

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 8 January 2015

Present: K Ball, S Barker, J Christophers, G Gribble, P Harper, S Hill, P Hitchins, J Hockridge, M Jeffery, J Kidner, D Lloyd, J McInnes, I Mortimer, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, D Webber.

Apologies: None

3137 Minutes of the Authority Meetings

Save for some typographical errors, the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2015 were agreed as a correct record. Members agreed for them to be reprinted and for the Chairman to sign.

3138 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3139 Chairman's Report

The Chairman advised Members that there had been no further news from DEFRA relating to National Park Grant for 2016/17 and beyond.

3140 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None.

3141 Public Participation

None.

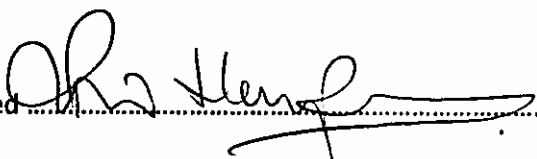
3142 Fees and Charges

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/16/001). Members were informed that a formal review of the Authority's fees and charges is undertaken every year as part of the budget setting process, although this does not preclude the Authority introducing new ones or making revisions in-year. This excludes Planning application fees which are set by Government.

Whilst the fees and charges are not a major source of income, (a total of around £80k in aggregation), they do help the Authority set a balanced budget and go some way to meeting the cost of delivering some services.

Members' attention was drawn to Paragraph 2.2 of the report which lists the changes made in February last year, and to the table at Appendix 1 showing the current income achieved at month 9, the forecast outturn for 2015/16 against budget and the 2014/15 outturn as a comparator.

Signed



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The Head of Business Support informed Members that the proposed schedule of fees and charges for 2016/17 is set out in appendix 2 of the report. A change to the wording was highlighted in respect of room hire charges – the words “minimum charge” should be added.

It was highlighted to Members that the detail to support the proposed charges is provided in Section 3 of the report.

The Head of Business Support stated that many of the charges do tend to remain unchanged for a few years at a time, as individually they are so small that by increasing annually, by just inflation, would be inefficient. However, all are individually considered for revision each year.

Members were reminded that pre-planning application advice charges were introduced in April 2014 and it was agreed that these would be reviewed once a full year's worth of data was available.

Members were informed that the Authority is undertaking a specific piece of work in respect of car parks highlighted in the summary set out in paragraph 3.8. A further report will be brought to Members as soon as this is complete (likely to be Summer 2016).

The agreed fees and charges will be incorporated into the 2016/17 Revenue Budget which will be presented to Members as soon as National Park Grant is confirmed.

A Member raised concern as to the overestimation of reserve from pre-planning application advice and whether it could be concluded that charging for this advice has caused a drop in planning applications. The Head of Business Support agreed about the need to review charges for pre-planning application advice after a full year to determine impact on workload as well as income.

A Member questioned whether the increase in membership fees for Ranger Ralph last year had any impact on membership numbers, given that a further increase was proposed and was informed that there is no evidence this has caused a drop in membership.

The fees in relation to feature films were questioned by a Member. The Head of Communications, Economy and Fundraising informed Members that a review had been done benchmarking against other National Parks. From this review it is felt the Authority needs to be more robust with these fees as quite a lot of officer time is spent facilitating filming.

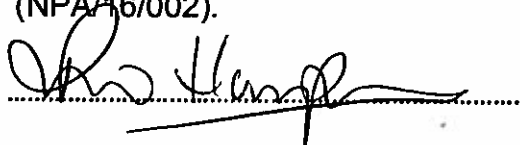
RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Approved the recommendations made in section 3 of the report and
- (ii) Approved the 2016/17 schedule of fees and charges contained in Appendix 2

3143 Renewal of Management Agreements

Members received the report of the Director of Conservation and Communities (NPA/16/002).

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On behalf of the Director of Conservation and Communities, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) reported that management agreements have been a key tool to achieve National Park purposes since the 1980's. Since the introduction of national agri-environment schemes the Authority has sought such funding for its management agreements when they come up for renewal.

Three existing management agreements will be expiring over the next 12 months, as set out in the report. The sites were all small and it was considered unlikely that they would qualify for the national Countryside Stewardship scheme.

Members were informed that a correction needed to be made to paragraph 5.1 of the report, so that it states 'The annual cost if the agreements are renewed would be approximately £2156.' This means that the amounts quoted in paragraph 6.3 of the report should read £2156 and £10780 respectively.

Following discussion it was agreed that officers would approach Natural England again to discuss the possibility of Countryside Stewardship agreements for the sites.

RESOLVED: Subject to the discussions with Natural England regarding the potential for Countryside Stewardship agreements, Members:

- (i) Noted the significant achievements of the three management agreements for Rhôs pastures on Dartmoor as outlined in the report; and
- (ii) Approved renewal of these management agreements for a further five years.

3144 Land at Gallant Le Bower

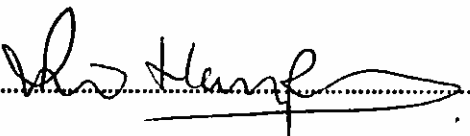
Members received the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (NPA/16/003).

On behalf of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) informed Members that the land in question was transferred from Devon County Council when the Authority became an independent organisation in 1997.

It was highlighted to Members that the land in question is shaded green on the attached map to the report. Members were informed that although this land appears on the Authority's asset register, the recurring maintenance liability associated with the track, coupled with the lack of any realistic income potential, means that the land parcel is essentially a liability.

It has been agreed that £1,750 will be contributed by residents to the costs of the works to repair the surface of the track. Mr M has also agreed to pay £500 towards the Authority's conveyancing and legal costs.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report, highlighting that the Authority will be entitled to an average payment of 60% of the development value for each additional residential unit if planning consent is obtained in the future.

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RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Noted the terms of the proposed disposal of certain land at Gallant le Bower (part only)
- (ii) Approved the disposal, subject only to statutory advertisement
- (iii) Authorised the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) to finalise the terms of the disposal and complete the conveyance.

3145 Statement of Community Involvement

Members received the report of the Assistant Forward Planner (NPA/16/004).

The Assistant Forward Planner presented the report and informed Members that the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) makes up part of the Local Plan. It is a high level procedural document and is an updated and streamlined version of the Authority's previous SCI which is outdated (2008).

The SCI sets out how we will engage with communities, businesses, organisations and individuals in respect of planning. It is important to have an updated SCI in place as we begin to look at the Local Plan.

The SCI aims to give everyone the opportunity to participate and contribute, to use different methods to meet the needs of different groups, and to target engagement to ensure that the right groups are involved.

Consultation was carried out for a six week period and 8 responses were received. A "You said, We did" document has been produced responding to each comment and will be made available online.

The SCI is to be reviewed every 5 years, unless changes to regulations require an earlier review. The SCI reflects new planning regulations, a new local development scheme and current best practice. It has been designed to be flexible. An equality and sustainability impact assessment was completed and did not identify any necessary amendments.

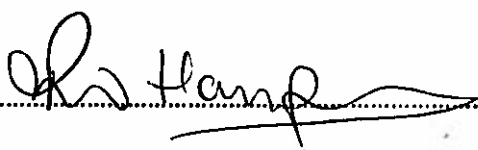
The SCI is likely to have positive financial implications by getting early buy in and reduce objections and potential delays at the formal Local Plan consultation and examination stages.

Members congratulated the Assistant Forward Planner on an excellent document that is well written and easy to read.

Members expressed their disappointment that only 8 responses were received and that it is important that circulation of the document includes young people. This has been considered by the officers, and consultation will include social media and email. There are approximately 400 consultees already on the Authority's database.

RESOLVED: Members adopted the Statement of Community Involvement with immediate effect.

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3146 Supporting Economic Growth Productivity in Dartmoor National Park and Heart of the South West Devolution Deal

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/16/005).

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) informed Members that the paper dealt with two separate but related issues. The first issue pertains to how the Authority is supporting economic growth and productivity in the National Park. The second issue concerns the proposed 'Devolution Deal' for the Heart of the South West. Whilst separate, work on the former influenced thinking on the second and has helped shape the content of the proposed 'Devolution Deal'.

A Member commented how positive it is that Dartmoor National Park is shown as a living and working place with economic growth.

In response to a question from a Member about potential transport improvements it was explained that this was more relevant to Exmoor than Dartmoor (it was a joint prospectus covering both National Parks) and that the Dartmoor ask was focused on brown signs to Dartmoor National Park from the A38 and A30.

Members observed that there appeared to be little mention in the report about Environmental Futures opportunities, and they queried whether more information could be included. It was confirmed that the focus had been on renewables. There is a potential to use the Met Office as a hub.

A Member asked whether more detailed case studies, to include farmers, could be added to the longer report that accompanied the prospectus.

Members agreed on the importance of a robust environment theme in the proposed deal for the Heart of the South West.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Noted and offered comments on the work the Authority is doing, in partnership with Exmoor National Park Authority, to support economic growth and productivity within the two National Parks
- (ii) Provided delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairman, to endorse the final devolution submission to Government and to enter into negotiations with Government towards a deal
- (iii) Noted that the National Park Authority's support for any future deal would be subject to formal approval by the Authority.

3147 Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons

Members received the report of the Director of Conservation and Communities and the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/16/006).

On behalf of the Director of Conservation and Communities, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) informed Members that Dartmoor was one of five case study areas involved in "Better Outcomes for Upland Commons". The overarching purpose of the initiative, inspired by HRH The Prince of Wales was to improve long

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term working relationships between organisations to strengthen our ability to manage the uplands to deliver multiple outcomes concurrently.

The Dartmoor case study focuses on the Forest of Dartmoor using the experience gained from the collaborative working on the Hill Farm Project, Moorland Vision, Dartmoor Farming Futures and the Mires Project.

The project partners are developing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to extend the initiative through a project called 'Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons', seeking to build on the findings of the Better Outcomes study.

There are two stages to the bid for funding. A stage one application (to be submitted in February 2016) will, if successful, provide funding for a development phase of up to two years to research, test ideas and pilot new approaches. The development phase would culminate in a second application for a delivery phase.

The total spend for the full project could be up to £2.5 million pounds (this is for the project and not for the Dartmoor element).

In response to a question from a member, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) explained that the Authority was able to afford the match funding due, in part, to the success of other funding bids which meant that there was less call on reserves than had been forecast at the start of the financial year.

RESOLVED: Members:

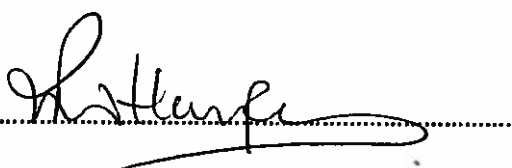
- (i) Noted the intention for Dartmoor to be one of five 'action research areas' in the proposed Our Common Cause bid for Heritage Lottery funding: and
- (ii) Agreed to provide £8,000 match funding for the Development Phase.

3148 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/16/007).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report

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