

Dartmoor National Park Authority

Audit & Governance Committee

Public Minutes of Meeting held on 7 February 2025

Present:

Will Dracup, Corinne Farrell (Independent Person), Peter Harper, Gay Hill, James McInnes, Sally Morgan (Chair), Mark Renders, Philip Sanders, Mary Seddon, Pamela Woods

Apologies:

John Nutley, Peter Smerdon

Officers in attendance:

Kevin Bishop (Chief Executive (National Park Officer)), Dean Kinsella (Director of Spatial Planning), Angela Stirland (Head of Business Support), Neil White (Head of Organisational Development), Cath Burnett (Business Support – Minutes)

628 Declarations of Interest

Mr Dracup declared an interest in Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), Hill Farm Project (HFP) and Dartmoor's Dynamic Landscape (DDL), having received funding and/or potentially benefiting from future funding.

Mr Harper also declared an interest in FiPL, having received funding.

629 Minutes

The Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 1 November 2024, was subsumed by an Authority meeting held on the same day. The Audit and Governance Committee reports were incorporated into the Authority meeting of 1 November 2024. The minutes from this combined meeting were approved and signed at the Authority meeting held on 6 December 2024.

630 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

631 Public Participation

None.

632 Financial Management 1 April to 31 December 2024 and Forecast Financial Outturn 2024/25

Considered: The report of the Head of Business Support NPA/AG/25/001.

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report.

633 Business Plan Monitoring 2024/25 (April 2024 to December 2024)

Considered: The report of the Head of Organisational Development NPA/AG/25/002.

In response to Member questions:

- The implementation of the new financial system (from Devon County Council) has been delayed. There is live testing happening now, in preparation for go live April 2025.
- The Chief Executive (NPO Officer) reported that the review of the governance model for the Hill Farm Project Steering Group will be progressed and offered to up-date Mr Harper outside of this meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report and commented on key actions identified in the 2024/25 Business Plan.

634 Performance Indicators 2024/25

Considered: The report of the Head of Organisational Development NPA/AG/25/003.

In response to Member comments:

- Members agreed the need to address Member attendance at Authority meetings, this being lower than the target agreed by Members of the Authority. Members also noted the importance of sending apologies if they were unable to attend a meeting (this is important to ensure that meetings are quorate and to help with refreshments etc.).
- The Director of Spatial Planning advised that Performance Indicator 14 be amended to the 'number of affordable housing units approved' (PI 14) rather than the 'number of affordable houses being built' as this is the data that we have control over.
- In response to a question from a Member regarding an article in the Western Morning News which stated that the Authority received £10m from Defra, the Chief Executive (NPO Officer) stated that our core grant from Defra for 2024/25 was £3.8m plus a one-off sum of £500,000.
- The Chief Executive (NPO Officer) said that the performance indicators in this report relate to our services and service delivery. To measure the 'impact on nature' we need to look at alternative sources such as 'State of the Park' reports.

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report and analysed the performance for 2024/25 to-date.

There being no other business the Audit and Governance Committee meeting closed at 15:48.