



**SOUTH WEST PEAK**  
LANDSCAPE AT A CROSSROADS



**South West Peak**  
– a Landscape at a Crossroads

# Landscape Conservation Action Plan

July 2016



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– a Landscape at a Crossroads

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**Scheme  
Plan**

# Introduction

# Introduction

**The South West Peak Landscape Partnership comprises organisations and individuals used to working together in the Peak District on earlier projects and initiatives, as part of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) partnership, the Local Nature Partnership (Nature Peak District) and other projects.**

When the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Peak District was revised in 2011, objectives and priority actions were identified on a geographical basis using the three National Character Areas (NCAs) the White Peak (NCA 51), Dark Peak (NCA 52) and South West Peak (NCA 53) which comprise the majority of the Peak District.

At this time discussions took place with partners around developing the Southern Peak and Fringe Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA), a concept piloted during 2010–2011 by the England Biodiversity Group and Natural England to move forward landscape-scale delivery and partnership working, and a precursor to the Nature Improvement Areas established following the Natural Environment White Paper. The Southern Peak and Fringe IBDA did not continue due to lack of clear purpose at that time.

The desire to deliver on a landscape scale remained high on the agenda and when the board of Nature Peak District met in February 2013 to focus on what difference they could make within the Peak District, the South West Peak was identified as the area which was deserving of attention and a more integrated approach. With Nature Peak District championing a renewed vigour for partnership working in the South West Peak, discussions began in May 2013 when representatives of seven organisations (Peak District National Park Authority, Nature Peak District, Natural England, Environment Agency, RSPB, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Peak District) met to discuss drivers for change and conservation priorities in the area.

Further discussions led to a stakeholder workshop in July 2013 (Spriggs, 2013) attended by 22 people representing 17 different organisations. The workshop looked at the

added value that could be gained by partnership working distilling this into some emerging themes; looked at existing activity in the area; discussed opportunities for activities ranging from sustainable farming to improved broadband coverage; articulated what was special about the South West Peak; identified the benefits to each organisation of working together; and plotted a timeline for taking the partnership forward.

Key topics which emerged at each of these early stage meetings were **ecosystem services**, **sustainable farming** and **connecting people to the place**.

The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) agreed to take the lead for the partnership and, with support from the RSPB, set up a bid coordinators group and a steering group, both of which met regularly during the course of preparing for submission of the round one application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in May 2014.

## **Benefits of joint working**

(from July 2013 workshop)

- Partnership could bring value for money, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.
- Wider benefits from a landscape partnership that means it is not 'just another environmental project'.
- Valuing the landscape – discovering what it can bring to us and our lives.
- Common goals shared between partners and those who might benefit from the partnership.
- Shared vision, communication and understanding, something new and imaginative.
- Recognising and rewarding good land management.
- Potential for capturing the value of ecosystem services and restoring and enhancing them.
- Engagement, support and contribution from communities.

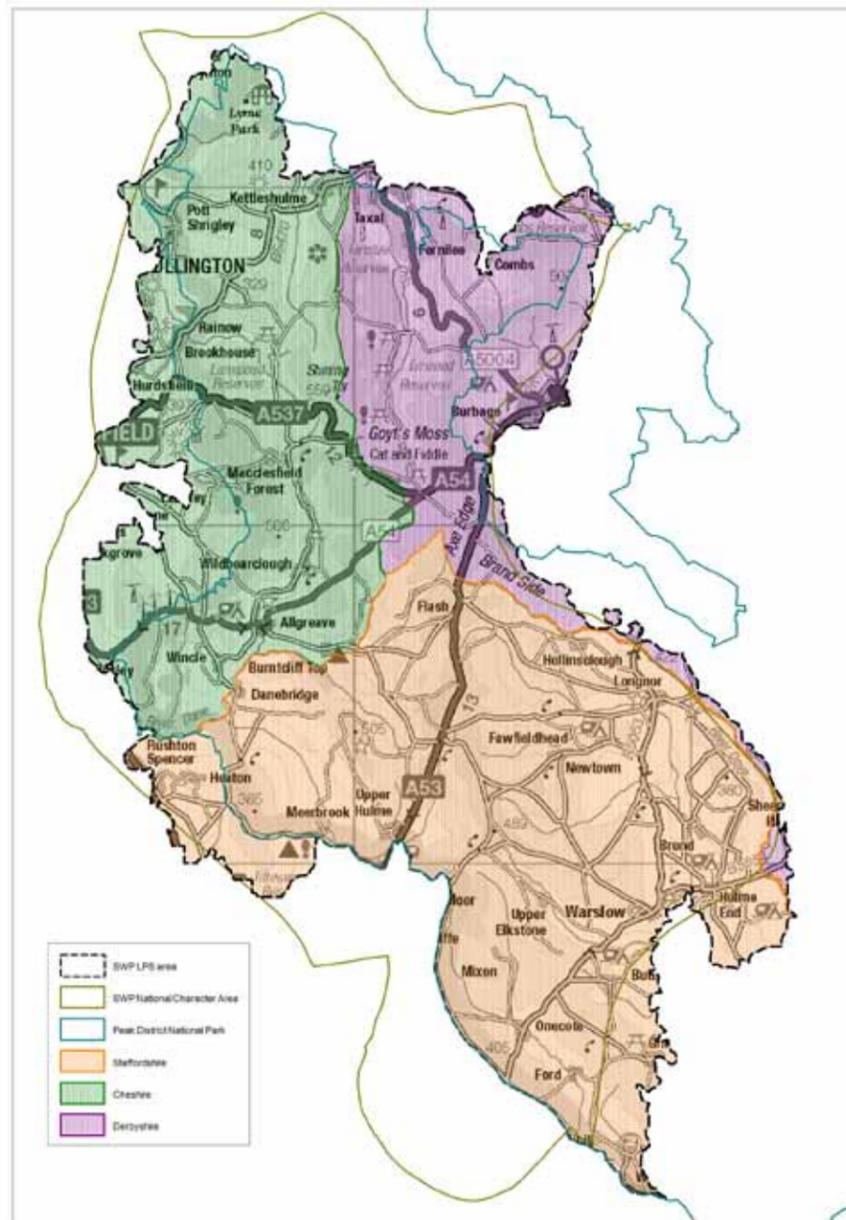
### Scheme Area

The South West Peak Landscape Partnership area covers some 354km<sup>2</sup> (35,419 ha) of the Peak District. Not confined to the National Park, the Landscape Partnership area includes parts of Staffordshire, Cheshire and Derbyshire. The LP area is not contiguous with the South West Peak National Character Area (NCA) (Natural England, 2013), which was defined on a much coarser scale, but follows the locally defined 'Regional Character Area'.

### Duration of Delivery

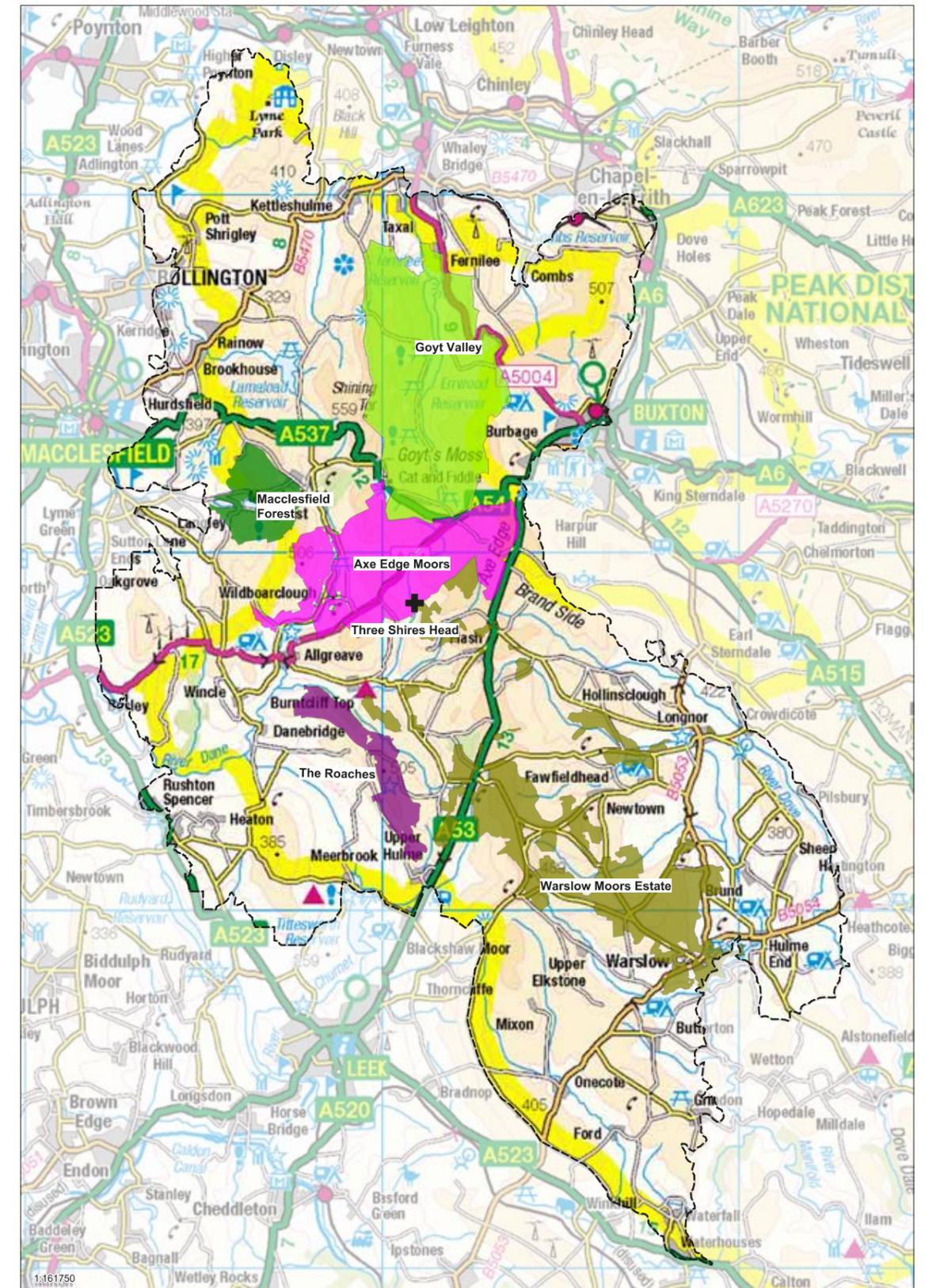
The Landscape Partnership expects to spend five years delivering a suite of projects to enhance the landscape and our connections with it. Five years are needed due to the size and complexity of the area, the variety of projects which we will deliver and the recognised challenges in engaging effectively with 'hard to reach' farmers in this location. The emphasis of this Scheme is on building better relationships between the different parties and increasing understanding and valuing of the landscape, both changes which take time and face-to-face contact to effect.

### South West Peak Three Counties



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### Map of the South West Peak showing key locations



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# The Partnership

## The Partnership

### The Partnership comprises the following organisations:

#### Lead partner:

- Peak District National Park

#### Delivery partners:

- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- RSPB
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Support Staffordshire
- The Farming Life Centre

#### Supporting partners:

- Cheshire East Council
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Nature Peak District
- Severn Trent Water
- Staffordshire County Council
- United Utilities

#### The role of the lead partner (accountable body) is to:

- Deliver the scheme in accordance with the mission statement and outcomes directed and agreed by the Board;
- Manage the financial and contractual administration of the scheme including the drawdown of funds from HLF;
- Support the delivery of projects by delivery partners;
- Act as a delivery partner for some of the projects;
- Keep accurate records of income and expenditure of the scheme to meet the needs of HLF;
- Keep accurate records of the achievements of the scheme;
- Ensure that the delivery partners deliver the projects and that the overall scheme meets and fulfils the grant conditions of HLF;
- Maintain the overall records and ensure that it complies with its contractual obligations pursuant to the Grant Agreement and the Standard Terms of Grant.

#### The role of delivery partners is to:

- Implement their individual projects according to the terms of the project plans and in accordance with the Standard Terms of Grant;
- Ensure all claims for payment against eligible project expenditure are submitted to the accountable body by specified quarterly deadlines;
- Pass adequate records to the accountable body for audit and monitoring purposes;
- Comply with the financial requirements and conditions of grants from other Funders as appropriate in respect of the project plan;
- Be responsible for the provision of all the necessary personnel, insurance, accommodation and services required for the implementation of their specific project;
- Work collaboratively to achieve the actions set out in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) and properly and diligently manage its project plan in accordance with the LCAP (including any variations to the LCAP agreed by the Board);
- Be responsible for procuring and securing match funding for their project as set out in their project plan;
- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are in place covering good practice when working with children and vulnerable adults.

#### The role of supporting partners is to:

- Sponsor or contribute towards a project and project plan within the scheme and support the scheme itself (but not act as a delivery partner);
- Take a place on the Board.

A detailed partnership agreement comprising delivery agreements and board agreement has been agreed and signed by the appropriate partners. The partnership agreement details the management and operation of the scheme and the partnership together with the roles and responsibilities of each type of partner as set out above.



## Organisation of the Partnership

We intend to keep the structure of the partnership as simple and efficient as possible with clearly defined roles and lines of communication, keeping the number of meetings to an acceptable level.



### Meetings

The Partnership Board will meet on a quarterly basis timed to take place before the submission of quarterly reports to HLF. The Chair will be present at all meetings, with a vice-chair appointed as stand-in if required. Working (task and finish) groups will be appointed by the board as required to oversee specific operational elements of the Scheme such as monitoring & evaluation, heritage projects steering group, and people & communities projects steering group.

### Financial arrangements

The detailed financial management of the Scheme will be the responsibility of the accountable body (PDNPA). The Partnership's 'common fund' will operate as a 'virtual' common fund whereby the accountable body will administer a separate financial cost centre; secure, establish, and operate appropriate financial management procedures; and supervise management of audit procedures in respect of the partnership fund.

Each delivery partner shall be responsible for procuring and securing match funding for their project as set out in their project plan; and confirm in writing to the accountable body that the required match funding has been secured from a funder, together with details of any conditions placed on such match funding by that funder.

Each delivery partner will provide to the accountable body all receipts and paid invoices in respect of any expenses or costs incurred by them as a result of the project. The accountable body will then submit the scheme's returns to HLF for reimbursement of partnership funds. Provided that HLF agree to pay such costs, the accountable body will transfer the relevant share of the partnership fund to the relevant delivery partner.

### Strengths, Weaknesses and Risks to the Scheme

The Landscape Partnership consists of a number of organisations who have a history of working together. A strong lead is given by the National Park Authority, which despite going through a period of change is now emerging strongly focused and has shown commitment to the Scheme, giving it corporate priority. Many of the partners have a history of success in delivering projects and large area programmes of work: the Moors for the Future Partnership,

Peak Birds Project, Stepping Stones to Nature, Dane Valley Project and the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership to name a few.

The projects are shared amongst six delivery partners: National Park, RSPB, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Support Staffordshire and the Farming Life Centre, all experienced at delivering successful projects. The majority of the responsibility - and with it risk - falls to the National Park as lead partner, delivering the bulk of the projects. With Defra funding for the National Park now on firmer footing, senior management and staff are confident of their ability to deliver.

Whilst the partnership is strong and committed, we are aware of some weaknesses. We have not managed to secure another farming representative on the Board (other than the Farming Life Centre) and therefore we will need to continue to make efforts to do so. An individual farmer would not necessarily be the right representative, nor have the time to participate as a Board member, so alternative methods of involvement in decision-making will be tried. Two of our Board members are local residents as well as representing partner organisations, bringing local knowledge and connections to the partnership.

One of our delivery partners, the Farming Life Centre, is a small charity which has been going through a period of financial uncertainty over their future viability. The Trustees have now confirmed that they are in a position to remain as delivery lead for two projects and, should circumstances change, that they will seek a substitute delivery lead with agreement of the LPS Board.

We are now going through a time of uncertainty with the recent referendum on leaving the EU. It is difficult to predict exactly what impact that will have on the Scheme. Access to European funding will almost certainly now be challenging, agricultural subsidies are likely to change at some point during our delivery phase, and it is likely that the competition for grant funding will continue to increase; however, new strands could well become available. Where projects do not currently have all match funding secured, partners have agreed to underwrite this and help each other with funding bids.

The size of the Scheme area and the risk of diluting the benefit have been raised as concerns by HLF; however, the partnership strongly

feels that the LPS area has been defined using strict criteria and reducing its area could not be done in any meaningful way. The projects comprising the Scheme include some very site-specific projects; species and habitat focused projects for which priority areas have been identified within which to focus efforts; community-led and influenced projects allowing the local communities to decide where work is focused; and engagement and influencing work which will be widespread across the area.

We are confident that the location of the LPS and the mixture of partners will each be a draw for recruiting Scheme staff, together with flexible working arrangements. The ability to retain staff to the end of the projects/Scheme is a concern; we will look to find incentives where necessary, such as completion bonuses, and will be succession planning in good time in order to try and continue the work of the partnership beyond the HLF funding.

### The Staff Team

The LPS will be delivered by a skilled staff team comprising:

#### Scheme Manager

Full time post for the duration of the scheme hosted by the lead partner (PDNPA), overseeing the whole scheme and managing some of the scheme staff.

#### Programme Support Officer

A part time post for the duration of the scheme, managed by the Scheme Manager, to provide administrative and financial support to the partnership.

#### Communication & Interpretation Officer

A part time post for the duration of the scheme, managed by the Scheme Manager, to ensure clear messages are used throughout the partnership in engaging with our audiences and to deliver interpretation projects.

#### Farm Link Workers

Two/three part time staff for the duration of the scheme, managed by the Scheme Manager, with a key communication role working closely with the farming community to explain the work of the partnership and link farmers and landowners with project officers and projects.

#### Volunteer & Vocational Training Officer

Full time post managed by the Scheme

Manager, to manage two cohorts of apprentices and a team of volunteer champions with a focus on increasing skills and participation in under-represented groups.

#### Youth Engagement Officer

Part time post hosted by PDNPA and managed within the Learning and Discovery team to run a programme of secondary school projects and field studies activities.

#### Community Engagement Officer

Full time post hosted by Support Staffordshire to engage with residents, community groups and visitors to promote the Scheme, signpost people to volunteering opportunities and promote the community grants.

#### Community Grants Officer

Part time post hosted by Support Staffordshire to administer and support our community grants scheme.

#### Grasslands Officer

Part time post managed by the Scheme Manager to coordinate a programme of survey, enhancement and monitoring of grasslands in three key 'landscapes within the landscape'.

#### Cultural Heritage Officer

Full time post for the duration of the scheme managed by the Scheme Manager to manage the Barns and Buildings and Small Heritage Adoption projects and provide cultural heritage expertise to other projects as necessary.

#### Slowing the Flow Officer

Full time post for the duration of the scheme hosted by Cheshire Wildlife Trust to develop and implement a range of natural flood measures, working with farmers, land managers and local people and engaging with partner organisations and stakeholders.

#### Wader PhD Student

Full time PhD student hosted by RSPB and the University of Sheffield looking at landscape-scale management interventions for curlew and snipe.

#### Wild Child Officer

Part time post hosted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to deliver Wildplay and Nature Tots sessions with children and young people.

#### Crayfish Ecologist

Contract position hosted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to deliver the Crayfish in Crisis project, conserving this globally endangered species.

### Staff Structure Chart

