

## **Appendix: DEFRA Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework**

### **Protected Landscape targets**

The Protected Landscape targets are non-statutory and create a shared ambition for all 44 of England's Protected Landscapes. The targets are for the Protected Landscapes as places (the geographic area covered by the designation). Action will be coordinated by Protected Landscape bodies through their statutory management plan. It will be the responsibility of all stakeholders, partners and land managers in the area to support their delivery.

Some targets are action-focussed, while others set a clear numerical target for how much Protected Landscapes are expected to contribute as areas to the national targets. The targets are based on an analysis of the environmental potential of the Protected Landscapes. They are also set proportionally, based on the characteristics of these areas and the share of relevant natural assets within them. The targets are set for Protected Landscapes as geographical areas and will be delivered and monitored as such.

The targets in this framework are set at a national level for all 44 landscapes as a collective. Each individual Protected Landscape body, working with relevant local partners, will set their own individual contribution, which will be embedded in their management plan. Natural England will support this process and ensure contributions represent a fair share and add up to the national total.

### **Thriving plants and wildlife targets**

Protected Landscapes have significant environmental potential, containing almost half of England's priority habitats. They also contain over half of our most precious sites for biodiversity, land designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). To ensure these habitats are reaching their full potential for nature recovery, we have set targets to motivate more activity on the components needed to ensure wildlife can thrive.

The protection, restoration, creation, and management of priority habitats will increase species abundance. It will help turn the tide on extinction risk and support our international commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030 (30by30). The adoption of nature friendly farming practices will help stop biodiversity loss and increase species abundance alongside sustainable food production.

Protected Landscape bodies and partners should seek to increase the amount of land in favourable management in Protected Landscapes through meeting the targets below and other available means. This will maximise the contribution that Protected Landscapes can make towards our national targets for nature recovery.

#### **Target 1**

Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).

#### **Target 2**

Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.

#### **Target 3**

For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.

#### **Target 4**

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

#### **Target 5**

Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

### **Mitigating and adapting to climate change targets**

Protected Landscapes contain some of the UK's most important carbon stores, including significant tracts of peatland, woodland and hedgerows providing important carbon sinks for achieving net zero. To ensure we are maximising the opportunities for climate mitigation within our Protected Landscapes we have set targets for restoring peat and increasing tree planting. Restoration and ongoing management of these habitats is essential for sequestering and storing carbon into the future, and therefore reducing net greenhouse gas emissions. They can also provide natural flood management and other benefits for farmers and local communities.

Protected Landscapes are leading action to achieve net zero at a landscape level, working with residents, businesses and communities, aiming to reduce emissions and deliver nature-based solutions. We have set a target to support them in this ambition and strengthen their important contribution to our world leading target to achieve net-zero by 2050.

Tree planting and peat restoration at scale will support new skills and green jobs, attract private investment and help grow the rural economy.

For the long-term protection of our iconic landscapes, action is needed to increase their resilience and that of the communities within them. We must mitigate climate risks through nature-based solutions and adapt to the unavoidable impacts, planning for a changing future.

#### **Target 6**

Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.

#### **Target 7**

Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.

#### **Target 8**

Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

### **Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment targets**

Protected Landscapes are designated for their natural beauty and provide a range of health and wellbeing benefits and educational opportunities. We know these benefits are not currently being enjoyed equally by all parts of society. Protected Landscapes have a distinctive sense of place and represent our shared heritage and national identity. These special qualities must be protected for everyone to enjoy. The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) made a commitment that everyone in England should live within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space. It also committed to reduce other barriers that prevent people from accessing green and blue spaces, such as physical challenges, lack of confidence and lack of information. Protected Landscapes should be setting the standard for meeting this commitment, leading efforts to increase responsible access and engagement with nature.

To ensure that more people have the opportunity to enjoy and learn from these special places, we have set targets to improve accessibility for all. Protected Landscapes are leading the way to promote accessibility to the natural environment. They are using a range of tools such as engaging schools, providing disabled facilities and improving trails and waymarking. Targets will also conserve the important sense of place that these landscapes bring to our country and communities.

The government wants to boost visitor numbers in a safe and manageable way for local areas, allowing people, communities and businesses to reap the benefits of tourism, growing the rural economy, whilst preserving heritage and natural assets.

We rely on Protected Landscape bodies to gather relevant data to measure progress towards our beauty, heritage and engagement outcome. We will continue to work with Protected Landscape bodies and other partners to explore the benefits of further developing targets to improve and promote accessibility and engagement.

**Target 9**

Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.

**Target 10**

Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.

Source: DEFRA Policy paper: *Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework* January 2024