

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 26 May 2017

Present: K Ball, S Barker, W Cann, J Christophers, A Cooper, S Hill, P W Hitchins, M Jeffery, D Lloyd, J McInnes, I Mortimer, D Moyse, N Oakley, C Pannell, M Retallick, P Sanders, P Woods

Apologies: G Gribble, D Webber

3247 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 7 April 2017

The Minutes of the meeting on 7 April 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

3248 Declarations of Interest

Mrs Pannell declared a personal interest in Item 11 – Ashburton Masterplan, and advised that she would not take part in the discussion or vote.

3249 Chairman's Report

Mr Retallick informed Members that he attended the Secretary of State interview day. 18 applications were received for the positions.

The Ten Tors event was a successful weekend attended by Mr Hitchins, Mr Retallick and the Chief Executive (NPO). The Military are committed to continue and promote the youth event.

Mr Retallick reported that concerns were raised over large recreational and commercial activities on the moor at the Dartmoor Commoners' Council meeting. It was noted that the Authority will be issuing a consultation paper about the management of such events shortly.

The Chairman stated that the Moor Otters event at Bovey Castle Hotel was very successful with media coverage from BBC and ITV as well as local newspapers. It was a great networking event with the sponsors and local businesses. The Chairman gave thanks to Dave Southern, the DNPA team that have been involved in the project and Bovey Castle Hotel. He informed Members that 30 Golden Otters will be auctioned at the end of the project.

The Edward Morshead awards were held at Princetown Visitor Centre. Mrs Morshead presented the awards. South West Lakes Trust won for their Environmental Work, Karla McKechnie won for her work as Livestock Protection Officer, The Buckfastleigh Naturally Healthy Project won for the community work and the DNPA Junior Rangers won the Dartmoor Preservation Association award.

3250 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

The Senior Forward Planner informed Members that the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) process was completed at the end of 2016 and now there is a

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portfolio of sites to be looked at. The LAA panel have to decide whether sites can be developed and two Members are required for the panel. The next meeting will be held on the 11 July 2017.

Cathie Pannell, Andrew Cooper and Kevin Ball put themselves forward for the panel. It was agreed to appoint all three.

The Chief Executive informed Members that on 26 June the Authority will be hosting a workshop with Exmoor National Park Authority and Exeter University's SWEEP (South West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity) on natural capital. One of the speakers will be Professor Ian Bateman, a member of the Government's Natural Capital Committee. He invited Members to attend: Mr Ball, Mr Retallick and Mrs Oakley volunteered.

3251 Public Participation

None.

3252 Dartmoor National Park Authority Internal Audit Report 2016/17 and Proposed Internal Audit Plan 2017/18

Two Auditors from the Devon Audit Partnership presented their report to the Members. They found Dartmoor National Park Authority to have a high standard of financial systems – the highest standard possible. Overall, there are no significant weaknesses.

The Auditors did notify the Members of an increase in the Devon Audit Partnership fee's by £15 p/day. The Service Level Agreement is to be signed by both parties. The next audit will happen in October 2017.

One Member asked if there was any scope for reducing the amount of days the Auditing, the Auditors informed Members that 20 days is about right for the size of the organisation, to review the finance systems and look at the Annual Government Statement.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Team for their hard work.

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the report.

3253 Dartmoor National Park Authority Internal Audit Strategy (March 2017)

The Auditors briefed the Members on the Internal Audit Strategy.

Members did question the Authorities Cyber Security measures, they were reassured by Officers that the IT team had sufficient security measures in place and after the NHS issues, the Head of IT and Premises was interrogating our system within hours to ensure there were no breaches.

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RESOLVED: Members NOTED the report.

3254 Dartmoor National Park Authority Internal Audit Charter (March 2017)

The Auditors informed Members that the Internal Audit Charter was very similar for all their clients. It is a requirement of the Board. Very slight changes have been made from the 2013 Charter. The Auditors check that all systems are working correctly and to the relevant codes.

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the report

3255 2016/17 Financial Outturn

The Head of Business Support reported a successful financial outturn with an increased additional income of approximately £314k and further efficiency savings in excess of £95k which meant that three projects were able to be funded from in year savings rather than reserve balances.

The Authority gave approval for £0.5 million cash contribution to the Local Government Pension Fund in February, which was met from reserve balances.

The project fund has been fully utilised; some of the projects run over more than one accounting period and therefore will be subject to a carry forward request (NPA/17/006).

The level of reserves and balances held is sufficient to meet current and future needs and cover unforeseen risks.

The Head of Business Support highlighted section 5 of the report to Members, which deals with the historical issue of Management Agreement Payments that had been identified as falling within the EU definition of state aid farming support. A continuous assessment of this issue is undertaken and at year end the Authority must assess whether a disclosure needs to be made in the Accounts.

The Head of Business Support also informed Members that the Accounts had been produced in accordance with the 31 May deadline and a copy of the unaudited Accounts can be found on the website. The public inspection period will commence on 5 June and end on 14 July.

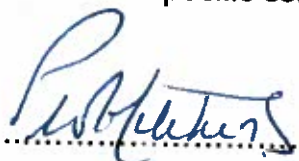
The Chairman thanked the Finance team.

RESOLVED:

Members

- i) noted the content of the report
- ii) approved that the Authority transfers the 2016/17 revenue surplus of £5,822 into reserves
- iii) approved that the Authority approved the transfer of grants and contributions received with specific conditions or restrictions and monies set aside for

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- contractual commitments into earmarked reserves, as set out in section 3.4 of the report;
- iv) agreed that it is unnecessary to include a note in the Statement of Accounts relating to the remote possibility of a contingent liability, as set out in section 5 of the report.

3256 Ashburton Masterplan

Members received the report of The Forward Planning Manager (NPA/17/018).

Members were taken through the background of the Ashburton Masterplan, which was first discussed with the community in 2012, identifying what they wanted from the site. The main priorities to come from the consultation were parking, flooding and highways. The reconstruction of the railway was not raised at this point. In November 2014 the railway issue entered the discussions; at this point Members agreed to pause the process for the Friends of Ashburton Station to present their case, which was judged to be weak, and so the process moved forward. The Masterplan was supported by the Town Council and approved by the Authority. With the threat of a legal challenge by the railway group, we were forced to step back and pause the process. In April 2016 Members agree to cease work on the Masterplan for 12 months to allow planning applications to come forward / further work to be done by the railway group. Members also agreed to review the situation after 12 months.

The Forward Planning Manager explained that officers had now reviewed the situation, 12 months on from the decision to cease work on the Masterplan, and that the recommendation to Members was that no further work be undertaken on the Masterplan. It was noted that the evidence gathered to date and the consultation responses could be used within the Local Plan Review which is now considered to be a better place for discussion on the future of the area.

Members discussed the learning points from the process. Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr McInnes.

RESOLVED: Members AGREED to take no further action on the Chuley Road Masterplan, and focus discussion regarding the site through the local plan review.

Mrs Pannell abstained from the vote.

3257 Performance Indicators 2016/17

Members received the report of The Head of Organisational Development (NPA/17/019).

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Members were informed that the report indicates how the Authority has performed against the targets agreed for 2016/17. The report also includes Staff and Member training data and compliments and complaints received and handled by the Authority. The Head of Organisation Development reminded Members that performance indicators are there to indicate where there maybe an issue or trend that needs to be investigated or allocate resources to. Sections 3.5 – 3.13 in the report were highlighted as the performance levels are considered significant.

Members discussed some of the data. Volunteer days were possibly not counted correctly due to the previous lead officer retiring in March, the Appeal and major applications percentage figure does not give enough information. The drop in E2 – “% of total length of footpaths and other rights of way easy to use by the public” is concerning as we are the leading Authority for PROW. Members agreed that the attendance at Parish Meetings was not good enough and all parish meetings should have a DNPA representative at least once per annum, and that feedback from the Parish Council meetings needs to be improved. The increase in the amount of litter bags collected is a worrying indication of the public's mind-set. More education in schools is needed and more Voluntary Warden time for litter collection.

The Chief Executive (NPO) acknowledged that the volunteer days were not accurate and this would be reviewed. More Member training can be provided, but Members must think about what training would be beneficial. The number of appeals is low, but the way it is recorded will be picked up at Planning and Sustainable Development Working Panel. Unfortunately the amount of litter people are dropping has increased. The two minute litter pick has been introduced but more is needed. The Authority employed a Student ranger who has had a great effect doing footpath maintenance and his employment has been extended by 12 months.

RESOLVED : Members noted the report

3258 2017/18 Strategic Risk Register

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/17/020). Leadership Team review the Register on a quarterly basis. The most recent review has identified no further risks or changes to the ratings but the register has been updated in light of changing circumstances particularly in relation to Brexit and the snap election.

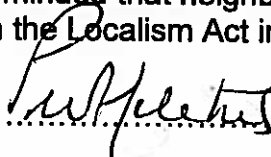
Mr Ball proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Sanders.

RESOLVED: Members approved the updated Strategic Risk Register for 2017/18.

Mr Cann left the meeting.

3259 Neighbourhood Planning

Members received the report of the Communities Officer (NPA/17/021). Members were reminded that neighbourhood planning is a 'community right' introduced through the Localism Act in 2011 which can be used by communities to shape

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future development in their parish. Neighbourhood (Development) Plans become part of the Local Plan and their plan policies used in the determination of planning applications.

The Communities Officer explained that while the preparation of the plan is community led, commonly the parish or town council, there are several key stages which the Local Planning Authorities are required to undertake:

- Area designation approval
- Reg 16 consultation
- Examination
- Referendum
- 'making' or adopting plan

Statutory timescales are tight and implications if not met can be significant, including Secretary of State Intervention.

On Dartmoor there are currently six plan areas designated, all but one straddling the National Park boundary. The Communities Officer referred Members to Appendix 4 of the report setting out the working arrangements for joint working on neighbourhood planning with the District Councils. There is a Memorandum of Understanding in place to which all districts have agreed.

The proposed delegated agreement is comprehensive but is limited to areas where all stakeholders are in agreement. In cases where agreement cannot be reached an extension of time will be sought to enable the matter to be referred to Members.

The final stage is the 'making' of the plan, equivalent to adoption and it is proposed that the plan is referred to Members at this point.

In response to a Member's question the Communities Officer confirmed that it will be following the examiner's report that a neighbourhood plan will carry weight in consideration of District planning decisions.

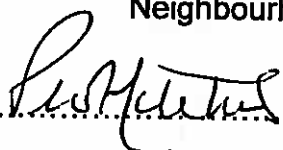
Members congratulated the Communities Officer on the comprehensive layout of the report.

Mr McInnes proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Mr Hitchins.

RESOLVED: Members:

- agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) in accordance with the schedule as set out in Appendix 2; and
- agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman any revisions to the schedule (Appendix 2) required to meet Government guidance or legislative change;
- agreed the arrangements for working with our neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) as set out in the Joint LPA Neighbourhood Planning Protocol at Appendix 3.

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3260 State of the Park Report 2017

Members received the report of the Research and Projects Officer and the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/17/022).

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) highlighted some of the key findings in the report under the themes of Sustain, Enjoy and Prosper:

Sustain

- 7% reduction in the number of scheduled monuments at risk compared to 2010.
- 1.7% of listed buildings at risk compared to a national average of 3% across English National Parks.
- Clear evidence of climate change with data on Dartmoor becoming warmer and wetter.

Enjoy

- Overall visitor numbers have decreased since 2009 but saw a rise of 5.9% from 2013 to 2015.
- Visitor spending has increased by 25% between 2009 and 2015, linked to the growing number of staying visitors which increased by 17% during this time.
- One of the key trends was the increase by 19% of the number of large scale events.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the National Park have deteriorated indicating a 16% reduction since 2010/11 but are still above the national average.
- Erosion sites have been surveyed with 52% stable or improving.


Prosper

- Limited time series data re Dartmoor economy as many data sets are not 'cut' to the National Park Boundary.
- Superfast broadband coverage has increased from 24% in February 2015 to 79%(provisional) in January 2017.

A Member expressed concern about the erosion on tracks particularly between Tors. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) commented that a number of measures have been put in place to look at the impact of this, particularly in the North Moor. He will pass Members comments to the Director of Conservation and Communities and report back to Members at Park Management Working Panel for further discussion.

RESOLVED: Members:

- (i) Noted the draft State of the Park Report 2017.
- (ii) Approved the publication of this document and authorised the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman, to make any further amendments as required.

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3261 Proposed Task and Finish Group on the Future of Farming

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) (NPA/17/023).

In October 2016 the Directors of National Parks England (NPE) agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to provide advice to the NPE Board on the strategic priorities in relation to farming post Brexit. There are three main elements to the NPE policy paper:

- A National Park FARM (Farming and Rural Management) Scheme
- FARM plus – locally led agri-environment schemes for each National Park
- Wider Rural Development – local resources for wider rural development.

A new task and finish group is to be established to develop Dartmoor specific proposals for future farming support (in light of Brexit).

Mr McInnes proposed that Maurice Retallick chair this group, which was seconded by Mr Hitchins.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to the establishment of a task and finish group to develop proposals for a future 'Farming and Rural management' Scheme for Dartmoor and appointed a member to chair this group.

3262 Your Dartmoor – National Park Management Plan 2014-2019 Progress Report

Members received the report of the Conservation and Outreach Officer (NPA/17/024) presented by the Chief Executive (National Park Officer). The National Park Management Plan presents a vision for the National Park as a whole, not just for the Authority.

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) stated that a steering group is organised by the National Park Authority each year to review the action plans that accompany each of the six priorities. Progress on delivery, issues raised by Steering Group members and revised action plans are then presented to a Delivery Board for comment and approval.

The six action plans that accompany the Management Plan contain a total of 149 actions. There is an agreed set of indicators to measure progress towards the ambitions (or outcomes) identified in the Management Plan. These indicators are reported annually to the Delivery Board (last reported in 2016).

RESOLVED: Members noted the progress with delivering the National Park Management Plan 2014-2019.

3263 Business Plan Monitoring

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/17/025). This report sets out how the Authority has performed in delivering the 26 key actions identified in the Business Plan. The Head of Organisational

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Development highlighted that the report focuses on Business Plan key actions and to recognise that core business continues on a daily basis. He confirmed there have been significant contributions and achievements throughout the year delivered by all services.

Members were assured that although only 13 (50%) of the key actions were completed by the year end there has been significant progress and achievement regarding most of the 13 actions that are in progress or ongoing. In many cases the majority of the work has been completed or the work relates to longer-term projects.

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

3264 Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Local Action Funding Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund (GD LEAF) 2015-20

Members received the report of the Communities Officer (NPA/17/026) presented on her behalf by the Chief Executive (National Park Officer).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

3265 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/17/027).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

3266 Standards Sub-Committee Annual Report

Members received the report of the Chief Executive National Park Officer (NPA/17/028).

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

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