



State of the National Park Report 2021

The State of the National Park Report provides an overall picture of the 'health' of the National Park and measures progress against the outcomes set out in the National Park Management Plan in 2016.

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Introduction

The State of the National Park Report provides a snapshot of the overall health of Northumberland National Park (NNP) and provides an update of the progress in delivering the aims and objectives of the Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016-2021.

The Management Plan was developed in close consultation with the communities, businesses and organisations that have an interest in the National Park; these make up the Management Plan Partnership. The Plan represents a shared vision for the place, and this is therefore a report on the special qualities of the park, how these qualities are enjoyed, and by whom, and on the economic and social wellbeing of the park communities.

The report is structured in line with the five Aims of the National Park Management Plan with a comprehensive update on the achievements of the Management Plan Partnership in delivering each of the 16 primary outcomes.

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) has meant that the decision has been made to extend the State of the Park monitoring until we are able to approve the next iteration of the Management Plan, this is scheduled to be in 2022.

Whilst this year's State of the National Park report reflects outcomes affected by the impact of Covid-19, it should be noted that significant positive impact has been made in several key areas. Targets and aims are distributed evenly with 8 (50%) of its outcomes achieving a 'good' performance while 8 outcomes are 'acceptable'. There has been a drop of 25% in the number of outcomes rated 'Good' and there are currently 7 with a trend which is currently unknown. This uncertainty is caused by the sudden and significant impact of the pandemic in March 2020. Currently this drop in performance is assumed to be temporary rather than a trend indicator. Many of the 'Acceptable' areas within the report should also be read with assumption that negative impacts on the local economy, engagement and project work will be short lived and are not representative of the long-term change in the National Park, in fact we are already seeing a positive recovery in many of these areas

I trust you will find this report of interest and I would welcome your feedback on any aspects of the report.

Tony Gates, Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

December 2021

Northumberland National Park Authority Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Baseline	Target (2021)	Status 2019/20	Status 2020/21
Increase visitor numbers to Northumberland National Park.	1.47 million (2015)	1.62 m (↑10%)	1.73m (↑18%)	0.97 m (↓34%)
Increase the economic contribution of National Park visitors to the local economy.	£141 million (2015) ¹	£155 million (↑10%)	£176 million (↑25%)	£71 m (↓49%)
Develop and implement the Sill Activity Plan.	-	30,000 days / p.a.	28,369 (95% of target)	10,922 days (36% of Target)
The National Park will remain the most tranquil part of England.	Most tranquil (CPRE 2016)	Most tranquil	Study required	Study required
Maintain the area of blanket bog and extend the area of heathland.	20,800 ha (2016)	160 ha ² new heath	20,816 ha Total Heath	20,816 ha Total Heath
Maintain or increase the number and distribution of curlew.	450 pairs / 211 areas (2016)	Maintain or increase	No further information	No further information
Farmland managed under 'enhanced' agri-environment schemes.	85% (2016) ³	70%	94%	89% ⁴
Reduce the number of scheduled monuments that are "at risk"	53 [12%] (2016)	21 [5%]	48 [11%]	39 [9%]
Total self-generated income by NNPA	£242,000	£922,000	£1,194,500	£1,000,600

¹ 84% of visitors to the National Parks 'influence zone' visit the National Park but spend outside the boundary. This figure is 84% of the value of the visitor economy of the wider influence zone.

² NEV target of 1000 ha additional heathland area between 2010 and 2035 (25 yr period). 160 ha is 4 years' worth.

³ In 2016, 100% of the farmed area of the National Park was covered by an agri-environment scheme. 85% of the farmed area was covered by agreements with 'higher level' options. Changes to agri-environment schemes mean only (and not all) areas with higher level options will qualify in the future. The 70% target is based on the 2016 benchmark for other English National Parks.

⁴ There are no longer any holdings in Entry Level Stewardship in NNP. The definition of farmland now applies to all holdings under the Rural Land Registry, as Countryside Stewardship Schemes also include woodland and scrub areas.

Delivery of desired outcomes from the Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016-2021

Introduction

The format of the report has changed to meet accessibility standards. Northumberland National Park Authority is a publicly funded body and our information published online is regulated by the Government Digital Service (GDS).

Performance of our 16 desired Outcomes is recorded as Good, Acceptable or Poor and trend information is recorded as Declining, Static, Improving, or Unknown.

Aim 1 – A Welcoming Park

Outcome 1.1 – People who come to the National Park will feel they have had an exceptional experience in relating to the landscape and in finding peace, tranquillity and adventure and will have enjoyed their visit.

Target – To maintain and improve levels of visitor satisfaction and achieve a high standard and broad range of facilities, information, and service within the National Park.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – unknown

Impact – Following the relaxation of restrictions during the summer, new audiences were visiting NNP in increased numbers. Analysis of social media posts indicated that young people and families were coming to the park for the first time and enjoying the peace, tranquillity, and the opportunity to visit the national park safely. Car Parking information for 2020 indicated that, out of lockdown, our facilities at Cawfields and Walltown were visited more often than in recent years.

In 2021, improved signage, interpretation and visitor welcome facilities have been provided in a number of key visitor access points. As a result, our satisfaction survey of 531 visitors, revealed a net promoter score of 76%, with an average satisfaction rating of 9.3 out of 10.

Key points -

- 2018 Visitor Survey showing 67% of visitors rated the park 6 out of 6.
- 2021 net promoter score of 76%.
- Average satisfaction rating of 4.3 out of 5 from online ratings.
- Public experience exceeded expectation for 9 of 14 facility types.
- Upgrade of facilities from Once Brewed to the Sill completed in 2017.
- Upgrade of facilities at Walltown and Cawfields completed in 2019.
- 2020 Lockdowns resulted in shorter visitor season and some initial negative sentiments, but latterly opportunities for people to escape, find peace and enjoy the tranquillity of NNP.
- 2021 new signage and interpretation and visitor welcome facilities have enhanced visitor experiences at a number of sites across the Park.

Outcome 1.2 – The National Park will be accessible to a wider and more diverse audience including people who live in, work in, and visit the National Park.

Target – To increase visits to Northumberland National Park by those living within the region by 10% by March 2021 (from the 2016 baseline); increase visits from currently under-represented groups by 10% by 2021 (from the 2016 baseline); and improve information and infrastructure with more sites in the National Park accessible to all.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Unknown

Impact – Those seeking isolation and space from others during the pandemic were able to experience this in the national park, we saw an increase in new visitors from urban areas.

Further opportunities for engagement were made during our campaign of #outdoorsIndoors which showcased the sights and sounds of Northumberland digitally. This enabled visitors to experience the park remotely and safely throughout periods of lockdown.

We have made a programme (Recover Together) working with communities most affected by the covid pandemic including refugees, ethnic minorities, disabled people, elderly and isolated and urban deprivation. We also provided a NNP in a box to young carers and children on the schools amber list during lock down.

The full year figures for 2021/22 are not yet available but the visitor season during the summer has been busier than we had initially anticipated.

Key points -

- Total Visitors⁵:

Table A. Visitor Metrics for NNP, Change against 2015/16 Baseline

Metric	2015/16 (baseline)	2019/20	2020/21	% Change
Activity Days (In NNP)	10,153	28,369	820	-92%
Activities Held	383	566	15	-96%
Visitor Centres	29,609	134,849	48,600	+64%
STEAM (Tourism measure)	1,465,000	1,737,000	970,000	-44%
Bus (Concessionary, NE)	2,858	3,203	0	-100%
Bus Total	20,084	22,768	0	-100%
NNP Website	114,037	312,932	426,399	274%

- In 2020/21 84% of our Public Rights of Way were estimated to be 'easy to use'.
- Significant investment has gone into some key sections of our Public Rights of Way network in 2017 and 2018 with £50,000 invested in improvements to the Simonside footpath and £30,000 invested in improvements to the Pennine Way.
- Visits to our website have increased by over 300,000 per year with visits to our walking pages around 25% of the total.
- Our website is 94% compliant with current accessibility guidelines, within the top 10 of all government websites.

Outcome 1.3 – A more diverse range of learning opportunities will be available to help people understand, value and contribute to conserving, enhancing and enjoying the National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural qualities.

Target – To use the resources of the National Park to provide increased access to learning and educational opportunities for young people.

Performance – Acceptable given Covid restrictions (10,922 activity days)

Trend – Unknown

⁵ Source: NNPA, Go Northeast, STEAM

Impact – The Sill has provided an improved space for events and activities to be held. The number of educational activities had been increasing year on year since 2015 and the new facility is supported by an increasingly diverse range of volunteering opportunities. However, the number of events and learning opportunities held in 2020 was limited by restrictions on group sizes and the additional safety measures required under government guidance. Our volunteering opportunities were limited but were a particularly valuable resource between June and November, as we began to welcome people to the National Park following the first lockdown.

Events and learning opportunities have now restarted in 2021/22 and demand has been high. Similarly volunteering opportunities have increased within the Authority and our partners working in the park, through projects such as the Cheviot Peat Project, Revitalising Redesdale and Generation Green.

Key points -

- Education activities effectively stopped for the year, although efforts were made to create digital resources that can be shared with schools in the coming year.
- 150 copies of *The Lost Words* were distributed to schools at the end of the year to encourage students to learn about our natural heritage.
- NNPA are supporting PhD students with projects from augmented reality to supporting the value of heritage throughout Europe.
- Online and digital engagement during the year became our most important means of delivery and, though previously untested, the virtual Northumberland National Park Dark Sky Festival attracted an audience of over 10,000 people through YouTube.
- Existing volunteering provision and improvements will be continued when restrictions ease through ongoing and project work, including:
 - Guided Walks,
 - Revitalising Redesdale,
 - NLHF Culture Recovery Fund opportunities,
 - Generation Green Project lead by the YHA,
 - Historic environment volunteering.
- Volunteer days decreased around 50% from 4,065 in 2019/20 to 2,153 in 2020/21.
- Improved engagement with 10,000 additional social media followers this year, up from 58,000 in 2019/20.

Aim 2 – A Distinctive Place

Outcome 2.1 – A distinctive place that will maintain a sense of inspiration and tranquillity.

Target – To protect and enhance tranquillity levels as the highest in England; conserve and enhance the National Park’s distinctive characteristics and sense of place; to ensure that all new development within or on the fringe of the National Park will conserve or enhance the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.

Performance – Good

Trend –Static

Impact – NNPA continue to work with partners and stakeholders ensuring that NNP retains its sense of place. ‘Low impact’ tourism opportunities are being embedded, overhead powerlines are being buried in areas of greatest visual impact and we continue to ensure that woodland planting is permitted in line with the principal of ‘the right tree in the right place’.

Key points -

- Tranquillity protected through existing and future planning policy.
- The new Local Plan adopted in July 2020.
- Dark Sky awareness campaigns protect the Gold status of Northumberland Dark Sky Park and targeting a reduction of sources of light pollution in the Park.
- NNPA responded to 88 consultations on Park fringe in the last 5 years.
- 10km of overhead lines being assessed for undergrounding, 3k completed so far, including schemes at Ingram, Rochester and Walltown. These schemes did not progress in 2020 during Covid restrictions.
- Low impact tourism is being promoted through the use of electric bikes and ongoing financial support of Hadrian’s Wall Bus (HWB). The bus did not operate in 2020.
- A Landscape Enhancement Initiative bid has been developed to make significant improvements and reduce erosion on Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trail.

Outcome 2.2 – The natural qualities and diverse habitats that characterise the changing landscapes will be safeguarded and enhanced.

Target – To bring about measurable improvements in the natural environment and deliver the Natural Environment Vision 2014-2035 (NEV).

Performance – Good

Trend – Static

Impact – Park habitats continue to improve with appreciable increases in upland bog condition. Through the new Northumberland Peat Partnership, we are assessing, with partners, degraded peat areas within and without NNP and attracting funding to restore them. The number of birds of prey fledglings in Northumberland continues to increase year on year, and the Authority continues to work with land managers to develop woodland and moorland management plans to improve habitats. Work continues with our partners to support pollinators, wading birds and freshwater species that live in the national park.

Key points -

- 99% of SSSI sites within the National Park are in ‘Favourable’ or ‘Recovering’ status.
- Upland Bog SSSIs in favourable condition have increased from 20% to 34% since 2014.
- The Cheviot Peat Project is entering its final year with plans to restore 150 ha of damaged peat.

- Some damage to SSSI Sites has occurred during a fire on the Otterburn Training Area (OTA) in 2018 and a further fire damaged moorland on Simonside in 2020.
- Landscape scale approaches to habitat and biodiversity continue through the Northern Upland Chain (NUC) and Revitalising Redesdale.
- Bird of Prey protection partnerships are improving the number of fledglings of osprey and hen harriers. The number of hen harrier fledglings in Northumberland has increased from 0 in 2014 to 18 from 6 nests in 2020 with successful nests in each of the last 6 years.
- An RSPB led project supporting volunteer survey work for both wading birds and their predators. Once complete there will be engagement with land managers to encourage the uptake of techniques that can help maintain and improve wader habitats.
- Moorland Restoration Plans are drafted for two farms and the Moorland Management Plan is agreed for College Valley Estate.

Outcome 2.3 – The rich historic environment and archaeological heritage will be understood, valued and cared for.

Target – To protect and enhance the historic environment and archaeological sites within the National Park and develop further understanding of its cultural heritage.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Static

Impact – The number of Scheduled Monuments at Risk remains in decline thanks to our Heritage at Risk (HAR) volunteers who continuously monitor their condition. Delivery of Revitalising Redesdale (RR) and the Traditional Farm Buildings Pilot have had a significant impact on to improvement of the condition and understanding of our heritage assets during this period.

Key points -

- The number of scheduled monuments at High Risk has fallen from 53 to 39 in the past 5 years, or 9% of the total of 426 monuments. 49.1% of the monuments on the Heritage at Risk Register are Low Risk, although there remains more to be achieved.
- Through the 'Traditional Farm Buildings' 21 projects to restore traditional farm buildings are being completed across the national park.
- The Revitalising Redesdale landscape partnership scheme is supporting the restoration and conservation of Otterburn Battlefield and Bremenium Roman Fort. In 2020 there were archaeological excavations at Rattenraw and on the Otterburn Training Area.
- Further understanding of the Rede Valley enabled through Lidar survey and community Archaeology Groups. More than 1,000 additional historic records have been added in 2019 thanks to this community project.
- Scoping began for the Cheviot Hills Heritage Project in 2019/20 as an opportunity to enhance access to, understanding of and engagement with the unique historic environment of the North of the National Park.

Outcome 2.4 – The strong sense of identity and deep-rooted cultural heritage but is balanced with a vibrant approach to the future.

Target – To perpetuate the vibrant traditions of the National Park and its gateway communities as part of the distinctive character of the area.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Unknown

Impact – Volunteers and partner organisations continue to take a leading role in ensuring local heritage and culture is preserved. This work is supported by staff input and community funding from the National Park Authority.

Key points -

- In 2020/21 *The Lost Words* temporary exhibition was hosted at The Sill.
- Northumberland National Park Neighbours scheme supported the residents and communities of NNP during April and May 2020 in lockdown. Working with Age UK we helped deliver 460 support packages over the period.
- The Revitalising Redesdale project team have been exploring the heritage of the Otterburn Ranges with the MoD and Breaking Ground Heritage, as well as with participants from Operation Nightingale, an MoD initiative to assist the recovery of wounded, injured and sick military personnel and veterans.
- A PhD began in 2019/20 to develop augmented reality displays of 3D models.
- National Parks Volunteer Project of the Year 2018 awarded to Coquetdale Community Archaeology Group for their 'Border Roads' project.
- The RAF Cheviot memorial was upgraded and re-dedicated in 2018.
- After successful temporary exhibitions featuring local artists and photographers 'Inspired by our land' is now a regular feature at The Sill.

Aim 3 – A Living Working Landscape for Now and the Future

Outcome 3.1 – New and better approaches to sustainable land and water management have been tested, adopted and embedded.

Target – To encourage and support the uptake of better and more sustainable land management practices which conserve and enhance the National Park’s qualities; and to ensure that all its rivers are of the highest quality and minimise the flood risk and impacts to communities and businesses.

Performance – Good

Trend – Improving

Impact – initiatives are being implemented across the National Park to reduce point source pollution, improve the quality of our water courses and improve the diversity of our woodlands. Our ELMS test and trials have been successfully concluded and we are beginning to roll out a new ‘Farming in Protected Landscapes’ grant scheme with the intention of supporting the improvements in our Natural Capital. The Authority has received a grant to trial new and innovative land management practices to help restore nature whilst retaining an agricultural focus, through Hadrian’s Wall: Recovering Nature (HW:RN).

Key points -

- New Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) grant for projects that deliver improvements to ‘Climate’, ‘Nature’, ‘People’ and ‘Place’. A total £1.4m funding pot is available over a three-year project period.
- The HW:RN project has started, to create a nature first approach to the Greenlee landholding. The project team is working with partners and land managers to extend the potential of this project within the region.
- Projects exploring alternative land management and making space for nature are being delivered at Hepple Whitefield and in the College Valley.
- 97% of NNP Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) is in a Stewardship Agreement.
- 94% of woodland and forestry in NNP is in active management compared to 53% in England.
- In 2016, 65% of NNP rivers were in ‘High’ or ‘Good’ status, in 2019 that number fell to 0%. 93% of rivers are now ‘Moderate’ and 7% are ‘poor’. See *Facts and Figures* document for further information.
- Improvements to the bank and bed of the River Rede have been taking place through Revitalising Redesdale in 2019/20.

Outcome 3.2 – The National Park makes an important contribution to achieving sustainable development and responding to climate change.

Target – To promote and implement sustainable land management practices which contribute to ecosystem services using the natural capital provided by the National Park; and encourage the production of renewable energy from sources compatible with the National Park’s distinctive qualities.

Performance – Good

Trend – Improving

Impact – Improvements in land management have seen an increase in the carbon storage in upland bogs. National grants / tariffs for renewable electricity and fuel use are enabling residents and businesses of NNP to contribute to the UK’s greenhouse gas emission reduction. The NNP Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services are being assessed through our partners in the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (NUCLNP).

Key points -

- Landscape scale approaches to improving land management has resulted in improving the condition of upland peat bog habitats, as evidenced in SSSI data.
- The government is investing £10m to restore 6,580 hectares of peat bogs across the UK with the Cheviot summit contributing 150 Ha to this goal. This will secure the peat as a carbon store and limit the natural emissions from degraded, exposed peat. This project is due to conclude at the end of 2021.
- Further peat restoration work is underway supported by the newly formed Northumberland Peat Partnership, which has a target area from the Tyne gap north to the Scottish border. In 2020, the hydrology of 12 ha of peat was restored with more projects in the pipeline.
- Support for the installation of small/micro scale renewables has stalled due to the reduction of available funding from Defra, however alternative central government funding from 'Feed-in Tariffs' and 'Renewable Heat Incentive' continue to encourage adoption.
- Projects encouraging tree planting, specifically the Northumberland Woodland Creation Partnership (Great Northumberland Forest), are being created with the intention of significantly increasing tree cover across the county.

Outcome 3.3 – There is sustained and economically-viable business growth in sectors which sensitively make use of the National Park's special qualities.

Target – To strengthen and diversify the markets for businesses that relate to achieving National Park purposes; to grow the tourism market in and around the National Park; and retain, attract and develop new and traditional skills to meet the demand of enterprises and business growth in key sectors.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Unknown

Impact – In 2020 many businesses and jobs were supported and retained through the governments 'Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme'. The support was welcomed as the overall number of visitors to the park was significantly impacted by national lockdowns. The easing of lockdown during 2020 saw an increase of new audiences and a survey of visitors in 2021 gave the national park a net promoter score of 76%, almost of all visitors would visit again in the future. The change to the visitor season in 2021 is currently underway and there is some evidence of a 'bounce back', but the future trend remains unknown.

Key points -

- We were part of a £1.2m bid with 8 other National Parks to Discover England, supporting the development and delivery of the English National Park Experience Collection. The project ran from 2018/19 to 2019/20. The second phase of the scheme saw all 10 of the English National Parks take part and provide experiences through a central platform.
- Estimates for the Gross Value Add of The Sill are currently being determined, however with a build cost of approximately £8.7m and the subsequent increase in activities, retail, café and staffing the impact on the local economy is significant. (Over £1.5m GVA p/a).
- The Sill has helped to drive an increasing number of visitors to the National Park with the building welcoming 395,000 over the past 4 years.
- More than 50% of National Park properties now have access to superfast broadband (>24Mb/s), this is a significant improvement from 2015 when the target was for 95% of residences to have speeds of just 2Mb/s.

Aim 4 – Thriving Communities

Outcome 4.1 – The communities in and around the National Park have a strong connection to, and appreciation of, the National Park and are fully engaged in shaping its future.

Target – To increase understanding of the distinctive natural and cultural qualities of the National Park, so that communities have strong connections and a recognisable sense of identity and to ensure greater levels of community engagement in local decision-making so that people can contribute to the future well-being of the National Park.

Performance – Good

Trend – Improving

Impact – The adoption of the new Local Plan in 2020 will have a lasting positive impact on the ability of communities to develop and grow in a sustainable manner. In addition, the Authority continues to work with community groups that wish to develop neighbourhood plans, most recently in Wooler. In the early 2020 the Authority worked with our communities and partners to ensure everyone had access to home deliveries during the first lockdown, through the National Park Neighbours initiative. In the latter half of 2020 we welcomed back the support of our volunteers who aided our Rangers through site monitoring, maintenance and visitor engagement.

Although there was a drop in the total number of visitors in 2020, our online engagement and promotion of our landscape through the #outdoorsIndoors campaign caused a spike in interest in our walking pages by 100,000 during the year.

Key points:

- The publication of the Local Plan adopted in 2020 is the culmination of 4 years and 8 consultations with communities and businesses in and around NNP.
- The Authority is also working with communities that wish to develop Neighbourhood Plans.
- Visits to the national park website have increased 36% year on year.
- We continue our work with community groups, regional schools and business groups to ensure they recognise the importance of NNP. The Authority has a £20,000 community fund to contribute towards Covid-19 recovery and climate change projects within the National Park.
- Increasing number and diversity of volunteering opportunities with the national park.

Outcome 4.2 – Effective infrastructure supports active communities with a high quality of life and improved health and well-being.

Target – To ensure a balanced range of housing that meets local needs and the retention of rural services; to enable an integrated transport network which offers an attractive alternative to the car; to increase the use of renewable energy by communities in the National Park by 20% by 2021 whilst continuing to work on increasing energy efficiency; and to increase levels of public health and well-being.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Unknown

Impact – Improving infrastructure remains a challenge in NNP. Investment in physical infrastructure continues and the updated Local Plan aims to help address the provision of housing to meet local need. Improvements to rural broadband in some areas are, however, improving the capabilities for home working in NNP.

Key points:

- Uptake of public transport on the AD122 is up 27% since 2015, on a 'per operating day' basis (although this didn't operate in 2020).
- Renewables have been installed in 14% of buildings in NNP post codes.

Outcome 4.3 – People will have opportunities to work and live-in resilient communities in and around the National Park.

Target – There are more young people and people of a working age living in the National Park; more opportunities for employment and training in the park and its gateway settlements; and the impact from commuting out of the Park, or its gateway communities, is reduced by encouraging more home-working.

Performance – Acceptable

Trend – Unknown

Impact – The population of NNP continues to be older than the Northeast and England average and demographic forecasts prior to 2020 suggested this trend will continue. High employment and limited housing may restrict the ability for new people to move to NNP. The changes in the Local Plan in 2020 place more emphasis the use of homes within NNP as a primary residence.

Key points -

- The NNP population has remained relatively static in previous years with little evidence to suggest young people are moving to the National Park. This may change following societal changes following the 2020 lockdowns.
- Looking at like-for-like demographic data, in 2005, 85.5% of the population were under 65, and by 2018 that figure had fallen to 75.3%. The number of people under 15 has fallen 15% to 247. There has been a 71% increase in the number of people over 65, from 281 to 481 over this timeframe. These figures are derived by the ONS and are not exact. Improved information will be available in early 2022 as the 2021 census data is published.
- Agriculture remains the dominant industry, comprising 48% of the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) list of 170 registered businesses.
- Home working continues to be encouraged through Northumberland County Council's 'Get Digital' campaign and the i-northumberland broadband roll out. It remains to be seen if the rush to home working in rural areas has had a positive impact on the communities of the national park.
- Currently 51% of properties in NNP have access to superfast broadband against a Northumberland wide target of 95%.

Aim 5 – A Valued Asset

Outcome 5.1 – The National Park is widely recognised for its environmental, social and economic contribution, particularly to Northeast England.

Target – To optimise opportunities for the National Park to contribute to the social and economic regeneration of Northumberland and the wider region; and to sustain its natural, cultural, social and economic infrastructure as a local and regional asset.

Performance – Good

Trend – Improving

Impact – Environmental programmes aimed at making space for nature and landscape restoration are at the forefront of national improvements and exemplified by the launch of the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant scheme. Our work with partners to develop digital communication and data collection continue at pace.

Key points:

- Tourism contributed £50m from 0.97m visitors in 2020 according to the most recent STEAM⁶ report.
- £1.2m was granted to the English National Parks Experience Collection between 2017/18 and 2019/20 with two projects from Northumberland. This has since pivoted from an international to a domestic market.
- The Farming In Protected Landscapes scheme was launched in 2021 and supports a range of initiatives to address nature recovery, climate action and public access.
- Annually, over £4.4 million in agri-environmental payments are granted to maintain and improve traditional upland farming practices in the National Park as part of approved stewardship schemes.
- We maintain places in key partnerships including the boards of the Northeast Cultural Venues and Northumberland Culture Network.
- Our leadership of Border Uplands Demonstrator Initiative (BUDI) which was a forerunner of the Borderlands growth deal which has a natural capital theme within it – unique in any growth deal nationally to date.
- In 2020/21 the Park played a key role in supporting Northumberland wider pilot Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Northumberland Woodland Creation Partnership.

Outcome 5.2 – The National Park makes a distinctive contribution to a broader network of protected areas.

Target – To ensure the National Park has a role in leading on protected area management which relates to its natural and cultural assets.

Performance – Good

Trend – Static

Impact – NNP continues to play a leading role across a wide network of natural and cultural management organisations. The increase in landscape scale project thinking is encouraging, particularly in relation to the government’s ambition to increase 30% of land protected for biodiversity by 2030.

Key points:-

⁶ STEAM Model is based on the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model, used by organisations nationally.

- NNP is an active member and contributor to National Parks England and its various policy and working groups. NNPA contributes to responses on the Glover review, England Tree Action Plan, England Peat Action Plan and other key national initiatives.
- NNP represent the national parks in the North of England on 'Nature North' a strategic alliance of public and third sector bodies enabling a strategic approach to nature recovery in the North of England.
- The National Park continues to contribute to England's largest LNP, the Northern Upland Chain. In addition, work towards a holistic environmental land management system has been explored through 'Test and Trials' and improvements are now being sought through the FIPL scheme.
- More locally we are working with a number of protected species partnerships, the Cheviot Peat Project, RSPB project and Revitalising Redesdale to make a positive contribution to protected areas.
- Future partnerships and plans are underway to ensure NNP contributes to wider regional improvements to our Natural Capital. These include the creation of a Hadrian's Wall Recovering Nature Partnership, Northumberland Peat Partnership, contributions to the Great North Bog, supporting tree planting through the Northumberland Woodland Creation Partnership and exploring changes to land management.

Outcome 5.3 – The value of the National Park is clearly demonstrated by the policies and actions of all who have an influence on the National Park.

Target – To ensure national, regional, and local plans, policies and programmes demonstrate a commitment to delivering National Park purposes.

Performance – Good

Trend – Improving

Impact – NNPA is taking an increasingly active role in shaping the future of protected area management at a local, regional and national level. The Authority actively and ambitiously seeks to shape future policy to ensure it adheres to National Park purposes.

Key points -

- Working through Natural England, NNPA aims to influence government policy and other statutory bodies to contribute to the objectives of the National Park, these include the Home Office, Forestry Commission, Public Health England, the 25-Year Environment Plan, the Agriculture Act and the Environment Act.
- The Authority is actively engaged in consultations and development work for:
 - The England Tree Action Plan
 - The England Peat Action Plan
 - Northumberland Woodland Creation Partnership
 - The Northumberland Peat Partnership
 - The Great North Bog
 - The Local Nature Recovery Strategy
 - The Borderlands Growth Deal
 - The Northumberland County Council Climate Change Action Plan
 - The Defra 'Test and Trials' developing a new ELM system
 - Policy Lead for the National Parks' Historic Environment
 - National Park Recovery Strategy (linked to the impact of CV-19).

Northumberland National Park Contextual Information

Areas

Name	Area	%	Notes
Northumberland National Park	1,050 km ²		
Land in Public Ownership (Government)	406 km ²	39% of NNP	Ministry of Defence, Forestry England, National Park Authority
Northumberland International Dark Sky Park (NIDSP)	1,471 km ²	71% of NIDSP	NNP is 71% of the NIDSP area, Kielder makes the remainder
Intersecting Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA)	2,048 km ²	51% of Area 9% of Pop.	ONS Population data is typically sorted by LSOA. These areas overlap NNP which contributes more than half the area, but less than 10% of the population.

National Park Population

Date	2001 Census	2011 Census	2020 Est. ⁷
Total Pop.	1,936	1,993	1,959
Population Density	2/km ²	2/km ²	2/km ²
Age Structure			
76	17.3	14.4	13.5%
16-59 (%)	62.3	57.0	52.1%
60 + (%)	20.5	28.6	34.3%

National Park Housing

Date	2001 Census	2011 Census	2017 Est.
Total Dwellings	972	1,085	1,090
Households	861	871	872
Households with no usual residents	111	214	218

⁷ Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-Year Population Estimate 2021

Conservation Designations

Designation	Number of Sites	Area (Ha)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	32	12,452
Special Area for Conservation (SAC)	7	5,216
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	2	108
Ramsar sites	1	377

Habitats

Type	Area (ha)	% of NNP Area
Native Woodland	3,616	3.45%
Waxcap Grassland	395	0.38%
Species rich grassland	428	0.41%
Bog	9,978	9.52%
Heath	21,127	20.16%

Historic Environment Designations

Designation	Number
World Heritage Site	1 (Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site)
Scheduled Monuments	426
Listed Buildings	229 (12 Grade 1, 11 Grade II*, 206 Grade II)
Battlefield Sites	2
Registered Parks and Gardens	1
Conservation Areas	1

Land Use

Land Use	Area (Ha)	%
Moorland	68,980	65.8%
Woodland	23,877	22.8%
Farmland	11,482	11.0%
Water	380	0.4%
Urban	48	0.0%
Other	367	0.4%

Forestry

	Area (Ha)
Actively Managed Woodland	22,497
Unmanaged Woodland	1,557

Public Rights of Way (km):

	Lengths (km)
Public Footpath	631
Public Bridleway	347
BOAT	57
Restricted Byway	60
Area of Open Access Land	750km ²
Total	1,096