

01 - CONSULTANT BRIEF

White Peak Landscape Recovery – Green Finance Consultant

1. Background

The Peak District Dales Special Area of Conservation (SAC) comprises thirteen component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) spanning the White Peak plateau (Ballidon Dale SSSI, Coombs Dale SSSI, Cressbrook Dale SSSI, Dove Valley and Biggin Dale SSSI, Hamps and Manifold Valleys SSSI, Lathkill Dale SSSI, Long Dale and Gratton Dale SSSI, Long Dale, Hartington SSSI, Monk's Dale SSSI, The Wye Valley SSSI, Topley Pike and Deep Dale SSSI, Via Gellia Woodlands SSSI, Matlock Woods SSSI).

These limestone dales are the heart of the White Peak and are among the best wildlife sites in the world. They are critical to nature recovery in the UK and sit within the Peak District National Park, renowned for its natural beauty created by the complexity of landforms and limestone geology. White Peak farmers produce high quality milk, beef and lamb from this upland landscape. The habitats and species of the dales need to be as healthy and well-managed as possible to be both resilient to increasing pressures such as climate change and fragmentation, and a reservoir of species to drive nature recovery.

This contract is funded through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Peak District National Park Authority and Natural England's Protected Site Strategies (PSS) development project. Protected Site Strategies are a new power under the Environment Act 2021 and the Peak District Dales SAC Pilot is one of 5 pilots across the country. The Pilots aim to research ways to collaboratively address complex issues affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), providing socio-economic value in addition to ecological improvement.

The White Peak landscape is highly fragmented and constrained. 85% of the White Peak is classed as Severely Disadvantaged, with the plateau land rising to over 400 metres above sea level. As in much of the UK, the plateau grassland is increasingly intensively managed to grow productive ryegrass for grazing and silage, although small areas of arable crops are now also reappearing in the landscape, often alongside herbal leys. There is a wide diversity of farm holding size: 143 are larger than 100 hectares and cover 47% of the White Peak, with an estimated 900 being less than 100 hectares. A significant portion of the larger landholdings in particular include land within and/or adjacent to SSSIs.

This project aims to deliver dales thriving with wildlife, spilling out onto the plateau, linking our best wildlife habitats and contributing to net zero and reduced water pollution. Achieving this aim requires collaboration with and support for those that manage the land.

We have identified a vision for nature recovery in the White Peak from previous successful initiatives and research projects, and through initial collaboration with a core group of

farmers representing over 50 farmers who signed up to the principle of a Landscape Recovery project in Sept. 2023. Based on this, we will aim to restore nature with the interventions below. Through these interventions, we aim to sequester carbon, improve biodiversity, improve water quality, and restore natural processes across the landscape alongside conserving cultural heritage assets, and enhancing access opportunities for local people.

1. Habitat creation on the improved grasslands of the Dale-tops
 - The creation of structurally rich grasslands with scrub and trees – ‘wood pasture’
 - More conventional low input agroforestry
 - Trees and shrubs along field boundaries, in field corners and in some locations scattered across the fields.
2. The creation of linking habitats
 - To include enhanced silage margins, woody corridors and field boundary trees
3. Enhancement of existing habitats
 - Grassland enhancement
 - Improved condition of wood pasture
4. The widespread adoption of nature-friendly, regenerative farming methods across the White peak plateau
5. Grassland enhancement and restoration
 - Widespread scrub control and management in the limestone dales
6. Improved woodland management practices
 - Mitigation for ash die-back (tree planting) in the limestone dales

2. The Green Finance Consultant

We are now working with Natural England's (NE) Protected Site Strategies (PSS) Team to conduct a pilot study for landscape recovery in the White Peak. The project is led by the Peak District National Park (PDNPA), supported by several core farmers, with National Parks Partnerships advising on Green Finance.

The next phase of the project will include extensive farmer engagement, and a bottom-up approach to attracting private finance and green enterprises, the latter being done through the introduction of regenerative and mixed farm systems. This will enable us to first establish which investments from green finance make sense for individual farm businesses, and then seek private finance to fund land use changes.

As part of this, we require a Green Finance Consultant to undertake a feasibility study on private finance for nature restoration that is supported by Green Enterprises. We require the Consultant to help us understand the following:

- 1. Is there a route to attracting private finance for nature recovery in the White Peak?**
 - What revenue streams can be generated from the sale of ecosystem services and/or outcome payments from our interventions both over short and longer terms?
 - Which markets, codes & standards would be applicable?
 - What are the potential tax implications for land owners?
 - What might the payment rates be for the proposed interventions if adopted at different scales?
 - Who might the beneficiaries and buyers of the ecosystem services and/or outcomes be?
- 2. How would a group of farmers have to constitute or organise themselves to be able to secure green finance?**
 - What organisational and governance structures would be required?
 - What aggregation models might be suitable for the landscape?
 - What form would contracts with buyers of ecosystem services take,
- 3. The role of Green Finance for Protected Site Strategies in National Parks**
 - How should a PSS look in a National Park, in light of the evidence collected during this project?
 - What role might Green Finance and Green Commerce play in supporting PSS?
 - How does the Protected Sites Strategies model support or hinder access to green finance (the process model for testing will be supplied by Natural England)?

The consultant also needs to consider the emerging recommendations from the Defra ELM test on the role of NPAs in ELMs and green finance.

The consultant will work closely with the PDNPA, NE, and local farmers to answer these questions and produce recommendations that will help guide the next stages of the project. We are looking to work with consultants who have strong local knowledge (or the willingness to gain it), understand the complexities and constraints of land management in upland, protected landscapes, have an innovative approach to private finance for nature restoration.

The contract budget is maximum £40,000 plus VAT. The contract is subject to (1) internal approvals (2) conclusion of the grant agreement with NE.

3. Work packages

Table 1: Green Finance Consultant Work Packages

Work Package	Detail
1. Ecosystem service quantification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of ecosystem services, generated from our planned facilitated land use changes, that can create revenue streams, across entire landholdings - Identify and quantify the additional ecosystem services that would be delivered through the adoption of regenerative and nature friendly farming practices. - The analysis will be based on findings from the White Peak ELMs Test, the White Peak Trials, subsequent Catchment Sensitive Farming initiatives, and a more recent Nature Recovery Pilot Project. These initiatives have identified a suite of suitable interventions at the landscape-scale, although further work may result in additional options. - The analysis also needs to take account of the ELM test which assessed the role of NPAs in addition to FiPL evaluations - This will require spatial analysis of existing habitats to confirm broad suitability for our interventions, using publicly available data and more detailed habitat data (to be made available by the PDNPA).
2. Financial assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial modelling to demonstrate the potential for generating economic returns for farm businesses from the sale of ecosystem services. - The analysis needs to demonstrate what the economic value is for the adoption of nature-friendly farming practices and farming where the core focus is nature recovery. We need to understand which (tradeable) ecosystem services we can generate through introducing a mixed-farming and/or regenerative system in landholdings across the project area in addition to farming where the core focus is nature recovery, albeit being mindful of the other special qualities of the National Park. - The Consultant will analyse adoption of the interventions and use this to develop minimum-maximum payment rates on a per hectare basis; with more realistic figures to be developed in Work Package 3 below.
3. Market appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of regulatory, compliance and voluntary markets for ecosystem services and an appraisal of their suitability for the landscape and our investments. - Identify the risks and opportunities of using established codes and methodologies, for example: the Woodland Carbon Code, Nutrient Neutrality, and Biodiversity Net Gain. - An analysis of developing markets, such as any existing for Soil Carbon, Agroforestry, and Natural Flood Management. - An analysis of the opportunities through corporate social responsibility (CSR) which could include delivery of cultural heritage and access opportunities

4. Develop payment structures and rates

- Developing a value proposition for farmers, based on the shared objectives of the landscape recovery project and farmers
- Where appropriate, liaise directly with farmers to understand their motivations for and concerns about engaging with nature markets and natural capital.
- A guide of the number and type of site visits is given below:
 - a. Approximately 2 meetings with the core farmer group to determine the organisational structure/aggregation model that will be required
 - b. Meetings (between 5 – 10) with individual farmers to assess the costs and benefits of hosting the interventions
 - c. 1 meeting with the wider farmer group (potentially up to 50) to update on project progress and core recommendations
- Assessing the costs and benefits of hosting the interventions, the potential for incorporating interventions into farm businesses with minimal impact on revenue and the capacity of farmers for committing resource to the project.
- This will require a local presence in the PDNPA, and the ability to have these conversations “round the farm table”.

5. Assess buyer pipeline

- Identification of potential beneficiaries who may be willing to ‘buy’ or pay for the ecosystem service(s) to be created, restored or maintained.
- Stakeholder and buyer interviews to understand whether it is viable to create a local “market” for the ecosystem services we have to sell in the White Peak.

Outputs and Timescales

Table 1: Green Finance Consultant Outputs and Timescales

Work package	Output	Format	Timescales
1. 2 & 3	1. Financial assessment of ecosystem services and market appraisal	Slide deck Calculations	<p><i>Description:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A slide deck upon completion of work packages 1 & 2, along with any data and IP collected during the process. - Calculations of ecosystem service generation and potential income generation via established codes and standards - Appraisal of current markets for our interventions <p><i>Timescales:</i></p> <p>September 2024 – February 2025</p>
4 & 5	2. Farm business suitability assessment and indicative buyer pipeline	Slide deck Results of site visits/interviews	<p><i>Description:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A slide deck upon completion of work packages 3 & 4, along with any data and IP collected during the process. - Data collected from any site visits, interviews, workshops, or meetings with farmers, stakeholders or buyers - Full results of meetings will all buyers engaged as a part of the research <p><i>Timescales:</i></p> <p>September 2024 – February 2025</p>
All	3. Synthesis report	Report	<p><i>Description:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A full report including what the consultant has done (their methods), what they found out (key findings) and key recommendations for the lead organisations and stakeholder groups. <p><i>Timescales:</i></p> <p>December 2024 – February 2025 (Draft report December; Final report February)</p>

4. Costs

- Provide a summary of qualifications/ experience, and day rate, of each person who would be delivering the contract.
- Provide an itemised breakdown of costings against the elements of the brief above, including day rates for each person, travel and subsistence costs.
- For queries or questions, email Rebekah Newman at rebekahnewman@peakdistrict.gov.uk and Suzanne Fletcher at suzanne.fletcher@peakdistrict.gov.uk