Forest of Bowland National Landscape

Draft Management Plan 2026 - 2031

Image by Graham Cooper

Contents

Chairs Foreword

A foreword from the new chair. To follow.

Part One: Background and Context

Until late 2023, National Landscapes were known as 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)', and that is still the legal name of the designation, hence the title of this plan. Other than on the title page, the term National Landscape(s) is used in this plan.

The nature and purpose of this plan

This plan is produced under provisions in Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), which itself was subject to amendment in this context by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) (2023).

The plan, which is in practice a strategy, has several primary functions. It:

- formulates the policy of local authorities in relation to their National Landscape,
- guides the policy and practice of partners and Relevant Authorities under LURA,
- sets out what might constitute 'seeking to further the purpose of designation' through the implementation of work in support of the plan's outcomes and measures,
- aims to inspire action for nature, climate, people and place, including guiding the team's work and that of key partners, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme applications, and the content of Landscape Recovery and other ELM proposals.

The plan provides a positive and pro-active management framework for the many bodies that form the Forest of Bowland National Landscape Partnership, and others. It identifies the components of natural beauty – those things which should be the focus of conservation and enhancement – and outlines an integrated vision for the future of Bowland as a National Landscape. The plan identifies the drivers of change in the landscape today and looks at how they can be best managed and/or accommodated.

As well as the components of natural beauty, the plan also addresses how people use and interact with the landscape for their enjoyment, health, and well-being.

A series of desired outcomes are identified, alongside measures to achieve them, with broad sectoral responsibility linked to each measure.

The primary audiences for the plan are therefore:

Local Authorities at all levels Relevant Authorities under LURA

Nature related Arm's-Length Bodies (ALBs) i.e. Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission

Farmers and land managers, their representative bodies and providers of farm advice

Conservation Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other partners

Historic England

Local groups of place and interest

In short, everyone who has an influence over, or stake in, this nationally protected landscape

A National Landscape

Together with National Parks, National Landscapes are unique and irreplaceable national assets, each with such distinctive character and natural beauty that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them for present and future generations and manage them in the interests of everyone in society. They are also recognised globally as Protected Areas under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN Category V).

The 38 National Landscapes in England and Wales cover approximately 16 % of the land surface. They are some of the most special and cherished places in our country. Like all IUCN Category V Protected Areas, they are also living, working landscapes that contribute billions of pounds every year to the local and national economy. Although home to less than half a million people (under 2% of England's population), over two thirds of England's population live within half an hour's drive of a National Landscape and around 150 million people visit the country's National Landscapes every year, spending in excess of £2bn.

An introduction to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape

The Forest of Bowland was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1964. It is internationally important for its heather moorland, blanket bog and rare upland birds. The components of natural beauty in the Forest of Bowland were set out in a Statement of Significance when the AONB was assessed and designated.

The Forest of Bowland is in North West England and covers 803 square kilometres of the Pennines (730 in Lancashire and 73 in North Yorkshire). The area is bounded to the north and south by the Rivers Lune and Ribble, respectively. To the west is the Fylde plain, while the eastern side of the boundary matches the Yorkshire Dales National Park for a short distance, with Ribblesdale bordering the remainder. On its south-eastern edge, Pendle Hill (557m) forms a discrete landscape feature, which is geologically linked to the rest of Bowland, but separated from the main area by the Ribble valley.

The Rivers Brock, Calder, Conder, Hindburn, Hodder, Loud, Roeburn, Wenning and Wyre all originate in the upland core of the Bowland Fells. The highest point is Ward's Stone at 561m, alongside other notable landmarks such as Fairsnape Fell at 510m and Hawthornthwaite Fell at 479m.

Bowland lacks large settlements and has an estimated population of approximately 17,500 people. Its boundaries include parts of five Lancashire district council areas, namely: Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley and Wyre; plus, a part of North Yorkshire Council that was formerly Craven District. The urban centres of Preston, Lancaster, Blackburn, Blackpool and Burnley are all near to Bowland, with over one million people living within a 30-minute journey of the area. Bowland is also within a 90-minute journey from the major conurbations of Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds.

The designation is overseen by a partnership of local councils, government agencies, landowners, farmers, local businesses and wildlife and recreation interest groups, who work to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this special landscape.
https://www.forestofbowland.com/Joint-Advisory-Committee

Turning the Last Plan into Action: Key Achievements since 2019

Since the last Management Plan was published we have recorded the following achievements from within the National Landscape Team

In addition to the above deliverables, the Team have overseen the investment of nearly **£17,520,000** (£17.52million) in the Forest of Bowland since 2019 from a variety of sources including Defra, the seven local authorities and United Utilities currently making up the local contributions to the National Landscape partnership; the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, Natural England, Environment Agency, Landscape Enhancement Initiative, significant peat restoration funds from Defra and local landowners, and several other local funds and charitable donations. This is a significant achievement especially when you factor in the massive impacts, both societal and financial, of the Covid pandemic which occurred in this time period.

1088 hectares of peatland has undergone some form of restoration in this period, much of it in conjunction with other bodies such as the Lancashire Peat Partnership and the Great North Bog (www.forestofbowland.com/peatland-restoration). This restoration work provides multiple

benefits for nature, water quality, flood prevention and the retention and future sequestration of carbon in peat soils.

During this period the area's iconic bird, the Hen Harrier, has gone through a cycle of fortunes, starting and finishing with an annual crop of 22 chicks (2019 and 2024 figures) with boom years during the Covid lockdowns of the early 2020s when 50 fledged. Continued efforts have also been made by RSPB staff and committed landowners and farmers to support our wading birds, in particular the curlew. Volunteer surveys, nest cams, temporary fencing and careful mowing have all contributed to favourable results locally, although the outlook remains pretty bleak.

5500 trees have been planted, and 14.5 ha of woodland have been created on farmland, and 209 hectares of wildflower rich grassland have been created through our Hay Time project supported by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT). This delivery has been led by farmers under the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' project with input from the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (www.pendlehillproject.com) Through the Defra funded FiPL programme, farmers and land managers are funded to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and cultural heritage; and to support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses. Over 330 farmers have participated to date and you can read more about it here www.forestofbowland.com/farming-protected-landscapes

Additional investment in nature recovery in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape has been secured by our key partners including the Wyre Countryside Service, Environment Agency, and United Utilities; the Ribble, Lune and Wyre Rivers Trusts, RSPB and YDMT.

Improvements to access and Rights of Way in the National Landscape have significantly increased since 2019 with the appointment of a new Countryside Access officer to the team, and a specific allocation of capital funds from Defra since 2023 which followed on from additional investment during the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership. This investment has covered physical improvements to footpaths and bridleways and all ability routes; the installation of kissing gates and accessible gates, and also significant works to provide routes and facilities at our 'all terrain wheelchair hubs' where vehicles have been funded via FiPL to individual farms providing public and educational access. These all-terrain chairs enable children and adults with mobility issues to access the countryside, alongside their schoolfriends and families, and to feel the benefits of a connection with nature.

This focus on inclusion and a providing a welcome for all has also been developed in our Connecting People and Nature project which originated in the Pendle Hill LP, and Days to Remember which developed from post Covid work. These schemes support community groups, voluntary organisations and care providers to offer opportunities to individuals dealing with mental health, social isolation issues and dementia. They raise awareness of green spaces in our neighbouring towns and provide trips out to the Forest of Bowland countryside which enable people to connect with nature through observation, exercise, creative activity and mindfulness - www.forestofbowland.com/connecting-people-nature. This form of 'green social prescribing' is providing huge benefits to individuals and relieving pressure on the health service. Work with Forestry England and Access the Dales resulted in two inspiring and well received events at Gisburn Forest, which highlighted accessible opportunities to experience the countryside.

In 2024 as part of a national arts programme Nature Calling (www.forestofbowland.com/nature-calling), Bowland hosted local artists OneDa and Rob St John to work with young people from Nelson and Burnley to create two pieces of art that also inspired people to access and

experience the landscape. Again, this was building on successful work trialled during the Pendle Hill Landscape Project.

Investment in the National Landscape has also enabled the considerable expansion of our offer to visitors via the Eco Escapes programme - www.discoverbowland.uk/activities/ecoescapes/ during this period. This started with post Covid funding and led to other financial support enabling us to create car free itineraries, business toolkits and fabulous marketing materials. The National Landscape supports a vibrant 'sustainable tourism business network' with over 100 members who support the production of our annual Discovery Guide www.forestofbowland.com/discover-bowland-guide, events such as the annual Dark Sky Festival and Feast Bowland weeks, and our newly developed Champion Species sponsors which link businesses to our nature recovery work - www.forestofbowland.com/champion-species.

Our annual programme of events, Festival Bowland continues to be well supported by key partners at Wyre Countryside Service, RSPB and a range of local guides. Over the Covid years it very successfully transferred events online. The Festival now continues, largely 'in real life,' to provide a myriad of experiences over a wide geographical area, offering participants an insight into the history, ecology and landscape of the National Landscape - www.forestofbowland.com/festival-bowland.

In addition, the Forest of Bowland's landscape, nature and heritage, its residents, businesses and visitors, benefit in countless ways from work undertaken year-round by a wide range of public bodies, organisations, community groups, charities and individuals. Whilst this may not be captured directly here through figures and outputs, it is key to ensuring that the National Landscape thrives into the future.

The Operating Context for the Plan

National Planning Policy

National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024. The NPPF applies as a whole to National Landscapes as it does to non-designated areas and sets out that planning policies and decisions should [inter alia] recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. However, two paragraphs refer specifically to 'AONBs': paragraphs 189 and 190. The NPPF and the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance form important material considerations about development management and confirm that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues, and the scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited." (Para 189)

"When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."

In practice this means that:

- The scale and extent of development in National Landscapes should be limited
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not automatically apply within National Landscapes (where the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, OR where any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole)
- There is a presumption that planning permission should be refused for major development in National Landscapes other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest
- Policies for protecting National Landscapes may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for housing and other development in full (where the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area)
- National Landscapes are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs arising from adjoining, non-designated, areas.

The Protected Landscapes Duty

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended S.85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000) to place a new duty on Relevant Authorities. This seeks to 'further the purpose of designation' in National Landscapes, rather than simply having a duty of 'regard' as previously. This is a significant, beneficial change. The list of Relevant Authorities runs to several thousand, but chief among them are all public bodies (including local authorities and Arms-Length Bodies) and utilities. Seeking to further the purpose is not a passive duty and is not 'business as usual.' It actively requires those to whom it applies to take positive action to seek to further the purpose, and to be able to evidence how they have done so.

This management plan provides outcomes and measures that help to identify what constitutes 'seeking to further the purpose' in the Forest of Bowland context.

Local Planning Policy

Each of the relevant local and minerals planning authorities has policies aimed at supporting the conservation and enhancement of Bowland's natural beauty and cultural heritage. As this management plan 'formulates the policy of local authorities in relation to their AONB' (S89. CRoW 2000) it is anticipated that it will guide further National Landscape-specific policy in any reviews of Local Plans and guide the day-to-day approach of local authorities to issues affecting the National Landscape.

The key role of planning authorities in conserving natural beauty

The Local Planning Authorities should establish, in their Local Plans, robust policies which support the purpose of designation and protect the components of natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland. In particular these policies, and their application in decision making should:

- ✓ Ensure the LURA duty to 'seek to further the purpose of designation' is fulfilled through spatial planning and development management
- ✓ support the conservation and enhancement of the components of natural beauty in Bowland – see Statement of Significance
- ✓ protect the National Landscape and its setting from visually intrusive development
- ✓ promote best practice in building design and energy efficiency
- ✓ ensure the effectiveness of net gain for biodiversity
- ✓ ensure increased ecosystem service provision in policy making and development management
- ✓ promote the retention of traditional building styles
- ✓ protect heritage features
- ✓ reduce light and noise pollution and promote tranquillity
- ✓ encourage a visitor economy predicated on enjoying natural beauty
- ✓ promote sustainable transport options, including improved public transport
- ✓ promote ease of living and working in the National Landscape without compromising its environmental qualities

National Environmental Policy and Initiatives

The duty to 'seek to further the purpose of designation' (the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty) - The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) is a significant change for how

National Landscapes must be treated by all those bodies who influence policy and practice here. This management plan provides measures that help to identify what constitutes 'seeking to further the purpose.'

30x30 – Bowland's contribution - Governments around the world have committed to protecting 30% of their land area by 2030 (hence 30x30). The target requires areas to be effectively conserved and managed while integrated into the wider landscape and respecting the rights of local communities. Protected areas such as the Forest of Bowland, and their dedicated teams and partnerships, are at the forefront of national work to conserve, protect and restore nature-rich habitats across our landscapes.

Initial mapping from Natural England suggests that 37.4% or 30,113.8 ha of Bowland can meet the 30x30 target (2025); this can be used to set realistic targets for Bowland's contribution to 30x30 over the lifetime of this plan.
https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/5761cf73966040258cfa3f0f59359e18

However, Natural England's own assessment[1] suggests that just 22.5% of the NL is currently being managed for nature and is in a good, or moving towards good, condition. The National Landscape Association is proposing a target of 45% for nature to be met in all National Landscapes in England.

Bowland already has areas of interconnected nature-rich habitat with many areas in sympathetic low-input management. Through protecting these areas and their inter-connectivity, along with improving the quality of habitats through investment via agri-environment schemes and other conservation and enhancement programmes, Bowland could further contribute to 30x30 objectives. Meanwhile it is important that the drive for 30x30 does not take nature conservation and recovery back to a site-focused approach, potentially valuing 'protected' fragments of land over work to conserve, enhance, expand and connect habitats which may not count as 'protected' but may, in combination, be even more valuable for nature.

The approach in Bowland therefore should:

- Identify wildlife-rich areas, protecting them and preventing damage from drainage, pollution, pesticides, 'nature-negative' management, over-exploitation, invasive species, disturbance, and habitat destruction, and manage them to enhance biodiversity
- Buffer and link core sites to support a connected and resilient ecological network
- Restore wildlife richness to its pre-industrialised farming baseline across the wider landscape by, for example, fostering management of land for multiple objectives, investing in approaches that maximise nature recovery alongside food production, allowing natural processes to flourish, and creating structural diversity.

The Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) - Developed under the Climate Change Act (2008) and covering 2023 to 2028. NAP3 states that all Protected Landscapes must have a Climate Change Adaptation Plan by 2028. In the Forest of Bowland our adaptation plan forms a formal appendix to this management plan and will be consulted on accordingly. The table below summarises the key natural assets identified to be at risk to climate breakdown, and the actions identified that enable adaptation to take place. These align with the Measures incorporated into this management plan.

[1] Natural England Monitoring Environmental Outcomes 2022

ASSET	MAIN RISKS	KEY CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ACTIONS
Peatlands	Drying out of peat, and storm 'wash outs'	Improve the hydrological function and condition of peatland. 2A
Species rich grasslands	Loss of species due to drought/flood or lack of frosts	Ensure existing and potential species-rich meadows and pastures are healthy, diverse and well connected. 4A
Hedgerows	Impact of drought, and pests & diseases on hedgerow plants	Bring existing hedgerows into good management. 3A Create new hedgerows to act as wildlife networks and natural solutions to climate change 3C
Veteran trees & Historic landscapes	Impact of storms, drought, and pests & diseases	Survey and retain existing significant/veteran trees in the landscape and plant new ones to act as habitat, stepping stones and future landscape features 3D
Woodlands	Impact of storms, drought, and pests & diseases	Bring existing woodland into good management and wherever possible enable natural regeneration and expansion 3A Plant trees, woodlands and hedgerows 3C Support research into future woodland resilience to climate change, pests and diseases 3I
Species abundancy & diversity	Impact of storms, drought, and pests & diseases	Deliver habitat and species conservation measures at a landscape scale. Increase habitat connectivity and undertake adaptive management 6H
Headwaters, streams & ponds	Impact of drought and storm events	Restore and create ponds, scrapes and dams on farmland, moorland and in woodland 5F
Rivers and waterbodies	Impact of drought and storm events	Strengthen the resilience of river systems to climate change and extreme weather events, encouraging the development of nature-based solutions 5C Restore natural processes to watercourses to improve in-channel habitats, reconnect rivers to their floodplains, increase biodiversity and enhance the landscape 5E
Ground & surface water	Drought	Maintain, create and expand wetland habitats promoting good hydrological function and diverse abundant species 5A

Forestry	Impact of storms, drought, and pests & diseases	Plant selected species that may be more resilient to prevailing climatic conditions and pests and diseases in the medium/long term. 3C
Public Rights of Way	Impact of drought and storm events	Utilise adaptive management practices that can ensure rights of way and access routes are more resilient. 7I

Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) – This is aimed at helping Protected Landscapes (the places, not just the National Park/Landscapes teams) to contribute more fully to the goals in the Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment. Three of the targets: 1 – new priority habitat restored or created outside protected sites; 7 – restored peatlands; 8 – increase in woodland and tree cover, are directly apportioned to each Protected Landscape; for the rest, Natural England will lead on monitoring the impacts of actions in each place. See the targets section of this plan (p26).

Planning reform and the growth agenda - In every management plan cycle there are changes to the planning system. While the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (2024-25, currently still in Committee stage) may offer local conservation opportunities through its Nature Restoration Fund, it could also weaken protections. The Government's own environmental impact assessment confirmed that there is no data or evidence to support a view that nature is a 'blocker' on development and growth, and any new legislation will need to reflect the importance of protecting natural beauty for the multiple benefits it brings. Thriving nature is essential for a thriving economy.

The Land Use Framework – This will set out a vision for land use in England and is intended to act as a tool to drive better decision-making on how land is used and managed maximising win-wins and managing competing demands. In developing this Management Plan account has been taken of the ongoing process towards producing the framework.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory for new development - There will be opportunities to use BNG to further conservation in the National Landscape. This management plan provides measures that should be incorporated into BNG proposals locally.

Nutrient Neutrality – this requires that new development does not increase nutrient pollution (such as nitrogen or phosphorus) in sensitive habitats protected under the Habitats Regulations. Development proposals must demonstrate effective mitigation - such as wetlands creation, buffer zones, or off-site offsetting - to avoid harm to nearby rivers, lakes or estuaries. This should be seen in concert with other protections for National Landscapes, ensuring both ecological integrity and landscape character are safeguarded, while balancing the need for sustainable growth.

Updates to UK Forestry Standard (2024) – Updates to the UKFS are aimed at helping owners and managers mitigate the impacts of climate change, reduce the impacts of pests and diseases and support nature recovery alongside commercial woodland management objectives. This will

enable an increasingly nuanced approach to expanding woodland, scrub and tree cover in Bowland.

The Cunliffe Review – the 2025 report produced by the Independent Water Commission, is aimed at rebuilding public trust in the water sector, improving services and protecting the water environment. This proposes the creation of a single integrated water regulator and nine regional water planning authorities. A 25-year national water strategy which will follow should ensure an integrated approach to the water environment, focusing on the health of watercourses, standing water and the hydrological function of peatlands to provide multiple public benefits and protect nature.

Local context

Local Nature Recovery Strategies - Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in England are established under the Environment Act 2021. They are created on administrative (at least county or unitary authority) boundaries and are intended to map out and guide actions for restoring and enhancing nature across the whole country. The Forest of Bowland National Landscape has its own Nature Recovery Plan, which is recognised by partners locally as both influencing, and being influenced by, the LNRS for Lancashire and for North Yorkshire and York. Management implementation monitoring will be used to feed into LNRS monitoring, and vice versa, wherever possible. The Local Authorities charged with producing the two relevant LNRS are members of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape Partnership and Joint Advisory Committee.

Asset Management Plan (AMP) 8 and its local impact – The current AMP for England's water industry sets out three main priorities for spending. One of these is nature-based solutions, which brings opportunities for resourcing relevant conservation work at scale across Bowland, in collaboration with United Utilities and Yorkshire Water. During this National Landscape Management Plan cycle there will need to be strategic planning for AMP 9, which should be guided in part by the priorities set out in this plan.

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution – Local government reorganisation is proposed for Lancashire by 2028, and this will create a different public sector landscape during the lifetime of this plan. This may simplify governance and concentrate responsibility and may affect funding commitments and in-kind support provided by local authorities, but the National Landscape's governance will still require a degree of independence regardless of the outcome.

Wider general context

The central role of farming, but at a time of real uncertainty and change – Farmers and land managers will play the central role in conserving and enhancing nature in Bowland. However, despite the roll-out of elements of government support via Environmental Land Management, this is still a time of great uncertainty. There was an unrivalled opportunity to rethink agricultural support towards a focus on public money for public goods, with results-based payments directed in the main towards outcomes rather than prescriptions. However, only in the Landscape Recovery strand of ELM (which must expand over the lifetime of this plan), has this outcomes-focused approach begun to be realised. It brings an opportunity to develop a longer-term vision which many would welcome, though there is also a balance to strike, in that current 5-year agreements may be too short, but a 30-year horizon is too far off for many, especially tenants. Some local tailoring may be required.

There has also been some progress in supporting the farming community to further expand their work for people and nature, including through the creation of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and the Higher Tier scheme, but more progress is needed.

If society is going to change the social contract with farmers, seeking more nature-friendly farmed landscapes, farmers must have the necessary mechanisms, and the right capital and revenue incentives, over timeframes they want to work on, supported by access to good quality joined-up and consistent advice.

The continued decline in our biodiversity — locally, nationally and globally — There is an increasingly urgent need to arrest and reverse the well-documented declines in nature. There must be action, at the largest scale possible, to conserve, enhance, restore, expand and connect habitats like never before, and to support species recovery with the same urgency.

Adapting to a changing climate – In our Protected Landscapes, the drive must be for building resilience, in nature-based solutions, and the multiple benefits that can be accrued from sensitive expansion of tree cover, restoration of peatlands, low-carbon farming practices, improving soil and water quality, reducing flood risks and improving the condition of semi-natural habitats. These natural solutions are reflected in the Climate Adaptation Plan which forms part of this management plan.

Inequalities in access to nature – There is a well-documented increasing disconnect between people and their environment, just as there is a well-documented positive link between engagement with nature and people's health and well-being. Access to nature is not equitable, for multiple social, cultural and economic reasons, and there are genuine barriers to overcome.

Green finance - Private finance for nature is growing, but current markets for carbon and biodiversity remain immature. In the context of Bowland peatlands, for example, there has been limited progress in realising the potential benefits of the IUCN UK Peatland Code. Biodiversity Net Gain is new and relatively unproven (and though involving private finance it is associated with development and is not a carbon or nature market per se). Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments can deliver tangible benefits at scale, however they require an increase in capacity to nurture relationships, and they are vulnerable to economic shifts. There is no 'green finance silver bullet' at this point. There is an important role for the National Landscapes Association to play here, potentially aggregating investible propositions and linking investors with landowners/managers and project developers.

Public sector financial constraints – Public funding remains tight. Protected Landscapes are still underfunded—receiving only a third of the £36m (2025 equivalent) once deemed necessary. Whilst this is not just a management plan for the Forest of Bowland partnership team, general constraints on public investment in nature, farming and access to the landscape will inevitably impact on the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

Bowland's Natural Beauty

Statement of Significance

The Forest of Bowland is treasured by so many thanks to its unique character and sense of place. The interplay of nature and human interaction over many centuries has resulted in a landscape of great beauty and diversity, which feels "wild" but accessible.

Bowland's natural beauty encompasses everything that makes this landscape distinctive: its geology, topography, climate, soils, flora and fauna. It also embraces the area's archaeological, architectural and industrial heritage, along with its farming history and key cultural elements.

The National Landscape has few large settlements and has an estimated population of just 17,500, although over one million people live within a 30-minute journey. Still relatively undiscovered, the Forest of Bowland holds a special place in the heart of visitors who have discovered the beauty of this captivating landscape.

This appeal, in part, comes from the combination of contrasting but complementary scenery in close proximity. The grandeur of the upland gritstone fells, heather moorland and steep escarpments provides an impressive backdrop to the more intimate scale of scattered, stone-built farmsteads, small villages, undulating farmland and wooded river valleys; these being woven together by steep-sided cloughs, dry stone walls and hedgerows, and all underpinned by a tangible sense of tranquillity.

The Forest of Bowland is a landscape justifiably recognised as being amongst the most precious in the country.

In order to continue to deliver and develop management practices which help to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty, we need to identify those components which make the Forest of Bowland so special.

Landscape Character

Landscape character is that which makes an area unique or different (rather than better or worse) from neighbouring areas. The Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment breaks down the landscape into 13 Landscape Character Types and a detailed description of each of these LCTs can be found in the full document: www.forestofbowland.com/Landscape-Character-Assessment

The key characteristics of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape are identified below.

The grandeur and isolation of Bowland's upland fells are central to the National Landscape's identity. Their imposing presence, expansive views and sense of remoteness are key elements of the area's landscape character. With few visible signs of human activity, the moorland plateaux offer the chance to experience a feeling of real solitude. The highest point at Ward's Stone (561m) lies within the internationally recognised Bowland Fells Special Protection Area. The summit of Pendle Hill – a distinctive outlier to the south east of the main Bowland mass – reaches 557m. Landcover is predominantly blanket bog or heather moorland.

Associated Landscape Character Types include:

LCT A – Moorland Plateaux

The steep escarpments and distinctive rounded profile of the moorland hills create dramatic landforms. Although ice and glacial deposition have softened the slopes of the hills, they are often deeply incised by cloughs created by fast flowing streams. The moorland hills afford long, generally uninterrupted views to the lowlands, across a mosaic of heather, bilberry, bracken and steep wooded valleys. The broad sweep of Parlick to Totridge beyond Chipping, Craggs Dole to Saddlers Height above Sabden and Beacon Fell near Longridge provide good examples of this landscape. Enclosed by drystone walls and fences, often unimproved moorland with traditional field barns provides a transition from higher ground. On the very edges of the Forest of Bowland, west of Quernmore and south east of Pendle Hill, rounded ridges with open views rise from the surrounding lower land.

Associated Landscape Character Types include:

LCT B – Unenclosed Moorland Hills

LCT C – Enclosed Moorland Hills

LCT D – Moorland Fringe

LCT K – Rolling Upland Farmland

LCT M – Farmed Ridges

As the view moves from the uplands, **undulating lowlands** take centre stage. Predominantly farmland, this landscape is a patchwork of pastures, meadows and copses divided by dry stone walls and hedgerows dotted with mature trees. Winding lanes with herb-rich verges cross hump backed bridges to link scattered farmsteads and stone-built villages, forming distinctive settlement patterns. In several places, such as Wyresdale, Browsholme and Downham, "designed" parklands reflect Bowland's long history of estate management. Rounded glacial drumlins occur in the very north of the National Landscape. Throughout, the backdrop of the fells provides a sense of intimacy and enclosure, the fells being linked to lower lying land through wooded tributaries.

Associated Landscape Character Types include:

LCT E – Undulating Lowland Farmland

LCT F – Undulating Lowland Farmland with Wooded Brooks

LCT G – Undulating Lowland Farmland with Parkland

LCT H – Wooded Rural Valleys

LCT J – Drumlin Field

Bowland is a **landscape of contrasts**, often with many elements being visible from a given point. The panorama from Pendle Hill is a classic example. Here, the view north west takes in sweeping gradients down to hedge-lined fields with out-barns and pockets of woodland, to the wide valley of the River Ribble with its larger settlements and areas of industry, then upwards to the central fells beyond – this canvas is peppered with scenic villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Looking south east offers a very different perspective, with the Leeds Liverpool Canal and the M65 motorway weaving their way past the urban towns of Colne, Nelson and Brierfield, the

whole framed by its own moorland backdrop. When journeying through the area, this impression of a new view around each corner contributes greatly to the Forest of Bowland's sense of place: the landscape offers variety on a human scale.

These characteristics encompass multiple Landscape Character Types, including:

LCT I – Valley Floodplain

LCT L – Forestry and Reservoir

People value the National Landscape for its **serenity and tranquillity.** The absence of workable coal reserves, a long tradition of farming and the historical management of much of Bowland as royal hunting forests and, later, deer parks and grouse moorland, restricted development. This has resulted in small scale settlements, very few main roads and no railways within the core of the area. Although Bowland has its honey-pot sites, these are relatively few and it is still entirely possible to experience peaceful, secluded locations, enriching wildlife encounters and truly dark skies.

These characteristics are found across a variety of the Forest of Bowland's Landscape Character Types.

Biodiversity Key Habitats & Species

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan (December 2023) identified six broad, interconnected habitat types and fourteen ‘Champion’ species at its heart. The full plan, from which these summaries are compiled, can be viewed here: www.forestofbowland.com/nature-recovery. The habitat types below represent the mosaic of habitats most important for developing a resilient network of functioning ecosystems. Similarly, whilst the National Landscape is rich in hundreds of plant and animal species, the "Champion" species highlighted here represent those of conservation concern, those which are charismatic and provide inspiration, or those which indicate the health of an ecosystem or habitat.

Habitats

Over a quarter of the National Landscape is **peatland**, with the Bowland Fells Special Protection Area being the most extensive. Covering over 16,000 hectares, the Bowland Fells supports rare and endangered species and is of international importance for biodiversity, carbon storage, natural flood management and water quality. These upland areas are used for sheep and beef farming, alongside the management of moorland for grouse shooting.

Woodland covers 8% of the National Landscape area. Found on steep-sided cloughs and along river valleys, dense broadleaved woodland provides a rich and diverse habitat for wild plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals. Calf Hill and Cragg Woods SSSI is one of the best examples of Atlantic oak woodland in the British Isles and across the world. Originally planted for timber, conifer plantations can provide important habitat for nightjar and crossbill. Large scale plantations include those at Gisburn Forest, Longridge Fell and Knots Wood. Individual, veteran and 'Landmark’ trees occur across the National Landscape; most being found in parkland and along roadsides. The micro-habitats in hollowing trees and other decaying wood support a wide range of specialised invertebrates, lichen and fungi. "Landmark" trees are important to the unique character of the area and can be both native and non-native species. Native hedgerows form traditional boundaries and cultural features across the landscape and contribute greatly to the wooded "feel" of Bowland. They are important habitats for birds, mammals and

invertebrates, both in and of themselves, and as wildlife corridors. Many hedgerows feature mature hedgerow trees, adding to their impact in the landscape.

Large areas of the National Landscape are dominated by **grassland**. Bowland is home to a significant number of the UK's remaining upland hay meadows (Lancashire's Coronation Meadow can be found in Slaidburn) with 77 hectares recorded. Ancient grasslands, undisturbed and unimproved, are irreplaceable. Often containing important indicator fungi, the mycelium in the ground can take centuries to re-establish. Areas of marshy grassland are widespread on the lower moorland slopes around the Bowland Fells. They provide part of the mosaic of habitats required for successful black grouse re-introduction and support important wading birds such as snipe. Semi-improved and improved permanent pasture accounts for 67% of farmland within the National Landscape. Supporting sheep, cattle and dairy farming, these areas are essential in supporting landscape scale habitat restoration, healthy and resilient soils and greater habitat resilience.

A mixture of **upland fens, flushes and swamps**, along with lowland fens, floodplain grazing marsh and wet grassland make up Bowland's wetlands. Often rich in plants and invertebrates, they provide feeding ground for wading birds in spring, and areas for wildfowl in winter. Around 13% of Bowland's upland fens, flushes and swamps are designated SSSI, with a further 10% of the area's lowland fens holding this distinction. Each of these habitats supports high concentrations of invertebrates including craneflies, beetles and spiders. Large areas of floodplain grazing marsh are found along the wide, low lying areas of the Rivers Lune, Hodder and Ribble, with wet grassland occurring alongside this habitat, along water courses and on grassland. Both are characterised by temporary wet areas and often have tussocky areas and damp swards.

The Rivers Ribble, Lune and Wyre all originate in the upland core of the Bowland Fells. The headwaters provide some of the best breeding grounds in Lancashire for Atlantic salmon, brown trout and sea trout. Several reservoirs draw water from the area's river catchments to provide good quality drinking water, with Stocks Reservoir being important for its rare mosses and liverworts. Ponds provide habitat for a range of freshwater plants and invertebrates, feeding areas for bats, and feeding and breeding areas for voles, toads, newts and frogs. Once numerous, ponds are now found in only a few places across farmland and woodland. The National Landscape has been identified as a Strategic Opportunity Area for creating ponds to support great crested newts.

Species

Globally under threat and continuing to decline nationally, the Forest of Bowland is critically important for the **Eurasian curlew**, and maintaining populations remains a priority. The National Landscape is one of the most important areas in England for breeding **hen harriers** – an iconic, and exceptionally rare, upland bird. In 2023 around 22% of the breeding population nested in the area. **Black grouse** were once widespread in the Forest of Bowland, connected with a larger population in the Yorkshire Dales. Considered locally extinct by the mid-1990s, the Bowland Fells have been identified as an area to promote expansion of black grouse through continued habitat enhancement. Summer visitors to Bowland, **swifts** sleep, eat, bathe and mate on the wing. Like the Eurasian curlew, they are globally threatened, with climate change and severe weather events potentially affecting migration patterns. **Pied flycatchers** can be found in the Forest of Bowland's ancient and Atlantic oak woodlands. Over wintering in West Africa, they arrive here to

breed in summer. Increased connectivity between woodlands is needed to support the expansion of this nationally declining species.

Juniper is a native moorland coniferous shrub. It is in decline in Bowland and restricted to just a few sites in the northern fells. As existing populations are ageing and none of the colonies appear to be producing new seedlings, grazing management and new planting could help support regeneration. **Globeflower** was once abundant in Bowland but is now found in only a small number of locations within species-rich grassland. Using local, sustainably sourced seed, globeflower seedlings are being propagated and planted out as part of the Bowland Hay Time project, helping to support this spectacular species and the **Chiastocheta flies** associated with it. **Hard-fern** can be found in the National Landscape's ancient and Atlantic oak woodlands in damp, shady gorges, on banks, rocks, and walls. It is easy to spot with its feather like, leathery foliage and spotty undersides. Not under threat, it is a good indicator of Atlantic oak woodland habitat.

Brown long-eared bats are a protected species in the UK, along with their roosts. A medium sized bat with huge ears, they have a slow, fluttery flight. Feeding at night, these bats roost in holes in trees, old buildings, lime kilns and caves. Although not under threat nationally, management of ancient and mature woodlands and traditional buildings and features can help provide habitat.

The pale pink **ballerina waxcap** fungus is rare and vulnerable to extinction due to declines in ancient grasslands across the National Landscape. Usually found in natural and semi natural pastures and meadows, occasionally it can be found in churchyards and the lawns of historic buildings. As the mycelium it relies on takes centuries to develop, retaining ancient grasslands is the only way to support its conservation and expansion.

Native **wild brown trout** can be found in unpolluted rivers and streams with cold water and gravel areas for spawning. They have been in decline across the National Landscape since 2014 and are vulnerable to changes in water flows and periods of drought. Work to re-naturalise rivers, through removing in-river structures, is ongoing. Sensitive to pollution, **Yellow May dun** are an indicator of good water quality and a favoured food of brown trout. They are easily identified from the yellow body, transparent lacy wings and two long tails. Along with clean water, they need gravel and vegetation to support their lifecycle. The **bilberry bumblebee** is distinctive, with extensive red marking over its abdomen. It is nationally scarce and in serious decline. Queen bees feed almost exclusively on bilberry stands but a mosaic of habitats, including heath and species rich grasslands, are needed for foraging. The eye-catching **green hairstreak butterfly** is widespread across England but has undergone local losses in some parts of the UK. It lives and feeds on upland heath habitat that can be vulnerable to climate change and changes in land management. In the National Landscape it can be found feeding on plants in species-rich grassland, blanket bog and heathland.

Landscape History and Built Heritage

Early human influences on Bowland's landscape remain visible today, most obviously perhaps in the **Bronze Age** clearance of trees from the fells. A number of **prehistoric and Romano-British** settlements also leave their mark in the form of defended enclosures, particularly in the north west of the National Landscape. Finds from the nationally important Bleasdale Circle Bronze

Age urnfield are held at Preston's Harris Museum, whilst the round cairn on Parlick Pike is unexcavated and represents a rare survival in Lancashire. Slaidburn Archive holds some of the finds uncovered from a local Bronze Age burial mound, partially excavated in 1984. The Roman Road which ran between Manchester and Carlisle can still be traced on the ground in sections of its route through the Forest of Bowland.

Local placenames reflect the influence of **Norse** settlement in the Bowland area. The "pen" of Pendle denotes a hill and "holme" (as in Dolphinholme) is an area of flat land. There are several suggestions for the origin of the name Bowland itself, with the Old English boga-, or Old Norse bogi-, (“bow or bend in a river”) being one. Other early medieval connections include the silver hoard from the reign of King Cnut discovered near Halton in the early nineteenth century. Also found in Halton and nearby Hornby, Gressingham and Melling are examples of **Anglo-Saxon** sculpture, with a further pre-Conquest example being Slaidburn's Angel Stone.

The Scheduled Monument of Castle Stede, near Hornby, is the best example in Lancashire of a **medieval** motte and bailey castle and is one of a number of late 11th century mottes in the Lune valley. Sites here were chosen strategically to control movement through the valley and impose order following the Norman Conquest. Another example can be found at Castle Hill in Halton, just outside the National Landscape boundary. Founded in 1149, the Cistercian abbey at Sawley is well preserved, with extensive remains and undisturbed earthworks. Several features are Grade 1 listed.

The current National Landscape boundary includes evidence of five **medieval hunting forests** - land set aside for the monarchs and their nobles, where clearing and cultivation were restricted and development prohibited. The Royal Forest of Bowland, along with those at Bleasdale, Quernmore, Wyresdale and Pendle, perhaps had the greatest influence on the landscape of Bowland. As Forest laws were revoked in the early 16th century, many areas were replaced by deer parks and smaller estates. Large areas of land are now managed for grouse and other game birds. "Designed" landscapes are evident today at Browsholme, Downham, Gresgarth, Leagram, Quernmore and Read, for example, reflecting influences from the medieval period right through to the nineteenth century.

Bowland has many fine stone buildings which were constructed between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The **vernacular style**, stone mullions and lintels echo locally available building materials and hint at the lives and livelihoods of the people who built them. Stephen Park in Gisburn Forest, Brabin's Old School in Chipping and Roughlee Old Hall are good examples. Datestones in villages such as Wray have quite a distinctive, stepped "Lune Valley" style, and traditional estate villages, like Slaidburn and Downham, have seen very little modern development. Isolated farmsteads string along tracks skirting the contours of the hills, and out-barns scatter the higher ground and summer pastures.

The complexity of Bowland's **traditional boundaries** reveals itself from almost any viewpoint. The network of dry stone walls and hedges reflect not only the underlying geology of the area, but also the history of land management. Walls tend to dominate the fells and moorland fringe, with hedges appearing on lower lying land, taking advantage of glacial drift. Ancient enclosures tend to be more sinuous in shape, with fields enclosed following the Parliamentary Acts of the mid nineteenth century often larger, with straighter, more uniform boundaries. Roadside metal railings, often white-painted, are distinctive features around villages including Chipping, Dunsop Bridge and Pendleton.

Rural industries shaped Bowland's past and much evidence can still be found today. Ashnott lead mine above Newton was worked as early as the thirteenth century, whilst silver was mined near Rimington. Evidence of medieval iron working exists at Quernmore and Roeburndale. The fells would have echoed to the sounds of working sandstone and limestone quarries in later periods. Numerous lime kilns are seen by roadsides and in-field. Established in the late eighteenth century, Clintsfield Colliery near Wennington forms part of an extensive colliery landscape from this time. The nineteenth century paper mill at Oakenclough now stands quiet, but the cotton mill in nearby Calder Vale continues to operate. Quernmore, Tarnbrook, Wray and Slaidburn were centres of hat making. Many upland farms made cheese from surplus milk, with stone cheese presses retained as features in farmyards around Bowland.

Farming is the backbone of rural life in Bowland, and the landscape is embedded with the history of generations of farming families. Surviving small scale, irregular field patterns, patches of woodland along stream and field edges, narrow, winding roads linking scattered farms and settlements, relic farmsteads and field boundaries now overlaid by forestry and reservoir all help to tell Bowland's farming story over hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Upland beef and sheep farms and lowland dairy and cattle farms continue to contribute to communities with a keen sense of self-reliance, with agricultural shows across the area providing local focal points for gathering and celebration.

State of the National Landscape Report 2024

In 2024, following on from similar work in 2014 and 2018, we prepared a 'State of the National Landscape Report' www.forestofbowland.com/state-NL-report - a summary of which is produced here to provide a snapshot of the current condition of the protected landscape.

The indicators below have been chosen to reflect the wide range of work that takes place within the National Landscape in support of delivering the Management Plan. All indicators have been measured using the most recent data releases.

Nature

Almost one third, 32.5%, of the Forest of Bowland NL is **designated for nature conservation**.

Priority Habitats are well represented:

Priority Habitat	Hectares covered	% of NL area covered
Peatland	21,100	26
Grassland	500	0.6
Woodland	2,762	3.4
Wetland	1,671	2.1
Rivers	411 km	

Source: Forest of Bowland Nature Recovery Plan, 2023

There are 22 **SSSI's** within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, covering an area of over 16,387ha or 20.4% of the national Landscape area. Of these:

- 5% are in a favourable condition (this was 6.7% in 2014)
- 77.3% are in an unfavourable but recovering condition (this was 78.8% in 2014)
- 3.4% are in an unfavourable, no change condition
- 14.3% are in an unfavourable, declining condition

***Source**: Natural England*

The are currently 569 live agreements under the **Countryside and Environmental Stewardship** schemes across the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, these agreements cover a total of 38,000ha which equates to 47.1% of the National Landscape.

Source: DEFRA Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework Total area of land managed under agri-environment schemes and total value of agri-environment schemes within Protected Landscapes 2024

Water

- 46.2% waterbodies (river, canals, and surface water transfers) within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape have a 'high' or 'good' status – this was 48.8% in 2014
- 26.4% waterbodies (river, canals, and surface water transfers) within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape have a 'moderate' status – this was 45.9% in 2014

Source: Defra Analysis, PLTOF data 2024

Climate

The table below shows the greenhouse gas emissions data for the Forest of Bowland for 2022 by sector both in KtC02e (all gases shown as equivalent to C02) and as a percentage of the total emissions, this is also shown as a comparison with the Government's Department for Energy and Net Zero (DESNEZ) national figures.

	Forest of Bowland		DESNZ National
	KtCO2e	%	%
Industry	16.7	5.3	16
Commercial	3.8	1.2	9
Public Sector	1.9	0.6	
Domestic	28.3	9.0	22
Transport	54.6	17.4	31
Land Use & Forestry	-22.2	-7.1	
Agriculture	224.3	71.5	13
Waste	6.3	2.0	
Total	313.7	100	

Source: Defra PLTOF analysis

NB Agricultural emissions account for a high proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions within the Forest of Bowland due to the area's predominantly upland livestock farming systems, low levels of industrial and commercial activity, and the presence of land use and forestry as a net carbon sink. Emissions are primarily methane and nitrous oxide, which are difficult to abate and scale with land area rather than population. The resulting sectoral profile is therefore characteristic of protected rural landscapes and should not be interpreted as indicating unusually intensive farming practices.

People

Using information from the 2021 Census the population of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is 17,500.

98% of this population is classed as White.

The average age for people living within the Forest of Bowland is 46. The average age for England is 41.

The average earnings per calendar month (PCM) of the population living within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is £2,150, this is below the England (£2,350) average.

The house purchase affordability ratio for the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is given as 9 (mean house price is 9x mean income) this is lower than the national average for Protected Landscapes ratio of 11 but higher than the England ratio of 8.

Sources of data: Defra analysis, Census 2021, ONS

Place

Farming

In 2021 in the National Landscape

- 33.5% of farms were under 20ha in size (27% in 2014)
- 27.4% were over 100ha in size (same as 2014)
- 11.8% of farm holdings were dairy farms (14.6% in 2014)
- 62.4% were grazing livestock (LFA) holdings.

Source: *DEFRA June Survey 2024*

The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF)

The PLTOF was introduced by Natural England in 2024 to help identify the contributions that could be made by Protected Landscapes to the Environmental Improvement Plan and to initiatives such as 30 x 30, as has been set out elsewhere in this plan. The PLTOF relates to the Protected Landscapes as places, therefore these are not just targets for the National Landscape and National Park teams themselves. Targets 1, 7 and 8 are apportioned to each Protected Landscape; the others are national targets. The targets will be monitored nationally.

The table below sets out where the Outcomes of this plan, as described in Part 2, contribute to the PLTOF. See also page 75 - Targets and Monitoring - which details Local Indicators for those Outcomes not covered by the PLTOF.

Management Plan Outcomes (2026-2031)

1. The distinctive landscape character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is conserved and enhanced
2. All Bowland's remaining unrestored peatlands are brought under restoration
3. Woodlands are in good ecological condition, supporting a diversity and abundance of key species. Tree and scrub cover is expanding to support nature and enhance the landscape
4. Grasslands are species-rich, safeguarded and extended, and support wider biodiversity
5. Rivers and watercourses are healthy and functioning naturally. New wetland habitats are created, and these and existing wetlands are well-managed: all supporting a greater abundance and diversity of key species
6. Champion Species are increasing in range and abundance
7. The provision of high-quality access infrastructure, facilities and information, means that the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is a welcoming place for everyone
8. More people can enjoy, understand and celebrate the National Landscape's natural beauty and special qualities through the provision of high-quality information, events and activities which inspire them to engage with the area
9. More people are learning about Bowland and its natural beauty, and practising the skills that help to conserve and enhance its characteristic features
10. More people are enjoying the health and well-being benefits that come from a greater connection with Bowland's nature, culture and landscape
11. The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Forest of Bowland is better understood, conserved, enhanced and celebrated.
12. Bowland is a showcase for regenerative tourism, emphasising the connections between nature, society and culture, while ensuring financial benefits stay within the local community
13. Thriving local communities have access to key services and are actively engaged in activities and projects that conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the National Landscape.

PLTOF Target	Management Plan Outcome												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline). Forest of Bowland target – 4700 ha		√	√	√	√								
2 Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042		√	√	√	√								
3 For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.		√	√	√	√								
4 Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042		√	√	√	√								
5 Ensure at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature-friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030			√	√	√								
6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels		√	√	√									√
7 Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050. Forest of Bowland target – 8000 ha		√											

8 Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline). Forest of Bowland target – 750 ha by 2040			√		√								
9 Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme							√						
10 Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes											√		

Throughout Part Two of this Management Plan, the PLTOF targets relevant to each Outcome are illustrated as follows:

PLTOF Targets supported (shown in green):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

NB many of these national targets are closely aligned to those in our **Nature Recovery Plan** (2023). In addition, the Nature Recovery Plan sets the following targets, and where possible these are incorporated in the Measures and Local Indicators in Part Two:

- All local wildlife sites will have been surveyed. 75% will be in better management
- 75% of waters to have good ecological condition
- Species diversity and abundance is improved in 80% of rivers
- More floodplain is reconnected to rivers and wetlands. Target to be confirmed
- 34,500 ha of permanent pasture is being managed using nature friendly and/or regenerative farming techniques
- 5,300 ha of woodland is being actively managed to increase its wildlife value
- Atlantic oak woodland is expanded in area. Target to be confirmed following survey of current extent
- 200km of native hedgerows are restored, enhanced or created
- Veteran, ancient and other field trees have new succession trees planted alongside them. Target to be confirmed following survey of current number
- Wood pasture and parkland are expanded. Target to be confirmed following survey to establish current extent

Part Two: Outcomes and Measures

Vision 2040

If you find yourself in Bowland in 2040, this is a vision of what it is hoped you will experience. This plan sets out a roadmap to seek to ensure that the landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage – and its people – reach this point and beyond.

The Forest of Bowland landscape retains its sense of local distinctiveness, notably the wide-open moorland character of the Bowland Fells, undulating lowland farmland, clough woodlands, traditional buildings and the settlement patterns of its villages, hamlets and farmsteads.

The landscape, and the habitats found here, are resilient to the impacts of climate change and provide services and benefits that people value – carbon storage and sequestration, clean air and water, flood resilience and increased health and well-being. The restoration of our species-rich hay meadows has gathered pace, and they are the equal of anywhere in the English uplands in their beauty, diversity and extent. Our peatlands are fully restored wetland ecosystems. The names of the rivers Ribble, Lune and Wyre are synonymous with clear, naturally flowing wildlife-rich watercourses. Our breeding waders thrive and the decline in our songbirds has reversed; our raptors, including the hen harrier that is so emblematic of Bowland, breed successfully, free from the persecution of the past.

Profitable farming and sustainable land management are at the heart of nature recovery and vice versa, and they sustain natural processes and help them to flourish. The partnership-working between farmers, land managers, conservation bodies, communities and businesses is focused on delivering more for nature together.

The rich cultural heritage of the area is known for being well-understood and well-managed. Like our natural heritage, our cultural heritage is helping to support a resilient and sustainable local economy. More people, whatever their circumstances, can responsibly enjoy all that Bowland has to offer – local people are proud to live here, whilst communities from nearby towns like Preston and Colne think of it as their special place to visit close to home.

The Forest of Bowland is nationally regarded as a truly outstanding landscape, where it can clearly be demonstrated that the partnerships that have been developed to support nature, climate, people and place are bringing benefit for everyone.

Core Principles

This set of core principles run throughout this management plan, forming a framework to guide policy and practice in Bowland, promoting ecological integrity, community well-being and economic sustainability.

1. **Farming and sustainable land management:**
   Recognise that farmers and land managers play a key role in conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Bowland. Supporting nature-friendly farming and sustainable moorland management is critical for the long-term health of the area and its communities.

2. **Focus on outcomes, not prescriptions:**
   Emphasise results over a standardised, prescriptive approach, especially in agri-environment schemes and other work on the farmed landscape. Except with our most prized natural assets, there should be a greater openness to risk and a greater embracing of ambition.
3. **Collaboration and partnerships:**
   Building meaningful partnerships between farmers, land managers, conservation bodies, local authorities, and residents is essential for ensuring a thriving future for nature and heritage. Establishing consensus, though time-consuming, adds value to limited resources and enhances the effectiveness of conservation efforts. Readers and users of this plan should assume that a partnership approach is central to achieving its outcomes, be it policy / strategy development or practical work on the ground.
4. **Reversing declines in upland nature through landscape-scale ecological networks:**
   It is essential to adopt an integrated, whole-landscape approach to nature recovery, that connects habitats, making them larger, better-managed, and more numerous, with collaboration extending to surrounding areas for broader ecological impact. Some species (e.g. raptors) and habitats (e.g. hay meadows and peatlands) will need targeted interventions to reverse biodiversity loss or to ensure gains of the recent past are maintained.
5. **Adapting to a changing climate:**
   There should be a strong focus on nature-based solutions to adapting to the impacts of a changing climate. There is an important role for farming and land management to play here, whilst this sector too needs support to adapt some of its practices.
6. **Ecosystem services and benefits:**
   It is necessary to understand, promote and safeguard the non-market-driven critical services and associated benefits that the landscape provides, including vital water filtration, flood mitigation, carbon storage and health & well-being benefits.
7. **Managing landscape change:**
   It must be accepted that landscape change is inevitable but needs careful management to ensure conservation outcomes are provided and maintained. We must all work with the grain of the landscape to reinforce its special qualities, without seeking to freeze it in time.
8. **Economy and Environment:**
   It is important to promote the fact that Bowland's natural beauty and rich wildlife are valuable economic and social assets. Development within this protected area must be environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable, and the actions of Relevant Authorities must seek to further the purpose of designation.
9. **Integrated Nature and Heritage Conservation:**
   Conservation efforts should address the full range of environmental assets, including biodiversity, geodiversity, and the historic environment, recognizing the interconnections between these elements in all projects and programmes.
10. **Balancing benefits:**
    Actions which are intended as beneficial should not have perverse consequences, e.g. they must not unintentionally bring about one environmental benefit at the expense of another, such as planting new woodlands on archaeological sites or siting climate-friendly infrastructure where it damages nature, heritage and landscape character. The

importance of the mitigation hierarchy should also be reinforced wherever necessary to help balance benefits and impacts.

11. **Using and valuing regulation:**
    Regulation is important in underpinning the content of this plan and wider conservation efforts. It should be used wherever necessary to ensure its intended benefits for people, places and nature are delivered.
12. **Access for everyone:**
    Everyone should have the opportunity to responsibly access and enjoy Bowland's natural beauty. This will need some barriers to be addressed, such as improving access infrastructure, and broadening the ways in which nature and heritage are promoted. In the provision of access infrastructure, the most accessible option should always be used. Not all barriers are physical, and this plan promotes work towards recognising and removing those that may also be cultural and social.
13. **Engagement and Inclusion:**
    It is vital that both resident and neighbouring communities to Bowland have the awareness and opportunity to be fully and meaningfully involved in activity and decision making. In some cases, this will involve providing additional support to communities to become engaged. This plan promotes active engagement and inclusion in all areas of work.
14. **Learning and sharing:**
    Educational activities should be seen as being integral to conservation management. In all work to conserve and enhance nature and heritage, opportunities should be sought for learning and sharing knowledge, to enhance public engagement with Bowland's natural beauty.
15. **Arts and creativity:**
    For many people, the arts are an ideal gateway to discovering, exploring and enjoying Bowland. This is not necessarily about 'art' as objects, important though this can be there is enormous value to be gained from artistic enquiry and community participation as ways to express what people feel about their place and why it matters.
16. **Gathering and sharing data and evidence:**
    Good decisions are underpinned by good data and evidence. There is still a paucity of good and up-to-date data on our biodiversity, whilst there are also gaps in the evidence base across most areas of conservation activity and social and economic activity in the area. As well as the need to resource data and evidence gathering and interpretation, there is also a need for greater sharing of data (which has often been gathered at public expense).
17. **Sustainable funding and resource allocation:**
    There is an acknowledgement of the financial challenges for public funding and there should be continued effort to diversify income sources, though there will always be a strong role for public funds to support the provision and maintenance of public goods.

Introduction and how to use this part of the Management Plan

The 'Outcomes and Measures' section of this Management Plan are set out below as a framework that encourages positive action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Forest of Bowland during the period 2026 to 2031.

The Plan has been divided into four **Themes**:

- Landscape
- Nature Recovery
- People
- Place

For each of these themes the '**Forces for Change,**' i.e. the current issues and opportunities in play, have been described. The outcomes and measures have been drawn up in response to these predicted changes.

Outcomes are the broad change which the National Landscape plans to see during the lifetime of the Plan. An outcome is described as a 'state of being' and is a passive statement.

The **Measures** that need to be taken in order to achieve the outcome are then described. In the current format these measures are in a matrix table which also indicates which organisations or stakeholders are primarily responsible for delivering them.

Targets are then set which can be used as a proxy for measuring if the outcome and measures are met. The key targets are taken from the *Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework* (see page 26 above). A number of *Local Indicators,* and *targets from the Forest of Bowland Nature Recovery Plan,* are included where no relevant PLTOF targets are available for the outcome or measures. For further information see the section on Monitoring (p.75).

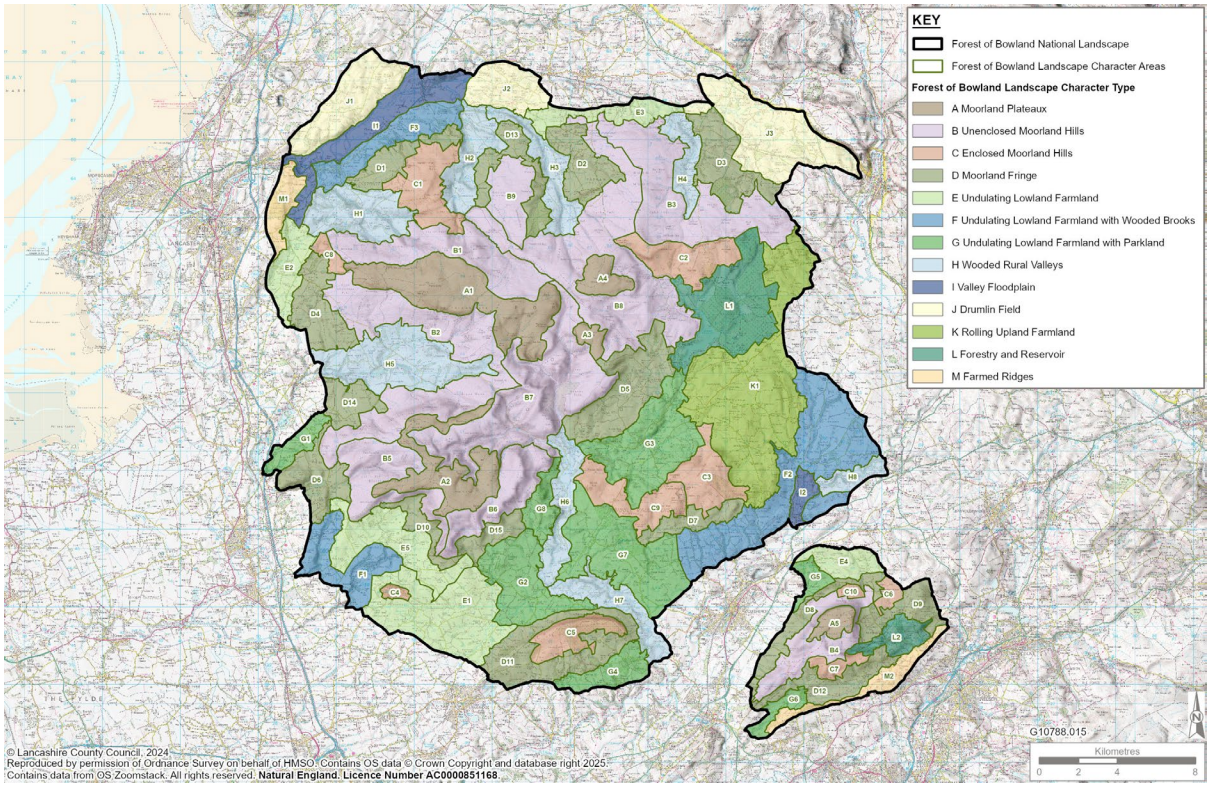
LANDSCAPE

Introduction

The Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment was updated in 2025 from an earlier iteration of 2009. It is a detailed document that breaks down the landscape into 13 Landscape Character Types, which are themselves then broken down into 73 distinct Landscape Character Areas.

An in-depth consideration of the area's landscape character can be found in the full LCA at: www.forestofbowland.com/Landscape-Character-Assessment. A summary of the 13 Landscape Character Types, their locations, key characteristics and key sensitivities can be found in Appendix 1.

Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Types and Areas



This part of the Management Plan sets out measures that will protect and enhance the qualities and character of these landscape types, and thus the places in which they occur.

The overall management outcome should be that landscape character is conserved and enhanced. Measures to achieve this outcome are to be found throughout the Management Plan, e.g. in Peatlands Outcome 2, measure 2G suggests: "*Avoid new track construction, infrastructure or any development on deep peat which requires planning permission*" and in Woodlands Outcome 3, measure 3D states: "*Survey and retain existing significant / veteran trees in the landscape and plant new ones to act as habitat, stepping stones and future landscape features, in line with UKFS*". Therefore, rather than duplicate these in the specific Landscape Quality section below, the measures included are not found elsewhere in the plan, yet they remain significant, hence their selection and inclusion here.

Forces for Change

Natural processes and human activity result in constant change, and climate change and the biodiversity crisis will further affect the fundamental character of the Forest of Bowland landscape.

The following section highlights key areas where change, both positive and negative, is likely to impact the landscape. It incorporates the main considerations identified within the current Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment.

Changes in agricultural practice and wider land management

Pressures

- ❖ Agricultural specialisation, intensification, drainage and farm amalgamation potentially leading to a loss of biodiversity, landscape and cultural features, resulting in landscape character change.
- ❖ Potential increase in invasive species such as bracken and gorse and the resulting landscape change.
- ❖ Loss of traditional skills and/or lack of management threatening traditional landscape features such as drystone walls, sheepfolds, hedgerows and woodlands.
- ❖ Pressure for new infrastructure including access tracks, shooting butts and cabins could lead to effects on the landscape.
- ❖ Change of crop types has the potential to change landscape character, particularly if there is a change to biomass or other visually distinct crop types.
- ❖ Increase in pheasant and partridge rearing, feeding and shooting on increasingly higher land – introduction of pens and feeding stations.
- ❖ Pressure for more commercial forestry and tree planting.

Opportunities

- ✓ Grant aid and incentives for habitat restoration and creation.
- ✓ Involvement in agri-environment programmes.
- ✓ Sharing good practice through peer support networks.
- ✓ Training opportunities building skills and confidence.
- ✓ Management of moorland habitats and ecosystems, including peatland restoration.
- ✓ Opportunities to consider succession for mature 'Landmark Trees.'
- ✓ Opportunities to increase tree and woodland cover to reconnect fragmented habitats.
- ✓ Opportunities to restructure commercial forests through phased felling and restocking and the use of native broadleaves to assist in improving landscape value.

Climate Change

Pressures

- ❖ Increased risk and frequency of flooding.
- ❖ Increased risk of moorland fires.
- ❖ Potential increase in soil erosion due to sudden downpours and weakened soil structure.
- ❖ Hotter, drier summers, leading to reduced ground water and drying out of peat bog habitats, affecting the character of upland landscapes and the preservation of buried archaeology.

- ❖ Changes to species composition and layout affecting the historic value and sense of place of designed landscapes.
- ❖ Potential change to cropping patterns and types of crops.
- ❖ Patterns of usage of footpaths and bridleways may change, with a potential increase or decrease in demand.
- ❖ The risk of the spread of invasive species.

Opportunities

- ✓ Grant aid and incentives for habitat restoration and creation, helping to maintain key landscape components such as peatland, species-rich grassland and woodland.
- ✓ Nature-based solutions to flood management.
- ✓ Availability of private finance and investment to support habitat restoration and management.

Development and Recreation

Pressures

- ❖ Inappropriate development of farm buildings and barns affecting the character and use of the landscape.
- ❖ Pressure for larger scale residential development, including areas of infill or on the edge of existing towns and villages, within and close to the boundary of the National Landscape.
- ❖ Increased pressure to accommodate large scale renewable energy schemes, such as solar, wind and energy storage, impacting the National Landscape or its "setting".
- ❖ Increase in inappropriate lighting within, and at the boundaries of, the National Landscape, with potential effects on dark night skies.
- ❖ Development of infrastructure associated with the water supply industry, which has potential landscape and visual impacts.
- ❖ Pressure at key visitor destinations resulting in erosion, effects on landscape features and tranquillity, loss of habitats, potential damage to archaeological sites, litter, overspill parking and diminished visitor experience.
- ❖ Erosion of sensitive peatland through unregulated access on open access land.
- ❖ Increase in visitor numbers is likely to increase traffic and congestion, which may affect tranquillity and also lead to conflict with other recreational uses of the area.
- ❖ Increasing traffic pressures on minor rural roads associated with increased visitor numbers, may require increased signage, road improvements and implementation of traffic restrictions.
- ❖ Pressure for lodge, caravan and camping accommodation related to increased tourism could give rise to landscape and visual effects.

Opportunities

- ✓ Sympathetic design of new buildings, and conversion of historic buildings, in keeping with the local vernacular of the landscape, with appropriate materials, siting and screening.
- ✓ Opportunities for the sensitive management of 'honeypot sites' to enhance the visitor experience and benefits.

- ✓ Sensitively designed visitor accommodation and facilities.
- ✓ Appropriately designed signage and highway improvements and/or the use of innovative visitor and traffic management approaches.

Landscape Quality

Desired Outcome 1

The distinctive landscape character of the Forest of Bowland is conserved and enhanced

MEASURES	For National Government and/or Local Government	For Conservation Arm's Length Bodies (e.g. NE, EA, FC)	For Land managers and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
1A Restore dry stone walls, hedgerows and white railings to maintain the network visible in the landscape. This may also include historic or distinctive features such as gateposts, signposts, sheepfolds and footpath furniture		✓	✓	✓
1B Ensure the long-term viability of parkland through appropriate management		✓	✓	✓
1C Protect skylines from development, in particular support the continuation of the OFCOM funded undergrounding programme	✓			
1D Use local building materials, methods and styles for any new build or renovation works	✓		✓	
1E Avoid large scale tree planting and, where possible, fencing, in wide open moorland landscape areas, and preserve long, open views of the valley floodplains through the careful selection of sites and species for any areas of new planting		✓	✓	✓
1F Manage the spread of invasive species		✓	✓	✓
1G Manage grazing to facilitate a diverse mix of moorland			✓	✓

vegetation and the natural regeneration of woodland and scrub				
1H Conserve the strong sense of tranquillity across the landscape and protect dark skies by preventing and reducing artificial light pollution	✓			
1I Avoid loss or damage to mature field trees through intensification of agricultural practices, and conserve and maintain distinctive clumps of trees			✓	
1J Ensure that highway improvement schemes respect and reflect local character	✓			

Targets

Local Indicator

Number of km of overhead electricity cables undergrounded

Additional Nature Recovery Plan Targets (2040)

- ✓ 200 km of traditional boundaries restored, enhanced or created

NATURE RECOVERY

The Forest of Bowland is one of England's prime upland National Landscapes and it is internationally important for its natural assets: peatland, heather moorland, meadows, Atlantic oak woodlands and rare birds. Nature, and the landscape in which it exists, provides multiple benefits – it helps utilise natural solutions to adapt to and mitigate against climate change, whilst providing benefits to air, soil and water quality and to human health and wellbeing. Nature recovery in the face of current decline and numerous threats, is therefore key to the area's continued designation and to its special qualities.

In December 2023 the National Landscape partnership published a Nature Recovery Plan www.forestofbowland.com/nature-recovery setting out a vision for nature along with a positive and proactive framework for the delivery of its recovery. This section of the 2025-31 Management Plan is largely drawn from that Plan and seeks to summarise rather than repeat it. For more details of the listed Outcomes and Measures below please go to the relevant sections of the Nature Recovery Plan (www.forestofbowland.com/nature-recovery). This section also reflects the Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Lancashire (www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/environmental/local-nature-recovery-strategy) and North Yorkshire (www.northyorks.gov.uk/environment-and-neighbourhoods/conservation/local-nature-recovery-strategy), and these can also be utilised to identify more detailed and specific nature recovery actions. Finally, this section can also be read in conjunction with the Forest of Bowland Climate Change Adaptation Plan (Appendix 2) which specifically identifies measures required to help our habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of hotter, drier summers; warmer wetter winters; and the increased frequency of extreme weather events brought by the climate breakdown. As the measures proposed to reduce these impacts largely focus on building resilience in the landscape, the measures for nature in the two plans are almost entirely the same.

Much of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is privately owned and primarily used for farming, game shooting and drinking water supply. The conservation and recovery of our nature is therefore dependent on farmers, landowners and land managers. We recognise that many farmers and landowners have been working hard over recent decades to support nature rich places across grasslands, peatland, woodlands, wetlands, rivers and water bodies. Environmental bodies have eagerly supported this work and also deliver critical research and trials to sustain key species such as curlew, lapwing, hen harrier, globeflower, brown trout and bumblebees. However, nature continues to sharply decline in Bowland for a variety and complexity of reasons. Many of these reasons are linked to habitat fragmentation, climate change, human disturbance, and invasive species; but others are the result of changes to land management policies and practices.

This plan therefore provides a framework for nature recovery prescriptions to positively manage and build resilience in the landscape and habitats, with nature as a priority not just as a side effect of good land management.

Forces for Change

Pressures and Opportunities facing Nature in the Forest of Bowland

We have explored the 'Forces for Change' affecting biodiversity via consultation, and a review of key documents including the Nature Recovery Plan and the Local Nature Recovery Strategies covering the National Landscape area; the Landscape Character Assessment and the Climate Adaptation risk assessment.

From this we have synthesised the following:

Changes in Agricultural practice and moorland management

Pressures

- Agricultural specialisation, intensification, drainage and farm amalgamation will likely result in a loss of biodiversity via habitat loss and fragmentation
- Fertiliser use reducing biodiversity both on and off agricultural land
- Potential increase in invasive species such as bracken and gorse
- Lack of management of field hedgerows and the ageing of hedgerow trees
- Uncertainty and consequent lack of commitment from farmers/landowners to signing up to new or long-term agreements (HLS and SFI) – leading to less provision for nature and no new opportunities to improve land for nature
- Increase in pheasant and partridge rearing, feeding and shooting on increasingly higher land – introduction of pens, feeding stations, and quad bike use, creates disturbance to other birds, and an increase in pests and predators
- Reduction in shooting tenants, leading to loss of gamekeepers and cuts in predator management
- Increase in bracken on slopes due to reductions in stocking density and inability to use herbicides, colonising the edges of dry peat where no trees are present – leading to a lack of diversity and loss of peat soils
- Impact on moorland and farm fringes of increased numbers of gulls, causing nutrient enrichment and increase in weed species out competing typical moorland species
- Lowland dairy farming practices can be very intensive and provide fewer opportunities for nature, e.g. at field margins
- Pressure for more commercial forestry and tree planting
- New limitations on the replanting of trees on peat leads to reduction of land available for commercial forestry
- Agricultural run off can cause pollution, nutrient enrichment and increased sedimentation of water environments
- Continued and increased threats to ground nesting birds by a variety of predatory species and continued impacts of some farming practice

Opportunities

- ✓ Grant aid for peatland restoration
- ✓ Incentives for hedgerow and woodland creation
- ✓ Natural flood management
- ✓ Riparian and clough planting
- ✓ Establishment of new orchards
- ✓ Introduction of sustainable drainage systems

- ✓ Creation of ponds and scrapes
- ✓ Improved roadside verge management
- ✓ Private investment opportunities
- ✓ Sharing of best practice amongst restoration contractors, land managers and advisers
- ✓ Scope to conserve and enhance the moorlands with appropriate environmental stewardship management regimes such as stock grazing management, grip blocking and burning agreements
- ✓ Management of moorland habitats and ecosystems to support birds and wildlife is incentivised, specifically in relation sensitive sites e.g. Bowland Fells SSSI and SPA.

Impact of Climate Change

Pressures

- ❖ Change to the species composition of habitats
- ❖ Increased risk and frequency of flooding
- ❖ Increased risk of moorland fires
- ❖ Potential increase in soil erosion due to sudden downpours and weakened soil structure
- ❖ Hotter, drier summers, leading to reduced ground water and drying out of peat bog habitats; also impacts on trees and woodlands, watercourses and wetlands
- ❖ Increased presence of heather beetle due to fewer frosts, this can expose bare peat to wind, rain and erosion
- ❖ Some species are moving north (e.g. ring ouzel) and may fail to breed in Bowland in future
- ❖ Increased incidence of extreme weather events, often in combination, e.g. drought, heavy rains and strong winds
- ❖ Warmer, wetter winters affecting growing season, germination, and the spread of pests and diseases as well as waterlogging of soils, and direct impacts on e.g. hibernation periods and breeding seasons of some species
- ❖ Reduced carbon storage in soils, carbon stored in vegetation and reduced ability of woodlands to store carbon in future
- ❖ Increased incidence of pests and diseases

Opportunities

- ✓ Appropriate management of blanket bogs, bare peat restoration and peatland improvement will maintain and enhance the biodiversity as well as the carbon sequestration function of these important habitats
- ✓ Increased opportunity/acceptance for planting non native tree species in the face of pests and diseases affecting native species, and of being better suited to warmer drier climate
- ✓ Availability of private finance and investment to support restoration and management of habitats

Development and Recreation

Pressures

- ❖ Destruction and fragmentation of habitats
- ❖ Unsympathetic building renovation can destroy nesting and perch sites for birds

- ❖ Unsympathetic lighting can affect Dark Skies and opportunities for nocturnal species to roost and feed
- ❖ Accumulation of small scale farm and village developments can encroach on habitats
- ❖ Introduction of shooting tracks on non SSSI moorland can cause issues to plants and animals and affect the flow of water on the fells
- ❖ Increased population and ageing water infrastructure, plus increase in storm events can overwhelm the sewage system and cause pollution incidents
- ❖ Erosion of soils and sensitive habitats
- ❖ Increased demand for parking space, formal and informal, leading to loss of habitats
- ❖ Increase in human and dog population and walking activity leading to disturbance of ground nesting birds, problems with dog poo and flea treatments contaminating habitats

Opportunities

- ✓ Biodiversity Net Gain
- ✓ Community Action, e.g. nest boxes for birds and bats
- ✓ Sensitive development creating new areas of woodland, dry stone walls, hedgerows and wildflower meadows
- ✓ Positive visitor experiences benefiting the local economy and support for nature conservation
- ✓ Wildlife and experiential tourism

Peatlands

Peatland restoration is a vital environmental priority, and it provides multiple benefits: healthy peatlands support unique ecosystems, provide clean water, reduce flood risk, and are among the most efficient terrestrial carbon sinks on the planet. However, decades of drainage, wildfire, and extraction have degraded these landscapes, leading to the release of vast amounts of carbon and reducing the overall area of priority habitat. Restoring peatlands helps reverse this damage by rewetting soils, stabilizing and expanding carbon stores, managing water quality and quantity and creating resilient habitats for rare species.

Central to restoration success is the restoration of hydrology and the re-establishment of native vegetation, particularly sphagnum mosses, which are essential for peat formation and water retention. Restoration methods include blocking drainage ditches, re-profiling eroded peat surfaces, and reintroducing key plant species. Full details of current restoration techniques can be provided on request. The Forest of Bowland National Landscape team has worked in partnership with local landowners to undertake 1812ha of restoration since 2010 (1088ha since 2019), with still more delivered directly by landowners through agri-environment schemes. Collaboration with partners in the Great North Bog coalition is increasingly unlocking new funding and allowing for sharing of ideas and resources. Looking ahead, priorities include restoring a further 8000ha by 2050, focusing largely on Bowland's upland peatlands.

Increasing interest in peatland restoration may unlock green finance initiatives and private investment, potentially through carbon markets, which could support our ambitions to increase the rate and scale of peatland restoration work in Bowland.

Desired Outcome 2

All Bowland's remaining unrestored peatlands are brought under restoration

MEASURES	For National Government and/or Local Government	For Conservation Arm's Length Bodies (e.g. NE, EA, FC)	For Land managers and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
2A Improve the hydrological function and condition of peatland through re-wetting and re-vegetating	✓	✓	✓	✓
2B Restore peatlands to support a diverse mosaic of vegetation; manage this with appropriate grazing regimes and stock management		✓	✓	✓
2C Ensure that opportunities for green finance are developed and be ready to respond to opportunities where green finance can aid with	✓	✓	✓	✓

increasing the scale and rate of delivery				
2D Support a more targeted and practical fire severity index, and maintain up to date fire plans for moorland areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
2E Carry out surveys and long-term monitoring of Bowland Fells SSSI, using a county-wide standard, to build a strong evidence base that monitors the condition of sites and the effectiveness of restoration and management		✓	✓	✓
2F Support specialist restoration contractors to 'scale up' operations	✓	✓		✓
2G Avoid new track construction, infrastructure or any development on deep peat which requires planning permission	✓		✓	
2H Undertake legal, proportionate and responsible predator control at levels which benefit species such as curlew, golden plover, hen harrier and merlin			✓	
2I Remove inappropriate tree planting, and do not replant conifer plantations after they are harvested in areas where trees negatively affect the hydrology of peatland.		✓	✓	✓
2J Restore heathland to areas of plantation woodland which previously supported heathland vegetation, through a mixture of felling, restructuring and grazing management.		✓	✓	✓
2K Restore heathland vegetation on areas of grass moorland on shallow peat soils		✓	✓	✓
2L Work across the Great North Bog coalition to identify and trial		✓		✓

innovative restoration techniques and materials				

Champion Species supported: hen harrier, black grouse, bilberry bumblebee, juniper, green hairstreak,

Targets

PLTOF Target 7 allocation for Forest of Bowland: 8000 ha of peatland to be in the process of being restored by 2050, 300ha per year between 2025-30.

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Woodlands

Woodland habitats, and ancient woodlands in particular, are among our richest terrestrial habitats. The highest levels of biodiversity are often found in woodlands that are actively and sensitively managed.

Wood pasture, scrub, hedgerows, agro- forestry and landmark trees are also key habitats in the working Forest of Bowland landscape. The integration of trees into grazed landscapes offers significant benefits: enhanced soil structure and nutrient cycling, carbon sequestration, shading and shelter for livestock, improved water regulation and flood buffering, and strengthened connectivity for species migration and climate adaptation.

Our vision is that well sited trees and managed mixed and native woodland habitat across the Forest of Bowland is providing a home for biodiversity, helping lock up carbon and is a valued place where people are enjoying and connecting with nature. Wildlife is thriving in well cared for, ecologically resilient woodlands, which are integrated with the wider ecological network. Commercial forestry is well managed, delivering timber and sustainable benefits for people and wildlife.

Creating and managing woodland needs to be done with thought and respect. Following the UK Forestry Standard is advised. Woodlands should exist in the right place as a vital part of the mosaic of habitats that make up the countryside, without further compromising other important habitats and species.

Link to Forest of Bowland Trees and Woodland Strategy
https://www.forestofbowland.com/files/images/FobWoodland0621v4.pdf

Desired Outcome 3

Woodlands are in good ecological condition, supporting a diversity and abundance of key species. Tree and scrub cover is expanding to support nature and enhance the landscape

MEASURES	For National Gov'ment and/or Local Gov'ment	For Conservation ALBs	For land owners and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
3A Manage woodlands in line with UK Forestry Standard and bring existing woodlands and hedgerows into good condition		✓	✓	✓
3B Identify, survey, and deliver management plans for all remnant Atlantic or temperate		✓	✓	✓

rainforests, and ancient woodland				
3C Plant trees, woodlands (including riparian woodlands) and hedgerows to act as wildlife networks and natural solutions to climate change. Plant species that may be more resilient to climatic change, pests and diseases		✓	✓	✓
3D Survey and retain existing significant / veteran trees in the landscape and plant new ones to act as habitat, stepping stones and future landscape features, in line with UKFS			✓	✓
3E Facilitate the natural growth and expansion of woodland and scrub habitat, especially to promote habitat connectivity		✓	✓	✓
3F Create areas of new parkland, wood pasture and agro-forestry	✓	✓	✓	✓
3G Improve the aftercare of planted trees and woodlands, including the removal of plastic guards where these have been necessary		✓	✓	✓
3H Employ measures to minimise grazing, trampling or browsing animals on woodland ground flora, including fencing where appropriate		✓	✓	✓
3I Support research into future woodland resilience to climate change, pests and diseases	✓	✓		✓

Champion Species: black grouse, pied flycatcher, hard fern, brown long-eared bat

Targets

PLTOF Target 1 allocation for Forest of Bowland: to create more than 275 ha of wildlife rich habitat per year (outside of SSSI) i.e. 4700 ha by 2042.

PTLOF Target 8 Forest of Bowland allocation: 50 ha per year of woodland and tree canopy to be created in Forest of Bowland, totalling 750 ha by 2040

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Additional Nature Recovery Plan Targets (2040)

- ✓ 5,300 ha of woodland is being actively managed to increase its wildlife value
- ✓ Atlantic oak woodland is surveyed to assess condition and current extent and is expanded in area.
- ✓ Veteran, ancient and other field trees are surveyed and recorded, and have new succession trees planted alongside them.

Grasslands

Scarce grassland habitats such as species rich hay meadows and pastures, acid and calcareous grassland, floodplain meadows and CHEGD important grasslands (assemblages of grassland fungi) are under constant pressure from development, intensive farming practices, and climate change.

These priority habitats are important for farming by providing fodder for livestock, but they also absorb carbon, help mitigate against flooding and soil erosion, and support healthy soils and biodiversity.

With more than 97% of our meadows already lost nationally, our actions count more than ever to protect and expand these extraordinary ecosystems. The Forest of Bowland is home to some of the last remaining traditional wildflower meadows in England.

Since 2012 The Forest of Bowland NL has worked closely with landowners and other partners to help reverse the loss of hay meadows, restoring around 220ha of traditionally managed hay meadows, pasture and floodplain meadows. Meadow restoration work continues in the National Landscape through the Bowland Hay Time Project in partnership with Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

Equally important is monitoring and recording our existing grasslands, including important CHEGD grasslands (Priority Habitat for rare grassland fungi) to enable their protection.

Through funding from DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, ongoing projects in the Forest of Bowland monitor grasslands that have previously had restoration work and identify potential sites for future restoration, to meet our habitat restoration targets and feed into the LNRS habitat mapping and inventory.

Desired Outcome 4

Grasslands are species-rich, safeguarded, extended, and support wider biodiversity

MEASURES	For National Gov'ment and/or Local Gov'ment	For Conservation ALBs (NE, EA, FC)	For landowners and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
4A Ensure existing and potential species-rich meadows, pastures and scarce grasslands are in good condition and well connected		✓	✓	✓
4B Expand and connect areas of priority grassland through bespoke restoration and enhancement, using locally sourced seed and plant material,		✓	✓	✓

and appropriate management practices				
4C Deliver a campaign to highlight the important value of grasslands including their biodiversity, soil protection, flood management and climate resilience benefits.			✓	✓
4D Manage roadside verges in a way that increases biodiversity	✓		✓	
4E Promote the uptake of regenerative farming principles and/or a maximum sustainable outputs (MSO) approach where it may lead to healthier soils, increased sward diversity, and assist farmers to analyse their business with respect to inputs and stocking levels		✓	✓	✓
4F Be ambitious in creating and maintaining space for nature in grasslands and the wider farmed landscape by promoting and enabling Nature Friendly Farming practices		✓	✓	✓
4G Encourage appropriate management of purple moor grass and rush pasture		✓	✓	✓
4H Identify, map and record flood plain meadows and CHEGD Priority Habitat grasslands		✓	✓	✓
4I Survey and monitor SAC and SSSI upland meadows and ensure their favourable condition is a priority in management agreements		✓	✓	✓
4J Assess farm and estate greenhouse gas emissions and			✓	

act to reduce these and to increase sequestration, in line with ambitions for a pathway to Net Zero for the National Landscape				
4K Encourage landowners to take up the National Estate for Nature role by delivering estate-wide management plans to deliver 30 by 30 and to contribute to PLTOF targets.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Champion Species: curlew, globeflower (and associated Chiastocheta flies) ballerina waxcap, swift, brown long eared bat, bilberry bumblebee

Targets

PLTOF Target 1 allocation for Forest of Bowland: to create more than 275 ha of wildlife rich habitat per year (outside of SSSI) i.e. 4700 ha by 2042.

PLTOF Target 4 Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042

PLTOF Target 5 Ensure at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature-friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030

PLTOF Target 6 Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Local Indicators

Ha of meadow created or restored by Hay Time

Number of farmers participating in agri-environment schemes

Number of farmers in Bowland Farmer group

Hectares of agricultural soil health improved

Additional Nature Recovery Plan Targets (2040)

- ✓ 34,500 of permanent pasture is being managed using nature friendly and/or regenerative farming techniques

Rivers and water

43.8% of rivers in the Forest of Bowland are classed as being in less than good condition (Defra PLTOF data 2024) with our headwater breeding grounds for fish under threat from the impacts of a changing climate, polluted run-off, and channel modification.

Our vision is that rivers and watercourses should be clean, with fewer man-made in-channel features; be allowed to follow their natural course; and be reconnected to their floodplains wherever possible.

Wetland habitats including wet woodland, flushes and flood plains are under threat of disconnection, drainage, pollution and development. There is a significant opportunity to greatly increase the number of small temporary and permanent wetlands on farmland, moorland and in woodland, to benefit a wide range of species

In Bowland there are three Catchment Partnerships working hard to support nature recovery and to improve water quality in local catchments.

Desired Outcome 5

Rivers and watercourses are healthy and functioning naturally. New wetland habitats are created, and these and existing wetlands are well-managed: all supporting a greater abundance and diversity of key species

MEASURES	For National Gov'ment and/or Local Gov'ment	For Conservation ALBs (NE, EA, FC)	For land owners and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
5A Maintain, create and expand wetland habitats, promoting good hydrological function and diverse and abundant key species		✓	✓	✓
5B Use regulatory powers, advice and enforcement to ensure watercourses and wetlands are in good ecological condition and free from pollution, barriers and artificial modification	✓	✓	✓	✓
5C Strengthen the resilience of river systems to climate change and extreme weather events, encouraging the development of nature-based solutions (e.g. natural flood management) in rivers and wetlands as climate adaptation methods	✓	✓	✓	✓

5D Tackle invasive and non-native species affecting in-stream and riparian habitats			✓	✓
5E Restore natural processes to watercourses to improve in-channel habitats, reconnect rivers to their floodplains, increase biodiversity and enhance the landscape		✓	✓	✓
5F Restore and create ponds, scrapes and dams on farmland, moorland and in woodland		✓	✓	✓

Champion Species: brown trout, yellow may dun, curlew

Targets

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Local Indicators:

Number of ponds and scrapes created/restored

Km of watercourse where natural processes restored

Additional Nature Recovery Plan Targets (2040)

- ✓ Improve water quality so that 75% of waters are in good condition
- ✓ Species diversity and abundance is improved in 80% of rivers
- ✓ More floodplain is connected to rivers and wetlands

Champion Species

The Forest of Bowland Nature Recovery Plan and the nature recovery strategies of Lancashire and North Yorkshire have identified key or 'Champion Species' which require special measures to be taken to ensure their continued presence within the National Landscape. These are rare or threatened species of local and/or national significance, charismatic species that are distinctive and provide inspiration for people to care about nature, and indicator species that can show that an ecosystem or habitat is healthy.

The 14 species chosen for Bowland, following stakeholder engagement, represent the full range of species found throughout the National Landscape. Actions taken to conserve them will automatically benefit a wider range of species by safeguarding and extending habitats and ensuring management plans are delivered. Measures listed here are general; more specific actions are detailed in the Forest of Bowland Nature Recovery Plan here https://www.forestofbowland.com/nature-recovery

Eurasian curlew (Numenius arquata)

Hen harrier (Circus cyaneus)

Black grouse (Lyrurus tetrix)

Swift (Apus apus)

Pied flycatcher (Ficedula hypoleuca)

Juniper (Juniperus)

Globeflower (Trollius europaeus) and associated Chiastocheta flies

Hard-fern (Blechnum spicant)

Ballerina waxcap (Porpolomopsis calyptriformis)

Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auratu)

Brown trout (Salmo trutta)

Yellow May dun (Heptagenia sulphurea)

Bilberry bumblebee (Bombus monticola)

Green hairstreak butterfly (Callophrys rubi)

12 of these species (all but Hard fern and Yellow May dun) are either S41 species on the IUCN Red list or species on the UK Birds of Conservation Concern Red list or are a nationally or locally rare or threatened species. The Black Grouse is not currently known to breed in Bowland, however, in 2019 the Fells were identified as an area to promote expansion within due to the proximity of lecking (breeding) sites to the east of the National Landscape.

Desired Outcome 6

Champion Species are increasing in range and abundance

MEASURES	For National Gov'ment and/or Local Gov'ment	For Conservation ALBs	For Land owners and farmers	For Conservation bodies and NGOs
6A Carry out more research and practical action to ensure that wading birds thrive in Bowland			✓	✓
6B Enable seed collecting, propagating and planting of globeflower and other local native species in meadows.		✓	✓	✓
6C Install more 'homes for nature' including boxes for swift, pied flycatcher, brown long-eared bat			✓	✓
6D Identify a northern seed source for juniper; propagate and plant saplings in upland cloughs		✓	✓	✓
6E Survey the black grouse population near to Bowland, and establish relocations where habitats support the potential for new leks and a resident population		✓	✓	✓
6F Establish a local management approach to combat and eradicate illegal persecution of hen harriers (and other raptors)		✓	✓	✓
6G Carry out research to identify key sites for waxcaps and hard fern, and deliver actions that help to understand and safeguard these habitats			✓	✓
6H Deliver habitat and species conservation measures at a landscape scale, increase habitat connectivity and undertake adaptive management to increase species diversity and abundancy				

Targets

Local Indicator

Number of projects targeted at recovery of threatened species;
Number of wildlife boxes installed

Additional Nature Recovery Plan Targets (2040)

- ✓ All local wildlife sites will have been surveyed
- ✓ 75% of local wildlife sites will be in better management

PEOPLE

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as: "**A*n area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*.**" Therefore, a landscape protected with national status needs to consider the needs and impacts of people alongside those of the natural, non-human world. To reflect this, the purpose of National Landscape (or AONB) designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, whilst having regard to the social and economic needs of landowners, farmers and communities. The NL also has a responsibility to meet the demands for recreation and tourism, but only if this is consistent with protecting the natural beauty of the area.

If people are to care for a place, be they local people or visitors, it is important that they can first enjoy what it has to offer. There is a need to ensure that more people, from a wider variety of backgrounds and life experiences, can discover Bowland and enjoy its natural beauty. Where there are physical and/or perceptual barriers to people's ability to explore this landscape with confidence, these need to be removed.

Forces for Change

Pressures

- Loss of rural skills and opportunities to train in, and learn them
- Reduced opportunity locally for post-16 training or education in subjects leading to work and careers in agriculture, land management and environmental sectors
- Climate impacts on recreation infrastructure and networks leading to requirements for more repairs and new techniques to tackle extreme weather events
- Increased incidence of ticks and diseases affecting human health
- Increased visitor pressure at key destinations leading to erosion, congestion, effects on tranquillity and dark skies, litter, parking, motor home parking: leading to a diminished visitor and resident community experience
- Conflict between users of Rights of Way and of quiet lanes
- Barriers to physically accessing the area (e.g. limited public transport, costs, health issues) as well as non-physical barriers (lack of knowledge, experience, cultural tradition, fears and mental health issues) can create inequalities in access to, and enjoyment of, the National Landscape
- Cuts to resourcing of public health, education and environment sectors affecting access and recreation services, learning and skills, health and wellbeing services

Opportunities

- ✓ Ability of the landscape and nature to offer free access to everyone to take exercise, connect with nature, relax and refresh
- ✓ Increasing interest and opportunity nationally for traineeships and apprenticeships in conservation, farming, outdoor activity and protected landscape professionals
- ✓ An increased digital offer – for collaboration, information sharing and interpretation
- ✓ Inclusivity and social justice are becoming a driver for work of the NL and other environmental NGOs leading to an increase in investment and provision of facilities, events and services on offer
- ✓ Increased provision of free supported visits to the area for those groups experiencing mental health and social isolation or exclusion issues

Access & Recreation

With a Public Right of Way Network of around 160 kilometres in length and 248 square kilometres of Access Land opportunities, the Forest of Bowland National Landscape offers some of the UK's best countryside for walking cycling, wildlife-watching and stargazing. From quiet lanes, ancient woodlands and distinctive and attractive villages to flower-filled hay meadows, open moorland and a wealth of local culture and heritage, Bowland has a great deal to offer. The diverse landscapes, combined with the area's serenity and tranquillity, create a special place for everyone to enjoy.

Several iterations of the National Landscape Management Plan have focused on the need to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of mobility needs. This has led to pioneering work on the ground such as All Terrain Wheelchairs and 'miles without stiles.' This and other such work promote enjoyment of the landscape and can greatly increase people's health and well-being.

Desired Outcome 7

The provision of high-quality access infrastructure, facilities and information, means that the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is a welcoming place for everyone

MEASURES	For National Government & its agencies, and/or Local Government	For Conservation bodies	For Communities and Land managers
7A Maintain and enhance the Public Rights of Way network and provide resources to improve provision, recognising the importance of the network to the rural economy and people's well-being	✓		✓
7B Develop and enhance Access for All routes and facilities to meet the needs of a wide range of users following the established practice of least restrictive means, and where possible include the provision of all-terrain wheelchairs	✓	✓	✓
7C Use bespoke projects (e.g. through NLHF, FiPL, Countryside Stewardship) to enhance the network beyond the minimum standard on key promoted and strategic routes, and provide additional access	✓	✓	✓

7D Seek to ensure that any existing permissive access routes continue, especially where they provide important links to wider access within Bowland.		✓	✓
7E Manage public countryside sites to provide more opportunities for a wider range of people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape.	✓	✓	✓
7F Promote responsible and safe access for visitors to the countryside (e.g. Countryside Code, dogs and livestock, respect for fragile habitats, advice on water safety, fire-risk)	✓	✓	✓
7G Improve the promotion of countryside access opportunities, including interpreted routes and easy access routes, including increased use of digital mapping and digital information		✓	✓
7H Through the Fire Operations Group (FOG) and partners, help to maintain up-to-date fire plans for moorland areas and raise awareness of the risk and impacts of wildfire in the National Landscape.	✓		✓
7I Utilise adaptive management techniques and practice that create and restore rights of way which are more resilient to climate change	✓	✓	✓

Targets

PLTOF target 9: Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Local Indicators:

Km of footpath improved/better managed
Number of accessible amenities created
Number of accessible gates installed
Number of Changing Places facilities within the National Landscape
Number of publicly available All Terrain Wheelchairs

Exploring and Understanding

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape is a place to explore, learn and be inspired. By offering high-quality information and inclusive events and activities, opportunities are created for people to understand, enjoy and connect with the area's special qualities.

It is important that Bowland's nature, culture and heritage are shared in engaging and accessible ways that meet a variety of needs. This includes working with groups supporting people with physical disabilities, mental health challenges and neurological or neurodegenerative conditions. Such tailored approaches help individuals move from discovery to confident exploration, enjoyment and understanding - ultimately inspiring greater care and even practical action to protect the landscape.

Desired Outcome 8

More people can enjoy, understand and celebrate the National Landscape's natural beauty and special qualities through the provision of high-quality information, events and activities which inspire them to engage with the area

MEASURES	For National Government & its agencies, and/or Local Government	For Conservation bodies	For Communities and Land managers
8A Create inviting communications that highlight the year-round opportunities of the area for both communities and visitors.		✓	✓
8B Deliver, support and promote events which celebrate the nature, landscape, culture and heritage of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.		✓	✓
8C Manage, improve and create new interpretation and information, to raise awareness of the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland landscape.		✓	✓

8D Organise and promote inclusive events for people facing barriers to accessing the countryside.		✓	✓

Targets

Local Indicators

Number of events held
number of event attendances
number of people from under-represented groups being engaged
high levels of satisfaction in event participation feedback

Learning and Skills

Bowland is a landscape for learning, at any stage of life. There are many opportunities to provide rewarding educational experiences for children and young people, to develop lifelong-learning programmes for adults, and to ensure that essential skills are passed on and expanded.

As well as reaching local young people, there is acknowledged benefit, and work on which to build, to ensure that children in surrounding towns see Bowland as their own learning landscape. Learning doesn't stop when we leave formal education. There is considerable scope for using Bowland as a place to provide lifelong learning opportunities in nature and heritage. Similarly, citizen science projects can enrich people's lives and add to the pool of knowledge about this special place.

Conserving and enhancing the distinctive qualities and character of the landscape requires the maintenance of skills which underpin land management and nature conservation. These include 'traditional' skills like drystone walling, hedge laying and woodland management, but also developing the skills and knowledge necessary for nature-friendly, economically viable farming to thrive. In addition, knowledge and expertise in nature conservation – field survey, peatland restoration, the management of rivers and wetlands – all need to be expanded. There should be increased opportunities for formal training and apprenticeships, peer-to-peer learning and greater sharing of knowledge, ideas and skills.

Desired Outcome 9

More people are learning about Bowland and its natural beauty, and practising the skills that help to conserve and enhance its characteristic features

MEASURES	For National Government and/or Local Government	For Conservation bodies	For farmers and land managers	For Communities and Businesses
9A Provide and support educational visits to Bowland, including engaging schools and colleges from nearby towns	✓	✓	✓	
9B Provide support to teachers to help them develop and deliver Bowland-related programmes in the classroom and in the field	✓	✓		
9C Support school travel costs and work to remove barriers to participation in environmental educational activity.	✓	✓		
9D Provide support for, and input to, lifelong-learning programmes		✓		

linked to the area's nature, culture and heritage				
9E Develop and resource opportunities for citizen science with a strong element of training and learning that support increases in the quantity and quality of data on species and habitats		✓		✓
9F Provide training opportunities in skills which are key to conserving and enhancing Bowland's components of natural beauty, including developing more opportunities for peer-to-peer learning		✓	✓	✓
9G Create apprenticeships, traineeships and placements in rural skills, and professional roles in local organisations, to establish career pathways into the farming, nature and heritage sectors	✓	✓	✓	✓

Targets

Local Indicators

Number of training days held
Number of people trained
Number of farm education visits
Number of schools engaged

Health & Wellbeing

The benefits of engaging with nature are established and increasingly valued. Time spent in nature can impact positively on a range of physical health conditions, as well improving mental wellbeing and increasing mindfulness and resilience.

From extensive areas of Access Land, to village greens, a comprehensive footpath network and open farms, the Forest of Bowland is full of opportunities for people to get close to nature. However, not everyone is able to access these opportunities equitably.

Public transport within the National Landscape is limited, which can make getting here difficult for people without access to a car. Keeping warm, dry and comfortable in the countryside often involves outdoor clothing and waterproof footwear, which not everyone has. Beyond these practical barriers, some may be reluctant to visit because they lack confidence about where they are "allowed" to go, don't know what to expect, or what kind of welcome they may receive.

Whilst there is still work to be done to overcome these hurdles, many projects are actively engaging with individuals and groups who find it harder to access Bowland. This often begins with exploring local open spaces and nature close to home, before moving on to supported visits to the National Landscape itself, ultimately aiming to build self-assurance for independent visits. In addition, programmes of regular "easy access" walks, which often don't require booking head, allow people to decide how they feel on the day, making them accessible for diverse audiences.

Building partnerships between conservation agencies, health bodies, local authorities and others, will help to widen this reach, build sustainability and monitor outcomes.

Desired Outcome 10

More people are enjoying the health and well-being benefits that come from a greater connection with Bowland's nature, culture and landscape

MEASURES	For National Government & its agencies, and/or Local Government	For Conservation and health care bodies	For Communities
10A Develop targeted support programmes which overcome specific barriers to people enjoying the National Landscape.	✓	✓	✓
10B Collaborate across sectors to make best use of available resources to deliver wellbeing programmes.	✓	✓	✓
10C Provide opportunities to encourage communities to improve	✓	✓	✓

their health and wellbeing through access to nature, close to home and in the National Landscape.			

Targets

Local Indicators

Number of health and wellbeing sessions held
Number of people participating in health and wellbeing events

PLACE

The character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape is shaped equally by its history, its communities and its physical form. The landscape we see today is the result of a long-standing relationship between people and place. Conserving and enhancing this special area means addressing the social and economic needs of its residents, not just managing the land itself. Many locals work within the landscape or commute to nearby towns, while a significant number of retirees depend on local services.

Bowland's history is central to its identity. Echoes of the area's medieval royal hunting forest status are evident still, but centuries of land management and ownership before and since have also left their mark on landscape, settlements and buildings. This link between past and present provides a sense of continuity for residents and visitors alike. Moving forward, this connection can be nurtured to provide opportunities for more people to discover and value the National Landscape.

The area has a diverse economy, with agriculture and forestry being the primary land uses, but tourism is also increasingly important. The area has a strong farming tradition, with sheep and beef farming in the uplands and dairy farming in the valleys. Much of the area's moorland is also managed for driven grouse shooting. Additionally, there are businesses involved in quarrying, production (including food production), energy and transport. The National Landscape is growing in popularity as a visitor destination for the surrounding urban settlements of Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Yorkshire. Its relatively 'undiscovered' nature is highly cherished, fostering loyalty among locals, day-trippers, and an increasing number of overnight visitors. The blend of open moorland and the dynamic geography of the lower river valleys not only defines the area's unique character but also makes it an excellent spot for walkers, cyclists, wildlife enthusiasts and more recently, those interested in experiential tourism, including exploring the area's fantastic local produce.

Local communities rely on local services, yet some shops and pubs are closing, and many rural areas have limited or no public transport. These changes can make life more difficult for residents. Increased car usage can also impact the local environment and carbon emissions. The challenge lies in finding solutions that enhance the social and economic well-being of communities while preserving the quality of the environment.

Forces for Change

Pressures

- Increased uncertainty of government policy and viability of hill farming may affect community make up and knowledge about the importance of connection to the land
- Impacts of climate change on heritage features include storm and flood damage; drought leading to loss of vegetation and soils protecting features; exposure of fragile heritage
- Impacts of climate change on communities through increased flooding, storms and power outages leaving residents isolated and cut off; impacts of drought and extreme heat on residents and farm livestock; high cost of rural domestic fuel supplies, e.g. coal, oil and LPG

- ❖ Increased housing costs and 'gentrification' of homes leading to loss of affordable homes for people working locally, especially young people and older persons leaving farm tenancies
- ❖ Poor provision of rural services (public transport, broadband, shops, pubs and schools) affecting both residents and visitors, especially those on low incomes; limited access to full and part time work locally
- ❖ An ageing population leading to fewer young families living in the villages, affecting schools and other service provision and a loss of skills, knowledge and engagement with the landscape

Opportunities

- ✓ Increased interest nationally and internationally in nature, outdoor activity and short breaks in areas of high scenic value
- ✓ Resilience and entrepreneurial attitudes of local community leading to new businesses, and support for new bus services, community owned pubs, and high-speed broadband
- ✓ Opportunity for installation of small-scale renewables, often by community led action; also, local fuel buying co-ops
- ✓ Diversification of farms leading to increased provision of visitor accommodation
- ✓ Increased supply of locally produced food, arts and crafts and experiential tourism to attract visitors

Cultural Heritage and the Historic Environment

Alongside its outstanding natural heritage, the Forest of Bowland boasts a rich cultural landscape. Although human presence in the area stretches back over thousands of years, the development of the medieval hunting forests and subsequent deer parks have had some of the most obvious influence. This legacy is manifest in the relatively unchanged rural nature of the area, its grand halls and parkland, distinctive stone-built settlements and lack of main roads.

Within the National Landscape there are 20 Scheduled Monuments, ranging from prehistoric enclosures and bowl barrows to lime kilns and bridges, over 800 Listed Buildings (13 Grade 1 and 37 Grade 2*) and two Registered Parks and Gardens. 22 Conservation Areas intersect with the Protected Landscape boundary.

Residents and visitors alike are keen to explore the area's heritage. Local history groups are active in researching and recording Bowland's history, whilst both local and county archives hold a wealth of manuscripts, artefacts and images, providing an invaluable source of information and inspiration. The Forest of Bowland landscape continues to provide a tangible link with past lives and stories.

Desired Outcome 11

The historic environment and cultural heritage of the Forest of Bowland is better understood, conserved, enhanced and celebrated.

MEASURES	Local Government	Communities and land owners	Conservation bodies
11A Use the planning system to resist the piecemeal erosion of aspects of Bowland's historic landscape character (settlement patterns, field boundaries, woodland and wood pasture, parklands, etc.)	✓	✓	✓
11B Ensure that tangible cultural heritage is not adversely impacted by projects and land management activity beyond the planning system	✓	✓	✓
11C Utilise agri-environment schemes and other incentives to conserve historic features and reinforce the character of historic landscapes	✓	✓	✓
11D Improve the condition of assets which appear on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, and act to remove them from the Register through conservation and restoration measures	✓	✓	✓
11E Develop uses for redundant historic structures which respect their character	✓	✓	✓
11F Establish and support community-led archaeological projects	✓	✓	✓

11G Ensure the Heritage at Risk register is resourced to stay up to date with good quality and accessible information	✓		
11H Ensure the supply of local building materials is adequate for ongoing building repairs & maintenance	✓		
11I Research and document local life and traditions, supporting efforts to keep alive local stories, crafts and skills	✓	✓	✓
11J Develop collaborative projects to research, conserve and interpret the built heritage of the Forest of Bowland.	✓	✓	✓
11K Increase awareness around Listed Building status, the need for consent and the use of appropriate materials/technologies in relation to climate change resilience	✓	✓	✓

Targets

PLTOF target 10: Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Local Indicator

Number of collaborative projects focusing on built and cultural heritage

Regenerative Tourism

Sustainable tourism has been central to the Forest of Bowland management plan for the past 20 years, and Bowland has led the way through its dynamic tourism business partnership. While the principles of sustainable tourism remain relevant, today, there is a need for what is termed 'regenerative tourism' – an approach that fosters economic growth by reinvesting money into local communities, which creates jobs and strengthens local businesses. It also values and safeguards cultural heritage, promoting authentic experiences that respect local traditions and customs.

Regenerative tourism offers a way to further restore and enrich the area's ecological, cultural and economic wellbeing. It's about leaving the landscape better than we found it—by empowering local communities, deepening visitors' understanding and care for the natural world and creating meaningful experiences that foster lasting connections with place.

Desired Outcomes 12

Bowland is a showcase for regenerative tourism, emphasising the connections between nature, society and culture, while ensuring financial benefits stay within the local community

MEASURES	For Local Government	For Businesses and communities	For Conservation Organisations
12A Support initiatives that promote the use of public transport and active travel.	✓	✓	
12B Support collaborative tourism-related projects to drive economic growth.	✓	✓	✓
12C Establish and engage with networking and training opportunities for tourism-related businesses to support regenerative tourism development, via networks such as the Forest of Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network.		✓	✓
12D Develop tourism initiatives that are community-led and provide benefit to local people.		✓	✓
12E Develop the research & statistical data for the Forest of Bowland to enable better understanding of its visitor and economic profile, to inform future developments and funding.	✓		

Targets

Local Indicators

Number of businesses engaged
Number of businesses contributing to initiatives

Community

Village life provides the focal point for communities living in Bowland, with school, church and pub often at the centre. These hubs draw from the surrounding scattered farms and more isolated settlements, providing services, social contact and support.

Communities are self-sufficient in many respects, and much time is given voluntarily in order to help village life thrive. Flourishing local groups offer everything from amateur dramatics and craft classes to garden clubs and history societies, and much pride is taken in caring for village facilities.

Some villages may have shops and access to GP surgeries, but this isn't always the case and, where residents need to travel further afield, there is a reliance on private cars. The lack of public transport can be an issue for some.

Larger settlements around the periphery – Garstang, Clitheroe and Settle, for example – provide a much wider range of services. They also act as gateways to the National Landscape, offering ideal locations from which to share information with visitors. They tend to be much more easily reached by bus and train.

High on the annual calendar of events are the traditional agricultural and horticultural shows, some with histories reaching back over a century. Important social gatherings for local communities, they also provide a living snapshot of rural life for visitors.

Desired Outcome 13

Thriving local communities have access to key services and are actively engaged in activities and projects that conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the National Landscape.

MEASURES	For National Government & its agencies, and/or Local Government	For Conservation bodies	For Communities	For Businesses
13A Retain access to services within local communities and resist developments which would result in their loss.	✓		✓	✓
13B Provide funding, support and advice for community-based projects and activities which enhance the National Landscape.	✓		✓	✓
13C Support community activity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the National Landscape	✓	✓	✓	✓

13D Strengthen access to, and movement within, the Forest of Bowland through enhanced public transport options, whilst also actively promoting walking, cycling and other forms of active travel	✓		✓	✓
13E Provide a wide range of rewarding opportunities for volunteering that bring benefits both to participants, and to the Forest of Bowland.		✓	✓	

Targets

PLTOF Target 6: Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050

PLTOF Targets supported:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Local Indicators

Number of community groups supported
Number of volunteer days

Monitoring

As explained in Part 1, national targets taken from the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) apply to the whole area of the National Landscape, not just to the National Landscape Team, and these targets will be monitored nationally. Some of our priority outcomes, however, do not relate to these targets so local indicators or targets from the Forest of Bowland Nature Recovery Plan are used instead.

To ensure that outcomes identified in the Management Plan are delivered by the wider Partnership the following local indicators have been selected and will be monitored annually via a Partners Forum. Some of the indicators will only be monitored by the National Landscape team, however, wherever possible Partners will also be encouraged to collect this data.

During the lifetime of this Management Plan the NL team intends to create and populate an evaluation framework to better assess the impact of our work.

Local Indicators to monitor outcomes and measures

km of overhead electricity cables undergrounded

ha of meadow created or restored by HayTime

number of farmers participating in agri-environment schemes

number of farmers in Bowland Farmer group

hectares of agricultural soil health improved

number of ponds and scrapes created/restored

km of watercourse where natural processes restored

number of projects targeted at recovery of threatened species

number of wildlife boxes installed

km of footpath improved/better managed

number of accessible amenities created

number of accessible gates installed

number of Changing Places facilities within the National Landscape

number of publicly available all-terrain wheelchairs

number of events held

number of event attendances

number of people from under-represented groups being engaged

high levels of satisfaction in event participation feedback

number of training days held

number of people trained

number of farm education visits

number of schools engaged

number of health and wellbeing sessions held

number of people participating in health and wellbeing events

number of collaborative projects focusing on built and cultural heritage

number of tourism businesses engaged

number of tourism businesses contributing to initiatives

number of community groups supported

number of volunteer days

Nature Recovery Plan targets to monitor outcomes and measures

200km traditional boundaries enhanced, created or restored

5,300 ha of woodland is being actively managed to increase its wildlife value

Atlantic oak woodland is surveyed to assess condition and current extent, and is expanded in area.

Veteran, ancient and other field trees are surveyed and recorded, and have new succession trees planted alongside them.

34,500 of permanent pasture is being managed using nature friendly and/or regenerative farming techniques

Improve water quality so that 75% of waters are in good condition

Species diversity and abundance is improved in 80% of rivers

More floodplain is connected to rivers and wetlands

All local wildlife sites will have been surveyed by 2040, 75% will be in better management

-END-