations scrutiny and responses
- Completing required reporting to Defra
- Initial support for the steering team assessing the proposal for a new Yorkshire Wolds AONB
- Putting in place arrangements for the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, including:
 - fulfilling Defra reporting requirements and budget re-profiling
 - working with NYMNP to create and define procedures for operation of the joint FiPL Panel
 - delivery of the first FiPL Panel meeting, including taking the Vice-Chair role
 - continuing the work on the Howardian Hills application pack and website

- information
- progress with hiring FiPL staff
- putting a call-off contract in place for FiPL support
- acting as FiPL facilitator, conducting site visits, helping to prepare applications
- attendance at Defra and NAAONB FiPL briefings

November 2021 – March 2022

Work during this period will principally consist of:

- Continuing familiarisation with the AONB, team, local contacts, landscape and habitats
- Analysis of the current work plan and budget and development of suggestions for any adaptations, inc. discussion at the winter JAC
- Preparation of the 2022-23 budget, inc. FiPL
- Fulfilling Defra reporting requirements
- Planning application and consultations scrutiny and responses, including felling licences
- Full implementation of FiPL and drive to ensure distribution of the first year funding, including recruitment of facilitator and admin staff
- Responding to Glover developments and other national consultations
- Continuing to offer support to the steering team assessing the proposal for a new Yorkshire Wolds AONB
- Maintaining NAAONB links, attending the Lead Officer Meeting, Northern Lead Officer Group meeting and any Undergrounding Group meeting

AONB OFFICER REPORTS

Liz Bassindale

April - October 2021

Work during this period has principally consisted of:

- Providing Project Fund applicants with application guidance, making grant offers, checking completed projects and making grant payments. Significant amount of chasing end of year grant claims April/May 2021.
- Ryevitalise – planning INNS work. Site visits and site meetings in the Ampleforth area (access, outreach and land management). Linking with landowners. Filming of interpretation video. Joint development of a community wildlife event with Ampleforth Parish Council. Attended joint Board and Steering Group Meeting. Initial interpretation of hydrological modelling for the Ampleforth area.
- Farming in Protected Landscapes – farmer advice event in Hovingham, keeping up with announcements and webinars, producing content for our website, drafting application and guidance documents, initial conversations and site visits with possible applicants, attendance at Panel meetings, working with Consultants on the development of Projects, presentation of application to FiPL Panel. Meeting with Castle Howard Estate Team re. FiPL ideas.
- MMS – bramble clearance on round barrow, Fryton Wood. Landowner permissions obtained for summer work and Castle Howard supplied with a work plan as they are now managing their own monuments. Organising bracken cutting then crushing on round barrows near Grimston (AONB Team) and

bracken cutting then crushing near Newburgh (AONB volunteers cut then TCV crush).

- Turtle Dove Project – land access permissions, volunteers evening, preparation of survey packs and land access maps, risk assessments sent to surveyors and all volunteers registered, surveys undertaken.
- INNS – Giant hogweed reports forwarded to YDCP for treatment, Himalayan balsam control arranged for six sites (mix of SINC and SSSI) and assisted Francesca with organising Wath Beck clearance when required. Control carried out by four contractors, TCV and AONB volunteer team.
- Monitoring developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions, etc and relating them to the AONB Volunteer activities. Reviewing risk assessments and procedures in order to re-start the group in May. Planning and delivery of summer activities and planning autumn activities. Identifying a leader for the group from October onwards and briefing them on covid working.
- Working with communities –site visit to Terrington Primary School to discuss ideas to improve their schools grounds for wildlife and vegetable growing, follow-up information supplied. Grant offered to St Benedict's Primary School, Ampleforth, for Forest Schools/outdoor learning area. Advisory visits to Ampleforth Millennium Green to help the Parish Council to start up a wildlife project, links provided to Community First Yorkshire, Ryevitalise and Cornfield Flowers Project for specialist advice/support. Interpretation board for The Green to be produced by Ryevitalise working with the village schools.
- AONB Newsletter – Articles written and gathered from other contributors, images sourced, design and print completed on time, door to door delivery successful, enquiries coming in relating to articles (particularly volunteering).

Other work:

- Communities/outreach – Outdoor Education and Community Projects Officer at Gilling Castle linked with Stronger Communities and LNP for advice about green social prescribing and linking with community support charities in Norton.
- Communities – initial enquiries re grant funding received from Huttons Ambo and Slingsby Village Halls. Responses and grant advice being provided with support from Community First Yorkshire Development Officer. Street light replacement advice, Swinton, linked to Dark Skies advice from NYMNP.
- Conservation projects – joint Ampleforth Abbey and FC site visit inc Pied Flycatcher and Redstart areas. Attending Ryevitalise and LNP meetings. Fen management advice, Ampleforth. Grassland management site visit and advice, Terrington. Coulton Fen SINC site visit with Natural England and volunteer task organised as a result of the visit.
- Stone walling repairs site visit, Terrington. Stone wall volunteer task site visits, Stonegrave Minster.
- Tree spiral removal day, Castle Howard Avenue.
- Cornfield Flowers Project - contributing to developing a bid to NLHF to build on the success of the current project.
- Appleton le Street Churchyard SINC cut and raked, Kendrew Green management adjusted following advice from NYCC Ecologist.
- Northern Group AONB Volunteer Officers working group video calls – working our way through the rules, regulations and public perceptions together.
- NAAONB workshops and online discussions – keeping up to date with the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and attending Communications Officers meeting.
- NAAONB Conference – attended online – July 2021.
- Keeping in touch with delivery of the end of the CS/ELM Advocacy Project.
- Attending Ryedale area Communities, Volunteering and VCSE monthly

- meetings.
- Panel member at the North Yorkshire Funding Summit organised by Community First Yorkshire.
- 'Sit Back and Enjoy the Ride' leaflet printed and copies ready to collect from Ryedale House.
- JAC – presentation preparation.
- Showing Ellie round some of the AONB, introducing her to some of the Projects and Ryevitalise and discussions about the way forwards as a new Team.

November 2021 - March 2022

Work during this period is likely to include:

- Providing Project Fund applicants with application guidance, making grant offers, checking completed projects and making grant payments.
- Continuing to work with Ellie and Francesca to determine future ways of working, allocating work areas etc.
- Ongoing work with Ampleforth Estate about involvement with Ryevitalise, walking routes and FiPL.
- FiPL including attending NAAONB briefings, advising potential applicants, supporting the Delivery and Guidance consultants, attending Panel meetings and presenting projects to the Panel when required.
- Working with Community First Yorkshire to support community projects.
- Identifying and planning Autumn and Winter volunteer tasks. Supporting Peter as he returns as the AONB Volunteer Team Leader.
- Organising cutting and raking of Kendrew Green in the early Spring.
- Organising bramble strimming on Scheduled Monuments at Risk.
- Ongoing work with Gilling Castle relating to outreach work.
- Turtle Dove surveys – collating results of the 2021 surveys and starting to plan for the 2022 surveys if the Steering Group identify a need for them.
- Supporting the Ryevitalise Team when required including coordinating the Evaluation and Monitoring Group and attending Steering Group meetings. Update meetings with the Programme Manager. Linking with landowners and community groups and identifying Projects where FiPL and Ryevitalise funding can be used in parallel to enhance the final result.
- Attending Cornfield Flowers Project and River Derwent Partnership meetings. Supporting the LNP Officer with the bid to NLHF for the next stage of the Cornfield Flowers Project.
- Communities, Volunteering and VCSE meetings – monthly.

Francesca Pert

April - October 2021

Work during this period has principally consisted of:

- Volunteers – Assisting Liz with planning autumn activities. Investigated possible tasks to help churchyard maintenance at Crayke and Amotherby. Organised Wath Wood Boundary SINC volunteer scrub clearance and organising two volunteer tree shelter removal events for Nov & Dec.
- Developing the strategy for reducing the impact of plastic tree protection waste on the HHAONB landscape. This has included: organising a hedge spiral removal

day with partners; chairing a meeting between Rainbow Professional, Castle Howard Estate, North York Moors National Park Woodland Team to start collaborating on local solutions; collaborating with industry partners to start a pvc spiral recycling scheme; presenting our work to the Forestry Plastic Working Group; organising AONB volunteers to bag 6000 shelters on Castle Howard Estate to go to be recycled. Preparing an advice note and uploading resources and links to the HHAONB website.

- Ryevitalise: working with Ryevitalise & the National Trust (NT) to develop the 'Cause and Effect' river-themed art exhibition planned for Nunnington Hall. This has involved: planning and leading a site visit with artists; outlining the HHAONB's potential contributions and aspirations for the exhibition for the draft project brief; Planning, scheduling and writing briefs for the filming of the interpretation video; Accompanying the artists and production company on 4 filming site visits introducing them to landowners, gaining permissions, producing prompt questions for contributors and explaining landscape features. Giving some AONB time to Ryedale School creative writing workshops at Nunnington Hall running a workshop to introduce the geography of the area to year 8 students.
- INNS –Himalayan balsam control arranged for Wath Beck, seeking landowner permissions, sending maps and landowner contacts to contractors and setting up purchase orders. Control carried out by two contractors. Obtained permission for INNS control in Mugdale and Barker Woods.
- Exmoor Pony conservation grazing programme – liaised with landowners and the Yorkshire Exmoor Pony Trust to create a schedule. Organised contractor to complete boundary checks and maintenance of sites. Placed order and liaised with YEPT where necessary.
- Website / communications – Added and kept updated information about the new FIPL funding scheme to the grants page of the website, updated the Coronavirus page and worked on updating banners and gaining Google Analytics set up with Bronco (web developer).
- MMS – Bracken crushing on round barrows near Grimston (AONB Team).
- AONB Newsletter – Assisted Liz in writing and editing of articles and assisted with the smooth running of the design, print and Door to Door process.

Other work:

- Meetings with PJ and LB to discuss team tasks and new staffing.
- Booking the Royal Mail Door-to-Door delivery of the AONB Newsletter for its new timeslot in August.
- Investigating how to obtain analytics data for usage of our website.
- Site visit with landowners in Crayke to give advice on developing the wildlife benefit of their plot of land.
- Working up IPM targets and IPM meeting with Paul.
- National Landscapes Forum – identifying HHAONB access issues with the forum and liaising with NYCC IThelp and the forum's web developer to try to resolve our access issues – ongoing.
- Initial contact with NYCC highways about Special Interest Road Verges cut.
- Growth and Heritage Team Meetings.
- Action Programme updates.
- Communities/outreach – Represented the AONB and Ryevitalise on a stall at Ryedale Eco-fair in Pickering. Landscapes for Life Week – made Ryevitalise team aware of this which resulted in LB and Rye team organising Ampleforth outreach event.
- Introductory half-day with Ellie walking around Hall Moor, visiting the Arboretum Tree Health Centre and talking about my involvement in AONB

- project work.
- Introductory day about Ryevitalise for Ellie with LB and Ryevitalise with site visit to Rose Cottage, Terrington.
 - Discussions with LB and EH about new ways of working.
 - Observed FIPL meeting with new consultants to gain insight of the scheme.
 - NAAONB Conference – online in July.
 - Landscape Recovery Webinar – online in August.
 - Three weeks annual leave in July / August, 2 days unpaid leave in August, 1 day flexi, 1 day annual leave
 - Two days of self-isolation due to child at home with Covid-19 symptoms.

November 2021 – March 2022

Work during this period will principally consist of:

- Providing Project Fund applicants with application guidance, making grant offers, checking completed projects and making grant payments.
- Cause and Effect exhibition – working with Ryevitalise and NT to develop engagement activities to run alongside the exhibition. Planning and accompanying film crew and artists on final filming day. Proofing-viewing final interpretation film.
- Assisting LB with organising volunteer tasks. Organise 2 volunteer tasks to bag and recycle spent tree shelters. Organise another spiral removal task with younger volunteers.
- Assisting EH and Liz Small to inform designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB.
- Continuing to develop a strategy for reducing the amount of plastic tree protection waste in the HHAONB. Continue work with Castle Howard Estate NYMNPA and industry partners to develop local recycling solutions. Investigate whether a FIPL project could be created to help fund this work.
- Developing thinking around linking with urban areas and outreach to under-served audiences.
- Investigating updates required to the AONB website accessibility.
- FIPL - arrange a site meeting with Potter Hill landowner to talk about FIPL and ash die back. Accompany one of the other AONB staff on a FIPL liaison site visit near Ampleforth to develop knowledge of the scheme and the NW AONB area.
- Assisting the new AONB manager to develop team new ways of working where necessary.

**HOWARDIAN HILLS
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
11 November 2021**

Item 6: Proposals for the future AONB Action Programme

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review the work of the AONB team and for the Manager to make proposals for future work for discussion by the JAC:

- Review of existing strengths.
- An increase in focus on Glover recommendations.
- Branding and website refresh.

2.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING STRENGTHS

The AONB team have a number of strengths, including:

- A small, efficient staff team.
- Two officers with differing, complementary skills and knowledge. Liz B has built a huge knowledge of the area, its habitats and landscape and a network of contacts over many years, as well as delivering projects, managing the volunteer programme and managing allocation of the project fund to landowners and communities. Francesca has significant geomorphology, outdoor education and art sector knowledge, as well as delivering projects, working on the Ryevitalise project, becoming an expert on tree spiral issues and leading on website maintenance.
- An excellent record of delivering on-the-ground landscape and habitat improvements, via allocation of a high proportion of core funding to project delivery.
- A high level of community awareness of the AONB, built on direct staff team contact with the community, e.g. through allocation of funds to community projects, involvement with local schools, events and volunteers, and circulation of the annual newsletter.
- Existing, though slightly dated, walks leaflets encouraging public enjoyment of the area, supported by good walk signage.
- A new opportunity to fund on-the-ground improvements via delivery of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

Using 2020-21 as an example, approx. 40% (£71,000) of the core funding was distributed via project grants focussed on:

- Natural environment (walls, hedges, grassland and grazing, INNS control)
- Historic environment (scrub management, village signs)
- Sustainable development and community (publicity, walk leaflets, signage)

3.0 A FOCUS ON GLOVER RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2019 Glover Review of Protected Landscapes made 27 proposals for the future role of protected landscapes (see the summary of the review in Appendix 1).

The Howardian Hills AONB team is already delivering well on many of the Glover proposals, notably delivering a strong Management Plan, supporting vibrant communities and delivering a range of volunteer activities and good

information and signage.

The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is taking a first step towards delivering the Glover objective to place national landscapes at the centre of new Environmental Land Management Schemes. The FiPL funding and resourcing available over the next two financial years (£145k for projects in 2022-23 and £105k in 2023-24, with 1.0FTE advice and guidance and admin support) will support delivery of natural environment and historic environment projects which would usually be delivered by core funding and staff resource.

Thus, there is an opportunity to build on the existing strengths and expertise of the staff team to stretch the on-the-ground delivery into other areas highlighted by Glover, namely:

- More work on health and wellbeing through access to the countryside, with improved and expanded walking and cycling guides.
- More involvement with schools and schoolchildren (and young people), with a new schools programme, building on past successes.
- Increased ethnic (and economic) diversity of visitors, with stronger links to nearby urban areas and their communities.
- A focus on new ways to reach and engage with a more diverse audience, including use of art, delivery of art in the landscape and involvement with the arts sector.
- An increase in provisions for sustainable tourism, with greater connections to local tourism providers and development of a sustainable tourism plan for the area.

It is proposed that these new areas of work are firmly rooted in continued on-the-ground delivery, utilising existing core staff resources and project budget, made available through FiPL.

Glover also notes that delivery of his proposals should be accompanied by a new financial model for AONBs, 'more money, more secure, more enterprising'. Long term growth of these new areas of work will rest on delivery of this last proposal.

Whilst we have some capacity, we do, however, have the opportunity to look at becoming more enterprising by:

- Looking for opportunities to partner other, related organisations in larger funding bids, e.g. NYMNPA, LNP.
- Develop our own smaller external funding application(s), e.g. to National Lottery.

4.0 BRANDING AND WEBSITE REFRESH

Lastly, it is proposed that a small proportion of the core funding freed up by FiPL is used for a minor refresh of:

- The AONB branding and logo.
- The website design.
- The design of external publications, particularly the annual newsletter and the walking guides.

These communication tools have delivered well for many years, with the branding defined when the designation was confirmed in 1987. However, the styles and fonts are now looking dated. For example:

- The website has a picture taking up the full page view, requiring scrolling to

access the text information, see Image 1. This was a design preference some years ago but now instant access to information is preferred.



Image 1: Website homepage

- The walking guides design is print-focussed and does not work well when downloaded and used on a mobile device. There is also a move to more itinerary-based guides, rather than simple maps of walks.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the JAC approve development of these ideas in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Action Programme and budget, with the Manager to return to the JAC with proposed costs and timings.

Landscapes review: final report - summary of findings

Updated 25 September 2019

The underlying argument of our review, which covers England, is that our system of national landscapes should be a positive force for the nation's wellbeing. Big ambitions are made possible by these 44 areas working together in new ways to become more than the sum of their parts.

We want this to happen not as an end in itself but because more must be done for nature and natural beauty. More must be done for people who live in and visit our landscapes. And a lot more must be done to meet the needs of our many fellow citizens who do not know the countryside, or do not always feel welcome in it, but should be able to enjoy it. Our landscapes are open and free to all, but can seem exclusive.

We think this can only happen if we are honest about what doesn't work at the moment and put in place a system which can do better.

Today, we have a system which is fragmented, sometimes marginalised and often misunderstood. Indeed it is not really a system at all, but 10 National Parks, who do not always work together effectively, and an entirely separate network of 34 less powerful Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). They have different purposes from National Parks, vastly less money, but sometimes greater pressures. Yet they cover areas that are more visited, sometimes more biodiverse and are just as beautiful.

We believe this duplication wastes resources and diminishes ambition.

That is why our central proposal is to bring National Parks and AONBs together as part of one family of national landscapes, served by a shared National Landscapes Service (NLS). This will give them a bigger voice, bigger ambition and a new way of working to meet new challenges.

Within this family, of course not every member will be the same. Local identity matters. National Parks need to keep their titles, at least their current levels of funding, and local autonomy, especially over planning.

The current system of governance for National Parks (and, as we'll explore later, AONBs) should be reformed substantially. Time after time we have heard and seen that National Park boards are too big, do not do a good job in setting a strategic direction and are deeply unrepresentative of England's diverse communities.

Of the almost 1,000 people on National Park and AONB boards today, the great majority are male, many are of retirement age and a tiny fraction are of black, Asian or minority ethnicities. This is wrong for organisations which are funded by the nation to serve everyone.

We also think what are now AONBs should be strengthened, with increased funding, governance reform, new shared purposes with National Parks, and a greater voice on development.

We think the current cumbersome title 'AONB' should be replaced. Our suggestion is that they should be called National Landscapes.

We would also like to see the encouragement of a wider range of non-designated systems of landscape protection, which should be members of the national landscapes family and served by the NLS.

This ought to include new areas of forest, along the lines of the successful National Forest in the East Midlands. We give our strong support for proposals for new urban National Parks, such as the one proposed for the West Midlands and the one already underway in London. We also praise the impressive work being done to bring the South Pennines together as a regional park and to create a marine park in Plymouth.

Our overriding conclusion is that without structural reform and greater shared ambition and status, our national landscapes will always struggle to do more than make an incremental difference.

Summary findings

The review focused on 5 areas:

1. Landscapes alive for nature and beauty
2. Landscapes for everyone
3. Living in landscapes
4. More special places
5. New ways of working

They are not separate but part of one ambition: to strengthen the natural beauty of England's landscapes in order to serve the country better by improving their biodiversity, and the lives of people who work in them, live in them and enjoy them.

For clarity when reading this summary, we refer to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as AONBs, and use 'national landscapes' to refer to the two designations of National Parks and AONBs together.

Summary 1. Landscapes alive for nature and beauty

The [2010 Making Space for Nature review](#) and the most recent [2016 State of Nature report](#) are explicit about the crisis of nature and what needs to be done to bring about a recovery. There is no need, in this review, to restate the excellent and mostly chilling analysis they contain, except to say that we agree and we want to see national landscapes lead the response.

Proposals

Proposal 1: National landscapes should have a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature, and be supported and held to account for delivery by a new National Landscapes Service

Proposal 2: The state of nature and natural capital in our national landscapes should be regularly and robustly assessed, informing the priorities for action

Proposal 3: Strengthened Management Plans should set clear priorities and actions for nature recovery including, but not limited to, wilder areas and the response to climate change (notably tree planting and peatland restoration). Their implementation must be backed up by stronger status in law

Proposal 4: National landscapes should form the backbone of Nature Recovery Networks – joining things up within and beyond their boundaries

Proposal 5: A central place for national landscapes in new Environmental Land Management Schemes

Proposal 6: A strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system with AONBs given statutory consultee status, encouragement to develop local plans and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework

Summary 2. Landscapes for everyone

National Parks were created in part to provide a healing space, both mentally and physically, for the many who had given so much to protect our country during the Second World War. They were meant for everybody. Much has changed in the 70 years since. Modern Britain is a very different place socially and demographically. Today we recognise diversity as the mark of a healthy and resilient society. However, many landscape bodies have not moved smartly enough to reflect this changing society, and in some cases show little desire to do so.

We want our nation's most cherished landscapes to fulfill their original mission for people, providing unrivalled opportunities for enjoyment, spiritual refreshment and in turn supporting the nation's health and wellbeing.

Proposals

Proposal 7: A stronger mission to connect all people with our national landscapes, supported and held to account by the new National Landscapes Service

Proposal 8: A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child

Proposal 9: New long term programmes to increase the ethnic diversity of visitors

Proposal 10: Landscapes that cater for and improve the nation's health and wellbeing

Proposal 11: Expanding volunteering in our national landscapes

Proposal 12: Better information and signs to guide visitors

Proposal 13: A ranger service in all our national landscapes, part of a national family

Proposal 14: National landscapes supported to become leaders in sustainable tourism

Proposal 15: Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family

Proposal 16: Consider expanding open access rights in national landscapes

Summary 3. Living in landscapes

Our system of national landscapes works best when it works with people on its side. We can all agree that a village that is lived in, with an active school, people who work, and who are part of a living tradition, is better than a sterile place that is full of shuttered homes, empty pubs and derelict shops.

If we are serious about demonstrating the value of 'lived in' landscapes to the global family of national landscapes, then we need to be serious about the people who live in them, and show how it's possible to offer meaningful social and economic support for them.

Proposals

Proposal 17: National landscapes working for vibrant communities

Proposal 18: A new National Landscapes Housing Association to build affordable homes

Proposal 19: A new approach to coordinating public transport piloted in the Lake District, and new, more sustainable ways of accessing national landscapes

Summary 4. More special places

Almost a quarter – 24.5% – of England is already covered by national landscapes.

We think there is a case for several larger AONBs to take on National Park candidate status, as well as for a new AONB (or National Landscape as we propose they are called in future).

The success of the National Forest is also a model which should be replicated.

We also think that a changing nation needs new ways to come together to support natural beauty and access.

Proposals

Proposal 20: New designated landscapes and a new National Forest

Proposal 21: Welcoming new landscape approaches in cities and the coast, and a city park competition

Proposal 22: A better designations process

Summary 5. New ways of working

We want our landscapes to focus on enhancing natural beauty, supporting communities and visitors. But to do it better, we think they need to change and work together more.

Proposals

Proposal 23: Stronger purposes in law for our national landscapes

Proposal 24: AONBs strengthened with new purposes, powers and resources, renamed as National Landscapes

Proposal 25: A new National Landscapes Service bringing our 44 national landscapes together to achieve more than the sum of their parts

Proposal 26: Reformed governance to inspire and secure ambition in our national landscapes and better reflect society

Proposal 27: A new financial model – more money, more secure, more enterprising



Rural North Yorkshire: The way forward

Beautiful, connected, and embracing the future

Executive Summary

July 2021

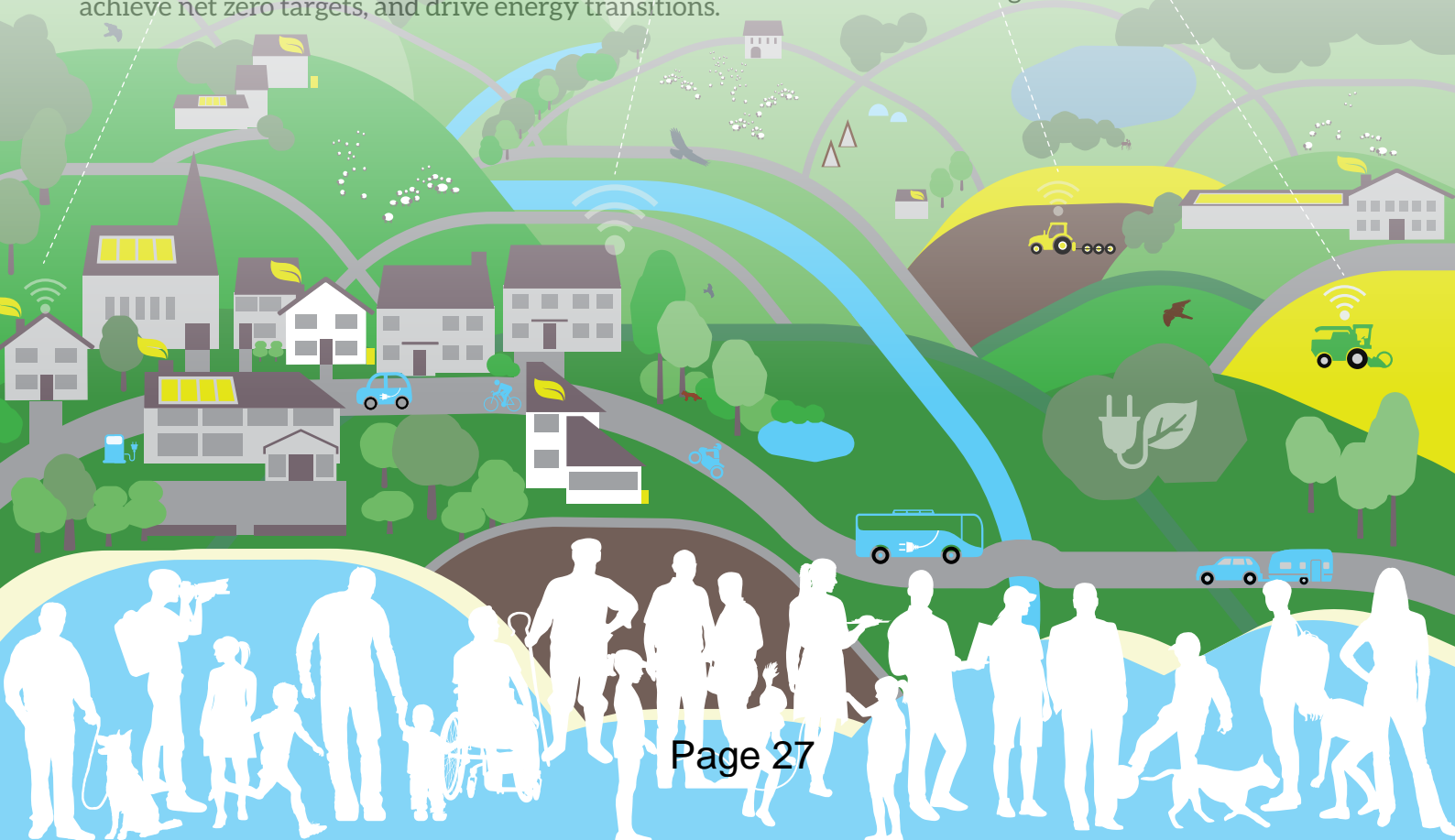
This is the first Rural Commission of its kind. Our report aims to preserve the beauty of Rural North Yorkshire while embracing new ways of living and being.

The issues the Commission has examined require positive behavioural change to allow rural and remote North Yorkshire to become a leader in the green economy, have beautiful living rural spaces, to be digitally connected, farm sustainably and have vibrant services. The Commissioners believe that a thriving rural community is one in which people of all ages and backgrounds can find a home and play a part in community life.

The Commission strongly advocates for the levelling up debate not only to focus on Northern industrial regions, but also on remote and rural regions. The debate must recognise the significant potential of rural and sparsely populated rural areas to contribute to the national economy, achieve net zero targets, and drive energy transitions.

The Commission is strongly of the view that devolution is a priority for rural North Yorkshire. The Commission believes that central government must ensure additional powers and funding for the devolved authority so that it has real capacity within the region for decision-making and control of significant funding.

The Commission examined seven key themes: rural economy; energy transition; digital connectivity; farming and land management; rural schools, education and training; rural housing; rural transport. Cross cutting themes were also examined.



The Commissioners: The Very Reverend John Dobson DL, Martin Booth, Chris Clark, Heather Hancock, Jean MacQuarrie, Professor Sally Shortall, Dr Debbie Trebilco, Sir William Worsley Bt DL.

Key recommendations:

Rural economy: key challenge: North Yorkshire has a diverse economy. There is high skilled employment but there is also a significant low wage economy.

What Commissioners suggest:

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| Devolution is critical to ensuring the right use of investment in the region and the Commission calls on the government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency. | The County Council must encourage investment in the region. This could be pursued through a mutual bank, with supporting funding from the Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund. | The Commission sees a role for North Yorkshire leading in green employment including food, farming, forestry, and renewable energy. The Levelling Up Funds or the Shared Prosperity Fund must provide seed funding support to be match funded by industry. |
|---|---|--|

Energy Transition: key challenge: Up to 47% of North Yorkshire is designated as either a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Much of the rural housing stock is made of solid brick or stone walls; there is no gas grid, and weak electrical infrastructure.

What Commissioners suggest:

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|---|--|---|
| The Government must invest in an electricity structure that does not overlook rural and remote areas. | The York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the County Council must advocate for investment in rural electricity infrastructure. | The National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should execute an enabling strategy to permit the essential infrastructure and upgrades to buildings to be undertaken, to ensure a 'fit-for-purpose' future within these protected landscapes. |
|---|--|---|

Digital connectivity: key challenge: The Commission acknowledges the commitment and considerable investment the County Council has made to digital connectivity in North Yorkshire. Despite the significant investment, digital connectivity remains a significant challenge, especially in rural areas.

The Commission is strongly of the view that digital connection must be considered a human right.

What Commissioners suggest:

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| The Yorkshire National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty must establish a Digital Inclusion Group to advise on a digital infrastructure that will be acceptable for these protected regions. | National government and OFCOM must understand digital connectivity as a human right. This is as much a human right for people in rural and remote areas as it is in urban areas. The Commission advocates that the government begin by connecting its most remote citizens to avoid the typical lagging-behind model. | The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport must place a higher priority on digital inclusion in rural communities and set out a strategic approach to address the issue for North Yorkshire and other sparsely populated areas. The Shared Prosperity Fund could be used as a vehicle to address this issue. |
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Farming and Land Management: key challenge: North Yorkshire has a long and proud history of farming. There was a great deal of evidence that farming, and farmers are facing significant challenges and policies must be developed to assist them to meet these challenges.

What Commissioners suggest:

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs must have a more integrated approach to farming, land management and the environment. It must recognise that farming and land management practices are central to achieving environmental targets. Working with Nature, rather than substituting for it, will deliver the most profitable farms in conjunction with the most sustainable Nature.

The Council, in conjunction with the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, should facilitate a new Farm Business Task Force to direct the culture change needed for the farming future and to ensure changed business practice meets environmental targets. This should liaise closely with the national Agricultural Productivity Task Force.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs must provide free business coaching and mentoring support to help farm businesses survive and restructure, whilst ensuring support is in place to help farmers exit the industry with dignity.

Rural schools, education and training: key challenge: North Yorkshire has the highest number of small schools in England. Rural schools perform well. Yet, rural schools risk closure. The sustainability of rural schools is largely attributable to falling pupil rolls, financial difficulties and schools standards. Children attending small rural schools achieve better educational outcomes than urban children, yet they are less likely to go on to further and higher education when they leave school.

What Commissioners suggest:

The Commission believes that the Department for Education must revise its National Funding Formula to ensure increased support for rural super sparse secondary schools.

The County Council must lead on pioneering a two-stream educational system post GCSE in rural and remote areas, with one stream focusing on vocational education while the other remains academic.

The County Council and the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership must strengthen the offer for post-16 education and provide a better sense of future for young people.

Key recommendations:

Rural housing; key challenge: in North Yorkshire there is a significant shortage of affordable homes in large parts of the County and an acute housing shortage within the national parks. The general high cost of rural housing means that the region is unaffordable for low- and medium-income families.

What Commissioners suggest:

The formula for designating affordable housing must be revised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government so that it does not reflect market value in an area but rather average income in the area.

The County Council should be enabled to have the power to levy a charge on second homes which must stay in the county and be used to further affordable housing.

Each parish in rural North Yorkshire should build five houses over a ten-year period. 40% of this housing stock must be affordable or available for rental.

Rural transport; key challenge: People who live in super sparse and rural areas need to travel for school, employment, shopping, and health facilities. This raises issues that include accessibility, affordability, and environmental impact.

What Commissioners suggest:

The Commission believes that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs must make it clear what rural fund will replace the loss of the EU Rural Development Programme funding which allowed local communities to respond imaginatively to local needs around transport.

Until the devolved authority is established, the Council must have the power to use Shared Prosperity Funds and Levelling Up funds to design relevant schemes for rural and remote areas in North Yorkshire.

The Commission believes that the County Council should take up the opportunity to provide more innovative passenger transport such as demand responsive transport across the county.

Cross cutting themes; key challenge: The Commission identified a number of issues for the region that are impacted by all of the previous themes. These are the demographic challenge and the missing generations; leadership; the importance of community and climate change.

What Commissioners suggest:

Devolution is critical to securing long-term investment into the region and the Commission calls on the government to agree a deal as a matter of urgency. This will allow North Yorkshire to ensure best use of levelling up funds for its remote and rural regions.

The County Council must establish an Advisory Task Force to include civil servants, rural business, banking and industry, academic and scientific expertise, and communities to take forward our recommendations.

The Commission urges the government to ensure Levelling Up funds recognise the needs of sparsely populated northern regions as much as the needs of northern industrial regions.

Community and social infrastructure are critical. The government must ensure Levelling Up funds protect social infrastructure in remote and rural regions.