The State of the National Park Report provides an overall picture of the ‘health’ of the National Park and measures progress against the outcomes set out in the National Park Management Plan in 2009.

September 2015
Introduction

As stated on the cover of this report, the purpose of the State of the National Park report is to provide a picture of the overall health of the national park and provide a report on the progress in delivering the 2009-2014 National Park Management Plan – Inspiring Landscapes, Thriving Communities. This Management Plan was developed in close consultation with local people and all those who have an interest in the national park. It represents a shared vision for the place and it is important we report on how the national park is changing.

The report is structured in line with the five Aims of the National Park Management Plan and the Executive Summary in the following pages provides an ‘at a glance’ view of how the Park is achieving against key five year targets in the Management Plan.

This is the seventh State of the National Park report. It is the second report in this more visually accessible format allowing trends and benchmarking to be identified. The State of the National Park report is published periodically when new and updated information becomes available, however it should be noted that some indicators and information are only updated periodically so much of the content in this 2015 report remains the same as the last report in 2013.

The report has been updated for 2015 to provide a useful source of information to support the statutory review of the National Park Management Plan which has started earlier in this calendar year and will again involve collaboration with local communities and partners in setting our future vision.

Overall this year’s State of the National Park report shows a stable position with more indicators showing “good” performance than “poor” performance and a balance between declining and improving trends.

I trust you will find this report of interest and I would welcome your feedback on any aspects of the national park condition which you would like to see reported in future. Please use the information in this report to help you engage with discussion on the review of the Management Plan during the autumn of 2015.

Tony Gates, Chief Executive (National Park Officer)
September 2015

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Executive Summary

An overview of the state of the National Park in 2015

Key:

- Good performance
- Acceptable performance
- Poor performance
- Improved trend
- Static
- Declining trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim 1 – A Welcoming Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1.1</strong> – People who come to the National Park will feel they have had an exceptional experience in relating to the landscape and in finding peace, tranquillity and adventure and will have enjoyed their visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – 75% of visitors to Northumberland National Park visitor services feel they have had an exceptional experience by 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – In 2014, 95% of visitors were highly satisfied with their experience of the National Park with 75% having an exceptional experience, an increase from 69% in 2011. This continues an improving trend as in 2007, 77% of visitors were highly satisfied and 41% rated their experience as exceptional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despite the closure of two National Park Centres, visitor facilities have been maintained at both sites through the private sector. Visitor facilities have been improved at Housesteads, Vindolanda, and the Bellingham Heritage Centre. The ‘Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre’ project has been awarded funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Outcome 1.2** – The National Park will be accessible to a wider and more diverse audience including people who live in, work in, and visit the National Park. |
| **Target** – 5% increase in visitors from the underrepresented groups of young people, disabled and black and ethnic minorities by 2013 from the 2007 baseline. |
| **Result** – In 2014, 3% of visitors were young people (under 25 year olds), the same as in 2011 but a decline from 11% in 2007. Over 80% of visitors had no children under 16 in their party. In 2014, 8% of visitors had a disability (7% in 2011) down from 12% in 2007 and compared to the average for the UK of 18% (2011 Census). Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) visitors remained unchanged at 3% between 2007 and 2014. |
| These results are despite a number of projects and initiatives to actively engage underrepresented groups since 2009. |

| **Outcome 1.3** – A more diverse range of learning opportunities will be available to help people understand, value and contribute to conserving, enhancing and enjoying the National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural qualities. |
| **Target** – 90% of adults and young adults are in employment or education following completion of NNPA traineeships by 2013. |
| **Result** – 93% of people completing an NNPA traineeship moved into employment or education with 26 (48%) starting their own rural business. However there have been no further schemes in the National Park since 2011. |
| NNPA has seen an increase in (recorded) volunteering since 2009 and an increase in youth volunteering. Partners like the National Trust have strong volunteer engagement and a number of new community groups have been formed (e.g. ‘Tynedale North of the Wall’ archaeology group). |
# Executive Summary

## Aim 2 – A Distinctive Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2.1 – A distinctive place that will maintain a sense of inspiration and tranquillity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – The National Park will continue to be the most tranquil part of England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – The National Park is the most tranquil Local Authority area in England. The combined area of the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park was designated a ‘Gold Tier’ International Dark Sky Park in 2013. Development policies for the National Park established and neighbouring authority development policies recognise the National Park. Integrated Rural Management Plan for the Otterburn Ranges adopted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2.2 – The natural qualities and diverse habitats that characterise the changing landscapes will be safeguarded and enhanced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – 98% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in ‘favourable’ or ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition by 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – The area of SSSI in ‘favourable’ or ‘recovering’ condition improved from 68% in 2005 to 100% in 2009 but declined and has remained at 99% since 2012 (due to administrative changes). 29% of SSSI are in ‘favourable’ condition which compares well to the average for English National Parks. The five priority habitats of upland heathland, blanket bog, ancient woodland, upland hay meadows, and rivers and burns cover 31% of the National Park and are all considered to be in improving condition. Landscape scale habitat connectivity has been enhanced through the establishment (and joint working) of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership, and 100% of the farmed area of the National Park is managed under the Environmental Stewardship agri-environment scheme in 2015. Research on ‘waxcaps’ has established the National Park as a nationally important area for these rare fungi.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2.3 – The rich historic environment and archaeological heritage will be understood, valued and cared for.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – 60% of Scheduled Monuments and 95% of Listed Buildings at low risk by 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – 50% of scheduled monuments were at low risk in 2014, a slight drop from 52% in 2012 but the trend is an improving one (up from 40% in 2007). The National Park is home to 31% of the North East regions Scheduled Monuments, but in 2014 38% of the regions high risk monuments were in the National Park. Since 2007 there has been a 1% improvement in ‘at risk’ and a 3% improvement in ‘vulnerable’ Listed Buildings. In 2015, 69% are at low risk although results of a full re-survey are awaited to provide an up to date picture. Understanding of heritage has been improved through the: Heritage at Risk project (over 250 monuments surveyed since 2010); establishment of new and development of existing community archaeology groups; a re-survey of Listed Buildings; a number of research and excavation projects, and; the establishment of a Young Archaeologists Club.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 2.4 – There is a strong and recognisable sense of identity which is born of the deep rooted cultural heritage but is balanced by a vibrant approach to the future.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – Sustained high levels of community belonging and activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – In 2011 57% of residents gave unpaid help to a community organisation and 64% felt they belonged to their community, a slight reduction from 67% in 2010. Throughout the Management Plan period there have been a large number of events associated with the cultural heritage and traditions of the National Park such as: the festival of the North East in 2013; local festivals (e.g. Redefest, BBAfest); the Rothbury traditional music festival, and; local village shows and sheep dog trials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Executive Summary

### Aim 3 – A Living Working Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 3.1 – New and better approaches to sustainable land and water management have been tested, adopted and embedded.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – All water bodies classified as within good ecological condition by 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – In 2015, 100% of the farmed area of the National Park is managed under the Environmental Stewardship agri-environment scheme with 85% of the area including the most environmentally beneficial ‘higher level’ options. In 2014, 56% of rivers were in ‘high’ or ‘good’ ecological status, the highest percentage for an English National Park but down from 59% in 2013 (this may be due to changes in reporting methods rather than actual changes). The National Park is home to two of England’s three pristine rivers. Over the Management Plan period there has been significant Partner effort into land and water management initiatives. In addition to agri-environment schemes there has been significant felling and re-profiling of conifer blocks and planting of broadleaf woodland and use of Water Framework Directive funds on projects to improve water quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 3.2 – The National Park has made an important contribution to increasing understanding about, and demonstrating the practice of sustainable development and responses to climate change.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – 10% of the energy requirements for all new developments provided by embedded renewable energy generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – Renewable energy requirements are embedded within National Park planning policies. By 2013 the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) had supported 45 climate change mitigation projects and the Authority reduced its own carbon footprint by 49% between 2008 and 2015. The National Park (as the least populated) has the lowest ‘carbon deficit’ of any English National Park. In the first half of the Management Plan period significant climate change mitigation work was undertaken. All community buildings in the National Park had insulation and/or renewable energy installed and a project with Northumberland Warmzones offered free insulation and energy efficiency advice to all National Park residents with the number of residents with low energy light bulbs fitted increasing from 59% in 2010 to 92% in 2011. Adaptation work continued throughout the period including the Cheviot Futures project, agri-environment scheme work, and enhanced partnerships such as the Northumberland (wild)Fire Group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 3.3 – Sustained and economically viable business growth which sensitively makes use of the natural, historical and cultural qualities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – 5% increase in farming, tourism, food, crafts and retail micro enterprises within the National Park and Action Areas making use of the natural and cultural qualities from the 2008 baseline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – The economy of the National Park and its inter-dependent gateway settlements was estimated to be £246m in 2012. A high number of residents are economically active and there is a particularly high level of self-employment. However there were indications that the value of tourism declined by 8% between 2009 and 2013 and that the number of businesses (9%) and employment (14%) in the National Park declined between 2009 and 2012. This may have resulted from the wider economic recession and indications are that tourism recovered in 2014 and that ‘staying visitors’ and visitor spend increased between 2011 and 2014. The ‘Visit Northumberland’ brand has been reinvigorated and training provided to businesses to maximise the use of protected landscapes, dark skies, and long distance walking and cycling trails in their offer and marketing. Support (inc. funding) for local farmers markets and artwork producers, etc. The North East Rural Growth Network has...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
supported the development of business hubs in towns and villages close to the national park but to date no business hubs have been delivered within the boundary.

**Aim 4 – Thriving Communities**

**Outcome 4.1** – The communities in and around the National Park have a strong connection to, and appreciation of, the National Park and are fully engaged in shaping its future.

**Target** – Level of influence of National Park residents on Northumberland National Park Authority services in the top 20% nationally by 2013.

**Result** – In 2011 only 15% of residents agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area (not just decisions made by the Authority) compared to the Northumberland average of 28%. To benchmark in the top 20% of Local Authorities, over 33% of residents would need to feel they can influence decisions. However, 27% of residents agreed that the Authority listens to and responds to residents opinions.

There has been a strong emphasis on working with communities and businesses through the Area based approach, policy consultations, and the National Park Forum. Development of a number of Neighbourhood (Local) Plans started.

**Outcome 4.2** – There is effective infrastructure (services, facilities, networks etc.) to support socially and culturally active communities with a high quality of life and improved health and well-being in and around the National Park.

**Target** – 95% of businesses and households within the National Park are able to access affordable broadband and speeds of at least 2MB per second by 2012.

**Result** – In 2011, 80% of households had internet access with 71% having broadband access.

Rural services, schools and buses have been under increased threat although a reduced Hadrian’s Wall Bus service has been retained and Spirit Buses have been established in Coquetdale. Funding support has allowed for the re-opening of Kielder filling station and establishment of the Humshaugh community shop. Plans for better rural broadband have been developed but implementation has been slower that hoped. There has been significant work to support communities and businesses with energy efficiency and renewable energy generation and an electric vehicle charging network installed.

**Outcome 4.3** – People will have opportunities to work in, live in and contribute to resilient communities in and around the National Park.

**Target** – The age profile of the National Park indicates a decrease in outward migration of young people and adults of working age.

**Result** – Between 2001 and 2011 the population of the National Park increased by 2.9%. However the population is getting older over time with the proportion of people in the age groups under 45 years old dropping from 53% to 43%.

Planning policies are supportive of sustainable developments and infrastructure but no affordable housing was built in Management Plan period indicating that traditional methods of affordable housing provision are not working within the National Park. The County Core Strategy recognises the role of gateway settlements in supporting National Park communities. The Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group has supported and invested in rural business development and there has been development of the Rural Growth Network including the establishment of ‘hubs’ in Wooler and Hexham.
## Executive Summary

### Aim 5 – A Valued Asset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 5.1 – The National Park is widely recognised for its environmental, social and economic contribution, particularly to North East England.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – Enhanced awareness of the Northumberland National Park to the local and regional economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – In 2011 only 2% of the national population were aware of Northumberland National Park. However 87% of visitors to the National Park were aware of the designation and 57% stated it had a direct impact on prompting their visit. 12% of the National Park is covered by national or international natural environment protective designations. Some of the best areas of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site are located within the National Park and it is home to 31% of the North East regions Scheduled Monuments. A study of the economic value of England’s National Parks found that the National Park and its inter-dependent gateway settlements contribute £246m to the economy in 2012. Land management and rural development programmes have invested in the National Park recognising its importance to the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 5.2 – The National Park has made a distinctive contribution to a broader network of protected areas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – Northumberland National Park is recognised as a regional/ national exemplar for low carbon living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – The National Park is part of the largest Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in England, the Northern Upland Chain LNP along with the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the North Pennines AONB, and the Nidderdale AONB. Northumberland has the smallest carbon deficit of England’s National Parks. The farm resilience planning approach piloted by the Cheviot Futures climate adaption project is now being used in the North West region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 5.3 – The value of the National Park as a place that is worth looking after is clearly demonstrated in the policies and actions of those who have influence on the National Park.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong> – Public bodies demonstrate their support for National Park purposes through their policies and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong> – The Northumberland National Park Management Plan Partnership has remained intact and engaged throughout the Management Plan period. Partners commit to circa 50% of actions in the Annual Action Plans and the partnership tends to deliver or partially deliver approximately 80% of actions each year. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises National Parks (provides exemptions) and the County Councils Core Strategy recognises the importance of the National Park and its gateway settlements. The North East Strategic Economic Plan identifies the National Park as a key economic asset and identifies the Sill as a strategic project for the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The land use map on the back page of this document can be used to provide context and comparisons against the thematic maps which are found throughout this document.
A Welcoming Park – Exceptional Experience

Visitor Infrastructure Map – 2015
Source: National Park Visitor Guide 2015

Visitor enjoyment of Northumberland National Park

Source: Northumberland National Park Visitor Survey 2014

2011 2014
Not at all 2 3 4 5 Exceptional
0.0% 0.0% 0.5% 4.5% 4.5% 26.0% 20.0% 69.0% 75.0%
Key Facts – Visitors:

- In 2014, 1.69 million people visited the National Park and the surrounding ‘Action Areas’ a 7% decline from the 1.81 million visitors in 2007 but the highest number since 2010.
- Of the 1.69m visitors to the wider ‘Action Areas’ most (1.42m) visited the National Park, but the majority stayed and spent money outside of the National Park in the gateway settlements.
- Visitor numbers to the main ‘pay entry’ visitor attractions in the Hadrian’s Wall corridor fell by 10% from 586,000 in 2007 to 529,000 in 2011 (Information not currently available beyond 2011).
- Visitors to National Park Centres fell by 39% between 2007 and 2012 with the Rothbury and Ingram sites transferred to private visitor based businesses in 2013. Visitor numbers to the Once Brewed centre appear to be recovering from a low of 40,250 in 2012 up to 44,400 in 2014.
- In 2014 55% of visitors were from the North East region (59% in 2011) and 6% were from overseas (8% in 2011). There has been an increase in the proportion of visitors from elsewhere in the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2014.
- First time and overseas visitors tend to go to the Hadrian’s Wall area whilst the Cheviots tends to attract regular repeat visitors from within the North East region.
- In 2014 around half of visitors were ‘day visitors’ whilst a further 43% were ‘overnight visitors’ staying in the North East region. This represents a significant increase in the proportion of staying visitors and more visitors are staying in or close to the National Park as opposed to elsewhere in the North East region since 2011.
- In 2014 25% of overnight visitors used serviced accommodation (B&B and hotels) compared to 14% in 2011 (37% in 2007) whilst those using non-serviced accommodation (self catering and caravans) fell to 31% from 38% in 2011 (20% in 2007).
- 95% of visitors are highly satisfied with their experience of the National Park. In 2014 75% of visitors rated their experience as exceptional compared to 69% in 2011 and 41% in 2007. The only available comparison is for a similar study in the North York Moors National Park which found that 96% of visitors were highly satisfied in 2011.
A Welcoming Park – Exceptional Experience

Key Facts – Visitor Activities:

- 45% of visitors state walking as their main motivation for a visit prior to actually visiting the National Park. Sightseeing (11%), visiting market towns (6%), heritage sites (5%) and cycling (4%) are the next most popular reasons for visiting.
- Once in the National Park, walking (long or short) is the most popular activity actually undertaken by visitors ahead of eating out, visiting historic sites, and visiting attractions.
- Most visitors use a car to get to the National Park (88%) but then walk to get around (66%). This further demonstrates that people drive to the National Park to then go for a walk.
- The trend between 2007 and 2014 suggests that visiting historic sites and visiting attractions are becoming more popular whilst photography and eating out are becoming less popular overtime.
- The 2011 survey was undertaken in particularly poor weather conditions over summer 2011 and this appears to account for the dip in popularity of walking and the spike in car touring in 2011 rather than a genuine change in visitor behaviour.
Key Facts – Visitor Facilities:

- Quality of footpaths, welcome and friendliness, car parking, and toilets are the most important facilities, whilst public transport is the least important facility in contributing to visitor enjoyment of the National Park.

- Experience exceeded expectation for 11 out of 14 of the facilities surveyed. Of the four most important facilities, quality of footpaths fell narrowly short of expectation and car parking was neutral (both a decline in performance since 2011). Toilets fell well short of expectation whilst experience of welcome and friendliness was the only area to exceed expectations.

- Between 2011 and 2014 the importance of all facilities increased slightly whilst the experience for all fell slightly. There was a significant increase in the importance of wifi/mobile coverage (actual experience fell short again) and a major drop in actual experience of public transport.

- In 2015 only 55% of public rights of way were considered easy to use, a decline from 74% in 2012 and a figure which benchmarks poorly to other National Parks. However, the focus on maintaining the most heavily used routes is probably the reason for the relatively high experience score given by visitors.

- The National Park Centres at Ingram and Rothbury closed at the end of the 2012 visitor season but private sector businesses at both sites have maintained visitor facilities (inc. toilets at Ingram) and additional information points have been installed in local businesses.

- Construction of a new National Landscape Discovery Centre on the site of the Once Brewed National Park Centre is due to start in September 2015, and improved toilet facilities at Bulby’s Wood in the Breamish Valley are due to open in summer 2015.

- National Park Centre staff scored 97% for welcome and friendliness in a 2012 survey.
Public Access

- National Trails
- Access Land

Public Rights of Way
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Restricted Byway
- Footpath

Rights of Way 'easy to use'

![Map of Public Access with data](image)

Source: Northumberland County Council & Natural England

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A Welcoming Park – Diverse Audience and Accessibility

Key Facts – Diverse Audience:

- Only 3% of visitors were aged 16-24 in both 2011 and 2014, down from 11% in 2007. In 2014 81% of visitors had no children under 16 in their party (up from 75% in 2011) and the results indicate that the 45 to 64 age group represents the majority of visitors to the National Park.

- In 2014, 8% of visitors had a disability or long standing health issue limiting their daily activities (7% in 2011, 12% in 2007). This compares to the UK average of 18% (2011 Census). The National Park Centre survey in 2011 indicated that 13% of visitors had a disability suggesting the importance of these types of facilities for disabled visitors.

- Visitors from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups have remained static at 3% since 2007.

- There has been a downward trend in visitor numbers between 2007 and 2013 with numbers bouncing back in 2014. This pattern broadly correlates with the national economic performance over the same period. These conditions may have contributed to the reduction in ‘under-represented’ groups and the prevalence of traditional core visitors.

- Between 2001 and 2011 there has been a reduction in young people in the resident population and those residents with a limiting health issue is below the national average.

- Over recent years the Authority has hosted a number of well received events with the Disabled Ramblers Association, has completed a project to engage BME audiences (BME Mosaic) and is currently hosting a Youth Mosaic project.

- The Authority has made youth engagement a priority and has established a Youth Volunteer Initiative, hosted the Young Northumberland project, hosted several youth ‘changemakers’ and provided a number of placements, bursaries, and training posts for young people.

Key Facts – Access:

- 72% of the National Park is ‘open access’ land and there are over 1,140 kilometres of public rights of way. There are a further 90 Km of permissive routes.

- About two thirds of the rights of way network is footpaths only accessible to walkers, whilst one third is bridleways accessible to horse riders and bicycles. There are small lengths of byways open to all traffic.

- The Pennine Way and Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trails run through the National Park. There are two long distance routes, the St Cuthbert’s Way and St Oswald’s Way. A new long distance mountain bike trail between Berwick and Hexham, the Sandstone Way was opened in 2014.

- There are about 100 Km of ‘Rangers Favourite Walks’ promoted on the National Park website.

- The ‘ease of use’ of rights of way declined to 55% in 2014/15. Northumberland benchmarks poorly compared to other National Parks where the average ‘ease of use’ is 82%.

Age profile of visitors

Source: Northumberland National Park Visitor Survey 2014
Source: NNPA Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills project data, 2011
Key Facts – Training:

- 93% of trainees embarking on the Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills (TBTS) and Upland Farming Traineeship (UFT) rural training schemes completed their training and gained a recognised qualification. These training schemes ended in 2011 due to lack of funding.
- Of those completing the course, 93% moved into employment or further education, 74% gained employment in rural based roles, and 48% started their own rural business (see business locations on map).

Rural Skills Training Graduation and Employment Rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TBTS</th>
<th>UFT</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of original recruits</th>
<th>% of those completing training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Trainees</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed training / gained qualification</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved into Employment or Education</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in a rural business role</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employed / new business start-up</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Facts – Volunteering:

- In recent years, the National Park Authority has placed an increased emphasis on providing training and career pathways through bursaries, placements and volunteering opportunities.
- Volunteering led/supported by the Authority has increased by 114% since 2010. This is driven by more accurate recording of volunteering activities and a focus on providing opportunities for young people meaning that volunteering from ‘under-represented groups’ has increased.
- ‘Young Volunteer Placements’ have provided training in practical conservation and access skills and the ‘Young Northumberland’ project provided young people with project and business skills.
- Community groups, organisations like the National Trust, and projects like the Hadrian’s Wall Community Champions project make significant volunteering contributions to the National Park.
A Distinctive Place – Inspiration and Tranquillity

Source: Campaign to Protect Rural England – national tranquillity mapping data, 2007

Source: Campaign to Protect Rural England – national light pollution mapping data
A Distinctive Place – Inspiration and Tranquillity

Key Facts – Inspiration and tranquillity:

- Northumberland National Park remains the most tranquil place in England and is the most tranquil protected landscape in England.
- The county of Northumberland is the most tranquil local authority area in England followed by Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and County Durham.
- Nationally the highest tranquillity score is 149 and the lowest -141. Tranquillity scores for the National Park range from 141 to -19 placing areas of the National Park close to the highest score in the whole country. The graph demonstrates that virtually all of the National Park gains a positive tranquillity score and large areas score very highly on the national range.
- The adjoining areas of the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park were designated a ‘Gold Tier’ International Dark Sky Park in 2013 making it the largest dark sky protected area in Europe and the best place in England to view the night sky.
- Dark Skies were cited as a reason for visiting for the first time in 2014 (1% of visitors).
- The 2011 Resident Survey reveals that 83% of residents think that ‘peace and tranquillity’ make the National Park a special place.
- The ‘word cloud’ below shows the special qualities cited (unprompted) by visitors in a visual diagram. The cloud gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently. The most frequent special quality in 2014 was ‘landscape/scenery’ cited by 66% of visitors, followed by ‘open spaces’ (39%), and ‘peace and tranquillity’ (37%), essentially the same as in 2011.
- The relative importance of landscape and tranquillity to visitors increased in 2014 with special qualities other than landscape / tranquillity such as cultural heritage, historic buildings, wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor recreation all tending to be cited less in 2014 than in 2011.
**Natural Environment Vision** - In 2014 the Natural Environment Vision was published after consultation with partners and landowners and managers living and working in the National Park. This long-term vision takes over from the Biodiversity Action Plan and sets out a direction for the Natural Environment of the National Park for the next 25 years.

### Natural Environment Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</td>
<td>12,453 ha (12% of National Park area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Area for Conservation (SAC)</td>
<td>5,216 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMSAR sites</td>
<td>377 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Nature Reserve (NNR)</td>
<td>108 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Natural England natural environment designation data, 2015
Key Facts – Natural Environment Designations:

- 12% of the area (12,453 ha) of the National Park is covered by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations. This is below the average for all English National Parks of 24%.

- Many natural environment designations overlie one another meaning, for example the Authority managed Greenlee Lough is a National Nature Reserve (NNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and a Special Area for Conservation (SAC).

- Natural environment designations are concentrated in three broad areas of the National Park: the Cheviot Hills and associated river valleys; Simonside and Coquetdale, and; the Hadrian’s Wall corridor and border mires.

- The area of SSSI in ‘favourable’ or ‘recovering’ condition increased from 68% in 2005 to 100% in 2009 and then dropped to 99% in 2012 due to a small decline in the area considered to be ‘recovering’. However, this was caused by an administrative change that amalgamated and reclassified a number of smaller SSSI units rather than an actual change in condition.

- 29% of the SSSI area is in ‘favourable’ condition which compares positively to the average for all English National Parks of 25% (and 20% for upland National Parks with similar habitats).

- The target is to maintain 100% of SSSI in ‘favourable’ or ‘recovering’ and to increase the area in ‘favourable’ condition to 45% by 2016. The area in ‘favourable’ has remained constant at 29% between 2010 and 2015 although 100 hectares did improve to ‘favourable’ condition in 2015.
A Distinctive Place – Natural Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Habitat</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rivers and Burns</td>
<td>439 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Hay Meadows</td>
<td>295 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Woodland</td>
<td>704 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Bog</td>
<td>9,799 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Heathland</td>
<td>21,520 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key Facts – Landuse and Priority Habitats:**

- 31% (32,758 ha) of the area of the National Park is comprised of priority habitats. These priority habitats are the most important areas for biodiversity. They are nationally and internationally scarce and are home to a huge variety of wild plants and animals.

- About one third (8,873 ha) of priority habitats are protected by SSSI designation but the remaining two thirds have no special protection. However in 2014, a further 21,777 ha of priority habitats were managed under Higher Level Stewardship agri-environment schemes leaving just over 2,000 ha without enhanced management practices.

- A large scale survey between 2007 and 2010 of the blanket bog and heathland habitats found that 69% of blanket bogs are intact, 11% fragmented, and 20% degraded. 40% of the heathland habitat is intact, 57% fragmented, and 3% degraded.

- Large areas of heathland are being managed through projects and agri-environment schemes to remove drainage grips, reseed heather, manage grazing and burning, and remove conifers. There are 164 Environmental Stewardship agreements covering 55% (58,078 ha) of the National Park to maintain, restore, or create moorland habitats.

- 36% of the National Park is un-improved or semi-improved grassland. In some areas these grassland habitats can be important for bird species and ‘waxcap’ fungi, whilst in other areas they also provide the best opportunities for re-creation and expansion of priority habitats. There are 210 Environmental Stewardship agreements covering 12% (12,424 ha) of the National Park to manage, restore, or create low input grasslands.

- Conifer plantations cover 20% of the area. Whilst providing habitat for some species and an important refuge for England’s remaining native red squirrel population, their overall landscape and biodiversity impact is negative compared to native habitats. There are only small fragments of ancient woodland covering 704 hectares (0.7%).

- Agriculturally improved land covers over 11% of the area and includes improved pastures, meadows and arable land and can be important for farmland bird species.
A Distinctive Place – Natural Environment

Key Facts – Priority Habitat status (assessment since 2013):

**Improving**
- **Upland Heathland**: Stable with local areas of improvement. Burning plans developed and some controlled burning carried out in partnership. Re-seeding of areas in Harthope valley. In some areas accidental or uncontrolled fires have burnt sensitive areas which is undesirable.
- **Blanket Bog**: Improvement to several sites through grip blocking, reprofiling of bare peat and removal of conifer regeneration, including Simonside hills, Steng moss, Rooken flow and Pundershaw moss.
- **Semi-Natural Woodland**: Probable continued improvement through forest restructuring and new native woodland planting and continued maturation of planted woodlands. Includes bankside planting which also improves water quality e.g. near the Roman wall loughs.
- **Upland Hay Meadows**: Improving due to seed addition to more meadows including at Newton and Dueshill. Monitoring continues showing that some meadows take more than 1 year after seeding to start showing full improvement. Limited mixes of certain species have been noted as being good for pollinators.
- **Rivers and Burns**: Some movement in water quality scores with 4 rivers recorded in “High” condition, but in different years. Overall good water quality in the National Park and only 3 reported as poor status. Recently there may have been some localised impacts from conifer felling, but work with forest managers to improve plantation design should help in the future.

**SSSI condition by habitat** (primary reason for designation as SSSI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat Type</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing Open Water and Canals</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers and Streams</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Grassland - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen, Marsh and Swamp - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen, Marsh and Swamp - Lowland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Heritage</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf Shrub Heath - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcareous Grassland - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland...</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogs - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acid Grassland - Upland</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Facts – Upland Habitat SSSI condition:**

- 100% of geological (earth heritage) designated SSSI are in favourable condition.
- Upland heathland (dwarf shrub heath) and blanket bog habitats represent the largest areas of SSSI. Most of these SSSI habitats are in ‘unfavourable recovering’ condition. These are nationally recognised as the most difficult habitats to restore to ‘favourable’ condition.
- Northumberland National Park benchmarks well for SSSI habitat condition compared to other upland National Parks with similar habitats, but less favourably compared to lowland National Parks.
## A Distinctive Place – Natural Environment

### Key Facts – Locally and Nationally Important Species status:

| Improving | Protection through the planning system is strong, and increased new native woodland together with good quality water courses and associated invertebrates is providing more habitat. Bat habitat suitability mapping has been completed for the National Park and shows many areas, particularly in the river valleys and lower altitudes to be good for most of the resident species. |
| Plants - Chives | Existing colonies of Chives are healthy with new habitat created at Walltown to extend those colonies. A new colony discovered in Walltown quarry. Chives and other whin species (including maiden pink and rockrose) are being grown on for planting in the roof at the Sill. Other projects to introduce locally native species have been undertaken including maiden pinks and a variety of species at Elsdon. |
| Stable | Buzzards are doing well and have increased all over the National Park. Merlin and peregrine have been stable for a few years from the BTO atlas results, but recent news of unsuccessful nests in the Park for unknown reasons need investigating. |
| Waders | A park-wide curlew survey in 2013 and limited surveys in 2015 together with BTO data seem to indicate that range remains stable in the Park but numbers of pairs may be declining. This is backed up by a general slow decrease in numbers over the last 10 years in fixed 1km square counts on the Otterburn Training Area. Habitat improvement and maintenance for waders is being undertaken through targeted agri-environment schemes, but it is difficult to separate data from national downward trends. Trends for lapwing and redshank look similar to curlew, but snipe seem to be stable. |
| Bumblebees | Records of mountain bumblebee are now all over the National Park. The rare moss carder bee has been recorded in the Park and habitat improvements have been undertaken by increasing diversity in meadows near to recorded sites. Goat willow, an early food source for emerging queen bees, is being planted around moorland and meadow sites. National trends for bees remain downwards so work to link flower rich areas in the National Park and Local Nature Partnership area is important. |
| Juniper | Disease is still a threat for this plant and new plantings are on hold but work at Hepple Whitfield to propagate local plants on the estate is progressing. |
| Red Squirrel | Recent RSNE data show that reds and greys are present in the Park, reds throughout and grey records mainly in the southern half. Over the whole of the north of England range occupancy of reds went down and greys went up in 2015, but it is yet to be seen whether this is a longer term trend. Since 2012 range has remained similar in the north east and the National Park. Continued surveillance and control of greys are likely to be needed to keep red populations healthy. |
| Declining | Despite having a breeding attempt in 2013 and 2 successful nests in Northumberland in 2015 the situation for hen harrier is not good. There seems to be habitat to support more pairs in the National Park and we will continue to work in partnership with agencies, volunteers and land managers to increase numbers where possible. |
| Black Grouse | The situation in the National Park is going against the trend in the rest of the north of England where numbers and range are increasing. Very few black grouse have been recorded in the last two years in the National Park; we think there is a small number around Redesdale and some birds heading north form North Pennines to Hadrian’s Wall. More habitat work and research is needed to determine why they are not doing well – at the moment we do not know the reason why. |
World Heritage Site: 1 (Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site)
Scheduled Monuments: 425 (1 new designation in 2015)
Listed Buildings: 229 (12 Grade I, 11 Grade II*, 206 Grade II)
Battlefield Sites: 2
Registered Park and Garden: 1
Conservation Areas: 1 (Kirknewton)
Key Facts – Historic Environment:

- Some of the best areas of Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site are located in the National Park.
- A full survey of Listed Buildings was undertaken in 2007 and found: 26 (11%) to be ‘at risk’ (high); 44 (19%) to be ‘vulnerable’ (medium); and, 148 (65%) to be at low risk. 11 Buildings (5%) were not surveyed. A full re-survey undertaken between 2012 and 2015 is still to report.
- By 2011, improvements to Listed Buildings meant that 10% were ‘at risk’ (down from 11% in 2007) and 16% were ‘vulnerable’ (down from 19% in 2007). There have been no further changes.
- Between 2007 and 2011, 4 Grade II buildings were removed from ‘at risk’ but 1 Grade II* site (Tarset Castle) was added to the ‘at risk’ list in the same period. 7 buildings were removed from the ‘vulnerable’ list including Thirlwall Castle, the only Grade I building on the ‘vulnerable’ list.
- 425 (31%) of the North East regions 1,389 Scheduled Monuments are located in the National Park but in 2014 a greater proportion (38%) of those at high risk in the region were in the Park.
- Between 2011 and 2015 the “Heritage at Risk” project has surveyed over 250 sites. In this period 42 monuments have been removed from high or medium risk to low risk, whilst 20 monuments declined in condition over the same period.
- In 2007, 40% of monuments were low risk. This improved to 52% in 2012 and dropped back to 50% in 2014.
- 122 agri-environment agreements covering 4,249 ha include management of historic features.
Key Facts – Land Management:

- 100% of the Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA) (i.e. eligible farmed area) of the National Park is covered by the Environmental Stewardship agri-environment scheme. This is the highest percentage of any English National Park and well above the National Park average of 86%.

- In 2015, 85% of the farmed area (UAA) of the Park is covered by agreements which include ‘higher level’ options with the remaining 15% covered by agreements that contain ‘entry level’ options only.

- The farmed area covered by agreements with ‘higher level’ options which are the most beneficial for the environment increased to 85% in 2015, up from 74% in 2013, and 64% in 2011.

- In 2013 there were 313 English Woodland Grant Schemes covering 2,563 hectares. About two thirds of schemes were to create woodland and one third were for improvement. In 2015 there were a further 37 Environmental Stewardship agreements to manage or create 220 hectares of woodland, and 13 agreements to protect 272 in-field trees.

![Percentage Area of English National Parks in 'Environmental Stewardship' schemes](source: Natural England agri-environment scheme data 2015)

![Area (hectares and percent) in different levels of 'Environmental Stewardship'](source: Natural England agri-environment scheme data 2015)
Key Facts – Water Management:

- In 2014 the National Park had two ‘pristine’ (high ecological status) rivers, the Barrowburn and Ridless Burn. When the 2015 data is reported it is understood that at least one other river, the Till from source to Linhope Burn will be classified as pristine.

- In 2014, 203 Kilometres (Km) of the 364 Km of rivers in the National Park were in ‘high’ or ‘good’ ecological status, a small decline from 217 Km in 2012. 137 Km are in ‘moderate’ and 24 Km in ‘poor’ condition. There are no lengths of river in ‘bad’ condition.

- Two of the National Park’s water bodies (lakes) are in ‘good’ condition and three are ‘moderate’.

- There are targets for 83.3% of the length of rivers and 80% of lakes to be in ‘high’ or ‘good’ status by 2027.

- A number of current and recent projects are helping to reduce pollution of water courses, including the Sheep Dip Project (chemical pollution from dip facilities), and: the Cheviot Futures project (river based work to reduce erosion); the Border Uplands project (reduce peat bog erosion by grip blocking); the Hill Tracks project (to reduce erosion from tracks), and woodland planting projects for water quality are all working to reduce sediment pollution.
Source: NNPA planning data and Sustainable Development Fund project data, 2013
Key Facts – Climate Change:

- The total amount of carbon captured and stored in the soils of the National Park is estimated to be 40 million tonnes, which is the carbon dioxide equivalent to the average annual emissions from 6.6 million households.
- Defra’s carbon footprint estimates for National Parks identify that Northumberland produces 139,000 tonnes and captures 118,000 tonnes of carbon annually and has the smallest annual deficit of any National Park at 21,000 tonnes. This is to be expected given the low levels of population and development in Northumberland National Park.

Key Facts – Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption:

- Between 2006 and 2013, 66 planning applications have involved the installation of renewable energy. In 2012/13, 6 planning applications including renewable energy generation were granted, down from 13 permissions in 2011/12, 12 permissions in 2010/11, and 8 in 2009/10.
- Before government incentive schemes such as feed in tariffs, the renewable heat incentive, and green deal were introduced, 45 Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) projects supported climate change mitigation measures, improving insulation of buildings and installing renewable energy.
- There is a network of 12 electric vehicle charging points at 8 locations around the National Park to ensure the National Park is connected to the regional network.
- The Authority virtually halved (49%) its own carbon footprint between 2008 and 2015. About half of this improvement is on a ‘like for like’ basis due to ‘genuine improvements’ (renewable energy, fuel efficient vehicles, etc). The other half demonstrates the impact of budget reductions and is accounted for by the leasing of buildings and offices to the private sector.
- The Cheviot Futures climate change adaptation project helped farmers plan for the effects of climate change, trialled flood defence products, and erosion and flood defence methods including riverbank protection work at Kirknewton in 2012.
- A climate change adaption plan for the National Park was agreed with Defra in 2010 and actions are now integrated within the annual National Park Management Plan action planning work.
IMPORTANT NOTE: Measuring the economy of the National Park is extremely difficult due to the nature of the boundary that excludes the major settlements and the resultant small resident population. If figures are generated where the National Park population is greater than 50% of the ‘statistical area’ population, areas of the National Park are omitted (under reported). If all of the ‘statistical area’ information is considered as the National Park, then the National Park specific economy is absorbed within the information for the wider area (over reported and not representative of the National Park characteristics alone).
Key Facts – Economy:

- The economy (GVA)\(^1\) of the National Park and its gateway settlements was estimated to be **£246 million per annum** in 2012 based on the Government’s Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

- In 2012 an under-estimate of businesses located within the National Park only indicates a £17 million contribution towards the Gross Value Added (GVA) total (see IDBR method explanation below).

- The BRES indicates that 6,160 people are employed in the area covering the National Park and its inter-dependent gateway settlements (i.e. the ‘statistical areas’ indicated on the map). ‘Accommodation and food services’ (16%) and ‘wholesale and retail’ (13%) are the main employing industries.

- The high levels of employment in accommodation and food services (16.3%) compared to the average for National Parks (14.7%) and England (6.4%) indicates the importance of tourism to the local economy.

- 2014 estimates for tourism for the ‘Action Areas’ (including the National Park and gateway settlements) indicate that tourism contributes £158 million to the local economy and supports over 3,113 jobs.

- In 2014, 84% of the 1.69 million tourists to the ‘Action Areas’ visited the National Park but only 45% of the economic impact was within the boundary demonstrating the importance of the National Park to the local tourism economy and businesses located outside of the boundary.

- The value of tourism in the ‘Action Areas’ dropped by 8% between 2009 and 2013, but increased by 2.6% between 2013 and 2014. A 2014 survey suggests visitors are spending more than they did in 2011.

- The Inter-Department Business Register (IDBR) method indicates that within the National Park boundary the number of businesses fell by 9% between 2009 and 2012 but recovered slightly in 2012. It also indicates that local employment fell by 14% in the period.

- Farming (and forestry) is the dominant sector within the National Park boundary. It is the main industry employing residents (22%) and could account for two thirds of businesses and 55% of jobs located within the National Park boundary (number of businesses undercounted - see IDBR method explanation below).

- The IDBR method indicates that 68% of businesses are in the farming and forestry sector, but that the sector accounts for 55% of employment and 46% of turnover. These figures and an average turnover of £54,000 per employee (compared to a UK average of £167,000) suggest low returns in the farming sector.

- The IDBR method indicates that 97% of businesses employ 0-9 and 3% employ 10-49 employees. This is a far greater concentration of small businesses than the average for National Parks’ and England.

Inter-Department Business Register (IDBR) method explanation:

- The IDBR method under-estimates business activity as it omits some areas of the National Park (only includes ‘statistical areas’ where more than 50% of the population is within the National Park). The method under reports as it is based on VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses. The National Park has a high number of self-employed and low turnover businesses which are missed by this method.

- The under-estimate of the National Park’s GVA is based on 140 businesses employing 420 people and misses self-employed and low turnover businesses. As an indication of the under-estimate, there are 256 agricultural holdings in the National Park alone and just under 1,200 residents are in employment (not necessarily within the National Park). There are many small (low turnover) businesses and 441 residents are self-employed and are likely to be missed by this method.

- The method records 140 businesses operating from 155 establishments and employing 420 people in the National Park. 68% of businesses are in the agricultural and forestry sector and account for 55% of employment.

- The 140 businesses are estimated to have a combined annual turnover of £27m with farming and forestry contributing £12.5m (46%). The average turnover per employee was £54,000 in 2012 (National Parks’ = £68,000; UK = £167,000 per employee).

- This method suggests that the Gross Value Added (GVA) economic measure for the National Park was £17m in 2012.

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\(^1\) GVA is a measure of economic performance to allow comparisons (=turnover less subsidies & excluding tax)
Key Facts – Economically Active Population:

- Just under 1,600 National Park residents are of working age (16-74) and just over 1,200 (76% of the working age population) are economically active which is significantly higher than the average for National Parks’ (68%) and England (70%).

- The economically active population has increased from 74% in 2001 to 76% despite an increase in the number of retired people. This is because of relatively high numbers of full-time and particularly self-employed workers whilst the number of people looking after the home/family, long-term sick/disabled, and students has declined (consistent with drop in younger population).

- A high number of residents are in work (73%) compared to the average for National Parks’ (64%) and England (62%) whilst the unemployment rate is low at 2.1% compared to the average for National Parks’ (2.2%) and England (4.4%).

- Levels of self-employment are very high at 28% of the working age population compared to the average for National Parks’ (19%) and England (10%).

Key Facts – Residents Employment (industries not necessarily based in the National Park):

- The percentage of residents employed in farming and forestry has declined from 28% in 2001 to 22% in 2011. However, farming remains the dominant industry employing over twice as many residents as any other industry. This dominance is emphasised when comparing those employed in farming in the National Park (22%) to the average for National Parks’ (6%) and England (1%).

- There is some evidence of diversification with an increase in the percentage of residents employed in accommodation and food services (from 7.5% to 9.7%) and wholesale and retail trades (from 8.2% to 9.6%) although the employing businesses may be located outside the National Park boundary.

- Of residents in employment, 74% work full-time hours compared to the average for National Parks’ (67%) and England (71%). 30% of residents in employment work long hours (over 49 hours each week) which is much higher than the average for National Parks’ (19%) and England (13%).
Key Facts – Communities Engaged in Shaping the Future:

- **Listening to National Park residents** – 27% of residents who expressed an opinion agreed or strongly agreed that the National Park Authority listens to and responds to residents’ opinions (up from 26% in 2009/10). 24% of residents thought the National Park Authority was in touch with local people, and 25% thought the Authority made good planning decisions².

- Communities were widely consulted in the development of the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) policies and a number of National Park Forum have been held over recent years.

- **Influencing decisions** – In 2011 only 15% of residents who expressed an opinion agreed or strongly agreed that they could influence decisions that affect their local area (not just decisions made by the National Park Authority) compared to Northumberland (28%), North East (28%), and the North West (27%). In England the top 20% of Local Authorities have at least 33% of residents that feel they are able to influence decisions locally.

- The Authority has assisted the community of Tarset and Greystead to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which has been submitted for independent examination, and is assisting the development of a plan for mid-Coquetdale. Neighbourhood Plans provide the opportunity to inform the nature of future development within communities.

- There are 34 parishes covering the National Park, 27 of which have an active Parish Council. In 2011 8 parishes (24%) had developed Parish Plans and a further 5 had them under development to provide a shared community vision identifying local issues, aspirations and needs.

- **Involvement in community projects** – In 2011 57% of National Park residents give unpaid help to organisations or clubs in the community compared to 25%³ of Northumberland residents. 65% of residents (who expressed an opinion) said that they were willing to give unpaid help to local community projects compared to 16%⁴ of Northumberland residents who would like to spend more time helping groups and clubs.

- Authority administered Funds, invested £71,500 in 34 community projects that attracted £214,500 of matched funding in 2014/15. There has been a downward trend in projects and funding in recent years within difficult economic times.

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² Information from 2009/10 and 2010/11 National Park Residents Survey
³ 2008 Place Survey
⁴ Northumberland Citizenship Survey 2007
**Key Facts – Community Facilities:**

- All the main settlements within the National Park are considered sustainable as they have access to core facilities of: schooling; doctors; postal services; groceries/provisions; public transport; community facilities (hall, church, pub), and mobile and broadband coverage. Facilities are either available within the settlements, within a reasonable distance, or there is a home delivery service covering the area.

- All settlements within the National Park can access online grocery delivery, which until 2007/08 was unavailable throughout the northern area of the National Park.

- However, outside of the main settlements mobile phone and broadband coverage is variable.

- The reliance on private vehicles in the deep rural areas of the National Park is demonstrated by the percentage of households with two or more vehicles increasing to 57%, above the average for National Parks’ (47%) and England (32%). The re-opening of Kielder filling station in 2012 represents an important facility for residents and visitors alike.

- The 2010/11 National Park residents survey established that 80% of households could access the internet, with 70% using it regularly. 71% of users were able to access broadband (85% in the Parish of Tarset and Greystead), mainly through a landline. 29% of residential internet users have broadband access greater than 2mb, and 28% don’t know the speed of their broadband connection. 90%\(^5\) of Tarset and Greystead residents felt that broadband provision is essential.

- Most of the National Park’s residents are now included in broadband improvement schemes, but these initiatives are being delivered slower than anticipated.

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**Key Facts – Business Infrastructure:**

- Authority administered funds invested £32,000 in 13 business projects attracting £93,000 matched funding in 2014/15. The numbers of projects and match funding ratios have tended to be lower since 2011 compared to the pre-2010 levels.

- The Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group (LAG) continues to support rural development initiatives across the National Park and beyond. Initiatives have included developing a market for local woodfuel and delivering the regions first ‘firewood fair’ supporting 22 local businesses.

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\(^5\) 2010/11 North Tyne and Redesdale Rural Isolation Survey
Key Facts - Housing:

- The Census figures suggest an increase of 113 dwellings (housing units) over a ten year period between 2001 and 2011.
- The majority of the dwellings in the National Park are ‘detached’ (60%), significantly above the average for National Parks’ (45%) and England (22%). This reflects the dispersed nature of housing, and lack of settlements with mixed housing types within the National Park.
- The proportion of houses with no usual resident has increased from 18% to 20%. This is higher than the average for National Parks’ (19%) and England (4%). This suggests an increase in the number of houses used as second homes or let as holiday homes, but could also be the result of an increase in vacant properties.
- The proportion of houses ‘owned’ (outright or mortgage) has increased to 58% but is below the average for National Parks’ (70%) and England (63%).
- A large proportion of National Park residents live in ‘private rented’ housing (28%). This is well above the average for National Parks’ (16%) and England (17%) and demonstrates the presence of larger estates with tenanted housing in the National Park.

Key Facts – Development Planning:

- In 2014/15 the Authority determined 88 planning applications with 92% dealt with within statutory deadlines compared to the average for England of 78%. This included 2 ‘major’ applications.
- In the last four years approval rates for planning applications have been at 96% or above. In 2014/15 98% of applications were approved compared to the average for England of 88%.
- In 2014/15 the Authority made formal responses to 11neighbouring Authority consultations to help ensure development outside of the boundary does not adversely impact on the special qualities of the National Park. Assistance was provided for 51 pre-application enquiries.
- Applicants’ satisfaction with the planning service was 82% in 2011/12 but down to 64% in 2013/14 (note small sample size can skew this statistic).

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6 Table P132: District planning authorities - Planning decisions by development type, speed of decision and authority (England, year ending March 2015)
Key Facts – Changes in Resident Population Demographics:

- Northumberland is the most sparsely populated National Park at 0.02 persons per hectare. This is ten times less densely populated than the average for National Parks’ (0.2) and significantly less than the average for England (4.1 persons per hectare).

- The population of the National Park increased by 2.9% between 2001 and 2011 to 1,993 people. This is stronger growth than the average for National Parks’ (2.1%) but lower than the national average (7.9%).

- There are more male (51%) than female (49%) residents in the National Park. This is the reverse of the national and National Parks’ average split (men – 49%, women – 51%).

- The population is getting older over time with the number of people aged between 60 and 74 years increasing by a significant 59% between 2001 and 2011 (from 15% to 23% of the total population). The percentage of residents under 45 has dropped from 53% to 43% in 2011.

- The 2011 Census provides evidence of the trend towards an ageing population. The National Park Management Plan adopted in 2009 recognises and looks to address this trend, but there has not been enough time passed to show a change in the trend since adoption of the Plan.

- The proportion of people ‘living in a couple’ has increased between 2001 and 2011 to 73%. This is higher than the average for National Parks’ (66%) and England (58%) and levels of marriage are particularly high.

- 39% of National Park households are composed of couples with no children or non-dependent children, significantly higher than the average for National Parks’ (29%) and England (24%).

- The percentage of National Park residents born outside the UK has increased to 3.4%. This is lower than the average for National Parks’ (4.6%) and England (13.8%).

- Residents that are ‘White British’ have declined to 97%. This is still higher than the average for National Parks’ (96%) and England (80%).

- Residents that follow a religion have fallen from 80% to 67% (‘Christian’ from 80% to 67%) whilst those with ‘no religion’ have increased to 24%. This is a similar trend to other National Parks’ and nationally.
**Key Facts – Residents Health, Education and Professions:**

- **15% of National Park residents have a health issue that limits their day-to-day activities.** The population is relatively healthy compared to National Parks’ (19%) and England (18%).

- **83% of the National Park population describe themselves as in good health.** This is higher than the average for National Parks’ and England (both 81%).

- **10% of National Park residents provide unpaid care for someone with an illness or disability.** This is in-line with the national average (10%) but below the average for other National Park’s (12%).

- **The percentage of economically active residents with no qualifications has declined and those with a degree or equivalent professional qualification have increased.** At 16%, residents with no qualifications are lower than the average for National Parks’ (20%) and England (23%). National Park residents with higher level qualifications (35%) are equivalent to the average for National Parks’ (35%) and above the average for England (27%).

- **The percentage of economically active residents employed in professional occupations has increased significantly from 10% in 2001 to 17% in 2011, whilst elementary occupation have declined from 18% to 12%.** This represents an ‘up-skilling’ of residents. Skilled trades remain the main occupation at 26%, above the average for National Parks’ (19%) and England (11%) pointing to a continued relevance for skills and training initiatives linked to the opportunities in and around the National Park.
Key Facts – Environmental, Social, and Economic Value to the North East Region:

- Only 2% of the national population were aware of Northumberland National Park in 2011, down from 3% in 2007.
- In 2011, 87% of visitors to the National Park were aware of the landscape designation with 57% saying the designation had a direct impact on prompting a visit (compared to 48% in 2007).
- 31% of the National Park comprises of priority habitats that are recognised for their national and international environmental importance. About one third of these are nationally or internationally protected with designations.
- 31% of the North East regions Scheduled Monuments are located within the National Park.
- Over £4.6 million in agri-environment payments were attracted in 2014/15 to maintain traditional upland farming practices in the National Park.
- The National Park and its inter-dependent gateway settlements contributed £246 million to the regional/national economy in 2012.

Key Facts – National Attitudes towards National Parks:

- 90% of the population are aware of the expression ‘National Parks’ and of those over 90% agree they are areas of countryside of national importance, places that protect wildlife and landscapes, and are peaceful places.
- 89% of the population say that National Parks are important to them.
- 96% of the population think that every child should experience firsthand a National Park as part of their education.
- 96% of the population think it is important to protect the countryside from development and only 39% of people think enough is being done to protect National Parks (down from 44% in 2007).
- 49% of England’s population think that £1 per person per year is too little funding for England’s National Park Authorities, 48% think it is about right, and only 2% think it is too much.
- However, behind the headline figures from the survey there was a clear trend that National Parks are less relevant to young people than older age groups.
- The publics’ ability to name English National Parks (unprompted) has declined between 2007 and 2012, and the percentage of the national population that has ever visited a National Park declined over the same period.

Key Facts – Links to Protected Landscapes and Partner Policies to Protect the National Park:

- The National Park has joined together with the Yorkshire Dales National Park, North Pennines AONB, and the Nidderdale AONB to establish the ‘Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership’ to undertake a number of projects to improve habitat and species connectivity and eco-systems services on a landscape scale.
- The Management Plan Partnership is a group of statutory organisations and key stakeholders committed to the protection and enhancement of the National Park. The Partnership developed and endorsed the Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2009-2014 and meet twice annually to agree and monitor actions that contribute to the delivery of the Management Plan.
- Partners commit to around 50% of actions in the Management Plan Annual Action Plans and the partnership tends to deliver or partially deliver approximately 80% of actions each year.

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7 Information from UK Association of National Park Authorities ‘National Parks survey’ 2012
This land use map can be used to compare against the thematic maps throughout this document.