

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 3 March 2017

Present: S Barker, W Cann, J Christophers, G Gribble, P W Hitchins,
M Jeffery, D Lloyd, J McInnes, I Mortimer, D Moyse, N Oakley,
M Retallick, P Sanders, D Webber, P Woods

Apologies: K Ball, A Cooper, S Hill, C Pannell

3226 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 3 February 2017

The Minutes of the meeting on 3 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

3227 Declarations of Interest

None

3228 Chairman's Report

None

3229 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None

3230 Public Participation

None

3231 2017/18 Draft Business Plan

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/17/007).

The Business Plan is a strategic document, its purpose is not to define all that the Authority does, nor every action to be undertaken, but rather to clarify the Authority's vision, outlining the way it will work to achieve Nat Park purposes; identify core values; set out strategic priorities and key actions to achieve those priorities, and detail the funding available to deliver. It also provides a link between our Management Plan, individual work programmes and staff appraisals. A separate annual review is produced to report on performance & highlight key projects undertaken in each financial year.

Signed 

Date 7/4/17

In October 2016, the Authority discussed, and agreed, six priorities for 2017/18 & beyond. The Business Plan identifies key actions to help deliver those six priorities. The Business Plan is supported by a performance management framework, and this comprises three elements - dashboards for key services/teams; performance indicators (PIs) and the Business Plan monitor.

Members were asked to review the draft Business Plan for 2017/18 and delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman, to agree the final version.

A Member asked if someone would be able to attend the next meeting of the Park Management Working Panel (PMWP) to explain the 'landmark' archaeology/cultural heritage project. Due to the timescale of the project, and the fact that the agenda for the forthcoming PMWP meeting is full, it will not be possible. However it will be brought to PMWP in the future.

The same Member aired his disappointment that the advertisement for the new Secretary of State Member does not include the need of knowledge or interest in cultural heritage. The Chief Executive (NPO) explained that the content and wording of the advertisement was drafted by Defra.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive (NPO) to agree the final version of the draft Business Plan.

3232 2017/18 Net Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Budget

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/17/008).

The Authority is required to set a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. In January, 2016 National Park Authorities were given notification of a four year National Park Grant settlement. Our financial planning process for the yearly revenue budget and Medium Term Financial Plan is guided by; our business plan priorities, the National Park Management Plan and the Government's 8 Point Plan for England's National Parks.

We have received a letter from the Director of Planning at DCLG, setting out one of the Government's proposals to start "*fixing our broken housing market*" by allowing local authorities to increase the nationally set planning fees by 20% as from 1 July 2017. This is on the proviso that any additional fee-income is invested back into our planning department. Our agreement to this proviso needs to be verified to Government by 13 March 2017.

The Authority has positioned itself well in respect of setting a balanced budget for 2017/18 & beyond and can move forward over the next three years knowing that it has a robust MTFP, a sufficient level of reserves, strong financial management, less uncertainty and a three year direction of travel in its new Business Plan.

Signed 

Date 7 / 4 / 17

A Member endorsed the rise in planning fees and felt there was ample scope for this.

Mr Cann left the meeting

A Member asked if the increase in planning fees would have a beneficial impact on trying to get more affordable housing?

In response, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) explained that the revenue generated would not enable the Authority to grant-aid or subsidise affordable housing but it could be used to support delivery through the planning system (ie through additional staff capacity).

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Approved the net Revenue Budget for the 2017/18 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Plan for the years 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- (ii) Approved the employer Pension contribution rate as set out in paragraph 3.6; and
- (iii) Authorised the Authority's Section 151 Officer to accept the Government's offer to increase the planning fees by 20% to invest in our planning service.

3233 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2017/8

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/17/008).

In March 2016, in accordance with the revised Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services, the Authority, adopted a Treasury Management Policy Statement, together with a statement of its Treasury Management Practices (TMPS). No changes are proposed to these policies for 2017/18.

The Authority's arrangements for treasury management continue to be maintained at a high standard. The Head of Business Support continues to consult with Devon County Council's Investment Manager to investigate opportunities to maximise the Authority's investment income and will bring a report to the Authority for approval if changes to our practices are proposed.

RESOLVED: Members approved and adopted the 2017/18 Treasury Management & Investment Strategy.

3234 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/17/010).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

Signed



Date 7/4/17.....