

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 2 December 2022

Present: P Harper, G Hill, J McInnes, S Morgan, D Moyse, M Renders,
L Samuel, P Sanders, P Smerdon, D Thomas, W Dracup, R Glanville,
N Oakley, C Pannell

Officers: K Bishop, Chief Executive (National Park Officer)
A Stirland (Business Support Officer), A Gandy (Senior Policy Officer),
J Sharpe (Strategic Planning & Projects Manager)

Apologies: A Cooper, P Vogel, J Nutley, G Gribble

3459 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3460 Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Friday 11 November 2022

The Minutes of the Authority meeting, held on Friday 11 November 2022, were agreed as a correct record.

3461 Chair's Report

The Chair reported the following:

- Attended two National Parks Partnership Meetings (a national charity) – one was an informal meeting about the bid to DEFRA and the other was the AGM. Both interesting and worthwhile.
- Numerous discussions regarding National Park funding – both in general and for DNPA.
- Attended the Rural Crime Initiative Meeting which brought to light some excellent ideas and created good rapport all round.
- GWR celebration of the one year anniversary of the Dartmoor Line and the formal opening of Okehampton facilities

The Deputy Chair reported the following:

- BMW Deal with UK National Parks has begun to reap benefits with first tranche of money (£64K) being paid out towards implementing charging points in car parks. Recharge for nature will be getting another £60K shortly.
- AMEX has committed to paying £100K per annum for 3 years to National Parks Partnership.
- A Pro Forma has been sent to the US National Parks in order to apply for "sister" Park status.
- Another Member reported having attended the Campaign for National Parks Meeting and will distribute her notes on this meeting to Members shortly.

3462 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

3463 Public Participation

There was no public participation in the Meeting.

3464 Procurement Procedures

The Head of Business Support reported on the need for a change to the Procurement Procedures. These procedures are part of the Authority's core governance documents and they were last revised and approved by Members in October 2019.

General procurement training is due to be provided for new and existing staff in January 2023. Before we embark on this training course, it was deemed a suitable time to look at our current procedures and review whether these remain appropriate.

As a result of this review and with consideration to current legislation, the Authority is proposing to increase certain procurement thresholds, which require formal Authority Members' approval (amendments are highlighted in Appendix 1).

Current Public Procurement Regulation 2021 requires a threshold of £20,833 excluding VAT. The proposal is to increase the Authority's formal tender process of goods and services to those over £20,000 from the current amount of £10,000. This approach is also in line with other National Parks.

A Member commented that this is a change which is in line with general inflation and just run-of-the-mill housekeeping.

A Member requested that there be a weighting applied for local companies and it was agreed that although a formal tender process must be carried out, locality was a factor that was considered within the process.

Mr Sanders proposed to note and approve the recommendations regarding the revised Procurement Procedures, which was seconded by Mr McInnes. All in favour.

3465 Devon Carbon Plan Report by the Senior Policy Officer

Devon Climate Emergency ("DCE") is a collaborative partnership of public, private and third sector organisations, which DNPA joined in 2019, when we declared a climate and ecological emergency. We have since been working with the partnership, and all their combined powers and responsibilities, to produce the Devon Carbon Plan ("DCP").

The DCP is a landmark document, the first of its kind in Devon, providing vital direction for responding to the climate emergency. The plan plots the route to meeting two targets for Devon:

- being carbon neutral by 2050,
- reducing Devon's emissions by 50% below 2010 levels by 2030

After evidence gathering in winter 2019-2020, the draft DCP consultation was produced in 2020/2021. The consultation raised three particularly contentious issues which were considered further by a Citizen's Assembly. These issues were:

- i) How Devon could encourage people to retrofit buildings more quickly
- ii) How Devon could encourage people to use their cars less
- iii) Whether Devon should have more onshore wind and, if so, under what conditions?

Results were fed back into the plan.

The final Devon Carbon Plan was launched in September 2022 and has eight simple objectives :

- Fossil fuels are phased out
- Energy consumption is minimised
- Communities are engaged and acting for a net-zero Devon
- Carbon is captured from the burning of fossil fuels
- Fugitive emissions are minimised
- Communities are resilient with access to green finance
- A circular use of resources in our economy
- Carbon storage is maximised in marine and terrestrial environments

From the Plan, some key action areas have been highlighted which will present particular challenges to Dartmoor in the future:

- a. Delivering a planning system which effectively protects our landscapes, supports active transport and reduces the need to travel, by allowing development in sustainable locations that contributes to walkable communities:
- b. Increasing the flexibility of energy generation and consumption, to allow for greater ability to store renewable energy and how to deliver and support this in deeply rural areas
- c. Retrofitting Existing Buildings with energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating technologies with the scale and speed needed to meet net zero objectives.
- d. Reducing the need to travel and ascertaining how much car use is realistic for a Dartmoor resident without risk of rural isolation.

- e. Improving carbon storage from farming by enhancing soil carbon through regenerative practices, agroforestry and pasture-based livestock farming.
- f. Maximising carbon storage in the environment by protecting and enhancing existing habitats and ecosystems, and creating new ones. And forecasting whether existing and created habitats will sequester sufficient carbon to support a net-zero Dartmoor?

We have summarised actions in the Action List that are of relevance to DNPA and at what stage we are with these. DNPA plan to commence a review of our organisational Climate Action Plan in the New Year.

In response to the Chair's observation that we have a large number of listed buildings on Dartmoor, where it is not always easy to carry out energy saving strategies and asking what dialogue there is with Historic England going forward, it was advised that Historic England have clear guidance on retrofitting. However, it is unclear whether this strategy will deliver sufficient emission savings to meet overall objectives for emission reductions across Dartmoor and nationally.

It was explained that "fugitive" emissions refers to leaks and other irregular releases of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

It was agreed that little or no progress has been made regarding the tourist levy either in Dartmoor or Devon as a whole. There has been no serious discussion about this in DNPA and we have no information about any Devon level discussions. A levy could raise money, but could equally reduce tourist numbers.

In answer to the Chair's question regarding a timescale and methodology for review of strategic plan documents, it was advised that this would start with review of the organisational Climate Action Plan next year. The Local Plan has already incorporated many actions from the DCP and it would not be appropriate to review it again now, the statutory period within which to review the Plan to consider whether it requires update is 5 years after adoption. The DCP actions will invariably have more implications for the Partnership Plan, but we should ensure implementation is done at the right time when there is reasonable confidence in the evidence supporting future action and policy changes.

Following a question from a Member, we are concerned that Central Government appear to be backing off from a lot of things we would wish to do as a National Park in Devon. It was agreed that pressure needed to be maintained on the government to achieve our environmental objectives.

A bullet point summary of the Devon Carbon Plan can be found on <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan/>

Following a Member's question it was confirmed that we are actively providing more opportunities for agricultural workers' dwellings. Our local plan offers more opportunities through barn conversions and farm worker annexes connected to farms and has stronger safeguards to prevent existing stock being lost.

Regarding a question about a potential Devon Farm Service, it was advised that a wish for a central and trusted Devon advice service has been expressed. This action poses no risk to the Hill Farm Project and is likely to be more about duplicating the successes of this project for other areas.

It was proposed by Ms Pannell that the Authority endorses the Devon Carbon Plan and in doing so, commits to reviewing the effectiveness of the Authority's strategic plans to deliver the Devon Carbon Plan. This was seconded by Mr Thomas. All Members in favour.

3466 Report of the Strategic Planning and Projects Manager Changing Lives, Nurturing Nature, A Project Supported By The Green Recovery Challenge Fund Programme Update

Changing Lives, Nurturing Nature Project - one of a small suite of projects, which have been made possible by a grant from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF). We moved quickly to bid for this money and we were able to bid for this due to existing clear strategic aims and strong partners already in place.

Permission to start was given in September 2021 and the grant funding term ends on 31st March 2023. The purposes have largely been met within budget which was £400K plus match-funding of £22K.

DNPA is the lead partner for this one-year programme of work, delivering alongside the National Trust, South West Lakes Trust and Woodland Trust which completes in March 2023. Risk of failure at this stage was still very low. It concentrated on:

- Nature conservation and restoration, including ecosystem restoration and species recovery
- Nature-based solutions, particularly for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Connecting people with nature.

Community Engagement Rangers

This one-year programme of outreach and engagement, was particularly aimed at young people. The project was named “The Moor Community” with the objective being to engage with 5,000 people.

Natalie Gibb, one of the three Community Engagement Rangers, was welcomed to the Meeting to explain the methods they used to reach their goals.

Roadshows: getting involved with larger public events allowed us to access a captive audience and also to penetrate some urban areas and introduce Dartmoor to them.

Haytor Car Park Welcome Party: a stall was set up twice a week creating a friendly welcome to Haytor. This was replicated in other key hot spot areas on Dartmoor not already covered by Engagement Rangers (volunteers). The Community Engagement Rangers talked about the water cycle on Dartmoor in order to engage the public.

School Engagement: high on the agenda with “Breathing Space Day” taking pupils from South Dartmoor College, who are finding mainstream education challenging, out of the classroom for the day. The team has also been working both on Dartmoor and in the classroom with various other primary and secondary schools.

Junior Youth Rangers: We have 88 Rangers on the programme (12-19 year olds) who work for us twice a month and have amassed some 2180 hours of volunteer workover the last 9 months.

Worked with Devon Young Carers and Dementia Friendly Dartmoor (along with Enliven in Exeter) to look at on-site facilities as well as providing different sorts of activities.

Princetown Community consultation will be held next week alongside Active Devon to investigate what the community require. This will be carried on after the project closes in March by Active Devon.

NUTS – “Night Under The Stars” Young people from deprived backgrounds in partnership with farms on Dartmoor spend the night out on Dartmoor camping. Chief Executive (National Park Officer) advised that he has taken part and found it a very worthwhile exercise.

Overall, the project has been a great success and it is hoped that we may be able to continue these initiatives in the future by obtaining further funding.

Conservation and Access Trainees

A one-year training opportunity for four young people to start their careers in the land management and conservation sector. Learning the practical side of

conservation work following on from their academic studies of the subject to degree level.

Projects included working with South West Lakes Trust at Burrator reservoir to liaise with Ecologists and set moth traps. This helped enhance the identification skills of the team. They also liaised with the Woodland Trust in Fingle Woods and learnt about the Dormouse; data obtained was collected and sent off.

The team attended the Devon County Show and Plymouth University Student Fair and entered into a partnership with Exmoor to study Pine Martens.

They undertook access work with the Rangers at Lydford Gorge with National Trust to enhance the paths where soil erosion has caused issues and make them safer for visitors.

The team learnt how to carry out granite splitting to create signs and way-markers with traditional methods.

Training courses completed:

Tree-felling, Tractor driving, Dormouse Ecology Work, Brush-cutting, 4x4 licences

Members agreed that both of these projects covered important work and one Member commented on how enthusiastic his own children were about the projects carried out at their school (Combe Dean).

The trainees confirmed they have learnt skills, training qualifications and gained contacts that will be useful in their future careers.

Numbers of engagement were shown and run through with Members. Total target of engagement with 5,000 people was reached.

Members were very enthusiastic about these projects and keen to see these initiatives continued beyond the current grant funded period. When asked if this might be possible the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) and the Strategic Planning and Projects Manager advised that we are hopeful that we may have three potential funders. Members were grateful for the excellent management of the programme as well as the enthusiasm of the staff, The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) is motivated to try and sustain the programme and hopes to get further funding from the Lottery and potential arrangements with local charities.

Members noted the content of this report and thanked and congratulated the staff with a round of applause.