

Adoption of Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan

10th February 2026

Report of Chief Officer – Planning and Climate Change

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
(i) To approve the adoption of the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		N/A		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PORTFOLION HOLDER

- (1) To approve the adoption of the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan which, on adoption, will act as a material consideration in planning decisions, guide delivery and provide a strong foundation for support in bids for funding opportunities for projects within the National Landscape.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As set out in Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Council has a duty to jointly prepare and review Management Plans for the two National Landscapes (NL) in its area (Arnside and Silverdale NL and the Forest of Bowland NL). This work is delivered on the Council's behalf by the relevant National Landscape partnerships and staff teams. For Arnside & Silverdale NL the two other responsible local authorities are Westmorland & Furness Council and Lancashire County Council. For clarity, National Landscapes were previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.2 The Management Plan for the Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape has recently been reviewed and a draft to guide the management of this protected landscape for the period 2026 – 2031 was produced in Autumn 2025 (consultation ran from 1st September 2025 until 17th October 2025). The Council now needs to formally adopt the Management Plan to continue to meet its statutory duties.
- 1.3 The first statutory Management Plan for Arnside & Silverdale was published in 2004 and was reviewed and rewritten in 2009, 2014, 2019 and again in 2025 for this new Management Plan which will cover the period 2026-2031. It sets out how partners can all work together to conserve, enhance and connect people to the National Landscape, to ensure it remains a beautiful place where people and nature thrive together. The Management Plan takes account of all consultations carried out in 2024 and 2025.

- 1.4 Council officers have been involved in the review and preparation of the Management Plan through attendance of the Management Plan Review Sub-group meetings and through numerous on-going collaborative officer meetings and site visits with both the National Landscape team and Westmorland and Furness Council. Members have contributed through attendance of the Executive Committee and/or Sub-group meetings and have been made aware of the NL Management Plan consultation and its content at Local Plan Review Group (LPRG) on 24th September 2025. A report on the draft Management Plan was also presented to Council Business Committee on 16th October 2025.
- 1.5 This is the first Management Plan to be produced since legislative changes in 2023 as a result of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) which amended the duty on *(my emphasis)* **relevant authorities** in respect of their functions which affect land in National Parks, **National Landscapes**, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (collectively referred to as Protected Landscapes) in England. Relevant authorities must now **‘seek to further’ the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes**. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to **‘have regard to’** their statutory purposes.
- 1.5 As set out by DEFRA¹, *“the duty is intended to facilitate better outcomes for England’s Protected Landscapes, which are in line with their statutory purposes. The duty is intended to... [ensure] that the purposes for which Protected Landscapes are designated for are recognised in reaching decisions and undertaking activities that impact these areas”*.
- 1.5 As set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; confirmed by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

2.0 Content of the Arnside and Silverdale Management Plan

- 2.1 Management Plans are meant to be taken as a guide for all partners and stakeholders to refer to when planning their own work within the National Landscape. They set out a range of objectives, desired outcomes and requirements for land management and project delivery within the National Landscape to achieve these outcomes. Some of these required actions and behaviours would be led by the National Landscape partnership and team, whilst many of the actions and behaviours would be led by other partners and stakeholders, with support from the National Landscape team where required.
- 2.2 The Draft Management Plan is split into three themes for delivery. Each theme represents an aspect of delivering the primary purpose.
- **Place:** A landscape alive with nature and beauty,
 - **People:** A landscape for everyone, and
 - **Partnerships:** Working together for the landscape.
- 2.3 These three themes are then subsequently split into 10 Strategic Objectives. These are as follows:

Landscape & Seascape	Placemaking & Planning
Geodiversity	Biodiversity
Historic & Cultural Heritage	Farming, Forestry & Rural Land Use
Access, Employment & Wellbeing	Governance & Ways of Working
Sustainable Economy, Tourism, Transport	Finance & Fundraising

- 2.4 Each of these ten Strategic Objectives have their own section in the report, within which is a set of Outcomes, Drivers for change, Indicators of Success, Key Partners, and a list of Actions, as well as the relevant background legislation/ policy context.
- 2.5 To give an indication of the what the plan is looking to do under each of the 10 strategic objectives, a selection of these aims are set out at para 2.6 through to para 2.15.
- 2.6 In the case of the landscape and seascape strategic objective, the Management Plan is looking to implement 10 actions such as reducing the impact of light pollution and another being developing a climate adaptation plan for the landscape.
- 2.7 For the Geodiversity strategic objective the Management Plan is looking at supporting conservation of geological assets, supporting the geotrails network, and developing a Local Geodiversity Action Plan.
- 2.8 For the Biodiversity strategic objective, the Management Plan is looking to raise awareness of the importance of wildlife, enhance and restore grassland, woodland and wetland habitats, encourage conservation grazing, and progress projects in the shoreline management plan and Nature Recovery Plan. It's also looking to encourage swift bricks and bat and bird boxes and looks to promote using urban landscaping like roadside verges to improve connectivity for pollinators.
- 2.9 For the Historic and Cultural Heritage strategic objective, the Management Plan is aiming to reduce the number of nationally designated scheduled monuments at risk in the NL, raise awareness of designated heritage assets, restore the network of traditional field boundaries and also raise awareness of notable archaeological finds in the area.
- 2.10 For the Access, Enjoyment & Well-being strategic objective the Management Plan looks to deliver a supported programme of walks for people experiencing barriers to enjoying the countryside, producing high quality visitor guides, and encouraging visitor compliance of national guidance like the Countryside Code and Leave No Trace principles.
- 2.11 For the Sustainable Economy, Tourism & Transport strategic objective, the Management Plan looks to improve visitor understanding of the landscape and its special qualities and is also aiming to get a better understanding of visitor numbers, perceptions, behaviours and their economic and social contributions to the landscape.
- 2.12 For the Planning and Place Making strategic objective the aim of the Management Plan is for planning application decisions and for the preparation of Local Plans to "seek to further the purpose of the National Landscape designation". It looks to support local housing associations and Parish Councils with providing affordable housing for local needs, to ensure that design of development is of the highest quality, and also to restrict proposals for new static caravan, chalet, cabin or lodge-style development or short term holiday lets.
- 2.13 For the Farming, Forestry & Rural Land Use strategic objective, the Management Plan looks to provide bespoke advice and support to farmers, landowners and managers on land management practices as well as supporting opportunities for creating and supporting the next generation of land managers.
- 2.14 For the Governance & Ways of Working strategic objective, the Management Plan looks at actively engaging, and working with partnerships, groups, networks, academic institutions, local special interest groups and skilled individuals with links to the National Landscape and also supporting volunteering within the landscape for people of all ages and abilities.

- 2.15 And finally for the Funding & Finance strategic objective the Management Plan looks to explore opportunities to further develop income through individual gifting schemes, crowdfunding and targeted donations, and to facilitate and lead on funding bids that contribute towards the purpose of the designation.

Future Use of the Management Plan

- 2.16 As a statutory plan¹, once adopted, the Management Plan would be used as a material consideration in planning decisions, however it is important to note that it does not form part of the statutory Development Plan (The Lancaster District Local Plan). As a material consideration however, it does carry significant weight in decision making as Local Authorities are legally required to prepare and review the Management Plan under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).
- 2.17 The Management Plan will provide a framework for ensuring delivery of the statutory purpose of designation; it sets the framework for action by Local Authorities, Public bodies, Businesses, Communities and Partner Organisations and informs the National Landscape team work programme.
- 2.18 Following adoption, the Management Plan will also be used by the National Landscape Partnership team and its partners and stakeholders when applying for funding opportunities. Reference to the Management Plan in funding bids assists greatly in illustrating that a project is evidence led, locally supported and part of a wider co-ordinated strategy on which there has been substantial consultation and input. Funding bids might include those for heritage, nature, landscape or access projects to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Natural England, DEFRA schemes or charitable trusts, for example.

3.0 Proposal Details

- 3.1 There is one proposal to consider:

Proposal A: To adopt the Arnside and Silverdale Management Plan.

3.0 Proposal A – Management Plan adoption

- 3.1 National Landscape Management Plans are statutory plans whose purpose is to provide a framework for ensuring delivery of the statutory purpose of designation, that of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of their designated landscapes (As set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; confirmed by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty). The Management Plan guides the work of the National Landscape Partnership. It sets the framework for action by Local Authorities, Public bodies, Businesses, Communities and Partner Organisations and informs the National Landscape Team work programme and therefore requires formal adoption by the relevant authorities.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To adopt the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan	Option 2: not to adopt the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan
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¹ Under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Advantages	The City Council is one of the organisations responsible for the governance and operation of the National Landscape at Arnsdale and Silverdale and the formal process requires the approval of the relevant local authorities (which includes LCC) before the MP can be submitted to Government. The adoption would be in accordance with the required approach and makes it clear that Management Plans are a starting point for actively managing these protected landscape areas.	None known.
Disadvantages	None known.	Without formal adoption, the Council would not be fulfilling its duty under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which requires the relevant authorities to adopt the Management Plan. This would lead to less overall guidance and direction for those actively managing the National Landscape. The Council would not be able to fulfil their statutory duty under Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 to 'seek to further the purpose' of the designation.
Risks	None known.	Without an adopted Management Plan, it will be harder to protect the National Landscape from inappropriate development and would result in fragmented management of the landscape area.

7.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 7.1 The preferred option is Option 1, for Lancaster City Council to formally adopt the Arnsdale and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 This report sets out the preferred way forward for adopting the Arnsdale and Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan. Actioning the formal adoption will help

ensure that the National Landscape is effectively and cohesively managed and protected.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

As set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; confirmed by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty and Management Plans should guide the work of the National Landscape Partnership.

At a district level, the Local Plan sets out the Council's broad strategy for its two National Landscape areas within the *Strategic Policies and Land Allocations (climate emergency review) DPD* and the *Development Management (climate emergency review) DPD*, both adopted in January 2025 and the Management Plan is in general conformity with these documents.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Human Resources, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The report and its recommendation to adopt the final Management Plan has positive implications for sustainability and rural issues, given that prominence is given to these issues in plans. There are no equality issues arising from this report. The National Landscape Management Plan includes actions that seek to address equality issues, increasing access opportunities for disabled people and those with additional needs. The support of activities for outdoor recreation and education/community participation all of which promote good health. Managing the rural economy through change and conservation is an effective way of ensuring that rural communities can become sustainable and that traditional skills can be retained for the benefit of those who live there, and those who visit for tourism and recreation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, the relevant local authorities (Lancaster City Council, Westmorland & Furness Council and Lancashire County Council) must adopt the Management Plan.

Its adoption will form part of the Council's planning evidence base to inform effective decision making in National Landscapes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and regularly review Management Plans for the two National Landscapes within its area: Arnsdale and Silverdale, and the Forest of Bowland.

The plan has been prepared by the National Landscape team, and consultation has already been undertaken. There are no financial implications arising from the adoption of the plan.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Arnsdale & Silverdale National Landscape Management Plan (Current Final Draft) 2026 – 2031.

Contact Officer: Diane Neville

Telephone: 01524 582335

E-mail: dneville@lancaster.gov.uk