

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 1 April 2022

Present: W Dracup, G Gribble, G Hill, S Morgan, J Nutley,
N Oakley, M Renders, L Samuel, P Sanders, P Smerdon,
P Vogel, P Woods, A Cooper and D Thomas

Officers: R Drysdale, Director of Conservation and Communities (acting Chief Executive)
N White, Head of Organisational Development
C Hart, Head of Development Management
J Sharpe, Strategic Planning & Projects Manager
C Giles, Head of Conservation and Land Management

Apologies: D Moyse, C Pannell, P Harper and J McInnes

The Chair welcomed Mrs Shewan, Independent Person, to the meeting.

3408 Declarations of Interest

The Director of Conservation and Communities advised that whilst this is no particular issue, Mrs Oakley and Mr Dracup were involved in the Dartmoor Tests and Trials project, however there are no financial implications, and this does not mean they cannot take part in the debate.

3409 Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Friday 4 March 2022

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 4 March 2022 were proposed by Mr Sanders, seconded by Mr Nutley and agreed as a true record.

3410 Chair's Report

The Chair reported the following:

- She advised she made an error and had said in last month's meeting that the podcast she took part in would be circulated to all Members, when in fact this has only been sent to one Member, who requested it. Chair has advised if any other Members would like this to let her know so that this can be sent on to them.
- Thanks to Mr Harper, Mrs Oakley, Mr Drysdale and his colleagues for an excellent Park Management Working Panel meeting, held at Mr Harper's farm. A very good discussion which proves the worth of the working panels and working groups. These were informal and well-informed discussions, with good ideas. Also, a reminder that although at the AGM people are formally appointed to the working groups and panels, any Member can come along. She has asked that invitations and information for these panels is circulated to all Members in future.
- Attended a Teams meeting with Defra officials looking at potential models for governance of protected landscapes (National parks and AONBs). She advised this was a useful meeting, it does appear Defra officials are looking closely at the consultation responses received so far and while the consultation phase is not yet closed, there are themes coming through. At this stage it would look as though there may be more room for local flexibility than previously thought. She cannot say anymore as this is an issue that is still under discussion and no decisions has been reached.

It was a useful discussion to have had, other Authority's and AONB's put their views forward. With three Defra officials in attendance, one of which was very senior, she hopes this will be brought forward in a constructive way.

- Due to attend a further Defra meeting on the afternoon of 1 April, along with the Director of Conservation and Communities. This meeting is with National Parks England to do with issues arising out of the consultations. These issues are well known to Members on which we have written to the ministers and others, it is an informal meeting and will be interesting to see what comes out of this meeting, there will of course be feedback in due course.

At the invitation of the Chair:

- Mr Vogel, on behalf of the Members thanked the Chair, the Chief Executive and the Director of Conservation and Communities for being absolutely consistent with the Authority's message, at meetings with Defra, Members of Parliament and AONBs.
- Mr Sanders raised concerns at the number of Parish Councils not aware of the government's response to Glover and in turn not aware of the significant proposals and possible issues from the response. He has stressed the significance of this and the importance of the parishes submitting their responses by the 09 April 2022
- Mr Smerdon raised concerns regarding the number of fires on the moor and the media coverage of this over the last few weeks and asked if the Authority should be adopting higher profile warnings about the risk of fires on the moor? Chair advised she understands there is some thinking to be done on this, however this is not an issue for discussion or decision at this meeting. She deferred to the Director of Conservation and Communities who confirmed the practice of controlled burning (swaling) nationally is allowed until 15 April, there is a voluntary code on Dartmoor for controlled burning until 31 March, so there should not be any further controlled burning from this point forward. He has written to Lee Howell at the Fire Service to thank him for the coordination with Dartmoor Rangers and advised there have been regular updates from the administration team, through Leadership Team and rangers as to where these fires are taking place. He confirmed they will be having a wash-up meeting regarding swaling shortly.

3411 Items requiring urgent attention

None.

3412 Public Participation

None.

3413 Scheme of Delegation

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/22/018).

He advised Members that the Authority's Scheme of Delegation is important as it provides the framework for decision making and accountability for meetings of the full Authority. It also contains details of the powers and responsibilities delegated to committees and officers. We have undertaken a review, in consultation with relevant

officers to ensure the Scheme of Delegation meets current needs and reflects changes that have been previously agreed, these are set out at paragraph 2.1. There is a specific addition relating to the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

The proposed new Scheme of Delegation is provided at Appendix 1. Changes to the current version are highlighted for ease of reference.

As set out in the conclusion, the proposed amendments are considered necessary and appropriate to ensure effective governance, reflect developing organisational practice and keep in place a clear mandate for officers to exercise delegated functions and responsibility on behalf of the authority. It is therefore recommended that Members approve the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in Appendix 1, to take effect from the conclusion of the meeting.

In response to a Member query in relation to section 4.1 of the report, the Head of Organisational Development advised that from the work carried out to make the changes to the Scheme of Delegation, there has been no direct financial implications.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mr Gribble.

RESOLVED: Members approved the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation, as set out at the Appendix 1, to take effect from the conclusion of the meeting.

3414 Local Validation Checklist Review

Members received the report of the Senior Planning Administration Officer, presented by the Head of Development Management (NPA/22/019).

The Head of Development Management acknowledged the work carried out by the Senior Planning Administration Officer, to produce this report. He advised Members there is a requirement for the Local Validation Checklist to be brought up to date. Validation is the process of checking that all relevant documentation has been provided for a planning application. He added there are two forms to that list the National requirement and the local list, whereby all local Authorities can add their requirements on top. This provides consistency for all planning applications to be assessed in exactly the same way, against the same criteria to avoid delays. A public consultation has been carried out with all Statutory Consultees and Parish Councils asking for comments. He advised the appendices shows the comments following the consultation and Appendix 2 showing the checklist and Appendix 3, the trigger table is in line with the policies of the local plan, are what Members are being asked to agree.

In response to a Member query the Head of Development Management confirmed once approved the new checklist will be made available to the public on the website and also confirmed replacement IT systems are hoping to be implemented in the Autumn.

Members thanked the Senior Planning Administration Officer and the team for their work in producing the Local Validation Checklist report. Mr Vogel proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mr Sanders and carried unanimously.

- RESOLVED:** Members:
- (i) Noted the information contained in Appendix 1 of the report;
 - (ii) Approved the updated Validation Checklist at Appendix 2; and
 - (iii) Approved the Wildlife, Geology or Invasive Species Trigger Table at Appendix 3.

3415 Stage 1 Bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a Partnership Programme led by DNPA

Members received the report of the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager. He confirmed the report sets out the way forward and explained having previously worked with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in the past with Moor than meets the eye, with this being recorded as a success, the Authority were encouraged by the NLHF to put a further bid together. An expression of interest was made by the Authority late last summer. Since then, a proposal has been worked on attempting to deliver core aims from within the National Park Partnership Plan. The partners in the Partnership Plan and the Authority do not have the resources needed to deliver all of those aims. The NLHF's aims align very strongly with those of the Authority's and partners. He added the table in Appendix A sets out the aims from the Partnership Plan, which this programme seeks to address and how this aligns with the NLHF, which shows a clear match.

He explained that there is a 2-stage process for these larger grants, Stage 1 which is for approval by the Authority today, would supply the financial resource required to put the programme, for a 5-year scheme together for May this year. He did highlight there are a few constraints as well as aiming to build a partnership plan, the Authority is looking to utilise capital from the Headwaters programme for match funding leverage and as this programme has an existing timescale, this does leave a shorter window of delivery for this.

In response to a Member query the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager advised this is very much a partnership approach, with the Authority as the lead partner. A number of organisations are already committed, but the partnership is developing and growing all the time. Significantly, the bid looks to community partners in developing a model of gateway towns to the moor. These are currently identified as Ivybridge, Okehampton and Postbridge.

In response to a Member query relating to 3.3 of the report, the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager advised he is happy to look at this again and has considered working with Ashburton, who are not on the index of deprivation. Ashburton are not being ruled out, as they have some useful lessons to share, e.g., the Ashburton Chamber of Trade. He explained the point of this is for communities to work together.

In response to Members queries relating to 3.5 and the map, the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager explained that the rationale behind the school choices is that there is a layer of primary schools selected via the main catchment areas, there no firm criteria. One of the main mechanisms for engaging with all schools (not just primary schools) would be working with Sustrans as a partner, who have a National Bike-it programme, 'Bike it Wild'. This is not only for travel to school, but also to access green spaces and nature which would then link with later stages of the project

with visits to Dartmoor. He did also advise there is an aim to engage and work with partners in the Torbay and Plymouth areas.

In response to a Member query relating to criticism the Authority received on the Moor than meets the eye project, from those outside the identified areas, the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager explained this is an area-based approach and not a landscape Partnership like the Moor than meets the eye project. The Authority wants to make sure there is an impact, hence the identified areas. This is a pilot approach, with three gateway towns, with the intention being to learn from these and share.

In response to a Member query relating to staffing needs if this proposal is successful, the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager explained this would be 3 days a week of a project managers time, and the Authority would recruit for an additional full-time post for the development phase. There is a significant amount of resource proposed for engaging consultants and the experience gained through the Moor than meets the eye project has been invaluable.

The Director of Conservation and Communities (acting Chief Executive) thanked the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager and his team, for their time and effort on this programme.

Mr Vogel proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr Cooper.

RESOLVED: Members

- (i) Approved submission of a Stage 1 funding application, as described in the paper, to the National Heritage Fund during the 2022/23 financial year.
- (ii) Approved a contribution from the Authority's financial reserves of up to £22,500 to be used as match funding, during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, in the event of this stage 1 application being successful and
- (iii) Confirmed their support in principle for the wider proposed programme of work that would form a full stage 2 application for funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in late 2023/early 2024, if we and partners are successful with stage 1.

3416 Dartmoor Tests and Trials

Members received the report of the Head of Conservation and Land Management (NPA/22/021). He advised Members that Defra are currently developing the Environmental and Land Management Scheme (ELMS), this is made up of 3 different schemes which sets out to help deliver the ambitions set out in the 25-year environment plan and will pay farmers and landowners for production of public goods and help deliver net zero ambitions for 2050. He explained that to do this Defra have invited farmers and landowners to help develop the scheme and in 2019 they invited applications for tests and trials.

These are set out as projects which people can apply for, these are not pilots, they are there to design concepts and to talk through various issues, but with no guarantee these recommendations would be taken up.

In 2019 the Authority successfully applied to be a pilot for Tests and Trials , fully funded for 18 months and which concluded in November 2021. This was undertaken with the Dartmoor Commoners' Council and the Duchy of Cornwall. He went on to say there were four objectives which the Authority set out, the development of land management plan blueprint which could be used on commons and home farms, payment by results (rewarding farmers for what they produce and achieve), private finance, and how this could be incorporated into ELMS at a local level, particularly on commons. Defra have made it clear that private finance will be required to deliver these aims and the pilot programme also explored the role of National Parks in shaping and delivering ELMS.

He explained that the original idea to deliver this was to reach out as widely as possible to the farming community across Dartmoor, unfortunately this was at the beginning of the pandemic and the first lockdown, so this had to be re-thought. A project board was then started, made up of a number of partners, including the Commoners Council, The Duchy of Cornwall and Natural England. Farmers were then invited to sit on an advisory group, made up of 15-18 farm businesses who met regularly in the early months of the scheme. In addition to this there were a number of surveys and meetings, with some farmers testing the outputs of some of these schemes.

He went on to say, in terms of outcomes, farmers were very keen on a scorecard and the Authority also commissioned the University of Exeter, through the SWEEP programme to produce a map, which was based on satellite imaging . The outputs of the map are approximately 70% accurate. A scorecard was trialled across a number of farms and commons, a lot of work went into developing the framework of the scorecard, in addition to that, payment by results were integral to the scorecard and this was picked up by Defra. The importance of advice and facilitation came through very clearly. The Postbridge cluster group came together with the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project and a number of potential investors to look at how the blended finance model would work. It was very clear that this is a very complicated system, which is very much in its infancy and there is more work to be done around this. In terms of the Authority's role, farmers were clear that many hadn't been involved in the management plan and were keen to have more involvement in what the future management plan looked like. Farmers were very keen on the Hill Farm Project being involved in future but were split on some of the bodies and how that advice could be provided moving forward. He advised Members that some of the key recommendations which are outlined in the report were 1) Home Farm and Commons agreements are to remain separate, 2) there was a desperate need for the administrative framework around commons agreements work and 3) there needed to be a Nationally set framework and a desire to look at payment by results.

He advised that in terms of next steps Defra have approached the Authority and asked if we would be interested in extending or carrying out another Tests and Trials project. , An expression of interest is being put together for this, with the clear indication that as an authority we would like to do more.

Members asked for their thanks to be noted for the work that the Head of Conservation and Land Management, his team and Harriett Bell put into this project, Harriett's enthusiasm in particular and getting to every corner of the moor and with multiple farms and getting them engaged. Members also requested a letter of thanks be sent to Harriett Bell.

In response to a Member query relating to 6.1 of the report the Head of Conservation and Land Management agreed commons and home farms are inextricably linked and we would want that holistic view.

In response to a Member query relating to the SWEEP map, the Head of Conservation and Land Management advised he would send a link round to Members so that they can access this or alternatively Members can google SWEEP to access this, as it is accessible to the public.

A Member noted although this is a small number of farmers / landowners, the report portrays a very positive picture, and it shows the Authority, and the farming community working together and help each other.

RESOLVED: Members noted the findings of the Dartmoor Tests and Trials project.

3417 Tree Preservation Orders, Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) and Hedgerow Removal Notices Determined Under Delegated Powers

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/22/022).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.