



NPA/21/008

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

Draft Business Plan 2021/22

Report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Recommendation: **That Members review the draft Business Plan for 2021/22 and delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, to agree the final version.**

1 Background

- 1.1 The Business Plan is a strategic document and as such does not seek to describe everything that we do, rather it seeks to:
 - Explain the purpose of the Authority;
 - The link with the National Park Management Plan;
 - Set out the Authority's strategic priorities and the key actions to achieve these;
 - Detail the funding available to deliver the Business Plan.
- 1.2 It also provides a link between the National Park Management Plan, individual work programmes and staff appraisals.
- 1.3 The draft Business Plan focuses on 2021/22 but identifies where actions/ programmes will continue beyond 2021/22 and, therefore, links to the Medium Term Financial Plan as well as the detailed revenue budget for 2021/22) (see NPA/21/009).
- 1.4 The national policy context for the draft Business Plan is provided by documents such as the Government's plan for the environment ([A Green future: Our 25 Year Plan to improve the Environment](#)) and its [Industrial Strategy](#) and productivity agenda. The Business Plan identifies the links to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, the findings of the independent [Landscapes Review](#) and Authority's Climate Emergency. With specific reference to the Landscapes Review, the draft Business Plan shares the ambition of being 'a positive force for the nation's wellbeing' and enhancing the National Park for people and nature. However, it should be noted that that the Landscapes Review was published in September 2019 and, at the time of writing this report, we still await a formal Government response to the recommendations. Indeed, the only form of response to the findings of the Landscapes Review to-date has been a further real-terms cut in our

core funding which is contrary to the limited ambition in the Landscapes Review of protected budgets for National Parks.

2 Priorities for 2021/22

2.1 The draft Business Plan for 2021/22 (see Appendix 1) is structured around the five priorities identified through the review of the National Park Management Plan (NPA/21/003). In no particular order they are:

- Better for Nature
- Better for Cultural Heritage
- Better for Farming and Forestry
- Better for People
- Better for Communities and Business

2.2 The draft Business Plan also identifies a sixth priority – ‘Be an excellent organisation’ – which reflects our desire to be an effective organisation providing an excellent level of service. This priority also reflects our aim to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2025.

2.3 The key actions in the draft Business Plan will help deliver the priorities identified by Members, including:

- **Visitor management** – Covid has demonstrated the importance of exercise close to nature and the value of our National Parks. Since the first lockdown was eased we have seen an increase in visitor numbers and new visitors to the National Park. Our challenge is to ensure that visitors respect Dartmoor’s special qualities, cause no lasting damage but actually help to sustain the National Park. As detailed in the separate report on Visitor Management (NPA/21/012) this is a significant area of work.
- **Engagement and Outreach** – our challenge is to secure funding for the practical action we want to undertake in support of the Authority’s Engagement and Outreach Strategy (NPA/20/026).
- **Future direction of agriculture policy** – A number of the key actions contained in the draft Business Plan are aimed at helping to shape a future Environmental Land Management System (ELMS) that will be ‘good for Dartmoor’. These include the Hill Farm Project, Common Cause, Tests and Trials, the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund, the Natural Flood Management and Peatland Restoration projects. We also envisage a new Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme which we hope will provide funding for practical environmental and access improvement and help prepare farmers for the new ELMS.
- **Supporting economic development and productivity** - The Authority’s work is focused on managing and enhancing a key economic asset – Dartmoor National Park. There are specific priorities in the draft Business Plan to support local communities and business. These include: Moor Otters 2, the Pathways Project and the Community Resilience Project which builds on the lessons we learnt through operating the Coronavirus Community Support Grant.
- **Climate change and enhancing nature** – The focus on peatland restoration and natural flood risk management supports this theme along with the work to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain through positive planning. Proposals for a green

transport strategy will aim to reduce car travel and encourage other forms of transport – also contributing to health and well-being.

- **Engaging with people and communities** - This is reflected in a number of the key actions in the draft Business Plan including Moorscapes – we are seeking to develop an external funding bid to further develop the successful Parishscapes project (NB this was delayed from 2020/21 due to Covid).

2.4 The Business Plan is supported by a performance management framework that comprises three elements:

Dashboards for key services/teams - these are intended to provide management information on how a service/team is performing and an opportunity to highlight key achievements and pressure points. Their primary value should be to the manager for that service area - for them to use, to review and potentially improve performance. They are also reported quarterly to Leadership Team (as part of the meeting that focuses on performance) and Leadership Team will reflect key issues in reports to Audit and Governance Committee. In addition, Audit and Governance Committee can request to see any dashboard. The dashboards help to demonstrate the 'day job' whilst the Business Plan focuses on key strategic projects.

Performance indicators (PIs) - these are data sets that we use to gauge the 'quality of the service' we provide and/or potential impact. The current set comprises a mixture of PIs: some are set nationally by Government (e.g., speed of planning decision); some have been agreed collectively by the English National Park Authorities so that we can benchmark performance; and some are agreed locally (i.e., by Dartmoor National Park Authority). The PI data is reported to Audit and Governance Committee. As part of the work on the Management Plan review, we will be looking at the State of the Park PIs over the next 12 months.

Business Plan monitor - this document tracks progress with the key actions identified in the Business Plan. It is reported quarterly to Leadership Team and to Audit and Governance Committee. The intention is to better project manage the key actions identified in the Business Plan, ideally to ensure they are delivered on time and within budget, but also to identify, at an early stage, if there are any actions that we are at risk of not delivering and to consider any support measures to address project slippage, or whether we signal to Members that action will not be completed and why.

3 Equality and Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) the Authority must prepare and publish one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve in pursuance of the general duty under the Act. Our work programmes are designed to ensure equality of access and awareness and understanding of diversity.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The draft Business Plan has been developed in parallel with the 2021/22 Revenue Budget. As noted in NPA/21/009 we still await our grant settlement from Defra; we believe this will be a one-year settlement in advance of the Spending Review later in the year. Setting robust work programmes when we are unclear about future

core funding is difficult. We may need to review the Business Plan in light of the revenue budget settlement for 2021/22.

- 4.2 Many of the actions in the draft Business Plan are focused on securing additional income to deliver practical projects and programmes. Sustained core funding is essential – it provides limited capacity to bid for new funding and, through prudent use of our revenue grant and reserves, the ability to match-fund external grants. External funding (grants, donations, sales and charges) should not be seen as a substitute for National Park Grant.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The draft Business Plan is ambitious, with a blend of key actions that will deliver management and enhancement of the environment, opportunities for people to get engaged and promote the enjoyment and understanding of Dartmoor's special qualities. These actions will help support the Dartmoor economy and the communities that live within the National Park. The key ingredients for most of the actions are staff time and partnership working.
- 5.2 Whilst many of the actions are funded there are a number that relate to work programmes designed to develop future funding bids and/or secure other forms of funding (voluntary donations, commercial sponsorship etc.).
- 5.3 Covid related restrictions and operating processes may have an impact on our ability to deliver the draft Business Plan. We will report such issues and risks to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Kevin Bishop

**Dartmoor National Park Authority
Business Plan 2021 – 2022**

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Introduction

To be drafted

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Dartmoor National Park Authority

The Dartmoor National Park Authority was established under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 as an independent body within the framework of local government.

The Authority's role is clearly defined by Parliament through our two statutory purposes to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

These purposes are of equal weight unless there is an irreconcilable conflict between the two, in which case, conservation of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage takes priority.

In pursuing the two statutory purposes, we are also required to:

- seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

The National Park Authority is governed by 19 Members appointed via different routes:

- by the Secretary of State to reflect the national interest
- by constituent authorities (Devon County Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council).
- via parish council elections and subsequent appointment by the Secretary of State.

The Authority is a small organisation and the majority of the work we do is undertaken in partnership with others in order to achieve the best outcomes for Dartmoor National Park, the people who live and work here and those who visit this special place. Our partners range from public authorities to private individuals, from commercial businesses to community groups.

To learn more about the work of the Authority visit: [insert hyperlink](#)

Dartmoor National Park Management Plan

The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan is the most important document for the National Park. It sets out a vision for the National Park and specific objectives for the next five to ten years. It is produced in partnership but with the Authority playing a key role in facilitating the partnership and leading the process. The National Park Management Plan has just been reviewed and a revised version of the Plan will be published in 2021. The new Plan sets out an ambitious vision for Dartmoor: it combines national priorities (as reflected in documents such as the 25 Year Environment Plan) with local priorities. This Business Plan identifies key actions that the Authority will lead on in support of the Management Plan (see next section).

Vision for Dartmoor National Park 2045

Dartmoor National Park is an extraordinary landscape: shaped by nature and humans over time; steeped in history but always changing; one of Britain's finest. It has the power to inspire and enrich lives.

Our Vision is to make Dartmoor better for future generations: climate resilient, nature rich, beautiful, connected to the past and looking to the future; a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can live, work, or visit. A place that is loved, cherished and cared for.

It will be:

- **Alive with nature:** Networks of healthy habitats that are home to many different plants, insects and animals create a more resilient natural environment connected within and across the boundary of the National Park. Some areas feel wilder as nature is enhanced and allowed to take its course.
- **Celebrated and enhanced:** Dartmoor's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage is better understood, valued and looked after.
- **A warm welcome for all:** Enriching people's lives, reaching out to people from all backgrounds, connecting them with this special place. Transformative experiences will inspire people to care for the National Park.
- **A great place to live and work:** People of all ages can enjoy living and working in low carbon, flourishing communities that are connected physically and digitally. Farming and forestry businesses play a key role in delivering a high-quality environment and local products alongside a range of other public benefits.
- **Carbon negative:** Dartmoor's peatlands, soils and woodlands will store significantly more carbon. Responding to climate change will be embedded in our way of life, making the best use of natural resources and reducing carbon emissions.

Everyone will come together to deliver this Vision for Dartmoor; make choices that balance the needs of people and place; embrace positive change; and inspire the next generation to help shape its future.

This plan sets out how we will work together over the next five years towards the vision. This National Park Management Plan for Dartmoor will be reviewed and updated every five years.

To learn more about the Management Plan visit: *insert hyperlink*

This Business Plan

Our Business Plan is structured around 6 priorities:

- P1 Better for Nature
- P2 Better for Cultural Heritage
- P3 Better for Farming and Forestry
- P4 Better for People
- P5 Better for Communities and Business
- P6 Be an excellent organisation

Most of these (priorities 1 to 5) relate directly to the National Park Management Plan (see above). Priority 6 reflects our desire to be an effective organisation providing an excellent level of service.

The table below highlights key actions that the Authority will lead on in 2021/22 under each of these 6 priorities. It should be noted that most of our work programmes span more than one financial year.

Whilst our work is presented under the six priorities our overall goal is integrated delivery: to ensure action on one priority considers and delivers, wherever possible, across all themes and helps Dartmoor become carbon neutral.

Key Actions to Deliver Business Plan Priorities

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
BETTER FOR NATURE						
Working with the SW Peatland Partnership deliver a programme of Peatland Restoration	Restoration and enhancement of 1000 ha of peatland on Dartmoor by 2026. Agreed strategy and funding for future delivery. Increased local capacity and skills to support on-going delivery.	Ongoing	Initial phase 2026. Subject to confirmation of funding-	✓	✓	✓
Deliver landscape scale nature enhancement	Pilot nature enhancement/recovery at a landscape scale across at least two catchments working with clusters of landowners/farmers to identify and develop opportunities and engaging local communities where possible.	Ongoing	2022 Implementation Subject to funding	✓	✓	✓
Undertake soils surveys and develop project to enhance and monitor soil structure	Maximise carbon storage potential and retention within key Dartmoor soils By 2025 work with 50 farm businesses to explore and implement agreed measures to enhance soil structure and monitor results	Started	2025 Finding required for implementation of project	✓	✓	✓
Produce species re-introduction strategy	Strategic approach focusing on species that support the greatest environmental benefit and are supported by Dartmoor community.	2021	2022 Implementation Subject to funding	✓	✓	✓
Expand the Dartmoor Headwaters Natural Flood Risk Management Project	Test natural approaches to flood management that deliver a range of public benefits in a way that supports the farming/land owning community. Agree future priorities and funding. Contribute to thinking on Environmental Land Management.	Started	2033 Subject to confirmation of funding	✓	✓	✓

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain	Prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the delivery of a broad approach to Biodiversity Net Gain through emerging Local Plan policy. With potential for pilot project links with Environmental Land Management and Natural Flood Management.	2021	2022	✓	✓	✓
BETTER FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE						
Valuing Cultural Heritage	Apply agreed methodology to assess historic environment significance, priorities and constraints for use by conservation projects operating at a landscape scale	Started	2026 Full roll out subject to funding			
Undertake a review of Premier Archaeological Landscapes (PALs)	PALs will be identified; incorporated into new Environmental Land Management system; recognised in landscape scale conservation projects, under proactive management to achieve good condition and their significance widely understood and valued	Started	2025			
BETTER FOR FARMING AND FORESTRY						
Implement Dartmoor Test and Trail. Support Postbridge Farmer Cluster as an example of landscape scale action	A new Environmental Land Management system that reflects Dartmoor's special qualities and provides scope to maintain and enhance a wide array of public benefits. A role for the Authority in co-designing the system and facilitating in its delivery through advice. Pilot scheme attracting private finance to support environmental outcomes.	Started	2024	✓	✓	✓

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
Dartmoor Hill Farm Project	Support for farm businesses across the National Park to help them deliver a range of public goods as part of a sustainable business and promote effective collaboration.	Started	Funded until Feb 2023	✓	✓	✓
Deliver the Common Cause Project	Deliver agreed outcomes for National Lottery Heritage Funded programme including: shared local visions for commons, showcasing new approaches to management of common land to deliver a range of public benefits and improved public understanding of commoning. Contribute to thinking about Environmental Land Management.	Started	Feb 2024	✓	✓	✓
Deliver Farming in Protected Landscapes programme	Prepare farmers for new Environmental Land Management schemes; deliver environmental outcomes and access improvements.	2021 (subject to funding)	2024	✓	✓	✓
BETTER FOR PEOPLE						
Implement Visitor Management Plan for 2021 season	Visitor behaviour influenced and changed so that negative impact on the fabric of the moor and local communities is reduced and positive impacts increased.	Started	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓
Implement the Recreation Strategy and seek funding to deliver where necessary	Funding is secured to implement agreed proposals to improve recreational opportunities and support local communities. Visitor motivation study completed to influence future recreation provision. Cycling development plan completed.	Started	2026	✓	✓	✓

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
Pathways Project	Access routes and associated infrastructure that is in good condition, easy to use and helps support the Dartmoor economy; delivery supported by volunteers and fundraising.	Started	Ongoing		✓	✓
Develop a Green Transport Strategy	A strategy to reduce the impact of cars through congestion or inappropriate parking as people arrive and travel around the National Park by other means of transport. Opportunities for those without access to a car are increased.	2021	2022 (Subject to staff resources)	✓	✓	✓
Secure funding to deliver the Outreach and Engagement Strategy	Pilot projects are completed informing future longer term partnership projects to increase the diversity of people who are able to enjoy Dartmoor in a sustainable manner.	Started	2026		✓	✓
BETTER FOR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES						
Local Plan	An adopted Local Plan that (together with the Management Plan) provides a framework for the future development and management of the National Park, helps deliver National Park purposes and vibrant communities.	Started	2021 (Local Plan adopted)	✓	✓	✓
Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Guidance Document (SPD)	New Design Guidance (in the form of an SPD or code) delivers the government's growing emphasis on good design in a way which conserves and enhances Dartmoor's local distinctiveness.	2021	2022	✓	✓	✓

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
Dartmoor Community Resilience Project	The development of a network of peer support project for community groups and businesses leads to new social enterprise and projects which promote sustainable communities.	2021	2021	✓		✓
Moor Otters 2	A public arts trail that supports local businesses, helps engage new audiences, raises income for National Park projects and raises the profile of the National Park.	Started	December 2021		✓	✓
Moorscapes	A community grant scheme for projects that enhance the environment, respond to climate change and/or help a wider range of people understand or enjoy it.	June 2020	Subject to external funding	✓	✓	✓
BE AN EXCELLENT ORGANISATION						
Deliver DNPA's Climate Action Plan	Aim is to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2025.	Started	2025	✓		✓
Responding to, and learning from, the Coronavirus pandemic	Sustained service provision. A motivated, healthy and high-performing workforce.					
Contribute to Government reviews and policy	An independent effective and efficient organisation with strong links to local partners and communities, resourced with finance and necessary tools to 'deliver for Dartmoor'.	Started	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓

Key Action	Outcome sought	Target start date	Target end date	Contribute to carbon neutral	25 Year Env Strategy	Glover Review
Develop a new partnership project to deliver Management Plan priorities and apply for National Heritage Lottery Funding to deliver.	An external funding package to help deliver key priorities in the NPMP review including nature recovery, environmental enhancement, engaging and welcoming a wider range of people and supporting sustainable use of the NP, the local economy, jobs and communities.	Started	2028	✓	✓	✓
Developing a strong evidence base and partnerships	An evidence base and strong partnerships with key organisations (e.g., universities) to support our work, report on the state of the National Park and evidence the impact of work to deliver the National Park Management Plan.	Started	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓

Measuring progress

We continually seek ways to improve the quality and value for money of the services we provide.

Progress against the key actions is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee.

At the end of each financial year, the Authority completes an annual performance review which contains information about the progress made in delivering the actions in the Business Plan, together with achievement against a comprehensive set of performance indicators.

Funding and expenditure

All our core funding comes from central Government, not from local taxpayers. This reflects the fact that, unlike local councils, our responsibilities extend to people who live well beyond our boundaries.

Since 2011 our core funding has been reduced by circa 40 per cent in real terms. Despite the recommendation in the independent review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that we should have a five-year settlement (to facilitate and long-term planning) and our budget should be protected in real terms. We remain on an annual budget and core funding was cut (again) in 2020/21.

Our core grant for 2021/22 is *to be completed*

Our ability to provide a high quality service in priority areas depends on raising significant funding from other sources (charges for services, fees, external grants etc.). Most of our priority actions are focused on securing income to deliver work programmes.



NPA/21/009

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

2021/22 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022 to 2024

Report of the Head of Business Support

- Recommendation: **That Members:**
- (i) **approve the 2021/22 budget and note the indicative budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24 as shown in Appendices 1 – 3.**
 - (ii) **agree that fees and charges should remain unchanged for 2021/22 as set out in section 5 of the report.**
 - (iii) **approve the capital strategy as set out in section 6 of the report.**
 - (iv) **approve the allocation of reserve balances as set out in Section 7 and Appendix 6.**

1 Background

- 1.1 The Authority is required by statute to set a balanced annual budget. The basis for the revenue and capital expenditure is the pursuit of the 'Special Purposes' for which the National Parks were designated in the Environment Act 1995 (the Act). Section 65 of the Act determines the purposes as: conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of National Parks and promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Parks by the public. The Authority also has a duty, in pursuit of the two purposes, to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.
- 1.2 The key source of funding for the Authority is National Park Grant (NPG) which is paid by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Currently NPG accounts for over 80% of total income. At the time of writing this report Defra has yet to confirm how much NPG the Authority will receive in 2021/22 and has no plans to indicate what level of NPG will be forthcoming beyond this. The delay in announcing NPG has an obvious impact on our ability to plan over both the short and medium term: officials have indicated that a flat-line grant is the most realistic outcome for 2021/22, there is no indication of the level of grant for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

2 Financial Context

- 2.1 The budget has been prepared against a background of unprecedented uncertainty. In particular, the Government's planned Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), which would have set our grant level for the next three years, was effectively postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and government departments were provided with a one-year settlement.
- 2.2 Given the above context, there are two fundamental messages to take from this report:
- (i) the proposed budget for 2021/22 'balances', i.e. it is affordable within the limits of our resources; it will pay for the scheduled delivery of our Business Plan and National Park Management Plan targets without resorting to any programme cuts.
 - (ii) budget projections for 2022/23 and beyond are much less certain, and there is a high probability that we will need to adjust our work programmes from 2022/23 onwards. The impact on our programmes is very much dependant on the outcome of the CSR and the long-term economic impact of Covid 19, as well as any changes in delivery that Defra might wish us to make in response to the (Glover) Landscapes Review.
- 2.3 From the perspective of reasonable financial certainty over the medium term (i.e. the next three years), this position is not satisfactory, and continues the situation that we found ourselves in at the start of 2020/21. We were supposed to receive a new three-year settlement starting in 2020/21. That settlement, part of the planned 2019 CSR, did not happen because of Brexit-related issues, and was postponed until 2020. Instead, we received a one year-extension to our Grant for 2020/21, but at the 2019 rate without any allowance for inflation. The (2020) CSR was postponed again because of the impact of Covid 19. Consequently, for 2021/22 Defra has indicated that we are likely to receive a Grant at the same level as 2019; at the time of writing this report, this had not been confirmed.
- 2.4 We are currently experiencing a series of cuts to the real-terms value of our Defra grant, because no allowance has been made for increases in our core costs (such as nationally agreed pay awards that we have no influence or control over). We had projected a worsening budget deficit position this time last year but planned to 'hold out' from taking remedial action until we had certainty over the CSR. That remains our approach again this year, but we cannot adopt this 'wait and see' approach indefinitely, because – at some point - we will not have sufficient reserves to continue to prop up our spending plans. The likely state of the country's finances when we do finally exit the current pandemic makes any increase in core grant unlikely despite Manifesto commitments; more realistic is continued stand still or further significant cuts to our core grant from Defra.
- 2.5 As a result of the current situation we have avoided, wherever possible, building in any significant 'new' costs into future years to avoid making a potentially difficult situation from 2022 onwards even worse. We have kept very closely to the Authority's current priorities and have not expanded programmes except where additional external funding has become available.

2.6 The financial outlook from 2022/23 onwards may be extremely difficult as the economic impact of dealing with Covid becomes clearer. The funding of public services will be a key issue for the Government to address. If that approach involves significant cuts in grant then all English National Park Authorities will come under severe pressure in delivering their programmes, particularly the 4 priorities that have been established through National Parks England:

- Dealing with the impacts of Climate Change
- Nature and Wildlife recovery in National Parks
- The future of Farming and Land Management
- National Parks for everyone: improving access and diversity.

2.7 We have developed the 2021/22 budget with an eye to the future by limiting new long-term funding commitments. However, Members need to understand the potential implications of future cuts on the Authority's objectives, deep and sustained cuts will require us to review our organisational structure and further reduce our work programmes.

2.8 Clearly, we are unable to provide any detailed proposals for dealing with cuts in Government funding unless and until the scale of such a cut in funding is known. However, we can illustrate some potential impacts in general terms. A standstill grant, with no allowance for inflation, is effectively a cut in real terms. Our current projection is that our existing deficit will grow in excess of £400k over the next five years should NPG not be adjusted for inflation. Some Members will recall that between 2010 and 2015 National Park Grant in England fell by nearly 40% in real terms and that led to significant programme cuts and reductions in staff numbers.

2.9 For 2021/22 we are in limbo until we know the future of our long-term funding. The use of our reserve balances is an appropriate mechanism for bridging the gap until the future is clearer. The outcome may prove to be much better than the bleak scenarios painted here. But if we are forced to respond to cuts, no one should be in any doubt that this may significantly affect our ability to deliver current Authority and Management Plan objectives.

3 2020/21 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Overview

3.1 The 2021/22 Budget and indicative financial plans for 2022-24 can be found at Appendices 1 to 3. The Authority does not build each annual budget on an incremental basis, choosing instead to zero-base each year. Assumptions used are:

- Pay Award (the single largest area of expenditure is staff salaries) - a zero pay award in 2021/22 and then an annual 2% increase has been assumed for the following two years. A 1% increase in pay, if awarded in year one, would cost around £36k; a provision for this is included within earmarked reserves. No pay award in years two and three would reduce the budgets by circa £36k and £75k respectively.
- Inflation and price increases: are only included after discussion with suppliers / service providers.
- External grant income: only included if confirmed.
- Fees and charges income: target budgets are estimated using historical and trend data (see also section 5 of this report)

- NPG: for planning purposes the MTFP assumes that the funding settlement will be flat cash (i.e. the same as for 2019/20 and 2020/21)

3.2 It is proposed that the budget gap for 2021/22 is met from the 2020/21 forecast surplus (£110k at month 10) which enables setting a “balanced budget” without drawing on existing reserve balances and reflects the impact of Covid 19, where work programmes have slipped.

3.3 The forecast budget gap in years two and three, if they were to remain unchanged, could be met from reserves. However, it is too early to make changes at this stage until we get more clarity from the CSR.

No increase in NPG	Budget Gap / (Surplus) £
2020-2021 (to be met from reserves)	112,895
2021-2022	86,286
2022-2023	58,375
Total	217,556

3.4 If Defra were to apply an uplift of 1% to NPG in years two and three the deficit would be halved in year two and in year 3 we would have an ability to invest in expanded work programmes (based on the current MTFP):

Impact of a 1% increase in NPG in years two and three only	Budget Gap / (Surplus) £
2020-2021	112,895
2021-2022	48,025
2022-2023	(18,626)
Total	102,294

3.5 If increased core funding from Defra is not forthcoming in the near future, through the Spending Review (or other sources) then we will need to take some tough decisions to adjust our work programmes in order to set an affordable and balanced budget in future years. To keep calling on Reserves for more than one year is not sustainable. Similarly, as we have built the 2021/22 budget assuming a flat cash settlement, if this is not the case, a revised budget may have to be brought back to the Authority after the start of the financial year, so that Members can make decisions about how to rebalance the budget (and the MTFP).

4 Budget Detail

4.1 The following table provides a summary of some of the most significant projects and income targets that have been included in the MTFP; some of which may become at risk if increased core funding is not forthcoming.

Projects and Programmes	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Holwell Tor Community Excavation Project	0	10,000	0
Monument Management Scheme Projects	16,000	11,000	11,000
External funding	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)

Archaeology Priority Significance Survey	20,000	7,000	7,000
External funding	(10,000)	(7,000)	(7,000)
Habitat management	6,500	6,500	6,500
Curlew recovery project	3,000	3,000	3,000
Species Rich Grassland project	4,000	4,000	4,000
Nature recovery project phase 1	20,500	0	0
External funding	(5,500)		
Management plans (Holne, Hawns & Dendles, woodlands)	7,000	3,000	0
Common Cause - national partnership project	10,000	10,000	0
Access & PRow: miles without stiles, infrastructure improvements and erosion repairs	20,000	30,000	25,000
Higher Uppacott cottage refurbishment	30,000	0	0
Development Management IT system	50,000	0	0
Outreach & Education (inc. Ranger Ralph, Junior & Youth Rangers)	18,950	19,350	19,000
Visitor Management Support – summer 2021 (to be met from reserves, see 4.3 viii)	40,000	0	0
Gateway signage – redesign / replacement	5,000	10,000	5,000
EV charging point installation	5,000	0	0
Vehicle purchases	23,000	0	0
Parke House maintenance programme	13,000	10,000	9,000
Duchy Hotel maintenance programme	11,800	16,000	12,000
Key campaigns (visitor messaging)	5,000	5,000	5,000
New people / vehicle counters	5,000	1,560	1,560
Car park improvements/ resurfacing	61,000	38,000	25,000
Car parking income – demand led	(75,000)	(75,000)	(75,000)
Planning fee income – demand led	(192,000)	(192,000)	(192,000)
Local Plan Review Programme	28,000	30,000	15,000
Visitor Centres retail stock procurement	100,000	110,000	125,000
Visitor Centres sales income	(156,000)	(170,000)	(197,000)
Donate for Dartmoor (target not budget)	(30,000)	(30,000)	(30,000)

4.2 The Authority has in the past taken on up to three apprentices each year; there are no apprenticeship posts provided for to date due to future financial uncertainty and lack of capacity to properly manage and mentor apprentices, which is disappointing. However, the Authority has been successful along with the other National Parks in a joint application to take part in the Government funded Kickstart Programme and has committed to providing four placements in 2021/22.

4.3 Members' attention is also specifically drawn to the following projects:

- (i) The Hill Farm Project is currently in the final year of agreed funding from the Prince's Countryside Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Duchy of Cornwall worth £130,197. Beyond March 2021 external funding for this project is not confirmed. The Authority is committing to support a three-year post to help secure the future of the Project and help the farming community transition to a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), which is a key priority in the Authority's Business Plan.

- (ii) The funding bid for Our Common Cause – ‘delivery phase’ - was successful. It is a national partnership project, being led by the Foundation for Common Land with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The National Trust is the accountable body.
- (iii) An extended Parishscapes Programme using New Homes Bonus receipts. South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council and Teignbridge District Council have transferred an agreed proportion of the New Homes Bonus Grant attributable to new housing development in the National Park, to the Authority. We have agreed, with these Councils, that this money will be used as potential match-funding for a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project aimed at supporting community engagement in local heritage (natural and built). We have had to delay the bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund as it closed to new applications due to Covid-19. It is now re-opened and this is a work programme for 2021/22
- (iv) The Authority is a delivery partner in the Defra funded South West Peatlands Project being led by South West Water which commenced in 2018/19. On Dartmoor, a programme of restoration is underway with a budget of approximately £1.8m being funded by: a capital grant of approximately £1.5m from Defra; and grants or contributions and in-kind support from local partners including the Authority. The Authority set aside £150,000 in 2018/19 to support this project, which includes a full time Project Officer post, which has been extended for a fourth year as further partnership contributions have been received.
- (v) The Authority is also a delivery partner for the Dartmoor Headwaters Project, which is being led by the Environment Agency (EA) to trial the delivery of natural flood risk management interventions. A budget of £260,000 has been secured from Defra via the EA, matched by DNPA in kind support (to the value of £36,000) for a 3-year project which was to end in March 2021; further funding has been secured to extend the project for another year. The Authority is hosting the employment of the Project Officers and is recharging all costs to the EA.
- (vi) In November 2017 we were invited to submit ideas to Defra for the proposed Environmental Land Management System. After much delay and further work to meet Defra funding requirements we were awarded a grant of £201,080 in December 2019. The Dartmoor Environmental Land Management Test and Trial runs for an 18 month period. It provides an exciting opportunity to work with the farming and land management community on developing proposals for the Government’s Environmental Land Management System. It should be noted that this Test and Trial does not fund practical work.
- (vii) Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL). This programme was announced in the Government’s Agricultural Transition Plan published in November 2020. Farming and forestry are the main land uses in our National Parks and yet for 70 years we have had very little ability to influence farming policy and practice. FiPL could alter this and if successful could help us establish a role in local delivery of the forthcoming Environmental Land Management programmes. At present we (a small group of National Park and AONB staff) are working with Defra Protected Landscapes Team on the design

of the programme. We envisage FiPL being a three-year programme with ring-fenced money from Defra to be used to support delivery of environmental outcomes, the transition to ELM and improved access. The Authority would have a role in managing this programme and engaging with the farming and land management communities.

- (viii) Visitor management. We anticipate an increase in visitor numbers and the management issues we faced during 2020 being sustained throughout 2021. A separate paper, on the agenda for this Authority meeting, explains the work we are doing on visitor management (NPA/21/012). We are in the process of securing additional money from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Forestry Commission and others to support 'National Park Marshalls', dedicated special constables and a potential joint post with the Police and Fire and Rescue Services. If successful, this will provide some 'blue uniformed' support to supplement our 'thin green line' of Rangers. We are seeking Member approval to use up to £40,000 of money from our reserves to support this work area during 2021/22 (this has been incorporated into the revenue budget for 2021/22).
- (ix) In 2017 we undertook a public arts initiative called "Moor Otters". The aim was to engage the public, support the local economy, promote positive key messages and generate an income to support key projects. The initiative was a huge success generating a £60,000 surplus which was allocated to three projects: Junior Ranger Programmes, Erosion repairs and eradication of non-native invasive species. During 2019/20 Members approved plans to run a second version of this project (NPA/19/015). The project was deferred in 2020 due to the Coronavirus Pandemic; the relaunch is planned for Spring 2021, culminating in an auction to sell the otters in September to generate a return.

4.4 In recent years the Authority has operated a Project Fund as part of its Revenue Budget. This Fund has enabled us to: buy-in additional support and capacity; to match-fund new projects; and to invest in new equipment during the financial year. This strategy has helped to provide flexibility and agility and it is therefore proposed that we continue with this approach for the life of the new MTFP. The amount allocated to the Project Fund for each year is summarised below:

Project Fund	£
2021/22	75,000
2022/23	75,000
2023/24	75,000

4.5 The financial context for 2020/21 and beyond is particularly challenging, especially due to the lack of clarity about NPG. In building this MTFP, Leadership Team has had to make some hard decisions about which work programmes could realistically be supported. A list of project bids that have not been successful or been reduced can be found at appendix 4. Some of these are at an 'ideas in progress' stage and these will be kept on the back burner or worked up further if resource and capacity becomes available. This provides us with a useful planning tool to help guide: future Business Plan priorities; future financial strategy; and future work programmes.

4.6 Other budget pressures include our desire to implement actions set out in our Climate Action Plan. Last year we set aside a sum of £50,000 to be held in reserves to be able support the priority actions in the Climate Action Plan; to date this has not

been used. We will bring a detailed progress report on our Climate Action Plan to a future meeting of the Authority.

- 4.7 The triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Fund took place in 2019 and the Authority’s funding level improved from 90% in 2016 to 97.8% at 31 March 2019. In 2016 the Authority made a £0.5 million one-off contribution to the Pension Fund as an “invest-to-save” initiative. The aim being to potentially make long term cash savings over the deficit recovery period and to try to protect future revenue budgets against significant pension cost rises. An employer contribution target rate was subsequently set by the Actuary at 19% of pensionable pay, rather than 21%. This strategy is proving successful as borne out by the improved funding level in the 2019 valuation and the fact that the employer contribution rate has subsequently been maintained at the same level, even though the value of our liabilities increased. The next valuation will take place in 2022.

5 Review of Fees and Charges

- 5.1 Each year the Authority reviews its fees and charges strategy and policy for the forthcoming financial year; this is normally considered and approved via separate report as part of the budget setting process. Whilst these are not a major source of income, they do contribute to meeting the costs of delivering some services. The charges applied may be the difference between providing a service and having to withdraw it all together.
- 5.2 In recent years we have raised charges for Education and Outreach Services on a regular basis to a level that is considered to be fair, equitable and can partially offset costs. Nearly all of these services were suspended during 2020/21 due to the coronavirus pandemic; it is hoped that they can resume as soon as restrictions are lifted.
- 5.3 In 2018 we introduced car parking charges as at Haytor, Postbridge and Meldon (at Princetown in 2013). The charges replaced the previous system of voluntary donations and is promoted as ‘pay and conserve/pay and enjoy’ rather than ‘pay and display’. Income from car park charges is used to fund car park maintenance and repairs, the costs of which are increasingly significant.
- 5.4 In March 2020 Members approved an increase in parking charges (NPA/20/003) to take effect from 1 April 2020 as set out below:

Car parking charges	2019/20	2020/21
Cars – Half day (up to 3 hours)	£1.00	£2.00
Cars – Full day	£2.00	£3.00
Blue Badge Holders	£1.00	£2.00
Coaches	£4.00	£5.00

- 5.5 On 23 March 2020 lockdown restrictions were imposed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and our car parks were closed. They reopened in July and have remained so since. However, our car parking meter contractor has been unable to update the software in the machines, as their staff were furloughed for many months and are only now catching up with backlogs in outstanding work (our decision to amend the charges being made late). Therefore, the revised charges have not yet been implemented; it is anticipated the software will be updated by 1

April 2021. We are also continuing to investigate the being able to take card and phone payment.

- 5.6 When setting fees and charges we consider the implications for public access to services and the impact on the local economy. Consideration is given to proactively engaging those who may not otherwise access Dartmoor, being mindful of potential barriers and balancing the need to generate income and maintaining budgets that are flexible and responsive to the needs of service users. Many people have lost their jobs during the pandemic and many businesses are at risk of collapse; encouraging the public to visit Dartmoor and spend their money in our local economy is more important than ever.
- 5.7 It is recommended that fees and charges remain unchanged to those approved on 6 March 2020.

6 Capital Strategy and Prudential Indicators

- 6.1 As part of the annual budgeting process the Authority is required to produce an affordable Medium Term Capital Programme (MTCP) alongside its revenue budget, if relevant. There is also the requirement to produce a Capital Strategy in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017. The Prudential Code is a professional code of practice to support local authorities when taking capital investment (fixed asset) decisions. The objectives are to ensure, within a clear framework, that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. A Treasury Management & Investment Strategy report is also being presented for approval today.
- 6.2 The obligation to have a Capital Strategy has arisen, as some authorities have become increasingly willing to invest significant amounts in commercial developments, in order to generate returns that will offset some of the financial impact of austerity.
- 6.3 This Authority rarely has a significant capital programme or the need for significant investment in physical assets in the same way as local authorities, who have responsibility for highways or housing. Capital spend for this Authority is commonly of a small-scale nature such as related to vehicles or IT. For larger schemes such as new buildings or conversions, Members receive specific reports to support decision making; which provides background, the reasons why the scheme is being recommended and a cost benefit analysis; and will identify sources of finance. In advance of the report being presented to the Authority, Leadership Team will have scrutinised the proposed scheme.
- 6.4 The Authority historically has a low-risk attitude toward capital investment; having never borrowed internally or externally to fund capital schemes; entered into long-term liabilities such as Private Finance Initiatives; nor invested for commercial purposes. Capital investment decisions are made to support National Park Purposes only.
- 6.5 We seek external contributions towards supporting our capital spend wherever possible. If capital receipts (sale of assets) become available, these must be used to finance capital spend. In the absence of both these, revenue income (via NPG or fees and charges) or revenue reserves are used to fund capital expenditure.

6.6 Stewardship of our assets is led by Leadership Team and delivered by various officers within the Authority; the portfolio is small. Assets are kept under review to assess their ability to deliver or support National Park Purposes, to identify and manage future liabilities and identify opportunities for disposal. Built assets are subject to regular condition assessments and have a repair and redecoration programme that is built into the MTFP.

6.7 The Authority's capital programme for the MTFP period currently consists of:

Capital Scheme/ Project	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Replacement Vehicles (CWT)	23,000	0	0
Development Management IT system	50,000	0	0
Higher Uppacott cottage internal refurbishment	30,000	0	0
Funded From	£	£	
National Park Grant or Revenue Reserves	80,000	0	0
Capital Receipts	23,000	0	0

6.8 If any other Capital Projects are proposed in-year, for example in respect Climate Change Action Plan, they will be subject to submission of a business case to have the allocation of required funding approved.

6.9 If sources of additional capital income become available during the year, for example via additional grants, external contributions or capital receipts, or if any other business decisions are proposed that will result in a change to the Capital Programme or the Prudential Indicators, the Authority will be presented with a business case for approval.

7 Reserves

7.1 In 2010/11 the Audit & Governance Committee, at the request of the Authority, undertook work to formulate a risk-based approach to determining the level and use of reserves required by the Authority. The outcome of that work was an agreed methodology (NPA/AG/10/014) which continues to be applied to determine the level of reserves held.

7.2 Our reserve balances are regularly reviewed and are made up as follows:

- General Reserve (unallocated) - a contingency balance for emergency situations and is the minimum level that we have determined will always be maintained;
- Contingency Reserves (allocated) - provisions set aside using a risk-based analysis to cushion the impact of uneven cash flows, and unexpected events where the timing of and / or amounts are uncertain (e.g. pay awards, pension contributions, loss of income);
- Earmarked Reserves (allocated) - consisting of ring-fenced grants and contributions received from third parties, sums set aside for capital schemes, commitments against future contracts and agreements and our external funding allocations where we are working in partnership with others.

7.3 The Risk Based analysis can be found at Appendix 5 and is at a summary level. Appendix 6 shows the likely General Fund Reserve Balances for the MTFP period at a detailed level. It can therefore be seen that the majority of our Reserve Balances are “allocated”. The following table is a summary of how reserves are currently being allocated in each year of the MTFP (based on an assumed zero increase in NPG) the detail of which can see found at Appendix 6:

Earmarked Reserves	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance	2,477,571	2,014,313	1,462,705	1,311,735
Movements (see appendix 6)	(463,258)	(551,608)	(150,970)	(78,448)
Closing Balance	2,014,313	1,462,705	1,311,735	1,233,287
General Reserve	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000

7.4 If no increases in NPG are received for the next three years our Earmarked Reserve balances will be reduced by over 37% at the end of this MTFP period based on current assumptions and scenario planning (future years indicative budget gap deficits are included).

7.5 Legislation does not prescribe how much the minimum level of reserves should be. The Section 151 officer is tasked with recommending the minimum level of reserves required as part of the budget setting process having regard to elements of risk in the Authority’s finances. Since February 2020, the financial risks which all public bodies face will have increased, due to the pandemic. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report on the adequacy of the Council’s financial resources on an annual basis.

7.6 Earmarked reserves are working balances and many are ringfenced as they represent external match funding. These balances will naturally fluctuate between years. The current MTFP has been put together using cautious assumptions and our reserves risk assessed as normal. Year one (2021/22) can be balanced by using the surplus forecast to be achieved in 2020/21, which has mainly resulted in work program slippage due to the pandemic and therefore work programmes have been carried forward. Even though years two and three are currently forecast to be in deficit, if there is no future increase in NPG, the position is considered to be manageable; by undertaking further cost cutting, service reduction or restructuring.

7.7 The General (unallocated) Reserve balance was increased in 2019 to £500,000 to maintain this reserve at approximately 12% of the net budget, or circa three months’ worth of salary bill (for going concern purposes). This amount does still maintain a reserve of 12% of the 2021/22 budget which is deemed to be sufficient.

8 Risk Analysis

8.1 It should be noted that the first year of the MTFP i.e. the 2021/22 budget is the most robust and accurate financial plan of the three-year period; it is inevitable that future years’ financial plans can change for all sorts of reasons and influences, internal and external. However, as, at the time of writing, NPG has not been confirmed for 2021/22 (and beyond) there is a degree of uncertainty and there is a risk that the 2021/22 budget may have to be re-visited. The Authority continues to actively manage its financial and non-financial risks and therefore makes allowances for them

by promoting a culture of flexibility and agility to militate against threats, to be proactive and to embrace opportunities as they arise. Due to the current uncertainty, spending in quarter 4 of 2020/21 is being even more tightly controlled.

- 8.2 The budget and MTFP contains a number of assumptions that may or may not prove to be accurate. In addition, events may occur that have the potential to affect the Authority's underlying finances. We must therefore consider for ongoing risks and uncertainties such as:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Factors
Brexit	High	Unknown	At the date of this report, there remain a number of uncertainties associated with Brexit and which may have a positive or negative outcome for the Authority. Positive outcomes may include additional funding for ELMS Future of Farming. Uncertainties which might be either positive or negative include the economic performance of the wider economy, and its impact on government funding or on investment markets (and therefore on Pension funding); and changes in tourism patterns.
NPG – no increase	High	High	Level of reserves held. NPG has not yet been notified at time of writing this report. Budgets may have to be revised
Staff costs in excess of budget	Low	High	Beyond 2021/22, annual inflation-related pay awards are assumed to continue at the rate of 2.0%. This assumption is used for modelling purposes only. Higher rates of national pay award may be agreed (as the local government pay continues to lag behind inflation); this would also have a knock-on effect on employer pension contributions. Provision (short term) made in reserves. Some notice will be provided which will enable a timely response.
Failure to achieve earned income projections	Low	Medium	Achievement of targets is kept under continuous review. Projections have been modified for any long-term impact of COVID19 that may continue. Some anticipated grant income may not be achieved, in which case the related expenditure will not take place (so no net impact).
Liabilities related to property estate	Medium	Medium	A contingency fund established in reserves. On-going maintenance programme and not all property costs need to be met immediately.
Pensions valuation may	Low	Medium	Previous investment by the Authority to contain future costs. 2019 valuation has resulted in stable costs for next two years

increase costs			and funding position at 97.8%. Future fund performance is reliant on investment returns, demographic changes and other changes in financial and non-financial assumptions. The next valuation is due in 2022
Failure to deliver Business Plan objectives	Low	High	Closely managed process, with regular in-year review. Where additional spending is required to achieve delivery, budget can be made available from the General Reserve or – if necessary - from redirecting resources from lower priority programmes.
Coronavirus Pandemic	High	Medium	We envisage that the requirement or social distancing and working from home will continue until at least summer 2021. This will impact on our work programmes which we have sought to incorporate in the budget (e.g. reduced travel costs). Covid is also increasing our costs (for example, see the paper on visitor management). Longer-term we will need to consider our operating model. If the economy does not recover quickly then it will increase the likelihood of a reduction in NPG.
External grant income reduced	High	Medium	We have an active programme of developing new project ideas, but external funding sources are extremely competitive, and many grant programmes were suspended in 2020; time and capacity to bid has to be carefully factored in.
The Landscapes (Glover) Review	High	Medium	Published in Autumn 2019, the recommended a five-year settlement for National Park Authorities and real terms protection. This was a limited ambition given the other actions recommended in the report but even this limited financial ambition has not been accepted by the Government. The proposed new National Landscapes Service could mean the end of independent National Park Authorities

9 Equality & Sustainability Impact

- 9.1 Consideration is given when deciding which areas of expenditure should be supported of the impact on under-represented groups, and the need to promote equal opportunities both as an employer and in respect of the services provided. Our Climate and Environmental Emergency declaration does feature within the MTFP; however, our ability to deliver significant projects could be hampered due to lack of resources (funding).

10 Conclusions

- 10.1 The Authority's cost base is increasing at a faster rate than its underlying funding and there are one-off, and ongoing costs, that need to be met. A MTFP has been produced bringing together sensible assumptions over the future direction of income and expenses. However, the reality will inevitably be different, and we need to be prepared for less favourable scenarios. In particular, NPG may not increase and could potentially be cut through the CSR, now due in 2021; the Pension Fund revaluation occurs every three years and can result in increased costs; staff costs could continue to rise; pay award cost are currently unknown for this and future years.
- 10.2 This is very much a one-year budget whilst we wait until we have a clearer view of longer-term prospects. At the time of writing, we do not know our NPG settlement for 2021/22 let alone for 2022/23 and 2023/24. It seems sensible to wait for the results of the next CSR before adjusting our financial and other plans beyond 2022; the results may be positive, in which case any action taken now would be unnecessary and potentially damaging. Indeed, accurate financial planning and budgeting continues to be very challenging given the current uncertainty.
- 10.3 Clause 25 of part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (section 151 Officer) to report to Members, when calculating the net budget requirement, on the robustness of estimates made including the overall public sector financing climate. The 2021/22 budget is "balanced" and is considered to be robust and realistic but may be impacted because of the uncertainty over National Park Grant for 2021/22 and the pandemic. Indeed, accurate financial planning and budgeting is very difficult given the current level of uncertainty. It should be noted that reserves balances may have to be depleted at a faster rate than in previous years; and to that end we are exercising a degree of prudence with our revenue spending in the final quarter of 2021/22.
- 10.4 A continued period of austerity will threaten our ability to deliver National Park purposes, contribute to the targets in the 25 Year Environment Plan, meet our publicly stated objectives around climate change and also potentially question the Government's commitment to the Glover Landscapes Review.

DONNA HEALY

Attachments: Appendices 1, 2 & 3 – 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24 Revenue Budgets
Appendix 4 – Budget bid cuts and reductions
Appendix 5 – Reserves risk based analysis
Appendix 6 – Reserve balances

20210305 DH 2021/22 Budget & MTFP

Appendix 1 to NPA/21/009

BUDGET 2021/22	Salaries	Travel	Transport	Premises	Projects: Supplies & Services	GROSS EXPENDITURE	Grants	Treasury	Fees & Charges	Sales	Rents & Other	INCOME	NET EXPENDITURE
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT	30,922					30,922	(30,922)					(30,922)	0
BIO-DIVERSITY	106,474	1,050			75,285	182,809	(13,500)					(13,500)	169,309
LAND MANAGEMENT	51,906	675			40,970	93,551			(176)			(176)	93,375
WOODLANDS	41,755	100			9,500	51,355						0	51,355
DARTMOOR HEADWATERS PROJECT	70,849					70,849	(70,849)					(70,849)	0
PEATLANDS	41,820				395	42,215						0	42,215
HILL FARM PROJECT	51,571					51,571	(34,833)					(34,833)	16,738
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	395,297	1,825	0	0	126,150	523,272	(150,104)	0	(176)	0	0	(150,280)	372,992
ARCHAEOLOGY	125,196	1,100			50,057	176,353	(52,242)		(3,500)			(55,742)	120,611
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	41,755	200				41,955						0	41,955
UPPACOTT				17,115		17,115					0	0	17,115
CULTURAL HERITAGE	166,951	1,300	0	17,115	50,057	235,423	(52,242)	0	(3,500)	0	0	(55,742)	179,681
VISITOR FACILITIES	49,631	250		11,460	217,329	278,670			(122,411)			(122,411)	156,259
ACCESS & RECREATION	86,023	450			38,065	124,538						0	124,538
PROW	100,468				53,437	153,905	(43,000)					(43,000)	110,905
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & TRANSPORT	10,677	250			8,515	19,442						0	19,442
RECREATION MANAGEMENT	246,799	950	0	11,460	317,346	576,555	(43,000)	0	(122,411)	0	0	(165,411)	411,144
VISITOR CENTRES	228,432	1,150		23,099	116,475	369,156			(750)	(156,000)		(156,750)	212,406
COMMUNICATIONS	182,115	550			37,860	220,525			(17,500)			(17,500)	203,025
NATURALLY HEALTHY DARTMOOR					1,000	1,000						0	1,000
EDUCATION	206,359	1,100	1,718		19,220	228,397			(3,200)			(3,200)	225,197
PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING	616,906	2,800	1,718	23,099	174,555	819,078	0	0	(21,450)	(156,000)	0	(177,450)	641,628
RANGERS	384,636		31,550	3,444	63,664	483,294						0	483,294
CONSERVATION WORKS SERVICE	106,924		38,000	11,921	9,050	165,895						0	165,895
RANGERS, ESTATES & VOLUNTEERS	491,560	0	69,550	15,365	72,714	649,189	0	0	0	0	0	0	649,189
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	518,099	3,075			33,235	554,409	0		(192,000)			(192,000)	362,409
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	518,099	3,075	0	0	33,235	554,409	0	0	(192,000)	0	0	(192,000)	362,409
FORWARD PLANNING & COMMUNITY	131,732	750			25,000	157,482	0					0	157,482
FORWARD PLANNING	131,732	750	0	0	25,000	157,482	0	0	0	0	0	0	157,482
CORPORATE CENTRE	207,957	3,550			131,778	343,285						0	343,285
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC CORE	207,957	3,550	0	0	131,778	343,285	0	0	0	0	0	0	343,285
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	157,886	950			55,241	214,077			(3,837)			(3,837)	210,240
CORPORATE OPERATING COSTS			8,540		109,902	118,442						0	118,442
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	152,753				11,027	163,780						0	163,780
LEGAL					70,000	70,000						0	70,000
HUMAN RESOURCES	114,500	450			46,552	161,502						0	161,502
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PARKE)	14,209			94,079		108,288						0	108,288
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PRINCETOWN)				58,070		58,070					(21,684)	(21,684)	36,386
CORPORATE SERVICES	439,348	1,400	8,540	152,149	292,722	894,159	0	0	(3,837)	0	(21,684)	(25,521)	868,638
PROJECT FUND					75,000	75,000						0	75,000
OTHER	0	0	0	0	75,000	75,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	75,000
TOTAL	3,214,649	15,650	79,808	219,188	1,298,557	4,827,852	(245,346)	0	(343,374)	(156,000)	(21,684)	(766,404)	4,061,448

Summary:	
Gross Expenditure	4,827,852
Reserves and brought forward balances	(235,583)
Income	(766,404)
Net Budget	3,825,865
National Park Grant	(3,825,865)
Deficit / (Surplus)	0

Appendix 2 to NPA/21/009

BUDGET 2022/23	Salaries	Travel	Transport	Premises	Projects: Supplies & Services	GROSS EXPENDITURE	Grants	Treasury	Fees & Charges	Sales	Rents & Other	INCOME	NET EXPENDITURE
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
BIO-DIVERSITY	109,866	900			44,785	155,551	(5,000)					(5,000)	150,551
LAND MANAGEMENT	52,969	550			32,155	85,674			(176)			(176)	85,498
WOODLANDS	42,615	100			9,500	52,215						0	52,215
HILL FARM PROJECT	17,082					17,082						0	17,082
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	222,532	1,550	0	0	86,440	310,522	(5,000)	0	(176)	0	0	(5,176)	305,346
ARCHAEOLOGY	121,798	1,100			42,639	165,537	(59,200)		(3,500)			(62,700)	102,837
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	42,615	200				42,815						0	42,815
UPPACOTT				32,170		32,170					0	0	32,170
CULTURAL HERITAGE	164,413	1,300	0	32,170	42,639	240,522	(59,200)	0	(3,500)	0	0	(62,700)	177,822
VISITOR FACILITIES	52,089	250		11,620	174,795	238,754			(121,500)			(121,500)	117,254
ACCESS & RECREATION	88,975	450			48,513	137,938						0	137,938
PROW	97,249				53,562	150,811	(43,000)					(43,000)	107,811
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & TRANSPORT	11,155	250			8,745	20,150						0	20,150
RECREATION MANAGEMENT	249,468	950	0	11,620	285,615	547,653	(43,000)	0	(121,500)	0	0	(164,500)	383,153
VISITOR CENTRES	234,222	1,150		23,841	127,180	386,393			(750)	(170,000)		(170,750)	215,643
COMMUNICATIONS	190,889	800			36,335	228,024			(19,000)			(19,000)	209,024
NATURALLY HEALTHY DARTMOOR					1,000	1,000						0	1,000
EDUCATION	210,581	1,100	1,718		19,625	233,024			(4,100)			(4,100)	228,924
PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING	635,692	3,050	1,718	23,841	184,140	848,441	0	0	(23,850)	(170,000)	0	(193,850)	654,591
RANGERS	371,410		31,550	3,444	21,723	428,127						0	428,127
CONSERVATION WORKS SERVICE	109,051		15,000	19,580	9,050	152,681						0	152,681
RANGERS, ESTATES & VOLUNTEERS	480,461	0	46,550	23,024	30,773	580,808	0	0	0	0	0	0	580,808
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	531,797	3,075			41,897	576,769	0		(192,000)			(192,000)	384,769
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	531,797	3,075	0	0	41,897	576,769	0	0	(192,000)	0	0	(192,000)	384,769
FORWARD PLANNING & COMMUNITY	127,269	750			37,000	165,019	0					0	165,019
FORWARD PLANNING	127,269	750	0	0	37,000	165,019	0	0	0	0	0	0	165,019
CORPORATE CENTRE	212,046	3,550			129,820	345,416		(5,000)				(5,000)	340,416
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC CORE	212,046	3,550	0	0	129,820	345,416	0	(5,000)	0	0	0	(5,000)	340,416
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	163,977	1,200			47,083	212,260			(3,337)			(3,337)	208,923
CORPORATE OPERATING COSTS			10,740		110,441	121,181						0	121,181
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	149,819				10,986	160,805						0	160,805
LEGAL					70,000	70,000						0	70,000
HUMAN RESOURCES	116,754	450			52,517	169,721						0	169,721
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PARKE)	14,505			92,440		106,945						0	106,945
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PRINCETOWN)				63,317		63,317					(22,232)	(22,232)	41,085
CORPORATE SERVICES	445,055	1,650	10,740	155,757	291,027	904,229	0	0	(3,337)	0	(22,232)	(25,569)	878,660
PROJECT FUND					75,000	75,000						0	75,000
OTHER	0	0	0	0	75,000	75,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	75,000
TOTAL	3,068,733	15,875	59,008	246,412	1,204,351	4,594,379	(107,200)	(5,000)	(344,363)	(170,000)	(22,232)	(648,795)	3,945,584

Summary:	
Gross Expenditure	4,594,379
Reserves	(33,433)
Income	(648,795)
Net Budget	3,912,151
National Park Grant	(3,825,865)
Deficit / (Surplus)	86,286

BUDGET 2023/24	Salaries	Travel	Transport	Premises	Projects: Supplies & Services	GROSS EXPENDITURE	Grants	Treasury	Fees & Charges	Sales	Rents & Other	INCOME	NET EXPENDITURE
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
BIO-DIVERSITY	99,262	1,000			30,285	130,547	(5,000)					(5,000)	125,547
LAND MANAGEMENT	48,543	625			14,655	63,823			(176)			(176)	63,647
WOODLANDS	43,492	225			7,500	51,217						0	51,217
HILL FARM PROJECT	17,434					17,434						0	17,434
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	208,731	1,850	0	0	52,440	263,021	(5,000)	0	(176)	0	0	(5,176)	257,845
ARCHAEOLOGY	124,316	1,300			34,673	160,289	(49,400)		(3,000)			(52,400)	107,889
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	43,492	250				43,742						0	43,742
UPPACOTT				13,450		13,450					0	0	13,450
CULTURAL HERITAGE	167,808	1,550	0	13,450	34,673	217,481	(49,400)	0	(3,000)	0	0	(52,400)	165,081
VISITOR FACILITIES	54,337	225		11,760	159,337	225,659			(121,500)			(121,500)	104,159
ACCESS & RECREATION	92,038	650			43,613	136,301						0	136,301
PROW	99,831				53,690	153,521	(43,000)					(43,000)	110,521
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & TRANSPORT	11,659	450			8,990	21,099						0	21,099
RECREATION MANAGEMENT	257,865	1,325	0	11,760	265,630	536,580	(43,000)	0	(121,500)	0	0	(164,500)	372,080
VISITOR CENTRES	239,949	1,300		24,086	143,536	408,871			(750)	(197,000)		(197,750)	211,121
COMMUNICATIONS	196,164	650			36,209	233,023			(20,000)			(20,000)	213,023
EDUCATION	214,889	1,200	1,718		19,275	237,082			(3,925)			(3,925)	233,157
PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING	651,002	3,150	1,718	24,086	199,020	878,976	0	0	(24,675)	(197,000)	0	(221,675)	657,301
RANGERS	381,383		31,550	3,444	26,283	442,660						0	442,660
CONSERVATION WORKS SERVICE	111,220		15,000	14,210	8,100	148,530						0	148,530
RANGERS, ESTATES & VOLUNTEERS	492,603	0	46,550	17,654	34,383	591,190	0	0	0	0	0	0	591,190
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	545,517	3,200			41,983	590,700	0		(192,000)			(192,000)	398,700
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	545,517	3,200	0	0	41,983	590,700	0	0	(192,000)	0	0	(192,000)	398,700
FORWARD PLANNING & COMMUNITY	132,006	750			20,000	152,756	0					0	152,756
FORWARD PLANNING	132,006	750	0	0	20,000	152,756	0	0	0	0	0	0	152,756
CORPORATE CENTRE	216,011	4,500			131,152	351,663		(5,000)				(5,000)	346,663
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC CORE	216,011	4,500	0	0	131,152	351,663	0	(5,000)	0	0	0	(5,000)	346,663
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	169,095	900			48,059	218,054			(3,837)			(3,837)	214,217
CORPORATE OPERATING COSTS			10,740		112,045	122,785						0	122,785
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	153,665				11,449	165,114						0	165,114
LEGAL					70,000	70,000						0	70,000
HUMAN RESOURCES	120,610	500			53,752	174,862						0	174,862
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PARKE)	14,808			90,834		105,642						0	105,642
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION (PRINCETOWN)				57,858		57,858					(22,781)	(22,781)	35,077
CORPORATE SERVICES	458,178	1,400	10,740	148,692	295,305	914,315	0	0	(3,837)	0	(22,781)	(26,618)	887,697
PROJECT FUND					75,000	75,000						0	75,000
OTHER	0	0	0	0	75,000	75,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	75,000
TOTAL	3,129,721	17,725	59,008	215,642	1,149,586	4,571,682	(97,400)	(5,000)	(345,188)	(197,000)	(22,781)	(667,369)	3,904,313

Summary:	
Gross Expenditure	4,571,682
Reserves	(20,073)
Income	(667,369)
Net Budget	3,884,240
National Park Grant	(3,825,865)
Deficit / (Surplus)	58,375

Budget Bid Reductions and Deletions			
Cost Centre	Description	Reduced by £	Deleted £
Access	Miles without stiles	10,000	
Access	Access point infrastructure	5,000	
Access	Erosion works	10,000	
Archaeology	Bellever excavation publication costs		3,000
Archaeology	Publication cosst for other community projects		1,000
Biodiversity	Species reintroduction strategy		3,000
Biodiversity	Nature recovery project phase II - working with natural processes		10,000
Biodiversity	Nature Recover project phase III - Dartmoor soils and carbon study		3,000
Biodiversity	Nature recover project phase V - engagement		2,000
Conservation Works Team	Hand tools replacement & equipment repairs	3,000	
Corporate	Replace video conf system		865
Development Management	replacement scanner		4,699
Education	Events	5,000	
Education	Youth Ranger programme	1,500	
Human Resources	Corporate training	4,800	
All Service Areas	Travel & Subsistence - 25% reduction	12,550	
Totals		51,850	27,564

2020/21 RESERVES: RISK BASED ANALYSIS	Risk Level	Rate	2020/21 Opening Balance £'000
Grants & Contributions with Restrictions carried forward:	N/A	Actual	(299)
Budget Management Fund:			
Employees - Maternity / Paternity Cover / Pay Awards	Medium	Est.	(52)
Costs & Awards: Appeals / Public Enquiries / Litigation	High	Est.	(250)
Invest to Save Fund	N/A	Actual	(34)
Loss of Income, Inflation or Price Increases	Medium	Est.	(35)
Climate Change - Action Plan projects	N/A	Actual	(50)
2020/21 Outturn - to manage future budget deficits	N/A	Est.	(142)
Capital			
Property: Repairs & Maintenance (sinking fund)	Medium	Est.	(200)
Vehicles: Provision for future replacement of vehicles (sinking fund)	High	Actual	(127)
Planning IT System	High	Est.	(50)
Capital Receipts Unapplied	N/A	Actual	(21)
Known Commitments/Contracts			
Eco Skills project	N/A	Actual	(5)
National Park Management Plan	Low	Est.	(26)
Employment contract	N/A	Actual	(10)
Match Funding Reserve			
Cash Flow management for externally funded projects	Medium	Actual	(236)
Public Arts Project - Moor Otters II	Low	Actual	(120)
Unallocated fund balance	N/A	Actual	(357)
General Reserve - Minimum amount to cover unanticipated costs / emergencies	N/A	Actual	(500)
Total Reserve Balance			(2,514)

GENERAL FUND RESERVE BALANCES

Appendix 6 to NPA/21/009

GENERAL FUND RESERVE BALANCES	2020/21 Opening Balance £	2020/21 In-year Movements £	2020/21 Transfers from Revenue at Year end £	2020/21 Forecast Closing Balance £	2021/22 Forecast Movements £	2022/23 Forecast Movements £	2023/24 Forecast Movements £	2023/24 Forecast Closing Balance £	Notes
Grants & Contributions with Restrictions									
Hill Farm Project (Princes Countryside Fund)	(35,330)	35,330		0				0	
English Heritage: White Horse Hill	(20,036)	20,036		0				0	
Communities Fund Grant (from District Councils)	(109,799)	20,000		(89,799)	89,799			0	
DCLG - Neighbourhood Planning Grant	(10,000)			(10,000)				(10,000)	Held for community planning - referendums
DCLG - Unringfenced Grants	(84,940)			(84,940)	31,434	33,433	20,073	0	
Donate for Dartmoor Balances (public donations)	(22,067)	17,500	(4,433)	(9,000)	9,000			0	
Historic England -PALS Grant	(2,841)		2,841	0				0	
Police & Crime Commissioner Grant	(5,000)	5,000		0				0	
Peatland Partnership	(115,411)	41,945		(73,466)	42,215	31,251		0	NPA17/041
ELMS Test and Trials project	(32,755)	32,755		0				0	
Dartmoor Headwaters Project (Environment Agency)	(115,121)	115,121		0				0	
Woodland Trust - Eco Skills	(5,000)			(5,000)	5,000			0	
Access - MoD	(4,000)	4,000		0				0	
PRoW - MoD	(2,000)	2,000		0				0	
Clarion Housing #iwill			(7,600)	(7,600)	7,600			0	
Clif Bar			(10,000)	(10,000)	10,000			0	
Moor Medieval			(3,036)	(3,036)	3,036			0	
HE - HERO post			(6,805)	(6,805)	6,805			0	
Budget Management Fund - Provisions (risk based)									
Employees	(52,000)			(52,000)	10,000			(42,000)	See risk assessment for breakdown - 2020/21 pay award
Costs and Awards: Appeals/Public Enquiries/Litigation	(250,000)			(250,000)				(250,000)	See risk assessment for breakdown
Loss of Income and Inflation	(34,500)			(34,500)				(34,500)	See risk assessment for breakdown - C19 impact may mean that this is needed in 2021/22
Invest to Save and / or Generate Projects	(33,733)			(33,733)				(33,733)	
Climate Change /Emergency Declaration	(50,000)			(50,000)	50,000			0	NPA/19/020 and Climate change action plan
Annual Revenue Outturn and MTFP budget gaps	(179,955)	163,094	(125,122)	(141,983)	112,895	86,286	58,375	115,573	Budget gaps in years 2&3 to be met from savings or other unallocated balances in no increases NPG
Capital Funds									
Vehicles - Sinking Fund - Replacement	(127,321)			(127,321)	2,231			(125,090)	2021 CWT vehicle replacement
Capital Receipts Unapplied	(20,769)			(20,769)	20,769			0	2021 CWT vehicle replacement
Property - Sinking Fund - Repairs & Maintenance	(200,000)			(200,000)	30,000			(170,000)	Uppacott Cottage refurbishment
Planning IT System			(50,000)	(50,000)	50,000			0	Estimate only
Known Commitments/Contracts/B/fwd Balances									
Local Plan Review	(65,420)	63,015	2,405	0				0	
National Parl Management Plan	(25,590)			(25,590)	25,590			0	
Historic Farm Buildings Grant Scheme Support	(14,392)		14,392	0				0	
Eco Skills Project	(5,000)			(5,000)	5,000			0	
Nature Recovery Support	(8,000)	8,000		0				0	
Ecology Contracts - work in progress	(8,548)	8,548		0				0	
Acces contracts - work in progress	(8,202)	8,202		0				0	
Visitor Management contracts - work in progress	(16,930)	16,930		0				0	
PRoW contracts - work in progress	(11,078)	11,078		0				0	
Visitor Centres contracts - work in progress	(867)	867		0				0	
Enjoy Dartmoor contract	(550)	550		0				0	
Office 365 Contract	(20,979)	20,979		0				0	
Staff contract extention	0		(10,234)	(10,234)	10,234			0	
Match Funding Reserve									
Cash Flow management of external funding bids	(196,500)		(40,000)	(236,500)				(236,500)	To cover the cash flow relating to claims made in arrears i.e. cash flow delay
Greater Dartmoor LEAF 2015-2020	(6,900)	6,900		0				0	NPA/14/038 for 6 years 2015-2020
Moor Otters	(9,000)	9,000		0				0	Projects span more than one year
Postbridge Visitor Centre Building Project	(140,000)		140,000	0				0	NPA18/017 - completed and all costs met from other income
Public Arts Project 2020	(120,000)			(120,000)	30,000			(90,000)	NPA/19/015 - risk that costs will not be covered by income
Unallocated fund balance	(307,037)		(50,000)	(357,037)				(357,037)	Allocate to the National Lottery Heritage Fund bid when the Fund re-opens (delayed due to Covid 19)
	0			0				0	
Total Earmarked Reserves	(2,477,571)	610,850	(147,592)	(2,014,313)	551,608	150,970	78,448	(1,233,287)	
General Reserve (unallocated emergency reserve)	(500,000)			(500,000)				(500,000)	
Total General Fund Balance	(2,977,571)	610,850	(147,592)	(2,514,313)	551,608	150,970	78,448	(1,733,287)	



NPA/21/010

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2021/22

Report of the Head of Business Support

Recommendation: **That the Authority approves the 2021/22 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy (Appendix 1)**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2018, following the publication of a revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management (the Code) the Authority adopted a revised Treasury Management Policy Statement together with a statement of its Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). No changes are proposed to these policies for 2021/22.
- 1.2 The policy requires the Authority to consider a treasury strategy report, setting out the strategy and plans to be followed in the coming year as part of the budget process.

2 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

- 2.1 The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy is set out at Appendix 1; there are no changes this year. It sets out the Authority's minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy, capital expenditure funding, prudential indicators, the current treasury position, debt and investments; prospects for interest rates; the borrowing strategy; and the investment strategy.
- 2.2 The Authority's capital spend is commonly of a small-scale nature, e.g., acquisition of vehicles or IT. The Authority invests its cash working balances during the year via Barclays Bank PLC and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk is therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management. The overriding objective continues to be to invest prudently, with priority being given to security and liquidity before yield.
- 2.3 The Authority has no current plans to borrow and funds capital expenditure from National Park Grant, earmarked reserves, capital receipts or external funding which means that many of the *Prudential Indicators* are not applicable.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The Authority's arrangements for treasury management are maintained at a high standard. The Head of Business Support continues to consult with Devon County Council's Assistant County Treasurer (Investments and Treasury Management) 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.

DONNA HEALY

Attachments: Appendix 1 - Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

20210305 DH Treasury Management

TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

1. Introduction

The Treasury Management Strategy sets out the Authority's policies in relation to: the management its cash flows, its banking, borrowing and investment strategies, monitoring of the level of debt (if it has any) and funding of the capital programme. The Treasury Management Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Capital Strategy, which is included in the annual Budget Report.

In February 2018, following the publications of a revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) the Authority adopted a revised Treasury Management Policy Statement together with a statement of Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). No changes are proposed to these policies for 2021/22. This Treasury Management Strategy document sets out:

- Minimum revenue provision;
- Capital expenditure funding;
- The current treasury position, debt and investments;
- Prospects for interest rates;
- The borrowing strategy;
- Prudential indicators on impact of capital financing and monitoring of the level and make-up of debt;
- The investment strategy.

2. Minimum Revenue Provision

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is a charge to the Authority's revenue accounts to make provision for the repayment of external debt and internal borrowing; there is a statutory obligation to charge the revenue account an annual amount of MRP. The Authority has no external debt or borrowing.

3. Capital Expenditure

The Authority rarely has a capital programme; capital spend is commonly of a small scale nature such as related to the acquisition of vehicles or IT. For any larger schemes the Authority receives a specific report to support the decision making. The Authority's capital programme for the current MTFP period is set out below:

Project	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Replacement Vehicles (CWT)	23,000	0	0
Development Management IT system	50,000	0	0
Higher Uppacott cottage internal refurbishment	30,000	0	0
Total	103,000	0	0

Funded From	£	£	
National Park Grant or Revenue Reserves	80,000	0	0
Capital Receipts	23,000	0	0
Total	103,000	0	0

4. Prudential Indicators

Capital Financing Requirement - this represents the Authority's underlying debt position, showing how the previous and future spend for capital purposes has been or will be financed by borrowing or entering into other long-term liabilities.

Authorised Limit for total external debt - this represents the level at which the Authority is able to borrow and enter into long-term liabilities. Additional borrowing beyond this limit is prohibited without Authority approval. The Authorised limit is currently set at £100,000 (representing the Authority's available bank overdraft facility).

Operational Boundary - this is based on the anticipated level of external debt needed during the year. Variations in cash flow can lead to occasional, short term breaches of the operational boundary that are acceptable. Sustained breaches would be an indication that there may be a danger of exceeding authorised limits. The Operational Boundary is currently set at £100,000 (representing the Authority's available bank overdraft facility).

Underlying Borrowing Requirement to Gross Debt - the Authority needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the Capital Financing Requirement.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream - this shows the relationship between Capital Financing Costs and the net Revenue Stream.

5. Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

These relate to the fixed and variable rates of interest on loans and borrowings. As the Authority does not have any external borrowing, these indicators do not apply.

6. Monitoring the Indicators

It is important to monitor performance against forward looking indicators and the requirement that borrowing should only be for capital purposes. If we had borrowing, it would be monitored daily against the operational boundary and authorised limit. If these limits were to be breached, a report would be brought to the Authority outlining what action would be necessary to prevent borrowing exceeding the limit and the impact on the revenue budget. The indicators for capital expenditure, capital financing requirement, capital costs and the treasury management indicators are monitored monthly if they apply. Any significant variations would be reported to the Authority.

7. Analysis of Long Term Debt

The Authority has no long term debt.

8. Schedule of Investments

At the time of writing this report all the Authority's working capital was being held in its bank accounts. Use of a Barclays Treasury Deposit Account is used when interest rates are positive. The Authority currently has no fixed rate investments in place.

The annual investment returns history and current position is set out below.

2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Forecast
£15,000	£17,998	£19,162	£17,950	£10,616	23,505	£21,500	£5,500

The Authority's cash balance available for investment varies during the year, with the balance building up on a quarterly basis when we receive National Park Grant; it then tapers down at the end of each quarter and towards the end of the financial year. It is anticipated that long term cash balances available for investment at 31 March 2021 will be circa £2 million.

Investment performance in previous was affected by the low interest rates introduced as part of the measures used to alleviate the global credit crunch and the introduction of new banking regulations requiring banks to hold higher levels of liquidity to act as a buffer. Investment performance has been affected by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic during 2020/21; with banks offering zero interest rates for low balances held.

9. Prospects for Interest Rates

Forecasting future interest rate movements even one year ahead is always difficult. The factors affecting interest rate movements are clearly outside the Authority's control. Whilst short term rates are generally linked to the Bank of England's Base Rate, long term rates are determined by other factors e.g. the market in Gilts.

The coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March to cut Bank Rate to first 0.25%, and then to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings to 5th November, although some forecasters had suggested that a cut into negative territory could happen. However, the Governor of the Bank of England has made it clear that he currently thinks that such a move would do more damage than good and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. No increase in Bank Rate is expected in the foreseeable future as economic recovery is expected to be only gradual and, therefore, prolonged.

Gilt yields had already been on a generally falling trend up until the coronavirus crisis hit western economies during March 2020. After gilt yields spiked up during the financial crisis in March, we have seen these yields fall sharply to unprecedented lows as investors panicked during March in selling shares in anticipation of impending recessions in western economies, and moved cash into safe haven assets i.e., government bonds. However, major western central banks took rapid action to deal with excessive stress in Gilt yields and, therefore, PWLB rates have been at remarkably low rates during 2020/21, and as shown in the following table there is expected to be little upward movement in PWLB rates over the next two years. It will take economies, including the UK, a prolonged period to recover all the momentum they have lost in the sharp recession caused during the coronavirus shut down period. From time to time, gilt yields, and therefore PWLB rates, can be subject to exceptional levels of volatility due to geo-political, sovereign debt crisis, emerging market developments and sharp changes in investor sentiment, (as shown on 9th November when the first results of a successful COVID-19 vaccine trial were announced). Such volatility could occur at any time during the forecast period.

When budgeting for interest receipts a prudent approach has been adopted to ensure that, as far as is possible, the budget will be achieved.

10. Borrowing and Debt Management Strategy 2020/21 – 2022/23

As the Authority is debt free and has no current plans to borrow, there is nothing to report under this heading.

11. Investment Strategy 2021/22 – 2023/24

The Authority continues to adopt a very prudent approach to its cash investments and its investments will be “Specified Investments” as defined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The lending policy is kept under constant review with reference to strict criteria for inclusion in the counterparty list. The Treasury Management Strategy will continue to be set to ensure a prudent and secure approach.

The Authority is required under the guidance in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to approve an Annual Investment Strategy. The overall aims of the Authority’s strategy continue to be to:

- Limit the risk to the loss of capital;
- Ensure that funds are always available to meet cash flow requirements;
- Maximise investment returns, consistent with the first two aims; and
- Review new investment instruments as they come to the Local Authority market, and to assess whether they could be a useful part of our investment process.

The overriding objective will be to invest prudently, with priority being given to security and liquidity before yield.

The outlook for cash investment remains challenging. Whereas in the past there has been a perception that Governments would not allow banks to fail, the new regulatory environment has put more emphasis on the requirement for investors to take a hit by funding a “bail-in”. A bail-in is where the bank’s creditors, including local authorities depositing money with them, bear some of the burden by having part of the debt they are owed written off. The balance of risk is therefore changing, and as a result the Authority has considered alternative forms of investment in order to diversify its risk.

Under the Markets in Financial Instruments (MiFID II) directive, local authorities are now classed as retail clients by the Financial Conducts Authority (FCA). This has implications for the range of investments that are available to local authorities. While bank and building society deposits are unaffected by the regulations, some banks have determined that they will only take term deposits from professional clients and a range of alternative forms of investments are only available to professional clients. However, if the local authority meets the criteria set by the FCA, then it can apply to be “opted up”. The Authority does not meet the criteria to do so.

Specified Investments

Specified Investments will be those that meet the criteria in the MHCLG Guidance i.e. the investment:

- Is sterling denominated;
- Has a maximum maturity of 1 year;
- Meets the “high credit quality” as determined by the Authority or is made with the UK government or is made with a local authority in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland or a parish or community council;

- The making of which is not defined as capital expenditure under section 25(1)(d) in SI 2003 No 3146 (i.e. the investment is not loan capital or share capital in a body corporate).

Specified investments will include bank and building society deposits. Security is achieved by the creation of an 'Approved list of Counterparties'. These are the banks, building societies, money market funds and other public bodies with whom we are prepared to deposit funds. In preparing the list, a number of criteria will be used not only to determine who is on the list, but also to set limits as to how much money can be placed with them, and how long that money can be placed for.

Banks are expected to have a high credit rating. The Authority uses the ratings issued by all three of the major credit rating agencies, Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's, made available to the Authority via Devon County Council's Assistant County Treasurer (Investments and Treasury Management), who monitors them daily and advises the Authority accordingly.

The lowest rating published by any of the agencies is used to decide whether an institution is eligible for inclusion. Where the counterparty is only rated by two of the major ratings agencies, the lowest rating published by either of the two is used. This rating also determines the maximum amount which can be loaned to an individual counterparty. Non-Eurozone overseas banks that meet the criteria are included from countries with a high Sovereign rating. The time length of all deposits with financial institutions will be managed prudently, taking account of the latest advice from Devon County Council's Assistant County Treasurer (Investments and Treasury Management). The Authority's investments will continue to be in bank deposits.

The 'Approved List of Counterparties' specifies individual institutions, and is formally reviewed at least monthly. Notification of credit rating downgrades (or other market intelligence) is acted upon immediately, resulting in any further lending being suspended.

Counterparty Approved List criteria

Counterparty Type		Fitch	Moody's	Standard & Poors
UK Banks	Not below	A- & F1	A3 & P-1	A- & A-1
UK Building Societies	Not below	A- & F1	A3 & P-1	A- & A-1
Non-Eurozone Overseas Banks	Sovereign rating of	AAA	Aaa	AAA
	And not below	A- & F1	A3 & P-1	A- & A-1
Other Local Authorities		N/A	N/A	N/A

Where the short term rating of a counterparty is one notch below the stated criteria, but the counterparty meets the long-term rating criteria, they may still be used, subject to the advice provided by Devon County Council, who will take into account a range of other metrics in arriving at their advice. The credit ratings shown in the table for banks and building societies allow for greater sensitivity in recognising counterparty risk.

Liquidity in investments is the second key factor in determining our strategy. Funds may be earmarked for specific purposes or may be general balances and this will be a consideration in determining the period over which the investment will be made. All known short-term commitments are covered before lending for over 1 month. Where cash is expected to be available long-term (up to a year) the Authority will maximise the length of time for the deposit to obtain the best interest rate possible.

Non-Specified Investments

Non-specified investments are those that do not meet the criteria detailed above, but are intended to be a longer-term investment, generating a higher yield, but with a slightly higher degree of risk e.g. investment in commercial property. The Authority has no non-specified investments.

Interest Rate Targets

For the 2021/22 financial year it has been assumed that the average interest rate earned on short-term lending (to the bank) will be 0% p.a. The target rate takes into account that the Bank of England base rate is likely to remain at 0.10% for the foreseeable future.

Given the degree of uncertainty about future economic prospects and the level of interest rates, Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts will be based on average rates for lending to banks and building societies continuing to be 0.3% for the following two years. However, these will be reviewed in the light of changes to the rate on offer to the Authority over the MTFP period.

Investments that are not part of Treasury Management

The revised Code requires the Authority to report on investments in financial assets and property that are not part of treasury management activity, but where those investments are made primarily to achieve a financial return. The Authority does not currently have a policy of making commercial investments outside of its treasury management activity, for both financial and legal reasons. Any capital investment made or held is for the purposes of delivering operational services and must be in accordance with National Park Purposes.

Performance

The primary aim of the Treasury Management Strategy is to maximise interest receipts over the long term, whilst achieving annual budgets, without taking any undue risk.



NPA/21/011

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

National Parks Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership

Report of the Head of Communications and Fundraising

Recommendation: **That Members**

- (i) delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chair, to agree a further contribution to the operating costs of National Parks Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership for 2021/22 of £8,500**
- (ii) authorise the Chair to write to the NPPL Board to express our thanks for the work they are doing on behalf of all 15 UK National Park Authorities**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to up-date Members on the performance of National Parks Partnerships Limited Liability Partnership (NPPL) and summarise its interim Business Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 NPPL was established in 2015 and has a Management Board comprising a mix of representatives from National Park Authorities (NPAs) and the private sector. The partnership agreement stipulates that there should be a majority of management board members representing/drawn from NPAs.
- 2.2 The Partnership exists to create national level partnerships that will benefit the National Parks, either through direct cash or value in kind benefits. Central to its establishment was the principle that it represented all 15 National Parks and any income secured/other benefits would be distributed evenly across all 15 National Parks.
- 2.3 In 2017 the NPPL Board proposed that NPPL moved to a funded services or subscription model. The proposal was that each NPA pay a fee of £10,000 per annum for NPPL's services for the remainder of the three-year Business Plan.
- 2.4 In October 2019 the NPPL Board presented an updated business plan that took us to the end of the 2020/21 financial year. It was then expected there would be a

review of progress against the plan that would report on the success of the partnership and provide options on future delivery models.

3 Review of NPPL's Performance

- 3.1 The Authority has invested £50,000 in NPPL to-date, £20,000 to establish the partnership and three further payments of £10,000pa as part of the 'subscription' model.
- 3.2 To-date, NPPL has negotiated a number of partnerships and licensing agreements. Some provide an unrestricted cash benefit to the partnership, some are restricted meaning they must be allocated to certain types of projects within the parks, some provide in kind benefit such as uniform for staff and others provide a small amount of income for the partnership through the licensing of the National Parks brand.
- 3.3 The direct benefits to Dartmoor National Park Authority since NPPL started operations are summarised below:

Cash secured for/distributed to Dartmoor to date:

From Forest Holidays	£ 2,863
Forest Holidays campaign	£ 9,413
CLIF Bar	£12,500
Clarion Housing	£ 7,600
Dividend (2019)	£3,500

In-kind:

Total Columbia clothing allocation (wholesale) = £76,000 (c. 16k remains)

Total cash for Dartmoor =	£35,876
Total in kind for Dartmoor =	£76,000
TOTAL value generated =	£111,876

- 3.4 It should be noted that the Columbia clothing allocation accounts for a significant proportion of the total value generated by NPPL.

4 Business Plan and future prospects

- 4.1 The 2020/21 year was significantly impacted by Covid-19. The impact on the marketplace and future business partnerships reflected the economic impact the pandemic was having across the UK.
- 4.2 The current NPPL three-year Business Plan ends in March 2021, this would have been succeeded by a review of progress and a new three year plan. However, because it's too early to fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on commercial partner activity, NPPL have proposed an interim plan for one year. By the end of this they hope to have a clearer understanding of the landscape ahead and a new three-year plan will be developed from March 2022.
- 4.3 A new theme has developed as a result of the pandemic; a growing relevance of the importance of connecting with nature and the importance of the outdoors for physical and mental wellbeing. This along with the climate emergency is seeing several major companies investing in Corporate Social Responsibility with climate

and nature-based initiatives being of interest. This will be a primary focus for the work of NPPL for this interim Business Plan.

- 4.4 One of the main focuses for the next year will be developing the Net Zero with Nature work with a new partner that is providing a significant amount of pro bono support to develop the funding model. Dartmoor National Park will be a pilot park for this work and an early beneficiary of this new partnership.

5 Proposed funding model

- 5.1 NPPL are proposing a reduced funding model for this next year of an annual subscription per National Park of **£8,500**, a reduction of 15%. This is however assuming that all 15 UK National Park Authorities pay. In the past not all parks have contributed, but all have received the benefits of the partnership. NPPL have stated that it is crucial all Authorities sign up to this model and hope that the reduction in costs will help.
- 5.2 The return on this investment will be seen through an additional grant of £5,000 from Forest Holidays to work with young people, a £2,500 grant from Clif Bar for nature-based projects and our ongoing clothing allocation from Columbia. This will be in addition to any benefits to Dartmoor realised through the pilot park work on Net Zero for Nature. In terms of the later, we are working with a company offering pro bono support via NPPL on a potential application for funding.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The final year of the three-year Business Plan for NPPL clearly was difficult due to the impact of Covid-19 on any opportunities. The 2021/22 financial year is also likely to have many uncertainties as the impact continues to be felt. The interim business plan seems a pragmatic approach as we wait for the market to settle.
- 6.2 It is recommended the Members delegate the final decision to invest a further £8,500 in NPPL for 2021/22 to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Chair). This may be pre-determined by other factors such as confirmation of our National Park Grant, any future proposals coming forward from Government following the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes or the spending review. It is also recommended that the Chair writes on behalf of the Authority to thank the NPPL Board (especially the private sector representatives) for the unpaid work they do on behalf of NPPL and all 15 National Park Authorities.

Samantha Hill



NPA/21/012

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

Visitor Management

Report of the Director of Conservation and Communities

Recommendation: **That Members note the content of the report.**

1 Background: Opportunities and Challenges

- 1.1 Members will recall that at its meeting on 5 February 2021, the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) was asked to read a letter from Mr A Kennard regarding visitor damage at Wistman's Wood. The letter asked the Authority to bring the issue to the attention of local MPs and the Duchy. It was agreed that a full report on visitor management issues across the National Park (including Wistman's Wood) and proposed Action Plan for 2021 be presented to Members on 5 March 2021.
- 1.2 The summer of 2020 saw visitor numbers on Dartmoor soar. This increased interest and use of the National Park continued into the autumn and winter and has presented both opportunities and challenges.
- 1.3 With many other recreational activities limited, countryside sites across the country saw a rise in first time user numbers. On Dartmoor our limited visitor survey showed that 22% of those people interviewed were first time users. The fact that we have new visitors from a potentially more diverse socio-economic base is a positive outcome, both for the individuals who have 'discovered Dartmoor' and for the place, particularly if we can engage with those visitors and encourage a deeper connection with Dartmoor. Attracting more visitors and especially those from traditionally under-represented parts of society are key priorities in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Landscapes Review led by Julian Glover.
- 1.4 The sheer number of cars and, in some cases people, coupled with the behaviour of some of the visitors, causing damage to the fabric of the National Park, has been challenging to manage.
 - Camping in the wrong location in large groups and associated damage caused by fires, litter and human waste;
 - Motorhomes parking overnight on roadsides -

- Inappropriate parking – causing damage to verges, erosion to common land and, at times, blocking access for local residents and emergency vehicles;
- Off-road cycling where there is no legal right to do so;
- Threatening behaviour to officers of the Authority (verbal and at times physical abuse)

1.5 At some sites the increase in numbers has overwhelmed some members of the community. This is against the backdrop of continued concerns amongst our local community and some businesses about how to serve our local communities and keep vulnerable residents and visitors safe.

1.6 The following sites have been particularly challenging due to numbers of cars and/or anti-social or inappropriate behaviour:

- Two Bridges and Wistman’s Wood
- Bellever/Riddon Ridge
- Foggingtor Quarry
- Roborough Down
- Shipley Bridge
- Dart Valley
- All river and reservoir sites

2 Response and lessons learned Summer 2020

2.1 Bellever /Riddon Ridge

Members will recall that the Authority implemented Part III Section 10 of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 to ban camping for 28 days at Bellever/Riddon Ridge because of the level of camping and associated damage to the fabric of the common, including concerns about the impact on archaeology, grazing animals and ecology. The resources required to implement this were significant, both in officer time and finance. We contracted with a private security firm for the provision of National Park Marshalls to help engage and educate the public. This proved to be a success. It was a success because there was a clear need for action and we were able to develop a strong partnership of organisations to support the action we took. Section 10 of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 provided us with the power to close the common, but it is a tool that we can use only when there is a clear and justifiable need.

2.2 Signage

We moved away from more educational, softer signage to the larger warning/emergency style yellow signs, with simple but clear advice. These were deployed at car parks and laybys and at heavily used sites – particularly where anti-social behaviour was evident. Rangers and local people affected by the damaging behaviours welcomed the new approach and feedback has been that these signs were more effective, providing the clear message required for any prosecution under the byelaws.

2.3 **Traffic management**

The worst cases of traffic management were at Foggingtor, Shipley Bridge and Two Bridges but other sites included Hexworthy and Meldon reservoir access road. Local communities and parish councils continue to be very concerned about these issues, looking for longer term solutions.

Devon County Council is the highway authority and thus the lead organisation for traffic management. We have sought to work closely with them and we would like to record our thanks for their active support. Due to the level of pressure across the county we could not respond quickly with the development and implementation of traffic orders; however, traffic cones at Two Bridges were eventually put in place in September 2020 and have proved successful in managing dangerous parking on the road. The Authority has entered into an agreement with Devon County Council which allows our teams to manage the cones and allowed them to remain in place over the winter period. We have started a programme of verge treatment for Two Bridges, Shipley Bridge, Meldon and Foggingtor to better manage the parking and reduce impact on verges. Over the winter a more comprehensive survey of all our car parks and verges has been undertaken to assess levels of damage across the National Park

2.4 **Off-Road Cycling**

An issue in some areas, but something that is of growing concern amongst Rangers. The need for a cycling development plan is identified in the National Park Management Plan review.

We have recruited two volunteer mountain bikers to work with us. They are looking at route development but also are keen to build relationships with users, pulling cycle users in to help repair and maintain routes and to use local riders as ambassadors.

We are currently undertaking full erosion surveys at a number of areas where we have been notified of damage: Haytor, Roborough Down and the Warren House; we will then be able to focus future erosion budgets more effectively. We will also have evidence to support external funding bids.

2.5 **Outreach Vehicle and Visitor Survey**

In response to the high levels of use and issues being reported by Rangers and communities, the outreach vehicle operated at weekends with a focus on busy sites. We took the opportunity to undertake visitor surveys and this work has been supported by Voluntary Wardens. Regular visits have been made to Two Bridges, Foggingtor and Shipley Bridge as well as Bellever. Although a small sample, it is a useful insight to help with management; we found that 22% of our visitors were first time visitors; 36% said that COVID restrictions had influenced their reason to visit; we have noticed an increase in younger visitors with over 26% being under 35 compared to 13% in our last survey. The survey has also revealed that many visitors are using Google maps and social media platforms to find out where to go and specifically where to park.

2.6 Throughout 2020 and the three lockdowns our Outreach and Engagement Team continued to produce virtual resources and opportunities for people to connect with Dartmoor, to learn more about its special qualities and to create conversations about responsible behaviours. This included a the very successful *Dartmoor Connections* on-line festival exploring natural and cultural heritage. It included 10 online talks about archaeology and wildlife, 12 family craft workshops and 17 short engaging films. The events attracted a wide audience with participants from the Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay postcodes, southern England and even the USA. We also developed a virtual curriculum driven education offer through our *Learning in Lockdown* programme and informal family learning provided on our Fun Zone webpages.

3 Preparation for the 2021 Visitor Season

3.1 Our experience last summer has given us an insight into how we might better respond to the increased level of use of Dartmoor and our new visitors. What worked and how we might improve.

3.2 During last summer we developed a closer working relationship with many of our partners and this was used to support the Green Recovery Challenge bid (which was not successful). It is disappointing that the Green recovery Challenge Fund bid was unsuccessful as it would have provided the additional financial resource that is needed to support active visitor engagement and management. Nevertheless, we are actively building a partnership approach to visitor management across Dartmoor looking at how we can share resources, improve communications and work together to provide a warm welcome but also to address some of the less desirable aspects of increased visitor numbers and inappropriate behaviour.

3.3 The partnership now includes the following organisations: Dartmoor Commoners Council, Dartmoor Common Landowners Association, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England and South West Lakes Trust. We are collaborating on a visitor management plan for 2021 that focuses on:

- Communicating key messages
- Providing a warm welcome
- Managing traffic flows and parking
- Limiting damaging activity

3.4 We are aware that we will need to influence people's decisions and behaviours from the point they decide to visit Dartmoor right the way through to the point that they leave; it will require good pre-visit information; continued real-time information as they make their journey and clear signage and advice once they arrive. This will require a mix of good communications, infrastructure and people on the ground to help visitors make the right decisions and to enjoy the National Park responsibly. This Plan is about helping everybody enjoy Dartmoor but in ways, and at times and locations that do not cause harm to the special qualities of the National Park and to local communities and crucially to support local businesses as they re-open and are able to welcome people back.

4 Communication and Key Messages

4.1 One of the shared learning points from last summer was the impact and influence of social media on visitors' decision making. We have worked with our partners to agree a communication approach which is about tools not rules. We know that as the pandemic goes on there is a genuine fatigue with rules. If we assume most people want to do the right thing they just do not know how, then we need to give them the tools to make positive choices.

4.2 We will do this by:

- **Providing the right information in a single place**

The Authority's website will be a key tool and will be update regularly, there will be links to important and up to date information from our partners. We will include a FAQ section to help answer the basic questions we have received over the past year.

- **Directing people to the website via a social media campaign**

People need to know that this information is available and therefore we will develop a social media campaign that is positive and perhaps humorous to ensure people read and engage with it.

4.3 Our partners all agree that the tone should be warm and friendly – we want people to come back and enjoy the National Park; we want to thank those who are doing the right thing and those who want to. We want to create a social norm of the right behaviour rather than wrong. The messaging needs to reflect the unique special qualities of the National Park and why it is important to protect them. Discovering or rediscovering nature and wildlife has played a big part of many people's lockdown life. This heightened awareness coupled with the impact of humans on nature is much publicised– we aim to develop a campaign that reflects this.

5 'Leave no Trace - Give nature space'

5.1 Over the autumn and winter we have reviewed and refreshed our key messages and Ranger Code, these will sit behind the strapline above and our on-site signage from gateways to car parks will be consistent and responsive. This is the point where the rules will need to be more explicit.

5.2 As well as the local campaign we have been working at a national level feeding into a refresh of the Countryside Code. It is anticipated that the code will be re-launched at Easter with a promotional campaign to support it. We have designed our local messaging as outlined above to compliment the refreshed code.

6 Providing a warm welcome

6.1 We are aiming to get a stronger and longer presence on the ground to support our Ranger team; helping to provide a welcome to the National Park, engaging people to enjoy the National Park responsibly and promoting key messages but also being willing and able to enforce against anti-social behaviour where necessary. This will be supplemented by a range of self-guided walks which the team will be able to promote and give away ("Best ways – an idea promoted by representatives of the Commoners Council, to help those people who need some help in devising and

following a route to walk). We are asking our Voluntary Wardens to help us with this work alongside the outreach vehicle and Dartmoor Marshalls. Staff, Volunteers and Marshalls will be deployed at the times and sites to be finalised with our partners to ensure that we focus resources where they are most needed, but it is our intention to have a strong presence at weekends. We have once again secured funding through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and from Forestry Commission to employ Marshalls which will be working into the evening.

- 6.2 Although we want to welcome everybody, we also need to be able to take strong action when needed. We are working through the Dartmoor Rural Crime Initiative to secure some dedicated Special Constables for Dartmoor and we are hoping that these will be available to help us over the coming season, providing Police support to Rangers and Marshalls.
- 6.3 Having developed new skills, we will mark the 70th Anniversary of the National Park with an online Wildlife Festival and other activities as regulations allow. These will support the 'Leave No Trace - Give Nature Space' campaign, will include a citizen science programme being developed through the UK National Parks and a Time for Nature Challenge which aims to give people a greater connection to nature as well as an increased understanding of their impact on it.

7 Managing Traffic Flows

7.1 Over the past year the sheer number of cars has been an issue across the National Park. In the review of the National Park Management Plan we recognise the need to provide a longer term more sustainable solution to this increasing problem, however this will not solve the potential issues we face this summer. We are therefore focusing our efforts in 2021 on initiatives to influencing peoples travel decisions before they arrive in the National Park. These include:

- Providing more detailed information for Google maps which includes size of car park and busy times to help visitors plan their trip;
- Better mapping on our own website showing car park sites and capacity – as above;
- Work with Devon County Council's Highways Operations Centre and local radio stations to promote real time information on traffic flows and car park capacity so that people can avoid busy times. (This proved partially successful last summer);
- Implement real time VMS roadside signage at Bovey Tracey and Yelverton, utilising technology and techniques used to manage visitors in urban areas. Again this will advise of real time traffic delays and car parking capacity.

8 Managing Parking

- 8.1 We will continue to implement physical verge treatments at the worst sites to protect the fabric of the national park; Work has been planned and implementation started at Shipley Bridge, Two Bridges, Riddon Ridge, Newbridge and Meldon.
- 8.2 We have purchased a set of traffic cones that can be manage by our own team expanding on the initiative we started with Devon County Council for Two Bridges, we will use these at other sites in consultation with local communities e.g. Hexworthy and Cross Furzes.

- 8.3 We are still hopeful that a longer term solution for Two Bridges will be found through the implementation and enforcement of double yellow lines. We are still awaiting confirmation from Devon County Council on the feasibility of this.
- 8.4 We are considering how and where pop-up campsites or car parks may be appropriate to help provide capacity at busy locations at peak times. This is something that has been utilised in other National Parks, but we have not yet been able to identify agreed locations. The current relaxation on planning allows activities for up to 56 days but this ends in May.

9 Limiting Damaging Activity

- 9.1 We have reviewed our signage and will be using the bright yellow ‘emergency signs’ that we created last year. These will be focused on those sites and activities where we experience problems. The signs have been offered to our partners to use at sites across the National Park and to the Dartmoor Commoners Council and the Dartmoor Commoners Land Owners’ Association to use by their members, helping to focus and deliver the important messages where and when they are needed.
- 9.2 Our experience last year showed that use of Section 10 III of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 is a good tool if and when there is clear need to implement restrictions on a site, or for an activity, in the interest of conservation, grazing animals and local communities. We can only use this where there is a clear and demonstrable need and it is important that we only do so if we are able to engage public support. If such a need arises we will use this power to control damaging activity.
- 9.3 Campervans. We have started work to influence the information provided on dedicated Campervan websites, clarifying the position with regard to Dartmoor.
- 9.4 Voluntary Restrictions on Access. Rather than focus on a formal restriction, officers are looking to consider use of voluntary restrictions asking people to help us look after Dartmoor by restricting an activity or not visiting a certain place which links closely to our proposed tone and messaging for the coming season. We will consider this as the season progresses but it could be one tool we adopt for Wistman’s Wood.
- 9.5 The summer of 2020 has shown that a number of our byelaws are out of date and need reviewing. Our byelaws have not been reviewed fully since they were first implemented in 1989. Since then, recreation pressures and society has changed. We are aiming for a revised set of byelaws that are relevant to the 21st Century, easy to understand and clear for those enforcing and the public. We have started a review of our byelaws which will be subject to public consultation before they are submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. It is unlikely that we will complete this review and have a revised set of byelaws before the summer of 2021.

10 Wistman’s Wood

- 10.1 Natural England are currently reviewing the Management Plan for Wistman’s Wood National Nature Reserve (NNR), the current draft notes that “during the Spring and

Summer of 2020, possibly as a result of COVID19, the site has undergone unusually high and damaging visitor pressure from visitors”.

- 10.2 Site visits, feedback from the local community, and anecdotal evidence suggests that visitor numbers are increasing and are more varied; although greater number of visitors in itself is not a major problem sheer numbers of people scrambling through the wood is impacting on the mosses and lichens. Although this is not widespread across the site it is of concern; it needs to be deterred and monitored. Some activities such as ‘Moss Art’ have started to appear on social media, this is of concern and could cause major damage if the activity becomes normalised and spreads across social media. Parking is a major issue along the road, causing concerns from local residents and a call for parking restrictions in the interest of road safety. There appear to be more cases of people camping on the land and having fires (however, we have not got definite numbers on this or comparisons). Camping is not allowed on the land and an uncontrolled fire could cause significant damage to the interest of the NNR. The path to Wistman’s Wood is eroding and restoration work to improve resilience has started. More litter is being left on the path including beer bottles.
- 10.3 There is an increasing concern about disturbance to the local residents and they express a growing concern about the fabric of the NNR due to levels and type of use. The residents have been eyes and ears, frequently reporting evidence of misuse, including people cycling on the footpath. A visitor survey completed last summer at Two Bridges showed some interesting insights; over 30% visitors said it was their first visit to Dartmoor and nearly 50% said it was their first visit to Two Bridges. Google maps, social media, word of mouth and the National Park website are quoted as the main ways people found out about the site and the age profile at this site shows a greater proportion of young people (less than 35 years old) 38% compared to 22% across the wider National Park.
- 10.4 It is the view of partners that people do not go to the site with the intention of causing damage. They have heard that it is interesting place to go and some have travelled internationally with Wistman’s included in their list of ‘must see’ sites. We do not have actual visitor figures, but anecdotal evidence has suggested 350 people on a busy day. It is clear that current signage is ineffective and a programme of work to rationalise and improve the signage is underway and will be partially implemented by Easter.
- 10.5 Natural England, the Duchy of Cornwall as landowner and the Authority have identified the following objectives and key actions for 2021. We do not want to stop people coming to the site, but we do need to qualify numbers as far as is possible, so that they are commensurate with the nature of the site and the access provision provided, particularly given the limitation on car parking. We also need to engage with visitors to reduce and remove damaging activity.
- 10.6 **Parking**
DNPA will continue to manage the traffic cones on site to manage parking and work with Devon County Council to agree and implement some roadside banking until a decision on more formal restrictions is confirmed.

10.7 **Pre-visit information**

We will aim to change the notation on Google maps; removing text promoting parking for Wistman's Wood and include information on limited size of car park and busy times. We will update DNPA website to ensure clear, comprehensive and consistent advice for visitors – including camping and overnight parking.

10.8 **On-site information**

A new information board will be on site by Easter at the car park. The key messages will be as follows:

Tread lightly though this ancient valley; it is a special place. At its heart is Wistman's Wood National Nature Reserve, important for its fragile mosses and lichens. The incredibly rare Horsehair lichen (*Bryoria smithii*) is only found here and at Black-a-Tor Copse (on the north side of Dartmoor). This upland oak wood is precious, and vulnerable. It needs all of us to protect it.

- Do not walk through the wood or scramble across the rocky boulders, this will destroy the lichens and mosses. Every footstep makes a difference;
- Do not light fires, and leave your BBQ's at home;
- Wild camping is not allowed anywhere in this area;
- Leave no trace; do not remove branches or pick lichens and mosses;
- No cycle access;
- No Parking Do Not Block the Gate.

10.9 This links very nicely with our 2021 campaign strapline 'Leave No Trace, Give Nature Space'.

10.10 Two more boards are planned along the route to the wood but will not be in place for Easter. We will utilise bright yellow Emergency COVID signing at river below Wistman's Wood where camping has been seen this summer.

10.11 **Monitoring**

A new people counter will be placed on the path in March; this will provide real time information and will help us better understand busy times so that we can allocate resources. DNPA and Natural England ecologists will visit the site in early March and again throughout the season, we will review use mid-season and continue to adapt our approach if necessary and subject to resources.

10.12 **On site Engagement Officers**

This will be a crucial element of the plan for this summer. We aim to deploy staff and volunteers on site to talk to visitors, share how precious and vulnerable the site is and promote good behaviour. We will deliver this through a mix of Dartmoor Marshalls, Volunteers and the Outreach Assistant and we are hoping to get a presence on site from 10am to 3pm at weekend (Friday/Sat/Sunday) and then evening patrols at weekends. We are assuming that these are busiest times, but we can react to information from our visitor counters. With more resources we could afford greater cover and the level of cover at Wistman's will depend on the issues we face elsewhere and number of volunteers signing up. We bid to Defra for additional resource to support visitor management in general but have not, to-date, been successful.

10.13 **Voluntary Restriction**

If we continue to see levels and type of use that is damaging to the fabric of the NNR we will apply a Voluntary Exclusion Area and ask people to give the site a rest. This links to our headline messages: Leave no Trace – Give Nature Space.

10.14 As a last resort we could consider a restriction under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. This will require the landowner to submit a request and provide clear evidence of need. We will start this process as a precaution. However as always it will require people on the ground to help educate and enforce.

10.15 The proposals we implement this summer will help inform the longer-term plan for the site.

11 **Financial Implications**

11.1 We are seeking to use money from the Authority's reserves to help pay for additional visitor management (see the separate paper on the 2021/22 revenue Budget – NPA/21/009). The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Forestry Commission have both confirmed financial contributions of £5,000 for 2021/22. We are hoping other partners will do likewise which would enable us to increase our cover of Marshalls. As noted above, we have not been successful in securing any additional resource from Defra.

12 **Conclusion / Recommendation**

12.1 The summer/autumn of 2020 has seen intensive visitor pressure on Dartmoor and many sites across the County and the country. The increase and greater diversity of visitors is welcomed but has brought significant challenges, we expect this to continue into 2021. We responded quickly to these challenges in 2020, implemented new initiatives where possible, forged greater collaboration with our partners, reviewed what worked well, learnt from other National Parks and protected sites and developed a joint visitor management plan for 2021.

12.2 The Ranger team, who have been out on the ground throughout the period of the pandemic, have struggled to keep on top of visitor management, balancing expectations from local communities and visitors. Some of the tools they have need updating but the support from Marshalls last summer was well received, particularly in relation to evening working.

12.3 Officers do not expect that the plan we have put in place will solve all of our problems, but we are aiming to use the tools we have, to work more effectively with partners and respond to new issues and opportunities where we can. We aim to engage and welcome our visitors this year encouraging them to plan ahead; considering time and place; for those less confident about where to go and what to do we aim to provide better information and advice. There is very little external funding to support visitor management activity and yet we see the fabric of the moor being damaged, not deliberately, but by high levels of use all year round; verges, car parks, access routes and public rights of way are all suffering. In the longer term we need to seek new funding to support this work and implement longer term measures as outlined in the National Park Management Plan, Recreation Strategy and proposed Green Transport Strategy.

12.4 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and support the Visitor Management Plan for 2021.

Alison Kohler



NPA/21/013

Dartmoor National Park Authority

5 March 2021

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

Report of the Trees and Landscape Officer

Recommendation: **That the decisions be noted.**

TPO APPLICATIONS

Teignbridge

Ref: 20/0033

Yonder Wreyland, Lustleigh

SX 7884 8116

Application to remove low branches from a larch tree. The works are minor and will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations.

West Devon

Ref: 20/0041

Riddon Brake, Postbridge

SX 6688 7772

Application to fell four spruce and reduce a group of pine and spruce. The site is very exposed and the works are necessary to prevent damage to an adjacent property. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work-Recommendations.
3. Replacement planting of four birch or rowan trees within the crown spread of the originals in the first season following felling.

South Hams

Ref: 20/0028

Moorhaven, Bittaford

SX 6649 5750

Application to cut branches from a group of ash trees. The works are minor and will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work-Recommendations.

Ref: 20/0029

Bittaford Wood Park

SX 6679 5671

Application to reduce the height of three Douglas fir trees. The works are minor and will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. All works are carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Work-Recommendations.

SECTION 211 NOTICES

Teignbridge

Ref: 20/0030

44 Ford Street, Moretonhampstead

SX 7526 8616

Notification to fell a copper beech tree. The tree was damaged by a fire and is in very poor condition.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0031

32 Fore Street, Buckfastleigh

SX 7399 6608

Notification to reduce an ash and sycamore tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0032

Greenawell Lodge, Ashburton

SX 7563 6975

Notification to reduce a copper beech and willow tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0034 **Buckfastleigh Primary School** **SX 7372 6608**

Notification to crown lift a beech and fell a sycamore tree. The works will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0037 **Garden Flats, Ashburton** **SX 7556 6995**

Notification to reduce an apple tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0038 **The Old Armoury, Ashburton** **SX 7563 6976**

Notification to reduce a cherry tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0039 **Ireland House, Ashburton** **SX 7590 7010**

Notification to fell a sycamore, chestnut, ash and spruce, and crown lift sycamore and lime trees. The trees to be felled are heavily suppressed and have poor form. The works will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

West Devon

Ref: 20/0027 **2 Oak Cottages, Dunsford** **SX 8123 8912**

Notification to reduce a walnut tree. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0035 **Stoneycliff Place, Princetown** **SX 5901 7357**

Notification to reduce two beech trees. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0036 **6 South View, Lydford** **SX 5131 8497**

Notification to fell a eucalyptus and a horse chestnut, and to remove low branches from three ash trees. The eucalyptus is in poor condition, the horse chestnut has minimal public amenity value and the works to the ash trees are minor.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 20/0040

8 Blackbrook Close, Walkhampton

SX 5336 6962

Notification to fell an oak and an ash tree. The trees are in very poor condition.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Brian Beasley