

# THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

## United Kingdom (422rev)

In accordance with Decision **45 COM 7B.63** of the World Heritage Committee, the United Kingdom State Party has produced a State of Conservation Report for The English Lake District World Heritage Site.

As requested, this report is structured according to the format set out in Annex 13 of the *Operational Guidelines* (2023). The clauses of the World Heritage Committee decision are given in italics and indented. The response of the State Party is not indented and does not use italics.

### **1. Executive Summary**

The State Party has reported on positive progress in implementing the World Heritage Committee's recommendations over the last 7 years, identifying the Lake District National Park Partnership's firm commitment to the same objective. This latest State of Conservation Report also outlines key areas of continuing progress.

The life of the adopted Partnership Plan was extended in 2024 until 2026 to retain focus on delivery. An intermediary Action Review was agreed to ensure interim progress. This has allowed the Plan to evolve in response to issues highlighted by the World Heritage Committee.

The consent granted at Honister, one of the last working slate mines in England, to reinstate the use of a traditional form of transportation for hand quarried slate and recreational route remains to be implemented pending amendments, necessitated by a change to the configuration and location of the proposed equipment.

A range of increasing proactive action is being taken to ensure the long-term suitability of the agro-pastoral system. The recent Periodic Report concluded that overall, the condition of the attribute of the agro-pastoral system is not causing persistent or substantial negative effects to the landscape.

The Lake District has also seen much work seeking to address the issue of affordable housing in the property. The Lake District National Park Authority's approach is to work in partnership to facilitate delivery of small numbers of housing reflecting community need, but recognising the environmental capacity of proposed sites. Recent UK Government initiatives such as changes to tax regimes to disincentivise second home ownership will also make an important contribution.

Traffic volumes in the property have not increased over time, but traffic and transport has been acknowledged as an issue and the Partnership is committed to a sustainable future for the Lake District by encouraging public transport improvements and active travel measures that actively challenge perceptions about the accessibility of public transport in the property. To this end it has agreed a range of transformative actions under the Partnership Plan that support delivery of sustainable and active travel.

The Lake District National Park Authority has set up a monitoring plan to assess the level of activity on unsealed roads within the property and any impacts on the attributes and values. Where the LDNPA identifies unequivocal evidence that motorised vehicle use is harmful to the OUV of the WHS, or the

special qualities of the National Park, it will consider the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to address the defined threat.

The Lake District National Park Partnership also wants to support its communities to manage flood risk. Working with partners across the property and with Government funding it is seeking a careful balance through Natural Flood Management to ensure that schemes are designed with the lowest possible impact on the cultural landscape.

Work on the draft Interpretation Strategy continues. It will be used to contribute to engendering a strong sense of pride and ownership of the local environment and its distinctive character and supporting wider objectives in relation to this world class living cultural landscape.

Following the most recent planning decision for development at Elterwater Quarry, a request for a judicial review was made to the High Court which is proceeding.

Windermere is one of the most monitored water bodies in the world and the challenges to water quality are well understood. Significant joint action is being taken locally to improve its water quality with support from both the State Party and the Lake District National Park Authority.

In conclusion, the Lake District National Park Partnership has provided an update on achievements, projects, conservation work and community engagement which jointly support the OUV of the Property under key outcomes identified within the Partnership Plan.

The State Party acknowledges that many of the areas included in this report will require continued monitoring nationally, but is nonetheless of the view that the property as a whole has not significantly changed since its inscription. It therefore believes that no further State of Conservation Reports about existing issues should be required at this time, but will continue to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any major developments or new constructions which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

2. **Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee’s Decision, paragraph by paragraph.**

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B,*

2. *Recalling Decision **41 COM 8B.30** adopted at its 41<sup>st</sup> session (Krakow, 2017),*

3. *Welcomes the efforts made by the State Party to address the recommendations adopted at the time of the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List but notes that progress in the implementation of those recommendations is very slow;*

The State Party believes that positive and meaningful progress has been made in implementing the World Heritage Committee’s recommendations over the last 7 years. The latest iteration of Appendix 1 to this report, the Lake District National Park Partnership’s Concerns and Actions document, demonstrates the extensive volume of work that has steadily been undertaken and continues to be so. With a property of this size and due to the range and number of partners involved implementing changes of the nature requested by the Committee can be challenging. The Lake District National Park Partnership has nonetheless demonstrated its firm commitment to implementing the recommendations by incorporating them into the Partnership’s Management Plan strategies. Annex 7 of the [joint WHS and National Park Management Plan](#) outlines how this has been achieved. In the remainder of this state of conservation report key areas of continuing progress have been outlined. The State Party welcomes the continued support of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in recognising the efforts of all those actively engaged in the protection and management of the English Lake District’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

*4. Also welcomes the State Party's confirmation that no projects for a gondola/cable car at Whinlatter and a Geological Disposal Facility for hazardous waste within the property are currently being considered, recommends that no such project be considered in the future and requests that timely information and documentation on the possible redevelopment and expansion of the Whinlatter Centre of recreation be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before any decision is taken on the future of this facility;*

The State Party can confirm that there are no proposals at the present time within either the property or the National Park for either type of scheme.

The Lake District National Park Authority's Local Plan indicates in [Policy 29](#) that it would not support a geological disposal facility for radioactive waste on or under the Lake District National Park. The Lake District National Park was excluded from the possible search area by relevant local bodies, including the local authority, the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) developer and members who are reflective of the community in the Search Area.

The boundary of the National Park and the World Heritage Site largely coincide so this ensures that the same protection is provided for the property.

Should any speculative proposals come forward for either type of scheme they will be assessed in relation to national legislation, policy and guidance. The UK planning system is plan-led, meaning any planning application must be determined in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan (Local Plan) relevant to the area and any other material considerations. Therefore, any new planning application would be tested against Local Plan Policy 29 which makes it clear that such a facility would not be supported by the Planning Authority.

The State Party considers this issue is resolved and that it should not be of any further concern to the Committee.

Any proposals that may come forward in the future will be alerted to the World Heritage Centre via notification under paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

*5. Welcomes furthermore the information concerning the approval of the update of the revised joint World Heritage and National Park Management Plan;*

As reported in the State Party's letter of 18 May 2022 and the update to its 2021 State of Conservation Report, submitted on 01 March 2023, the current Lake District National Park Partnership Management Plan was adopted by the Lake District National Park Authority in October 2021. This was a year later than originally planned because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024 it was agreed by the Partnership, and endorsed by the Authority, to extend the life of the current Plan until 2026 to retain focus on delivery. It was also agreed that an Action Review would be undertaken to ensure progress in delivery. This was concluded in May and an amended version of the Plan was published in [July 2024](#).

The Action Review responded to the World Heritage Committee's Decision ([Decision 45COM 7B.63](#)) in a number of ways, such as:

- The addition of two World Heritage site actions:
  - Prepare an interpretation strategy for the English Lake District World Heritage Site in 2024 and commence delivery of the associated action plan (WHS.act.1), and
  - Work with Partners to prepare a State of Conservation report for UNESCO by the end of 2024 (WHS.act.2) (page 47);
- Incorporating the UNESCO recommendation to 'address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles' as an overarching principle to steer delivery of actions under Outcome 5: Sustainable travel and transport (STT.act.1-11) (pages 44-46).
- Reinforcing and expanding Action VCPE.act.1 (page 33) to manage the impact of second homes and short-term holiday lets in the Lake District, in consideration of the World Heritage Committee's concerns over affordable housing under Outcome 1: Vibrant communities and prosperous economy following COVID-19.
- In recognition of UNESCO concerns over water quality of Lake Windermere, better reflecting support for the Love Windermere Partnership in its delivery of actions under Outcome 3: Securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery, and climate change (FFNC). The Partnership aims to improve the water environment of Windermere and align the Lake District National Park Partnership's Partners and Plan with the Love Windermere Partnership and programme (FFNC.act.5) (page 40).
- Strengthening the Partnership's commitment to Landscape Recovery scale projects, where traditional farming is at the heart of successful delivery, by helping to sustain local agro-pastoral traditions by actions under Outcome 3 Securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery, and climate change and sharing learning which is critical in spreading the word that these projects can work successfully in a World Heritage Site to secure attributes of OUV:
  - supporting project delivery and future bids to Landscape Recovery Schemes to understand how they can secure the future of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and the National Park Special Qualities (FFNC.act.1c) (page 40).
  - Supporting hefting in particular by monitoring change through the on-going collection and analysis of fell-going flock data, and
  - preparing and publishing an updated Lake District Shepherds' Guide in 2025 to establish a baseline of fell-going flocks to understand and support the viability of hefted flocks (FFNC.act.4a) (page 40).
  - addition of a new action under the Plan to prepare a Wild Deer Management Strategy by March 2025 (FFNC.act.2f).

A review of the LDNPP Management Plan started in autumn 2024, with public consultation on a draft expected in autumn 2025. It is expected that a new Management Plan to cover the period 2026-2031 will be adopted in Spring 2026. The State Party will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is kept informed of progress on the review of the Plan.

*6. Regrets that the planning consent for Honister Zip Wire was issued, despite objections of several preservation organisations and contrary to the advice contained in ICOMOS' Technical Review and encourages the State Party to pursue all possible ways to resolve this issue and to avoid the construction of this infrastructure;*

As reported by the State Party in its letter to the World Heritage Centre of 16 April 2019, planning permission was granted in September 2019 for a dual-purpose aerial wire for extraction of stone and tourism use at Honister.

The aerial wire is intended to facilitate the return of a traditional method of transportation for slate extraction which was historically used at Honister, one of the last working slate mines in England. It is also considered to represent the most economic and environmental solution to the production of slate at the site. The applicant's documentation states that the original Aerial Flight was built in 1926 to ensure the efficient transport of slate from the working level to the "Hause". Remnants of this method of transport can still be seen on the fell side of Fleetwith Pike. The documentation indicates that there is currently no economically viable way to extract slate from the mine openings as, following extraction by hand, it would need to be walked down the incline. The applicant states that the utilisation of the aerial flight will allow a much higher output of the slate, which will provide a much more reliable income for Honister.

The aerial wire permitted was also to offer a recreational use, as an optional accessible extension to the existing Honister Via Ferrata experience to cater for those who may be unable to use the existing route.

The World Heritage Committee recommended at the property's inscription ([Decision 41 COM 8B.30](#)) that assurances would be provided that quarrying activities within the property will be progressively downsized and extraction volumes limited to what is needed for carrying out conservation of the assets supporting the attributes of the property. The State Party would draw to the World Heritage Committee's attention that Honister is one of the last working slate mines in England, and as such one of the last producers of this natural stone.

World Heritage Site considerations were taken into account by the local planning authority in reaching its decision. A Technical Review from ICOMOS was subsequently received in December 2019.

The State Party is aware that the landowner has subsequently stated that the 2019 planning permission has been implemented. The applicant has advised that these anchor points were installed in 2021, prior to the expiration of three years from the date of the planning permission. This is confirmed by the applicant providing an invoice from the installation company which is dated September 2021. This evidence indicates that the development has commenced. Where a planning permission is implemented within the required period it remains extant and capable of implementation at any time thereafter.

#### Current planning application

The local planning authority is currently in receipt of a planning application ([7/2023/2286](#)) for a revised scheme. The proposal remains to install a 1035 m long zip wire from Honister Crag to the car park at Honister Slate Mine for the dual purpose of the extraction of stone from an existing mine opening and a visitor attraction. It has a starting point accessed from the existing Via Ferrata (fixed rock-climbing route).

Differences between the original approval and this current proposal are:

- Removing the intermediate post of the zip wire;

- Reduction of noise by using the latest technology for braking and trolley wheels running over the aerial line cable;
- Greater slate carrying capacity delivered directly to the processing zone without the need for any intermediate transport and handling;
- Safer and easier passenger transfer at the landing point.

Due to the re-location of the landing platform, the amendment would take the development outside the original 'red line' boundary and therefore it warrants a new planning application. If this planning application were approved, it would replace the original planning permission as it would occupy part of the same area, so only one could be built.

Assessment of this application will be made in due course, in accordance with the legal framework and the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. All representations will be reported. World Heritage Site impacts will again be a significant consideration for the local planning authority. The previous comments from ICOMOS' Technical Review of the original application will be considered as they remain relevant due to the very limited difference in the two applications.

As the planning application progresses and more information becomes available then the State Party will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is provided with a further update in due course.



*7. Expresses concern at the lack of a clear strategy to address the vulnerability of the property's agro-pastoral traditions and urges the State Party to devise and implement, in consultation with the Lake District's farming communities, appropriate policies and adequately resourced funding schemes to support and compensate them for their heritage services in order to sustain in the medium to long term the key attributes of this landscape that underpin its integrity and authenticity;*

The State Party can report that there has been good progress, at both national and local level, on this matter since the last update to the State of Conservation report was submitted in March 2023. Whilst traditional farming practices in the Lake District are unique, the context in which they operate is not. Global issues such as climate change, the financial viability of small farm businesses and impacts of globalisation need to be recognised and managed. New strategies have been developed and actions revised to address the concerns of UNESCO. It is appreciated that further work will be needed to monitor the effectiveness of these strategies and actions and to refine them where necessary.

The recent Periodic Reporting exercise for the property concluded that overall, the condition of the attribute of the agro-pastoral system in its totality is not causing persistent or substantial negative effects to the landscape. However, the pressures on this attribute and the fact that to date some compromises have been made is recognised. Increasing proactive action is being taken by the State Party and the Partnership to address these matters, manage them, and ensure the long-term sustainability of this highly important and complex attribute.

### **Consultation with and Support for Farming Communities**

Farming communities play a critical role in preserving the Lake District's heritage. The LDNPP recognises their contributions as heritage stewards who safeguard traditional practices, biodiversity, and cultural heritage. The LDNPA has two farming officers and a team of rangers, a commons officer, and a natural environment adviser who all regularly meet farmers in numerous ways. There is more contact now with farmers than ever before, and the LDNPA is proud that it is reaching farmers who have not been engaged with the Partnership before.

Elsewhere within the Partnership there is considerable engagement with the farming community. The National Trust's farming officers, Natural England advisers and their catchment sensitive advisers, and Rivers Trusts' staff are all engaging with and working with local farmers.

In addition, The Farmer Network, a delivery partner of the LDNPP's Farming, Forestry, Nature Recovery, Climate Change Key Outcome, has coordinated the "Farm for the Future" programme. This is a series of workshops and one-to-one support to help farmers understand the changes to farm payments and consider future options for their business.

The LDNPP is actively supporting farm and community-led initiatives such as farm clusters and Community Interest Companies (limited companies which operate to provide a benefit to the community they serve). Such initiatives are looking at farmer-led nature recovery, improved flood resilience and traditional regenerative farming. They recognise that the local knowledge and experience of traditional pastoral farming practices, and dedication of farmers and local communities, will create sustainable and biodiverse futures.

### **Funding Schemes for Farming Communities**

Considerable State Party funding supports the farming community of the English Lake District property, and thus the agro-pastoral attribute. Much has also been done locally to support farmers adjusting to changes in funding. With a new system of support the intended, and unintended,

consequences will be carefully monitored, and changes made to schemes where necessary. Further consideration of the intangible components of the agro-pastoral attribute may be necessary but there is effective engagement between the State Party and local partners, through the Partnership, to further sustain key attributes of this cultural landscape.

The UK Government is aware that there is considerable concern within the farming community, particularly within the Lake District as a result of some of the reforms to Agricultural property relief (APR) and Business property relief (BPR) announced in its Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024. APR is a type of inheritance tax relief. It reduces the amount of tax that farmers and landowners must pay when farmland is passed to the next generation. Business property relief (BPR) is similar, but for business assets that are part of the estate.

The UK Government is committed to supporting farmers and rural communities, including helping families to pass their land on to the next generation. It believes that its reforms will better target these reliefs to make them fairer, protecting small family farms, such as are common within the Lake District. It considers that most estates will not be affected by the changes and that those affected will be the wealthiest 500 estates each year.

#### Agricultural Transition Plan

The State Party, through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), has set out plans for a range of schemes, including initiatives to increase biodiversity, restore landscapes, promote animal welfare, and increase productivity through investment in new equipment and technology. These were outlined in its Agricultural Transition Plan for 2021 to 2024, [The Path to Sustainable Farming](#). This plan was updated in [January 2024](#). It provides a significant opportunity for the Lake District, to maximise the benefits for farming, nature, and climate recovery, for example: cleaner water; healthier soils and greater resilience to floods and droughts. Central to the new regime is the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) via which the UK Government pays for land-based environmental and climate goods and services.

As reported in the State Party's 2021 State of Conservation Report and the update submitted in 2023, delivery of projects such as ELMS has progressed. There is now increasing clarity and certainty around the new ELMS and how this can best support the components of the attributes of the property, albeit recognising that the Partnership will need to continue to liaise with DEFRA around what else can be done.

#### Change to Farm Business Payments and Incomes

The Partnership is monitoring the impact of the removal of the [Basic Payment Scheme](#) (BPS) which was to be phased out by 2028 but this is now being accelerated. The BPS historically accounted for over 90% of net profit for livestock farmers in Less Favoured Areas (remote and constrained rural areas). The table below shows payments received in UK pounds per hectare (source: Strutt Parker BPS calculator). The average Lake District commercial farm size in 2021 was 118ha (source: DEFRA survey).

year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
£/ha	£183	£148	£114	£85	£57	£28	£0

The BPS is/was used to supplement the main basic income of farmers who carry out eligible agricultural activities. The Partnership is working with the State Party to minimise the impact of this reduction. Such measures include maximising the uptake of the new ELMS and exploring

opportunities for diversifying income streams, whilst at the same time providing advice and support to the farming community. Further work is still needed, including the ability to transfer between old agri-environmental schemes to the new ELMS to shore up incomes.

The following table shows changes in farm incomes (source: DEFRA's Farm Business Survey not including BPS)

year	Average farm business income: In less favoured area at current prices not including BPS
2020/2021	£33,400
2021/2022	£42,900
2023/2023	£25,400
2023/2024	£26,000

### Agri-Environment Subsidies

ELMS has three components, all of which are applicable to the English Lake District WHS: the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Countryside Stewardship (CS), and Landscape Recovery (LR). Whilst still in roll-out phase, partners are seeking means, through ELMS, to sustain the social and economic vibrancy of farm businesses and of farming and local communities without threatening or denuding the tangible and intangible agropastoral attributes of OUV.

An example of a Landscape Recovery project is the Resilient Glendermackin project with £550,000 allocated to reduce Keswick's flood risk. The project aims to temporarily store around 800,000m<sup>3</sup> of water and the project will provide further flood risk-benefit by slowing the flow of water. The team is working with farmers to co-design the project to allow farming and nature to go hand-in-hand; whilst creating new job opportunities along the way, including for local contracting businesses.

ELMS is also helping to support Commoners' Associations. Commoners' Associations can enter a Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Moorland scheme and will receive payments to cover the extra expenses involved for managing their land in an environmentally sustainable way. The scheme allows commoners to complete the survey of their land at any time of year, working around the farming calendar, and no changes to stocking levels or management of the land is required. An additional report is also produced which includes current environmental benefits delivered on the common and future opportunities for restoration and improvement and highlights the importance of common land, delivering multiple highly-valued public goods at present and in the future.

### Farming in Protected Landscapes

The [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) programme (FiPL) is making a significant difference to farmers, whether through conserving traditional farm buildings, supporting diversification, or helping farmers help themselves through financial support for Community Interest Companies. Programmes like FiPL are enabling the LDNPA to increase engagement with the farming community and engage hard-to-reach farmers for the first time. FiPL is providing support to farmers for projects which farmers might not otherwise have been able to do. It has also supported organisations which support farming traditions such as the funding of equipment to support shepherds' meets and shows. Whilst future project funding for FiPL beyond March 2025 is not yet clear, the extension of the FiPL staffing to further assist with optimising the effectiveness of farmer uptake of ELMS aligned to the LDNPP's Management Plan is very welcomed. It is a further illustration of the State Party's commitment to Protected Landscapes.

The allocation of DEFRA FiPL-funding for Lake District projects is administered through the LDNPA. It has been hugely successful and beneficial to the agro-pastoral traditions of the property through

resourcing both investment in tangible and intangible attributes. In the Lake District, up to March 2024, approximately 360 farmers have been engaged in the FiPL programme. A total of £5.4m of project funding has been provided from July 2021 to March 2025.

In addition to FiPL project funding, another £2.7m has been secured from DEFRA for Historic Building Restoration Grants in the national park (in 2024-25) towards the repair of culturally important traditional barns, and a separate allocation of £100,000 has been awarded for access projects. Both funds, while separate to the core FiPL funding, are delivered by the FiPL team.

FiPL has delivered enormous benefit to the WHS by providing funding for farmers for projects which have had a positive benefit in sustaining attributes of OUV such as: barn restoration; cultural landscape feature restoration and supporting traditional farming practices and farm diversification. Project examples are included in Annex A.

#### Projects (Potentially) Funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund

In its 2022 State of Conservation Report the State Party outlined the scope of the Our Common Cause landmark national partnership project, with Lake District commons included, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The [Lake District Foundation](#), the charity for the Lake District, on behalf of the Partnership has submitted a proposal to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This significant bid, entitled ‘Managing World Heritage in a Climate Changing World: ensuring resilience of our OUV’. will help deliver the Partnership’s ambition for supporting farming to address climate action and become resilient to climate change.

#### Securing Private Finance

The Partnership is also making significant progress on private finance, for securing natural capital and sustaining the cultural landscape. Finding the resources to deliver is challenging, however the Partnership is actively exploring a number of opportunities including:

- There are a number of initiatives being piloted within the property, including the Glenderamakin Catchment Project (further details below);
- a partnership with National Park Partnerships and Palladium, with funding from Estee Lauder Companies UK (ELC) and Santander Bank, seeking to establish a sustainable nature-based finance income stream for land managers or farmers to create riparian woodlands and construct wetlands to intercept phosphorous from entering waterbodies and the Windermere catchment.

Nationally the State Party has produced guidance on [Nature Markets](#): a framework for scaling up private investment in nature recovery and sustainable farming.

#### **Implementation and Strengthening of Policy (National and Local) to Support Agro-Pastoral Traditions Including Through Research and Analysis**

There are aspects of many State Party strategies that provide support for the agro-pastoral attribute. It is important these are continually monitored to ensure the desired outcomes are being achieved.

#### Partnership Management Plan

The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) actively seeks to support farming and agro-pastoral traditions through its Partnership Management Plan. As reported in the response to paragraph 5 of the Committee’s Decision above, actions to maintain, celebrate and strengthen traditional Lake District farming systems and to support farmers through the agricultural transition were supported in the recent Action Review under [Outcome 3: Securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change](#).

It is acknowledged that the hefting system has been compromised. All components associated with the attribute of agro-pastoral system are now being carefully monitored and are the focus of significant work to ensure their long-term sustainability:

- On-going collection and analysis of fell-going flock data will support publication of an updated Lake District Shepherds' Guide (a Partnership Plan action).
- Other components of the agro-pastoral attribute, such as some traditional farm buildings, field boundaries and field systems are being protected and through State Funding have been repaired and restored (see Appendix A examples under Farming in Protected Landscapes).
- The Partnership is ensuring that the area of land designated as Common Land is being maintained.

#### Actions taken by the WHS Steering Group

Through the work of the WHS Steering Group (WHSSG), the LDNPP has made progress on improving the understanding of the interactions between nature recovery, deer management and the management of fell-going sheep flocks. The report on this subject (see Appendix A Tripartite report), considers traditional farming practices, and the interactions between deer, sheep, and nature recovery. Produced in 2023, it proposes a set of recommendations for both the Partnership and the State Party. A number of these recommendations are now being progressed, including the establishment of a new Wild Deer Management Group which is tasked with producing the first Lake District-wide Wild Deer Management Strategy (see response to paragraph 5 of the Committee Decision above).

In 2023 the WHSSG commissioned a Farm Survey to provide information on farming in the property. The results of this survey have been analysed since the last State of Conservation Report was submitted. With respect to the monitoring of agro-pastoral traditions, the survey was particularly effective in collating baseline data to enable monitoring for:

- Farmsteads and farmhouses
- The surviving physical and social elements of hill farming e.g. shepherding and common gathering
- Local techniques of landscape maintenance (stonewalling, hedging, pollarding)

Analysis of the Farm Survey data resulted in several recommendations, some of which are already being implemented to support restoration of buildings and improve visitor information about farming.

#### Integrating Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in Landscape/Nature-based Schemes

The LDNPP is also advocating for an approach to promote mutual understanding and learning between relevant land-management organisations and practitioners. When progressing landscape/nature-based schemes (including agri-environment schemes), partners are asked to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that promotes a bespoke place-based approach. The intention is to ensure that nature recovery, viability of hefting patterns, commoning activity and other aspects of agro-pastoral practice are all assessed.

The National Trust has adopted this approach in its Future Farming Programme which ensures that decisions affecting the re-letting and management of their 92 hill farms include an understanding of cultural heritage and seek to sustain OUV. 54 of the Trust's hill farms are fell farms, and include a flock of over 21,000 mainly Herdwick sheep in and around the edge of the WHS. This programme will see investment in farmhouses and infrastructure as well as creating opportunities for farm diversification. It will also support and develop a pipeline of new farm entrants with skills to take on farm tenancies.

#### Other Initiatives

In addition to the suite of agri-environment subsidies being secured to help manage the property there

are other initiatives that are helping to sustain the agro-pastoral attribute. Natural England and Historic England have recently issued a joint [statement](#) with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This indicates a commitment to both nature and cultural heritage. The UK Government is clear that “*initiatives to protect and improve our natural world and cultural heritage are acts of stewardship by which we discharge our debt to it, and so are moral imperatives in themselves, but they are also economically sensible.*”<sup>1</sup>

In 2023 the country’s first Environmental Improvement Plan was published, as required by the Environment Act. It has, as its apex goal, improving nature, but importantly contains ‘Goal 10 - Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment’, including key policies to reinforce the natural, geological, and cultural heritage of landscapes, and to support farmers to improve Protected Landscapes through the FiPL programme.’

Where the LDNPP has identified potential vulnerabilities, it is being proactive in designing and delivering solutions. This includes establishing a new pan-Park Deer Management Group which is producing the first Lake District-wide Wild Deer Management Strategy, also promoting land management approaches which take a place-based approach to ensure that nature recovery, viability of hefting patterns, commoning activity and other aspects of agro-pastoral practice are all assessed and promoted through a Heritage Impact Assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan (2018):  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf)<sup>1</sup>

8. *Notes the growing imbalance between houses for residents and holiday homes, despite efforts to provide affordable housing for residents, and further requests the State Party to establish measures that discourage the conversion of residential houses to second or holiday homes to guarantee affordable housing for residents and at the same time reduce urban development pressures on the landscape;*

The issue of lack of affordable housing for local residents is both a national and international issue impacting areas which attract significant numbers of tourists and in turn become desirable locations for second/holiday homes.

The Lake District has seen much proactive work involving both the State Party and locally with the Lake District National Park Partnership on seeking to address the issue of affordable housing in the property. Following the change in national government in July 2024, the State Party has indicated its intention to bring forward potential rental reforms, help for first time buyers, and more housebuilding. This is an evolving situation and continuing action is needed to address the current lack of permanent residential housing to sustain local communities and maintain services such as schools, shops, and local medical facilities. The State Party and the LDNPP are working together to address this issue through national and local policies.

The popularity of the Lake District means there is a high demand for housing, not just from local residents, but also from people from other parts of the country to occupy as permanent residences, holiday homes or second homes. It is generally accepted that if the percentage of second homes in any one settlement/parish is over 20 percent then the sustainability of settlements is adversely impacted. According to recent figures, 25 percent of the existing housing stock in the Lake District has no permanent resident and there are several parishes where this figure is significantly higher than 20 percent.

The annual strategic affordable housing need across the Lake District is calculated carefully taking account of information about where properties are really needed in practice. For example, for the following settlements the housing need numbers are:

- 259 in Windermere
- 253 in Keswick
- 155 in Ambleside

The State Party is aware that the LDNPA acknowledges the growing imbalance between houses for residents and holiday homes and has been taking action to provide affordable homes for local residents. Unlike many other Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes) the LDNPA's planning policies do not permit unrestricted housing, thereby enabling affordable and local occupancy housing to be built whilst new build second and holiday homes are controlled and restricted. The LDNPA will continue to look at further opportunities to reduce the imbalance.

The Lake District National Park Partnership's recent review (Spring 2024) of its Management Plan (see response to paragraph 5 of the Committee's Decision above) has an increased focus on actions relating to the housing market and the impact of short-term and holiday lets. This demonstrates the Partnership's awareness of the issue and its ambition to increase the number of permanent residents and the share of the resident population that is of working age.



### Measures to discourage the conversion of residential houses to second or holiday homes

The State Party is implementing changes at a national level to disincentivise second home ownership through changes to tax regimes and to holiday letting through proposed further changes, including a national holiday let registration scheme and changing the land use classification for holiday lets.

In March 2024, the State Party indicated it would abolish the furnished holiday lettings tax benefits to promote fairness with other residential property landlords. This comes into effect on 6 April 2025. It also strengthened 100% Council Tax premiums on long-term empty homes, which came into force on 1 April 2024.

In its October 2024 budget the new Government announced that it was increasing Stamp Duty Land Tax on the purchase of second homes, buy-to-let residential properties, and companies purchasing residential property, from 3% to 5% from 31 October 2024.

Locally, councils covering the English Lake District are implementing the new changes to tax regimes for second homes from 1st April 2025, to discourage second home ownership.

### Measures to guarantee affordable housing for residents

The State Party and the LDNPA is actively working with [Homes England](#) (the UK Government's housing and regeneration agency) to support new housebuilding for affordable housing to maximise the support they provide to bringing forward new house building in the English Lake District. They do this by forming partnerships that bridge the gap between the public and private sector. Significant work is being undertaken with local landowners, local housing trusts and housing associations (a number of whom provide affordable rented accommodation across the property) on bringing sites forward to facilitate affordable, local, and permanent housing. For example, 534 new houses have been built since inscription in 2017 and 'allocated sites', such as Windermere Gateway, could bring forward over 600 new, permanently occupied properties across the Lake District.

The State Party's notification regarding the Windermere Gateway proposals, submitted on 05 April 2024, set out how the proposals for this allocated site were intended to address identified need for affordable housing for local people. The State Party received ICOMOS' Technical Review on 23 September 2024. That Technical Review is welcomed by the LDNPA who, as planning authority, is now in discussions with the developer and other interested parties, including Homes England and the local housing authority, on how best to take forward matters raised.

The LDNPA's approach is to generally facilitate delivery of small numbers of housing to reflect the community need. The authority identifies sites for affordable housing in its Local Plan in the form of the [Land allocations](#) document, including the proposed Windermere Gateway site for affordable housing, local needs housing and permanent homes.

Positive actions to address affordable housing also include the work of other local agencies such as the [Lakeland Housing Trust](#) which has spent the last two years working with solicitors, a barrister, and Lake District National Park Authority planners to develop a [restriction](#) which people can choose to register with the Land Registry against the title of their property. The restriction, technically known as a Section 106 Unilateral Undertaking, will be registered in the Land Charges Register against the property, meaning their home can only ever be used as a principal residence or as a rental property with a 12-month minimum term and not as a second home, holiday let or Airbnb.

### Measures to reduce urban pressure on the landscape

The LDNPA's site allocations recognise the environmental capacity of the lakes and settlements where sites have been identified. Measures aimed at maximising the use of the existing housing for



permanent use by residents will also reduce the pressure for further new build and therefore pressures on the landscape. However, this will take time to have an effect, and, in the meantime, there is a need to retain the resident population, and therefore some sensitive development will still need to take place.

*9. Recommends to the State Party to address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles;*

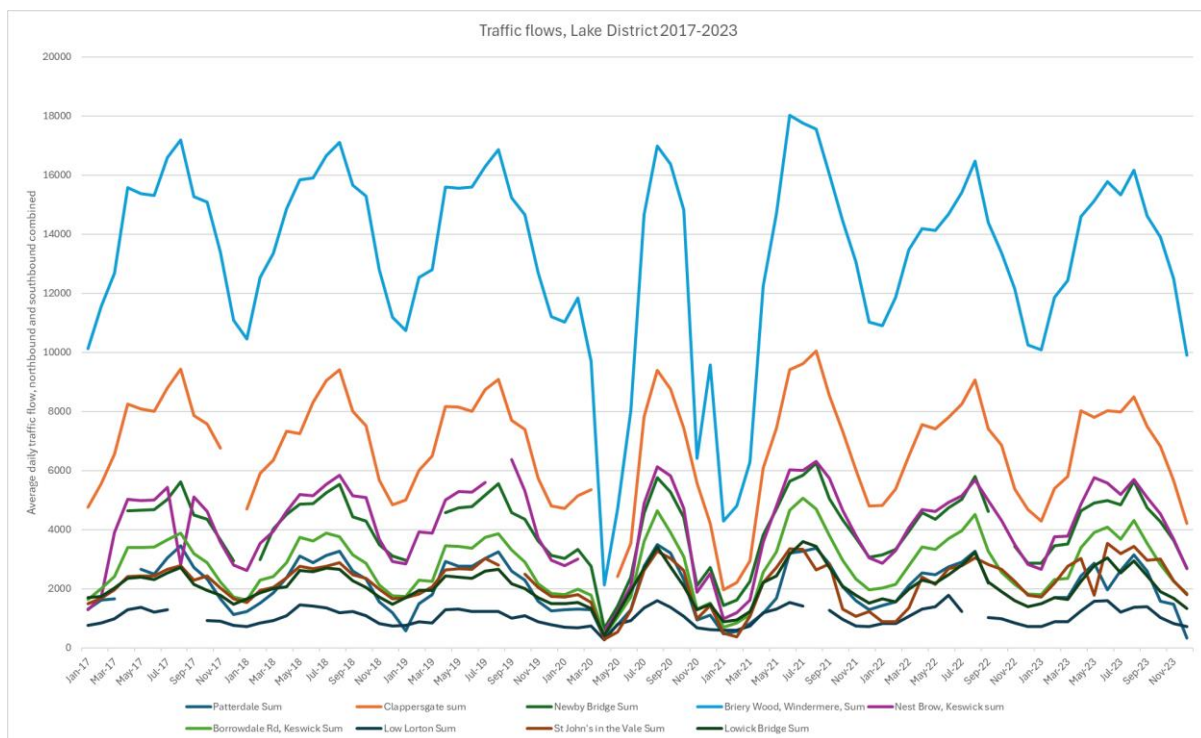
Traffic and transport has been acknowledged as a major issue in the property since its nomination, since the majority of visitors have predominantly moved around by private vehicle.

Private vehicular traffic is a topic that the State Party, commercial operators and the Partnership therefore take seriously and, in recent years, have focussed attention on improving public transport, as well as encouraging active travel measures through national and local policy. These initiatives are delivering improvements to both public transport use and active travel take-up within the property.

The LDNPP is committed to a sustainable future for the Lake District by encouraging public transport improvements and active travel measures that actively challenge perceptions about the accessibility of public transport in the property.

Data collection

Traffic count data gathered from 2017 to 2023 within the World Heritage Site shows no increase in traffic numbers overall since inscription. However, there has been a change in the distribution of traffic and seasonal fluctuations, both increases and decreases at different locations.



*Figure 1: Average daily traffic flows for nine locations within the Lake District between 2017 and 2023 which demonstrates that there has not been an increase in overall traffic levels since inscription*

Additional traffic data is presented in graphs included in Annex A.

Where the data shows traffic decreases in different locations, this suggests that this effort is having a positive impact. This evidence is particularly clear in the Central Lakes where long-term sustainable transport and active travel interventions have been delivered, complemented by more recent changes to increase the frequency of public transport services and subsidised fares.

The Cumbria Visitor Survey reports on changing visitor attitudes through a comprehensive survey undertaken every three years. It asks visitors for their experience of traffic levels to see if this was an issue for users of the highway network and tracks how views have changed over time. The latest [Cumbria Visitor Survey \(2022\)](#) reported the following findings:

- Approximately 90% of visitors arrive by private motor vehicle.
- There was a significant increase in people agreeing with the statement “*Traffic levels were reasonable*” as 83% of people agreed. This is up 26% from 2018 (57%) and 2015 (63%).
- There was a significant increase in people agreeing with the statement “*there is sufficient parking available*” as 85% of people agreed. This is up 20% from 2018 (65%) and 2015 (64%).

This evidence demonstrates that visitors feel that congestion as an issue is getting better not worse. However, it is acknowledged that seasonal fluctuations, with traffic levels increasing during the summer season, and increases in specific areas, can create a perception of excessive traffic, particularly for residents.

#### Actions to Enhance the Public Transportation System and Encourage Sustainable Travel

The LDNPP is committed to a sustainable future for the Lake District by encouraging improvements to, and an increased use of, public transport as well as promoting active travel.

One of the Key Outcomes identified in the Partnership’s Management Plan is Sustainable Travel and Transport (STT). The aim is to increase the rate of decarbonisation in travel, increase opportunities for use of sustainable and active travel, make use of new technologies to reduce the need to travel, and create and market new sustainable travel opportunities.

In Spring 2024 the Partnership undertook an Action Review which recognised UNESCO’s concerns on traffic issues. The overarching principles under this key outcome reference the World Heritage Committee’s specific request:

- Contribute to the UNESCO recommendation to ‘address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles’.
- Inform our practice with awareness of global innovation and change in the transport and mobility sector, specifically in relation to behaviour change and implementation.

A number of key transformative actions have been identified under the Partnership Plan to help achieve the ambitions under this key outcome:

- Advocate and support initiatives for multi-modal ticketing and enhanced connectivity from the West Coast Mainline between Penrith and Keswick and from Oxenholme and Windermere stations.
- Support councils and community rail partnerships to progress rail upgrades on all Cumbrian lines, including Lakes Line capacity, Cumbrian Coast Line signalling, electrification of the Lakes and Furness Line, station accessibility improvements and improved stopping frequency at and the ability to travel between Penrith and Oxenholme.
- Develop marketing initiatives for all sustainable and active transport modes. All Partners to promote sustainable travel through their own communications.
- Develop high quality active travel measures, including Develop cycle corridors and spurs set out in the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan, deliver the Borderland See More Lake District projects and work with Active Travel England to develop priority networks within the Lake District using funding allocated.
- Work with communities to pilot sustainable travel improvements including potential

integrated traffic management schemes and delivering the actions from the Keswick Transport Study.

- Use results from the research project ‘Comparing attitudes and behaviour for visitors and residents in terms of how they would like to move around the park’ to develop and support delivery of a list of SMART actions.
- Work with Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council to deliver and promote bus service improvements through the revised Bus Service Improvement Plan, Rural Mobility Fund pilots and through partnership working at the Enhanced Partnership.
- Partners to promote public transport and active travel in their communications. The Key Outcome Group will support them to provide sustainable travel itineraries, information, ticketing linked with attractions and accommodation and to maximise the use of the ‘You Smart Thing’ travel information.

In addition, other local policies and strategies are helping further public transport and active travel ambitions including:

- Development of valley travel plans that look at the opportunities and solutions at a valley scale.
- [Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan](#), approved in 2022.
- [Cumbria Destination Management Plan](#), approved in 2023, includes an ambitious target to reduce private vehicle traffic by 15% by 2030.

These key policies and initiatives have led to actions that are improving the quality of public transport and active travel. These include innovations in rural mobility and substantial funding awards for the improvements to bus services and fleets, integrated services between train, bus and some boat services with enhanced ability to view the timings of departures and integrated ticketing, demand responsive shuttle buses between key settlements and attractions, promotion and marketing campaigns supporting the use of public transport, and multi-million-pound investments in active travel opportunities on accessible off-road routes such as the [West Windermere Way](#).

National policy decisions are also influencing public transport and active travel such as:

- The bus fare cap initiative: at present the bus fare cap is £2. In the October 2024 budget the UK Government announced an England-wide £3 bus fare, whereby all single bus journeys will be capped at £3 in 2025 with the Government subsidising the difference.
- Funding to Local Councils to deliver their Bus Service Improvement Plan. This funding helps to support rural bus services to reconnect communities.

More information on these examples and others are included in Annex A.

*10. Also notes the concerns raised in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews regarding the use of off-road motorised vehicles on green lanes within the property, urges the State Party to harness the already available instruments to prevent vehicular access to unsealed roads in highly sensitive and emblematic valleys, and also requests the State Party to ensure as a matter of urgency that systematic monitoring is carried out on all unsealed roads open to vehicular access to assess the status of this activity and its impacts on the tangible and intangible attributes of the property, as a basis for a comprehensive regulatory policy focused on safeguarding the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);*

The State Party trusts that the following report will assure the World Heritage Committee that this matter is being progressed through the Lake District National Park Authority's (LDNPA) unsealed public roads<sup>2</sup> route monitoring plan, resulting from this recommendation.

#### Use of Available Instruments to Prevent Vehicular Access to Unsealed Roads

Unlike access within other countries, in England there is an established right and presumption for vehicular access to unsealed public roads, as for any other roads, unless that right is removed or modified through a formal process of Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) due to harm being caused. The State Party previously reported on the use of TROs in its 2021 State of Conservation Report, including in Annex D.

The LDNPA must work within government guidance and regulation regarding vehicular access rights, including the procedure to be followed when TROs are proposed and issued.

As a TRO is a mechanism to suspend people's rights to use a route or control the way they use a route, either permanently or temporarily, removing such rights is a significant issue. Any decision to do so must be based, as far as is practicable, on robust evidence. This means each unsealed public road needs to be assessed before any legal action is taken. The UK Government has produced detailed [guidance](#) regarding the legislation and the situations within which a TRO may be considered.

TROs can restrict all or certain specified types of users. They can restrict use to certain times or certain seasons, or even ban use altogether in areas where there is a severe problem.

Of the 103.52km of unsealed public roads, there are already a number that have Traffic Regulation Orders. In the Lake District there are TROs on the following routes:

- Little Langdale to Ford at River Brathay ([U5531](#)) – closed.
- Nibthwaite to Parkamoor, ([U5051](#) and [U5052](#)) - discretionary closures depending on weather and conditions (3.6km). LDNPA is advised by Westmorland & Furness Council that as this TRO has not been activated for many years, it would likely require consultation with stakeholder and interested parties before bringing it into effect again - and possibly a new or revised TRO;
- Rusland Pool ([U5566](#)) - seasonally closed between 1 October and 31 May (0.729km).

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<sup>2</sup> It is the non-tarmac public roads that are solely on the List of Streets, and the non-tarmac Byways Open to All Traffic that are now known as 'Unsealed Public Roads' and are the subject of the UNESCO recommendation. It is generally accepted that most non-tarmac public roads and non-tarmac byways open to all traffic (BOATSs) carry public vehicular rights and so can be legally used by motor vehicles. Although it is not always possible for these routes to be driven in what we consider 'road cars' (such as a Ford Fiesta for instance) they are generally usable by 4 Wheel Drive vehicles and sturdy motorbikes – that is, vehicles such as those used by farmers.

- [Gatescarth Pass](#), permit system for use of BOAT 548015/361002 between Sadgill and Mardale (3.542 km).

The highway network in England has developed over centuries, if not millennia. It is an important cultural heritage asset. These unsealed public roads have been used over a lengthy period of time and have established legal rights of use. They form a small part of the totality of the network for recreational access (only 3.4%), but it is acknowledged that there is localised concern about vehicle access to these routes. Some people consider that any vehicles accessing unsealed public roads are harmful in terms of their perception of enjoyment of the cultural landscape.

#### Systematic Monitoring Plan for Unsealed Public Roads within the Property

The LDNPA has responded to the request from UNESCO to undertake systematic monitoring of unsealed public roads in the World Heritage Site, diverting funding to commence the monitoring programme this year.

The LDNPA recognises that management of these unsealed public roads requires long term attention. It has prepared a monitoring plan to systematically monitor nine unsealed public roads, including six routes highlighted by UNESCO, over a nine-year period to ensure a collection of evidence based on fact, not perception. This timeframe will ensure the data collected informs an overall view of potential impacts on each route, excluding short term influences on data such as seasonality, weather, and changing recreation trends. [Breasthigh Road](#) has been included in the provisional schedule as this was requested by UNESCO even though it is outside the World Heritage Site but is an important route within the Lake District National Park.

Monitoring will assess the level of the activity and its impacts on the tangible and intangible attributes of the property through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative monitoring is already underway on three routes this year, at Tilberthwaite, Gale Road and Stile End; with data-logging equipment installed on these routes.

To ensure that the monitoring is responsive to impacts on the attributes of OUV and, taking account of resources available to the LDNPA, the ‘qualitative’ user survey monitoring work has first commenced on Tilberthwaite, given the historic monitoring of this route and the route’s active management group. To secure buy-in to the approach and methodology, the LDNPA has developed the approach and the qualitative survey design with the Tilberthwaite Partnership Management Group (TPMG) which has a broad range of representatives from all interested groups relating to the Tilberthwaite route including the Lake District Green Lanes Alliance (LDGLA), ramblers, trail users, and the parish council. This approach will ensure a robust approach to assessment, so any future decisions meet the required test of being evidence-based, and not subjective opinion.

To strengthen findings to take a confident view on impacts on OUV or probable future actions, LDNPA’s approach will be to repeat the surveys three times, so that three years-worth of quantitative and qualitative data has been collected for each of the monitored routes in order to establish any sort of trend. This will enable benchmarking to give a baseline to compare survey results and will track attitudes/perceptions. To confidently conclude that existing access rights should be removed, the collection of evidence may need to be collected over a long-term timeframe to ensure short term influences (seasonality, weather, etc) are understood. The same methodology will be adopted to monitor all routes.

#### Policy to Safeguard Attributes of OUV

The LDNPA has published a [Position Statement](#) (also included in Annex A) to clarify its current

activity and the process it will follow should management difficulties arise. The State Party previously provided information relating to this statement to the World Heritage Centre under Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* on 08 April 2022, and also references it in its 2023 State of Conservation Report update.

Where potential impacts have been identified, the LDNPA will work with partners, land managers, user groups and stakeholders to manage and mitigate the impacts of such activity on the routes themselves, the surrounding environment and on other legitimate user groups. In accordance with the legislation, it will consider the use of a TRO as one potential method of mitigating identified harm.

Where there is unequivocal evidence that motorised vehicle use of a specific unsealed road is harmful to the OUV of the WHS, or the special qualities of the National Park, then the LDNPA will consider consulting upon the introduction of an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to address the defined threat. This process will be in accordance with UK Government guidance and the tests required under Highways Act legislation.

The TRO process has been used before where there was evidence of harm, and the LDNPA would use it again, if necessary. This demonstrates the LDNPA's willingness to use TROs where it has identified harm through robust evidence-gathering. This has to be in conjunction with the highway authority as the LDNPA does not have sole responsibility for all the routes.

#### Assessment of the Impact on Tangible and Intangible Attributes of OUV

The State Party is aware that certain groups without a legal mandate, such as the Lake District Green Lanes Alliance (LDGLA), make representations about this matter to UNESCO via ICOMOS and World Heritage Watch.

As set out above, the TRO process has been used before where there was evidence of harm, and the LDNPA has indicated it would use it again, if necessary, as set out in its Position Statement, where harm has been identified through robust evidence-gathering.

If our evidence gathering indicates there is potential for harm, the harm will be assessed on the basis of the results of the monitoring programme with reference to the methodology set out in UNESCO's *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*.

Through the attitudinal surveys being undertaken the LDNPA will consider the views of users of the routes for the intangible attributes such as "Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment," and "The perception and enjoyment of an open landscape." These views are subjective, based upon people's experience of using the routes. The State Party and the LDNPA are aware that there are very opposing views on this matter. As well as being a World Heritage Site the LDNPA also has a responsibility as a National Park which requires access for all and if it is to restrict access to certain users, this needs to be evidenced based on harm.



*11. Notes furthermore that the Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, approved in 2022, makes no mention of World Heritage and, as a change of scale in the Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects is envisaged within the property, recommends the State Party to promptly set out an overall place-based strategic approach to demonstrate how both natural flood management and protection of the attributes of the OUV might be achieved;*

The World Heritage Site is not mentioned in the Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy because of its strategic nature and the requirement for the Flood Risk Management Strategy to be applicable to the whole of Cumbria. It does not identify either site specific locations or any of the related designations (whether environmental or heritage). The Strategy establishes the strategic framework to guide all Cumbrian flood risk projects. Local characteristics and risk will be considered, including World Heritage Site inscription, once projects under the strategy are identified.

The responsibility for flood management which was covered by that document is now divided between the two new unitary authorities - Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council - which replaced the County Council in April 2023. Cumberland Council is not intending to change the existing Strategy at the present time. However, Westmorland and Furness Council is looking to revise the Strategy for its geographic area this year and will ensure that the WHS designation is considered. Both council areas include land within the WHS.

Cumbria is forecast to be one of the areas of the UK most affected by increased flooding under UK climate change predictions ([UK Climate Projections](#)) from the UK Met Office ([UKCP18](#)). More detailed modelling on the specific circumstances Cumbria may face is currently being explored through a joint project led by Westmorland and Furness Council which will inform the revision of the Partnership's [Climate Adaptation Report](#).

### **Overall Place-Based Strategic Approach**

#### National Natural Flood Management Strategy & Funding

Departments of the UK Government are preparing a [Natural Flood Management](#) (NFM) Strategy to identify opportunities for NFM as a mechanism for protecting communities particularly vulnerable to flooding.

In September 2023 the Environment Agency and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announced £25 million funding for improving flood resilience through a new NFM programme. The [Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience](#) (CIFR) project was successful in receiving funding. It is operating in the Grasmere sub-catchment of Windermere, within the property, and has aligned its delivery and engagement with other schemes operating across the Lake District that are delivering landscape restoration, climate and nature action ([Revere](#), [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) (FiPL) and [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) farmer engagement.

#### Lake District NFM Projects

The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) wants to support its communities to manage flood risk. It recognises that NFM is the most appropriate method to mitigate the impact of climate risk and increase the resilience of its communities and landscape and that this requires urgent action. This requires using nature-based solutions to reduce downstream flood risk by delivering a whole host of interventions including re-wiggling rivers, planting trees and restoring wetlands. To be successful it will need to deliver at scale, and with the involvement of a number of agencies and the local communities. This approach will require a careful balance to ensure that schemes are designed with



the lowest possible impact on the cultural landscape.

It is worth noting that Cumbria has been at the forefront of testing and researching the impacts that Natural Flood Management can have and continues to work with academic partners to expand and develop options.

As reported in the State Party's 2021 State of Conservation Report and 2023 update, partner organisations such as the National Trust are looking at addressing flood resilience in a cultural landscape through their [Riverlands](#) project and the Ullswater Catchment Management Partnership, which works to restore and improve rivers in the Ullswater catchment in the Lake District. The Ullswater project has won the prestigious [2024 UK River Prize's Catchment Award](#). Together the partners have delivered over 280 restoration initiatives across the catchment since its inception in 2015, including the Riverland team's award-winning 're-wiggling' Goldrill Beck project.

### Production of Guidance

Existing national guidance regarding NFM is available from the [Environment Agency](#) and [Government](#).

The [North West Natural Flood Management measures – a practical guide for farmers handbook](#) contains more information about the types of NFM techniques that landowners can use, the associated maintenance and costs, and extra considerations.

A specific guidance document on NFM and protecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property is also being prepared by a multi-partner collaborative group. This will set out a staged approach to OUV considerations when undertaking any NFM project. There is recognition that without addressing climate change impacts, the local communities and the cultural landscape will be further threatened, experiencing more frequent and larger flooding events. Therefore there is a careful balance to strike to ensure action is being taken to mitigate this risk whilst also ensuring schemes are designed with the lowest possible impact on the cultural landscape. The guidance document will set out the standard of best practice for considering the OUV of the World Heritage Site and integrating this into NFM proposals. It will help to understand what OUV is and why it is important to integrate into plans for NFM. If OUV is identified in relation to an NFM proposal then a process of heritage impact assessment will be used to assess any potential impacts.

*12. Welcomes that an interpretation strategy for the property is under preparation and requests that this strategy be developed around the OUV of the property, finalised as soon as possible, submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and used as a reference to determine, which tourism uses are compatible with sustaining the property's OUV;*

Work to refine the Interpretation Strategy continued thereafter on the basis of advice from Historic England and other partners. A revised draft was shared with key partners by the Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) in October 2024. At the same time the State Party received ICOMOS' Technical Review report of the initial draft.

The State Party is aware that Historic England has actively engaged in supporting the LDNPP in reviewing ICOMOS' Technical Review comments alongside the latest version of the Interpretation Strategy. Historic England and ICOMOS' comments will jointly contribute to enhancing the revision of the Interpretation Strategy to better help it be fit for its purpose.

The Interpretation Strategy seeks to enhance public appreciation and understanding of the English Lake District World Heritage Site and tell the story of what makes this site special. It will contribute to engendering a strong sense of pride and ownership of the local environment and its distinctive character. Key messages will be outlined, both at the property-wide level and across the property's 13 Valleys. The State Party considers that the draft Strategy will support wider objectives in relation to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of the heritage of this world class living cultural landscape of exceptional beauty to current and future generations.

#### Response to ICOMOS Technical Review

The State Party and the Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) have both welcomed ICOMOS' contribution to refinement of the draft Interpretation Strategy. The positive comments received will provide assistance in finalising the document. The current omissions are also noted, with the draft Interpretation Strategy still evolving, and further work underway on the action plan component. Further work on how this Interpretation Strategy is related to the Partnership Management Plan, the Destination Management Plan and other policies will continue and will form part of the Management Plan review.

The LDNPP recognises that the Interpretation Strategy needs to have a defined status and requires buy-in from partners to support delivery. It therefore proposes that the Strategy will be taken to the Partnership for adoption early in 2025 and that the Partnership's on-going commitment to delivery will be enshrined in the next iteration of the Management Plan for the property.

In order to deliver the Strategy, an associated action plan is in draft which provides a schedule of actions, explains what the actions are, proposed timescales for delivery, who will deliver, and budget and funding opportunities. ICOMOS' comments have been helpful in developing this further. Timescales for delivery have been set out in terms of short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long term (5+ years) proposals. The LDNPP will monitor the progress of delivery and benefits realisation with the aim of ensuring increasing awareness of the World Heritage Site and its OUV. Greater engagement and knowledge of the site and what makes it special will also help with visitors' appreciation and enjoyment of the property and increase responsible visiting. Some of the identified actions are either in progress or have already been delivered, such as the 13 Valleys walking trail (see detail in Section 3 below).

#### Purpose of the Interpretation Strategy

The LDNPP is producing an Interpretation Strategy which seeks to enhance public appreciation and understanding of the English Lake District WHS and tell the story of what makes this site special. This reflects UNESCO's own glossary (to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of the site) and ICOMOS' definition (as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites). The LDNPP has also considered the content of other WHS interpretation strategies.

The interpretation strategy will assist stakeholders with their understanding and promotion of the WHS, help local communities understand and take pride in their site, and help visitors understand how special this place is and encourage responsible visiting. It will outline key messages, both at the property-wide level and across the property's 13 Valleys. It will strengthen engagement with local communities, and especially young people, thereby increasing awareness of the World Heritage property and increased ownership of why the Lake District is internationally recognised.

The Interpretation Strategy will indicate which activities/places can be used to promote the OUV of the WHS, embracing the full range of potential activities to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of the site by providing examples of how these sites demonstrate OUV. Many tourism sites/outlets can and do provide interpretation, particularly where they relate to a site-specific and historical context within the World Heritage Site, fostering a greater appreciation of that location's contribution to the cultural landscape and history of local communities.

The Interpretation Strategy aims to:

- Review the heritage and its broader context;
- Review the interpretive services that already exist;
- Develop and improve the way we provide interpretation;
- Develop resilience and sustainability;
- Be flexible to respond to funding opportunities;
- Support visitor experience and access;
- Provide information on the World Heritage Site attributes of OUV, whilst details of the attributes for each valley will be part of the delivery of the interpretation such as through the 13 Valleys Trails and a revised Business Tool Kit;
- Set out the schedule of actions, with timescales, which partner will support the action, funding and monitoring of progress and effectiveness.

The principle focus of the Interpretation Strategy is understanding what is important in any geographic area and how to communicate these messages, including those attributes that are most pertinent to that area. This will then influence other management tools, including land use planning tools (the Local Plan), management tools (the Partnership's Management Plan and the Cumbria-wide Destination Management Plan) and other Strategies (e.g. the Natural Flood Management Strategy, Lake District Historic Environment Strategy) to provide a consistent framework to explain what makes WHS important in that area.

**The LDNPA's Lake District Historic Environment Strategy (HES)** (reported on in the State Party's 2023 State of Conservation Report update), refers specifically to interpretation, and to relevant actions and policies to:

- Promote understanding of OUV and conservation management;
- Utilise interpretive media to manage visitor pressure on the historic environment;
- Develop a comprehensive outreach programme for the historic environment;
- Deploy a communications plan dedicated to the historic environment.

**The Destination Management Plan (DMP)** for Cumbria (reported on in the State Party’s notification under Paragraph 172 of 22 May 2024) aims to support *‘a successful visitor economy for the whole of the county, supporting economic growth, the natural environment and delivering benefits for our host communities.’* The DMP recognises that *‘managing visitors as they journey to and within Cumbria helps to improve the visitor experience and reduce the pressure on the environment.’* It also fully acknowledges the importance of the English Lake District and Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Sites.

Whilst the Interpretation Strategy cannot be a development management document due to the regulations for the preparation of such plans, it will be a material consideration in planning decision-making. The Strategy, once agreed, will also feed into the next iteration of the Management Plan, work on which has commenced in 2024.

The Partnership’s commitment to producing an Interpretation Strategy and delivering its related actions is clear from its recent Action Review (Spring 2024) when a new action was added to the Management Plan to *‘Prepare an interpretation strategy for the English Lake District World Heritage Site in 2024 and commence delivery of the associated action plan.’* (WHS.act.1) (see response to paragraph 5 of the World Heritage Committee’s Decision above).

*13. Requests furthermore the State Party to suspend the approval process of the tourist attraction at Elterwater Quarry in Great Langdale, and any other such project proposals, and to reconsider it in light of its potential negative impacts on the attributes of Langdale underpinning the OUV of the property, until an OUV-based interpretation strategy is approved;*

The State Party has submitted further information to the World Heritage Centre subsequent to the World Heritage Committee's Decision. On 08 September 2023 the State Party provided an update on the consideration of the proposed scheme by the Lake District National Park Authority's Development Control Committee. The State Party reported that the application had been refused due to concerns that the travel plan for the proposed scheme was not sufficiently worked up to ensure the sustainability of the proposals. The World Heritage Centre was provided with a link to the report provided to the Development Control Committee to inform their decision. The report outlined the consideration of the comments provided by ICOMOS in its Technical Review of the proposals in May 2023.

The State Party provided further information under paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* on 22 May 2024 that the applicant had sought to address the reasons for refusal and submitted a revised application in December 2023. It reported that this application was approved by the Lake District National Park Authority's Development Control Committee on 01 May 2024.

The local planning authority concluded that, subject to planning conditions, the proposals would not result in unacceptable impacts on the significance of the World Heritage Site. There were found to be a potential range of public benefits, including enhancing or better revealing the significance of the World Heritage Site by providing safe and controlled access to an area of mining heritage not previously accessible to the public, and increasing awareness of some of the traditional skills and intangible heritage that has all but disappeared.

Whilst the draft Interpretation Strategy had not been published at the point of the planning decision, the Lake District National Park Authority was aware of, and took into account, the attributes in relation to Langdale with reference to the relevant chapters in the nomination document (which sets out what is special about the Langdale Valley and its contribution to the World Heritage Site). Langdale has had a long association with tourism of an adventurous nature being at the heart of the start of activity tourism with the advent of recreational rock climbing. The UNESCO-adopted Statement of OUV recognises this: *"In the English Lake District these values led directly to practical conservation initiatives to protect its scenic and cultural qualities and to the development of recreational activities to experience the landscape, all of which continue today."*

Whilst the Interpretation Strategy will further understanding of interpretation of the WHS attributes, it can be confirmed that these attributes were taken into consideration in determining this application. In addition, the [Cumbria Destination Management Plan](#) encourages and ensures that development proposals such as this encourage sustainable and responsible tourism in the English Lake District.

The Lake District has a long history as a focal point for outdoor adventure alongside its arts and cultural offer. The Lake District Partnership's strategy for growing a sustainable visitor economy supports initiatives that promote it as a destination to a range of audiences year-round with a particular focus on experiences offered by landscape and environment, culture and heritage, and adventure. This includes supporting and promoting new and existing outdoor adventure

opportunities, all sensitive to the unique landscape. At the same time the opportunity for quiet enjoyment, and the need to ensure that the spirit, awe and feeling of the Lake District can be experienced is also recognised.

As the State Party indicated in its notification of 22 May 2024, it does not consider that these objectives are incompatible, and takes the view that there is opportunity across the Lake District for an inclusive approach to sustainable tourism that protects the local environment and its culture, as set out by the Lake District National Park Authority.

The State Party and the LDNPA are particularly concerned by ICOMOS Technical Review's conclusion that the Elterwater proposals would risk *"inviting a type of audience and attraction that is likely to disrupt its [the WHS's] tranquil and contemplative character"*. The zip wire activity is underground and so the activity proposed would not generate harmful noise to the locality. The issue of noise from vehicles was considered and not considered to be detrimental. There is no objective evidence to support ICOMOS view that the proposal would invite "a type of audience" likely to adversely affect the area's character. It is important that World Heritage Sites and National Parks are welcoming to everyone and all audiences, and this is embedded in the Partnership Plan through our 'A Lake District for Everyone' Key Outcome.

#### Current Status of Consent

Following the most recent planning decision for development at Elterwater Quarry, a request for a judicial review was made by the [Friends of the Lake District](#) to the High Court. The court has decided that a judicial review can proceed. The State Party will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is updated on the outcome of this process.

*14. Notes furthermore the declining water quality of Lake Windermere caused by public and private sewage systems and land management practices, as well as by the impacts of climate change, and encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to tackle the sources of the lake's pollution through a multi-stakeholder approach including public, private and community partners and to secure its long-term funding;*

Windermere is one of the most monitored water bodies in the world and the challenges to water quality are well understood. These challenges (namely eutrophication and the warming effects associated with our changing climate but also the introduction of non-native invasive species) are commensurate with those faced by many lakes and waterbodies globally. However both the State Party and the Lake District National Park Authority acknowledge that more must be done to improve water quality in Windermere.

Significant joint action is being taken locally and nationally to improve water quality in Windermere. There is a strong commitment across local communities and through a multi-stakeholder approach to address the pollution of bodies of water and rivers. This commitment is clear in the actions already delivered by the Love Windermere Partnership (refer to State Party's notification response of 26 May 2023). The Love Windermere Partnership Plan will further show what will be done to improve water quality in Windermere and how progress can be measured.

Concerns regarding the water quality of Windermere have been raised by UNESCO before and the State Party responded to a Paragraph 174 request in 2023 (Ref: CLT/WHC/EUR/22/14115) which set out the background to water pollution and green algae in the lake, along with measures being undertaken to address these issues.

### **Water Quality of Lake Windermere**

There is increasing interest in Water Companies' activities nationally and the condition of waterways in the UK which has resulted in increased awareness and interest in Windermere's water quality.

The long-term record for monitoring of Windermere is the most comprehensive in the world. Since 1945, the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) and other organisations have been conducting comprehensive monitoring of the lake. Until the 1990s, through the last two centuries, nutrient enrichment (eutrophication) has built up in Lake Windermere. It has created a complex challenge, long in the making, causing increases in surface algal blooms and deoxygenation of the lake at depth.

Blue Green Algae blooms are a naturally occurring environmental phenomenon that become more likely during periods of warm, settled, dry weather but can also form after periods of heavy rain. Water bodies affected by blue green algae, or algal blooms may be green, blue green or greenish brown and can produce musty, earthy, or grassy odours. Blooms can also cause foaming on the shoreline, which can sometimes be confused with sewage pollution. During a bloom, the water also becomes less clear, blocking sunlight and can slow down plant growth in water. As algal blooms are naturally occurring and require the right conditions to form, there are no quick and easy solutions for reducing their occurrence. The Environment Agency (EA) [publishes the presence of confirmed blue green algae online](#).

Further nutrient reductions will be required to limit future blooms, and significant action is being taken, albeit there is no quick solution and will require long term management. This is a live situation and an evolving picture with changes likely in management/regulation.

The Environment Agency (EA) has identified that recent improvements to sewage treatment works, driven by the EA, the Water Services Regulation Authority ([Ofwat](#)) and the government as part of the [Water Industry National Environment Programme](#) (WINEP), have already led to around a 30% reduction in phosphorus entering the lake since 2020, with future improvements expected to lead to a further reduction of between 4 and 8%. This is really good news.

The water quality of Windermere is impacted from a variety of pressures in the catchment:

- Nutrients, particularly phosphorous from Water Company-operated wastewater drainage (treatment works and sewage overflows), non-water company wastewater (1,900 septic tanks as well as package treatment plants) and from urban and rural land activities.
- Historical land use and current land use change from agriculture and forestry that are also sources of nutrients, sediment, and faecal bacteria.
- Invasive non-native species affecting the ecology.
- The Freshwater Biological Association have [reported](#) that climate change has increased lake surface water temperatures by 1.7°C over the last 70 years and in combination with increased nutrients is favouring conditions for algal growth. Extreme weather patterns of intense rainfall have also increased the input of nutrients, sediment, and bacteria.

The [Source Apportionment Study](#) conducted by the Environment Agency (May 2024) used models to identify the main sources of nutrient pollutants as shown in the table below.

Source	North basin	South basin
Rural land use	33 – 41%	28 – 36%
Urban	6-12%	4 – 10%
United Utilities storm overflows	18 – 25%	17 – 24%
United Utilities sewage treatment works (STWs)	12 – 16%	18 – 22%
Private sewage treatment works (STWs)	10 – 13%	10 – 14%
Septic tanks	5-9%	6 – 10%

These studies further show that the main challenge to water quality in Windermere is nutrient enrichment (eutrophication). Nutrients, namely phosphorous, have increased in Lake Windermere over the last two centuries. Nutrient enrichment increases surface algal blooms and deoxygenation of the lake at depth. While the presence of phosphorous has declined since its peak in the 1990s (largely from the introduction of tertiary sewage treatment at that time), the presence of nutrients, combined with the increase in lake temperatures means these algal blooms are occurring more frequently. All organisations involved recognise that more needs to be done and are working together to tackle nutrient inputs and working collaboratively to identify the next steps.



Bathing Water monitoring, which measures faecal contamination rather than nutrient levels, shows that the four designated Windermere bathing waters, (Fellfoot, YMCA Lakeside, Rayrigg Meadow and also Millerground) where pollution from faecal bacteria is measured, have been consistently graded 'excellent' since 2019.

### **Efforts to Tackle the Sources of the Lake's Pollution Through Multi-Stakeholder Approach**

The Lake District National Park Partnership has recently reviewed its Management Plan actions and in recognition of the importance of water quality in the Windermere catchment has added a new action. This also recognises the need to address UNESCO concerns over Windermere. The action states that the Partnership will: *'Support the Love Windermere Partnership in its delivery of actions to improve the water environment of Windermere and align the Lake District National Park Partnership's Partners and Plan with the Love Windermere Partnership and programme.'* The LDNPA plays an active role in the Love Windermere Partnership, leading the 'land use' workstream.

### **Love Windermere Partnership**

The Love Windermere Partnership (LWP), of which the LDNPA is a significant partner, is collaborating with partners and others to address nutrient pollution. LWP was formed in 2022, and now comprises of nine partner organisations, each with a stake in Windermere, whether that be scientific, cultural, and/or economic. The partners are the Environment Agency, LDNPA, Lake District Foundation, National Trust, South Cumbria Rivers Trust, National Farmers Union, Westmorland and Furness Council, United Utilities, Cumbria Tourism and the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and representation from Parish Councils. The Partnership have recently appointed an Independent Chair – Nigel Wilkinson, and also a Partnership Manager, and a Communications Officer.

The LWP approach is based on science and supported by the views of its community engagement panel (Citizens Panel – March 2022 (supported by ACTION with communities in Cumbria funded by Esmée Fairburn Foundation.) and 'Dialogue Matters' workshop and Big Windermere survey February 2024). The Partnership aims to improve the water quality of Windermere focusing on nutrient reduction through three workstreams; Sewage, Information and Land-use. A plan is being written that will set out the outcomes that the Partnership seeks to achieve and the actions it will take to achieve them. Example interventions include:

- The Environment Agency (EA) has identified that recent improvements to sewage treatment works, driven by the EA, Ofwat and government as part of the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP), have already led to around a 30% reduction in phosphorus entering the lake since 2020, with future improvements expected to lead to a further reduction of between 4 and 8%.
- South Cumbria Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency are trialling innovative technology that, if successful, could be used to remove nutrients from septic tank effluent at a low cost. Work is underway to secure long-term funding to deliver the evidence-based solutions, for example through the LDNPA's delivery of the Revere Windermere Water Quality Finance Platform Project.
- [The Big Windermere Survey](#), which is a citizen science project. Members of the community collect water samples for laboratory analysis by Lancaster University, this data is used to inform decision making processes and to bring about action and change at pace within the catchment, in order to maintain and to improve water quality.
- South Cumbria Rivers Trust is collaborating with volunteers to restore reed beds around the north of the lake, encouraging natural processes to remove nutrients from the lake sediment.

- The Lake District Foundation and Environment Agency are [working with owners of septic tanks](#) to develop community emptying schemes and share tips about how to best manage private sewerage systems.
- The LWP has appointed a farm liaison officer to work closely with the farming community around the Windermere catchment area.

To secure long-term funding the Love Windermere partnership will continue to foster the current multi-stakeholder approach through the Love Windermere programme. The Love Windermere Partnership will seek further funding through public and private finance to secure long-term investment to address what is a long-term issue.

### Water Quality Regulation

Discharges to the water environment are regulated under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (this regime also applies to other discharges on the catchment). Officers of the Environment Agency (EA) regulate all premises and operations on the catchment that hold an environmental permit for the discharge of treated sewage effluent. These include water companies but there are also numerous other dwellings that due to their small size do not require an environmental permit provided that they comply with the [General Binding Rules](#) for small sewages discharges. In addition the EA also performs a regulatory and advisory role in relation to agriculture as well as responding to any reports of pollution of rivers and lakes etc.

The EA conducts compliance inspections and when breaches of environmental permits are identified uses its regulatory powers to bring those sites back into compliance.

With respect to storm overflows, it is recognised that sewage pollution can be devastating to human health, local biodiversity and the environment and it is for this reason that storm overflows must only be used under strict permitted conditions that control their environmental impact. Environmental permits authorise spills of dilute storm sewage during wet weather or during genuine power outages when high river levels can result in greater dilution. Storm overflows are a necessary part of sewerage systems as they prevent sewers flooding into properties. The EA will take action if any breaches of permit conditions are identified. All records relating to the Environment Agency's compliance activities can be viewed on its [public register](#).

## **Securement of Long-Term Funding**

### Local Partnership investment

- United Utilities (UU) are investing £41 million in Windermere 2025-2030 to improve performance of wastewater treatment works. In addition, in September 2024 they announced further investment of £156 million bringing the planned investment to around £200 million. This funding will enhance the treatment works, and associated infrastructure reducing the amount of phosphorous entering the lake. This funding is proposed for 2025 and beyond. This is in addition to the £45 million invested over the last 10 years in the Tower Wood plant on Windermere.
- The LDNPA's delivery of the [Revere Windermere Water Quality Finance Platform](#) project aims to improve the water quality of Windermere. This will seek investment to fund the creation of nature-based solutions that are designed to improve water quality in the catchment's lakes and rivers. In partnership with National Park Partnerships and Palladium, £90,000 was secured from The Estee Lauder Companies UK (ELC) to establish a phase 1 model for sustainable nature-based finance income stream for land managers to create riparian woodlands and construct wetlands to intercept phosphorous from entering waterbodies and the lake. Santander UK announced a growth

in their partnership to support the restoration of nature across some of the country's most-loved landscapes. The bank supported Phase 2 with £250K to develop an innovative nature financing platform. See: [Revere press release](#).

### National Investment

The existing funding for monitoring and water quality improvements is provided by a variety of sources, including public and private sources. Further work is required to increase the level of investment. The State Party provides funding for many of the partnership organisations who are part of the Love Windermere Partnership, such as the Environment Agency.

Sources of State Party funding include:

- Delivered by the Environment Agency, the Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) was established in 2016 and funds projects that deliver on the government's commitments set out in the 'Plan for Water' (see below) to ensure clean and plentiful water for the future. The funding will also unlock up to an extra £11.5 million from organisations bringing the total possible investment to £23 million.
- A new £11m [Water Restoration Fund](#) to reinvest water company fines and penalties back into the water environment. £800,000 has been "ringfenced" for the North West of England. A bid for funding has been made by the Lake District Foundation but no awards have yet been made.
- The State Party's new Plan for Water has been published which seeks to transform the whole water system, see: [www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plan-for-cleaner-and-more-plentiful-water](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plan-for-cleaner-and-more-plentiful-water).
- The State Party will support farmers, from doubling funding to £15 million to give free advice to farmers across the country through the Catchment Sensitive Farming scheme and accelerating the rollout of the Sustainable Farming Incentive which will help farmers to use their land in a way that keeps valuable nutrients and soil on the farm and stops them running off into rivers, lakes, and streams.
- Support from the National Lottery, Local Rivers and Wildlife Trusts providing a possible total investment of £23 million.

*15. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

The State Party confirms its continued commitment, for all the UK's World Heritage sites, to notifying the World Heritage Centre of any major restorations or new constructions which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property under the Paragraph 172 obligation, and to continuing to submit HIAs for any new developments.

Should any of these 172 notifications cause significant concern that might warrant greater attention, we will of course be happy to provide a more detailed State of Conservation Report for the Committee's consideration.

It is the view of the State Party that for a large property designated as a cultural landscape, there will continue to be a number of areas (from national considerations such as housing policy to more local activities such as off-roading), where consensus between individual stakeholders will not be achieved. The State Party will continue to monitor and review these ongoing issues through the management structures of the property to ensure that the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are not directly impacted.

Therefore, whilst the State Party acknowledges that many of the areas included in this report will require continued monitoring, it is the State Party's view that the property as a whole has not significantly changed since inscription and that no further (reactive monitoring) action should be taken and that no further State of Conservation Reports about existing issues are required for this property.

The State Party also requests a dialogue meeting with the World Heritage Centre in early 2025 in order to answer any clarifications or questions arising from this State of Conservation Report.

### **3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value**

The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) has provided the following report to update the World Heritage Committee on achievements, projects, conservation work and community engagement which supports the OUV of the Property but which is not picked up by the recommendations in section 2. Examples of this positive work are set out below; Annex A provides more detail and examples.

#### **International Links with other World Heritage Sites**

We have improved our international links with other World Heritage Sites in order to learn from others and share best practice. In early November representatives from the Lake District National Park Authority visited China to attend the 2024 National Park Conservation and Development Workshop, as part of the ongoing partnership with the Giant Panda National Park (also part inscribed as a World Heritage Site). The conference sought to further collaboration and cooperation, with a focus on addressing the key issues of climate change, nature, and biodiversity. The visit, organised by the British Consulate, is part of a programme established by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the LDNPA and the Giant Panda National Park which took place in 2023, and provides a platform to share experiences on issues in common and support both governments in developing further their environmental policy.

#### **Performance of Statutory Planning Functions**

The excellence of the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) Planning Team has been recognised at the [Royal Town Planning Institute Awards \(North West\) 2024](#). We received:

- Commendation in Best Plan for our Design Code;
- Won Best Project (Natural Environment) - West Cumbria Pipeline;
- Won Best Project overall - West Cumbria Pipeline;
- Won Best in Region - West Cumbria Pipeline;
- Won Local Authority of the Year.

The judges were impressed with the Authority's resilience and dedication and with the improvements in its timely determination of planning applications. They noted its robust enforcement processes have resulted in the Authority becoming one of the most active enforcement authorities in the country.

The judges gave the following feedback: *"Given its vital role in managing planning functions within the Lake District National Park and the English Lake District World Heritage Site the team excels in leadership across a wide variety of projects, including in nutrient neutrality across Cumbria, the Windermere Gateway development project, and the west coast water pipeline project. Along with their involvement in the Design Code Pathfinder Project and evolution of the Lake District Design Code."*

At the National Royal Town Planning Institute Awards the Authority received a further commendation for Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment – West Cumbria Pipeline.

#### **Effective Collaboration Between Local Planning Authorities**

We are also pleased to report greater collaboration between the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and the two new unitary authorities in Cumbria: Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. This includes:

- LDNPA's work to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cumbria which will set our collective Partnership approach to nature recovery in the county.

- LDNPA convenes a Cumbria-wide Nature-Based Finance Knowledge Hub as a mechanism for sharing thoughts and learning on emerging means of leveraging private finance for nature recovery. Following discussions at the Hub, the three councils with the addition of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Cumbria Wildlife Trust are collaborating to explore the potential to bring high-integrity, nature-based credits to the market.
- LDNPA's work on Nutrient Neutrality: the State Party has announced an award of £16 million from its Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to the three Cumbrian local planning authorities: the Lake District National Park Authority; Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. The three councils are working together to deliver nutrient mitigation schemes to enable housing delivery in areas affected by nutrient pollution. This will cover the River Eden, River Derwent and Bassenthwaite Lake, River Kent and Esthwaite Water catchments. Nutrient pollution is an urgent problem for our freshwater habitats and rivers, many of which are internationally important for wildlife. The Government funding will deliver local nutrient mitigation schemes which will boost the supply of mitigation available to support sustainable development.

## **Future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change**

### Team Nature

The Lake District National Park Authority has created 'Team Nature' bringing together colleagues from across the organisation in a new project-focused team. A Team Nature approach will enhance our delivery of nature recovery within the English Lake District cultural landscape, with an emphasis on our own 'green' property and on leading private investment opportunities in natural capital on external strategic sites. The aim is that the Authority will be an exemplar of an organisation which maximises financial opportunities for blended finance from natural environment credits whilst retaining cultural attributes of its property. Credits include those for Carbon, Biodiversity Net Gain, Nutrient Neutrality, Natural Flood Management and Water Quality.

### Our Upland Commons

A recent conference in the Lake District led by the Foundation for Common Land shared knowledge on the project "Our Uplands Common". The project is helping to secure the future of upland commons in the Lake District National Park, Dartmoor, the Yorkshire Dales, and Shropshire. Centuries old farming practices on commons are especially relevant to the cultural significance of the English Lake District World Heritage Site and can also assist in mitigating some 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, such as natural flood management (a topic reflected in this State of Conservation Report). The conference reflected on the traditions of 1,000 years of commons management and the current challenges facing nature and commoning communities.

### Canal and Rivers Trust

We are also pleased to confirm that the Cumbria Rivers Trusts (West Cumbria, South Cumbria and Eden Rivers Trusts) joined the Partnership in October 2024. The Rivers Trusts have been a Partnership Observer for some years as well as a significant delivery partner across the national park, so we are delighted that they have confirmed their commitment to our collective endeavours by becoming a full Partner. The Partnership will now benefit from the Rivers Trusts' experience and advice on catchment-based approaches to water management and nature-friendly farming, which will be particularly helpful in our development of the next Partnership Plan.

## **A Lake District for Everyone**

### Inclusion and Diversity

We are proud to report that there have been changes in the demographics of our visitors in recent years,



demonstrating that the English Lake District is benefiting and welcoming a broader spectrum of the population. We hope that in turn this will ensure that our new visitors will appreciate and want to care for this very special place. The data comes from the latest Cumbria Visitor Survey (2022) which demonstrates that we are seeing an increasing number of younger visitors as well as a more diverse audience overall. In 2018 53% of visitors to Cumbria were under 50 but by 2022 this had increased to 75%. The table below sets out the percentages by age range:

	2022 (all <u>Park</u> visitors)
0-4	2.2%
5-10	6.7%
11-15	5.1%
16-24	3.4%
25-34	19.0%
35-44	23.0%
45-49	14.9%
50-59	13.6%
60-69	10.5%
70-79	2.2%
80+	0.1%
<b>Base</b>	<b>2,732</b>

In addition, the 2018 survey reported that only 2% of visitors indicated someone in their party considered themselves to be a member of an ethnic minority community whereas in 2022 this had risen to 16%. Ethnic minority groups most commonly represented were Indian (19%) and Pakistani, Chinese or White and Asian (14%).)

The LDNPA is pleased to be a supporting partner of the [Black Nature in Residence](#) (BNiR) Programme – we have enjoyed collaborating with and learning from the appointed creative, Wajid Hussain. With funding from Arts Council England, the BNiR programme is a unique, ambitious, and ground-breaking project, providing residences for five creatives of the Global Majority in each of the five northern National Parks, including the Lake District. This Black-led project aims to contribute to the changing narrative around who has a right to have a connection with nature and start adding more diverse voices to the climate crisis facing society today.

#### Community Engagement and Grassroots Development

The LDNPP places great emphasis on community engagement and grassroots development of ideas and solutions. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation we are delivering a project known as the ‘Collaboration Hub’ (transformative action LDFE.act.1d under Lake District Partnership Plan Outcome 4: A Lake District for Everyone) which aims to support conversations around difficult topics in creative ways.

One example is our work with residents to explore options on how to improve visitor management in the Wasdale Valley. This has been led on the Partnership’s behalf by our partner [ACTion with Communities in Cumbria](#). We have taken a [citizens’ panel approach](#) which has given a group of residents a focused and facilitated opportunity to discuss the question “*How do we get the best out of our visitors in Wasdale, so we thrive as a community?*” The panel has considered areas of concern including visitor management, traffic, and parking and has made [recommendations](#) to local authorities

and other key stakeholders about how they might assist the community in response. We are now working on developing a range of actions to respond to the identified community aspirations.

[The Lake District Foundation](#) (a Partner) has provided grants to underserved community groups to access the national park to further the Partnership's 'A Lake District for Everyone' Key Outcome. Grants are being provided for groups from our three target audiences of disabled people, ethnic minorities, and people from socio-economically deprived communities particularly in west and south Cumbria to visit the national park, providing funding for things which might otherwise prove a barrier to visiting, such as lack of access to transport or appropriate outdoor clothing. We are working with the groups to understand how they felt before, during and after their visits in order to help us to better appreciate barriers (whether real or perceived) to accessing the national park. We then plan to run some workshops with participants to better understand how we can improve our welcome across these key audiences.

In a related project the LDNPA partnered with [National Parks England](#) and the SOIL Collective consultancy to run an Equality Diversity and Inclusion workshop in July 2024. The workshop was designed to understand the needs, wants and ideas of the local community in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and access to the Lake District National Park. We heard about the barriers community groups face accessing the park, and also peoples' views on the positive impacts the park has on local communities. This information has been used to create '10 Principles of Belonging', which included an example of best practice from the Lake District which is the [Miles without Stiles](#) accessible routes infrastructure and supporting communication material.

As mentioned above, in response to paragraph 12 of the Committee's Decision, we have recently established a [13 Valleys walking trail](#). This complements the annual 13 Valleys Ultra running race. We are currently working with [Sport England](#) to explore leveraging more funding for the 13 Valleys, while also considering how we might together measure the health benefits people gain from accessing the outdoors in the Lake District.

### **Climate action – achieving net zero and adapting to climate change**

We are delighted to report a reinvigorated Partnership, following the introduction of site visits and Deep Dive discussions to engage Partners on key issues affecting the National Park, the most recent example being on climate adaptation and resilience. It is particularly important that Partners are informed about and engaged with the significant challenges facing the national park and World Heritage Site, particularly as we gear up to begin our work to develop the next 5-year Management Plan for the property.

#### Net Zero by 2037

One of the Partnership's commitments is to reach net zero by 2037. In order to do this, we have commissioned Small World Consulting to calculate our carbon budget and set our path to achieve this. All Partners are committed to reducing their carbon footprint and more than half of Partner business plans are already aligned to this net zero target: we continue to support the others on this journey to integrate significant climate mitigation proposals into their plans.



**4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.**

The State Party would draw the World Heritage Committee's attention to the following notifications issued under paragraphs 172 and 174 of the *Operational Guideline* since its last update on the property's state of conservation was submitted in March 2023:

- 26 May 2023 – Information regarding sewage at Lake Windermere (174);
- 08 September 2023 – Information regarding the refusal of the application for Elterwater quarry and the Lake District National Park Authority's commissioning of its interpretation strategy (172);
- 05 April 2024 – Information regarding the Windermere Gateway proposals (172);
- 22 May 2024 – Information regarding resubmission and approval of the Elterwater quarry application (172);
- 22 May 2024 – Initial draft of the Interpretation Strategy (172)

The State Party expects that further notifications regarding the proposed development at Windermere Gateway and in relation to the next iteration of the Interpretation Strategy will be forthcoming in due course.

**5. Public access to the state of conservation report**

The State Party is content for the full State of Conservation Report to be uploaded to the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

**6. Signature of the Authority**

**Henry Reed  
Senior International Policy Adviser  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

## **ANNEX A: 11.10.2024 English Lake District WHS – Concerns and Actions**

# 11.10.2024

## English Lake District WHS – Concerns and Actions

The information below represents the current outputs and activities of the Lake District National Park Partnership’s review and monitoring of the State of Conservation of the Property following recommendations set out in **Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation** This is a live document which the Partnership intends to retain in use as a tool to track progress against each of the Committee’s recommendations. It will monitor progress and assist in future reporting. It is structured consistently across each of the recommendations for ease of reference. Each of the recommendations requires different approaches. As such, some sections remain blank as that section may not be pertinent to the particular recommendation. As a live document some areas of activity and action will update rapidly. Areas where there has been less activity and action may reflect limited opportunity to date, but equally will help steer where increased focus is necessary going forward

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Progress Updates

Issue currently on hold/no longer relevant

Good progress toward addressing recommendation but requires continued attention/new actions

Issue resolved

Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required.

**Recommendation 4**

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Welcomes the State Party’s confirmation that no projects for a gondola/cable car at Whinlatter and a Geological Disposal Facility for hazardous waste within the property are currently being considered,

**Progress**

Issue currently on hold/no longer relevant

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS**

There is no activity at present related to this recommendation. No current planning applications.

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

No actions

**Recommendation 5**

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

**Welcomes furthermore the information concerning the approval of the update of the revised joint World Heritage and National Park Management Plan.**

**Progress**

Issue resolved

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS**

Actions in the Management Plan has been reviewed recently (in Spring 2024) and have included reference to addressing the WH Committee recommendations.

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

LDNPA will be looking to start to revise the management Plan in 2024 for adoption in 2026.

**Recommendation 6**

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

*Regrets that the planning consent for Honister Zip Wire was issued, despite objections of several preservation organisations and contrary to the advice contained in ICOMOS’ Technical Review and encourages the State Party to pursue all possible ways to resolve this issue and to avoid the construction of this infrastructure*

**Progress**

Live planning application.

The previous planning permission has been implemented as there was a commencement of the previous approved development. A new planning application has been received and activity related to the progress of applications this will be provided when available. There is no current date for determination of this application. This is a live planning application, and an update will be provided.

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS**

The LDNPA used its new notification process of proposed applications or issues of concern, to Historic England so it can advise us and UNESCO of any issues or require feedback from that organisation. Historic England has indicated that as the application is similar to the previous proposal the Local Planning Authority should consider whether ICOMOS’s concerns as set out in the Technical Review have been addressed.

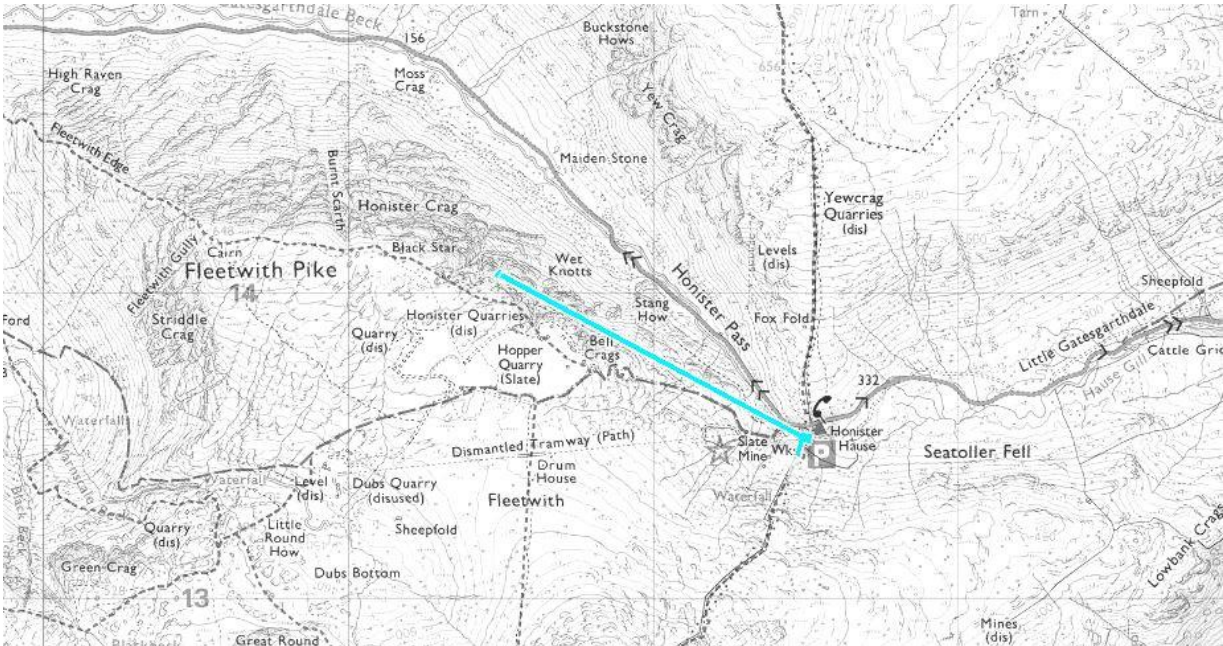
Historic England considers that there is limited potential for the aerial wire and associated structures to adversely impact the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site through visual changes in the landscape. Whilst the submitted noise assessment does assess noise generated by the aerial wire when in use, there is no assessment of noise generated by participants using the aerial wire. Increased levels of noise have the potential to erode attributes of the OUV, such as those linked with the value of landscape for restoring the human spirit and wellbeing, and opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment. The submitted heritage assessment does not consider the potential impact of noise at all and focuses on visual impacts. The introduction to The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 2) states that planning decisions must reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements. When considering proposals for change that affect heritage assets. the NPPF is clear that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (para 195). Historic England considers that the noise assessment should consider noise generated by participants using the aerial wire. In addition, the Heritage Impact Assessment should include an assessment of the impact of noise on the World Heritage Site's OUV.

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. [Citizen Portal Planning - application details \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk)

Further information has been submitted by the applicant including a noise assessment and further consultation is underway.

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

The proposed development at Honister Slate Mine includes the installation of a new zipline at the existing slate mine site, which is to be integrated into the end of the Via Ferrata climbing course (Via Ferrata Xtreme | Honister), as a direct route back down to the car park. The line will run a length of approximately 1.2km and at speeds of up to 120kph. The take-off and landing platforms are proposed to be 2m x 1m in area, with the zip wire itself being a 12-16mm cable. Alongside being used for recreational purposes, the zip wire will be used for industrial activities during the off seasons, with the re-purposing of the zip wire to a modern-day aerial flight, moving up to 300kgs of slate. Consultations have taken place, and the LDNPA Planning department is awaiting further information.



Map of proposed site of zip wire subject of a current planning application



## Recommendation 7

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Expresses concern at the lack of a clear strategy to address the vulnerability of the property's agro-pastoral traditions and urges the State Party to devised and implement, in consultation with the Lake District farming communities, appropriate policies and adequately resourced funding schemes to support and compensate them for their heritage services in order to sustain in the medium to long term the key attributes of this landscape that underpin its integrity and authenticity

## Progress

Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required.

There are new strategies and funding sources both locally and nationally to support the vulnerability of the agro-pastoral traditions and support farmers for their heritage services.

## Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS

Relevant National Policy and Strategies for the Partnership plan:

- Agriculture Act 2020
- Environment Bill
- Climate Change Act 2008 and 2050 Net Zero target
- Agricultural Transition Plan 2021-24
- National Farmers Union 'Achieving Net Zero - Farming's 2040 goal'
- Landscapes Review 2019
- Government 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)
- Defra England Tree Strategy (expected in 2021) and England Tree Planting Programme
- Defra England Peat Strategy
- Environment Agency National Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy
- Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Cumbria Inquiry
- National Parks England's Delivery Plans for Wildlife and Nature Recovery, Climate Leadership, Sustainable Farming and Land Management, and Landscapes for Everyone

Nationally (this supplements the information in the State of Conservation Report on recommendation 7)

Defra (State Party Department) published initial details of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme in its Agricultural Transition Plan 2021-2024 (ATP) in November 2020. In July 2021, FiPL was the first of the Government's programmes and schemes in the ATP to start to be delivered. Other ATP programmes and schemes are now being rolled out or are in development and are planned to be implemented. The Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMS) are being rolled out: Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Countryside Stewardship (CS), and Landscape Recovery (LR). At the same time, the Basic Payment Scheme for farm businesses is being phased out by 2028, with a minimum 50% reduction by 2024. This is a period of momentous change for farming and land management in the UK, with hugely significant implications for farming communities and businesses in the Lake District National Park, the potential for delivery of the Vision for the National Park, and the World Heritage site, and the delivery of the National Park Partnership's Plan. There are significant challenges, but also potential opportunities.

The **Agricultural Transition Plan Update** was published in January 2024([Agricultural Transition Plan update January 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181432/ATP-update-jan-2024.pdf) )

It seeks to:

- support food security and a thriving farming sector
- make environmental schemes and regulation more attractive, fair, and workable.
- Encourage and enable more ambitious, targeted, and effective action.

The **25-year Environment Plan** indicates 10 goals including; mitigating and adapting to climate change (7) and enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment (10) which includes extending the delivery of our Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, using lessons learned to inform future farming schemes. [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181432/ATP-update-jan-2024.pdf)

The **Environmental Land management scheme** (ELMS) including the **Sustainable Farming Incentive** (SFI), **Countryside Stewardship** (CS), **Landscape Recovery** (LR), other agricultural transition policies, private finance, are supporting agro-pastoralism. Likewise, partners' collective resources in innovative and imaginative place-based approaches to support farming-led nature recovery enables farmers to deliver the nature, climate, and cultural heritage objectives of the LDNPP Plan in ways that will sustain the social and economic vibrancy of farm businesses and of farming and local communities and support the tangible and intangible agro-pastoral attributes of WH OUV.

Agri-environment schemes is a generic term for all previous and present schemes. Countryside Stewardship is the middle tier of ELMS, SFI being the lower tier and Landscape Recovery the upper tier. ( i.e. more intensive interventions.)

Current agri-environment schemes and grants, such as Countryside Stewardship, are critical for the financial survival of many farms in the World Heritage Site. They provide financial incentives for farmers and land managers to farm using practices that have a positive impact on biodiversity, the landscape, water, air, and soil quality. However, the change in subsidy payments and the development of new post-Brexit grant schemes like ELMS, will also change how farming is funded. To give farmers and land managers time to adapt, ELMS will be implemented over a 7-year transition period to ensure this is financially viable. The implementation of the schemes, however, needs to take account of the impact of them on the traditional farming practices for which the WHS was inscribed.

**Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)** pays farmers to adopt and maintain sustainable farming practices that can protect and enhance the natural environment alongside food production, and also support farm productivity (including by improving animal health and welfare, optimising the use of inputs, and making better use of natural resources). The payments in the standards are also intended to support and de-risk the transition for farmers wanting to adopt more sustainable farming approaches. ([Sustainable Farming Incentive guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainable-farming-incentive-guidance))

Locally (**this supplements the information in the State of Conservation Report on recommendation 7 with examples**)

Most of the **LDNPA** Commons are currently benefitting from being in an agri-environment scheme with six in Higher Level Stewardship extensions until 2028 and Duddon, Seathwaite, Torver and Coniston commons recently entering a Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship scheme until 2033 to restore and enhance wood pasture and scrub habitats. LDNPA is currently working closely with **Natural England** and Commoners on Subberthwaite, Blawith and Torver Low Commons to enter a new Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship scheme which will support active graziers to deliver on-the-ground nature recovery to improve the SSSI condition status whilst continuing culturally valuable commoning practices.

Whilst the transition to ELMS has presented its own set of challenges, commoners are successfully navigating these changes and six of the eight LDNPA-owned, or long-leased commons have already entered or are preparing to enter an SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive) MOR1 agreement. These three-year projects involve surveying their commons to collate data on soil, vegetation, and historic archaeological features across the moorland to identify and record current environmental benefits and future opportunities to maintain, enhance and restore the common entered into the agreement. Entering into these newly-introduced agreements will hopefully be the first step to positive environmental stewardship and commoners entering SFI will be perfectly positioned to take advantage of future funding opportunities and support as and when they become available.

**Landscape Recovery** offers farmers and land managers the opportunity to co-design a bespoke agreement to produce environmental and climate goods across landscape-scale projects.

There are 4 main distinguishing features of the Landscape Recovery scheme:

- Large-scale projects: the scheme is designed to deliver outcomes that require collaborative action across a big area, such as restoring ecological or hydrological function across a landscape.
- Long-term public funding (for example for 20 years or longer): the scheme will support outcomes that take a long time to deliver, such as peatland restoration, woodland management, or habitat restoration.
- Bespoke agreements: the scheme can fund activities that contribute to priority outcomes but are specific to the locality and so difficult to facilitate through other schemes.
- Blended funding: the features above and the provision of development funding should enable projects to attract private investment.

The DEFRA-funded Environmental Land Management (ELM) pilots for landscape recovery aim to support farmers, landowners, and land managers to take a large-scale, long-term approach to recovering nature and producing environmental and climate goods and services on their land. Landscape-scale recovery is an important element of the Partnership Plan, with the Partnership committed to supporting these pilot projects and influencing ELM policy. We are also interested to explore how such schemes can support nature recovery in a cultural landscape.

Of the Round 1 Landscape Recovery pilot projects, 8 farmers are engaged with the Upper Duddon project and 1 with the Lake District Eastern Fells. For Round 2, 37 are engaged with the Penrith to Kendal ARC project and 45 for Resilient Glenderamackin made up of 31 owner/occupiers and 14 tenant farmers; there are also a further 11 non-farming landowners involved but these are not included in the total of 91 for farmer engagement. This constitutes a dramatic increase in the total of engaged farmers from our 2022 baseline of 0.

There are currently four Landscape Recovery projects partially or wholly within the LDNP: two Round One projects: The Upper Duddon LR project; The Lake District Eastern Fells LR project; and two Round Two projects: The Resilient Glenderamackin LR project; and the Penrith 2 Kendal LR project.

Landscape recovery example - Resilient Glendermackin project - £550,000 to reduce Keswick’s flood risk. The project aims to temporarily store around 800,000m3 of water and the project will provide further flood risk-benefit by slowing the flow of water. The team is working with farmers to design the project to allow farming and nature to go hand-in-hand; whilst creating new job opportunities along the way, including for local contracting businesses.

Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery - The DEFRA-funded Landscape Recovery scheme is designed to work with farmers and other land managers to manage the land in ways that will improve soil, water quality, and reverse the decline in nature. The initial development phase of this project will see organisations work alongside farmers to explore how existing agri-environment schemes could be enhanced and expanded, with farmers receiving payments for environmental benefits provided. This long-term partnership will help ensure a vibrant future for small farms in the Upper Duddon and will provide employment for local people through the creation of new jobs. [Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery – Farming \(blog.gov.uk\)](#). [Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery \(arcgis.com\)](#)

**Westmorland and Furness Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund** (REPF) funding of £5,286,627 for 2024/25. The new investment plan reflects the ambitions, aims and approaches set out in the three original investment plans and the vision and priorities of the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan. (the vision -a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to thrive) ( the priorities – people, climate, communities, economy and culture, customers, and workforce)

The Council also has a **REPF** allocation of £1,642,238 in 2024-25. Only projects in the former South Lakeland and Eden district areas are eligible for support from the REPF’s £1m fund for use by the end of March 2025 including farm business advice and a capital grants scheme.

**Cumberland Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund** - Funding for UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) is available for capital and revenue activity for projects that demonstrate alignment and deliverability against the grant criteria. Cumberland has been allocated £13,115,256 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is split into;

- ‘Core’ funding of £10,585,622
- Rural England Prosperity Fund £2,529,634, which is entirely capital in nature with no additional allowance for revenue activity.

The WHS forms only part of these council areas, and the funding is allocated across the council areas.

**Farming in Protected landscapes (FiPL)** - FiPL is supporting farmers and land managers so they can work within Protected Landscapes to deliver environmental outcomes, lay the groundwork for future Environmental Land Management schemes, and contribute towards the delivery of recommendations in the Glover Review of National Landscapes (2019). The programme is delivering funding through the Protected Landscapes bodies (National Park Authorities and National Landscape managing authorities/boards) to support farmers - particularly upland farmers (75% of whom live and work in Protected Landscapes)- to make improvements to the natural environment, cultural heritage, and public access on their land, delivering projects under the themes of People, Place, Climate and Nature. The FiPL programme is time-limited and is operating from July 2021 to March 2025. The funding for this programme comes from Defra’s Farming and Countryside Programme. The FiPL programme is focussing on the key challenges facing farmers, land managers and communities in Protected Landscapes - helping to address the climate and biodiversity crisis, improve people’s engagement with the landscape, and support sustainable farm businesses and communities. [Farming in Protected Landscapes Blogs : Lake District National Park](#)

FiPL is continuing to be successfully delivered, with a range of partners supporting applications and sitting on the Local Assessment Panel. 100% of the Project Spend allocation for Year 3 (23/24) of £1.14m has been committed. Project spend allocation for Year 4 (24/25) is £1.89m, of which £1.29m -has been committed. Up to March 2024 approximately 360 farmers have been engaged in the FiPL programme. Funding years 1 - 4:Total of £4.65m of project funding from July 2021 to March 2025. Many projects have supported the World Heritage Attributes.

	Project spend	Advice and guidance	Administration	total
Year 1	580,000	79,668	44,260	703,928
Year 2	1,044,969	96,169	60,060	1,201,198
Year 3	1,135,563	153,812	82,132	1,371,507
Year 4	1,893,863	153,812	82,132	2,129,807
total	4,654,395	483,461	268,584	5,406,440

In addition to the above FiPL project funding, another £2.7m is being allocated by Defra for Historic Building Restoration Grants in the LDNP by March 2025 to repair culturally important traditional barns in the Property. This is separate to the FiPL funding quoted above but is delivered by the FiPL team.

There is also a separate allocation of funding managed through FiPL for access projects which equates to £97,745. (2024/25) plus an additional £22,308 in the current round and potentially we are awaiting a decision on £58k more.

#### Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FiPL) – Year 3 (2023/24) review

A hugely successful Year 3 of FiPL in the Lake District National Park has continued and built on the successes of the previous two years. The Authority's FiPL team, working with farmers and partners, has added 53 new FiPL funded projects in Year 3 to bring the total since July 2021 to 153 projects. Our total project spend in Year 3 of FiPL was £1,132,920, 99.8% of our Year 3 project spend allocation from Defra, taking total project spend since July 2021 to £2.7m.

Of the 53 projects in Year 3, 26 were with individual farms, 5 with farm clusters, and 22 were with farmers led by other organisations or individuals. 253 farmers have been involved in FiPL-funded projects in Year 3, taking the total up to 365 since July 2021, about one third of all farmers in the National Park. Examples of outputs delivered include 138 volunteers involved, 11 days of educational visits, and 7 projects to reduce flood risk. 925 metres of drystone walling has been restored, 875 metres of new permissive paths were created, 1,737 metres of hedgerow were planted, and 4,241 trees were planted.

Projects supported in Year 3 cover all four FiPL themes of Climate, Nature, People and Place. This includes on-farm habitat restoration, access improvements, traditional farm building repairs, natural flood management, regenerative farming projects, adding value to Lake District produce (meat and fibres) and working with farmer and commoner groups. We have continued to support collaborative farmer projects with Community Interest Companies in Ullswater and West Lakes and are supporting a farm cluster development project working closely with The Farmer Network. This work has included farm habitat baselining and completion of farm carbon audits.

In addition to our core FiPL project funding, Defra has offered farmers in protected landscapes the opportunity to apply for Historic Buildings Restoration Grant (HBRG) through the FiPL process. In Year 3 we have supported 6 building restoration projects to successfully access £900,000 of HBRG funding.

We are now in Year 4 (2024-25) which we believe to be the final year of the FiPL programme. We have already committed over 90% of our project spend for the 2024-25 programme year and have a pipeline of projects awaiting development, which we are currently assessing in line with our local priorities and remaining budget.

Examples of FiPL projects include:



**Shard / Brathay fence restoration in Hawkshead** - Restoring and repositioning some of the damaged shard fencing and installing new sections of fencing where appropriate. Where possible existing on-site materials will be repositioned to re-establish the traditional shard fence boundary. There 64 metres that will be restored. Shard fencing is an important landscape feature of the Hawkshead area, and a traditional boundary made of interlocking vertical slates. There will be an interpretation panel installed to promote the importance of shard fencing, how it supports traditional Lakeland Farming and the Lake District's World Heritage Status.

This project incorporates an element of training (2 weeks) for both LDNPA and National Trust field staff so that they can understand and learn the traditional restoration skills required, ensuring that we do not lose these skills in the future.

The project supports Outcome 3 of the Partnership Management Plan priorities -

Outcome 3: Securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change. It helps deliver the Partnership's aim: 'We will maintain, celebrate and strengthen traditional Lake District farming systems including the livestock, the food its produces, and the land management practices that support our natural and cultural heritage that are essential to the Lake District National Park Special Qualities, and sustain World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value'





### World Heritage Tweed

FIPL has provided funding to create Lake District Tweeds representing the 13 Valleys of the World Heritage Site from locally sourced wool. Maria Benjamin from Dodgson Wood, Nibthwaite Grange Farm is creating 13 new tweeds. It is a project which connects people to the history and cultural of wool production in the Lakes. Importantly the farmers get a good price for the wool plus 19% of the profit from the sale of the cloth.

- **Herdwick genebank** £24,000 funding for an innovative project across the country involving the collection of germplasm – semen and embryos - for long term storage as a “gene bank” to safeguard against the loss of genetic resources of the Herdwick breed in the future.
- **Historic Farm Buildings Assessment toolkit** is an output of a project that aims to support the long-term sustainability of farms. The toolkit aims to support more effective management, sympathetic reuse and enhance the protection afforded to historic environment features by developing an understanding of the traditional farm buildings and landscape features of the area. The toolkit helps building owners and the LDNPA assess traditional farm buildings for conservation and funding needs, diversification, or adaptation potential.
- **The Lake District Shepherds’ Guide** - Revising the Shepherds’ Guide is a Partnership Plan action, to establish a baseline and description of fell going flocks to understand and support the viability of hefted flocks; also supporting the broader ambition of maintaining, celebrating, and strengthening traditional Lake District farming systems which is a key ingredient of World Heritage Site status. The Lakeland Shepherds’ Guide covers information on fell-going flocks and flock marks for the 13 Lake District valleys. For the first time all the data collected has been entered into a database. This makes it easier to keep track of changes and the Guide becomes a living document, rather than a static picture of the situation at the time of collection. We have also added the 2005 entries to the database, and they plan to interrogate the data to highlight changes over the last 20 years. On first inspection the number of flocks has changed, increasing in some parishes, and decreasing in others. This will need further examination. In 2005, farmers had to pay to a modest sum to have an entry in the Shepherds’ Guide. This time, thanks to FiPL funding it is free to all. That may have encouraged more farmers to have an entry in the new Guide. They are working with web designers to create a digital version of the Guide available through a new website. In addition to the website hosting the Shepherds’ Guide, the site will also be used as a vehicle to reach the public and highlight some of the issues and challenges facing farmers, and their role in the importance of safeguarding the landscape and environment .
- FiPL has funded research in valleys such as Wasdale. ***The contribution of Wasdale Farming to social and cultural capital of Wasdale and the Lake District*** (Lois Mansfield and Owen Morgan 2024) focuses on demonstrating the value of cultural and social capital created and maintained by farmers in Wasdale and suggest solutions to some of the management challenges undermining the continuation of the agro-pastoral system in Wasdale.



Medieval 'barn' at Garth Row, Underbarrow

- FiPL received a large number of enquiries from farmers and landowners for support with traditional building repairs and has commissioned feasibility reports for 25 barns and is working to allocate capital funds for the highest priority sites.



**Renovation of Ruskin’s upland agricultural experiments at Brantwood Estate.** John Ruskin, a Victorian writer, artist, and social reformer, used several areas of the Brandwood estate on Coniston Water to conduct his agricultural experiments. The Brantwood team, with FiPL funding, has begun to plant several crop able plants. The plants include a tea plantation, unusual edible plants and a range of Birch and Acer species to be used for tree syrup production.

**The Eycott Hill Project** - Cumbria Wildlife Trust completed the purchase of Eycott Hill Nature Reserve in April 2015 following a three-year fundraising campaign. An award of £1.6 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund helped towards the cost of purchasing the site and enabled the Trust to run a five-year programme of activities, extended until September 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eycott Hill lies between Keswick and Penrith just north of the A66 on the edge of the Lake District National Park. The 217-hectare site was the first upland nature reserve to be managed by Cumbria Wildlife Trust and is one of its “flagship” projects. Half of the site is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological formations formed by volcanic lava flows and for the botanical species in areas of swamp-mire.

The project’s objectives can be categorised into three main areas:

- Improving wildlife habitats;
- Improving the knowledge/awareness of the public and providing an inspiring visitor experience;
- Using the site to demonstrate conservation farming and improving the knowledge and understanding of landowners/farmers of extensive cattle rearing in the uplands.

The project has significantly improved the wildlife habitats on the reserve both following the change in the grazing regime from sheep to extensive native breeds of cattle and the programme of capital works. This has included extensive planting of trees, juniper and hedgerows, work on Naddles Beck and the creation of Natural Flood Management features.

**West Lakes Community Interest Company** - The West Lakeland farmer-led nature recovery CIC is a not-for-profit, community interest company (CIC). It was formed in 2021 by local farmers and is based in the western valleys of the Lake District National Park, encompassing an area of approximately 25,000 acres (100,000km<sup>2</sup> or 40 square miles). The area includes the upland commons of Nether Wasdale, Stockdale Moor and Kinniside, the freehold fells of upper Wasdale and upper Ennerdale and the farmland of the lower valleys. These three West Lakeland upland commons, areas of open fell and the local lowland environment comprise “upland, ice carved scenery at its best” with fells and tarns of extraordinary beauty. This landscape and the weather have shaped the Lake District’s distinctive agro-pastoral traditions over hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Cumbrian fell farming is based on the ancient rights of common grazing, local sheep breeds in hefted flocks, including the unique Herdwick sheep, and mixed farming in the valleys nearing the coast. These farming systems and traditions have created a unique character of stone-walled fields and rugged fell farm buildings, shepherds’ meets and local shows. They have given the communities of the area the unique character and culture that were fundamental in the success of the Lake District National Park becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site (source West Lakes CIC website [Welcome to West Lakeland CIC - West Lakeland CIC](#)).

**Ullswater Catchment Management Community Interest Company** is run by Danny and Maddy Teasdale. The company was set up by Danny following the devastating floods of Storm Desmond in 2015. These were particularly damaging to their home village of Glenridding and other communities around Ullswater. Projects were initially small scale and local, but they now work throughout the whole of the Ullswater and adjacent catchments. Local contractors are used for many of the larger projects. The work is proposed and delivered by the community. The CIC is proud of the fact that as far as possible all money is spent on local businesses and contractors to help the local economy. The work is varied, from planting new hedgerows and trees to soil and grass health, and river restoration work. The CIC works with groups of local farmers and land owners. The CIC also attends information sharing events, discusses best practice, current issues, funding streams and shares ideas that work for the CIC to help others.

Alongside its partners The National Trust, the CIC has won The 2024 UK River Prize Catchment-scale Award. The judges were impressed by the catchment-scale approach to working with farmers and landowners, and the number of projects achieved in the last 8 years. Numerous farm scale initiatives have been carried out across the catchment with the partnership carrying out restoration across a total area of 843ha. The interventions across the catchment include:

- River restoration through de-culverting, embankment removal, small barrier removal, stage interventions, and re-meandering over 13.7km
- Pond creation and offline water storage totalling 46ha
- Hedgerow creation and restoration and riparian corridor restoration over 16km
- Wood pasture creation and restoration across 497ha
- Peat and wetland restoration over 249ha

## Potential actions, definitions, and background

### Recent Management Plan revised transformative actions.

Action No	Action wording
<b>FFNC.act.1</b>	Deliver a Partnership agricultural transition support approach to enable viable business adaption, farmer-led nature and climate recovery, and maintenance of the cultural landscape by:
<b>1a</b>	Joining up and filling gaps in existing business and environmental advice for farmers, foresters and land managers, including through projects such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes-funded Farm Cluster project and the Upland Farmer Toolkit.
<b>1b</b>	Delivering the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to secure the climate, nature, people, and place themes.
<b>1c</b>	Support project delivery and future bids to Landscape Recovery Schemes and share learning to understand how they can secure the future of the National Park Special Qualities and attributes of World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value.
<b>1d</b>	Partners to collaborate to support a high take-up and secure successful delivery of Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier schemes.
<b>1e</b>	Develop projects to secure a blend of finance opportunities for natural capital from private, charitable, public, and other sources, share learning, and explore delivery models.
<b>FFNC.act.2</b>	Supporting the emerging Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy by delivering the Lake District National Park Nature Recovery Plan, championing and resourcing the recovery of priority and protected habitats and species.
<b>2a</b>	Working with individual farms, farm clusters and community land management initiatives to increase understanding of options for nature and climate recovery, maintaining cultural heritage, and identifying and co-creating farming-led local nature recovery projects and landscape recovery pilots.
<b>2b</b>	Delivering targets for woodland creation and restoration schemes in line with the Partnership's 'Tree planting and woodland creation guidelines'.
<b>2c</b>	Delivering targets for peatland restoration schemes coordinated through the Cumbria Peat Partnership.
<b>2d</b>	Supporting the delivery of the species recovery projects for Pine Marten and Freshwater Pearl Mussel.
<b>2e</b>	Preparation of a Wild Deer Management Strategy by March 2025.
<b>FFNC.act.3</b>	Reduce farming and other land management greenhouse gas emissions and increase land-based carbon sequestration through delivery of Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership's Farming and Other Land Use Emission Reduction and Sequestration Action Plan to contribute to a Net Zero Cumbria by 2037 and support farmers and land managers on climate adaptation by:
<b>3a</b>	Securing resources, promoting, and delivering carbon budget assessments for individual farms, farm clusters and community farming initiatives.
<b>3b</b>	Promoting and supporting delivery of farming-led carbon reduction or carbon storage measures, including using the learning from farm carbon audits.
<b>3c</b>	Promoting and supporting farmers and land managers in delivering climate adaptation and resilience through nature-based solutions, focussing on natural flood management and improving soil health.
<b>FFNC.act.4</b>	
<b>4a</b>	Preparing and publishing an updated Lake District Shepherds Guide in 2025 to establish a baseline of fell-going flocks to understand and support the viability of hefted flocks.
<b>4b</b>	Increasing number of Commons in successful agri-environment schemes and landscape recovery pilots and projects to sustain and enhance the value and benefit Commons provide.
<b>FFNC.act.5</b>	Support the Love Windermere Partnership in its delivery of actions to improve the water environment of Windermere and align the Lake District National Park Partnership's Partners and Plan with the Love Windermere Partnership and programme.

Research project No	Research question wording
<b>RP3</b>	Explore how Lake District farm system operations can deliver adaptations and mitigations to address climate change and become more resilient themselves.
<b>RP4</b>	How can Lakeland farming systems deliver nature recovery in a cultural landscape, and be financially viable? Identifying options and best practice.

Agro-pastoral farming practices and traditions of the Lake District

Traditional Lake District farming practices – Special and distinctive characteristics of the Lake District's agro-pastoral traditions:

- **Continuing pastoral use of common grazings** is the key, creating a farming culture which has given rise to several distinctive features
- **Transhumance and year-round grazing combined.** In the Lake District, year-round grazing of ewes and (historically) wethers was combined with away-wintering of young sheep (hogg) on lowland pastures.
- **Heafing (or hefting)**, using the territorial homing instinct of sheep to allow individual flocks to graze specific parts of a common, thus creating a mosaic of rights.

- **Herdling.** Self-policing by heafed (hefted) flocks helped to maintain heaf (heft) boundaries and contain sheep.
- **Landlords' flocks.** Heafing (hefting) required flocks to know their territory on the common, so continuity of flocks was important. The landlord's flock are part of the farm tenancy, i.e. they stay with the farm even if a tenant moves on.
- **Sheep marking.** The need to identify sheep grazing a common led to a distinctive system of sheep marking, combining smit marks on the fleece (coloured patches to mark ownership), and cut ear marks.
- **Distinctive native breeds of sheep.** Hardiness is a key element in the high fells of the Lake District. And historically only certain breeds of sheep can cope with the elements hence the prevalence of hardy breeds such as the Herdwick, Rough Fell and Swaledale
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- **Independence and self-help.** The Lake District's pastoral system has been shaped by independent family farming with a tenanted element which has grown over time. By the 18th century, many farms were sub-let, so that a proportion (increasingly, a majority) of farms were occupied by tenant farmers.

Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons is a national partnership project. The broad ranging and inclusive Partnership is convened by the Foundation for Common Land as the Lead Body, with the National Trust as the Accountable Body. The national Partnership represents a broad range of statutory, charitable, and special interest organisations at a national and regional level with a stake and interest in commons and commoning. The multiple uses of common land are reflected in the Partnership.

**Our Commons Cause: Our uplands Commons** The project has four central aims reflected in four thematic strands of activity:

- Secure and support collaborative management of Common Land;
- Ensure that the health of commons is secured by supporting resilient commoning in a fast-changing world;
- Reconnect the public with the natural and cultural heritage of Common Land
- Enhance the environmental and ecological benefits offered by Common Land.

It will deliver 14 sub-projects across the thematic strands of Collaboration, Resilience, Commons for All and Commons for Tomorrow. The strands have been designed to deliver the overall aims of the project and each sub-project will deliver a range of outcomes for heritage, people, and communities. The project proposals have been refined and developed as a result of engagement, consultation, and research, and to reflect the significance and special qualities of commons as well as the threats and opportunities identified.

The Themes of the Our Upland Commons projects are set out below:

Theme A: Collaboration: There is only one thing which makes upland commons different from any other piece of upland farmland and that is the collaboration intrinsic in the ancient tradition and practice of commoning. Securing and supporting this collaborative management is vital to the sympathetic management of commons and preservation of the heritage they hold. When collaborative management breaks down, land and communities suffer. Collaboration includes three sub-projects

- A1. Stronger Together - collaborative projects
- A2. Shared Spaces - commons infrastructure
- A3. Sharing the benefit – widening the Visions

Theme B: Resilience: If Common Land is to thrive, and a way of life is to continue, Commoners must have the skills and support they need, and policy must recognise how the grazing of Common Land works. The activities in this strand tackle these challenges. Resilience includes three sub-projects:

- B1. Hill Livestock Health
- B2. Schemes & Skills
- B3. Commons Resilience Fund

Theme C: Commons for All: Most people have little knowledge of Commoning, or Common Land, including the millions who enjoy visiting our Protected Landscapes. The 'visiting public' miss the history and meaning of landscapes they explore. If more, and a wider range of people, engaged with Common Land and what it has to offer the public, the public could play a greater role in understanding, supporting, and benefitting from Common Land. Commons for All includes three sub-projects:

- C1. Enjoy - Interpretation programme
- C2. Learn - Learning resources and activities
- C3. Do - Activities and events programme

Theme D: Commons for Tomorrow: Multiple public benefits are provided by sympathetically managed Commons: rare habitats and species, ancient monuments, and conservation of soil and water. Yet where Commoning has declined, or common land not been adequately managed, these benefits are not realised. 3 Commons for Tomorrow include five sub-projects

- D1. Carbon



- D2. Historic Environment
- D3. Habitats
- D4. Water
- D5. Biodiversity Within the Commons for All strand there is a strengthened emphasis on outreach, both into urban areas surrounding our commons and in order to engage with new audiences for commons and commoning.

Heritage Horizons National Lottery Heritage Fund bid - The Lake District Foundation are leading on the development of the Heritage Horizons bid 'Secured for our children – Nature, World Heritage and Farming in the Lake District.' This significant bid could help deliver our ambition for supporting farming to restore nature and address climate action. The bid is focussed on three elements:

- Nature Recovery and Climate Resilience;
- Securing and futureproofing our farming heritage;
- A transformational opportunity for more people to experience and engage with our world-class heritage.

Tripartite Paper looking at monitoring of attributes related to agro-pastoral system

## **THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT - NATURE RECOVERY, DEER MANAGEMENT, AND MANAGEMENT OF FELL-GOING SHEEP FLOCKS**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The English Lake District World Heritage Site Steering Group (WHS SG), a sub group of the Lake District National Park Partnership, has been working through the complexities of fell management practices within the English Lake District World Heritage Site with relevance to nature recovery, deer management, and management of fell-going sheep flocks. Over the last 18 months it has reviewed three reports:

- What makes a viable heft? A technical review, produced by the Technical Advisory Group, 2021
- Interactions between deer, livestock grazing and nature recovery and OUV in upland agri-environment agreements in the Lake District, produced by the Technical Advisory Group, 2021
- Grazing regimes for nature recovery – experience from 25 years of agri-environment agreements in the Lake District's high fells, produced by Natural England, 2020

In October 2023, the Steering Group unanimously agreed to this strategic guidance document which aims to establish a framework by which all three elements (each of critical importance) can be considered holistically rather than in isolation.

The guidance document looks at all three issues and reports on the main findings of each report. There has been no attempt to prioritise the importance of any of the findings within the reports but rather appreciates there is an interdependency which cannot be ignored. After the summaries on the three papers there are a series of key recommendations which have been divided in to:

- a) Recommendations for partners (and for actions to be included/ refined in the Partnership's Management Plan) and,
- b) Recommendations for all UK Government Department (the State Party).

The Steering Group emphasizes the need to read the report in totality, as it tries to bridge the many and varied interests at play, including the more polarised views. The process of drafting the guidance document required compromise, and fundamentally recognises that compromise will be necessary from all involved.

It is recognised that this guidance document has been drafted at a period of significant uncertainty for upland hill farming in the Lake District, appreciating it is in an evolving context. This guidance document is valid as of October 2023, but reviews may be appropriate to reflect new information.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This strategic document is published as a guide to the Lake District National Park Partnership and others when considering land management practices within the English Lake District World Heritage Site, with relevance to nature recovery; deer management; and management of fell-going sheep flocks. It aims to establish a framework by which all three elements (each of critical importance) can be considered holistically rather than in isolation.

This document is not policy and should not be seen to override the policies of partner organisations, nor should it be seen as prescriptive. It simply tries to outline a way through this complex area, attempting to de-polarise the competing and passionate views often voiced in this landscape.

## 1.0 Strategic Context

- 1.1 The World Heritage Site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value together with the National Park's statutory purposes and duties, alongside other relevant government policy and legislation, provide the context for the management of the English Lake District, and decision making.<sup>1</sup> The Partnership's Plan 2020-2025, (hereafter referred to as the management plan), was adopted in October 2021 and is the statutory management plan. This management plan provides the policy context and sets out the Partnership priorities for the next five years.
- 1.2 The management plan highlights that our farming traditions, our natural environment and our climate are in crisis and our recovery from this shared crisis drive the priorities and objectives for the partnership.<sup>2</sup> A key outcome of the 2021 management plan is *securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change*
- 1.3 *Securing the future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate change* recognises that the English Lake District faces the biggest change in half a century with the implementation of the Agriculture Act 2020 and the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. To try to secure this outcome the Partnership has committed to the following:
- We will champion farming led nature recovery, supporting agricultural transition and delivery of the multiple public goods and benefits identified in the 25 Year Environment Plan.
  - We will deliver the ambition and vision of the nature recovery priorities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
  - We will maintain, celebrate and strengthen traditional Lake District farming systems including the livestock, the food its produces, and the land management practices that support our natural and cultural heritage that are essential to the Lake District National Park Special Qualities, and sustain World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value.
  - We will support profitable farming, forestry and land management businesses maintaining traditional land-based skills and sustaining our agro-pastoral farming system.
  - We will develop and grow the network of landscape scale nature recovery areas and delivery approaches that combine farming, forestry and land management choices to achieve nature recovery, and a broader range of multiple public goods and benefits.
  - Farming, forestry, land management working together to achieve net zero or negative carbon by reducing emissions, investing in our natural capital and increasing carbon storage by 2040.
  - Farming, forestry, land management and nature will become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and help to reduce the impacts of climate change on people and landscape.

## Research Papers

- 2.1 The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) provides technical support to the English Lake District WHS Steering Group. Part of its remit is to manage the risk register for the attributes of OUV and undertake in-depth research when requested by the Steering Group. Over the last year TAG has been commissioned, amongst other things, to provide a better understanding of (a) the role of hefts and hefting to the agro-pastoral farming systems of the English Lake District, and the viability of a heft itself to the farming business as a whole<sup>3</sup>; and (b) the interaction between deer, livestock and nature recovery in upland agri-environment agreements in the English Lake District<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.2 Natural England has also provided the Steering Group with its *Grazing Regimes for Nature Recovery*<sup>5</sup> which forms valued guidance in considering how best agri-environment schemes can help to secure recovery of a range of habitats.

### Summary of findings from the WHS Technical Advisory Group Paper “*Current realities and future state: Hefting viability; Nature Recovery; and Deer Management*”

- 3.1 Importantly, and at the outset, the WHS Steering Group expresses its appreciation and support for the work done to date on all three subject areas. It is clear that, through this research, there is a far greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities but also, importantly, the necessity to appreciate each should not be viewed in isolation, but rather the inter-dependencies be recognised and celebrated as a way to secure the sustainability of the whole.

#### Hefting viability

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<sup>1</sup> The Partnership's Plan: 2021 Management Plan.

<sup>2</sup> The Partnership's Plan – challenge (Future of farming and forestry, nature recovery and climate changes).

<sup>3</sup> What Makes a Viable Heft? A Technical Review – Commissioning date: August 2021

<sup>4</sup> Interaction between deer, livestock grazing and nature recovery and OUV in upland agri-environment agreements in the Lake District – Commissioning 2021

<sup>5</sup> Grazing Regimes for Nature Recovery – Experience from 25 years of agri-environment agreements in the Lake District's high fells, 2020

- A distinctive feature of the English Lake District agro-pastoral system is the continued practice of communal grazing on unenclosed commons/ fells managed through traditional methods including communal gathering; a learned behavioural ability in sheep to recognise where they could roam (hefting); and the practice of landlords' flocks.
- The level of shepherding and practice has varied over time sometimes in response to outside influences, such as recovery from Foot and Mouth.
- There is no comprehensive, long-term data on sheep stocking rates or hefting numbers within the English Lake District. It is very hard to give accurate figures, given the changing methods of data collection and monitoring units over the last 70 years. However more recent trends, post inscription as a World Heritage Site, have shown a reduction in fell flock sheep numbers, and removal of sheep grazing on certain fells (or parts thereof) due to:
  - Reductions in stocking densities as a requirement of agri-environmental schemes.
  - Farmers giving up grazing rights due to reduced labour supply.
  - Changing farming practices, driven by a lack of profitability of fell flocks, to focus on producing butcher's lamb rather than a fell lamb (hence developing in-bye flocks).
  - Off-wintering incurs additional costs (if separated from farm unit).
  - Lack of succession farmers and splitting up of farm unit (with farm house sold to non-farmers); and
  - Changes in objectives of major landowners with priorities switching to alternative environmental land management options.
- The Herdwick, Rough Fell and Swaledale sheep breeds are emblematic of the hefted flocks of the Lake District. These traditional hill breeds have stronger hefting instincts and have evolved to better withstand harsh winters and poorer grazing. However, there is an increasing tendency for other breeds and cross breeding potentially undermining the practice of hefting.
- A typical English lake district hill farm combines inbye (fertile, enclosed fields in the valley bottom), some intakes (agriculturally unimproved land on the fell but enclosed from the open fell) together with grazing rights for a number of sheep (or sometimes horses or/and cattle) on common land or other fell, enclosed or unenclosed. Any areas of common that go with the farm are known as Hefts (or Heafs) - these are tied to the farm holding rather than to the farmer.
- The number of animals kept on a fell were previously governed by rules of 'levancy and couchancy' whereby the numbers of animals that the farm had a right to graze were determined by the capacity of the inbye land held by that farm where those animals could be kept when not on the fell. This practice changed over time and when commons rights were registered in the 1960s high numbers of rights were often claimed. The commons registers do not on their own provide a sufficient mechanism for regulating the grazing.
- Hefting is a combination of the natural homing instinct of ewes and learned behaviour from active shepherding to form, and establish, the heft which then allows minimal shepherding once the heft has been created. Sheep have genetic traits for familiarization to a particular terrain, weather conditions, and parasites and diseases that prevail in the area.
- A successful, well-functioning, heft is often dependent on a range of factors, including the distinctiveness of the common, including topography, watercourse and stands of vegetation, and the balance of sheep numbers on adjacent hefts and commons with grazing boundaries maintained by the presence and grazing pressures of other sheep. This system developed due to the openness of the fells.
- Imbalances in stocking rates can impact the hefting behaviour of the sheep.
- Pre 1970s there was more active shepherding and it was only post 1976 that resulted in numbers in each heft becoming more important.
- Naturally, the stock will graze the most palatable vegetation first i.e., preferential grazing, and hence where there is a mosaic of vegetation there will be patterns of heavy grazing and areas of light grazing.
- The age profile of the heft is important. Hefted flocks are self-maintained flocks as female lambs are kept replacing older ewes, avoiding the need to buy in female sheep from other flocks thereby reinforcing the hefting instinct.
- The profile of flocks is changing – a traditional feature of the heft were the wethers (castrated male sheep), used to hold the boundaries of the heft (i.e., the gatekeepers). Most of the wethers are now sold 'store' and fattened elsewhere and their role in the heft has diminished/ disappeared.
- A fell with common rights may have a number of hefts, which when all populated should in theory act as a self-regulatory pressure system to stop sheep drifting on to land which is not theirs. However, on some fells there have long been imbalances between sizes of flocks in adjacent hefts and disputes over grazing rights. Additionally, other traditional practices associated with the Lake District, including shepherds meets to return strayed animals, demonstrate interventions have been required in this "self-regulatory" practice.
- The communal pastoral system relies on rules and regulations being enforced by a local overseeing body. Strong Commoner Associations ensure management practices are integrated for the benefit of all, albeit most are voluntary and reliant on consensus.
- A system of communal fell gathering exists to gather sheep from across extensive areas of fell, whereby farmers, neighbours and sheep dogs work together. Farmers of most commons coordinate the gathering of their flock with neighbours so that the whole common is gathered simultaneously for sheering, clipping, lambing, and tuppings. Smit and lug marks provide the means to identify which sheep belong to which farm, and the common flock can be subdivided back to their owners.
- The landlord's flock provides a foundation for a tenant farm. The landlord's flock occurs on some tenanted farms where a proportion of the sheep stay with the farm/land rather than with the farmer – the numbers are set as part of the tenancy. This ensures that the land continues to be successfully grazed by its resident 'hefted' flock and provides continuity with any incoming tenants having a starting flock. The landlord's flock is made up of some of the female breeding sheep, hefted to the parts of the fell relevant to that farm.
- Stocking calendars form an essential part of agri-environment agreements on commons<sup>6</sup>, setting precise time periods when commoners can run stock on the fell as well as stocking densities and numbers. Different stocking calendars for individual commons are expected, to reflect differing vegetation and circumstances. However non-synchronised stocking calendars between neighbouring commons increases the risk of straying, adversely impacting farmers management costs and threatening nature recovery.

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<sup>6</sup> Stocking calendars form part of the agreement between a commons association and Defra; Natural England advise on an appropriate overall stocking to ensure habitat recovery. Where the common is a SSSI, commoners have a responsibility to ensure that they have consent from Natural England to graze the common, whether or not the common is in a stewardship agreement. Natural England will only give consent where the proposed stocking of the common does not damage the designated habitats on the common.

- Off wintering, or at least with some age classes, is the increasing norm within the English Lake District. Off-wintering results in the removal of sheep off a heft and is being driven by government policy to incentivise environmental stewardship of land (and Natural England's recommendations on appropriate stocking rates) as well as a move towards more commercial flocks.
- Shepherds meet and form part of the hefting system. Shepherds meet developed as a way of returning stray sheep. Rams were hired for tupping and at spring shows the reams were returned, hence the prizes for the best wintered sheep. Such events are now under threat due to lack of succession.
- Farming in the Lake District fells is marginal in terms of profitability and not viable without government support payments.

**Extract of summary of findings from the Natural England Paper “Grazing regimes for Nature Recovery: Experience from 25 years of agri-environment agreements in the Lake District’s high fells”**

- Healthy habitats in the Lake District’s high fells deliver a range of public benefits including biodiversity, filtration of water, moderation of water flows, helping to reduce landslips, carbon storage and capture, contributing to health and wellbeing and are part of the area’s natural beauty landscape, history and culture;
- By the early 1990s, farm subsidy regimes had led to high levels of grazing over most of the Cumbrian fells and this had led to deterioration and loss of many upland habitats and a reduction in the public benefits they provided;
- Habitats have recovered best under low grazing pressure. Recovery of existing SSSI habitats has been universally good below a year-round average of 0.4 ewes/ha. Good recovery has sometimes been seen up to an annual average of about 0.5 ewes/ha. No sites stocked at or above an annual average of 0.6 ewes/ha have fully recovering habitats. Habitat response varies between sites;
- To achieve different objectives, for example to restore scrub, woodland, tall herb vegetation or radically alter vegetation structure, it is necessary for sheep grazing to be at even lower levels (or excluded for a period of time). The responses of a range of habitats to altered grazing regimes is reviewed;
- A variety of management regimes is welcome. Changes to grazing by hardy cattle (instead of just sheep) have been highly beneficial and light pony grazing may also have similar effects;
- Ecological restoration of sites with relatively good remnant vegetation is straightforward, just requiring appropriate stocking rates. Sites in poorer ecological condition may need more complex interventions (eg reintroduction of missing species or disturbance to dominant species);
- Successful agreements are often where farmers have adopted low input/low output systems. Reducing nutrient inputs has major ecological benefits;
- Reducing costs is key to achieving economic sustainability but the whole sector is still subject to severe economic threats.
- We need to enable farmers to continue with agro-pastoral traditions and good land management – and to feel valued for doing so – without keeping the high number of sheep that became the norm in the latter part of the 20th century. The focus needs to be on quality of stock, increasing farm profitability (often though reducing costs), good soil and water management, cattle, ponies, hay meadows and other wildlife rich habitats, management of trees and expansion of woodland, scrub and wood pasture.
- Where sheep numbers are reduced, red deer can increase. Coordinated and targeted deer management is already important in the Lake District (especially in the east) and the need for this is likely to increase, whilst also recognising that they are an iconic species contributing to the natural beauty of the National Park.
- People need nature recovery. Robust and healthy habitats will help reduce the severity of the climate crisis by storing carbon in vegetation and soils and can also help society to cope with an inevitably changing climate by slowing the flow of floodwater and reducing the risk of erosion and landslips. We need grazing regimes in the fells that result in nature recovery, and these should be based on experience of what has (and has not) worked over the last 25 years.

**Summary of findings from the WHS Technical Advisory Group Paper “Deer Management”**

- Within the North Lakes is a pure-bred red deer herd the integrity of which is important. Being a wild herd means the herd are transitory and free to roam. Wild deer are not owned by anyone and have no predators and are not evenly spread over the landscape.
- Current numbers of the North Lakes red deer herd are higher than what is considered necessary for a sustainable herd. Deer culling is challenging given: terrain and extent of territory; land ownership; skills; financial returns; recreational disturbance, and public perception.
- The need to manage wild deer populations is not only pertinent in the North Lakes. Evidence from other parts of the English Lake District show populations of wild deer increasing as well as red deer. Increasing Roe deer populations are likely to be a problem in the Lake District, although this species is territorial and mostly stays within woodlands, so management issues are different.
- Whilst there are voluntary deer management group operating in some areas: South Cumbria, West Cumbria and the North Lakes Red Deer Group, there is no consistent approach across the English Lake District.
- Deer can have an adverse impact on vegetation communities, tree establishment and woodland regeneration where not effectively managed.
- Deer and sheep compete for similar grazing resources on the fells and impact on nature recovery. Deer numbers can have an adverse impact on the success of agri-environment agreements to deliver favourable conditions for nature recovery.
- Where significant numbers of deer (wild herbivores) are present within an area covered by an agri-environment agreement sheep grazing densities may be adjusted. If deer are not controlled effectively then lower sheep densities may be required in any future agri-environment agreement (including rollovers and extensions) to further reduce grazing pressures and ensure agri-environment objectives are met. Such densities may be lower than those averages presented in Natural England’s Grazing Regime report. Where deer are included in the stocking rates the deer density is based on an understanding of herd movements and average deer numbers obtained from standardized counts, through the transitory nature of the herd means that deer density is not fully controllable.
- Deer management/ control is the responsibility of the landowner on whose land the deer are on at the time. However, control is only for as long as the deer are located on the landowner’s land. On areas of common land, the commoners have no control over the wild deer population.
- On the fells there is no regulatory control over deer numbers (unlike sheep). Natural England generally has no leverage or influence on wild deer numbers other than through negotiation and management plans, such as that between Natural England and the North Lakes Red Deer Group. At the present time there is no positive influence, such as grants available for controlling numbers, although a few agri-environment agreements require the agreement holders to follow a deer management plan. The Forestry Commission has responsibilities where deer are present in woodlands where there is a woodland creation and grants scheme.

- It cannot be assumed that reductions in sheep numbers, or an absence of sheep altogether, will result in an improvement in habitat where there are significant wild deer populations. If deer numbers are not controlled reductions in sheep could simply result in expanding wild deer populations. Improved grazing, together with milder winters, can make deer more productive and increase the number of calves. This can negate the reduction in sheep numbers in the first place.
- Effective deer management to control deer populations requires careful planning of the type of animals to be culled, as well as the numbers to be culled.

## Recommendations

The following framework is proposed for the English Lake District:

**All partners agree that a high nature value farming approach is required throughout the English Lake District but that this approach needs to sustain our cultural heritage. Both ambitions can be, and should be, mutually supportive and beneficial, where nature friendly farming, including soil management, mosaics of habitats, livestock within carrying capacity of inbye, helps sustain the culturally important aspects of farming.**

Actions that could be taken to progress this include:

**For the Lake District National Park Partnership, and for partners thereof, the following recommendations are proposed.** The relevant Key Outcome Groups and the WHS Steering Group are asked to progress these actions, including considering what amends, if any, are needed in the Partnership's Management Plan:

1. To secure nature recovery and the agro-pastoral landscape our farming businesses need to be sustainable and financially viable. **We encourage partners to work with and support farms to individually assess the appropriate level of input/output for their farm for the production of both livestock and public goods, ensuring nature recovery is achieved and cultural heritage is sustained.** Partners are asked to support and enable those farmers that want to optimize efficiencies within their livestock businesses.
2. **Partners are asked to better assist those farm businesses, and farming families, seeking to diversify their businesses, including the development of additional income streams.** Such diversification could be on farms, through tourism, for example, or through adding value to produce that is produced on farms. In the past, traditional upland/ hill farms had multi-income sources and, to continue to be viable, this model is again appropriate for Lake District farms, albeit it is appreciated that some farms are very dependent on the common and have few alternative options. Partners can assist locally, for example, through directly supporting farm diversification by grant funding, such as agri-environment agreements (assisted by Natural England), FiPL (assisted by LDNPA), encouraging diversification through the planning system (assisted by the LDNP), enhanced skill development, including deer management skills, such as stalking and butchery (assisted by the CLEP), new farm entrants supported and encouraged to take place-based approaches to enhance the distinctiveness of their locality (assisted by National Trust) and facilitating private investment in natural capital (assisted by LDNP, CWT, LDF and CLEP). **The Partnership, through the Partnership Plan, needs to facilitate bridging the gap between farmers and private investors, helping to develop mechanisms to assist support, for example, through biodiversity net gain credits, carbon credits, nutrient neutrality credits, and natural flood management credits.**
3. The World Heritage Committee emphasises the need for engagement with local communities, including the farming community. **Partners and the farming community are asked to engage more effectively to jointly develop and share an understanding of what public goods and services/ ecosystem services can look like in a cultural landscape where traditional farming practices on the fell are continued and, indeed, celebrated.** A win-win approach should be advocated which seeks to promote mutual understanding and learning.
4. A more coordinated and targeted approach to deer management is required, with an initial focus on the North Lakes, but with a need to expand pan Park. **A pan Park Deer Management Group would be beneficial to coordinate activity between the existing local wild deer management groups and better manage sustainable deer herds (population and distribution).** Non-native, invasive species should be more effectively controlled. **Each partner should be asked to (a) further effective deer management on their property, including the removal of barriers to their management; (b) openly share information on deer populations and deer impact assessments, and (c) assist in the development of markets for venison.** FiPL and other partner grant funding mechanisms should assist effective management. Further studies on wild deer population and modelling and population dynamics should be sought.
5. **Partners are asked, when progressing landscape/ nature based schemes (including agri-environment schemes), that a bespoke place-based model/ approach is undertaken for each common and related landscape block, ensuring nature recovery, viability of hefting patterns, commoning activity and other aspects of agro-pastoral practice, are all assessed and promoted through a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).** Whilst bespoke, it is important that such approaches conform with the ecological parameters evidenced<sup>7</sup> earlier in this paper. The tool of stocking densities should also be seen alongside others, such as temporary fencing and use of technology. Preferably, the importance of the three distinctive local sheep breeds (Herdwick, Rough Fell and Swaledale) and cattle breeds (including British Longhorn and other breeds traditional to the Lake District) should be reinforced, including through any agri-environment funding. The WHS Technical Advisory Group needs to work with FFNC Outcome Group to agree examples of where “sweet spots” of high nature value farming, retaining cultural farming traditions, exist or are emerging.
6. **Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are a useful tool if used proportionate to the level of change, and these should be encouraged more, including their continued use in agri-environment agreements.** Cumulative impacts of decisions are embedded within HIAs, thereby encouraging a more coordinated approach to stocking levels across whole fells or commons. **Partners are also asked to consider the benefit of single meta HIAs that can sit above individual HIAs.** Such a meta HIA would be particularly useful when considering the central core of the fells, seeing it as one contiguous unfenced block. Data and evidence are important components of such HIAs, particularly to understand historical trends of stocking levels. **The WHS:SG recognises the need to commission further work on collating historical evidence of changes in traditional agro-pastoral practices, including stocking densities and flock numbers/sizes from the post war period to 2005, historic grazing practices for cattle and fell ponies, land use change, including extent of hay meadows, and landscape character change including field boundary changes from post war post war.** Such evidence will help further illustrate what “traditional” agro-pastoral practices were in upland Lake District prior to the introduction of government incentives.

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<sup>7</sup> *Grazing Regimes for Nature Recovery*, produced by Natural England

7. The Partnership is making progress on securing private financing in natural capital. However, what is unclear is whether such payments can and will benefit both landowners and tenants, i.e., creating a win-win relationship. If such a win-win scenario cannot be created (and quickly) then there will be further reductions in tenancies and an increasing threat to the cultural landscape. **Partners are asked to consider urgently the merits of local codes for private financing which benefits both landowners and tenants and commoners, together with appropriate mechanisms to allow mutual beneficiaries.** The Partnership also needs to give regard to the State Party's ambition to develop a formal approach to cultural capital accounting (similar to natural capital accounting, albeit less well developed)
8. **Partners are asked to consider commissioning further work in specific areas of concern** that have arisen from this report, which may be fundamental to assisting further breakthroughs:
  - a. What constitutes an effective Commons Association and how can such a model be applied pan Park? Included within this is the Commons Association's ability to monitor and enforce compliance adherence to an agri-environment agreement.
  - b. How the practice of off-wintering can be further evolved to support both nature recovery and cultural heritage within the cultural landscape?

**For all UK Government Depts. ("State Party")<sup>8</sup> the following recommendations are proposed.** The Chair of the Partnership, assisted by the WHS Steering Group, is asked to make the government aware of these asks.

1. We welcome the State Party's continuing commitment to the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. However, the State Party is asked to ensure there is sufficient budget to deliver, at pace, the ambitions within the upland hill farming community, together with clear and transparent processes and easy access to tools, knowledge, and advice. All three schemes are appropriate within the English Lake District: Sustainable Farming Incentive; Countryside Stewardship Plus; and Landscape Recovery, albeit the latter scheme will need careful planning to ensure a positive contribution to the English Lake District World Heritage Site inscription. The State Party needs to ensure all ELM schemes are accessible and open to tenant farmers and commons associations.

The State Party should be encouraged to instigate a payment recognizing the importance of caring for the distinctive cultural landscape of the English Lake District WHS. This could be replicated in other upland areas of England. This option could supplement farmers entering SFI/LNR option(s) – but only be available to those entering such environmental enhancement options. An outline of what could be included in such a payment is included in Annex 1. If the State Party does not support the introduction of a distinctive cultural landscape payment, then it is asked to retain the FiPL Programme over the long term with its four themes of climate, nature, people, and place providing a holistic approach to the management of the World Heritage Site.

2. A number of government departments impact on the future of the Lake District WHS and the State Party is asked to ensure effective, cross departmental, consideration of WHS management. Natural England and Historic England each play important roles in ensuring cross departmental awareness of the implications of policy on the attributes of OUV for the English Lake District.
3. To ensure more effective long term deer management the State Party's intended National Deer Management Strategy is welcomed, including the intention to modernise and update the law for deer management. The State Party is also asked to consider targeted funding through agri-environment schemes were combined with farming and environmental activity.

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<sup>8</sup> The government bodies (Natural England, Historic England, and Forestry Commission) on LDNPP have been involved in the preparation of the evidence and recommendations for partners sections of this paper. The recommendations to the State Party concern policy matters for which local staff from these agencies are not responsible, so the government bodies have not provided advice on the formulation of these recommendations or expressed an opinion on whether the Partnership should make these recommendations.



Outline of proposed additional option within ELM for payment towards caring for the distinctive cultural landscape of the English Lake District WHS

Such a payment could:

- Recognise and help secure farming systems and working farmsteads as an integral part of the fabric of this landscape.
- Be based on a credible future for hill farming pastoral grazing and commoning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century given the climate and biodiversity crisis.
- Adopt a 21<sup>st</sup> century levancy and couchancy principle i.e., a quantum of stock carried in the summer is appropriate to the winter carrying capacity.
- Support farm businesses towards net zero farming and greater efficiency.
- Encourage outreach to local communities and visitors.
- Maintain and enhance public access infrastructure.
- Encourage active appropriate commons grazing and management where relevant.
- Restore, secure, and maintain distinctive landscape features e.g., boundaries, buildings, field sizes and woodlands.
- Support a continuation of the tangible attributes of upland farming, including agricultural shows, local techniques of landscape maintenance (stonewalling, hedging, and pollarding), shepherds meet, gathering and other traditional skills.
- Support a continuation of the intangible attributes of upland farming including traditions and customs, dialect, knowledge of hefting practices, social values illustrated through co-operative working via gathers, and common-land management.

Proposed components include:

- Hefted/ acclimatized livestock (native breeds/ shepherding/ animal health).
- Appropriate pasture management, feeding and forage making.
- Minimise consolidation of farm holdings e.g., a stepped payment – higher for the first 50ha.
- Payments for enhancing boundaries, cultural artefacts (including built heritage) and trees in the landscape.
- Farm carbon assessment and action plan – aiming for net zero (with perhaps a supplement if net zero or sequestering).
- Shepherding on commons payment.
- Submission of special projects that support intangible attributes, including support for agricultural shows, shepherds meet, and sense of place.

Recommendation 8

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation: **Notes the growing imbalance between houses for residents and holiday homes, despite efforts to provide affordable housing for residents, and further requests the State Party to establish measures that discourage the conversion of residential houses to second or holiday homes to guarantee affordable housing for residents and at the same time reduce. urban development pressures on the landscape.**

Progress

**Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required** The issue of Affordable housing and second homes and holiday lets is a national issue not just confined to the Lake District. The LDNPP recognises the growing imbalance in housing and has been monitoring the number of second homes and holiday homes. It has made representation to the State Party to bring in controls locally to resist the change of use from dwellings in permanent occupancy to a holiday use, in those communities and localities where there are demonstrable adverse impacts upon the sustainability and viability of that community/locality. The State Party is engaged to address this issue.

Growing imbalance

According to 2001 census data, holiday houses in England represent only 1% of the total housing stock. However, the local picture in the Lake District National Park is quite different. Using the same 2001 census information 64% of parishes in the Park had 10% or more of its housing stock being used as holiday houses; 33% of parishes had more than 20% of its housing stock used for holiday purposes. Properties used as holiday lets has seen the biggest rise over recent years. For example:

Parish	% of total residential properties used as holiday lets 2013	% of total residential properties used as holiday lets 2022
Keswick	14.22%	24.75%
Under Skiddaw	19.44%	33.60%
Borrowdale	24.13%	32.36%
Buttermere	13.11%	22.95%
Above Derwent	18.45%	26.39%

Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS

The LDNPA’s planning policies were adopted as part of our Local Plan in May 2021. Through Local Plan Policy 15 we will support new homes that:

- a. contribute towards helping communities remain vibrant and resilient; and
- b. achieve a better balance in the housing market; and
- c. is secured in perpetuity for permanent occupation with eligibility restricted to a geography that is tailored to local circumstances.

Existing planning policy regarding new housing requires affordable or local needs housing and permanent housing. Local Plan Policy 15 aims to facilitate the delivery of 1200 houses between 2020 and 2035 to increase the supply of homes to meet local community need.

A Housing Supplementary planning document has also been produced [Housing-SPD-Sept-2023-ADOPTED.pdf](#) As part of the Local Plan process sites were allocated for affordable and local needs housing. Work on bringing forward sites already identified through the local plan process and consultation with local communities for housing is taking place. Capacity studies and housing needs studies have been undertaken to identify appropriate sites and level of need that needs to be addressed. The LDNPA has been working with many stakeholders on a project known as the Windermere Gateway which will provide housing (including affordable housing) as well as business premises. The proposals have been developed by a consortium -the Windermere Project Steering Group - a collaboration between the Lake District National Park Authority, South Lakeland

District Council, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the National Trust, Booths and Lakeland with consultants Urban Splash. UNESCO has been sent a Heritage Impact Assessment (HI) for the proposed development for comment.

Other examples of the provision of affordable housing include the work of the Lakeland Housing Trust which provides rented homes to local people who cannot afford to buy or long-term rent at current market prices. The Association currently have 53 properties. The number of homes rented out has grown significantly in recent years with residents leaving their homes to the Trust as well as it buying further homes through donations.

South Lakeland Housing Trust (SLH) was formed to improve the quality of affordable homes in the area and the service which customers receive. SLH is an independent, not-for-profit housing association and is the largest provider of affordable rented housing in South Lakeland, Cumbria.

Since receiving over 3,000 transferred homes in 2012 it has achieved the initial outcomes and promises made to tenants, including;

- £72M spent on improving and maintaining homes, including £5M on environmental improvements
- Almost 300 affordable homes have been built or acquired
- Rents have been kept to an affordable level

Nationally, Homes England is a government body that supports new homebuilding and regeneration to support affordable housing across England. It does this by forming partnerships that bridge the gap between the public and private sector to deliver new homes . Homes England provides finance for infrastructure projects with potential to open up new housing sites and help housing associations to build more affordable houses. [HE Brand Strategic Plan ARTWORK HR single pages DIGITAL LR.indd](#)

Homes England announced that social rent funding is now available for all relevant housing schemes, making the Lake District National Park Partnership’s first action under its Vibrant Communities and a Prosperous Economy Key Outcome complete.

Collaborative lobbying efforts from the LDNPA and wider LDNPP has contributed to some significant changes and new announcements from central government. These have included changes to business rates rules for self-catering properties, changes to council tax that provide councils with discretion to charge additional council tax of up to 100% on furnished homes not used as a sole or main residence (Westmorland and Furness website, Cumberland Council website), and new proposals that introduce a requirement for planning permission for short term lets.

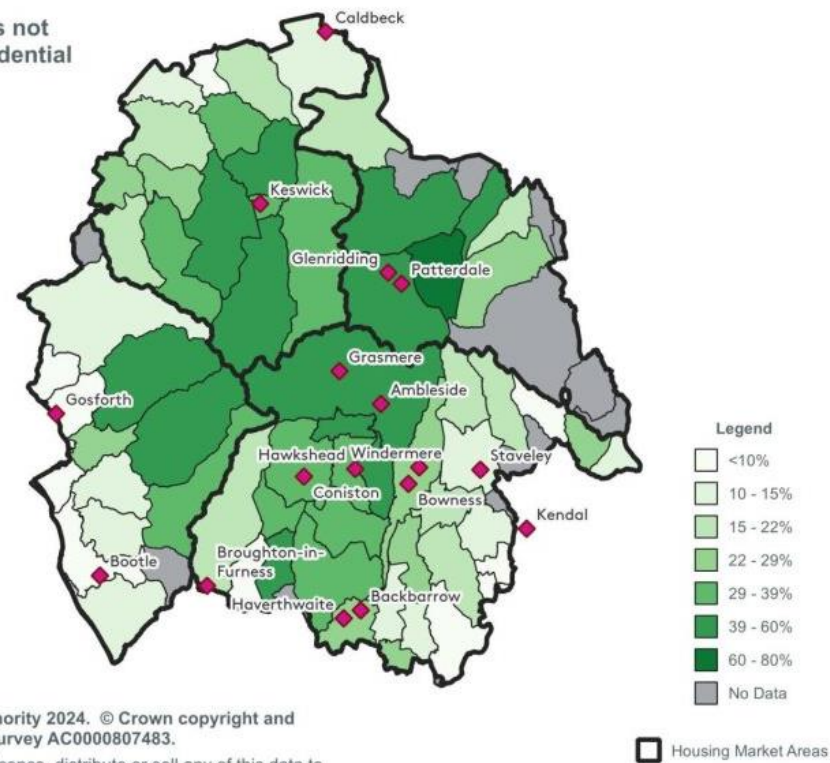
The State party has indicated that they will be bringing in planning legislation to require a change of use application of a dwelling into a short term let i.e. holiday let from this summer (2024). ( There is no news at this time whether the recently elected new government will continue with this proposal). There will be a creation of a new use class C5 for future short-term lets that are not used as a sole or main home. Existing short-term let will be automatically reclassified into the new category and will not require a planning application. This would provide local Authorities potential control over conversion of proposed new uses. However, the pending general election in July provides uncertainty over timescales for any changes in planning policy. [Department announces changes to short-term lets rules - DLUHC in the Media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

The growth in the imbalance has happened due to an increase in second homes and short-term holiday lets and local people being priced out of the market given relatively low earnings, and a reduction in the availability of housing in the private rented sector

	2001	2016	2022
Dwellings	25823	27658	35475
Second/holiday home dwellings	4248	5822	9594
Percentage of dwellings not in permanent use	16.45%	21.05%	27.04%

Properties used as holiday lets has seen the biggest rise over recent years.

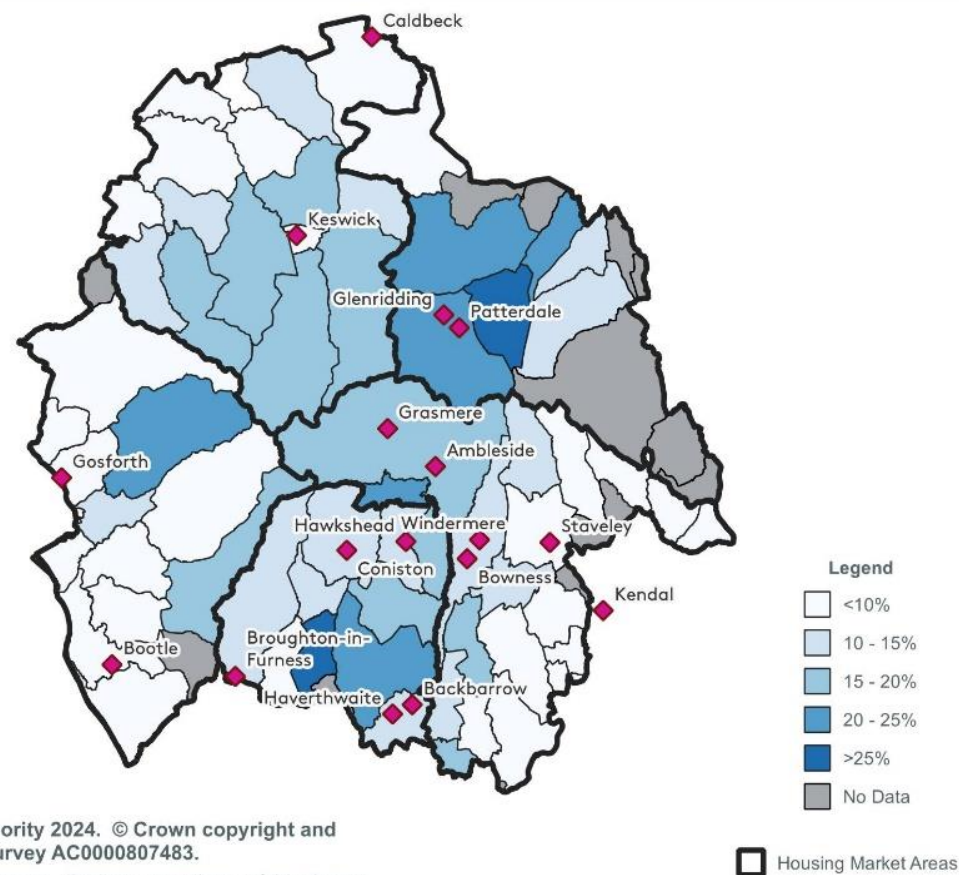
Percentage of properties not used for permanent residential use per Parish, 2022



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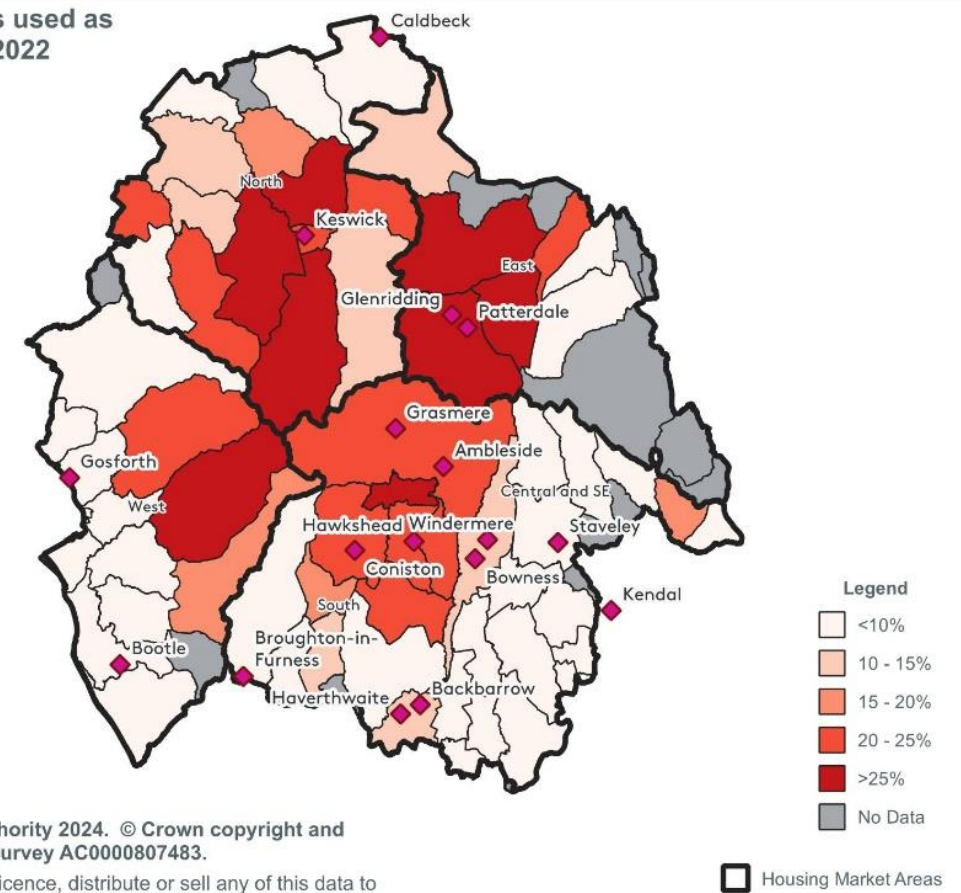
## Potential actions, definitions, and background

Percentage of second homes per Parish, 2022



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Percentage of properties used as holiday lets per Parish, 2022



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The LDNPP understands the issues around housing and the growing imbalance between holiday and resident accommodation and has therefore recently revised the actions in its management plan as part of the Spring 2024 Action Review. The new key transformative actions related to housing are:

Action No	Action wording
VCPE.act.1	Manage the impact of second homes and short-term holiday lets in the Lake District by:
1a	Implement the introduction of a registration system and database for short-term holiday lets, when announced.
1b	Implement planning land-use changes related to short-term holiday lets, when announced.
1c	Post-general election, work with other groups to lobby government to further control short-term holiday lets and second homes.
1d	Support Westmorland & Furness and Cumberland councils to use mechanisms to encourage the conversion of second homes to residential dwellings.
VCPE.act.2	Secure the delivery of key projects within the Windermere Gateway area including:
2a	Securing Homes England and Westmorland and Furness Council funding to support the Windermere Gateway development by December 2024.
2b	Delivery of enabling highway improvements and access infrastructure by March 2026.
2c	Further the delivery of housing and employment sites by: - Securing a planning application for affordable and local needs homes (in line with land allocation CSE01M, Land at Orrest Head Farm, Windermere) by December 2024 (outline planning application). - Securing a planning application for employment space (in line with land allocation CSE01M, Land at Orrest Head Farm, Windermere) by December 2024 (outline planning application).
2d	Seek funding to deliver the Windermere railway line improvements and Windermere Station improvements by December 2024.
VCPE.act.9	Work with the Cumbria Rural Housing Enabler Service to bring forward Lake District National Park Authority site allocations by March 2026.
VCPE.act.10	Proactively promote energy efficiency, sustainable building measures/ retrofit options for homeowners and businesses, with a particular focus on traditionally constructed buildings, including a presumption against demolition.

Affordable housing completions since 2017

Year	Windfall completions	Total completions	% Windfall	Five Year average (units)
2022/23	87	87	100	58
2021/22	39	39	100	58
2020/21	44	47	94	63
2019/20	59	72	82	63
2018/19	60	84	71	69
2017/18	85	95	89	64
2016/17	65	110	59	60

Urban development pressures

Not only are property prices inflated in areas of high demand for holiday houses, which in turn increases the need for more affordable housing to be built, but further pressure is placed upon land for new housing to replace the losses of existing housing stock to a holiday use. So, the implications of high proportions of holiday houses are wider reaching than community sustainability.

In the Lake District National Park, previously developed land is in short supply and most new development takes place on Greenfield sites. As we progress with the production of an Allocations of Land Development Plan Document, almost all sites identified are Greenfield sites; there is a need to promote sites for housing despite the environmental and landscape capacity constraints in many localities, because of the high levels of housing need. The number of suitable sites is limited however, and we have acknowledged that it will not be possible to facilitate the building of enough houses to meet the needs of many localities in an extremely sensitive nationally designated landscape. Meanwhile, in many of these localities large proportions of the existing housing stock is being used as holiday houses.

Recommendation 9

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles;

Progress

Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required.

Significant progress has been made on enhancing the public transportation system and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles. There has been a significant increase in visitors agreeing that traffic levels were reasonable. This is up 26% from 2018 (57%) to 2022 (83% .source Cumbria Tourism Visitor Survey). There has been no increase in traffic since 2017 inscription as a whole but that varies across the WHS and is seasonal.

Year	Clappers gate	Newby Bridge	Briery Wood, Windermere	Nest Brow, Keswick	Borrowdale Rd, Keswick	Low Lorton	St John's in the Vale	Lowick Bridge	Gosforth	Whitham Valley	total
2017	7210	4207	14102	3857	2818	1066	2190	2094	4504	1843	43894
2018	7030	4307	14306	4440	2842	1073	2290	2139	4440	1955	44825
2019	7105	4346	14150	4563	2869	1046	2334	2118	4340	1933	44805
2020	5851	3200	10522	3239	2237	901	1758	1796	3259	1520	34288
2021	6365	3977	12522	3979	2832	1009	1889	2167	3819	1759	40324
2022	6761	4169	13440	4241	2975	1094	2141	2111	3869	1824	42629
2023	6667	4183	13527	4441	3025	1120	2641	2146	3902	1821	43476
% change											
2017-2023	-7.53	-0.57	-4.08	15.16	7.32	5.06	20.57	2.48	-13.35	-1.22	-0.95

Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS

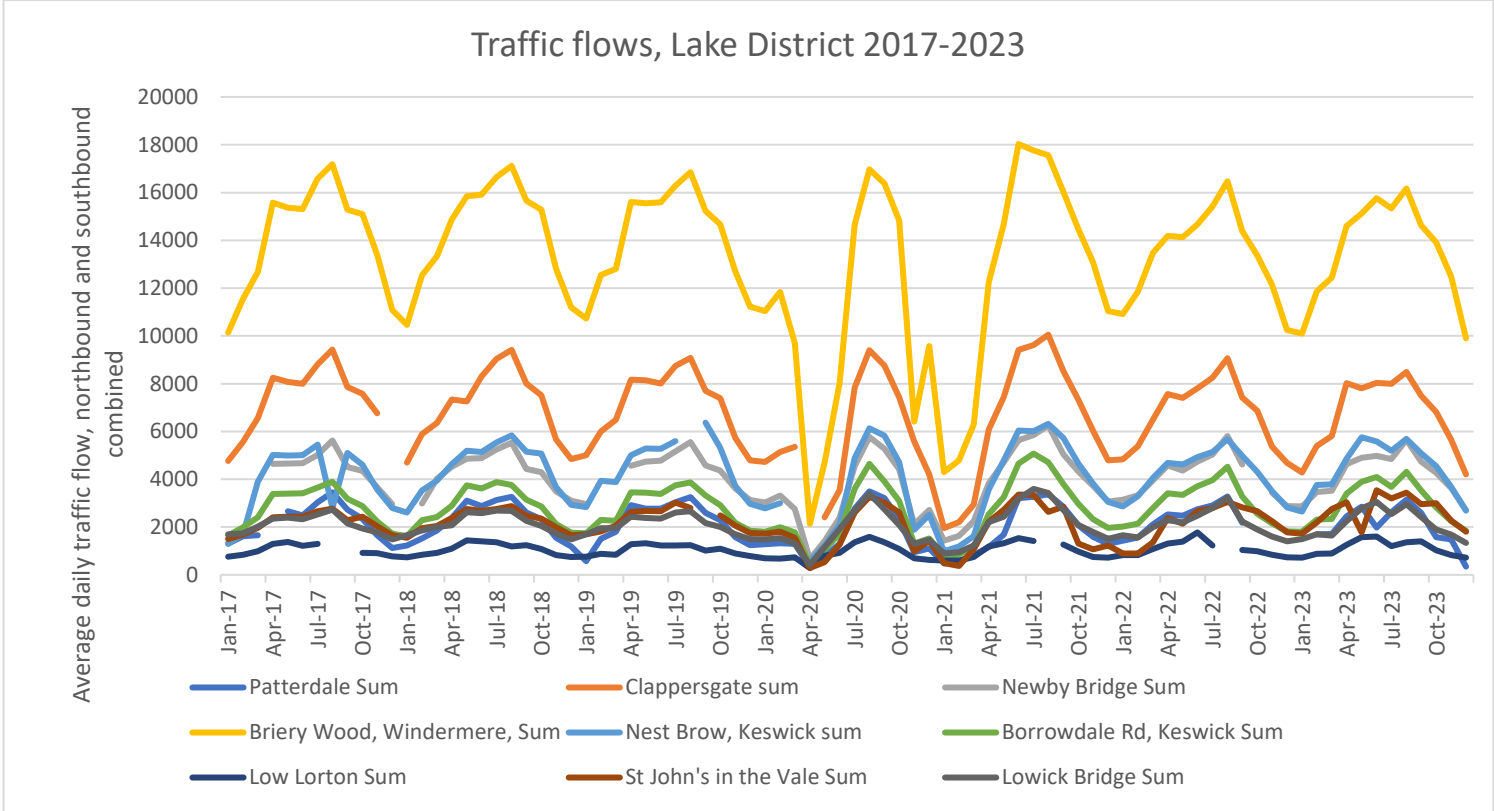
Traffic counts at various locations within the World Heritage Site from 2017 to 2023 has indicated overall a decrease in traffic to the WHS of 0.95% but this is a small amount statistically so basically no increase, however there are variation with some increase in the north of the site around Keswick where vehicle numbers have increased and decreases in the south and west.

In 2017 the Lake District National Park Authority set out its vision for sustainable transport, this was adopted by the Lake District National Park Partnership. It sets out how we will work with partners to develop and promote sustainable alternatives to driving under the headings:

- Reaching the Lakes
- Joining the Lakes together
- Active Travel
- New technology, and
- Keeping it special

Full details can be found here [www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/smartertravel](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/smartertravel) and see also the summary infographic is included in the appendices.

Figure 1: Average daily traffic flows for nine locations within the Lake District between 2017 and 2023 which demonstrates that there has not been an increase in overall traffic levels since inscription.



LDNP Partnership's Management Plan

When the Partnership Plan was adopted in October 2021 five Key Outcomes were identified and agreed by all Partners. One of these was Sustainable Travel and Transport. Full details can be found here <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/lake-district-national-park-partnership>



As part of the Spring 2024 Action Review, the transformative actions for this Key Outcome were reviewed and are set out below:

	<b>STT Overarching principles</b>
<b>STT.A</b>	Contribute to the UNESCO recommendation to ‘address the issue of excessive private vehicular traffic by enhancing the public transportation system within the property and discouraging access to the property by non-resident private vehicles.
<b>STT.D</b>	Inform our practice with awareness of global innovation and change in the transport and mobility sector, specifically in relation to behaviour change and implementation.
<b>Action No</b>	
<b>STT.act.1</b>	Advocate and support initiatives for multi-modal ticketing and enhanced connectivity from the West Coast Mainline between Penrith and Keswick and from Oxenholme and Windermere stations.
<b>STT.act.2</b>	Support councils and community rail partnerships to progress rail upgrades on all Cumbrian lines, including Lakes Line capacity, Cumbrian Coast Line signalling, electrification of the Lakes and Furness Line, station accessibility improvements and improved stopping frequency at and the ability to travel between Penrith and Oxenholme.
<b>STT.act.3</b>	Develop marketing initiatives for all sustainable and active transport modes. All Partners to promote sustainable travel through their own communications.
<b>STT.act.5</b>	Develop high quality active travel measures, including Develop cycle corridors and spurs set out in the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan, deliver the Borderland See More Lake District projects and work with Active Travel England to develop priority networks within the Lake District using funding allocated.
<b>STT.act.6</b>	Work with communities to pilot sustainable travel improvements including potential integrated traffic management schemes and delivering the actions from the Keswick Transport Study.
<b>STT.act.7</b>	Use results from the research project ‘Comparing attitudes and behaviour for visitors and residents in terms of how they would like to move around the park’ to develop and support delivery of a list of SMART actions.
<b>STt.act.8</b>	Work with Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council to deliver and promote bus service improvements through the revised Bus Service Improvement Plan, Rural Mobility Fund pilots and through partnership working at the Enhanced Partnership.
<b>STT.act.12</b>	Partners to promote public transport and active travel in their communications. The Key Outcome Group will support them to provide sustainable travel itineraries, information, ticketing linked with attractions and accommodation and to maximise the use of the ‘You Smart Thing’ travel information.

**Destination Management Plan**

In 2023 Cumbria was awarded Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status by Visit England. As part of this Cumbria Tourism have worked in partnership to create a Destination Management Plan. One of the key principles is to develop and encourage use of sustainable travel.

Through the DMP partners are seeking to:

“Ensure a joined-up approach to support a successful visitor economy for the whole of the county, supporting economic growth, supporting the natural environment, and delivering benefits for our host communities. The DMP seeks to ensure a balance between the economic benefits from a successful visitor economy and the need to support the environment and communities of Cumbria.”

The DMP sets out its vision:

- Famed for our world-class landscapes and culture - by 2040 Cumbria will be Britain’s most vibrant and sustainable rural destination, boasting a reputation for quality, welcome, and an adventure for everyone - bringing benefits for our visitors, economy, nature, and communities.

DMP principles:

- Sustainable tourism will be at the heart of everything we do
- Actions will be evidence based, inclusive and equitable, respectful, and supportive of our communities and of benefit to visitors

- A commitment to maximising our collective resources and expertise and avoiding duplication

The full report can be found here:

[www.cumbriatourism.org/dmp](http://www.cumbriatourism.org/dmp)

## Valley plans

To develop sustainable transport improvements that will reduce traffic and car dependency LDNPA is working with partners and communities to develop valley travel plans for Ullswater and Wasdale. Cumbria Tourism is leading on plans for Langdale and Hawkshead/West Windermere.

The draft plans for Wasdale and Ullswater are attached in the appendices. Langdale and Hawkshead are in preparation. Hawkshead is looking to increase the share of visitors arriving by bus, coach, and train from 9% in 2022 to 15% by 2030. The development and delivery of these plans is being carried out closely with local communities and businesses. In Ullswater there is an initiative-taking group Sustainable and Integrated Transport for Ullswater (SITU) which has already developed the Ullswater Hopper Bus and worked with LDNPA to create a walking route connecting the railway station in Penrith to Pooley Bridge on Ullswater, The Eamont Way.

**Examples of activities which have enhanced the public transportation system** include:

- Westmorland and Furness Council gives £1 million boost to sustainable transport. The first stage of a £1 million project to make it easier for people to walk, cycle and travel in sustainable ways in Westmorland and Furness has been given permission.
- £2 bus fare cap - In January 2023, the UK government announced an England-wide £2 bus fare, whereby all single bus journeys were capped at £2 with the UK government subsidising the difference. In the Lake District this has made a big difference to the attractiveness of bus travel as for longer rural bus journeys fares could be as high as £9 for a single fare. Both residents and visitors have taken advantage of this offer. On average bus usage across the Lake District has increased by approximately 9% but on some routes, it is much higher.

## Bus service improvements

In order to encourage people to choose public transport rather than the private motor vehicle the quality and frequency of services must be invested in. This has been happening particularly over the past two years.

There have been a number of bus service improvements in recent years which far exceed those expected when the original Partnership Plan was written. These have been provided or funded through a number of sources but are all integrated through the Sustainable Travel and Transport Key Outcome Group of the Lake District National Park Partnership and Partners' and delivery partners' work.

- Stagecoach commercial improvements. As the main bus operator in the Lake District Stagecoach has developed and improved its services since 2017. This has included increasing frequency of services, extending the season, running later at night, and improving the fleet. Just in the past year Stagecoach has doubled the frequency of the Langdale bus service and has put extra journeys on the 555/554 service that runs between Carlisle and Lancaster via the Central Lake District providing a strategic link to and through the Lakes. This route also benefited from a multimillion-pound investment in new vehicles, with lower emissions, quality interiors, stop announcements and bespoke livery. All this is publicised through the Lakes Connection timetable booklet which is widely available and through digital marketing.
- Bus Service Improvement Funding (BSIF) The UK Government has recently awarded substantial funding to the two councils Westmorland & Furness Council and Cumberland Council to improve bus services. Some services are already in place which include doubling the frequency of the Penrith to Keswick service to run every half hour and introducing through-tickets from rail travel to Penrith station. There are also improvements to the service linking Barrow with Windermere which benefits both visitors and workers. For less busy areas demand responsive minibus services have been developed through the Rural Mobility Fund.
- Wasdale and Buttermere shuttle buses. During the post-lockdown surges in visitors in 2020 and 2021 the multi-agency partners in the Strategic Visitor Management Group (SVMG)(comprising senior representatives of 10 different organisations) worked at pace to start bus services in the two valleys – Buttermere and Wasdale - where visitor and vehicle movements were reaching dangerous levels. The aim was to reduce the number of cars travelling into and parking in the two valleys by providing sustainable and low-cost public transport alternatives. These shuttle buses proved popular and effective and therefore have been continued and are running again in 2024. Full details of these services can be found here [www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/wasdaleshuttle](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/wasdaleshuttle) [www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/buttermereshuttle](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/buttermereshuttle)
- Cross Lakes Experience. This integrated bus and boat service links Windermere and Hawkshead with Beatrix Potter's former home, Hilltop, a popular cultural destination for domestic and international visitors. In 2024 the National Trust has invested in this bus to enable sustainable travel and access for visitor without a car. It is also providing integrated tickets incorporating boat, bus, and entry to Hilltop.
- Ullswater Hopper. As mentioned above an initiative-taking community group, SITU, has been working hard on a purely voluntary basis to improve sustainable transport options in their valley. This has included raising funds for securing the Ullswater Hopper service which links places in the valley without public transport with the core bus routes and the main attractions and settlements. This was piloted in 2023 and was such a success that the season has been extended in 2024 and a new route linking Keswick with Ullswater has been added. [Homepage - SITU - Sustainable and Integrated Transport for Ullswater \(situcumbria.org.uk\)](http://Homepage - SITU - Sustainable and Integrated Transport for Ullswater (situcumbria.org.uk))

## Rail Improvements

- £24 million enhancement works to Carlisle railway station to improve its role as a gateway to northern Cumbria due to be completed 2026. (Funding through the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal).
- Proposals to improve Penrith Station with funding from Network Rail and the Borderlands Place programme.
- Multi-modal ticketing and enhanced connectivity from the West Coast Mainline between Penrith and Keswick and from Oxenholme and Windermere Stations. Avanti West Coast has added Keswick as a destination on rail journey planners (even though it no longer has a railway station) so that just one ticket covering travel across both rail and bus transport can be bought to travel there. It comes as bus company, Stagecoach, has this summer doubled the frequency of services connecting Penrith and Keswick to 30 minutes.

There is also a longstanding aspiration in Cumbria has been to deliver the Energy Coast Rail Upgrade to support communities and businesses along the line from Barrow to Carlisle. It would help north to south visitor movements in Cumbria along the coast.

**Local Transport Fund**

Over £200 million allocated to Cumbria.  
Westmorland & Furness Council has an allocation of £1,357m with additional Local Transport Fund (LTF) funding over 7 years from 2025 until 2032 of £128,909 million, (Department of Transport information published February 2024) to fund a wide range of projects to improve the local transport connections that people rely on every day, particularly across towns, villages and rural areas (£30m has been allocated to the A595 Grisebeck Improvement Scheme).  
Cumberland Council has been allocated £1,209 million with additional LTF funding over 7 years from 2025 to 2032 to £72,844 million. The projects are yet to be determined however the funding priorities are:

- Drive better connectivity within our towns, suburbs, and cities
- Drive better connectivity between our towns and cities
- Improve everyday local journeys for people

The transport improvements which could be funded include:

- Building new roads and improving junctions
- Installing or expanding mass transit systems
- Improving roads by filling in potholes and better street lighting for personal safety
- Improving journey times for car and bus users by tackling congestion
- Increasing the number of EV charge points
- Refurbishing bus and rail stations
- Improving our streets so they are safer to walk children to school and increasing accessibility for all

Active Travel

The Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan 2022-2037 <https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/544/38296/44603132558.pdf> aims to deliver improved cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure. It also aims to create a series of traffic-free strategic corridors to better connect our towns and communities. The routes will be over longer distances and will also be suitable for leisure and tourism.  
Public transport is an important part of the sustainable transport mix and for many people the option most likely to encourage modal shift. For others however, active travel, walking and cycling, is a more attractive alternative to driving. Since 2017 Cumbria Authorities have invested in improved routes and marketing to encourage more people to choose active travel and reduce traffic.



**Keswick to Threlkeld Trail (K2T)**

Reopened and improved in 2020 this 5km long fully accessible walking, wheeling, and cycling trail between the tourism hub of Keswick and the village of Threlkeld has proven to be incredibly popular. In its first year of opening 265,000 people used it generating £15 million for the local economy and saving 194.2 tonnes of CO2e. The total distance travelled per year on the trail is estimated to be 583,680 miles on foot and 263,028 miles by bicycle. Many of these miles will have replaced car journeys. <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/walking/mileswithoutstiles/mws37>

**West Windermere Way (WWW)**

This accessible walking, cycling and horse-riding trail was opened in 2023. It links the ferry stop at Lakeside with the village of Newby Bridge, providing a connection between businesses and the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway. In its first year of opening almost 100,000 people have used it. Being found at the southern end of the National Park it provides an activity closer to many people’s homes, reducing traffic in the busy central Lakes area. <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/projects/West-Windermere-Way>

**Heart of the Lakes Corridor**



The LDNPA are working closely with the Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council to develop cycle connections through the Heart of the Lakes, through three projects to complete missing links in the public rights of way network: Grasmere to Dunmail, Thirlmere West and Keswick to Threlkeld extension. An outline business case has been approved to provide £6mln through the Borderlands Growth Deal to construct these routes and we hope work will start in 2025.

**Active Travel Lake District** LDNPA has recently been awarded funding through Active Travel England (an executive arm of the UK Government Department for Transport) to develop active travel in the Lake District through a network plan to steer future investment and feasibility studies to improve cycling infrastructure in Wasdale and Keswick. This work will take place in 2024/2025 with the hope that this will then enable us to secure funding to deliver in future years.

**Bike hire**

LDNPA has set up cycle hire hubs in key location in the Lake District where there are currently gaps in provision. Where there are existing cycle hire providers LDNPA is working with them to promote their business

A new **13 Valleys Trail**, using existing rights of way, is being developed and will provide interpretation about the WHS for each of the 13 valleys. [13 Valleys Trail : Lake District National Park](#)

The is a new walking route from Penrith Railway Station to Pooley Bridge Steamer Pier, offering an ‘Active Travel’ alternative to the car, bus, or taxi for these 5.5 miles. [Friends of the Ullswater Way - Eamont Way \(ullswaterheritage.org\)](#)

Innovation



Electric vehicle charging station powered by solar panels at Brockhole on Windermere

Technology in moving quickly in the transport sector as in other areas of life. This enables us to get accurate information out to people through digital communications either through our own platforms or through other platforms that tap into national public transport databases. But we are always looking for opportunities to work with providers to pilot new ways to reduce reliance on car travel.

Autonomous Vehicle Trail. Between 2017 and 2022 LDNPA conducted two autonomous ‘Pod’ trials at the LDNPA Brockhole visitor centre. These were the first rural trials of this technology and whilst this technology is still not ready to run on the Lake District’s roads there is potential to use this technology to reduce traffic in some key areas in future

RT5.0

This project is a collaboration between Cumbria Tourism and tech developer you.smart.thing, supported by funding from the European Space Agency. The mobile website uses data from satellites to identify busy areas and nudge visitors towards more sustainable alternatives or areas that are less busy. A pilot is taking place in 2024, and businesses are embedding it in their websites, the results are looking positive so far and it is hoped this will lead to its roll out in future years.

<https://www.cumbriatourism.org/resources/smart-travel-planner/>

Examples of activities which have discouraged private vehicles including:

Marketing

Many parts of the Lake District have good bus and rail services, for example from March to November buses run every 15 minutes between Windermere and Grasmere. But in many cases people do not know or appreciate how good these services are. Many partners including LDNPA, the local councils and the National Trust as well as private sector organisations have promoted this through their social media, and some such as Sizergh Castle (NT) and Wordsworth Grasmere (Wordsworth Trust) have offered incentives for visitors to travel by bus.

Cumbria Tourism have partnered with majority bus operator Stagecoach and with Rail companies TransPennine Express and Avanti to run a major campaign ‘go car free in ‘23’ which was remarkably successful. The objective is getting visitors out of their cars, making the journey here part of the trip, using buses and active transport as part of their holiday whilst they are here. [Go Car Free in the Lake District, Cumbria - Visit Lake District.](#)



- By end of round 2 of the campaign there has been a reach of nearly 94 million.
- This has resulted in real behaviour change and the transport partners have seen a significant uplift in passenger numbers, so much so that they are entering the campaign into the industry awards. Visitors targeted for this is London, Birmingham, Scotland, and the rest of the West Coast mainline and then Stagecoach approaches and travelling in Cumbria with the £2 bus fares.
- A further round (Round 3) of £60k funding has been secured from Avanti, Stagecoach and SVMG.

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria has overseen research, on behalf of the Partnership, over the last 18 months to explore with both visitors and local people's appetite to travel differently in the Lake District. The results showed that there clearly is.

Lorraine Smyth, CEO of ACT, said: 'This research collected responses from over 3,000 people, both locals and visitors, in face-to-face interviews, focus groups, three large online surveys and two events. The latest national online survey with 1,000 responses had 81% saying they would be willingly to travel without their car on holiday and 46% concerned about the impact of their travel choices on the environment. In local surveys 61% felt negatively about travel in the National Park and nearly 60% would like to see an integrated, cheaper transport system in the Lake District. Many respondents also indicated that charging for access to busy places at busy times would fund improvements in services for all. We have a lot of information from the surveys and, along with partners will be using this to inform planning for the future of transport services in the Lake District.' [Lake District National Park Authority \(cmail19.com\)](https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/assets/final-research-feedback-nov-2023.pdf) . <https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/assets/final-research-feedback-nov-2023.pdf>

This research was funded by The Lake District National Park Authority, Friends of the Lake District, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and ACT and was commissioned by the Sustainable Transport and Travel Group of the Lake District National Park Partnership.

## Potential actions, definitions, and background

The Lake District National Park has been something of a test bed for sustainable transport initiatives and this is a key focus of its Management Plan.

This involves helping and encouraging more visitors to arrive other than by car, or if they arrive by car, to minimise their usage during their stay in Cumbria. This includes encouraging walking, cycling, using local business and train services and the boats/ferries. It also covers supporting the use of electric vehicles to and inside Cumbria. This requires improvements in some of our infrastructure - in particular, investment to improve capacity and reliability of the railway lines in Cumbria - as well as enhanced bus service provision; this needs to be supported by dependable and easy to use online information about route planning which can be accessed on the go around Cumbria. It also, critically, requires proper coordination of different modes to create a genuinely integrated "end to end" transport system.

Sustainable and active travel needs to become easy, fun and a 'must do' integral part of the visitor experience, becoming a motivator for visiting. Investment in active travel routes will form a key part of improving this part of the visitor offer.

There are plans, not yet funded, to improve rails service along the Lakes Line to Windermere and the Coastal Line from Carlisle to Barrow along the West Coast.

[illegible]



**Recommendation 10**

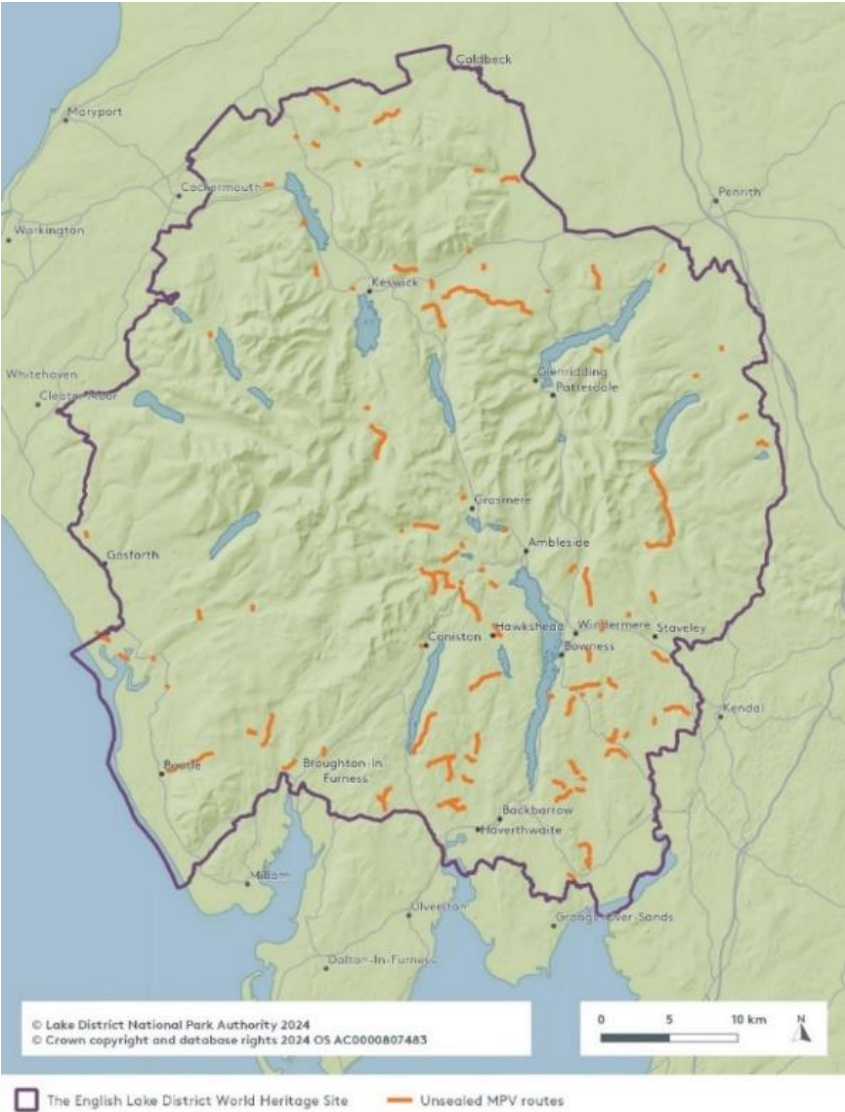
World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Concerns raised in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews regarding the use of off-road motorised vehicles on green lanes within the property, urges the State Party to harness the already available instruments to prevent vehicular access to unsealed roads in highly sensitive and emblematic valleys, and requests the State Party to ensure as a matter of urgency that systematic monitoring is carried out on all unsealed roads open to vehicular access to assess the status of this activity and its impacts on the tangible and intangible attributes of the property, as a basis for a comprehensive regulatory policy focused on safeguarding the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

**Progress**

Good progress toward addressing recommendation but requires continued attention/new actions.

Monitoring of routes has commenced, and a monitoring plan has been prepared.



The LDNPA acknowledges UNESCO concerns over motorised traffic on unsealed public road and is seeking to undertake the monitoring of these roads to assess the impact on the OUV of the WHS. There has been progress by the LDNPA producing a programme of monitoring. As a starting place the LDNPA will monitor 9 routes. These routes were chosen to include some of those which UNESCO has raised attention to. Monitoring could be extended to other routes in the future with additional resources. These are however in a close geographical area and to ensure that we are consider the World Heritage Site as a whole in terms of integrity of the World Heritage site we will also be looking at sites in other areas of the WHS to ensure an overview of activity across the WHS.

The highway network has developed over centuries and is a cultural heritage asset. These unsealed public roads have been used over a lengthy period of time and have established legal rights of use. They form a small part of the totality of the network for recreational access (only 3.4%), but it is acknowledged that there is localised concern.

The monitoring of a route will be for a minimum period of three years to establish a baseline of usage and for comparison for future monitoring. Given recreational usage is very dependent upon weather conditions this ensures a sound basis for establishing usage and survey data. The surveys and analysis of the data will be carried out by independent consultants.

Next steps once survey results are known where there is unequivocal evidence that motorised vehicle use of a specific unsealed road poses harm to OUV of the WHS, or special qualities of the National Park, then we will seek the introduction of an appropriate TRO to address the defined threat in accordance with DEFRA guidance and the tests required under Highways Act legislation.

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS**

- Data logging has started for three routes.
- Perception surveys for one route

**Provisional schedule for data-logging and user surveys on unsealed UCR and BOATS in the Lake District National Park 2024- 2032 inclusive.**

Green coloured routes = common with UNESCO/ICOMOS suggested routes for surveying\*

Routes to be surveyed	Length	Council Area	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
U2228 – Gail Road, Underskiddaw	1.5Km	Cumberland	✓			✓			✓		
U5255 – Stile End	2.75Km	W&F	✓			✓			✓		
U5001 - High Tilberthwaite – Fell Foot	2.5Km	W&F	✓			✓			✓		
C3035/102 – Bowscale, Mungrisdale	1.5Km	Cumberland		✓			✓			✓	
U3277 /3278 BOAT 355002/355003/367004–Breasthigh Road	2.9Km	W&F		✓			✓			✓	
U5600 / BOAT 514030 – Whitbarrow Road	1.95Km	W&F		✓			✓			✓	
U2236/3132 – Old Coach Road	8.4Km	Cumberland			✓			✓			✓
U5051 - Parkamoor	2.2Km	W&F			✓			✓			✓
U5333 – Gamblesmire lane	1.9Km	W&F			✓			✓			✓

The LDNPA must work within government guidance regarding vehicular access rights. Section 72 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and The National Park Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the procedure to be followed when such orders are proposed and made. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 reduced the number of unsealed public routes in the Lake District that could legally be used by motor vehicles.

As a TRO is a mechanism to suspend people’s rights to use a route or control the way they use a route, either permanently or temporarily, and or in part, removing them is a significant issue. Any decision to do so must be based, as far as is practicable, on robust evidence. This means each unsealed public road needs to be assessed before any legal action is taken.

Full details of the legislation for making TROs is set out in the following link [TRO - Defra Guidance.pdf](#)

The TRO process has been used before where there was evidence of harm, and the LDNPA would use it again, if necessary, as set out in our Position Statement (see supporting Matrix). This demonstrates the LDNPA’s willingness to use TROs where the LDNPA has identified harm through robust evidence-gathering. This has to be in conjunction with the highway authority as the LDNPA does not have sole responsibilities for all the routes.

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

**Position statement on unsealed roads**

19 January 2022

This position statement was approved at the LDNPA’s Park Strategy and Vision Committee on 19 January 2022, to clarify our current activity and the process we will follow should management difficulties arise. The intention is:

- To aid our corporate and staff understanding our current position and approach



- To give a consistent message to staff to use and promote when dealing with enquiries on this matter.
  - Provide clarity to individuals and organisations enquiring of our approach.
1. The Lake District National Park Authority remains concerned about driving on unsealed roads and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) often referred to as 'green lanes'.\* The activity is considered a potential disruptor with the special qualities of the National Park and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS) depending on levels of activity and behaviours.
  2. The ability to enjoy the area in tranquillity could be threatened by vehicle intrusion into its quietest parts. When vehicles are encountered or their physical impact is witnessed, the sense of peace and quiet is lost and enjoyment is temporarily diminished.
  3. However, the Authority accepts the legality of such activity which was in existence prior to inscription as a WHS and therefore will work with partners, land managers, user groups and stakeholders to manage and mitigate the impacts of such activity on the routes themselves, the surrounding environment and on other legitimate user groups.
  4. Where there is unequivocal evidence that motorised vehicle use of a specific unsealed road poses harm to OUV of the WHS, or special qualities of the National Park, then we will seek the introduction of an appropriate TRO to address the defined threat in accordance with DEFRA guidance and the tests required under Highways Act legislation.
  5. The LDNPA recognises the legitimacy of motor vehicle users to exercise their legal rights to use unsealed public roads and BOATS within the national park within the requirements of the Highways Act and other relevant legislation such as Traffic Regulation Orders applied to specific routes.
  6. The LDNPA recognises the tensions around the vehicular use of some unsealed roads in the national park that, through their physical appearance, would appear to many observers, not to be roads or to carry vehicular rights. Where these tensions exist the LDNPA will use the resources available to it at the time to inform, educate and explain the legal situation and also to instil responsible and sustainable use of such routes to all legitimate users.
  7. If the Authority forms the view that despite routine maintenance and information provision, tension or conflict between users sharing a route is sustained over time then where appropriate, and subject to availability of resources, the LDNPA will support the establishment of Management Groups comprised of stakeholders with a remit to:
    1. monitor the use of such routes with a view to reaching consensus on the way such routes should be managed to safely accommodate all legitimate users
    2. make suggestions to the relevant managing bodies to maintain or improve the management of the routes.
  8. Decisions to establish such groups may be informed by collection of data such as activity monitoring and or surveys, or these may be a product of the establishment of such Management Groups.
  9. In the event that the Management Group identifies problems with the use of an unsealed road and impact on the area then an HIA will be undertaken to assess the impact on the OUV of the World Heritage Site which can then be part of any decision on future action.
  10. In the event of a Management Group recommending the use of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) as a means to securing the sustainable use of a route, the LDNPA will carry out an assessment of the route and follow the prescribed legal process to establish if a TRO is appropriate and legitimate.
  11. The LDNPA will consider any future national legislation that may be presented that relates to the management of traffic, sustainability of routes, or the promotion of non-vehicular traffic in relation to such things as the National Park Partnership Plan, planning policies and other policy guidance relevant and applicable at that time. Such consideration may be used to inform any changes in the Authority's position on this matter.

The following link provides more information on Unsealed roads on the LDNPA website: [Unsealed Roads : Lake District National Park](#)

## Recommendation 11

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Notes furthermore that the Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, approved in 2022, makes no mention of World Heritage and, as a change of scale in the Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects is envisaged within the property, recommends the State Party to promptly set out an overall place-based strategic approach to demonstrate how both natural flood management and protection of the attributes of the OUV might be achieved.

### Progress

Good progress toward addressing recommendation but requires continued attention/new actions

The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) recognises that Natural Flood Management is the most appropriate method to mitigate the impact of climate risk and increase the resilience of our communities and landscape. Schemes should be designed in such a way that they do not significantly impact on the cultural landscape, while recognising that to properly mitigate the increased risk of flooding due to climate change in this area, change will be part of that process. Significant progress has been made on understanding how NFM can make the area more flood resilient, how to engage farmers in this process and sources of funding both state funding and private finance. Actions have been delivered locally with State funding.

### Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS

Local (this supplements the information in the State of Conservation report and provides examples of work.)

The **Cumbria Natural Flood Management** (NFM) project has sought to find what types of NFM work best in 14 different types of landscape. Cumbria has a variety of geology, soil depth, agricultural use, and altitudes which impact the choice and effectiveness of different NFM measures. In addition, they wanted to assess which NFM measures would be acceptable to farmers and landowners at risk and the implications for farming practices. The primary focus was to see which types of NFM would make the biggest difference to flood risk. The project team wanted to demonstrate how NFM measures could effect changes to river discharge (water in the river). The team partnered with Lancaster University to help with data collection and analysis. The project aimed to slow or store 10,000 cubic metres of water per square kilometre. This enabled the trialling of a variety of NFM measures across different landscapes. The team worked with a variety of landowners and agricultural operations to better understand the measures trialled, which included:

- farmers carrying out subsoiling (de-compacting the soil to help water infiltrate)
- changing overland flow routes
- building earth dams, bunds and swales
- re-designing a drystone wall to hold water
- building leaky barriers, with different materials and designs – including with living material
- planting 8,000 trees
- planting hedgerows • creating offline flood storage ponds (about 4,000 cubic metres)
- working with the Forestry Commission to create over 100 leaky wooden barriers or different designs

Revitalising Eden – The Eden Catchment Plan [Revitalising-Eden-Catchment-Plan-WEB.pdf \(edenrivertrust.org.uk\)](#). The Eden Catchment Partnership has developed this Catchment Plan to identify and prioritise the action needed to manage Eden's rivers sustainably whilst improving the natural ( ecosystem) services of the catchment. The whole catchment contains designations for wildlife, landscape and heritage. The Catchment Plan is developed for Catchment Partnership members who are engaged in sustainable management of water.

Since the **Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management strategy** (2022) was produced there has been a change in Local Governance for Cumbria and the creation of two unitary Authorities for Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness. Both authorities have responsibilities for various management issues in the World Heritage Site. It is likely that a new strategy may come forward (Westmorland and Furness) Council or may continue to adopt the existing strategy (Cumberland Council).

National Trust have through its **Riverlands programme** ([Ullswater Riverlands | Lake District | National Trust](#)) in the North Lakes developed a best practice approach to planning, designing, and implementing works to restore river health and natural processes, including natural flood management in rivers in sensitive landscapes such as parklands, designed landscapes, valley bottom farmland etc., which exhibit significant OUV. These approaches seek to minimise harm to OUV in the delivery of these benefits and seek opportunities to restore, support and sustain OUV.



( (c) National Trust- Goldrill Beck)( Image of the new route of Goldrill Beck away from the highway

### Potential actions, definitions, and background

Management Plan action have been updated

FFNC 3C Promoting and supporting farmers and land managers in delivering climate adaptation and resilience through nature-based solutions, focussing on natural flood management, and improving soil health.

The LDNPP Management plan sets out the Partnership Strategy. The Strategy (17- Increased resilience to Flooding) is to:

Support projects that provide the optimum solution to flood resilience for the catchment as a whole, balancing the need to reduce flood risk in towns and villages against potential impacts up and down stream, including on agricultural land, and sustaining the Special Qualities and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

Mitigate and adapt to the increased likelihood and severity of flooding that is predicted to result from climate change. Support measures that increase the resilience to flooding including slowing surface water run-off by increasing absorption and storage or protecting settlements with hard defences whilst sustaining the Special Qualities and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

As note in the Partnership Management Plan the priority is to achieve a recovery that will celebrate, sustain, and enhance the Lake District National Park's Vision and Special Qualities, and World Heritage attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. Our farming traditions, our natural environment and our climate are in crisis and our recovery from this shared crisis drive the priorities and objectives for the Partnership. This is why we recognise farming led nature recovery.

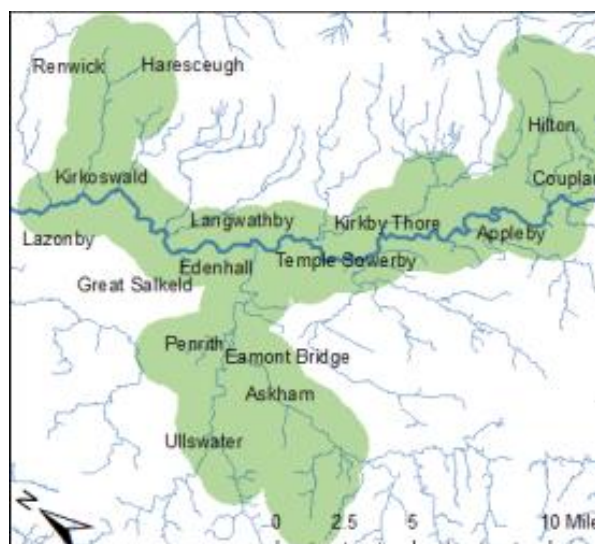
[Natural Flood Management \(NFM\) | The Flood Hub](#) showcases NFM work across Cumbria and some of our academic and outreach work.

West Cumbria Rivers Trust water storage area - This project was delivered by West Cumbria Rivers Trust as part of their DEFRA funded Glenderamackin Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project, in partnership with the Environment Agency and landowners. The project includes a large, bunded pond situated above Naddle Beck's floodplain, to provide flood water storage, slow the flow of water and reduce flood risk downstream

Colthouse Beck South Cumbria Rivers Trust - Natural Flood Management (NFM) project aimed at protecting properties in the small village of Colthouse, near Hawkshead, after repeated flood events. Works consisted of: • De-culvert of the existing stone-walled culvert at the top of the site. • The creation of a re-profiled open watercourse channel through the site. • The creation of x2 bunds and x3 leaky dams using natural materials (earth and timber), designed to temporarily store and attenuate peak flows from the watercourse during storm events • The construction of x2 formal headwalls and adjustable orifice plates enable optimal storage in target flood events.

[North-West-NFM-handbook.pdf \(thefloodhub.co.uk\)](#) - handbook contains more information about the types of NFM techniques that landowners can use, the associated maintenance and costs, and extra considerations.

Examples of NFM



An example of a strategic place based approach is the work in the River Eden: (see below) [Revitalising-Eden-Catchment-Plan-WEB.pdf \(edenrivertrust.org.uk\)](#). Another example of State Party funding (Historic England), to support building climate resilience through community landscapes and cultural heritage, is the Clandage project. Within the Clandage project the Eden Rivers Trust is predominantly working within the River Eden catchment focused on flooding (see map for the study). The project will demonstrate how understanding the history of human activity in catchments and their landscapes can inform their sustainable future management, and to show how that understanding can be used to engage people in informed resilience planning for their places. The project will develop a toolkit that enables archival, historical and material knowledge to be centralised within a geographical information system (GIS) database, see: [Eden,information,sheet.pdf](#) ;[Building Climate Resilience Through Community Landscapes and Cultural Heritage \('Clandage'\)](#)

West Cumbria Rivers Trust is working with the Environment Agency to develop and deliver three major natural flood management projects within the National Park:

- A £693k project will contribute to efforts to reduce flood risk in Keswick by working on the Glenderamackin catchment from Mungrisdale to Keswick.
- An £818k project will help protect Cockermouth, working in the Cocker catchment from Buttermere and Loweswater towards the town.
- Finally, a £166k project is working on the river upstream of Bootle to help reduce flood risk to the village

The catchment of the River Glenderamackin is approximately 142 square kilometres and includes the mountains and river valleys that drain into Keswick, including Mungrisdale, Troutbeck, the Naddle and St Johns in the Vale. The River Glenderamackin and St John's Beck join to form the River Greta just upstream of Keswick.

Using learning from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF), we have transitioned to a Landscape Recovery round 2 pilot project (April 2024-June 2025). Whilst blended finance is still a major feature, we will see stronger support from Defra with a widened scope to include Natural Flood Management - such as creating wetlands and increasing floodplain connectivity - whilst also creating wildlife habitat, improving protected sites (including the Skiddaw Group, River Derwent & Tributaries SSSI/SAC) and transitioning to net zero. We will be working with three commons associations, in addition to the 45+ farm businesses onboard (with eligibility for more). We have appointed three new staff and begun scoping opportunities, discussing long-term farm payments over 20 years, commenced habitat baseline monitoring, and are scheduling the first stakeholder group for mid-August.

We are developing six plans through the Development Phase, including a catchment-wide 'Land Management' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation' Plan. We hope Defra will give us an implementation agreement from July 2025 onwards. [Resilient Glenderamackin Landscape Recovery — West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#)

The aim is to support local communities to manage flood risk and working to support and work with the local farming community.

With thanks to funding from the Lake District National Parks' [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) funding, we are able to continue the Glenderamackin Farmer group until January 2025. This allows us to bring farmers together to help co-design the Resilient Glenderamackin project, understand grants that are available and support farmers in the catchment through the agricultural transition.





Goldrill Beck has been at the heart of nature restoration in the Ullswater valley and this summer the team have been working on the next phase of work which has included reconnecting a 1km stretch of the beck to its floodplain. As a major landowner in the valley, with more than 5,400 hectares of land and large farms to work with, we have a huge opportunity to make space for nature, increase biodiversity and boost climate resilience on a large scale.

The latest phase in our work to help this landscape thrive has seen work carried out along 1km of Goldrill Beck to create 11 hectares of floodplain wetland. The work, completed by contractor Tom Lindsay, and funded by the Environment Agency through the Cumbria River Restoration Strategy, involved introducing varied natural features into the river and the floodplain, including lowering sections of artificial embankments, blocking ditches, and creating ponds.

Reinstating natural features will encourage water to spread out across the floodplain, so a diverse wetland habitat can develop, creating ideal environments for a range of animals and plants to flourish. It will also provide some flood resilience to local communities. The approach taken has been to make minimal interventions which deliver the most impact, and then allow the river to do the rest of the work.

Climate change is the single biggest threat to the places we care for in the Lake District and our work to restore and improve rivers is one of the ways we can both boost resilience against its impact and enhance carbon storage in floodplain wetlands.

The good work is set to continue in Ullswater with plans to restore 400 hectares of peatland this coming winter and working with farm tenants over the next couple of years to create 400 hectares of wood pasture.

The delivery of the Environment Agency's Strategy (see above) has seen the following actions:

- In the last six years there has been £330m of investment in the North West of England to improve flood and climate resilience in communities. Of this £110m was invested in Cumbria in over 200 projects.
- Over £200m has been allocated to Cumbria for the flood and climate resilience programme between 2021 to 2027.
- Key locations in the English Lake District that have benefited from this investment include:
  - Keswick
  - Cockermouth
  - Glenridding
- Additionally, the Environment Agency maintains existing flood defence assets with approximately £20m invested since 2015.
- Between 20/21, Defra allocated £2.5m to pilot Natural Flood Management approaches across Cumbria and this included many locations in the English Lake District:
  - Staveley and the Upper Kent
  - Upper Derwent
  - Lorton Valley
- Building on this Natural Flood Management programme a further £6m has been allocated to Cumbria County Council to develop a programme of innovative resilience measures with communities, this includes Grasmere and the Lorton Valley.
- The flood and climate resilience programme also invested in nature-based solutions that not only reduce flood risk but also make a broader contribution to improving the natural environment, examples include:
  - River restoration programme with projects in Ullswater Valley, Lorton Valley, Derwent, Kent Valley, Lowther Valley.
  - Weir removal projects with projects in the Kent Valley.
  - Peat restoration programme with projects in the Kent Valley.
- The Environment Agency is responsible for the warning and informing of flood incidents in the English Lake District WHS and recently invested in:
  - Piloting improved radar coverage.
  - Provision of additional flow / level monitoring stations.
  - Provision of more flood warning areas.
  - Improved access to Environment Agency online flood information.
- The Environment Agency works with the Local Resilience Forum to ensure a professional response during flood incidents, which aims to keep people safe and minimise the impacts.

- Community flood action groups are integral to this response and over recent year the capacity and capability of these groups has been improved across the English Lake District.



**Recommendation 12**

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

**UNESCO recommendation:** *Welcomes that an interpretation strategy for the property is under preparation and requests that this strategy be developed around the OUV of the property, finalised as soon as possible, submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and used as a reference to determine, which tourism uses are compatible with sustaining the property’s OUV.* .

The strategy will be fundamental in defining how the property is understood and presented.

**Progress**

[Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required.](#) – This may be resolved if UNESCO agrees the draft interpretation Strategy.

Significant progress has been made on producing an Interpretation Strategy and the background work preparing this has indicated that there is much interpretation already taking place but not recorded; to date this has been dependent upon individual organisations. The LDNPP has come together with Interpretation experts from Partner organisations and outside consultants and potential users to produce this strategy. This is still in draft form but will provide an indication of actions for delivery and timescales.

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS**

See the draft Interpretation Strategy for a summary of some existing positive activity (and below).

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

Whilst the Interpretation Strategy is still under development there is however a wealth of interpretation of World Heritage taking place by various LDNP Partners and community groups.

Interpretation

The National Trust has made an active decision to try and look for opportunities to introduce different strands of Outstanding Universal Value into its physical and digital communications in the Lake District. This can be seen in the commitment to understanding and communicating the need for landscape scale change at Tarn Hows regarding a recent felling order for the larch that contributes to the character of the area. A detailed spirit of place document was prepared to refine our understanding of the site and its development, and to provide information to include in the communication strategy.

Images from the National Trust



An example of the National Trust using attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in interpretation is at the Bowder Stone, a 2000-ton stone which has attracted people to it as a place of interest. The National Trust, as part of maintenance to the Boulder stone access ladder, staged a media exhibition that framed the installations of a new ladder on the Stone. This was very much based on the OUV of the structure and was an early manifestation of the National Trust working more clearly with the idea of historic tourist infrastructure, as well as the relationship between tourism and the early discovery of the lakes. A gallery exhibition at Wordsworth House, comprising of most of the major paintings associated with the stone, including the famous Atkinson Grimshaw painting loaned from the Tate, and loans from several other major institutions was put on when. Two films were commissioned, one displayed in a restored stone hut on the site of the stone, and another in the gallery. This was very much a project that explored WHS and a good example of multi partner/output social programme that has real applications for the Lakes in terms of community, heritage and thinking outside the fixed interpretation box.



The history of the WHS has been told through a variety of projects to explain why the Lake District looks like it does i.e. [Romans-in-Ravenglass-Leaflet.pdf \(lakedistrict.gov.uk\)](#). [Geology Artwork \(lakedistrict.gov.uk\)](#)

There is existing interpretation about famous writers who have left their mark on the Lake District in terms of its popularity and understanding. The National Trust provides interpretation at Hill Top where the writer Beatrix Potter used to live. .

Dove Cottage, the home of the famous poet William Wordsworth, has become the centre for all things Wordsworth, his story also being told by the Wordsworth Trust at the Wordsworth Museum

Brantwood near Coniston is the centre for John Ruskin information. He was a renowned Victorian poet, artist, and philosopher and lived at Brantwood for much of his life.

Each of the above sites provides interpretation on the writers who greatly influenced people who visited the Lake District.



**Coniston Copper mines project.** Was a unique chance to preserve an exceptional mining heritage , it also provide opportunity for people to find out more and really get involved. Funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, and working with a private landowner, community engagement was key to this project and the involvement of local people has been greater than the LDNPA could have hoped for; from the schools that have embraced the opportunity to teach their children about the local mining heritage, to the locals who have volunteered their time to take on various roles over the past two-years.” Coniston C of E is one of the local schools to have introduced the Coniston Copper Mines to their curriculum across all ages; from early years through to year 6.

### Wonders of Whinlatter

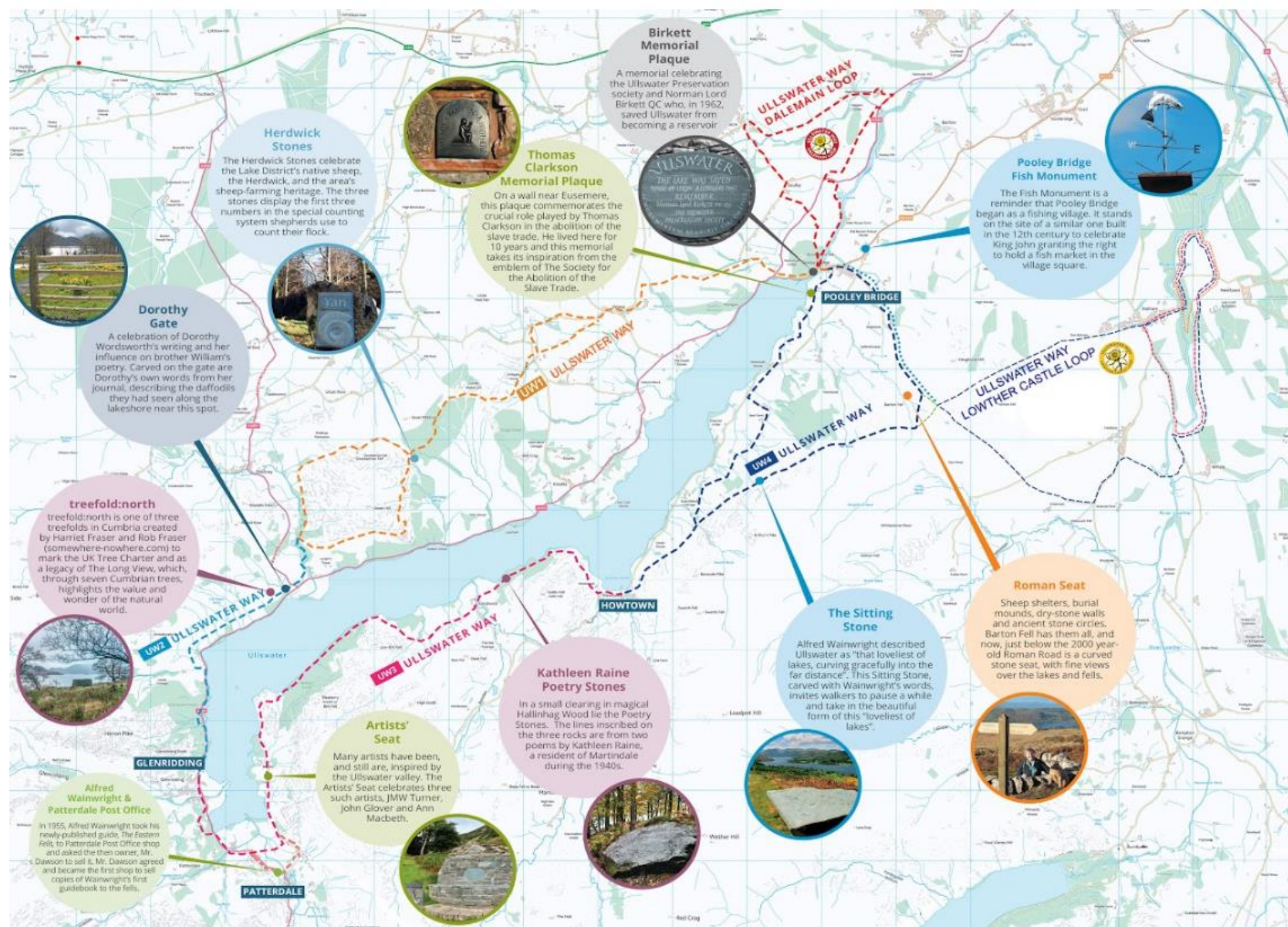
A new immersive and engaging trail at Whinlatter Forest opened in 2023. It showcases not only the story of England’s only mountain forest but also highlights what makes the Lake District World Heritage site one of the most special places on the planet. There is only one word to describe it – Wow!



The Wow trail tells the story of Whinlatter and helps visitors truly experience the forest. Forestry England - which manages the site on behalf of the nation - also offers guided experiences with knowledgeable staff and volunteers.

Visitors can explore the Wow trail by tramper with Outdoor Mobility. There are also cane seats available to borrow free of charge. These initiatives encourage visitors with lesser mobility to get outdoors and experience the new trail and its interpretation.





The **Friends of Ullswater Way** have developed a heritage trail leaflet which celebrates all that makes Ullswater Valley Special. (See map and website: [Friends of the Ullswater Way](http://Friends of the Ullswater Way) ([ullswaterheritage.org](http://ullswaterheritage.org)))

A project led by the Friends of the Ullswater Way to promote a route linking various sites/locations which have significance related to the Wordsworths is in development. The group is primarily doing this online/virtually and via a leaflet/booklet but may include some low key waymarking on the route. The route will link the Ambleside/Grasmere/Rydal area walking over Grisedale to Patterdale - the theory being one could walk one way and get the bus back.

The Wordsworth Trust and the University of Cumbria are supporting the project with a student supporting the research into locations to include:

<https://www.ullswaterheritage.org/heritage-knowledge-bank/inspired-by-ullswater/william-and-dorothy-wordsworth>





### 13 Valleys Trail

The LDNPA has created interpretation for a 13 Valleys Trail which links existing rights of way to provide a route which visits all 13 Valleys of the World Heritage Site. Each valley has its own distinctive character and features that contribute to the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within each valley there are roundels, such as the one pictured here, on public rights of way markers. When you scan the QR code you will be able to learn more about the unique features of that particular valley.

[13 Valleys Trail : Lake District National Park](#)



Various information leaflets on the cultural landscape produced both for visitors and local residents which provides information relating to the history of the World Heritage Site and places to visit to get a better understanding of this cultural landscape.

**Recommendation 13**

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

Requests furthermore the State Party to suspend the approval process of the tourist attraction at Elterwater Quarry in Great Langdale, and any other such project proposals, and to reconsider it in light of its potential negative impacts on the attributes of Langdale underpinning the OUV of the property, until an OUV-based interpretation strategy is approved;

**Progress**

Pending Judicial Review

The original planning permission which UNESCO mentions was refused due to concerns over traffic issues.

A subsequent planning application was submitted with new details over traffic issues identified in the previous proposal.

Planning permission for the tourist proposal at Elterwater Quarry was issued on 3 May 2024.

Judicial Review request

Following the most recent planning decision for development at Elterwater Quarry a request for a judicial review has been made by a third party to the High Court. The court has decided that a judicial review can proceed. It is unknown at this time when that judicial review will be held or determined, or subsequent actions.

**Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS****Potential actions, definitions, and background**

The planning permission was subject to 23 conditions, see: [Citizen Portal Planning - application details \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk/citizen-portal-planning-application-details)

Recommendation 14

World Heritage Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.63 recommendation:

The declining water quality of Lake Windermere caused by public and private sewage systems and land management practices, as well as by the impacts of climate change, and encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to tackle the sources of the lake’s pollution through a multi-stakeholder approach including public, private and community partners and to secure its long-term funding.

Progress

Significant progress on recommendation, with monitoring required.

The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) is aware of the impact of climate change and triggers to the condition of Lake Windermere, (it assessed these risks in its Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment Report 2021).

The Love Windermere Partnership. working with the LDNPP, was launched in July 2022 to coordinate action and investment to reduce nutrient inputs, focussed on a science-based plan, setting out a road map for environmental protection that could be replicated across the UK. Importantly this is a long-term project and will take time for the interventions to have an impact. All three sources of pollution – public and private sewage systems and land management practices - are being tackled. This information should be read in conjunction with the State Party response to World Heritage P174 enquiry CLT/WHC/EUR/22/14115.

Areas of known positive activity, examples of activities related to WHS

Windermere is a very well monitored lake.

Long-term data collected by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH) show substantial reductions in the concentration of nutrients within Windermere since the early 1990s, due, primarily, to reduced inputs from wastewater treatment works that have been improved by significant investments by United Utilities, the water company operating in the Northwest of England. However, climate change and the warming of the lake is resulting in the increased growth of cyanobacteria. Further nutrient reductions will be required to limit future blooms and action is being taken, albeit there is no quick solution.

The Source Apportionment Study conducted by the Environment Agency (May 2024) used models to identify the main sources of nutrient pollutants as shown in the table below.

Source	North basin	South basin
Rural land use	33 – 41%	28 – 36%
Urban	6-12%	4 – 10%
United Utilities storm overflows	18 – 25%	17 – 24%
United Utilities sewage treatment works (STWs)	12 – 16%	18 – 22%
Private sewage treatment works (STWs)	10 – 13%	10 – 14%
Septic tanks	5-9%	6 – 10%

Love Windermere is the biggest ever cooperation of sectors to tackle challenges in the lake.

The Love Windermere Partnership (LWP), of which the LDNPA is a significant partner, is collaborating with partners and others to address nutrient pollution. LWP was formed in 2022, and now comprises of nine partner organisations, each with a stake in Windermere, whether that be scientific, cultural, and/or economic. The partners are the Environment Agency, LDNPA, Lake District Foundation, National Trust, South Cumbria Rivers



Trust, National Farmers Union, Westmorland and Furness Council, United Utilities, Cumbria Tourism and the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and representation from Parish Councils. The Partnership have recently appointed an Independent Chair – Nigel Wilkinson, and also a Partnership Manager, and a Communications Officer.

The LWP approach is based on science and supported by the views of its community engagement panel (Citizens Panel – March 2022 ( supported by ACTion with communities in Cumbria funded by Esme Fairburn Foundation.) and ‘Dialogue Matters’ workshop and Big Windermere survey February 2024). The Partnership aims to improve the water quality of Windermere focusing on nutrient reduction through three workstreams; Sewage, Information and Land-use. A plan is being written that will set out the outcomes that the Partnership seeks to achieve and the actions it will take to achieve them.

The partnership is developing a science-based plan to set out a road map for long term environmental protection that could be replicated across the UK. The Love Windermere programme includes, to date, the following projects:

- **The Big Windermere Survey** is a citizen science project by the Freshwater Biological Association which aims to provide evidence and understanding about water quality in Windermere and its catchment. The project engages the local community and other stakeholders in the collection of water samples for independent laboratory analysis at Lancaster University. The data from the survey is used to inform decision making processes and to bring about action and change at pace within the catchment, to maintain and to improve water quality. The Big Windermere survey indicates the level of bacteria, phosphorous and nitrogen which helps us to understand the challenges.  
The first surveys took place in June and November 2022, with more than one hundred volunteers sampling water at various points around the lake and its tributaries. This was the largest ever one-day snapshot of conditions in Windermere. A further survey took place in February 2023 (results pending April) and another to take place in April 2023.  
South Cumbria Rivers Trust is working with volunteers to restore reed beds around the north of the lake, encouraging natural processes to remove nutrients from the lake sediment.
- The Environment Agency (EA) has identified that recent improvements to sewage treatment works, driven by the EA, Ofwat and government as part of the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP), have already led to around a 30% reduction in phosphorus entering the lake since 2020, with future improvements expected to lead to a further reduction of between 4 and 8%.
- The Lake District Foundation and Environment Agency are [working with owners of septic tanks](#) to develop an investment model for a community emptying schemes and share tips about how to best manage private sewerage systems.
- United Utilities is working with food outlets and restaurants in and around Windermere with tips to avoid constricting sewers with fatty waste which can lead to sewage spilling into the environment.
- South Cumbria Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency are trialling innovative technology that if successful could be used to remove nutrients from septic tank effluent at a relatively low cost.
- The Love Windermere Partnership’s Land Management workstream has held its inaugural meeting with farmers and land managers to raise greater awareness of impacts of land management practises and is ensuring greater co-ordination in activity to reduce diffuse pollution.
- In November 2022, the Lake District National Park Authority launched a [Revere](#) project to study water quality issues and develop nature-based solutions, working with land managers. In collaboration with the other Love Windermere projects, a scheme of solutions is being designed which could include catchment woodland planting, leaky dam installation and hay meadow creation. Revere is a collaboration between Palladium and National Parks Partnerships.
- A Love Windermere public drop-in event was held on 14 February 2023, at Brockhole on Windermere. More than 80 residents, including wild swimmers, councillors and local business representatives came along to ask questions about the partnership’s plans to protect the lake.

It will take time to address these complex issues but there is a commitment to do so from all parties and involving the local community in citizen science data collection, and others in analysis. Importantly funding provided by private and public finance is being sought to enable this to happen. Success can be measured, and compliance can be monitored through regulatory requirements (Environment Agency), of wastewater sewage treatment works. There is a need to focus now more on private sewage systems and septic tanks and improving land management practises to minimise diffuse pollution.

### **Windermere natural land management project (Revere)**

This is a project aimed at harnessing nature to help improve the way land is managed around the Windermere catchment area. Known as [Revere](#), the project will see the development of new financing methods to enable the use of natural solutions involving landowners, farmers, the Lake District National Park Authority, National Parks Partnerships, and global impact firm Palladium. Proposed solutions include the creation of wetland areas which will slow water flow along with woodland planting along riverbanks. Both will improve water quality in lakes and rivers as well as enhancing biodiversity and building natural climate resistance. Revere Phase 2 ground truthing has started in the Windermere catchment, and engagement with farmers, landowners, and potential buyers has also started. Revere is designing and developing a private finance model for nature-based interventions for phosphate reduction in the water environment.

### **Long-term Management Plan for Windermere:**

A long-term management plan is being created for Windermere and the land surrounding it (the catchment) through a process of stakeholder and public engagement and the best available science. This plan will include a suite of collaborative projects that aim to solve the overarching issue of phosphorus in the catchment, tackling the multiple sources. The plan will focus on strategic future activity, collaborative working and ensure long term funding. An outline for the plan will be created by the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency (EA) are the competent regulatory authority in England for ensuring that operators of wastewater treatment assets carry out their activities in ways that are protective of the environment.

From April 2023 to March 2024 the Environment Agency will:

- Assess the impact of all pollution incidents and use the information to plan and prioritise its work. Staff will attend the most serious incidents – categorised as 1 and 2.
- Take water samples monthly, with the results periodically reviewed to identify emerging trends and issues. Results will be made available online, at a location TBC, as soon as possible. This webpage will be updated at that time.
- Enable and support investigations into pollution hotspots. There will be an initial focus on Cunsey Beck, Mill Beck, Blelham Beck and River Brathay at Skelwith Bridge where the EA will deliver actions to resolve the pollution problems.
- Start a review of a minimum of five water company and ten non-water company environmental permits in the Windermere catchment, with priority given to larger discharges. The EA will be assessing if each permit is still adequate to protect the environment.
- Deliver a programme of ten [farm inspections](#) to ensure compliance with silage, slurry and [Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations](#) and the [Farming Rules for Water](#).

Review all 2022 water company [Event Duration Monitoring](#) (EDM) data submissions for compliance with environmental permit conditions. As the work progresses information can be requested from [inforequests.cmbinc@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:inforequests.cmbinc@environment-agency.gov.uk).

Windermere has 4 bathing waters all of which are excellent- the highest standard that there is. The EA therefore do not have any concerns about the bathing water quality of Windermere at any of the designated bathing waters there. The lake itself has a moderate ecological classification and faces the same pressures as the other lakes in the National Park, primarily that of tourism, agriculture, and climate change. Over the last few decades successive rounds of water company improvements have reduced the load of nutrients from sewage to Windermere, so the contribution of phosphorus from rural land use is now similar to that from sewage. The Environment Agency has produced a blog about this: [New data identifies amount of pollution from different sources in Windermere – Creating a better place \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **United Utilities investment in Windermere:**

1. Since 2000 United Utilities (UU) has invested more than £75m upgrading wastewater treatment sites, pumping stations and sewers around Windermere. £45m of that was completed in 2020 and our phosphorous contribution has halved since then.
2. Ambleside and Windermere sites are treating wastewater to the highest achievable standards using the best available technology and it uses UV treatment to kill bacteria
3. The company is investing an additional £41m investment into the Windermere catchment with £19m of that being spent over the next two years to further reduce storm overflows around Windermere at Elterwater, Hawkshead, Ambleside and Near Sawrey, reducing spills by 50% on 2022 figures
4. In addition, it is fast tracking new solutions at 28 sites across the North West this summer, to increase treatment and storage capacity, limiting the chances of the works becoming overwhelmed during periods of heavy rainfall and reducing the number of times the storm overflows at these locations will operate, helping to reduce storm overflow spills by 60% over the decade to 2030
5. UU is working with the Love Windermere Partnership and prioritising further wastewater investment based on independent expert science and evidence
6. Future improvements might include natural treatment solutions like reed beds or schemes to separate rainwater out of the combined sewage system. UU is already funding reed bed restoration around Windermere the South Cumbria Rivers Trust

Dr Ben Surridge of Lancaster University's Environment Centre was interviewed by the BBC in May 2024. He commented that phosphorus actually peaked in Windermere in the early 1990s and has been steadily declining in terms of its concentration since (drawing on records going back to 1940s). He suggested that the picture in the longer term is actually quite positive for many parameters from a water quality perspective but because the climate is changing and other parts of the lake ecosystem are changing, we actually need to do more.

The **Lake District Foundation** and Love Windermere Partnership have been awarded FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) funding to work alongside farmers in the Windermere Catchment to build their understanding of pressures on water quality and how farming can help through better resource efficiency. The work is being led by Hannah Towers - Farmer Liaison Officer - a local adviser based in the Troutbeck farming community. The project will enable up to 100 farms to access free soil testing, with 50 of these eligible to receive a free nutrient management plan, delivered by independent farm adviser, Paul Arkle of Cumbria Farm Environment Partnership. Additionally, Hannah and LDF are working closely with Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF), from Natural England, National Farmers Union and LDNPA officers.

Two successful farmer engagement events have been held in June and July to launch the project and give farmers the chance to sign up to the programme. The second event included a screening of the UK film 'Six inches of soil,' with the hope of inspiring our farmers to explore ways of improving soil health and reconnecting people with where their food comes from and how it is produced.

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) is providing £85,000 towards farmer engagement in soil testing and including the development of nutrient management plans and advice to 50 farms adjacent to the water course in the Windermere catchment.

**Potential actions, definitions, and background**

In Spring this year an Action Review took place of the actions in the Management Plan

This resulted in the revision to an action relating to Love Windermere and the new action is now FFNC action 5 -Support the Love Windermere Partnership in its delivery of actions to improve the water environment of Windermere and align the Lake District National Park Partnership’s Partners and Plan with the Love Windermere Partnership and programme.

Other issues and information

The Partnership Publishes an annual report which highlights the work of the partnership over the year. [Partnership-Annual-Report\\_2022-23web.pdf](#)



## Recognition for the Lake District Planners

The Lake District National Park Authority scooped an impressive five awards - including the coveted **Planning Authority of the Year** - at the recent Royal Town Planning Institute (North West) Awards.

The judges were impressed with the Authority's resilience and dedication and with the improvements in its timely determination of planning applications. They noted its robust enforcement processes have resulted in the Authority becoming one of the most active enforcement authorities in the country.

The Lake District National Park Authority also:

- Won Best Project (Natural Environment),
- Best Project overall and
- Best in Region -West Cumbria Pipeline (joint entry with United Utilities)
- Commended in Best Plan for Design Code (joint entry with consultants LUC)

The judges gave the following feedback: "Given its vital role in managing planning functions within the Lake District National Park and the English Lake District World Heritage Site the team excels in leadership across a wide variety of projects, including in nutrient neutrality across Cumbria, the Windermere Gateway development project, and the west coast water pipeline project. Along with their involvement in the Design Code Pathfinder Project and evolution of the Lake District Design Code."

Steve Ratcliffe, the Lake District National Park Authority's Director of Sustainable Development commented: "We are thrilled to have been named as the North West's Planning Authority of the Year. This cements the sterling work being undertaken by our team at a time when resources are stretched, and we are busier than ever. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the team for their hard work and dedication and I hope they are as proud of the Authority as I am.

"It is equally satisfying that our various project work, both by our Development Management team and our Strategy team, is recognised. We are keen to be at the forefront of thinking and delivery. We now look forward to the National final in October."