

# The Audit Findings for Dartmoor National Park Authority

**DRAFT**

This version of the report is a draft. Its contents and subject matter remain under review and its contents may change and be expanded as part of the finalisation of the report.

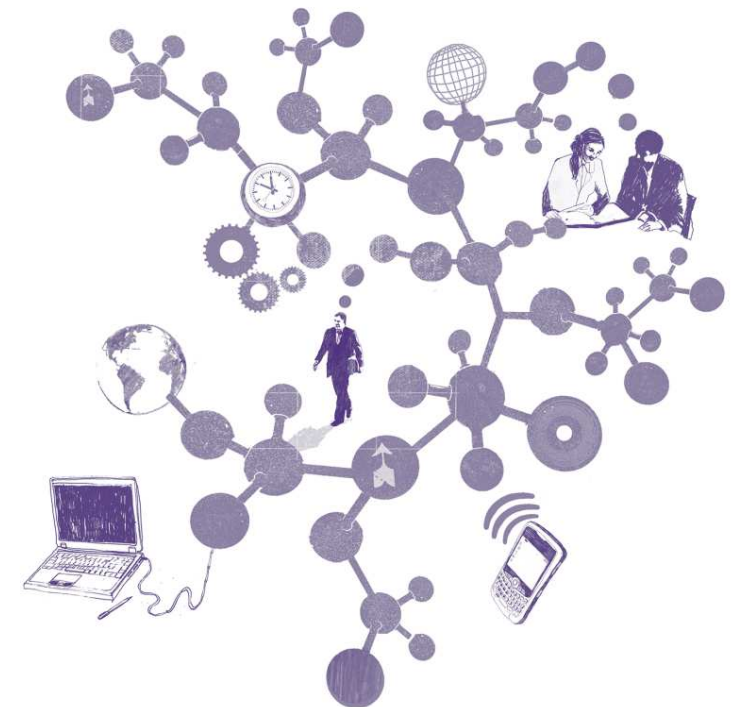
Year ended 31 March 2014

29 August 2014.

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The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed primarily for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements. Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify.

We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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## Section 1: Executive summary

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# Executive summary

## Purpose of this report

This report highlights the key matters arising from our audit of Dartmoor National Park Authority ('the Authority') financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2014. It is also used to report our audit findings to management and those charged with governance in accordance with the requirements of International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA).

Under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice we are required to report whether, in our opinion, the Authority's financial statements present a true and fair view of the financial position, its expenditure and income for the year and whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. We are also required to reach a formal conclusion on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the Value for Money conclusion).

## Introduction

In the conduct of our audit we have not had to alter or change our planned audit approach, which we communicated to you in our Audit Plan dated 16 May 2014.

Our audit is substantially complete although we are finalising our work in the following areas:

- obtaining and reviewing assurances from the audit of the Devon Pension Fund 2013/14;
- obtaining and reviewing assurances from the auditor for Devon County Council for the systems that are operated at Devon County Council which the Authority rely upon;

- obtaining and reviewing the ISA240 letters from the Authority;
- obtaining and reviewing the final management letter of representation;
- updating our post balance sheet events review, to the date of signing the opinion;
- Whole of Government Accounts; and
- completion of our closing procedures.

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers at the start of our audit, in accordance with the agreed timetable.

## Key issues arising from our audit

### Financial statements opinion

We anticipate providing an unqualified opinion on the financial statements.

We have not identified any adjustments affecting the Authority's reported financial position (details are recorded in section 2 of this report). We also identified a small number of disclosure changes which the Authority have amended.

The key messages arising from our audit of the Authority's financial statements are:

- a small number of disclosure changes have been made to the accounts, all of which are minor in nature;
- those Charged with Governance have been asked to review, on an on-going basis, the position in relation to the historic payment from special grant income to farmers and any need, in future to disclose a contingent liability.
- we have recommended that management review the value of all assets which have not undergone a formal valuation in year to ensure that those not valued are not materially incorrect.

Further details are set out in section 2 of this report.

### **Value for Money conclusion**

We are pleased to report that, based on our review of the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, we propose to give an unqualified VfM conclusion.

Further detail of our work on Value for Money is set out in section 3 of this report.

### **Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)**

We will complete our work in respect of the Whole of Government Accounts in accordance with the national timetable.

### **Controls**

The Authority's management is responsible for the identification, assessment, management and monitoring of risk, and for developing, operating and monitoring the system of internal control.

Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we report these to the Authority.

Our work has not identified any significant control weaknesses which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Further details are provided within section 2 of this report.

### **The way forward**

Matters arising from the financial statements audit and review of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources have been discussed with the Head of Resources.

We have made three recommendations, which are set out in the action plan in Appendix A. Recommendations have been discussed and agreed with the Head of Resources and the finance team.

### **Acknowledgment**

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

**Grant Thornton UK LLP**  
**August 2014**

## Section 2: Audit findings

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# Audit findings

In this section we present our findings in respect of matters and risks identified at the planning stage of the audit and additional matters that arose during the course of our work. We set out on the following pages the work we have performed and findings arising from our work in respect of the audit risks we identified in our audit plan, presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 16 May 2014. We also set out the adjustments to the financial statements arising from our audit work and our findings in respect of internal controls.

## **Changes to Audit Plan**

We have not made any changes to our Audit Plan as previously communicated to you on 16 May 2014.

## **Audit opinion**

We anticipate that we will provide the Authority with an unmodified opinion once our work has been concluded.



# Audit findings against significant risks

"Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty" (ISA 315).

In this section we detail our response to the significant risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. As we noted in our plan, there are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards.

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
1.	<p><b>Improper revenue recognition</b></p> <p>Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review and testing of revenue recognition policies</li> <li>• testing of material revenue streams</li> <li>• review of unusual significant transactions.</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of revenue recognition.</p>
2.	<p><b>Management override of controls</b></p> <p>Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk of management over-ride of controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of accounting estimates, judgements and decisions made by management</li> <li>• testing of journal entries</li> <li>• review of unusual significant transactions.</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any evidence of management override of controls. In particular the findings of our review of journal controls and testing of journal entries has not identified any significant issues.</p> <p>We set out later in this section of the report our work and findings on key accounting estimates and judgments.</p>

## Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. Recommendations, together with management responses, are attached at Appendix A.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
<b>Operating expenses</b>	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle;</li> <li>• undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess whether those controls are designed effectively;</li> <li>• Substantively tested operating expenses .</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.
<b>Employee remuneration</b>	Employee remuneration accrual understated	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle;</li> <li>• Undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess whether those controls are designed effectively;</li> <li>• Substantively tested operating expenses .</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.
<b>Property, plant &amp; equipment</b>	PPE activity not valid	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle;</li> <li>• Substantively tested a sample of asset additions.</li> </ul>	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.



## Audit findings against other risks (contd)

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. Recommendations, together with management responses, are attached at Appendix A.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
<p><b>Property, plant &amp; equipment</b></p>	<p>Revaluation measurement not correct</p>	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle;</li> <li>• Reviewed the PPE accounting policies;</li> <li>• Reviewed and tested the basis of valuation to ensure that the value of assets is a reasonable estimate.</li> </ul>	<p>Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.</p> <p>In accordance with the valuation policy for fixed assets, the Authority has revalued all assets bar heritage assets in 2013/14. The Heritage Asset is currently included on the Balance Sheet at a value of £487k. This asset was last valued in 2011. The asset value is based upon Insurance value. Currently, the estimated insurance value is £600k. We have accepted that this is an estimate only, however, we have recommended that management undertake a review of all assets which are not valued in year, to ensure that those assets recorded on the balance sheet are not materially incorrect, in accordance with international accounting standards.</p>

# Accounting policies, estimates & judgements


In this section we report on our consideration of accounting policies, in particular revenue recognition policies, and key estimates and judgements made and included with the Authority's financial statements.

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
<p><b>Revenue recognition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government grant and contributions are recognised as due to the Authority when there is reasonable assurance that the Authority will comply with the conditions of the payment and that they will be received.</li> <li>• Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Authority transfers the risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that the economic benefit or service will flow to the Authority.</li> </ul>	<p>We have reviewed the Authority's recognition of revenue and found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate policies have been used</li> <li>• Accounting policies have been adequately disclosed</li> <li>• Revenue has been appropriately recognised.</li> </ul> <p>Upon our testing of revenue recognition we identified that, in some cases, contracts had not been updated with more recent contract values. This is a minor issue in nature as our testing concluded that revenue disclosed in the accounts was materially correct. We would suggest, however, that management consider reviewing the contract values recorded for revenue grants.</p>	
<p><b>Judgements and estimates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key estimates and judgements include                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- useful life of capital equipment</li> <li>- pension fund valuations and settlements</li> <li>- revaluations</li> <li>- impairments</li> <li>- accruals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>We reviewed the accounting areas where the Authority has exercised judgement and used estimates. We found that::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate policies had been used;</li> <li>• Accounting policies had been adequately disclosed ;</li> <li>• Areas where judgement had been used were supported by the work of an expert or third party where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>We note that the contingent liability relating to the possible repayment of the special DEFRA pass through grant for farmers up to 2006/07 has been removed from the 2013/14 accounts. Management reviewed this position in 2013/14. We have accepted that the possibility of repayment continues to be remote, and have recommended that the Those Charged with Governance review the need for a contingent liability disclosure on an annual basis.</p>	

● Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

## Accounting policies, estimates & judgements (Contd)

In this section we report on our consideration of accounting policies, in particular revenue recognition policies, and key estimates and judgements made and included with the Authority's financial statements.

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
<p><b>Other accounting policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have reviewed the Authority's policies against the requirements of the CIPFA Code and accounting standards.</li> </ul>	<p>The Authority had not provided a detailed accounting policy for the Biomass boiler. An amendment has been made to include reference to the depreciation policy of 14 years for the Biomass boiler.</p> <p>There are no significant issues that we would wish to bring to your attention.</p>	

● Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

## Adjusted misstatements

A small amount of adjustments to the draft financial statements have been identified during the audit process. We are required to report all misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the financial statements have been adjusted by management. The table below summarises the adjustments arising from the audit which have been processed by management.

### Impact of adjusted misstatements

All adjusted misstatements are set out below. There is no impact on the primary statements or the reported financial position.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account £'000	Balance Sheet £'000	Impact on total net expenditure £000
1 No adjusted misstatements were required.			

## Misclassifications & disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Adjustment type	Value £'000	Account balance	Impact on the financial statements
1 Disclosure	N/A	Note 36	Note 36 – Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities – Financial Assumptions.  The RPI increase for 2012/13 was shown as 3.3%. The actuaries report disclosed this as 3.4%.
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

## Other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we are required by auditing standards to communicate to those charged with governance.

	Issue	Commentary
1.	<b>Matters in relation to fraud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit. We await receipt of the ISA240 letters to support this.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Matters in relation to laws and regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Written representations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A letter of representation has been requested from the Authority.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Disclosures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our review found no material omissions in the financial statements.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Matters in relation to related parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not aware of any related party transactions which have not been disclosed.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Going concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our work has not identified any reason to challenge the Authority's decision to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.</li> </ul>



## Section 3: Value for Money

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# Value for Money

## Value for money conclusion

The Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) describes the Authority's responsibilities to put in place proper arrangements to:

- secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- ensure proper stewardship and governance; and
- review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required to give our VFM conclusion based on two criteria specified by the Audit Commission which support our reporting responsibilities under the Code

The Audit Commission have determined that a light touch approach to Value for Money (VFM) work will continue in 2013/14 for smaller, relevant bodies, which includes National Parks.

## Key findings

We are required to report whether there are any matters that prevent us from being satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

## Overall VFM conclusion

We are pleased to report that, based on our review of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, we have concluded that there are no matters to report.

## Section 4: Fees, non audit services and independence

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## Fees, non audit services and independence

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit. We confirm that there no non audit services provided to Dartmoor National Park Authority in 2013/14.

### Fees

	Per Audit plan £	Actual fees £
Main audit	£11,807	£11,807
<b>Total audit fees</b>	<b>£11,807</b>	<b>£11,807</b>

### Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
None	Nil

### Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards and therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

## Section 5: Communication of audit matters

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# Communication of audit matters to those charged with governance

International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260, as well as other ISAs, prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

The Audit Plan outlined our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while this Audit Findings report presents the key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

## Respective responsibilities

The Audit Findings Report has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)).

We have been appointed as the Authority's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the Audit Commission and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work. Our work considers the Authority's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

It is the responsibility of the Authority to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Authority is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our communication plan	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence. Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence	✓	✓
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected auditor's report		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern		✓

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Action plan

### Priority

**Significant deficiency** – risk of significant misstatement

**Deficiency** - risk of inconsequential misstatement

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Implementation date & responsibility
1	<p><b>Revaluation of Assets</b></p> <p>In accordance with International Accounting Standards, we recommend that management perform a review, on an annual basis, on all assets which have not been revalued in year.</p>	High	<p>Management will liaise with the valuer in year to assess how this can be performed.</p> <p>With regards to the Heritage asset – Upacott, management have planned to have this asset revalued in 2014/15.</p>	<p>June 2015</p> <p>Donna Healy.</p>
2	<p><b>Contract Administration</b></p> <p>We recommend that Management undertake a review of grant income contracts to satisfy themselves that the contract value information is up to date.</p>	Low	Noted by management.	
3	<p><b>Contingent Liability Disclosure</b></p> <p>The Authority continue to review the need to disclose a contingent liability in relation to the historic, pass through grant for farmers. This item will continue to be discussed with Those Charged with Governance and we request that the Authority confirm this review for 2013/14.</p>	High	To be confirmed at the Authority meeting.	5 September 2014.





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## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14**Report of the Head of ResourcesRecommendation : **That**

- (i) Members approve the 2013/14 Statement of Accounts;**
- (ii) The Chairman of the Authority be authorised to sign and date the Statement of Responsibilities on behalf of the Authority**
- (iii) Members approve the signing of the Letter of Representation**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Statement of Accounts is a statutory document which all local authorities have to produce and make available for public inspection. In addition, the accounts are subject to external examination by the Authority's external auditors.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) publishes The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code) which specifies the principles and practices of accounting that must be followed in preparing the statement of accounts. The Statement of Accounts must be authorised for issue and made available for public inspection by 30 June each year; the un-audited copy can be accessed on our website at [http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/462525/Unaudited-Annual-Statement-of-Accounts-2013-14.pdf](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/462525/Unaudited-Annual-Statement-of-Accounts-2013-14.pdf) and an audited copy has been provided to Members only for this meeting (minus the final dates of approval, signatures and audit opinion).
- 1.3 The external auditor reviews compliance against the requirements of The Code and must provide the audit opinion and the Annual Governance Report by 30 September each year.
- 1.4 There are no significant changes to the format or the content of the Statement of Accounts this year, but there is one change of accounting policy that the Authority has applied relating to the presentation and disclosure of post-employment benefits. The overall measurement of the Authority's net pension liability has not changed; there are just some reclassifications of the components into which year-on-year changes in the net liability are analysed. The 2012/13 comparator has been restated on both the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement along with the relevant notes. For further explanation see the information provided in this Foreword on page 6 and in the Notes to the Accounts numbered 2 and 36.

## 2 Financial Performance

- 2.1 Whilst our aspiration and ambition remain, our practical capacity to 'deliver for Dartmoor' has been significantly reduced – all areas of work have been impacted on as we have reduced expenditure and staffing levels to reflect the available budget. However, we had positioned ourselves well for the future with healthy reserve balances, a robust revenue budget and we are anticipating receiving further income streams from external funding bids and from partner organisations for exciting new projects. Indeed during 2013/14 the Authority levered in an additional £156k from Defra, received £54k from the sale of land and in excess of £45k from other partner organisations, along with making vacancy savings of £43k and receiving additional fees and charges of circa £41k. This meant that the budgeted in-year call on reserves was not needed.
- 2.2 The 2013/14 budget and 3 year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was produced to reflect the challenging economic situation i.e. reduced NPG, less staff, a reduced work programme and the risk of further future uncertainty (future years' NPG is indicative only). This resulted in only core and essential work being fully costed and programmed, leaving an element of unallocated budget being available for in-year bids; the aim of which was to be able to react to and meet new opportunities as they arose and bring in extra staffing capacity on a temporary basis as required. This strategy has proved highly successful for the last two years and although the whole allocation was not used, this format has been taken forward into the 2014/15 budget, albeit at a slightly reduced amount.
- 2.3 The Audit and Governance Committee carried out a detailed review of the outturn position on 16 May 2014 (NPA/AG/14/037) and the final Financial Outturn Report was approved by the Authority on 6 June (NPA/14/027). At both meetings Members congratulated staff for the efforts made and outcomes achieved during the year, commenting specifically on the resilience shown in these difficult times, the skill in the way budgets have been handled and the way the Authority continues to move forward.
- 2.4 The actual revenue outturn, in terms of its in-year Management Account reporting (NPA/14/027) was a surplus of £47,974 (£119,965 surplus in 2012/13) against a net Revenue Budget of £4,489,361 (£4,093,309 in 2012/13) which represents a -1.07% variance (-2.09% in 2012/13).

This figure is reconciled to the deficit shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on page 10 in the table below:

	<b>31 March 2014</b>
	<b>£000</b>
<b>Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</b>	<b>230</b>
Reverse amortisation, depreciation & impairment charges	(108)
Reverse gain on sale of land	42
Reversal of IAS19 Retirement Benefit Adjustments	(504)
Reverse employee annual leave accrual movement	4
Transfers to or (from) reserves per Management Accounts	122
Capital expenditure funded from NPG	166
<b>Revenue Budget Surplus (NPA/14/027)</b>	<b>(48)</b>

### **3 Reserves**

- 3.1 The Authority brought forward Earmarked Reserve balances totalling £2.424 million on 1 April 2013 and utilised a total of £0.375 million during the year. The Movement in Reserves Statement on page 9 and Note 9 on page 27, details the movements in year. The carried forward Earmarked Reserve balance stands at £2.594 million, it should be noted however, that £0.961 million will be fully utilised in 2014/15, bringing the closing balance close to the 2013/14 opening balance.

In addition the General Reserve remains at £300,000 equating to approximately 8.9% of the 2014/15 Net Budget Requirement and is the minimum level that the Authority has determined must be retained.

- 3.2 In aggregate, the level of reserves and balances held is regarded as sufficient to meet current needs and to provide some assurance that unforeseen risks and emergencies can be managed. These balances are determined in part by our on-going work programmes and projects and by a risk based analysis and methodology approved by the Authority.

### **4 Pension Scheme Assets and Liabilities**

- 4.1 The pension liability is based on an actuarial valuation and represents the benefits that have been accrued by members of the local government pension scheme. The disclosures show many things, with a key factor being that they are highly unpredictable due mainly to the "snapshot" valuation of assets and liabilities on one particular day in the year and the mismatch between assets held and the corporate bonds based method that is used to value the liabilities. These estimates reflect the position as at 31 March 2014 and the conditions and actuarial assumptions prevailing at that time.

- 4.2 The return on Fund (on a bid value to bid value basis) for the year to 31 March 2014 is estimated to be 5%, although the actual return on Fund assets over the year may be different. Liabilities are valued using a discount rate based on Corporate Bond Yields. At 31 March 2014, the point of the Merrill Lynch AA-rated corporate bond curve which is closest to the duration of the employer's liabilities is used. Corporate Bond Yields have mainly increased and the change in discount rate over the year is estimated to have had little effect on our liabilities. Pension increases are expected to rise by inflation and this has resulted in an estimated 1% rise in liabilities. Although future benefits from 1 April 2014 will not be linked to final salary, benefits accrued up to that date will continue to be final salary benefits. It has been estimated that salary increases will just be at 1% per annum above RPI inflation, which is lower than the assumption used in previous years and it has been estimated that this will have the effect of decreasing liabilities.

- 4.3 As a result for 2013/14 the net liability has decreased by just over £0.297 million from £8.080m to £7.783 million. The pension fund deficit does not represent an immediate call on the Authority's reserves but simply provides a snapshot (at 31 March 2014), with the value of assets and liabilities changing on a daily basis. It is arguable whether the annual calculation of the pension fund deficit accurately reflects the long run position, many believe it does not. The last triennial valuation undertaken by the actuary and effective from 1 April 2014 shows a continued improvement in funding which has allowed the Authority's pension fund contributions to remain unchanged until 2017.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Authority's Auditors, Grant Thornton LLP has carried out the audit of the Statement of Accounts (SoA) and is presenting the "Audit Findings Report" and the "Audit Opinion" to you separately at this meeting. At the time of writing, Officers had not received the final version of the "Audit Findings Report and Audit Opinion", but having discussed and considered the findings, we have only had to make some minor presentational changes to the version of the SoA issued on 26 June 2012. The Pension Fund Audit will not be completed until mid-September, but it is not anticipated that this will have any impact on our Audit. The Audit Opinion will be added to the SoA after this meeting and before the 30 September.
- 5.2 The unaudited Statement of Accounts was presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on 15 August for review and scrutiny. The Section 151 Officer has also carried out a post-audit review and re-certified the Accounts.
- 5.3 Given reduced staff capacity (25% less compared to the start of the Comprehensive Spending Review Period) managing an ambitious and complex work programme once again presented a significant challenge. Whilst there has been some slippage in programmed work, Members have recognised the huge effort that all staff have made this year and have congratulated them for the outcomes achieved.
- 5.4 The financial statements record that as a result of careful management of the Authority's resources a reasonable level of reserves has been maintained, leaving the Authority in a sound financial position to cope with future challenges. The impact of the economic downturn has seen a significant squeeze on public expenditure, including that for National Park Authorities, and this looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The financial resilience of the Authority during this period will be recorded in future years' financial statements and will give a unique insight into the robustness of its financial management structures.

DONNA HEALY

Background Papers:  
NPA/14/027; NPA/AG/14/037; NPA/AG/14/046

**Attachments: Appendix 1 – Statement of Accounts**

20140905 DLH SoA

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**SPONSORSHIP POLICY**Report of the Promotion & Development Officer

**Recommendation: That Members adopt the Sponsorship Policy set out at Appendix 1.**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 This paper seeks approval to adopt a sponsorship policy that would set out our approach to commercial sponsorship. The purpose of the policy is to:

- To ensure the Authority adopts a consistent and professional approach towards sponsorship
- To ensure the Authority's position and reputation are adequately protected in sponsorship agreements
- To protect members and officers of the Authority from allegations of inappropriate dealings or relationships with sponsors
- To ensure best value for the Authority is obtained and provided in sponsorship arrangements, whilst also offering sponsors attractive packages that offer value for money for both parties

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Core funding for National Parks comes from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). As part of the overall reduction in public sector expenditure, National Park Grant will reduce, in real terms, by over 40 per cent during the life time of this Parliament. As well as having to make cuts to its expenditure the National Park Authority is continually reviewing opportunities to maximise revenue from other sources.
- 2.2 To-date, at a local level, we have (following an open procurement process) worked with Four Communications to develop our thinking on sponsorship. Four Communications reviewed the market and advised that there were potential opportunities to attract sponsorship as a family of National Parks (either at England and/or UK level). They also advised that opportunities for the Authority acting unilaterally were more limited and that we should focus our activity on local/regional players or organisations that we have a strong link with/have a strong link with Dartmoor. Four Communications also provided training on how to make a 'pitch' and how to value our brand/offer.
- 2.3 Our existing, local, sponsorship arrangements are with Sprayway (a UK based outdoor clothing manufacturer) and John Lewis Partnership. Sprayway have supplied, free of charge, uniforms for the rangers, waterproof clothing for our voluntary wardens and a large tent for use at events. They also provide discounted

clothing for other staff uniforms. John Lewis Partnership provided pro bono advice on retailing as part of the Visitor Centre review and a large, flat screen television for the Princetown Visitor Centre.

- 2.4 At a national level, National Park Authorities have worked through the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) to secure agreements with Merrell and Airwick. The Merrell agreement was focused on brand development and did not involve any financial sponsorship. The Airwick agreement includes a financial agreement whereby a percentage of sales from their new 'Breathing Spaces' air fresheners is paid to ANPA and then divided equally amongst the fifteen National Park Authorities in the UK. The Chairs of the UK NPAs have agreed to explore, in more detail, the commercial sponsorship agenda including the setting up of a private company limited by guarantee as a trading body to represent the NPAs. Dartmoor is leading on work to trademark 'Britain's Breathing Spaces' having already trademarked the Dartmoor brand.

### **3 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The purpose of the sponsorship policy is to provide a clear framework for sponsorship activity by the Authority aimed at generating new revenue sources, gifts in-kind and/or free in-kind support. It is not envisaged that adopting the sponsorship policy will result in additional expenditure by the Authority though it will require some focused staff time. Our experience to-date means that we will be targeting this staff time to ensure we get value for money.
- 3.2 The wider work on how we operate as a family of National Park Authorities to attract commercial sponsorship will result in some additional expenditure. The Chairs of the National Park Authorities agreed that each NPA would contribute £10,000 during 2014/15 to help fund this workstream. Further details on a potential company structure and focus for this work will be reported to the Chairs in November 2014. A key focus for this area of work needs to be the concern Dartmoor has raised previously about ANPA and its legal status.

### **4 Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment**

- 4.1 Any potential sponsor will have to meet the criteria set out in the Sponsorship Policy and suitability for both equality and sustainability will be checked under due diligence.

**Attachments: Appendix 1 Sponsorship Policy**

20140905 JRid Sponsorship Policy

# Dartmoor National Park Authority



## **POLICY ON ARRANGEMENTS & AGREEMENTS FOR SPONSORSHIP**

### **Introduction**

As part of the overall reduction in public sector expenditure, it is anticipated that National Park Grant will reduce by over 40% in real terms over the Parliament 2010 – 2015. It is vital that the Authority seeks and develops opportunities to draw in revenue and financial support from external organisations to maintain the delivery of National Park purposes.

However, it would be undesirable to enter into a series of commitments with external sponsors without a policy framework to ensure that decisions are made in line with the strategic aims set out in the Management Plan and the work programmes within the Authority. It is also very important that commitments are made in a transparent, fair and structured process which will retain public confidence in the impartiality and overall direction of the Authority.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure the Authority adopts a consistent and balanced approach towards sponsorship opportunities
- To ensure the Authority's programmes of work and reputation are safeguarded in sponsorship agreements
- To help protect members and officers of the Authority from allegations of inappropriate dealings or relationships with sponsors
- To ensure best value is secured in sponsorship arrangements, whilst offering sponsors commercially attractive opportunities

### **Scope**

This policy is intended to guide and inform sponsorship decisions and negotiations involving officers and members of the Authority.

For the purposes of this policy, sponsorship is defined as:

*“an agreement between the Authority and a Sponsor, where the Sponsor agrees to provide goods, services or financial assistance for an event, a service or an activity delivered by the Authority in return for public acknowledgement of its support”*



## **Opportunities**

The Authority will welcome and actively engage with Sponsors who are willing to help us to look after Dartmoor, promote the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park and contribute to the socio-economic well-being of local communities.

### Local Sponsorship Arrangements

The Authority will endeavour to identify Sponsors from individuals, local, regional and national organisations whose support would align with the strategic objectives and values of the Authority.

### Sponsorship through National Parks UK (formerly ANPA)

At a UK level, National Parks UK is actively exploring sponsorship opportunities where the *Britain's Breathing Spaces* branding and collective weight of 15 National Parks may be a more attractive proposition to Sponsors.

## **Core Values**

Core values are the guiding principles that define how the Authority carries out its work and conducts itself. It is very important that the Authority remains true to its core values in any sponsorship arrangements and is not perceived by the public or delivery partners to be “chasing the money” or entering into inappropriate deals (“selling its soul”).

For the purposes of this policy, the Authority's core values are:

- Conserving and enhancing Dartmoor's diverse landscapes, natural ecosystems and cultural heritage
- Helping people to enjoy and understand the special qualities of Dartmoor
- Supporting the economic and social well-being of Dartmoor's local communities and businesses

## **Acceptance Testing**

All opportunities for sponsorship arrangements will be considered carefully by more than one officer or a panel of members before a decision is made.

The following questions will be considered and answers will be documented:

- How well would the sponsorship fit with the Authority's core values?
- How would it further the Authority's strategic aims (as detailed in the Business Plan and the wider National Park Management Plan)?
- In what ways would the sponsorship support and add value to the Authority's key messages?
- What are the risks associated with the proposed arrangement?
- Does the potential Sponsor meet the due diligence checks, including:
  - Environmental standards
  - Ethical credentials
  - Corporate Social Responsibility
  - Financial and business standing

Consideration will also be given to the impact of sponsorship on the shape and balance of a service area or work programme or project. Sponsorship support may not be appropriate if the likely effect of the introduction of sponsorship resources will be to unbalance the

service area, work programme or project so as to present a potential barrier to the delivery of the Authority's wider aims

### **Decisions**

Other than large-scale (more than £100,000 total value) or long-term (more than 3 years) arrangements, decisions will be delegated to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) acting in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.

Any sponsorship arrangement believed by the Chief Executive (NPO) to be worth engaging, but potentially controversial, or more than usually risky, or otherwise unsuitable for decision under delegated powers, will be reported to members for decision.

### **Exclusivity**

Careful consideration will be given before entering into an exclusive agreement with a Sponsor. The longer or broader the agreement, the less likely it is to be appropriate to commit the Authority to an exclusive arrangement without detailed scrutiny.

In the event of more than one potential Sponsor wishing to enter into an arrangement with the Authority in respect of the same or similar activity / service / goods, the negotiation and decision-making process will be managed according to the principles for procurement under Financial Regulations so as to demonstrate the integrity and robustness of the sponsorship award process.

### **Transparency**

As a public body with guardianship of a nationally important asset, the highest level of transparency should be demonstrated in all financial dealings with third parties. It will be very important that information about sponsorship arrangements can be made available to the public.

### **Gifts & Hospitality**

Officers and Members involved in dealing with Sponsors or potential Sponsors must be careful to note and apply the guidance on gifts & hospitality in Financial Regulations [section C12] and the Member Code of Conduct [para 8.1(e)].

While extreme strictness can give unnecessary offence to people and organisations with whom the Authority's relationships should be cordial, an appearance of improper influence is easily created and with it encouragement of cynicism about the motives of those who serve in local government.

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Local Action Funding****Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund (GD LEAF) 2015 – 2020****Core Costs Contribution and Representation on the Local Action Group (LAG)**Report of the Communities OfficerRecommendations : **That Members:**

- (i) **agree in principle to provide up to £6,900 per year for 6 years, 2015 – 2020 (inclusive) to assist with the core costs of running the GD LEAF programme, subject to:**
  - a) **funding being secured from RDPE and LA Partners (WDBC, TDC and SHDC)**
  - b) **the Local Development Strategy promoting appropriate opportunities for Dartmoor communities and businesses**
  - c) **Authority representation on the GD LEAF 2015 - 2020 management team.**
  - d) **Delegate final decision on funding to National Park Officer (CEO) in consultation with the Chairman.**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 Local Action (also known as LEADER) is the community led element of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), a funding programme designed to support the development of English rural areas, primarily funded by the European Union and central government. Its aim is to diversify and strengthen economies and improve the quality of life for people living in these rural areas.

**2 RDPE Local Action 2007 – 2013**

- 2.1 During the 2007 - 2013 programme two Local Action programmes, Greater Dartmoor LEAF and South Devon Coastal LAG, brought in a total of £3.8m of European funding, generated £6.57 million of match funding (mainly private sector) with a total programme value in excess of £9million.

The programmes supported projects that focussed on:

- Creating and growing businesses
- Innovative service provision
- Bringing greater benefits from our unique environment

- 2.2 The £2m GD LEAF programme supported 93 projects in total with 50 projects on or benefitting Dartmoor, generated a further £3.2 million in match funding and achieved the following:

- Created over 60 full time jobs
- Supported over 550 businesses
- Provided over 750 free/subsidised training courses
- Attracted over 5,000 additional tourists
- Provided new/improved facilities for 28 villages (e.g. community shops, village halls)

Projects supported included the expansion of Clives Pies at Buckfastleigh to enable penetration of supermarket and export markets, supporting the creation of 8 jobs (FTE) and the marketing development of T wool, a wool based twine derived from Dartmoor sheep.

- 2.3 Both programmes were run through local partnerships, with representation from local authority, business and community sectors (responsible for making decisions about how to invest the funding locally), South Hams District Council acted as the accountable body (responsible for financial probity and contract holders for the programmes) and the DR Company were engaged as the delivery body (responsible for management, administration and project development support).
- 2.4 In addition to the RDPE funding, the four local authorities provided an annual contribution of £42k in total towards the core costs in managing the two programmes. The two south Devon programmes were recognised as two of the most successful nationally (64), both being awarded significant additional funding from Defra in recognition of the good performance achieved.

### **3 RDPE Local Action 2015 – 2020**

- 3.1 The next rural development programme starts in January 2015, with a national Local Action programme amounting to approximately £140 million. The programme has a far greater focus on supporting rural jobs and growth than previously, with the Local Action Groups (LAGs) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) expected to work closely together to maximise the economic benefit for rural areas.
- 3.2 Projects will need to clearly demonstrate how they support the rural economy with 70% of funding delivered directly in support of jobs and growth. Every project will be expected to demonstrate a benefit to the rural economy. Specific objectives are:
- support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification (40%)
  - support for increasing farm productivity (20%)
  - support for rural tourism (20%)
  - support for increasing forestry productivity (10%)
  - provision for rural services (5%)
  - support for cultural and heritage activity (5%)

Farming and Forestry productivity and diversification are now to be included within the Local Action strand of RDPE funding.

### **4 Greater Dartmoor LEAF 2015 – 2020**

- 4.1 The Greater Dartmoor LEAF area remains substantially the same, albeit some adjustment has been made to maximise funding and enable Devon wide programme coverage. GD LEAF now extends to include an area to the south east

(eg: Teign Valley), while Totnes is now within the South Devon Coastal LAG. The A38 generally acts as the divide between the two south Devon LAG areas (Appendix 1).

- 4.2 Defra has given the following guidance regarding the total amount of funding that could be made available, indicating that the average figure should be used for budgeting purposes:

	GD LEAF	LAG
Min	£ 1,853,000	£ 1,446,000
Ave	£ 2,184,000	£ 1,635,000
Max	£ 2,623,000	£ 1,865,000

The final budget is expected to be confirmed, along with approval of the Local Development Strategy, at the beginning of November.

- 4.3 Local Development Strategies (LDS) are to be submitted to The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in early September, following LEP approval. The 'Your Dartmoor' Plan and other key documents such as the 2012 economic sectors research will be used to inform the development of the GD LEAF LDS, ensuring that the programme meets the recognised needs and priorities for Dartmoor. In particular, the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project (HFP) is providing valuable guidance and direction, particularly on the new farming related priorities. The HFP will continue to work closely with GD LEAF as the programme develops and opportunities to maximise programme benefits by establishing a formal link will be further explored.
- 4.4 Direct community and business consultation has taken place through a number of well attended events and surveys which have engaged directly with representatives from local businesses, enterprise and the community and the results of which will directly influence and guide the content of the LDS.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that South Hams District Council will confirm that it is willing to act as the accountable body following a meeting of the Executive on the 11 September. It is the accountable body that will be responsible for procuring programme delivery and ensuring value for money is achieved.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the GD LEAF and South Devon LAG programmes continue to be managed collectively by one delivery body benefitting from the resulting economies of scale and cooperative working and the provisional costings (appendix 2) have been based on this assumption. Members should note that programme costs will not be fixed until a delivery contract is awarded in late November but should not exceed the current provisional costs indicated.
- 4.7 For both programmes the total management, administration and animation costs are estimated at £1,024,020 (GD LEAF £563,211) across the lifetime of the two programmes. Costs include £17,500 (GD LEAF £9625) per annum for the accountable body recognising the significant time taken to manage, audit and monitor programme delivery. There is also provision made for significant 'animation' or project development support for applicants in the form of 2 locally based project officers. These posts will assist potential applicants develop fundable

projects, a factor that was key to the successful delivery of the previous programme.

- 4.8 It is estimated that every £1 of LA contribution will generate £23 of activity delivered through the programmes, with GD LEAF providing one of the most accessible routes to EU funding for Dartmoor's many small and micro rural enterprises.
- 4.9 The delivery of EU funding streams and the complex administrative requirements of the Local Action programmes are onerous and offer little opportunity to streamline the management and administrative burden. The percentage of the RDPE budget allowed to be used for these purposes is reduced from previous programmes and there remains a requirement for additional funding from the local authorities in order to ensure that the programmes can be delivered effectively.

## **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 An annual contribution of £6,900 is sought from the Authority for the 6 years of the programme, with £16,300 per annum being sought from each of the three Districts, South Hams, West Devon and Teignbridge. The Authority contribution is determined by the % of population falling within the National Park boundary.
- 5.2 It is expected that further EU funding is likely to become available as the programme progresses, and will be awarded to the LAGs that are performing most effectively. The contribution costs have been calculated on the minimum required to deliver the programmes effectively thereby ensuring maximum benefit is secured.
- 5.3 Given that the Authority does not know its budget for 2015/16 and beyond it is proposed that the contribution will be confirmed annually as part of the Authority's budget process.

## **6 Equality & Sustainability Impact**

- 6.1 The GD LEAF will form one of the key delivery mechanisms to realise local community and business aspirations and initiatives such as those identified in 'Your Dartmoor'. The support offered through the project officers will ensure that the funding is accessible to all, assisting those applicants with less experience or capacity to access funding.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 While the requested £6,900 annual contribution over 6 years (£41,400 in total) represents a significant investment for the Authority in times of a reducing budget, it will facilitate the successful delivery of a grant programme in excess of £2million, enabling projects to an estimated value in excess of £5million to deliver key economic 'Your Dartmoor' plan objectives. The recommendation above is, however, dependent on other local authority partners committing to funding support.

Jo Rumble

Attachments: Appendix 1 – GD LEAF SD LAG Cost Summary  
Appendix 2 – Greater Dartmoor Parishes map

## Proposed Funding Profile for GD LEAF & SD LAG programmes 2015 - 2020

Costs	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
<b>DR Staff (FTE)</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	
Man & Admin Staff (FTE)	1.9	2.2	2.1	2	1.9	1.7	
Animation/Project staff (FTE)	2	1.6	1.4	1.2	1	0.8	
DR Costs: Staff costs, on costs, overheads, local office costs	£ 170,100	£ 155,900	£ 147,200	£ 138,600	£ 128,300	£ 114,900	£ 855,000
Administration & Management	£ 85,700	£ 89,800	£ 88,100	£ 86,600	£ 84,200	£ 79,200	£ 513,600
Animation	£ 84,400	£ 66,100	£ 59,100	£ 52,000	£ 44,100	£ 35,700	£ 341,400
Travel	£ 5,400	£ 5,400	£ 5,400	£ 3,240	£ 3,240	£ 3,240	£ 25,920
Meeting costs	£ 3,600	£ 3,600	£ 3,600	£ 1,800	£ 1,800	£ 1,800	£ 16,200
LAG expenses	£ 2,400	£ 2,400	£ 2,400	£ 2,400	£ 2,400	£ 2,400	£ 14,400
Publicity (incl website)	£ 4,000	£ 1,000	£ 500	£ 500	£ 500	£ 1,000	£ 7,500
Accountable Body Costs (SHDC)	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 105,000
	<b>£ 203,000</b>	<b>£ 185,800</b>	<b>£ 176,600</b>	<b>£ 164,040</b>	<b>£ 153,740</b>	<b>£ 140,840</b>	<b>£ 1,024,020</b>

Budget	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
RDPE	£ 146,900	£ 129,700	£ 120,500	£ 107,940	£ 97,640	£ 84,740	£ 687,420
LA Contributions							£ -
DNPA	£ 6,900	£ 6,900	£ 6,900	£ 6,900	£ 6,900	£ 6,900	£ 41,400
SHDC	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 98,400
TDC	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 98,400
WDBC	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 16,400	£ 98,400
	<b>£ 203,000</b>	<b>£ 185,800</b>	<b>£ 176,600</b>	<b>£ 164,040</b>	<b>£ 153,740</b>	<b>£ 140,840</b>	<b>£ 1,024,020</b>

12%  
29%  
29%  
29%

### Assumptions

Mid budget allocation used for calculation

No further allocation later in programme

Approx 220 projects across 2 programmes

Allocations of funding will be frontloaded

DR will provide local Project Officers for animation in each programme

Programmes will share management, admin and finance functions

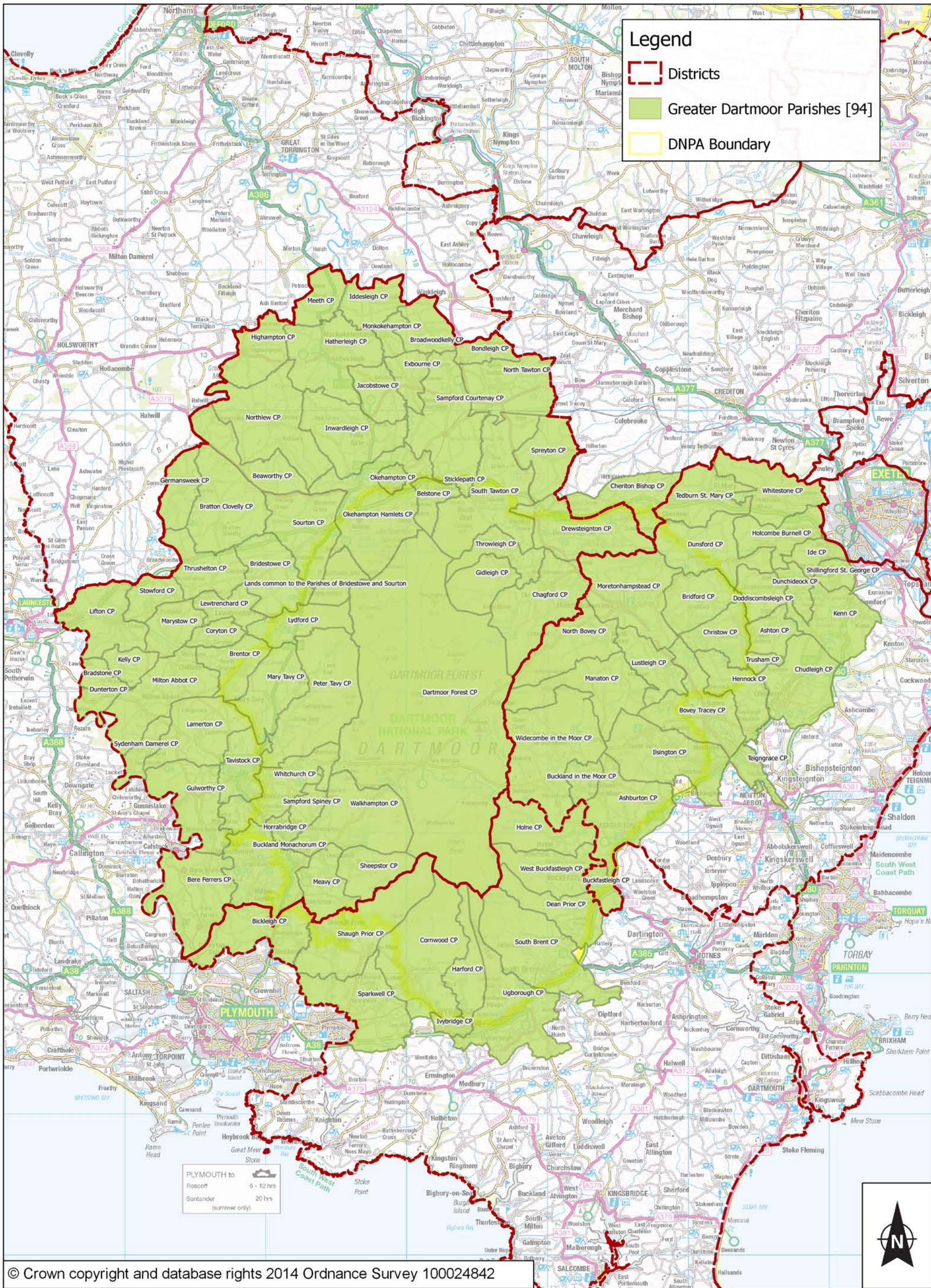
SHDC will act as accountable body

Each district contributes equally to the programme

# Greater Dartmoor LEAF



Compiled by mtravis on 17/7/2014





## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE**Report of the Director of Planning

**Recommendation: That Members agree to public consultation on the draft charging schedule for pre-application advice**

**1 Purpose of report**

1.1 A detailed report on pre-application charging was taken to the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee on 15 August 2014 (NPA/AG/14/051). At that meeting it was resolved that:

- A scheme of charging should go forward for consideration at the next available Authority meeting
- The scheme of charges as set out together with the exemptions were considered appropriate
- Any scheme of charges should be supplemented with a clear set of advice notes to guide pre-applicants
- The levels of service and general caveats on advice being informal and not binding should also be clearly set out.

1.2 This reports seeks authorisation to issue a consultation document in relation to a scheme of charging for pre-application advice. For information the current charging schedule of West Devon Borough Council/ South Hams District Council (same charges apply to both Councils), and Mid Devon District Council is appended to this report. Teignbridge District Council does not charge for pre-application advice except in the case of major development pre-application forum meetings. They have no current plans to introduce charges. The draft charging schedule proposed is also appended.

**2 Breakdown of pre-applications received in 2013/14**

2.1 In the last financial year the following pre-application enquiries were dealt with by the planning team. These are broken down into development types.

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Advertisements                        | 11                           |
| • Changes of use                        | 62                           |
| • Householder                           | 391                          |
| • Listed Building Consent (LBC)         | 68                           |
| • 1-9 dwellings                         | 220                          |
| • Other minor devt.                     | 198 (includes agr.buildings) |
| • Major residential (over 10) dwellings | 18                           |

2.2 In terms of numbers of enquiries the bulk of the work appears to fall into householder, LBC, 1-9 dwellings and other minor development categories.

### 3 Potential income and risks

3.1 On the basis of the charging schedule attached to this report, the potential income generated in a typical 12 month period would be:

Advertisements	£1,100	
Changes of use	£6,200	
LBC	£2,760	(based on a third proceeding to site visit)
1-9 dwellings	£33,000	(based on 1-2 dwellings as this is the majority)
Other minor	£15,840	
Major devt.	£7,200	(based on 10-30 dwellings)
-----		
Total income	£66,100	
-----		

3.2 Based on experience from constituent Councils in the area, we could expect an initial recoup of about a third of the above figure, but this should rise once the principle of charging and level of charges become more accepted. It will be important to monitor the impact of charges and how this affects both workload and income received, but it is considered that there is a prospect of receiving a reasonable level of income from a targeted charging schedule. It should be borne in mind that it is likely that following the introduction of charges there will be a drop in the number of written pre-application advice requests received particularly from developers who have no real interest in pursuing the matter or potential purchasers.

### 4 Householder advice

4.1 The view of Audit and Governance Committee was that free householder advice should be continued. This would be time limited to a 2 hour maximum desk top exercise without a site visit. In response to a query from the Audit and Governance Committee, it is confirmed that multiple requests for advice for the same or similar development will not be entertained (subject to a 12 month re-application restriction period). Further advice can be sought from a professional agent at that point to prevent the system being abused.

### 5 Commercial/residential development

5.1 The draft charging schedule for this category of development, as discussed and ratified by the Audit and Governance, is appended as Appendix 01.

### 6 Listed Buildings advice

6.1 Audit and Governance Committee agreed that a charge should be made where a site visit was essential. Otherwise it would remain free on the same basis as householder advice.

6.2 Unlike householder enquiries there will be times when a site visit is essential if we are to offer sound clear advice particularly related to the building concerned. The

team will reserve the right to refuse to give desk top advice if a site visit is considered essential in which case a charge will apply.

6.3 Members will be aware that unlike an application for planning permission (PP), an application for Listed Building Consent (LBC) does not attract a statutory fee. In many cases, development proposals will require both LBC and PP. It is not proposed to charge two sets of fees for advice on a single development proposal, and the higher charge only will be payable.

6.4 Some alterations to listed buildings, however, require LBC but do not require PP. The introduction of a fee for pre-application advice in these circumstances, albeit because a site visit is required, will mean that the Authority is levying a charge for advice when an application could be submitted (and re-submitted if unsuccessful) without charge. There may be a small risk that this could result in the proportion of “poor quality” applications being received increasing, although the numbers are likely to be very low.

## **7 Tree advice**

7.1 Advice will only be given free for works to TPO trees or on the removal of trees in Conservation Areas. Advice on trees on potential development sites can be picked up as part of the schedule above and will not be given free separately. Advice will not be offered in future for pruning works for non TPO trees.

## **8 Advice regarding need for permission**

8.1 Advice will continue to be offered informally as part of the written pre-application letter sent out. The informal nature of the advice and it being non-binding will be stressed. Any complexities in this area will need to be dealt with via a formal Certificate of Lawfulness application.

## **9 Set up costs**

9.1 Set up costs will be minimal with no major upgrade changes needed to systems. Officer time will be required to set up guidance notes and an on line payment system but this will not be onerous.

## **10 Payment methods**

10.1 The Audit and Governance Committee agreed that an on line payment system will be easiest to administer and that payment should be made ‘upfront’ before the pre-application request is processed.

## **11 Exemptions**

11.1 The Audit and Governance Committee discussed and approved the exemptions as set out below.

- Parish Councils (own land or land they are to acquire)
- Householder development within the curtilage of a dwelling house (not change of use of land outside the curtilage)
- Listed Building advice with no site visit

- Registered charitable organisations or not for profit organisations
- 100% affordable housing schemes
- Rural 'exception' site affordable housing schemes
- Cross subsidy schemes to be based on open market proportion to assess fee
- Enforcement enquiries to regularise unauthorised development
- Generic advice over the telephone or in reception but on a very limited time basis (no more than 5 minutes)
- Power of absolute discretion to Director to waive or refund any fee but only in exceptional circumstances.

## 12 Timescale to give advice and process

- 12.1 The timescale for giving advice will be maintained as it is at present i.e. 28 calendar days. There will not however be any refund of the fee if this target is not met. This will be monitored and our target may need to be adjusted depending on experience.

## 13 How the scheme will operate in practice

- 13.1 For clarity all pre-application requests will need to be made in writing with a dedicated form to be provided, will include an appropriate level of details such as location plan, other plans, and photographs. The fee will be confirmed as well as any additional information required before work commences. All pre-application requests will be formally responded to in writing (letter or email) and will include the comments of both internal consultees and external consultees such as the Highway Authority when appropriate. A meeting with the pre applicant can be in the office or on site and may include multiple officers. Any meeting will be followed up with written advice. Members are referred to the procedure flow diagram appended to this report.
- 13.2 The Audit and Governance committee remarked on the 'culture' change that will be needed to robustly implement a scheme for charging. In the past Officers have been willing to offer advice so as to improve the quality of applications (and the eventual built development), discourage 'no hoper' applications and to generally go the extra mile in customer service. If a scheme of charging is implemented it will be necessary to guard against applicants trying to avoid charges, or making multiple requests on the same proposal. Officers will be required to avoid giving site specific advice over the telephone or in the office.
- 13.3 Another matter of procedure needs to be stressed in relation to seeking amended plans. It is considered that if a charging scheme is in place and an applicant chooses not to seek advice before submission then it should remain the prerogative of the planning team not to enter into negotiations or discussions to amend plans **unless** the design or other amendments are easy to achieve (preferably without any attendant need to reconsult). Planning authorities are not obliged to accept amended plans although best practice does encourage problem resolution during the processing period.
- 13.4 A stance of non-negotiation where significant amendments are needed could result in a greater rate of refusals and a potential increase in appeal work. This is the one area which cannot be quantified but will need to be monitored. Any refusal could however come with an offer to enter into pre-application discussion on payment of the appropriate fee. Members are reminded that the central government 8 week

performance figures are here to stay and the Authority will continue to be judged against this performance standard.

- 13.5 Members of the Authority also have a part to play in this culture change by stressing the advantages of seeking advice at an early pre submission stage and acting on the advice given. Officer committee reports will continue to confirm if advice has been sought and if the officer advice has been followed.
- 13.6 In addition pre applicants can help themselves in that there will continue to be a wealth of information and advice on our web site. This information over the next year will need to be streamlined and access made easier. Advice notes relating to pre-application will stress the importance of early use of our web site preferably before any written request for pre-application advice is made.

#### **14 Other major developments and Member involvement**

- 14.1 The Audit and Governance Committee made reference to Pre-application Forum meetings and involvement of Members at pre-application stage. Officers agree and consider this is in line with government best practice. A system will be brought forward as soon as time allows and Members views sought prior to its formal introduction. In the meantime Members will be involved from time to time in an informal way particularly on the larger schemes that may be submitted.

#### **15 Financial Implications**

- 15.1 The potential income generated is set out above. Expenditure to set up the system is expected to be very low, limited to the costs of the public consultation, the production of internal forms, promulgation of new advice and dealing with any complaints.
- 15.2 There is expected to be a drop in the overall number of pre-application advice requests. This should have the benefit of freeing up some officer time, which can be re-allocated to other work streams.
- 15.3 Any increase in the number of refusals of planning permission or listed building consent (because of a failure to take pre-application advice) could have a knock-on impact on the number of appeals. This area of work is highly resource intensive in officer time. However, it is by no means certain that many or most poor applications continue through to a refusal and an appeal. Some applicants and agents accept officer advice on their application, albeit at a late stage, withdraw and reconsider the way forward.
- 15.4 If it is determined to introduce a Scheme of Charges for Pre-Application Advice, the impact on requests for pre-application advice, applications, decisions, appeals and complaints will be monitored and trends reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on a regular basis.

## **16 Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment**

16.1 Members will note a number of exemptions to fees set out above. These are aimed at those customers who are less able to afford fees and for whom there are different needs from the planning service. We will continue to offer free householder advice, and free advice to community not for profit groups provided they are properly set up and constituted. Registered charities will also be exempt. The Director will maintain a power to exempt in special circumstances if required taking into account equality and sustainability issues.

## **17 Conclusion**

17.1 Members are asked to consider the report and draft charging schedule. A key issue for consideration is the relative merits of a potential new income stream to offset costs and/or reduced workload (i.e. through reduced volume of pre-application enquiries) versus the negative perception of charges, the potential impact in terms of 'poorer quality applications', increased refusal rates and appeals.

17.2 If Members wish to proceed with potential pre-application charges, the next stage is a public consultation exercise. It is recommended that the following consultee views are sought

- Planning agents
- Statutory consultees
- Parish Councils
- Dartmoor Preservation Association
- Dartmoor Society
- Community Council of Devon

17.3 Any consultation will be carried out electronically with a link to this report and the earlier Audit and Governance report, and will include a draft charging schedule. Detailed advice notes will follow based on queries and other comments that may come out of the consultation exercise.

17.4 Results of the consultation will be reported to Authority for decision on whether to proceed. Suggested timescale for implementation is the start of the 2015/16 financial year. Fees would then be reviewed annually.

STEPHEN BELLI

## **Background Papers and appendices**

(NPA/AG/14/035)

(NPA/AG/14/051)

**Attachments:**

- Appendix 1 – Draft DNPA Schedule**
- Appendix 2 - Charging schedule of Mid Devon District Council**
- Appendix 3 – Charging schedule of South Hams/West Devon Councils**
- Appendix 4 – Procedural flow chart for pre-application advice**

## Dartmoor National Park planning advice pre application fees

### Draft schedule of fees payable

Costs will include meetings sometimes with multiple officers and a detailed written response. Meetings can be in the office or on site.

Fees are inclusive of VAT

#### Exemptions where no fee payable

- Parish Councils (own land or land they are to acquire)
- Householder development within the curtilage of a dwelling house (not change of use of land/buildings or other development outside the curtilage)
- Listed Building advice with no site visit
- Registered charitable organisations or not for profit organisations
- 100% affordable housing schemes
- Rural 'exception' site affordable housing schemes
- Cross subsidy schemes to be based on open market proportion to assess fee
- Enforcement enquiries to regularise unauthorised development
- Generic advice over the telephone or in reception but on a very limited time basis (no more than 5/10 minutes)

Type of Development	£ Including VAT	Additional Fee
<b>CLASS A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential between 31-149 dwellings</li> <li>• Non-residential floor space 5,000- 9,999 sq. m</li> </ul>	£600 (up to 2 meetings)	£300 per additional meeting
<b>CLASS B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential between 10-30 dwellings -</li> <li>• Non-residential floor space 1,000-4,999 sq. m</li> </ul>	£400 (up to one meeting)	£200 per additional meeting
<b>CLASS C</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential (including holiday lets) between 3-9 dwellings</li> <li>• Non-residential floor space 500-999 sq. m</li> </ul>	£300 (up to one meeting)	£150 per additional meeting
<b>CLASS D</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential 1-2 dwellings (including replacement dwellings) including change of use to, conversion and holiday lets</li> <li>• Non-residential floor space up to 499 sq. m</li> </ul>	£150 (up to one meeting)	£50 per additional meeting

<p><b>CLASS E</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisements</li> <li>• Telecommunications proposals</li> <li>• Change of use where no operational development (except residential/holiday let)</li> </ul>	<p>£100 £100 £100 (up to one meeting only)</p>	
<p><b>CLASS F</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listed Building where site visit involved</li> </ul>	<p>£120 (up to one meeting)</p>	<p>£60 per additional meeting</p>
<p><b>CLASS G</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other minor development including agricultural based development</li> </ul>	<p>£80 (up to one meeting)</p>	<p>£40 per additional meeting</p>
<p><b>CLASS H</b></p> <p><b>Renewable energy - solar, wind, hydro</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic scale</li> <li>• Non-domestic Hydro schemes</li> </ul>	<p>Free but £120 if site visit needed</p> <p>£150 (up to one meeting)</p>	<p>£50 per additional meeting</p>



MID DEVON  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

5. Any necessary scaled plans, elevations, sections, photographs or sketches. (Photos are often very useful to understand the proposal and its context).
6. Your contact details and whether you are requesting a meeting.
7. The pre-application advice fee.
8. We also request the submission of a draft Design and Access Statement where it will be useful to guide the discussions. However this is not a requirement at the pre-application stage.

When we receive a written request for pre-application advice we will check whether sufficient information has been submitted in order for us to understand the site, its surroundings and the proposed scheme. We may need further information before offering pre-application advice in writing. Timescale standards for the issuing of written advice will only begin once sufficient information has been received and will only apply to proposals where a fee is charged.

### Our charges.

Payment can be made by the following methods:

1. Cheque payable to Mid Devon District Council.
2. Bankers Draft payable to Mid Devon District Council.
3. Telegraphic Transfer – (account details can be provided).
4. Cash payable at the Council Offices, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton.
5. Credit card by phone or at the Council Offices.

Type of development.	Fee (incl VAT)	Additional fee (incl VAT)
<b>1. LARGE SCALE MAJOR</b> Residential >150 houses or site area >4ha; Non residential 10,000 sq m floorspace or site area >4 ha; All Environmental Impact Assessment development	£1000 (up to 3 meetings)	£400 (each additional meeting)
<b>2. MEDIUM SCALE MAJOR</b> Residential 31-149 houses or site area 2 – 4ha; Non residential 5,000 – 9,999 sq m floorspace or site area between 2-4ha	£650 (up to 2 meetings)	£300 (each additional meeting)
<b>3. SMALL SCALE MAJOR</b> Residential 10-30 houses or site area	£400 (up to 1 meeting)	£200 (each additional

up to 2ha; Non residential 1,000 – 4,999 sq m floorspace or site area between 1-2 ha		meeting)
<b>4. MINOR</b>  Residential proposals (including holiday lets) involving the erection of or change of use to between 3 – 9 residential units; Non residential 500 – 1,000 sq m floorspace;	£300 (up to 1 meeting)	£150 (each additional meeting)
<b>5. SMALL MINOR</b>  All residential schemes for the replacement, change of use or erection of 1 or 2 dwellings (or holiday lets) or conversion of building(s) to 1 or 2 residential units (or holiday lets); All minor non residential schemes for new buildings; Non residential 200 – 499 sq m floorspace	£150 (up to 1 meeting)	£50 (each additional meeting)
<b>6. OTHER</b>  Advertisements; Telecommunications; Changes of use (except residential / holiday let)	£100 (up to 1 meeting)	£50 (each additional meeting)
<b>7. WIND TURBINES</b>  Height to tip: 25m or less 26-75m More than 75m (Where Environmental Impact Assessment is needed, the charge will be at the large scale major rate)	Up to 3 meetings  £550 £800 £1000	Each additional meeting £200 £300 £400
<b>8. GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PV AND THERMAL</b>  Domestic (if planning permission required) Less than 1 ha (2.5 acres) 1 to 10 ha (2.5– 25 acres) Over 10 ha (25 acres) (Where Environmental Impact Assessment is needed, the charge will be at the large scale major rate)	Up to 3 meetings  £80 £550 £800 £1000	Each additional meeting £40 £200 £300 £400

<b>9. ANAEROBIC DIGESTERS</b>	Up to 3 meetings	Each additional meeting
On farm (single farm feedstock source)	£300	£150
On farm (multiple farm or mixed agricultural & non-agricultural feedstock source)	£550	£200
Off farm / non-agricultural commercial (Where Environmental Impact Assessment is needed, the charge will be at the large scale major rate)	£1000	£400
<b>10. Written confirmation that an enforcement notice has been complied with.</b>	£100	£50
<b>9. Householder applications</b>	£80	£40
<b>10. Listed Building / heritage</b> (in addition to any fee for planning advice).		
a. Repair / maintenance only	FREE	FREE
b. Enhancement / added value:		
In principle, no visit	£50	£50
In principle with visit	£75	£50
Detailed with visit	£120	£50
<b>11. Lawful Development Certificate advice</b>	£50	£50
<b>12. Planning matters relating to an enforcement issue</b> (other than written confirmation that an enforcement notice has been complied with – see 9 above).	FREE	FREE
<b>13. Registered charities and Town and Parish Council proposals</b> (on their own land or land they plan to acquire).	FREE	FREE
<b>14. 100% Affordable housing schemes</b>	50% normal pre-app fee	50% normal pre-app fee
<b>15. Non residential additional floorspace (extensions) &lt; 200 square metres</b>	£100	£50
<b>16. Discussions with local residents potentially affected by applications for development.</b>	FREE	FREE
<b>17. One meeting following a refusal of planning permission.</b>	FREE	As fee category
<b>18. Facilities for the disabled.</b>	FREE	FREE

## WEST DEVON PRE - APPLICATION ENQUIRY CHARGES

FEES SHOWN BELOW INCLUDE VAT at 20%

Type of development.	£ Including VAT	Additional Fee
<b>CLASS A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential greater than 150 houses or site area greater than 4ha;</li> <li>• Non residential 10,000sqm floorspace or site area greater than 4ha;</li> <li>• All Environmental Impact Development</li> </ul>	£5,000 (up to 6 meetings)	£500 per additional meeting
<b>CLASS B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential 31- 149 houses or site area 2 – 4 ha;</li> <li>• Non residential 5,000 – 9,999 sq m floor space or site area between 2-4 ha</li> </ul>	£2,400 - (up to 4 meetings)	£500 each additional meeting
<b>CLASS C</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential 10-30 houses or site area up to 2 ha;</li> <li>• Non residential 1,000 – 4,999 sq m or site area between 1 -2 ha</li> </ul>	£1,800 (up to 3 meetings)	£360 each additional meeting
<b>CLASS D</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential proposals (including holiday lets) involving the erection of or change of use to between 3 – 9 residential units</li> <li>• Non residential 500 – 1000sq m floorspace</li> </ul>	£600 (up to 2 meetings)	£180 each additional meeting
<b>CLASS E</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residential schemes for the change of use to or erection of 1 or 2 dwellings (or holiday lets) or conversion of building(s) to 1 or 2 residential units (or holiday lets);</li> <li>• All minor non residential schemes for new buildings</li> <li>• Non residential buildings/extensions up to 499 sq m floorspace</li> </ul>	£360 (up to 2 meetings)	£120 each additional meeting
<b>SINGLE REPLACEMENT DWELLING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential schemes for the replacement of a single dwelling</li> </ul>	£180 (up to 1 meeting)	£120 each additional meeting
<b>CLASS F</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisements;</li> <li>• Telecommunications;</li> <li>• Changes of use where no operational development (except residential/holiday)</li> </ul>	£180 (up to 1 meeting)	£120 each additional meeting
<b>CLASS G</b> <b>Renewable Energy – (Solar, Wind turbines etc)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turbines up to 25m hub height or Site area under 1 hectare</li> <li>▪ Turbines 25 – 50 metres or site area 1 – 2 hectares</li> </ul>	£850.00  £1725.00	£180 per meeting  £360 per meeting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Turbines over 50m (hub height) or site area over 2 hectares</li> </ul>	£2300.00	£500 per meeting
<p><b>Householder Schemes</b> - works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling, including extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type A - NO SITE VISIT OR REDESIGN</li> <li>• Type B - WHERE SITE VISIT AND/OR REDESIGN REQUIRED</li> </ul>	<p>Type A - NO CHARGE Type B - £120.00</p>	None
<p><b>CLASS H LISTED BUILDING SCHEMES</b> (where no planning permission will be required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type A – works to a listed building – where little guidance needed</li> <li>• Type B – works to listed building – where significant advice, redesign and site visits needed</li> </ul>	<p>Type A - NO CHARGE Type B - £120.00</p>	None
Conservation Area Consent advice (where no planning permission will be required)	NO CHARGE	
Lawful Development Certificate advice	NO CHARGE	N/A

No fee will be charged for all 100% affordable housing schemes; Parish Council, voluntary sector, charitable trust or not-for-profit organisations' development enquiries.

Please note that Planning Officers do not give informal advice on whether or not planning permission will be required. There is extensive guidance available to view on the [Planning Portal](#) but if owners or prospective developers are unsure they are encouraged to submit an application for a [Certificate of Lawfulness](#) which will provide a legally binding decision.

**Notes –**

- Floorspace refers to gross external floorspace
- The larger element of a mixed use scheme will primarily be used to determine which category of fee applies
- For the purposes of charging, flats and holiday accommodation are considered as dwellings/houses
- Fees will be subject to review
- All fees are subject to the current rate of VAT. Fees show VAT at 20%
- \* "Redesign" means it is necessary to change substantially the nature of the scheme before it can be supported...
- There is a difference between the cost of additional meetings between different categories because of the number of officers that are expected to need to be involved.

# West Devon Borough Council

## Development Management

### Pre-application enquiry form



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

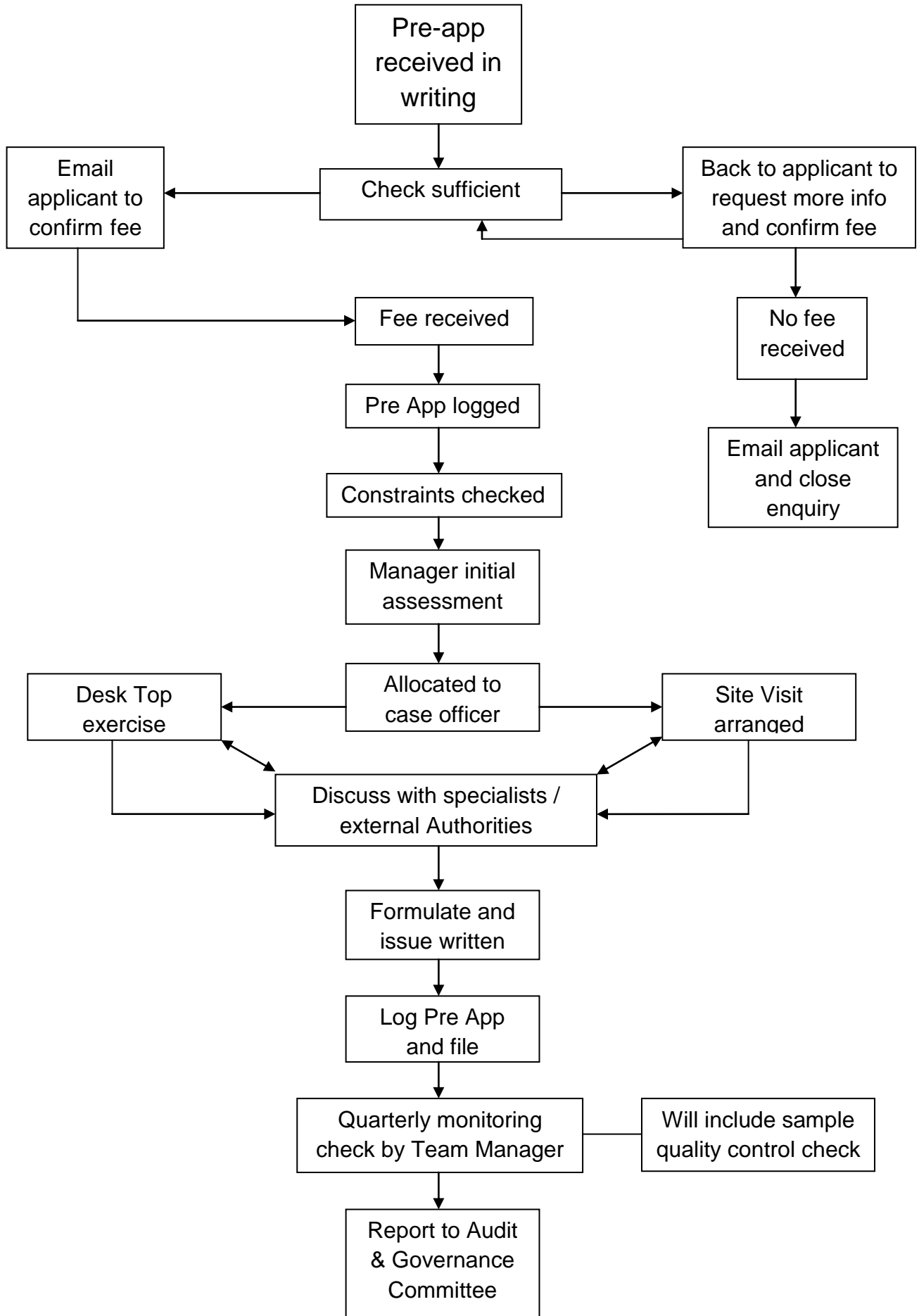
- such as:- GOSW, the Highway Authority, Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, etc. subject to their availability;
- Be provided in writing, and be reviewed by senior officers;
  - Include references to all relevant planning policies and planning history;
  - Be provided on a without prejudice basis because it cannot constrain the Planning and Licensing Committee which is entitled to not accept the officer recommendation if there are good and justifiable planning reasons not to do so;
  - Set out clearly the issues which would be raised by the development, and either what sort of changes would be needed to make it supportable, or, in the event of insufficient changes being likely, what the grounds for refusal would be;
  - Identify what level of community consultation would be expected in order to comply with the Council's Statement on Community Involvement;
  - Set out the nature and quality of information which would need to accompany any subsequent application in order for it to be validated;
  - Establish, as a minimum the Heads of Terms that are needed to be included in any Section 106 Agreement; but preferably have discussed in detail the agreement to enable a S106 agreement to be submitted with the application;
  - Be based on site visit information made by officers of the Council.

With the exception of householder schemes (below), the service would establish a mutually agreeable timetable to conclude the pre-application process and provide the written response and this is likely to take between 2-6 months depending upon the complexity of the issues raised. The users of the service may seek to impose a refund of some of the charges if the Council is unable to meet the agreed timescales.

**For Householder Schemes (works or alterations to an existing residential dwelling, including extensions, garages, satellite dishes, garden structures etc) advice would:-**

- Be provided in writing;
- Include references to all relevant planning policies and planning history;
- Be provided on a without prejudice basis because it cannot constrain the Planning and Licensing Committee which is entitled to not accept the officer recommendation if there are good and justifiable planning reasons not to do so;
- Set out clearly the issues which would be raised by the development, and either what sort of changes would be needed to make it supportable, or, in the event of insufficient changes being likely, what the grounds for refusal would be;
- Set out the nature and quality of information which would need to accompany any subsequent application in order for it to be validated;
- Provide the guidance of the case officer who would deal with any subsequent application and any other useful contact details.

Every effort will be made to deal with your enquiry within 6 weeks. If for any reason officers have to ask you to agree to extend the period for response, then your co-operation will be appreciated.



## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**LOCAL PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**Report of the Senior Forward PlannerRecommendation : **That Members note the Report****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out a summary of the Authority's ninth Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.
- 1.2 An AMR has two key roles; firstly to set out the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and secondly to assess the effectiveness of policies in the 'local plan'.

**2 Progress against the Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

- 2.1 During 2013/14 the principle area of work for the Forward Planning team has been the Affordable Housing SPD, and the implementation of the Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (the DMD).
- 2.2 The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in April 2014. This followed extensive research, a stakeholder workshop, and a formal consultation draft in early 2014.
- 2.3 Significant resources are also currently going into the implementation of the development plan, with Development Briefs and Masterplans already underway for a number of allocated sites in Local Centres. The Chagford Masterplan and Development Briefs for allocated sites in Ashburton, South Brent and Yelverton were approved in 2013/14. Work on the Ashburton Masterplan is ongoing. Support for affordable housing on exception sites continues, in collaboration with District/Borough Council Housing Officers and the Rural Housing Enabler.
- 2.4 Officers are supporting a number of communities in Neighbourhood Planning exercises. Four Neighbourhood Plan areas have been designated in the National Park.
- 2.5 A revised Local Development Scheme (LDS - the local plan 'timetable') was adopted in May 2014. This was delayed in order to seek clarity around resources in the team to inform realistic timescales for local plan review. The LDS sets a timetable for Local Plan review starting in 2015. Officers are currently exploring the most efficient and effective approach to bring forward minerals policies for the National Park. A revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), setting the framework for engagement in local plan preparation, is anticipated in 2014/15.



### 3 Policy monitoring

- 3.1 New employment development coming forward related principally to the motor trade with new car sales and repair areas at Ashburton and Tavistock. Officers continue to explore a number of redevelopment and regeneration opportunities relating to employment sites including the former Axminster carpets site at Buckfast, and the redevelopment of Chuley Road, Ashburton. The approved Masterplan at Chagford also includes employment space.
- 3.2 The level of affordable housing completions has risen in 2013/14 with 32% of new houses completed being affordable. With certificates of lawfulness excluded the proportion of affordable housing completed in 2013/14 is a more reasonable 44% (see further comments below). In 2013/14 the number of residential completions in the National Park (37 new units) is slightly lower than the rate anticipated (50 per year). The number of permissions for affordable housing in 2013/14 shows the 'pipeline' for affordable housing to be at a similar level (35% / 29 units). It is anticipated that affordable housing delivery (and overall delivery) will increase, however, as sites allocated in the Development Plan come forward. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008 the Authority has approved an average of 55 new dwellings per year (against an indicative 50 per year), of which 41% was affordable housing (against a target of 50%).
- 3.3 The Affordable Housing SPD has brought in additional flexibility in the delivery of affordable housing. This includes in particular:
- Scope for cross subsidy on exception sites, where robustly justified by viability appraisal and not exceeding 25%
  - Greater scope in specific situations for commuted sum contributions towards off-site affordable housing
  - These two provisions will help to support the continued delivery of affordable housing on smaller sites, and provide contributions to support schemes in the most sustainable and appropriate locations.
- 3.4 The average house price in Dartmoor National Park in 2013/14 was £278,262 compared to £284,816 in 2012/13. It should be noted that this figure is drawn from a relatively small geographical area (and therefore a limited number of sales), so whilst this figure is more accurate it is likely to fluctuate more. In respect of sales numbers, figures show an increase in transactions again through the first part of 2014. Whilst the average house price has fallen slightly in 2013/14 affordability continues to be a significant issue with lower quartile house prices in the National Park currently 11 times the lower quartile household income. Set against the typical measures of mortgage lending at 3.5 times household income this illustrates the significant affordability gap in the National Park justifying a continued focus on delivering affordable housing.
- 3.5 The number of planning applications for self-catering holiday accommodation units fell to 10 in 2013/14. It was noted in the previous AMR that applications had increased from 3 in 2008/09, to 11 in 2011/12 and 27 in 2012/13. Although the numbers have decreased we will continue to monitor this both in respect of policy implementation, and in order to ensure these units are occupied in accordance with

occupancy restriction and is not used as a route to bypass the Authority's relatively restrictive policies regarding open market housing development.

- 3.6 We continue to see a high proportion of new residential uses coming through Certificates of Lawfulness. A total of 10 residential properties came forward through issuing of Certificates of Lawfulness in 2013/14. They comprise 15% of new residential properties completed in the last 5 years. Development of this type can occur in unsustainable locations, and makes no contribution to affordable housing. Measures brought forward in the form of S106 and condition monitoring should reduce this figure in the medium term.
- 3.7 The table below shows that the number of applications for planning permission determined by the Authority has remained steady at 541 in 2013/14. The proportion of planning applications granted has fallen slightly from 2012/13 to 85%. 38 appeals were lodged in 2013/14; the proportion allowed was 26% (compared with 25% in 2012/13 and 23% in 2011/12). This is comfortably below the Authority's target of 33% of appeals allowed.

#### **4 The Duty to Cooperate**

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2012 brought into effect a 'duty to cooperate' as a method of ensuring engagement and cooperation in the absence of a regional planning tier. The Duty requires that a Local Planning Authority engages constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with relevant or prescribed bodies in order to maximise the effectiveness of development plan preparation and strategic matters
- 4.2 Officers continue to engage with other Local Authorities and agencies on the Duty to Cooperate around strategic issues for the area; this includes:
- Specific work on a Duty to Cooperate protocol led by Devon County Council to which DNPA is a signatory;
  - Plymouth area Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA) with Plymouth City Council, West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council and Cornwall Council;
  - Exeter area SHMNA with Teignbridge District Council, Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council and Exeter City Council;
  - There is also continued liaison with statutory bodies, for example with the Environment Agency over the Ashburton Flood Risk Assessment;
  - Work with Devon County Council on economic development and infrastructure planning; and
  - Engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in the preparation of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).
  - Engagement with the interim Greater Dartmoor LEAF to influence future Local Development Strategy.

#### **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Annual Monitoring Report continues to show effective implementation of the Development Plan. It will take some time before the implementation of the new policies in the DMD is evident in monitoring. There are no significant concerns at this time arising as a result of plan monitoring.

- 5.2 It is anticipated that 2014/15 will see the completion of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the revision of the Statement of Community Involvement and early stages of work on minerals policies. In addition to this it is expected that the Ashburton Masterplan will be approved, and that applications flowing from approved Masterplans and Development Briefs will begin to come forward.
- 5.3 A likely focus over the next 12 months will be evidence relating to local plan review around affordable housing need and delivery. It is important that the Authority recognises the statutory need to maintain an up to date development plan. The Core Strategy was adopted in 2008. Whilst it is considered consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is recognised that the economic and statutory context of this plan has moved forward. The Development Management DPD was adopted in 2013, after the publication of the NPPF and demonstrates a continued integrity to the overarching strategy and evidence which supports the Authority's local plan. A review of the local plan is likely to focus upon strategic housing policy, strategic economic development policy, and potentially settlement strategy. The NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance steers Local Planning Authorities back towards the preparation of a single local plan document.

## **6 Equality and sustainability impact**

- 6.1 The Annual Monitoring Report does not set policy or recommendations. It does however comment on a range of indicators covering social well-being, and in particular social inclusion, housing and health. Monitoring of development plan documents enables particular trends or policy effects to be identified, where they impinge on under-represented groups, and for amendments or variations to be introduced at subsequent reviews.

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 The AMR has no financial implications.

DAN JANOTA

### **Background Papers**

Annual Monitoring Report 2014 ([http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/planning/pl-forwardplanning/pl-localdevframework/forward\\_planning\\_ldf\\_evidence/pl-amr](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/planning/pl-forwardplanning/pl-localdevframework/forward_planning_ldf_evidence/pl-amr))

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AUTHORITY

5 September 2014

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS AND SECTION 211 NOTIFICATIONS  
(WORKS TO TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS)  
DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

Report of the Trees and Landscape Officer

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

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

**West Devon**

**Ref: 14/0022          The Beeches, Yelverton          SX 5203 6801**

Application to crown lift a lime and an ash. Consent was granted subject to the following 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**

**West Devon**

**Ref: 14/0018          Townend House, Lydford          SX 5121 8505**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 14/0021          Broadmead Cottage, Brentor          SX 4804 8134**

Notification to fell two ash stems. The works will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

## **South Hams**

**Ref: 14/0019**

**Church House, South Brent**

**SX 6965 6020**

Notification to fell a eucalyptus. The tree is a large specimen growing in a small garden and causing a nuisance to the neighbouring property.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

## **Teignbridge**

**Ref: 14/0020**

**22 Stapledon Lane, Ashburton**

**SX 7558 7002**

Notification to fell a cherry. The felling will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 14/0023**

**Widcombe Village Green**

**SX 7181 7680**

Notification to carry out a crown reduction on a sycamore. The works are being carried out to reduce the loading on a weak branch union.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**BRIAN BEASLEY**