

Partnership Plan 2026-2031

Summary

1. This report presents the Lake District National Park Partnership's Partnership Plan 2026-2031, also providing a report on changes to the Plan following public consultation, and asks Members to adopt the Plan as the statutory management plan for the Lake District National Park and English Lake District World Heritage Site.

Recommendations:

- a **It is recommended that Members adopt the 2026-2031 Partnership Plan (Annex 1), as the Management Plan for the Lake District National Park and the English Lake District World Heritage Site.**
- b **It is recommended that Members agree the 2051 vision and long term ambitions for the Lake District to guide the 2026-2031 Partnership Plan and future Partnership Plans.**

Background

2. The Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026–2031 has been prepared as the statutory management plan for both the Lake District National Park and the English Lake District World Heritage Site. It also introduces a new long-term Vision for the Lake District to 2051, when the Park will be 100 years old and almost 35 years since World Heritage Site inscription. It also sets out the Partnership's Ambitions to 2051 as well as Objectives and emerging targets for the five-year Plan.
3. The Lake District National Park Partnership is made up of 24 organisations from the public, private and charity sectors, including the Lake District National Park Authority. The Partnership collaborates on the preparation and delivery of the Partnership Plan, the key strategic plan for the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site.

4. The Plan has been developed using both the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs' guidance for management plans for Protected Landscapes and Historic England's guidance (prepared on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) for management plans for world heritage sites. The Plan has been developed with key stakeholders, subject to public consultation (Annex 2) and this included resting priorities with external target groups including young people.

5. The Partnership Plan has been prepared in the context of important Government policy drivers for Protected Landscapes, including Defra's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework, which aligns management planning with national priorities for nature recovery, climate resilience and access to nature. It also supports delivery of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, which sets the long-term framework for improving England's natural environment, and contributes to the national commitment to protect and manage land for nature through 30by30. Together, these drivers reinforce the role of the Partnership Plan in coordinating action across the Lake District to deliver national environmental ambitions at a local level.

6. The Partnership Plan has been discussed by Park Strategy & Vision committee, now Strategy meeting, on several occasions since late 2024:

Previous Committee	Main points discussed	Changes made
PS&V Away Hour (26 November 2024)	Plan development timetable and Guiding Principles	Member feedback
PS&V Away Hour (23 April 2025)	Plan progress and evidence gathering	Member feedback
PS&V Away Hour (10 June 2025)	Plan progress and supporting evidence papers	Member feedback on evidence papers
PS&V Away Hour (8 July 2025)	Plan progress, Ambitions, Objectives and introductory text; emerging Action Plan	Members agreed the draft Ambitions and provided feedback on the Plan

PS&V Away Hour (9 July 2025)	Consultation draft including Historic England feedback on World Heritage matters and measures of success	Member feedback on the consultation draft and measures of success
PS&V Part One (22 October 2025)	Partnership Plan consultation draft	Members agreed the draft Plan for public consultation
PS&V Away Hour (3 February 2026)	Plan Public Consultation feedback	Member feedback on the public consultation
Strategy Meeting (22 April 2026)	Partnership Plan post-consultation draft	Member feedback on Plan amendments following public consultation and on the 'You Said, We Did' draft report

Policy context

7. The Plan helps to deliver the Partnership's and the UK Government's obligations under international and national strategy and law for the purposes of managing and enhancing the World Heritage Site and National Park. It also helps to deliver on a raft of regional policies including the Cumbria Economic Growth Strategy, Cumbria Destination Management Plan and Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
8. The Plan supports the Government's aspirations for growth while delivering its Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.
9. The Partnership Plan will set the strategic direction for the management of the National Park and World Heritage Site over the five-year life of the Plan, from 2026-2031.
10. The policy context for the Plan is complex and is summarised in the draft Plan at paragraphs 39 and 87, also in the Plan's Appendix 8.

Links to the Management (Partnership) Plan

11. This Plan will replace, on adoption, the current Partnership Plan (2020-2026).

Links to Business Plan

12. The Authority's Business Plan (2026-2027) has been drafted to align with the Partnership Plan proposed for adoption.

Links to other strategic plans

13. The Partnership Plan supports the delivery of international, national and county-wide strategies. It will guide the preparation of the next Lake District Local Plan by establishing its vision and long-term ambitions.

Options

14. Members are presented with the following options:
 - a) Adopt the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026-2031 and agree the new vision and long-term ambitions.
 - b) Do not agree the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026-2031 for adoption and propose an alternative approach.

Proposals

15. It is recommended that you select option a). The Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026-2031, when adopted, will be the principal document for guiding key decisions and delivery of projects across the National Park and World Heritage Site. It has been developed through extensive engagement and collaboration with Partner organisations forming the Lake District National Park Partnership and public consultation which demonstrated overall support for the Plan. It establishes a clear strategy, long-term ambitions and five-year objectives which will help to deliver a new Vision for the Lake District.

Stakeholder consultation

16. The Plan has been written in close collaboration with the 24 Partner organisations that make up the Lake District National Park Partnership, including the Lake District National Park Authority.
17. Public consultation undertaken between 24 November 2025 and 30 January 2026 attracted a large number (nearly 2,000) of responses with an overwhelming majority supportive of the Plan; the detail of the consultation is set out in Annex 2.
18. The UK Government also provided an extended consultation period to UNESCO as an opportunity to comment on the World Heritage aspects of the Plan, but other than acknowledging the opportunity no further response has been received to date. The Government has therefore indicated that it is happy for the Plan to proceed towards adoption.
19. At its meeting on 12 May 2026, the Partnership agreed that the Plan should go forward to the Authority for adoption.
20. Whilst Friends of the Lake District outlined they could not support Objective I (sustainable travel) specifically as it was not ambitious/transformational enough they confirmed they would not stand in the way of Partners approving the draft to go to Authority and Friends of the Lake District fully support all other areas of the Plan.

Demonstrating best value

The recommendation delivers value for money for the Authority, using the 4Cs principles of best value.

21. **Challenged** – the Partnership Plan is the statutory management plan for the Lake District. Production and delivery of the Plan through the Partnership model of collaboration provides increased opportunity to improve outcomes and be more cost effective in delivery, drawing in resources beyond the Lake District National Park Authority.

22. **Compared** – every national park and world heritage site must produce a Management Plan. Lake District National Park Authority staff are in regular communication with our National Park family and UK World Heritage Site family peers to learn and understand what processes and models are followed elsewhere to ensure we are as effective and efficient as possible.
23. **Consulted** – The Plan has been through an extensive process of engagement with Members, Partners and a wider network of stakeholders over an 18-month period, as well as a large public consultation in late 2025-early 2026. The attached Consultation report (Annex 2) demonstrates how we have taken account of the consultation feedback received.
24. **Compete** – There are no procurement proposals contained within the recommendations of this report.

Finance considerations

25. The Authority will put actions in place from the Partnership Plan through our Corporate Business Plan. Finance considerations are made through our business planning process.

Risk

26. A new Partnership Plan must be adopted by October 2026. Contingency has been built into the Plan development programme to allow for the potential that Members are not ready to adopt the Plan in June 2026.
27. A risk register for the Partnership Plan is in development, having been discussed and feedback provided at the Strategy meeting in April 2026. The risk register will be a live document and subject to change. It will be owned by the Lake District National Park Partnership and go to a future Partnership Meeting for agreement before bringing back to Members for information.

Legal considerations

28. The statutory requirements for preparing a national park management plan are set out in the Environment Act 1995. The requirements for preparing a world heritage site management plan are set out in the World Heritage Convention 1972. Alongside this Plan we have prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment, a Sustainability Appraisal and an Equalities Impact Assessment to meet statutory and good practice requirements. We have also prepared a Consultation Report, setting out the results of the public consultation and how responses have influenced the final version of the Plan.

Human resources

29. The Business Plan and Service Plans for 2026-2027 already reflect the priorities in the draft Partnership Plan. Further staffing implications will be considered when the Business Plan and Service Plans are updated to reflect the adopted Partnership Plan.

Diversity implications

30. The Lake District National Park Partnership's Management Plan 2026-2031 has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and an Equality Impact Assessment, to ensure it meets the needs of a diverse range of social and economic groups. The Equality Impact Assessment did not identify any potential adverse impacts and instead considers that the Plan will promote and encourage equality, diversity and inclusion across the Lake District.

Sustainability

31. The principle of sustainability is integral to our strategic approach. The Sustainability Appraisal reported a wide range of potential positive effects, with many significantly positive effects possible through the delivery of the Plan. No significant adverse effects were identified by the appraisal.

Background papers	Annex 1 Partnership Plan 2026-2031 Annex 2 'You Said, We Did' Consultation Report Supporting documentation and links to reports in the Partnership Plan
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Annex 1: The Lake District Partnership Plan: a management plan for the National Park and World Heritage Site 2026-2031

Annex 2: You said, we did public consultation report

Annex 3: Supporting documentation and links to reports in the Partnership Plan

[Transport evidence review](#)

[Sustainability Appraisal Oct 2025](#)

[Nature and Land Management evidence review](#)

[Lake District National Park Partnership Plan HRA Sept 2025](#)

[Historic Environment and Cultural Landscape evidence paper](#)

[Farming evidence review](#)

[Equality Impact Assessment Sept 2025](#)

[Communities and Economy evidence review](#)

[Climate Action evidence review](#)

[A Lake District for the Nation evidence review](#)