

South Pennine Authorities Statement of Common Ground

PURPOSE

1. This Statement of Common Ground establishes a framework for co-operation between South Pennine local authorities with respect to strategic planning and developments relating to renewable energy, landscape and wider environmental, recreational, climate change and nature recovery. It is framed within the context of Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 and the duty to cooperate in relation to the planning of sustainable development, especially as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It is also framed within the context of a proposed 'alignment policy' ¹ to secure appropriate engagement between authorities where strategic planning considerations cut across boundaries. It sets out the way in which the authorities have, and will continue to, consult one another and work together on matters which affect the South Pennine area.
2. In line with the NPPF Planning Authorities will seek to take a positive approach to renewable energy development both in development planning and management. The landscape and environmental assets of the South Pennines are fundamental to its identity and Councils will work together with partners to protect and enhance these features. This will include taking opportunities to maximise strategic cross-border benefits as well as ensuring that any potential negative impacts are minimised or avoided.

PARTIES TO THE MEMORANDUM

3. The Memorandum is agreed by the following Local Authorities:

Barnsley MBC

Bradford MDC

Burnley BC

Bury MBC

Calderdale MBC

High Peak BC

Hyndburn BC

Kirklees MBC

Lancashire CC

North Yorkshire Council

¹ Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act

Oldham Council

Pendle BC

Rochdale MBC

Rossendale BC

OBJECTIVES

4. The Statement of Common Ground has the following broad objectives:
 - To enable a sharing of information and views and, where appropriate, to facilitate joint working on strategic issues which affect more than one local authority area.
 - To facilitate joint research and procurement between neighbouring authorities.
 - To facilitate strategic co-operation and partnership on issues of shared interest with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Local Nature Partnerships and other key consultees including planning, delivering, managing and mitigating development and its impacts.

TOPIC ISSUES

5. The principal topics where co-operation is valuable are:
 - Effective and timely consultation on planning applications, EIA (or Environmental Outcomes Reports) Screening Opinions and Environmental Scoping Reports of cross-border significance in the South Pennines and related areas.
 - Development of mutually consistent databases on planning applications to enable “cumulative impact” issues to be addressed particularly on wind energy but also other technologies.
 - Joint procurement of evidence base documents and professional expertise where this would bring economies of scale and be mutually beneficial.
 - Procurement and implementation of proposals identified in Local Plan Sustainability Appraisals (or Environmental Outcomes Reports) and Habitat Assessments such as Visitor Management Plans.
 - Co-operation on planning issues relating to the implementation of low carbon and renewable networks such as District Heating schemes; energy from waste or biomass particularly where these are identified in studies such as the Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and Humber, Lancashire and East Midlands Renewable and Low Energy Studies and have clear cross-border affects.
 - Joint working as appropriate on policy development and implementation relating to low carbon development.
 - Consultation (may be informal) on Local Plan policies and SPDs (or Supplementary Plans) beyond immediate neighbours where proposals are innovative or of wider interest.
 - Support as appropriate at Planning Inquiries.
 - Information sharing on current “good practice” at local and sub-regional level.

MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION

6. Regular meetings will be held (quarterly) with special meetings if necessary, such as when triggered by an application of major cross-border significance or other specific issues of common interest.
7. Renewable energy databases will be regularly updated and circulated in particular to inform Local Authority Monitoring Reports.
8. Consultations on renewable energy planning applications, Screening Opinions and Environmental Scoping opinions (or any equivalents in Environmental Outcomes Reports) with neighbouring planning authorities will occur in the following circumstances:
 - a. Affected neighbouring authorities where the Zone of Visual Influence shows an impact on land outside the host authority area
 - b. Where there are significant impacts on Recreational Trails of sub-regional or greater significance
9. Consultations on non-renewable energy applications and Environmental Scoping Opinions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
10. Liaison on development of Planning Policy documents and SPD's (or successors such as Supplementary Plans).
11. Sharing of Development Management policies and validation requirements.

LIMITATIONS

12. The Local Authorities recognise that there will not always be full agreement with respect to all of the issues on which they have agreed to cooperate. For the avoidance of doubt, this Statement of Common Ground shall not fetter the discretion of any of the local authorities in the determination of any planning application, participation in evidence base studies or in the exercise of any of its statutory powers and duties.




Signed: 

Organisation: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Position: Head of Planning

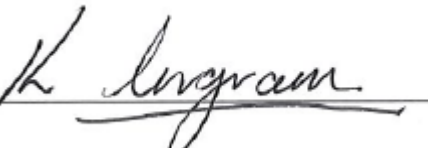
Date: 25th February 2025

Signed: 

Organisation: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Position: Assistant Director, Planning, Transportation and Highways

Date: 28th January 2025

Signed: 

Organisation: Burnley Borough Council

Position: Director of Economy and Development

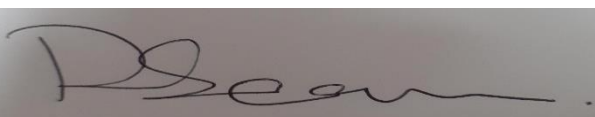
Date: 23rd April 2024 (re-approved by email 28th January 2025)

Signed: 

Organisation: Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

Position: Assistant Director of Strategy, Planning and Development

Date: 9th May 2024 (re-approved by email 28th January 2025)

Signed: 

Organisation: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Position: Corporate Lead for Planning


Date: 20th December 2024

Signed: 

Organisation: High Peak Borough Council

Position: Executive Director

Date: 31st January 2025

Signed: 

Organisation: Hyndburn Borough Council

Position: Head of Planning and Transportation

Date: 27th February 2025

Signed: 

Organisation: Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council

Position: Head of Planning & Development

Date: 3rd May 2024 (re-approved by email 23rd December 2024)

Signed: 

Organisation: Lancashire County Council

Position: Head of Service Planning and Transport

Date: 11th February 2025

Signed: 

Organisation: North Yorkshire Council

Position: Head of Planning Policy & Place

Date: 4th March 2025

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Organisation: Oldham Council

Position: Cabinet Member for Decent Homes

Date: 5th February 2025

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Organisation: Pendle Borough Council

Position: Assistant Director: Planning, Building Control & Regulatory Services

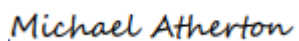
Date: 28th January 2025

Signed: Awaiting signature

Organisation: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Position:

Date:

Signed: 

Organisation: Rossendale Borough Council

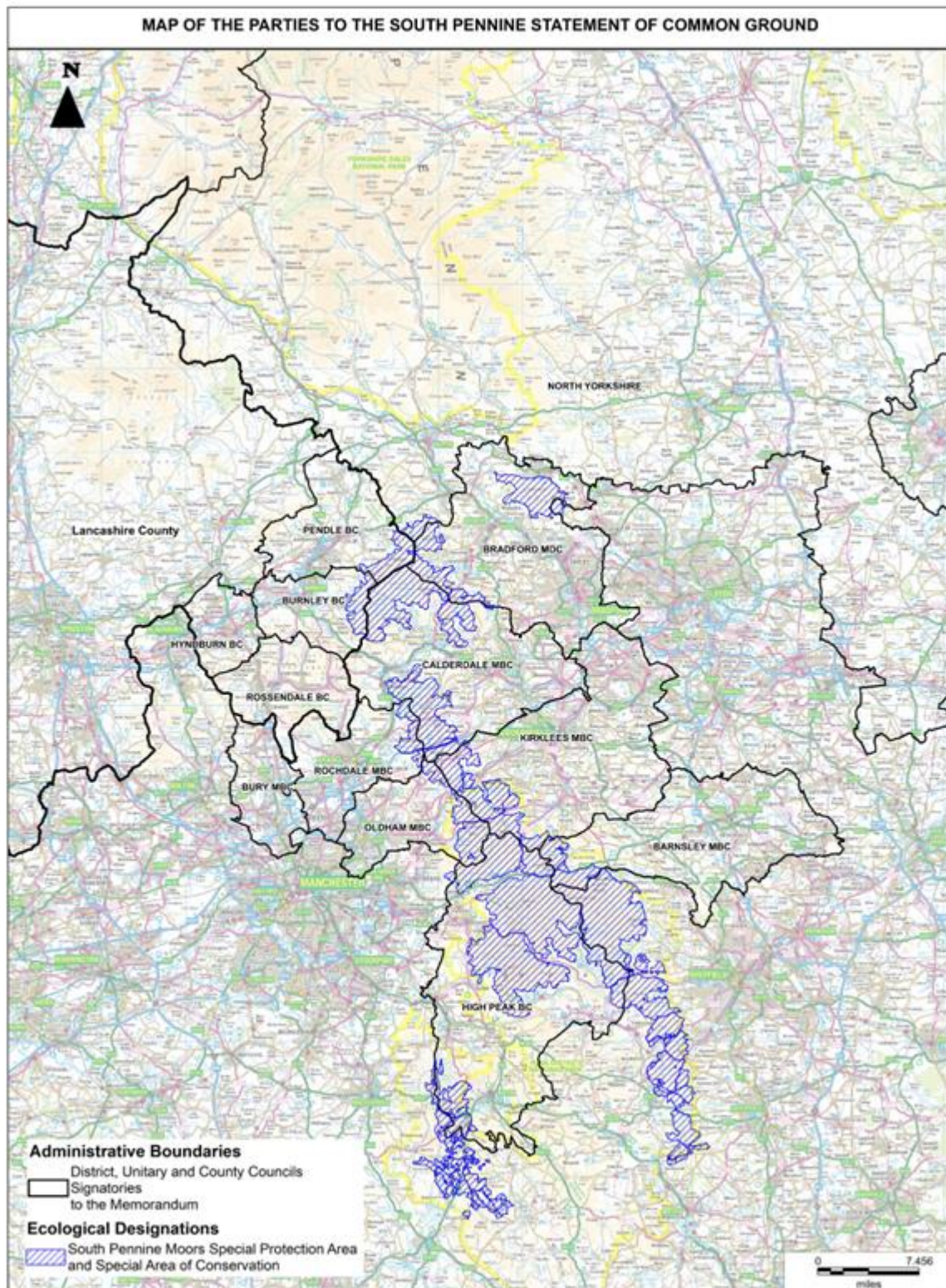
Position: Head of Planning and Building Control

Date: 28th February 2025

Annex One – Background Context

BACKGROUND

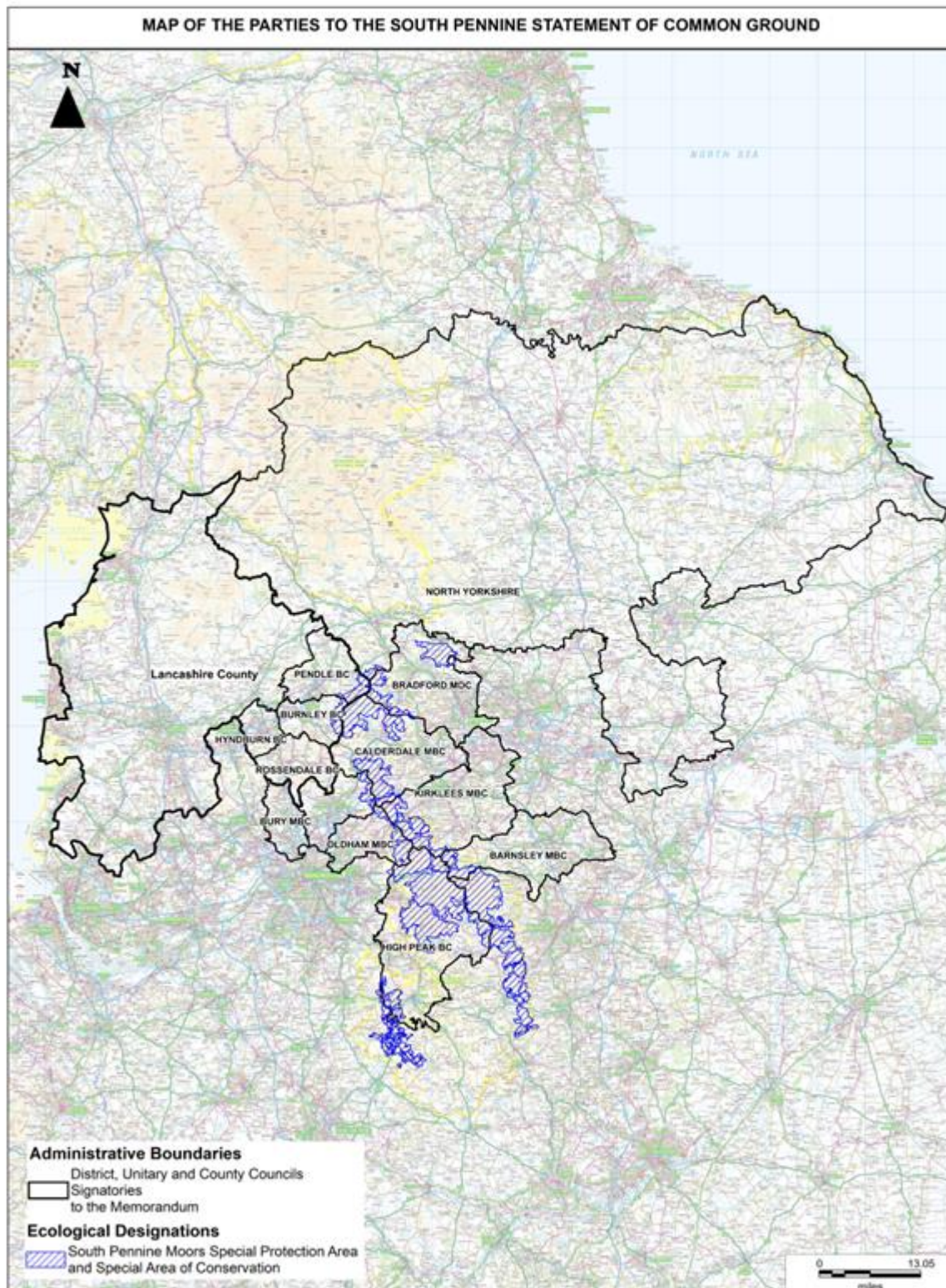
1. The South Pennine landscape straddles the borders of Greater Manchester, Derbyshire, Lancashire and North, West and South Yorkshire. Upland areas are particularly attractive for renewable energy developments, ranging from wind farms to solar panels. While parts of the area such as the Peak District National Park, Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Pennine Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation are subject to national landscape or conservation designations substantial areas are not. Issues of cumulative impacts from proposals are a major cross-border issue. There is a history of cross-border consultation dating back to the early 1990's through the Standing Conference of South Pennine Authorities (SCOSPA).
2. In the recent past, wind energy development has been the major driver for cross border co-operation. However, with changing government policy to onshore wind generation this has become of less significance. There are however recognised to be broader benefits of co-operation on issues affecting the areas upland and valley landscape, which is a highly valued recreational and environmental asset.



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Map drawn: 22/01/2024



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