

## 11. A Living, Working Landscape

11.1 This section sets out the policy approach to enable the creation and maintenance of a living, working landscape within the National Park.

### Landscape Quality and Character

11.2 The Park's landscape character is of wild, extensive, open moorland, forests, and the contrasting more intricate pattern of enclosed farmland. The importance of giving protection and enhancement to this wild and natural landscape form was fundamental to its designation as a National Park. There is recognition that the landscape will not always remain the same, significant issues such as climate change and changes in funding support for agriculture are likely to have an impact on landscape quality and character.

11.3 At the regional level, landscape character has been broadly defined by the former Countryside Agency<sup>xxxiv</sup>. In addition, English Heritage's Historic Landscape Characterisation Programme<sup>xxxv</sup> establishes an overarching view of the whole of the historic landscape. Although both pieces of work, undertaken by the former Countryside Agency and English Heritage, provide useful information, in order to deliver National Park purposes a robust description of landscape character and condition is needed.

11.4 Natural England are currently developing their policies for landscape. They highlight that the continued conservation and enhancement of National Parks and AONBs is a priority and consider there are opportunities to explore the potential for improving the way protected landscapes contribute to a healthy natural environment. Natural England also believes that landscape is a key aspect of the natural environment and a vital resource, and that an understanding of landscape character, aesthetics, systems, dynamics, and cultural heritage is essential in resource management and planning. With regard to spatial planning, Natural England considers a landscape perspective to be essential.

11.5 The National Park Authority is currently developing a Landscape Strategy which will set clear objectives for landscape management based on an informed understanding of the various important qualities that contribute to it. The Landscape Strategy will build on the work of the Countryside Agency and English Heritage and be informed by the results of other key areas of work such as: the Geodiversity and Biodiversity

Action Plans, Landscape Character Assessment, Cultural Mapping, Tranquillity Mapping, and visitor surveys. The Landscape Supplementary Planning Document will enable an informed assessment to be made of the potential impact of proposed development on landscape character.

11.6 The Sustainability Appraisal undertaken at the Issues and Options stage assessed alternative policy approaches. The preferred policy approach was assessed to be the most sustainable in terms of its impact on the protection of the special qualities and the protection and enhancement of the quality and diversity of the landscape.

### Policy 20 Landscape Quality and Character

The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape character and sensitivity as defined in the Landscape Supplementary Planning Document. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted.



Photo: Repairing a dry stone wall near Elsdon