



Lake District
National Park

Authority: 24 June 2026

Agenda Item: 10a

Park Strategy and Vision Committee

MINUTES of a meeting of the Park Strategy and Vision Committee held at the National Park Office, Wayfaring House, Murley Moss Business Park, Kendal at 10.00 am on 3 February 2026.

Present

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|---------------------|-----------------|
| Ms P Walter (Chair) | Mrs J Lancaster |
| Ms J Boak | Mr D F Rathbone |
| Mr J Jackson | 2 vacancies |

Also in attendance

Chair of the Authority: Ms T Hunt MBE

Apologies

Mr M P Brereton
Ms S Mosner
Mr R Outhwaite

No apologies received

Mrs S Lansbury
Mr A Pratt

01/26 Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Mosner, Mr Outhwaite and Mr Brereton.

02/26 Minutes

Decided: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

03/26 Chair's announcements

The Chair announced to the Committee and members of the public that the meeting was being livestreamed and that a digital recording of the meeting would be made.

The Chair informed Members of a Defra update focusing on several positive developments affecting farming and upland communities:

- **Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)** programme has been extended for three more years.
- **Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)** will reopen in June in a simplified format.
- Following Hilary Cottam's review, Defra will trial new upland funding approaches, with an emphasis on place-based, co-designed solutions for upland communities.
- **£30 Million Farmer Collaboration Fund** announced by Defra to support farmer groups in growing their businesses, building partnerships and sharing best practice.

04/26 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of a registrable interest or disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any of the business of the Committee.

05/26 Questions

There were no questions relating to the business of the Committee.

06/26 Public participation

There were no questions, petitions or deputations of a general nature relating to the business of the Committee.

07/26 Biodiversity Duty reporting

The Lead Strategy Adviser (Land Management Strategy and Environment) presented the Authority's first statutory Biodiversity Duty Report, covering 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2025. Members were asked to approve the proposed content, as required by the Environment Act 2021.

The production of the report followed the preparation of a 'First Consideration' that was approved by Park, Strategy and Vision Committee in 2023. The report compiles work delivered directly by the Authority and in partnership across the National Park. The draft document highlighted extensive biodiversity activity, including a dedicated section on Biodiversity Net Gain, which the Authority is required to report separately due to its link with planning functions.

Members welcomed the report, describing it as comprehensive, positive, and rich in examples of successful biodiversity work. Early questions focused on whether the format was prescribed or bespoke. The Lead Strategy Adviser clarified that only broad guidelines exist, and the chosen structure was designed to meet requirements while providing a clear narrative that showcased achievements over the period.

Members also asked whether any areas in the report gave cause for concern. Officers noted that the Authority's ability to deliver directly is naturally limited by its relatively small landholding, meaning much of the impact relies on partnership working. They also highlighted that the report identifies large areas of land with potential for enhanced biodiversity, offering both opportunity and challenge.

A key part of the discussion centred on how to judge performance. Officers explained that comparison with other Authorities was difficult because all are reporting for the first time in the same cycle. Members emphasised the need for clear metrics to assess trajectory and progress more frequently than every five years. Officers confirmed that progress towards 2030 goals will be recorded in the Partnership Plan, with detailed resource commitments and delivery actions set out in the Authority's Business Plan.

Decided:

- a Members noted the duty placed on the Authority by the Environment Act 2021 to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report every five years,
- b Members approved the publication of the Authority's first Biodiversity Duty Report for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025, and
- c Members delegated any minor changes to the completion of the Biodiversity Duty Report to the Director of Sustainable Development.

08/26 Rusland Moss National Nature Reserve Management Plan 2026 – 2031

The Natural Environment Adviser (Strategy and Environment) presented the Management Plan for the Rusland Moss National Nature Reserve 2026 – 2031. The Lake District National Park Authority manages Rusland Moss National Nature Reserve (NNR), part of the Rusland Valley Mosses SSSI. Statutory obligations require a Management Plan reviewed every five years with Natural England. This was the first time Members had seen the Management Plan, the draft plan for consultation, and the outline of the management priorities.

The Natural Environment Adviser (Strategy and Environment) explained that the plan has already undergone early stakeholder engagement, with strong public support evident from initial consultations. It was emphasised that Rusland Moss is a rare and important example of lowland raised bog habitat in England.

The primary aim of the plan is to restore and maintain a healthy and resilient peatland system, contributing not only to nature recovery but also to carbon storage targets and wider environmental improvement objectives. The draft plan was ready to proceed to wider public consultation, with a final version expected to return to Members for approval in April 2026.

Members noted the technical nature of the plan, with one Member highlighting that although much of the language was highly specialist, the document appeared comprehensive and well-constructed from a lay perspective.

The inclusion of visitor access considerations was particularly welcomed, with Members appreciative that public engagement with the reserve remains a priority rather than restricting access.

Members asked whether a simplified, public-facing summary of the management plan would be produced. The Natural Environment Adviser confirmed that while the current version remains technical to support detailed stakeholder review, a summary edition will be created and made available on the organisation's website for general audiences.

Members queried the proposed removal of Scots pine given historic records of red squirrels and their association with Scots pine:

- The Natural Environment Adviser clarified that Scots pine on this site are encroaching onto lowland peatland, impeding natural peat formation and accelerating drying of the bog.
- It was explained that the intention is to remove most of the Scots pine, although ecological surveys will be carried out before any tree removal to identify species present and necessary mitigation.
- Members raised the public sensitivity around the loss of Scots pines and emphasised the importance of clear communication.

Members praised the illustrations included in the plan, noting their value in helping non-specialists understand the key features of the site and the restoration work.

The Rusland Moss project was broadly commended for its success to date and for the effective use of funding.

Decided:

- a Members approved the draft plan for stakeholder consultation.
- b Members delegated any minor amendments of the consultation draft to the Director of Sustainable Development.

09/26 Cumbria Climate Assembly Charter

Five members of the Cumbria Climate Assembly, led by facilitator Pete Bryant of Shared Future, provided an overview of the Assembly's creation, methodology, and outcomes. They described the recruitment process via sortition, the six-week programme of expert presentations and deliberations, and the development of 23 recommendations designed to improve public engagement on climate change issues. Assembly members shared personal reflections on the inclusivity and effectiveness of the process, the breadth of topics covered, and the strong sense of collaborative purpose that emerged throughout the experience.

A Member asked how the Assembly intended to connect with the numerous local and regional bodies working on climate related issues. The facilitator explained that although the Assembly had concluded its formal work, around 30 of the 42 members wished to continue supporting implementation. An oversight panel of 23 organisations—including local authorities, NHS bodies, business groups and environmental organisations—had already helped shape the Assembly's methodology and sign off the core question. The intention was that these partners continue to champion the recommendations. This clarification was welcomed by Members, who appreciated the broader governance context.

Members noted frequent references to the incoming elected mayor and asked how the Assembly envisaged engaging with the new administration.

Assembly members explained that one of their key recommendations was the creation of a permanent citizens' assembly, ideally embedded within the structure of the new mayoral authority. They reported meetings with officials preparing the new governance arrangements, including John Barradell and the Chief Executives of Westmorland & Furness and Cumberland councils. They emphasised that a permanent assembly would involve rotating membership, not a continuation of the current cohort.

One Member raised the issue of demographic spread. Assembly contributors stressed that the original group did include younger members, but many were unable

to attend daytime meetings due to work commitments. They reiterated that the sortition method ensured a demographic match to Cumbria's population.

Members reflected on the strength of the Assembly process, comparing it to previous citizens' jury work in the region. Assembly members highlighted how the structured facilitation, expert evidence, and diverse group dynamic enabled constructive dialogue and consensus building among participants of very different backgrounds.

In reviewing the recommendations, Members acknowledged that while many proposals focused on improving engagement—something the Authority could support—some other recommendations (e.g., those relating to lobbying or planning matters) fell outside the LDNPA's constitutional powers. Members appreciated the work officers had done in Annex 3, clarifying which recommendations were “supportable” and which were not, and emphasised the importance of documenting these constraints transparently.

The Chair thanked Assembly members for their enthusiasm, insight, and contribution to improving public engagement on climate issues.

Decided:

- a Members supported the overall objectives and approach of the Cumbria Climate Assembly, by signing it's Charter asks, as set out in Annex 1;
- b Members agreed with the 'Principles for good engagement', as set out in Annex 2; and
- c Members agreed for the Lake District National Park Authority to support or help to implement relevant recommendations, as set out in Annex 3.

(The meeting concluded at 10:53)