

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF NATIONAL PARKS AND AREAS OF  
OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY**Report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)Recommendation : **It is recommended that Members:**

- (i) Comment on and agree the key recommendations outlined in this report as the basis for the Authority's formal submission to the Government's review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- (ii) Identify any comments they wish the Authority to make about how to further improve the governance of National Parks at an individual and/or collective level; and**
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer), in consultation with the Chairman, to agree the Authority's final submission to the review.**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 In May 2018 Michael Gove, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, announced an independent review of [designated landscapes](#) in England. The review was one of the key actions identified in the Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment (published in January 2018) which is focused on enhancing the environment and connecting people with nature. The themes of enhancement and connection are reflected in Michael Gove's vision for the review:

*"Amid a growing population, changes in technology, and a decline in certain habitats, the time is right for us to look afresh at these landscapes. We want to make sure they [the National Parks and AONBs] are not only conserved, but enhanced for the next generation."*

1.2 The review is being led by Julian Glover. He visited Dartmoor on 12 July and during that visit was keen to emphasise that the review was not about 'correcting' a system that is broken or failing but about how to learn from the experience of National Parks (and AONBs) and to consider how they might be sustained and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

1.3 The review will examine and make recommendations on:

- The existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met.
- The alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Plan for the environment.
- The case for extension or creation of new designated areas.

- How to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets.
- The financing of National Parks and AONBs.
- How to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations.
- How to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sectors of society and improve health and wellbeing.
- How well National Parks and AONBs support communities.

1.4 Julian Glover is being supported by a [review panel](#). Two other members of the review panel have visited Dartmoor: Lord Cameron of Dillington spent a day focused on rural development and Sarah Mukherjee attended the Junior Ranger presentations to hear how we are engaging with young people.

1.5 The review has issued a public call for evidence with a deadline of submissions by 18 December 2018. When the Panel published the call for evidence they highlighted a [series of questions](#). This paper outlines the key themes that will underpin the Authority's submission and seeks Members comments on these, approval that they are the correct key messages for the Authority to be communicating to the Panel and any other additional issues Members wish to highlight as part of the Authority's formal response to the Review.

## 2 Future Vision

2.1 When Lewis Silkin, then Minister of Town and Country Planning, introduced the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill for its second reading he called it:

*“A people’s charter – a people’s charter for the open air, for the hikers and the ramblers, for everyone who loves to get out into the open air and enjoy the countryside. Without it they are fettered, deprived of their powers of access and facilities needed to make holidays enjoyable. With it the countryside is theirs to preserve, to cherish, to enjoy and to make their own.”* (Emphasis added).

2.2 In the almost 70 years since Lewis Silkin made that speech, our model of National Parks and AONBs as ‘lived-in landscapes’ that are important for social, cultural, environmental and economic reasons has gathered momentum. People and place are at the heart of our National Parks and the way in which National Park Authorities work. It is a model of global relevance.

2.3 Whilst the vision for English National Parks and the Broads, outlined in Circular 2010, remains relevant we feel that there is an opportunity to up-date it, make it more inspiring and refresh the ‘People’s Charter’ that Lewis Silkin said should underpin our National Parks:

*A people’s charter for health and happiness, where natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage are conserved, sustained and enhanced for all to appreciate and enjoy. Our National Parks provide services essential to life - clean water, air and biodiversity to name but a few. They are also places that can enrich life - a source of enjoyment, inspiration and challenge; part of our identity as a nation and essential to the happiness and health of the nation. They provide benefits beyond their boundaries.*

## 2.4 We see the role of National Park Authorities as being multi-dimensional:

- We are local with firm roots into the communities we serve but also part of a global family, act at a national level and are charged with managing a national asset, valued and loved by millions.
- We are champions for our National Parks and the local communities that live within them - raising their profile, ensuring they are sustained for future generations.
- We make things happen - generating and receiving ideas; experimenting and learning; prepared to take managed risks; inspiring people to love and care for our National Parks and the wider environment.
- We work in partnership - we have few powers or direct resources, almost everything we do, we do in partnership with others. This is part of our USP and, we believe, a key strength.
- We seek to inspire people through the work we do and the special qualities that we help protect and enhance. This inspiration comes in different forms: people engaging, enjoying and helping to look after the National Park; demonstrating how we can live differently; encouraging people to try new things and to learn more.
- We are passionate about the place we seek to manage and working with people.

## 3 Key Opportunities and Challenges facing Dartmoor National Park

- 3.1 Summarised below are some of the key challenges and opportunities facing Dartmoor National Park. Opportunities and challenges are often ‘opposite sides of the same coin’: for every challenge there is an opportunity.

### **Climate change**

There is clear evidence of climate change already taking place on Dartmoor: higher daily mean temperatures, increased mean monthly precipitation and more incidents of intense rainfall. These changes could mean that we lose particular species, that farming systems will need to change, that the importance of Dartmoor as a source of drinking water and flood alleviation may increase and our infrastructure may deteriorate due to sudden extreme weather events.

### **Social changes**

The population within the National Park is ageing which creates particular challenges for the sustainability of our communities (access to appropriate forms of housing, labour for local businesses etc.). Whilst average life expectancy has increased in recent years we are also seeing the advent of a less healthy society with issues of obesity and mental health. The value of our National Parks to the ‘health of the nation’ is likely to increase. There are also implications for the types of leisure activity in National Parks.

Recent research by Exeter University forecasts that the number of people living in and around the Dartmoor is set to increase by 13 per cent between 2018 and 2039. The research predicts that the number of day visits to the National Park by these

local residents will rise from an estimated level of 7.3 million visits per annum to nearly 8 million by 2039. These visits will have health benefits (for those who participate) burning off the calorific equivalent of approximately 1.7 million cream teas but will have an impact on the environment which needs to be effectively managed.

### **Future of farming**

86 per cent of the National Park is classed as utilisable agricultural area. Farming has shaped the landscape of Dartmoor over many hundreds of years and today the management undertaken by farmers and commoners plays an important role in the maintenance of the landscape for biodiversity, ecosystem services, cultural heritage and access. Farming and associated businesses are also a key part of the Dartmoor economy.

Farming faces an uncertain future due to Brexit and calls for 're-wilding' to enhance biodiversity (see below). What is clear is the importance of the 'public pound' in terms of supporting Dartmoor farms. The 'public pound' is the difference between a significant loss or a small profit. In 2015 average farm business income figures for Dartmoor showed a loss from agriculture of £9,300 with positive contributions from the Basic Payment Scheme (£14,300) and agri-environment (£12,100). Brexit could be a positive factor with a focus on environmental land management or could usher in a period of environmental damage due to intensification or somewhere in-between.

### **Changing biodiversity**

There is widespread recognition that nature is in trouble across the UK and the wider globe. Our National Parks remain key islands of biodiversity: the Devon Birds atlas provides clear evidence of the continued importance of Dartmoor for biodiversity – a wildlife sanctuary against an alarming decline of key bird species across Devon. Nevertheless we recognise that there is the potential to do more to enhance biodiversity. We have the vision to achieve this but not necessarily the tools. There is the potential to achieve more through locally-based, co-designed environmental land management schemes learning from the experience of Dartmoor Farming Futures. There have been calls to achieve enhanced biodiversity through re-wilding. Work that we have done indicates that an appropriately grazed landscape is the best way to achieve a range of public benefits.

- 3.2 In summary, these challenges mean that in the future we need our National Parks to be more productive and resilient. More productive in terms of the range of benefits they provide to society and more resilient in terms of being able to provide those benefits to a greater number of people who may visit the National Parks without damaging the environment or impacting negatively on the communities who live in the Parks. Indeed, we need future use of the National Park to contribute to the socio-economic well-being of those who live and work in the Park. To meet these challenges we will need a new 'tool kit'

## **4 The Right Tools and Resources for 'the Job' – our key Recommendations for the Glover Panel**

- 4.1 The Government's review of National Parks and AONBs provides an opportunity to ensure that National Park Authorities have the right tools and resources to do the

job – to be ‘fit for the future’. We see this as a priority above any amendment to the statutory purposes and duty. The existing purposes and duty do not limit our ambition; resources and existing tools do. We have highlighted below our priorities in terms of additional tools and the resources we require to manage and enhance the National Park.

### **A duty to further National Park Purposes**

4.2 At present there is a statutory duty on all ‘relevant authorities’ to have regard to National Park purposes in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect a National Park (section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This duty is essentially negative and represents a minimalist approach:

- it requires a process but not a positive outcome (an organisation could have regard to National Park purposes but still determine to carry out an action detrimental to them); and
- it lacks the ambition inherent in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan namely to enhance the environment.

4.3 A legal duty on relevant bodies to further National Park purposes would address these weaknesses: it is stronger, focused on adding value and delivering positive outcomes.

4.4 Consideration would also have to be given to the definition or list of relevant authorities. These have traditionally been public sector organisations but with the blurring of public/community/private boundaries (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships) it will be important for the Secretary of State to have the power to up-date the list of relevant authorities in terms of any amendments to Section 11A/Section 62.

### **An enhanced role for the National Park Management Plan (NPMP)**

4.5 Section 66 of the Environment Act 1995 requires National Park Authorities to produce a NPMP (sometimes called the Partnership Plan) for their area and to review it at least every five years. These plans are for the National Park and not just the Authorities. They are meant to be the key over-arching strategic document for the National Park. Their purpose is to:

- Set out a joint, long-term vision and ambitions for the management of the National Park.
- Provide a framework for all policies and activities in the National Park, co-ordinating and integrating other plans, strategies and actions (including the Local Plan).
- Provide the basis for focusing resources and drawing in funding;
- Communicate what is important about the National Park and the priorities for action to the wider community.
- Provide a focus for the work of the Authority.
- Illustrate how partner organisations contribute to National Park purposes.

4.6 NPMPs have a clear value in terms of providing a basis for partnership working, setting out a shared vision for a National Park and identifying key actions to achieve

that vision. Nevertheless, there is a need for this statutory management plan framework to be strengthened in the following ways:

- Improved evidence base;
- Duty to collaborate/co-operate in the preparation of National Park Management Plans on all 'relevant authorities';
- Management of the National Park to be in accordance with the National Park Management Plan.

### ***Improved Evidence Base***

- 4.7 Data sets for National Parks are often, at best, partial with very little accurate time series information on environmental trends. Management Plans need to be based on good evidence about the state of the National Park, identifying trends, highlighting issues and providing a basis for monitoring and decision-making. Having data sets cut to National Park boundaries is essential. We already collaborate with Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission on a Monitoring Protected Landscapes initiative to provide information on agri-environment coverage, condition of SSSIs, water quality etc. but other data sets (especially economic data) are rarely available at a National Park level.
- 4.8 We are also working with Exeter University on the potential to use remote sensing to provide time series data on habitat types and condition and landscape change.
- 4.9 A pan Government initiative to ensure that data sets are available at a National Park level and to support the use of new data collection methods (such as remote sensing and resources for citizen science initiatives) would assist in ensuring we have evidence-based plans and could help in engaging more people in the work of the National Park.

### ***Duty to collaborate/co-operate***

- 4.10 This would ensure that key partners such as statutory agencies, constituent authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships participate in the preparation, monitoring, review and delivery of Management Plans. It would build on the duty to co-operate between local planning authorities, county councils and other prescribed public bodies for the purposes of the preparation of development plan documents that was introduced by section 33a of the Localism Act 2011.

### ***Management in accordance with the National Park Management Plan***

- 4.11 A statutory requirement for management of the National Park to be in accordance with the National Park Management Plan would provide real weight to the Management Plan. This would provide a spatial expression to the legal obligation on relevant authorities to further National Park purposes (see above). The intention is not to seek to control the precise management of individual parcels of land but to ensure that environmental land management schemes and management at a 'landscape scale' is in accordance with the Management Plan and delivering the vision for the National Park developed through the Management Plan process. For example, applicants to the Government's new Environmental Land Management Scheme (see below) would be required to demonstrate how their individual land management plans manage and enhance the National Park's special qualities.

4.12 This strengthening of the Management Plan will also be important as and when private sector markets for ecosystem services such as water and carbon are developed. It would provide a transparent framework for the management of the National Park and a mechanism to ensure that the public interest inherent in National Park designation is managed alongside private payments for land management.

### **Local Environmental Land Management Schemes for each National Park**

4.13 The Government has stated that it will be introducing a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) post Brexit. ELMS should be a key tool in the future management and enhancement of our National Parks. National Parks England published a policy statement on [Farming in the English National Parks](#) (2017). This document outlined a new system of integrated, place-based delivery that is focused on the outcomes that society seeks from the National Parks but is co-designed with local land managers and other interested parties and fairly rewards the providers of public goods. The proposals centred around three, linked components:

- A National Park FARM (Farming and Rural Management) Scheme to provide a base or foundation level of environmental husbandry and public goods
- FARM Plus – locally-led agri-environment schemes for each National Park.
- Wider rural development – local resources for wider rural development

4.14 ELMS provides a potential mechanism to enhance our National Parks in terms of:

- Landscape quality
- Biodiversity
- Woodland management (and creation)
- Cultural heritage
- Water management
- Carbon management
- Access, education and wider engagement
- High quality food production

4.15 ELMS is an essential tool for the future management of our National Parks but to realise this potential the new scheme needs to be flexible enough to be designed and delivered at a local level. NPAs need to have a key role in facilitating this and providing advice to farmers, land managers and land owners. We would also like to see ELMS linked to wider rural development and future farm productivity programmes – it is really important that it is not developed in ‘splendid isolation’ but seen as part of a wider programme of integrated development for National Parks and wider rural areas.

### **Parks for People**

4.16 Our National Parks were designated by the nation, for the nation. We need to build on the support for National Parks in society at large to ensure that there is a better understanding about our National Parks and proactively reach out so all sectors of society have an opportunity to visit a National Park.

- 4.17 As a family of English National Parks we would recommend a Government commitment that every child has the opportunity to visit a National Park as part of their formal education but in a way that is fun, enjoyable and memorable. We want to inspire the next generation to experience and appreciate the values of National Parks and champion responsible stewardship of the environment.
- 4.18 Whilst this formal opportunity is important we also believe that informal learning is of equal importance. On Dartmoor we use a progression route for young people to help them understand what makes Dartmoor special and to support learning outside the classroom and, importantly, outside the formal school context.
- 4.19 This engagement starts with children and their families with a family learning club catering for families with 5 – 12 year olds (the Ranger Ralph Club). In 2015 we developed a Junior Ranger initiative for young people aged 13 -16, using the Europarc Junior Ranger model as a template and linking it to the well-respected John Muir Award. We are now developing a Youth Ranger programme for young people aged 16 plus which, combined with the apprenticeships we already offer, provide continuity from 5 to at least 25: a foundation that we believe will provide passion for the environment and the National Park, better understanding; help develop key social skills; and a ‘healthy start to life’.
- 4.20 The programme means that we work with relatively small numbers and small-scale means we may not have the ‘reach’ of less immersive initiatives but the depth of relations and intensity of experience has been shown through our evaluations to be transformative.
- 4.21 This programme of engagement could be ‘scaled up’ but it requires long-term resources. We are currently funding the programme through a mix of our core grant and the funds we generated through a public arts trail – Moor Otters. We would like to see a Government backed initiative (ie not just Defra) that provides the resources to enhance this offer and encourage its adoption by others.
- 4.22 Our National Parks are good for people. Getting out and experiencing the natural environment can be good fun and great for our health (both mental and physical) - a key ingredient for both health and happiness. The Dartmoor Naturally Health Project ran from 2014 – 2017 with support from Devon County Council Public Health. The project explored the barriers to accessing the natural environment, explored ‘green prescriptions’ via a link with a GP practice and sought to develop a greater understanding of the health benefits, particularly mental well-being, of accessing outdoor space. Another initiative called Stepping Stones with Plymouth City Council provides further evidence on the value of having a network of green space from urban parks to National Parks for people to access and the need for some support for key groups to access these areas.
- 4.23 We believe that there is potential to develop a network of ‘Health Rangers’, based with GP practices and hospitals and funded through the Department for Health. These Health Rangers can help provide the support for ‘green prescriptions’, opportunities for carers to access the outdoors and generally build confidence. There may also be scope for these posts to help tackle the sickness absence within the health service itself. They would not be employees of the National Park Authority but could be supported by National Park Rangers through training and identification of a network of appropriate routes etc.



- 4.24 Not all visitors enjoy the National Park in a responsible manner. We need new powers and resources to tackle the small but growing proportion of society who show a lack of respect for the place and no responsibility for their actions. We are looking at having to equip our Rangers with body cams for their personal safety and to forge new links with Devon and Cornwall Police but they, like us, have limited resources. We would like to see new powers to tackle these issues: a streamlined process for reviewing byelaws and enforcing them – tougher and potential fixed notice penalties. There is a fine line to tread between the friendly and supporting role that our Rangers provide and the need to enforce against inappropriate actions in the countryside.
- 4.25 Vibrant local communities are a key part of the National Park. We are not in favour of revising National Park purposes to elevate the socio-economic duty to a new purpose unless it unlocks future resources. Our key priority is the resource base to work with local communities to help them help themselves – a ‘Human Capital Fund’ that can support rural and community development. Much of the current debate is focused on ‘natural capital’ this is important but we also need to consider ‘human capital’. Investing in human capital is often key to sustaining and enhancing our rural communities and improving the productivity of rural areas. An easy to access fund that focuses on outcomes rather than prescribing eligible items of expenditure would help us support rural communities. It should be modelled on the former Sustainable Development Fund and could provide an investment fund for community initiatives and wider business development.

#### **Resources: Pounds for the Park**

- 4.26 Over the period 2010/11 to 2015/16 the Authority’s income reduced by over 40 per cent in real terms and our staffing levels were reduced by 25%. National Park Grant (our core funding from Defra) reduced by £1,404,984 in cash terms and we also saw significant reduction in secondary income, for example, the sum of money we receive from Devon County Council for the management of public rights of way in the National Park reduced by 33%; Housing and Planning Delivery Grant was abolished and ‘replaced’ by New Homes Bonus which is paid to the districts/boroughs and county councils and not to us as a local planning authority. Since 2015/16 we have had a welcome period of financial stability albeit that our core grant has continued to reduce in real terms versus cost inflation.
- 4.27 The funding model for National Parks espoused by a series of Ministers has been of a small core grant supplemented by fees and charges and commercial sponsorship and philanthropic donations.
- 4.28 We have responded to this agenda by introducing ‘Donate for Dartmoor’ (a voluntary donations programme), introducing charges were legal, feasible and possible, developing innovative initiatives such as [Moor Otters](#) and supporting the development of [National Parks Partnerships Limited](#) at a UK level as a vehicle to attract commercial sponsorship. These initiatives, whilst valuable, have not filled the ‘funding gap’ and we do not hold out any realistic vision that they will do so. They also have potential unforeseen consequences. For example, the drive to attract commercial sponsorship means that we can end up in competition with stakeholders that we seek to work in partnership with – altering our relationship.

There are also legal limits to the amount of money we could generate from car parks, for example.

- 4.29 We have also continued with a programme of efficiencies and effectiveness – each year we effectively zero-base our budget and scrutinise all expenditure.
- 4.30 Our financial position means that we are running on the minimum in terms of staff resource. It is often the case that if one professional officer (such as a Biodiversity Officer) is off sick or on leave then we have no cover. It also means that our capacity to do new things, work up funding bids etc. is severely limited. This is a statement of reality rather than a lack of ambition or passion. Indeed, it is often the ambition and passion of our staff, Members and volunteers that helps us develop new work programmes.
- 4.31 If the Government is serious about sustaining and enhancing our National Parks for future generations then it needs to ‘enhance and sustain National Park Grant’. This could then be the springboard for new programmes to engage with people and enhance the National Park in practical ways (eg working with the farming community and landowners to improve biodiversity and cultural heritage) and the capacity to work up other funding bids.
- 4.32 The ability of each National Park Authority to generate income through charges and sponsorship etc. is varied. For example, we do not have the network of car parks in honey pot locations that some other National Park Authorities have nor extensive land ownership that might then provide the asset base for other forms of income generation. We are also conscious that external forms of funding such as the National Lottery and Rural Development Programme are subject to reductions and change. The funds available to the Heritage Lottery Fund are reducing due to the decline in Lottery sales and funds like LEADER that have helped support rural communities are likely to disappear post Brexit with no certainty that the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund will have a clear rural focus/remit.
- 4.33 As important, as funding for the National Park Authority, is public funding for the National Park itself. Based on Defra figures we estimate that between £12m and £16m is invested in Dartmoor National Park per annum in terms of Basic Payment Scheme and Agri-environment agreements. The Authority has little influence over the use and allocation of this money and it is questionable as to whether this investment of public money is actively contributing to National Park purposes. We would like to see a ‘total place’ budgeting process for National Parks so it is clear how that public investment is helping to deliver National Park purposes and the duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of local communities. This aligns closely to our recommendations regarding a duty to further National Parks and management in accordance with the National Park Management Plan.
- 4.34 Total place budgeting could also be extended to look at the public sector estate in National Parks. Whilst not necessarily applicable to all National Parks we can see a business case for the National Park Authority to assume responsibility for Natural England’s responsibilities within the National Park (eg management of the National Nature Reserves, outreach programmes and advice to the land management community) this has the potential to offer a better service to end users, cost savings and allowing Natural England to focus on land beyond the National Park boundary

and an audit role for SSSI and agri-environment agreements within the National Park.

## **5 Governance**

- 5.1 The terms of reference for the Glover Review include a specific question about how to improve the individual and collective governance of National Parks. As a family of English National Parks we work through National Parks England to raise the profile of National Parks and ensure there is a supportive policy and resource framework for National Parks and the work of the authorities. There is a network of profession-based working groups that facilitate knowledge exchange, policy development and professional development. We also collaborate at a national level through National Parks Partnerships Limited and, currently, National Parks UK.
- 5.2 We are aware that there are concerns, expressed by some, that the governance model for the National Park Authority could be improved. This was raised as an issue at the National Park Forum held on 23 November 2018 (by representatives of two organisations). In particular, there is a concern about a lack of direct accountability – that no members of the Authority are elected directly to the Authority. People have also commented on the size of the Authority compared to the budget it ‘governs’. We would welcome the views of Members on how the governance of the Authority might be further improved. It should be noted that successive external audits of our governance statement have not identified any concerns but the auditors do not have within their remit the ability to ask questions about the composition of the Authority.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 It will be important for the members of the Glover review panel to think through the financial implications of their recommendations. We anticipate that the work of the Glover Panel will input to thinking on the Comprehensive Spending Review.

## **7 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 7.1 The ‘Glover Review’ is the most significant review of National Parks since the National Parks Review Panel, chaired by Professor Ron Edwards, reported in 1991. The review provides an opportunity to renew the vision for our National Parks and ensure that we have the tools and resources to sustain and enhance the National Parks for future generations to enjoy and benefit from.
- 7.2 Subject to the comments and views of Members the key recommendations outlined above will form the basis for the Authority’s formal response to the call for evidence. Members are asked specifically to comment on how we might further improve the governance framework for Dartmoor National Park.

KEVIN BISHOP

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST JOINT COMMITTEE**Report of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)Recommendation: **That Members:**

- (i) **Note the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018;**
- (ii) **Agree to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership and the Government);**
- (iii) **Agree the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to this report;**
- (iv) **Note the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B and that, in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established, the Authority will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the 2018/19 contribution (£1,400 per annum);**
- (v) **Note that clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/20.**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 In January 2018, the HotSW Joint Committee was formally established by the councils and organisations involved since 2015 in the devolution partnership. The Committee is tasked with improving productivity across the HotSW area in collaboration with the HotSW LEP and other organisations as necessary. It was established under Sections 101 to 103 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling legislation.

1.2 The specific objectives of the Joint Committee are to:

- Improve the economy and the prospects for the region by bringing together the public, private and education sectors;
- Increase our understanding of the economy and what needs to be done to make it stronger;
- Improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector;
- Identify and remove barriers to progress and maximise the opportunities/benefits available to the area from current and future government policy.

- 1.3 The Committee has met formally three times in 2018, in March, June and October. In addition to this the management structure that sits behind the Committee and involves Chief Executives and senior officers from across the partnership has met regularly to drive the business of the Committee. The Committee is currently chaired by Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council and the Vice-Chair is Cllr John Tucker, Leader of South Hams District Council.
- 1.4 This report summarises the progress made by the Committee over recent months in key areas of activity and sets out actions proposed in the coming months. As part of this report there are specific recommendations for the constituent authorities to consider.

## **2 Work of the Joint Committee and Progress to-date**

- 2.1 Since August 2015, Devon and Somerset County Councils, all Somerset and Devon Districts, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HSWLEP), the three Clinical Commissioning Groups together with Exmoor National and Dartmoor National Park Authorities have been working in partnership to influence central government and secure additional funding for the Heart of the South West.
- 2.2 The original focus of this informal partnership was on trying to explore a devolution deal to improve productivity. It was then agreed to form a formal 'Joint Committee' (see NPA/17/105 and NPA/17/040) to demonstrate the willingness of the area to work together on agendas of mutual interest.

### **Productivity Strategy for the Heart of the South West**

- 2.3 The Joint Committee, in Partnership with the HSWLEP, has developed and published a [Productivity Strategy for the Heart of the South West](#). This Strategy sets an ambition of "Doubling the size of the Heart of the South West's economy over 20 years" with a vision of "Productivity and prosperity for all".
- 2.4 The Strategy identifies three strategic themes to improve productivity by strengthening and developing:
- a. the leadership and ideas within businesses in our area;
  - b. the housing, connectivity and infrastructure our people and businesses rely on for living, moving goods, accessing jobs and training, and exploiting new opportunities;
  - c. the ability of people in our area to work, learn and improve their skills in a rapidly changing global economy, and to maximise their economic potential.
- 2.5 In addition, there are three cross-cutting themes, referred to throughout the Strategy:
- d. Inclusive growth for our people, communities and places;
  - e. Capitalising on our distinctive assets;
  - f. Maximising the potential from digital technology.

- 2.6 The strategy recognises the importance of rural areas to future prosperity: “we want to ensure that our market towns, coastal resorts and rural areas are economically successful in their own right” (page 7). Rural areas account for 58% of output and 60% of jobs in the South West. Yet rural productivity is 8% lower than urban areas in the region and 10% lower than the average for rural areas in England.
- 2.7 There is also an environmental dimension to the productivity agenda. We know that a high quality environment is a key part of the Heart of the South West’s ‘USP’ – contributing to the quality of life that attracts people to live, learn, work and visit here. The natural environment also provides a series of products and services that support productivity be that raw materials for our food based sector, the emerging markets for newer forms of water and carbon management or the management of catchments to avoid flooding of key infrastructure.

### **South West Rural Productivity Commission**

- 2.8 The [South West Rural Productivity Commission](#) was established to explore how the economy in rural areas is performing and produced a report identifying a series of measures and opportunities to stimulate productivity. The Commission’s report has a close correlation with the work Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks did on rural productivity with many of the Commission’s recommendations mirroring ideas in the Dartmoor and Exmoor Rural Productivity Network proposal. The Commission’s work was used to support discussions with Government about a growth deal for the South West with a distinct rural focus. This was not achieved in the 2018 Budget and Autumn Statement but discussions with officials continue.

### **Productivity Delivery Plan**

- 2.9 The [Productivity Delivery Plan](#) is a ‘live action plan’ that will be used to track performance locally and may also form the basis of annual progress reports to Government, as required under the recent national review of LEPs. It is broadly divided into two sections – a ‘core offer’ focussing on programmes that deliver Business Support and Employment and Skills, as well as ‘enablers’ including housing delivery, transport, and other infrastructure that is essential to support economic growth. These activities apply across the whole of the HotSW area. A further section focuses on programmes of activity linked to the agreed set of ‘opportunities’ that are specific to the HotSW area.
- 2.10 The Productivity Plan incorporates current as well as future, planned activity, and is being produced in stages depending on how well developed the programmes of activity for each theme are. The current version features the opportunities that are at the most advanced stage, namely: Digital (Photonics); Advanced Engineering (marine and nuclear); High Value Tourism; Farming, Fishing and Food. By spring 2019 it will be expanded to include: Healthy Ageing; further Digital (Creative and Big Data); Advanced Engineering (aerospace); Construction; and Defence. Place markers have also been included for inclusive growth and natural capital to be developed as part of the next phase of work.
- 2.11 An Opportunities Prospectus has been extracted from the Delivery Plan and will be used with local MPs, Ministers and senior Government officials as part of continuing to raise the profile of the HotSW area at a critical time ahead of the 2019 Spending

Review and the anticipated launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund towards the end of 2019.

- 2.12 As the Delivery Plan is developed, further asks will emerge and be submitted to Ministers. The list of asks submitted in October 2018 (i.e. in advance of the Budget) is attached as Appendix A to this report, Members will note that a Rural Deal was a key focus of our ‘asks’.

### **Local Industrial Strategy**

- 2.13 The HotSW LEP area was included in wave 2 of developing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). This success is due in large part to the close alignment of the Joint Committee and the LEP on the Productivity Strategy.

- 2.14 The Joint Committee is also providing a framework for:

- A potential growth corridor study looking at M5/A38 transport spine;
- Housing development – the focus of work in this area has been on housing development as an ‘engine for growth’. We have submitted comments about the need to focus on ‘homes as part of vibrant, sustainable communities’ rather than houses for development purposes and not to ignore the issues around affordable rural housing;
- Brexit – there is a sub-group on Brexit Resilience and Opportunities that has looked at the potential impact of Brexit on key sectors including agriculture. This group has also fed into the work on a rural deal;
- Transport – linked to the Joint Committee’s work on infrastructure is the imminent establishment of a South West Peninsula Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (covering Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay) which will develop a sub-national Transport Strategy to work with Government to deliver investment in our major transport infrastructure. In the short-term this will be an informal partnership, however a current ‘ask’ of Government is that they endorse the creation of a statutory Sub-National Transport Body for the Peninsula, and a separate body for the South West around the east of the region. These two new transport bodies will provide a platform for strategic discussions with Government on priorities for the region over the long term.

- 2.15 In addition to the above the Joint Committee / LEP partnership is planning to:

- develop an ‘Investment Framework for the Delivery Plan’ so that priorities for delivery and project opportunities can be delivered via investment from a range of sources; and
- conduct a governance review focusing on the roles and functions of both bodies. This work will include a review of the management support arrangements.

- 2.16 The Joint Committee has a website providing background information, links to latest news and publications and details of the membership. This can be accessed at: <http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/>

### **3 Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement**

- 3.1 There is a budget and cost sharing agreement that underpins the finances of the Joint Committee. This document explains the role of the administering authority as well as the responsibilities of the constituent authorities. It sets out the framework for financial contributions to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee has approved the budget and cost sharing agreement and all Section 151 Officers (of the constituent authorities) have been consulted on its contents.
- 3.2 The Joint Committee is to be presented with a formal budget proposal for 2019/20 when it meets on 25 January 2019. At present there is a forecast underspend in the 2018/19 but not all commitments are known for the current financial year. We are being asked to budget for a commitment at least the same as for 2018/19 which would be a cost to the Authority of £1,400 (District/Borough Councils pay the same; County Councils pay £10,500; Unitary Councils contribute £4,000).

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Please refer to para 3.2 above and Appendix B. There is a staff cost associated with the Joint Committee, primarily Chief Executive (National Park Officer) time in attending meetings. We have worked closely with Exmoor National Park Authority to influence the Productivity Plan and our intention would be to do the same with respect to the Local Industrial Strategy.

### **5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Authority's engagement with the Joint Committee, and the supporting officer infrastructure, has provided us with a 'platform' to champion rural and environmental issues beyond our boundaries. Whilst we do not have a statutory role in economic development, the Authority's Business Plan and the National Park Management Plan are clear about our desire to work in partnership to deliver a National Park that is a living, working landscape. We seek, through our project work, to deliver integrated solutions that combine environmental, social and economic outcomes.
- 5.2 Whilst the Joint Committee has yet to secure a 'growth deal' it does provide an important forum for joint working, sharing of information and a vehicle to promote the HofSW to central Government. Work on the Local Industrial Strategy could be an important pre-requisite for future funding via the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It will be important that the HofSW Local Industrial Strategy has a strong rural dimension and recognises that a high quality environment is an important ingredient for growth and productivity improvements and not something that can be traded against economic growth.
- 5.3 It is recommend that Members
- Note the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018;
  - Agree to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership and the Government);



- Agree the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to this report;
- Note the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B and that, in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established, the Authority will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the 2018/19 contribution (£1,400 per annum);
- Note that clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/20.

KEVIN BISHOP

**Attachments:**    **Appendix A - Heart of the South West Partnership's key strategic asks of Government**  
                          **Appendix B - Budget Statement 2018/19**

20181207 KDB Heart of the South West Joint Committee

## **HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST PARTNERSHIP'S KEY STRATEGIC ASKS OF GOVERNMENT**

As part of the partnership's increased lobbying with MPs and with reference to the Great South West Partnership several 'policy asks' of Government have been identified to coincide with party conferences and the Autumn Budget. These will be socialised over the next few months and are:

1. Recognition of the Great South West Partnership in the Autumn Budget Statement together with a commitment to co-design a Rural Deal - a 'Rural Productivity Partnership' with GSW following publication of Rural Productivity Commission Report earlier in the year
2. Strategic Connectivity
  - a. Confirmation of Sub National Transport Body/ (ies)
  - b. Peninsula Rail priorities – e.g. commitment for funding Dawlish
  - c. Funding commitment for A303 improvements
  - d. Superfast Broadband and 5G trials
  - e. Joint working with the National Infrastructure Commission on an A38/M5 corridor study to explore how we can unlock our full potential and accelerate growth to transform our region.
3. Transforming Cities and Strength in Places bids agreed
4. EU Fisheries underspend proposal: an offer to work with Government to develop a proposal to utilise the projected underspend in the current EU Fisheries budget.
5. Nuclear Sector Deal (and others specifically Maritime and Defence) to have clear place-based elements/funding, recognising the HotSW opportunities.
6. Local Industrial Strategy specific: encourage joint working with WECA on Wave 2 Local Industrial Strategies particularly around connectivity and Smart specialisations e.g. Nuclear and Aerospace.

**BUDGET STATEMENT – 2018/19****Costs**

At the time the Joint Committee was established it was estimated that its operating and support **costs** for 2018/19 (and to cover the remainder of 2017/18) would be £89,000 - excluding in-kind officer support. This estimate comprised:

1. £25,000 for work the Joint Committee would wish to commission to support the delivery of its work programme
2. £24,000 for the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group Secretariat
3. £40,000 for the Administering Authority to undertake its duties.

**Budget**

Current budget position summary:

18/19 Budget = <u>£117k</u> (an increase of £25k over the original estimate)	18/19 Expenditure - <u>£76.4k</u> (as at 24/10/18)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. £67k - devolution budget carry forward (as against the estimate of £42k) – transferred from PCC to SCC</li> <li>2. £50k - funding contributions from the constituent authorities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 £40k - for Administrative Authority costs including: direct meeting costs (including refreshments); staffing costs directly relating to HotSW meetings; JC communications and marketing; micro-site development</li> <li>2 £11.3k - support costs of the Brexit Resilience Opportunities Group (BROG) including seconded part-time officer support (against an original budget allocation of £24k)</li> <li>3 £6k – costs of Housing Summit</li> <li>4 £9.8k – housing consultancy support</li> <li>5 £9.3k – national corridor infrastructure corridor consultancy support</li> </ol>

## BUDGET AND COST SHARING AGREEMENT

As part of the new Joint Committee working arrangements, the following clause was agreed in relation to the costs of operation of the Joint Committee. This clause was in the Inter-Authority Agreement.

### 4.0 JC Finance

4.1 The JC's budgetary arrangements shall be detailed in a budget and cost sharing agreement to be agreed by all the Constituent Authorities annually on the recommendation of the JC and in advance of the financial year. The only exception to this will be in the JC's first year of operation when the JC shall recommend a budget and cost sharing agreement to the Constituent Authorities for approval at the first opportunity following its establishment.

4.2 The budget and cost sharing agreement shall cover:

- (a) The responsibilities of the Constituent Authorities for providing funding for the JC
- (b) The anticipated level of expenditure for the JC for the year ahead
- (c) The cost sharing mechanism to be applied to the Constituent Authorities
- (d) Details of how the budget will be set and agreed each year
- (e) Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC (the 'accountable body');
- (f) What financial records are to be maintained;
- (g) What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when;
- (h) What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for:
  - auditing accounts;
  - insurance including ensuring all partners have sufficient cover;
- (i) How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the Constituent Authorities will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA.

### How is the budget set and agreed each year?

In the February preceding each financial year, in consultation with the Somerset County Council Finance Advisory Team, the SCC Strategic Manager - Partnership Governance on behalf of the PMO will detail a budget plan for the JC income and expenditure. This will establish estimated amounts for that financial year and the timing of those financial transactions. This will be submitted by the administering authority to the Joint Committee for recommendation to the Constituent Authorities (CA) for approval.

Each CA will pay their agreed contribution to the Administering Authority (AA) in a timely manner on receipt of invoice details.

### Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC?

SCC Finance Advisory Team – Ian Tier, Finance Manager.

**What financial records are to be maintained?**

Financial records, i.e. orders for supplies and services, payments made, invoices raised and receipts, will be kept electronically on the SCC financial system. This incorporates purchase orders, invoice scans, cashiers receipts and sales invoices.

**What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when?**

SCC Finance Advisory will present a quarterly income and expenditure report to the SCC Strategic Manager – Partnership Governance. This will be reported to the CEx Advisory Group for information. An income and expenditure report will be presented to the JC for information on at least an annual basis.

**What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for?**

**Auditing Accounts:** The AA's accounts and audit arrangements will apply to JC business.

**Insurance:**

Each CA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to provide protection for their members and officers participating in the work of the JC and in their capacity as officers or members of that authority. The AA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to cover the AA role.

**How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the CA will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA?**

Itemised records of contributions made by each of the CAs will be kept over the life of the JC. In the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA having given the required notice, financial assets will be returned to the CA or CAs on a proportionate basis.

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**COUNTRYSIDE & RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000 – STATUTORY REVIEW OF WEST DART RIVER VALLEY DOG RESTRICTION**Report of the Head of Recreation, Access & Estates

Recommendation: **That Members approve the variation of the current access restriction to exclude dogs from the West Dart River Valley, to a dogs on leads restriction**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of a statutory review of the current restriction on dogs in the West Dart River Valley.
- 1.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) introduced a new right of access on foot to land designated as mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land and thus mapped as “open country”.
- 1.3 The West Dart River Valley was mapped as open country and in 2005 Dartmoor National Park Authority (as the “relevant authority”) resolved to introduce a direction under section 26 CROW for nature conservation reasons. The direction imposes a restriction on access and excludes taking dogs onto the parcels of land shaded pink on the accompanying map and applies all year round. Assistance dogs are exempt from the restriction.
- 1.4 Under CROW, the Authority is required to review long-term restrictions on access within five years of commencement or subsequent review. The first review was undertaken in 2008 and was subsequently reviewed five years later in 2013. By the time of the last review, concerns were growing from some of the interested parties as to whether the restriction to exclude dogs from the West Dart River Valley was still appropriate. The findings of that review were reported to the Authority in December 2013, where Members resolved that the current restriction should be maintained for a further five year period (i.e. until December 2018). This latest review was completed in November 2018.
- 1.5 During the review, the relevant authority must consider whether the restriction is still necessary for its original purpose and if so, whether the extent and nature of the restriction is still relevant. In doing so, the Authority is required to consider the least restrictive option necessary to fulfil its original purpose, take account of the advice given by Natural England as the Relevant Advisory Body, and the Dartmoor Access Forum as the statutory advisor on access to the National Park.
- 1.6 The Authority may revoke or vary a direction if the direction given is no longer considered necessary.

## **2 Nature Conservation Interest**

- 2.1 The West Dart River Valley between Two Bridges and Hexworthy is a particularly rich area for wildlife. This stretch of the river valley provides important spawning grounds for salmon and an important habitat for otters.
- 2.2 Research by the Environment Agency in 2007 shows that since the 1980s, otter populations have increased significantly, with the West Country now having a healthy population of otters. Numbers are continuing to grow due to decreasing levels of toxic substances in the environment, with Devon and Cornwall being particularly important counties in terms of having the highest of otters in the region. The Environment Agency attributes the increasing population in the region to:
- Very high water quality
  - Low levels of disturbance
  - Extensive semi-natural habitat providing cover along river banks
  - Numerous wetlands in the headwaters of many streams
  - Predominantly sheep and cattle grazing, rather than arable farming
  - Good food supply (coarse fish, eels and salmonids)
- 2.3 Surveying otters can be difficult and they are rarely spotted in the wild due largely to their nocturnal habits. A walk through survey was undertaken by the Authority's Ecologist in July 2018 to assess the suitability of habitat for otters, signs of otter presence and activity, other notable wildlife present and evidence of human activity (e.g. well-worn paths, litter). His survey report, along with consideration of previous surveys, concluded that otters remain present within the West Dart River Valley and that there is abundant otter habitat. It is considered that the river valley continues to support a stable population of breeding otters.

## **3 Current access provision and patterns of use**

- 3.1 The majority of the land shown on the site plan at Appendix 1 is open country and registered Common land. The parcels of access land where the restriction is in place are shaded pink, with public rights of way shown as green broken lines. There are three public bridleways crossing the river valley within the restriction zone: one bridge below Bachelor's Hall, another at the Dartmoor Training Centre and a ford beside the stepping stones at the confluence with the River Swincombe. The CROW restriction on dogs does not apply to users of public rights of way.
- 3.2 Access management measures have sought to facilitate open access to parcels of access land along the West Dart, whilst avoiding trespass onto areas which were not mapped and offer a quiet haven for wildlife. CROW information boards were erected at key access points along the valley providing consistent access and conservation messages for the public.
- 3.3 Monitoring of public use of the river valley was initially undertaken over two periods during the first two years of the CROW restriction period in 2006 and 2007 by National Park Rangers and a Voluntary Warden. The survey methodology used was to observe the level of use and to assess the effectiveness of the restriction. People counts were undertaken to observe people both on and off the three public

rights of way within the restricted area and if dogs were on or off the lead on CROW land.

- 3.4 In 2009 a people counter was installed on one of the public rights of way traversing the West Dart River Valley.
- 3.5 The on site surveys and the data from the people counter suggest a continued relatively low level of use of the river valley by the public. The initial surveys showed that the vast majority of users keep to the public rights of way. This may be due to several factors including the fragmented nature of access land parcels, combined with difficult ground conditions along some parts of the valley.

## **4 The Review Process**

- 4.1 As required by Regulations and guidance issued by Natural England, the Authority has undertaken a public consultation to seek views on the existing direction and on any proposals to amend, vary or revoke a long term restriction.
- 4.2 An initial consultation was held with statutory consultees and the general public which sought views on the existing direction which permanently excludes dogs from the West Dart River Valley. During the consultation period allowed, we received responses from the following consultees:
  - Dartmoor Preservation Association
  - Duchy of Cornwall
  - Kennel Club
  - Open Spaces Society
  - Ramblers
- 4.3 Members of the Dartmoor Access Forum (DAF) also undertook a site visit in June 2018 as part of their annual training day.

## **5 Summary of consultee comments from initial consultation**

- 5.1 All respondents expressed the view that the current restriction to permanently exclude dogs is overly restrictive, excessive and cannot be justified. They considered that it is not the least restrictive option available that will still protect wildlife.
- 5.2 The landowner and tenant support maintaining the original direction to exclude dogs. The DAF Members at the site meeting expressed a range of views including support for the original direction, to those that considered a lower level of restriction could be used.

## **6 Further Research**

- 6.1 In light of the representations received during the initial public consultation, officers have undertaken further work including a detailed access assessment and an Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal (ASFA) and visitor monitoring for the West Dart River Valley. The assessments used follow the methodology adopted by Natural England for areas where there are concerns relating to access and conservation.



- 6.2 The access assessment examined the existing paths and areas of open access within the West Dart River Valley, how people use the site at present and the visitor management measures already in place. Access to the site is relatively difficult, with the main access being along the three bridleways which traverse the valley. The restriction area is made up of a number of fragmented access areas that do not link together. Some areas of access land within the restriction are difficult to walk across due to their boggy characteristics and a lack of visible or defined paths to follow. The majority of users will pass through the area following the public rights of way. There are information boards placed at key access points which provide details of the current access restriction.
- 6.3 Visitor monitoring of the site shows that levels of public use are low and those that do use the area tend to keep to public rights of way.
- 6.4 Our conclusions from completing the access assessment are that there could be a negligible increase in visitor numbers if the current restriction to exclude dogs was varied to allow dogs on leads, but that levels of public use will remain low.
- 6.5 The Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal considered whether changes in the level of access restriction might have an impact on wildlife that occur (including Otter and Atlantic Salmon) within the restricted areas of the West Dart. The approach used is to ensure that the appropriate level of access restriction (i.e. following the least restrictive principle) is available to the public whilst still affording protection of sensitive nature conservation features. The approach included consultation with our specialists including our ecologists and rangers as well as Natural England.
- 6.6 We have considered the risk to otters. Expert advice and observations from elsewhere in the country with much higher levels of human activity show otters initially avoid disturbed areas but will become habituated to human activity. This is however dependent on there being some areas left undisturbed, especially for breeding. The West Dart offers abundant, high quality habitat for otters such that any reasonably anticipated change in recreation activity (with and without dogs) would have no likely significant local effect on the otter population.
- 6.7 The West Dart offers abundant, high quality habitat for Atlantic salmon such that any reasonably anticipated change in recreation activity (with and without dogs) would have no likely significant local effect on the salmon population.

## **7 Conclusions and mitigation measures**

- 7.1 Following the assessments and walk through surveys officers have concluded that varying the current restriction to a “dogs on leads” restriction is unlikely to have any adverse impact on otters or salmon. However various mitigation measures are proposed which include updating of on-site access information with key messages for dog owners, and to continue with visitor monitoring.

## **8 Consultation on proposed variation**

- 8.1 A second consultation was undertaken on a proposed variation of the original direction to require dogs to be on a lead at all times.

- 8.2 Consultation responses were received from Dartmoor Preservation Society, Kennel Club, Natural England, Open Spaces Society and Ramblers. All of the respondents were in support of the proposed variation to the access restriction.
- 8.3 The Dartmoor Access Forum is the Authority's independent statutory advisory body for access to the countryside issues within the national park. The Forum provided its formal response to the consultation at its meeting on 6 November 2018. The Forum support the proposed variation to the restriction.
- 8.4 Where restrictions on access are considered necessary by a relevant authority under section 26 CROW, Natural England is the statutory advisory body. Natural England was consulted on the proposed variation to the restriction and their view is that the level of restriction should be varied to dogs on leads restriction.

## **9 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The level of public access shows that the valley remains relatively quiet. The original direction to exclude dogs was introduced in 2005 following conservation advice at the time as a precautionary measure to protect wildlife. Our understanding of the way in which the West Dart River Valley is used by the public since the introduction of the new right of access has greatly improved over recent years. Whilst the West Dart River Valley remains an important area for Otter and Atlantic salmon, the area is not well used by the public due to the remote location, difficult terrain and fragmented nature of access land parcels. Those that do use the area tend to keep to the existing three public bridleways which traverse the valley. Public rights of way are not subject to the restriction to exclude dogs and dog walking along these routes is minimal.
- 9.2 The Authority has undertaken access assessments and visitor monitoring to determine current levels and patterns of use. In addition, the Authority's ecologists have undertaken walk through surveys and have concluded that there is currently no justification in maintaining the original direction to exclude dogs. They do not anticipate any significant adverse impact on wildlife if the direction is varied to restrict dogs to be kept on leads at all times. We have concluded that varying the current restriction will not adversely impact on sensitive wildlife and that any potential increase in visitors (with or without dogs) will be negligible.
- 9.3 Various mitigation measures are proposed including updating access information at key access points with key messages for dog owners, no active promotion of the West Dart River Valley so it remains a quiet undisturbed area of the National Park and a monitoring programme to assess levels and patterns of visitor activity
- 9.4 The Authority is mindful of pursuing the least restrictive approach when managing access and has concluded that the current level of restriction should be amended from a total exclusion on dogs, to a requirement to have dogs on leads at all times within the restriction zone.

## **10 Financial Implications**

- 10.1 If the current restriction is amended, it will be necessary to replace the existing signage at access points. The approximate cost of undertaking this work would be £2,500.00 which would be met from within existing access and recreation budgets.

## **11 Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment**

- 11.1 An equality and sustainability impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the preparation of this report. Assistance dogs used by members of the public are exempt from the exclusion and no other adverse impacts were identified.

ANDREW WATSON

### **Background Papers**

Dartmoor National Park Committee Report NPA/05/021  
Dartmoor National Park Committee Report NPA/08/025  
Dartmoor National Park Committee Report NPA/08/082  
Dartmoor National Park Committee Report NPA/ August 2013

**Attachments:** Appendix 1 – Plan showing West Dart River Valley and dog exclusion area

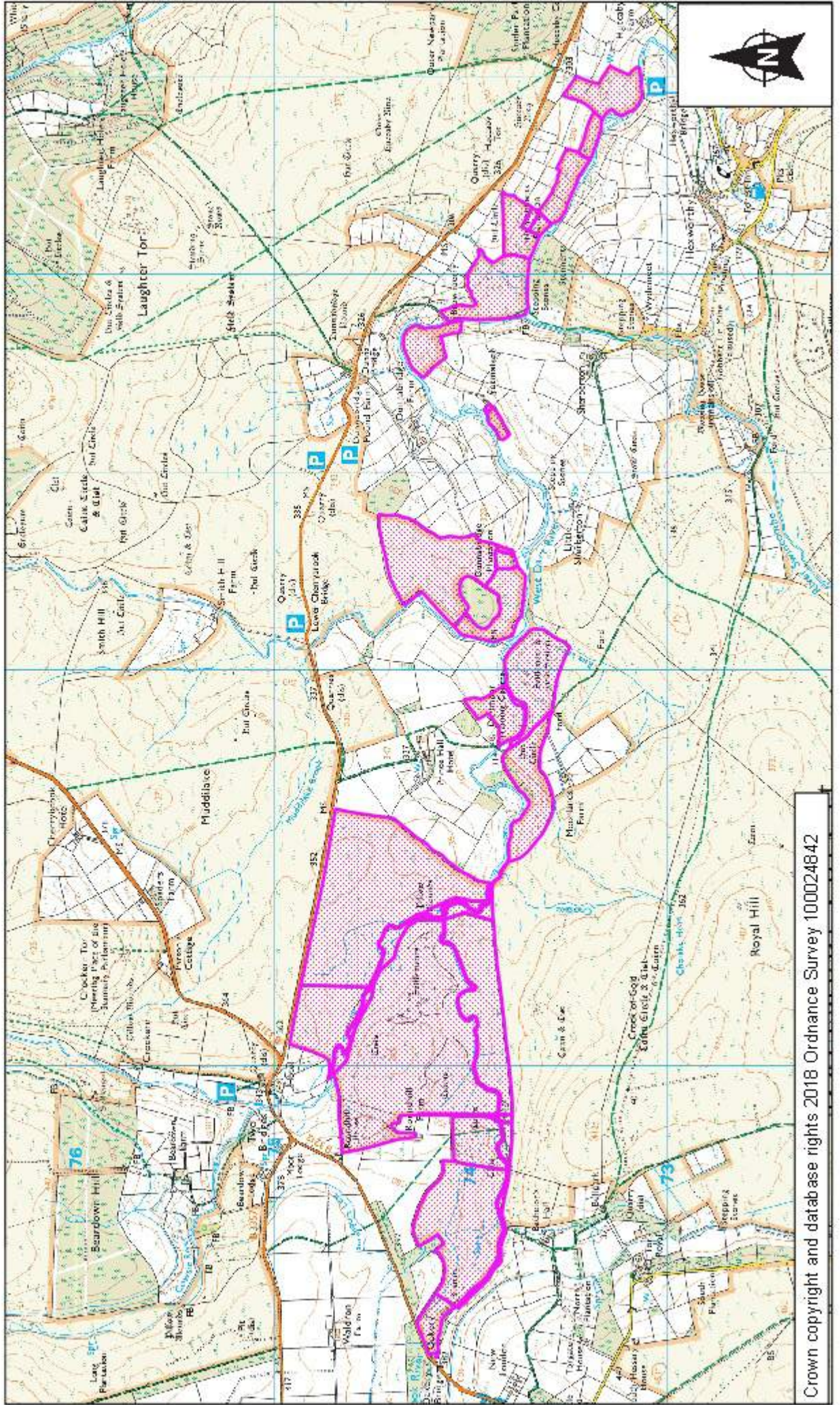
20181207 AW West Dart Dog Restriction

# Dartmoor National Park Authority

## West Dart CROW Restriction

Scale 1:26,000

Compiled by jmanning on 28/3/2018



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## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**MEMBER ATTENDANCE**Report of the Head of Organisational Development

**Recommendation: That Members agree to the publication of attendance by each Member at Authority Committee meetings.**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on Friday 25 May 2018 a report was presented to Members regarding Performance Indicators for 2017/18 (NPA/AG/18/008).
- 1.2 There was a discussion regarding Member attendance at Committee meetings (Development Management, Authority and Audit & Governance) as the target for 2017/18 had not been met (82% against a target of 85%). The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) advised Members that other authorities, including Devon County Council, published individual Member attendance. Members considered this to be a good idea and resolved to recommend to full Authority that Member attendance at Committee meetings be published.
- 1.3 The proposal to publish Member attendance was also discussed at the Member Workshop held on 14 September 2018 and was broadly supported by those Members present.
- 1.4 The data will be published on the Members page of the Authority's website and included in future performance reports.
- 1.5 An example of how data will be published online against each Member:

<b>Attendance record</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total expected attendances:	8	
Present as expected:	6	75%
Apologies received:	2	100% of absences
Absent (incl. apologies)	2	25%

- 1.6 An example of how data will be presented in future performance reports:

Name	Expected attendances	Present as expected	Apologies received	Absent (incl. apologies)
Mr A Member	8	6 (75%)	2 (100%)	2 (25%)
Ms A Member	8	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members agree to the publication of attendance by each Member at Authority Committee meetings as set out above.

## **3 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications.

## **4 Equality and Sustainability Impact**

- 4.1 There will be no impact relating to equality or sustainability arising from the recommendation; however the publication of Member attendance will provide greater transparency for the public.

NEIL WHITE

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**MOOR THAN MEETS THE EYE (MTMTE) LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME  
YEAR 4 PROGRESS REPORT**Report of the *Moor than meets the eye* Scheme Manager

**Recommendation: That Members:**

**(i) note progress to date; and**

**(ii) note that a six month report will be presented at 24 May 2019 Audit and Governance Committee and end of Scheme report to Authority in December 2019**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) granted Permission to Start on 18 August 2014 following the *Moor than meets the eye (MTMTE)* Landscape Partnership Scheme's (the Scheme) successful Round 2 application to the HLF Landscape Partnership Programme grant fund. This triggered the transition from the 'Development' to the 'Delivery' Stage.
- 1.2 HLF has granted up to £1.9m towards the Scheme's total budget of £3,843,183 giving an Intervention Rate of 49.4%. The remaining funding comes from the *MTMTE* Partners.
- 1.3 There are 34 co-ordinated Projects within the scheme. Each Project has a Partner who is responsible for delivering the Project (there are 13 Partners in total). As Lead Partner, Dartmoor National Park Authority (the Authority) is responsible for the general administrative, financial and management functions of the Scheme. These include:
- Overall administration of the Scheme (via the *MTMTE* Staff Team)
  - overall monitoring of actions and Projects undertaken in the delivery of the Scheme
  - responsibility for completing and submitting grant claims to HLF on behalf of the Projects within the Scheme
  - taking receipt of grant claim monies from HLF
  - making payments to Project Partners
  - retaining core documents and records relating to the Scheme for audit and governance purposes.
- 1.4 Representatives from the 13 Partners form the Landscape Partnership Board (the Board) and provide strategic oversight and direction for the Scheme and the *MTMTE* Staff Team.

- 1.5 The Projects vary in duration but all must be delivered by 17 August 2019 (five years after the Permission to Start), unless otherwise agreed with the HLF. A number of our revised projects have end dates of 31 December 2019 to align with the Scheme completion. This has been agreed with HLF; the costs beyond the end of August 2019 are predominantly staff costs.

## 2 Update on the Delivery Stage of the Scheme

- 2.1 Generally, the Projects and Scheme overall is in a good position. Year 4 could be typified as a period of reinforcing the growing community awareness from Year 3, and significant Project re-scoping or development at the start and end.
- 2.2 We have continued to have some high-profile events and activities throughout the year and this in turn is continuing to drive a groundswell of community recognition for our Project activities and their positive association in being delivered through *MTMTE*.
- 2.3 A summary of the Projects' progress and Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status against each key project performance measure can be seen in Appendix 1. This gives a snapshot of the Projects and the Scheme overall and at the end of August 2018 (Y4Q4). This is continually updated and monitored every quarter with the next due from Project Leads by 7 December 2018, for the Y5Q1 reporting period ending 30 November 2018.
- 2.4 The Scheme has spent £2.874m to the end of the last claim period on 31 August 2018 (HLF Y4Q4), drawing down £1.428m (75%) of the HLF funding, after 80% of time into the 5-year Delivery stage. So, we are slightly behind schedule on a pro-rata basis.
- 2.5 The starter of the year saw us successfully launch the following Projects which are progressing well:
- *PA1 – Dartmoor Moorland Bird* (re-scoped from the original project)
  - *PB5 – Welcome to Widecombe* (re-scoped from the original project)
  - *PD4 – Heritage Skills Training* (borne from the aborted PD1 – Dartmoor Diploma project)
  - *PD5 – Conservation Apprentices* (borne from the aborted PD1 – Dartmoor Diploma project)
  - *PD6 – Dart Valley in Focus*.
- 2.6 Following the Audit & Governance committee on 25 May 2018, and continued slippage in some Projects' delivery during Year 4, I continued to have some concern over the level of confidence in some Project Leads' forecast costs and their timing. During the last quarter I met with the majority of Project Leads to scrutinize and review general progress, budget position, outputs, communications and legacy aspirations in preparation for the Scheme's final year. The aim of this was to ensure that the HLF, Project Board and the Authority as Lead Partner can enter the final year confident that projections are as accurate as possible and provide surety of delivery.



- 2.7 Forecasting accuracy improved slightly in Y4Q4 but still had 36% variance; our target has been  $\pm 10\%$  across the Scheme. I'm hopeful that the impact of the Project reviews will result in improved accuracy when Project Leads are due to report progress, their planned remaining delivery and claim their expenditure for Y5Q1 on 7 December 2018. The forecast target to claim is £251k. Members will note that the Scheme has another £969k to spend in its final year and will claim £479k from the HLF. Of this, £127k is core Staff Team salaries and the remainder is delivery of Projects (some of which is also staff costs associated with Projects e.g., Conservation Apprentices, Moorland Birds, Heritage Skills Training).
- 2.8 The story of change has continued into the latter end of Year 4 when two Projects confirmed significant forecast underspend on their outturn costs during the Project review resulting in some £73k (2% of the overall Scheme) for reallocation. We have sought HLF's formal approval of our priorities to reallocate this budget which received approval in principle on 19 October 2018. These changes primarily resulted in reallocation of funds to support the core staff team's costs, provide additional support and capacity during the final year and minor budget increases to support a couple of our projects. A verbal update will be provided at the Authority meeting on the result of these discussions.
- 2.9 The majority of our Projects are on target to deliver their outcomes on time and to budget. The key Projects we will be monitoring to ensure that progress remains at a satisfactory level in the last year are:
- *PB1 – Bellever & Postbridge Trails* (a new Project Lead to be identified and lead the outdoor interpretation to be coordinated and delivered holistically with the Visitor Centre redevelopment)
  - *PC8 – Postbridge VC* (completion of internal interpretation contracts and fit-out, alongside the non-MTMTE capital works redevelopment of the centre)
  - *PC1 – Dartmoor Story* (the golden thread and 'landing-place' for the Scheme's interpretation and 'go-to' legacy resource)
  - *PC5 – Wray Valley Trail* (concluding key land negotiations, construction contracts let and works completed ready for opening by 17 August 2019)
- 2.10 All our Projects are delivering significant tangible outputs, experiences and outcomes. Some significant examples over the year include:
- *PA1 – Dartmoor Moorland Birds:*
    - Publication of the *MTMTE* Moorland Bird Research
    - Supporting and informing land managers on habitat management across Dartmoor
  - *PA5 – Unveiling the Heritage of the High Moor:*
    - A two-week community archaeology excavation at Holwell Tor
  - *PB2 – Parishscapes:*

- Conference celebrating community-led heritage conservation projects
- Formation and launch of the Ilsington History Group
- Throwleigh's community play: 'Colonel Heath's Hut'
- Restoration of Widecombe's pig house
- Working with Princetown Primary School on outdoor heritage education and the Parish Council to create a micro-heritage centre in a redundant telephone box
- *PB3 – Moor Medieval:*
  - Continued support to the Moor Medieval Study Group volunteers conducting community research resulting in a book publication early 2019
- *PB4 – Engaging in the nature of the Bovey Valley:*
  - An extensive programme of community events and activities throughout the Bovey Valley and support to other further-afield nature events
  - The Scheme's final 'Lantern Walk', this year through Pullabrook Wood, at night
- *PB5 – Welcome to Widecombe:*
  - Completion of the village's community-led interpretation, engaging visitors in a series of trails around village landmarks to tell the story of the village and its surrounding Dartmoor landscape
  - Organisation and hosting of the North Hall Manor community archaeology excavation
- *PB6 – Managing Volunteers:*
  - Purchase and fit-out of a volunteer tool-trailer for the Dartmoor community (to be marketed and launched by 2019)
- *PB7 – In the footsteps of the Victorians:*
  - "Dartmoor – A Wild & Wondrous Region": a 3-month long major exhibition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter and attracting around 40,000, examining how artists have portrayed Dartmoor in this period
  - Completion of the community volunteer research and publication of "Aspects of change in the Wrey Valley and surrounding area" book
- *PC1 – Discovering the Dartmoor Story:*
  - Content generation and launch of the Dartmoor Story webpages hosted by the Authority: <http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/wildlife-and-heritage/dartmoor-story> - the story of Dartmoor's cherished and protected landscape and wildlife is one of powerful geological forces, relentless weather and more than 10,000 years of human activity

- *PC7 – Fernworthy Reservoir Improved Access:*
  - TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence award for the improvements and trails around the reservoir
- *PD2 – EcoSkills Conservation Assistants:*
  - Continued personal development programme tailored to individuals' needs providing wider partnership working and experience across Dartmoor's landscape. Almost all have gone on to gain employment in the Environment or Conservation sectors
- *PD4 – Heritage Skills Training:*
  - Development and delivery of a wide-ranging training course programme
- *PD5 – Conservation Apprentices:*
  - The third member joined the Authority's Conservation Works Team early 2018 and all are progressing their Apprenticeships through Bridgwater College.
- *PD6 – Dart Valley in Focus:*
  - New project launched appointing a Youth Engagement Officer to develop and deliver a range of family oriented wildlife activities at Newbridge
  - Youth film competition launched and supporting young people with professional film production skills

2.11 We have organised or supported 288 events to date, attended by over 21,000 people (plus c. 40,000 at the RAMM exhibition). 12,673 people have been involved in 83 events this year, including:

- conferences
- exhibitions
- guided walks
- community archaeology excavations
- open days
- school links
- talks
- workshops, and
- family activities.

2.12 Over 500 people subscribe to our monthly newsletter which forms our main communications channel along with our social media presence. This has continued to grow this year, mainly in response to the central staff team's sustained effort generating content and raising awareness of our activities. Our Twitter (@Dartmoor\_MTMTE) has 757 followers (+31% on year) with our tweets being seen over 90,000 times/month on average over the last three months (+125% on year). This continues to be a significant step change, and in response to scheduled daily and opportunistic response to associated tweets by the central staff team. Facebook coverage continues in parallel with Twitter and we have grown to 1,100 followers (+38% on year).

2.13 We continue to have articles published in the local, regional and national press and publications including:

- nine features in the Enjoy Dartmoor magazine
- a forthcoming double-page feature on the Scheme over the last year in the winter edition of Dartmoor Magazine (12,000 readership) with other associated articles throughout
- local and regional coverage of the North Hall Manor and Holwell Tor community archaeology excavations, including TV coverage on BBC Spotlight.

One of the challenges we continue to face is engaging all our partners and people involved in the Scheme to showcase our successes and increasing our exposure and recognition in the community. Hopefully this will be helped with further pro-active engagement across all parties involved in the Scheme and our Projects.

2.14 We continue to be very lucky with so much support from passionate and willing volunteers helping us deliver our Projects. We hope that they also benefit from the support, training and opportunities we give them. The Scheme has a £114k target for volunteering input (equivalent to 2,280 'unskilled' days). We exceeded this target in 2016 and our volunteers have already kindly given: 2,384 'Unskilled', 1,621 'Skilled' and 92 'Professional' days, equivalent to £395k in contributions through diverse areas such as:

- historical research
- practical conservation management tasks
- trail improvements
- developing interpretation such as leaflets, guides, books and panels
- archaeological surveys and excavations
- recording and monitoring wildlife, and
- supporting our communications.

2.15 We have continued to implement the recommendations from the Scheme's Interim Monitoring & Evaluation report published in January 2018, which canvassed a select group of Board members, the Staff Team, Project Leads, volunteers, participants and attendees at events. The themes identified were:

- Project planning – resolving delayed Projects
- Communications – Partner support and the role of the Community Stakeholders' Group
- Scheme management & governance – reporting & related decision-making
- Legacy planning
- Increasing understanding and awareness
- Monitoring – improving the amount and standardisation of monitoring evidence across the Projects.

- 2.16 The main focus is now on Legacy Planning, ensuring that the assets provided, skills and relationships developed and momentum gained during the Scheme is nurtured and sustained into the future.
- 2.17 We have submitted our Legacy Development Strategy to the HLF and are finalising our draft Legacy Overview and Legacy Plan for submission by Christmas. The Legacy Overview is our statement of intent, identifying the key themes:
- Supporting Dartmoor;
  - Understanding Dartmoor; and
  - Working together for Dartmoor

to shape the Legacy Plan which will detail 'how' we intend to secure the Legacy. We expect the Legacy Plan to evolve over time and be shaped by the remaining project delivery activity and Final Monitoring & Evaluation Report due toward the end of 2019.

### **3 Key issues and actions**

- 3.1 As to be expected with project delivery, the main areas of concern and focus continue to be on:
- Projects:
    - behind schedule on their (forecast) progress
    - forecast under/overspent
  - Ensuring accurate and timely Project spend forecasts
  - Increasing requests for change control and agreeing this with the HLF, particularly within the remaining lifetime of the Scheme and its funding.
- 3.2 The key Projects identified in paragraph 2.9 are due to report back to Board in January 2019.

### **4 Financial implications**

- 4.1 As discussed in paragraph 2.8, we are expecting formal HLF approval of our request to relocate confirmed Project underspends to fund Scheme overheads or other minor Project budget increases. Both of these underspends are on Projects delivered by the Authority. Postbridge is partly financed by the Authority, Bellever and Postbridge Trails is not. Both of these Projects contribute to the Scheme Common Fund and this means that if they underspend and the full amount is not re-allocated, there will be a shortfall of £5k in the Common Fund. This is a financial risk to the Authority and recently reported to the Audit & Governance Committee.
- 4.2 Members are also aware of the current planned overspend on the MTMTE Staff Team overhead costs through salaries reported on PE1 (£34.5k) and PE3 Transport & Subsistence (£16.5k). The Authority has already made provision to cover this shortfall. The increases are due to staff appointments

at spinal column points above that budgeted for and the impact of the recent 2018/19 and 2019/20 Local Government pay award.

- 4.3 The Scheme Board and the HLF have agreed that covering this overspend would be a positive way to re-allocate the current underspends. It is acknowledged that the benefits of the core MTMTE team is spread across the whole Scheme. They also noted that the final year will be important to ensure we can close the Scheme down and ensure a positive legacy.
- 4.4 The PE7 – Unbudgeted Items (£8.7k) are costs that the Authority is not able to claim as Lead Partner. These have been absorbed by the Authority on an annual basis and some £870 is further forecast to complete Scheme delivery. We continue to capture whole-Scheme delivery costs to show the true outturn cost and any added-value provided by the Partners.
- 4.5 As reported previously, HLF will withhold the final 10% of their £1.9m grant until they are satisfied that all of their requirements have been fulfilled. These include the Scheme’s Final Monitoring & Evaluation report, acknowledgment of funding and a selection of images to be submitted with the final claim. They will of course also want to be satisfied that we have delivered against our key outputs and outcomes. Given our current projected spend forecast, HLF will start withholding payment in Y5Q3. It is at this point that the Authority may see the Common Fund enter a negative balance and therefore there may be a cashflow issue for the Authority. The Authority has already made provision for this in an earmarked reserve.
- 4.6 Whilst we have successfully renegotiated significant Project change over the past year, it should be noted that as we near the end of the Scheme, there will be limited time left to make alternative plans, seek change control and still be able to deliver.

## **5 Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 The Projects being delivered were selected to improve access to and understanding of the *MTMTE* (and wider Dartmoor) area by all sectors of society; support local communities and businesses; and deliver a range of environmental benefits.

MARK ALLOTT

Background papers: NPA/15/039; NPA/AG/16/015; NP/AG/16/017 ; NPA/17/004;  
NPA/17/043; NPA/AG/18/011; NPA/AG/18/016

**Attachments:** Error! Reference source not found. – **Project Status Summary**

20181207 MA – MTMTE Yr 4 Progress Report

Moor than meets the eye LPS - Project Progress RAG Summary ('Overall' measure)																							
ID	Project	LP Scheme Year 1 (2014/15)				LP Scheme Year 2 (2015/16)				LP Scheme Year 3 (2016/17)				LP Scheme Year 4 (2017/18)				LP Scheme Year 5 (2018/19)				(2019/20)	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1 (Sep-Nov)	Q2 (Dec-Feb)	Q3 (Mar-May)	Q4 (Jun-Aug)	Q1 (Sep-Nov)	Q2 (Dec-Feb)	Q3 (Mar-May)	Q4 (Jun-Aug)	(Sep-Nov)	(Dec-Feb)
PA1	Dartmoor Moorland Birds	A	A	A	A	A	R	G	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PA2	Haymeadows	G	A	A	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A						
PA3	Natural Connections	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	A	A	A	A	A	A						
PA4	Discovering the Nature of the Bovey Valley	G	G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G	G			G							
PA5	Unveiling the heritage of the High Moor and Forests	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PA6	Higher Uppacott	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	G						
PA7	Ponies, Pounds and Driftways	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	R	A	G	G	G	G	G						
PA8	Ancient Boundaries, Modern Farming	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PA9	Hameldown WWII Bomber Crash Archaeological Survey	G	COMPLETE																				
PB1	Believer and Postbridge Trails	A	A	A	A	G	G	G	R	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A						
PB2	Parishscapes	A	A	A	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PB3	Moor Medieval	G	A	A	A	G	G	R	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PB4	Engaging with the Nature of the Bovey Valley	G	G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G						
PB5	Welcome to Widecombe	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	A	G	G						
PB6	Managing Volunteers	G	A	A	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	G	G	G						
PB7	In the Footsteps of the Victorians	G	A	A	R	R	R	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PB8	Pony Herd Identification Project	R	R	A	A	A	G	R	R	R	R	WITHDRAWN											
PB9	Moor Boots	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	G							
PB10	Whitehorse Community Play	G	G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PC1	Discovering the Dartmoor Story	G	A	A	A	A	A	G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G						
PC4	Brimpts Tin Trail	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	G	G						
PC5	Wray Valley Trail	G	A	R	A	A	R	A	A	G	A			G	G	A	A						
PC6	Heritage Trails	G	A	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PC7	Fernworthy Reservoir Improved Access	G	A	G	G	A	A	A	A	COMPLETE													
PC8	Postbridge Visitor Centre	G	A	A	A	R	R	R	R	R	R	A	A	A	R	R	G						
PD1	Dartmoor Diploma	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	WITHDRAWN												
PD2	EcoSkills	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PD3	East Shallowford Trust	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	R	R	R	WITHDRAWN											
PD4	Heritage Skills Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		G			A							
PD5	Conservation Apprentices	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PD6	Dart Valley in Focus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		G	G	G							
PE1	Staff Team	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	R	R						
PE2	HERO and GI Staff for PC6	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PE3	Transport and Subsistence	G	A	G	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R						
PE4	Training	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PE5	Monitoring and Evaluation	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G						
PE6	Moor than meets the eye Website	G	A	A	A	G	COMPLETE																
PE7	Unbudgeted items	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**NEW HOMES BONUS AND THE DARTMOOR COMMUNITIES FUND**Report of the Communities Officer**Recommendation: That Members note the content of the report****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The “New Homes Bonus” (NHB) is a Government scheme designed to incentivise communities to welcome growth and encourage local authorities to grant planning permission for new houses in return for additional revenue. Under the scheme introduced in 2011, the Government matches the council tax earned by local authorities from each new home built, converted or brought back into use over a six-year period, subsequently reduced to five years for 2017/18 and four years from 2018/19 onwards.
- 1.2 The grant is paid directly to district councils as local housing authorities and while it is not ‘ring fenced’ so can be used how they see fit, they are expected to negotiate with their respective National Park Authorities (NPAs) recognising their part in housing delivery.
- 1.3 Following such negotiation West Devon Borough (WDBC), South Hams District (SHDC) and Teignbridge District (TDC) agreed to transfer a proportion of their NHB monies to the NPA to establish the Dartmoor Communities Fund.
- 1.4 Allocations have been based on the number of housing completions achieved on Dartmoor, with WDBC/SHDC paying over the equivalent of one year’s NHB award retrospectively each year since 2013/14 and TDC similarly paying the equivalent of one year but averaged out over a 3 year period from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The table below shows the contributions received.

<b>New Homes Bonus (£)</b>						
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>WDBC</b>	18,688*	2,610	24,136	9,880	5,164	<b>60,478</b>
<b>SHDC</b>	17,277*	5,779	24,606	3,060	4,032	<b>54,754</b>
<b>TDC</b>	£ **	25,000	25,000	25,000	£ -	<b>75,000</b>

\* 2014/15 includes NHM contribution for 2013/14

\*\* alternative contribution of £50,000 towards Ashburton master planning in 2013/14

**2 Dartmoor Communities Fund Scheme**

- 2.1 The Dartmoor Communities Fund (DCF) was established in 2014/15 for West Devon and South Hams and was extended to include Teignbridge (excluding Ashburton & Buckfastleigh) the following year. The small part of Cheriton Bishop parish (Mid Devon) that sits within the National Park is excluded.



- 2.2 The Dartmoor Communities Fund responds to the needs of Dartmoor's communities within the criteria set by the primary funders. It offers up to 50% grant funding for capital projects that support existing valued community facilities and services, or create new community infrastructure to meet identified community needs.
- 2.3 The Fund provides accessible finance for community driven projects that look to enhance community cohesion. It has had a key role in helping community assets such as village halls, shops and lavatories to become more sustainable where capital investment has led to an increase in use and revenue income.
- 2.4 The Fund delivers the 'Your Dartmoor' management plan priority 'Resilient and empowered local communities' which identifies the importance of community services in maintaining the vibrancy of Dartmoor's local communities.

### **3 Dartmoor Communities Fund 2017/18**

- 3.1 Total budgets for 2017/18, including underspend from previous year, were:
- Teignbridge: £29,070
  - West Devon: £11,134
  - South Hams: £22,614
- 3.2 The main fund was first opened to applications in early summer 2017, with a second round offered to Teignbridge based projects in January 2018. The 'Just Do It' small grants community action pot for 'quick win' environmental projects has remained open all year with applications being determined within a few weeks.
- 3.3 Over £30,000 has been awarded with a total project value in excess of £95,000, one outstanding provisional offer remains to be confirmed subject to ongoing discussions about a new lease.
- 3.4 Projects supported have been diverse and include a 'Champing' project for Walkhampton Church, works to improve physical access to Brent Island in South Brent and support for Widecombe History Society to renovate the Old Pig House to create a new community asset and visitor attraction.

### **4 Dartmoor Communities Fund Achievements**

- 4.1 Over the 4 years of the fund, it has awarded £166,000 of grants to support projects with a total value in excess of £700,000. Each £1 of DCF grant has generated over £3 additional investment to Dartmoor, including direct voluntary/in-kind match funding to a value in excess of £65,000 from local community volunteers and businesses.
- 4.2 What is clear is that the Fund has enabled communities to help and support themselves. Projects have included:
- community shops and cafes;
  - play schemes;
  - environmental action on litter;
  - addressing poor lighting;

- a scheme to encourage swifts back to a village;
- improved disabled access to valued community nature areas;

all of which have been achieved through the considerable voluntary commitment of communities, helped with a little grant aid.

- 4.3 The Fund has proven invaluable in supporting Dartmoor communities to achieve their aspirations and in the delivery of key 'Your Dartmoor' objectives. It remains the only Authority grant scheme offering targeted support and funding to support Dartmoor communities maintain vital village services and community infrastructure.

## **5 Monitoring**

- 5.1 Monitoring is being undertaken through Survey Monkey. Successful applicants as well as those that were ineligible or refused at either expression of interest or full application have been asked to participate.
- 5.2 Initial results indicate that the Fund has been well received, with most respondents finding the application process easy or very easy and 82% finding the staff very helpful with a further 12% finding them helpful. Over 80% would recommend the fund to others, and of those respondents who received a grant, 100% said it helped them to provide or improve community facilities and services.
- 5.3 When asked how the Fund could be improved, most indicated that they felt no improvement was required and wished for it to continue as it is. However, several did comment that it could be more widely promoted/better advertised and comments were received from Ashburton/Buckfastleigh, unhappy at their exclusion.

## **6 Current & Future Funding**

- 6.1 Contributions of a little over £4,000 and £5,000 have been received from South Hams and West Devon respectively for the Fund this year, Teignbridge is yet to make a commitment. While the contributions are welcomed, such a reduced budget makes it unviable to open the Fund to full applications this year and the monies will be rolled forward to 2019/20.
- 6.2 Negotiations continue with TDC/WDBC/SHDC to secure NHB funding for 2019/20 onwards with the aspiration to move away from capital support for community infrastructure to a new scheme closely aligned to the National Park Management Plan – Your Dartmoor <http://www.yourdartmoor.org/>.
- 6.3 Currently the small 'Just Do It' grant scheme remains open to applications.

## **7 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The Communities Fund has no direct budgetary implications on DNPA resources as it is funded through New Homes Bonus monies. However, there is an indirect cost in terms of officer support.

## **8 Sustainability and equality impact assessment**

- 8.1 The Communities Fund formed a key mechanism for the Authority to engage with communities at a local level helping them to meet community needs and aspirations and supporting wider National Park Management Plan objectives. Sustainability and equality were intrinsic in the assessment of grant applications.

## **9 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The Fund has proved a popular and accessible source of support funding to help communities provide or improve valued community facilities. It is regrettable that it has not been possible to open the Fund to applications this year but negotiations continue with the District and Borough Councils to secure future New Homes Bonus funding.

**JOANNA RUMBLE**

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

**CONNECTING ACTIVELY TO NATURE**Report of the Senior Learning and Outreach OfficerRecommendation : **That the content of the report be noted****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The successful *Naturally Healthy Project*, reported to Authority 15 June 2018 (NPA/18/023), delivered considerable change and benefit at a locality level. A legacy in the form of the *Buckfastleigh Naturally Healthy Group* was established and continues with activities. The challenge, as evidenced by the evaluation of this project undertaken by Plymouth University was always how to 'scale' this approach to ensure more people benefitted from Dartmoor's 'natural health service'.
- 1.2 Partnership approaches are a good way to stretch our small resource and capacity to reach far larger audiences and by working with *Active Devon* (Community Sport Partnership) and with other partners we can make Dartmoor part of the *Connecting Actively to Nature* project.

**2 Connecting Actively to Nature**

- 2.1 All the evidence shows that older people in Devon would like to get outside more if they were given more confidence to do so. Confidence can mean different things to different people from being given a green light to be active with a health condition, the confidence to go along to an activity for the first time, or the confidence to try out something new. Connecting Actively to Nature (CAN) is a new, flagship initiative from the Devon Local Nature Partnership which is tackling this lack of confidence and the growing inactivity amongst people aged 55 and over in Devon.
- 2.2 DNPA has been represented at Devon Local Nature Partnership (DLNP) since its inception. DLNP is considered high performing among the 49 Local Nature Partnerships in England. It is noted for the strength of its partnership working and in particular its Naturally Healthy priority, led by Devon's Director of Public Health. DLNP is currently chaired by a North Devon GP. DLNP hosted a visit from Defra in July 2018 which had a 'naturally healthy' focus. Partners presented the many ways in which organisations in Devon engage with the health agenda. Defra delegates expressed admiration for the 'joined up' approaches deployed.
- 2.3 Adults are recommended by Public Health England to get 150 minutes of activity each week for good health and insight shows that being outside in the fresh air gives people an enormous boost in terms of mental wellbeing. The target demographic is based on evidence that shows that a big part of the

reason that older people do not access the natural spaces on their doorstep is simply about confidence. Further evidence from a survey conducted by *Active Devon* as part of the bid process shows that in this age group only 15% are reaching the recommended activity target, a further 19% are considered 'inactive' – that is doing less than 30 minutes of exercise a week. These gross statistics hide inequality particularly between age and gender: women are more inactive when younger whilst activity levels in men decline with age. An important part of the CAN Project is to address the confidence barriers in the target age group. This is being done by developing a programme of events and activities and recruiting 350 CAN volunteers, with an emphasis on peer age cohort recruitment, to help make every activity welcoming and inclusive. Research suggests that people in this age group have additional barriers to being active; these include changing family structures (empty nest, bereavement), increasing caring responsibilities and vulnerability to mental health issues (“downbeat boomers”).

- 2.4 Connecting Actively to Nature (CAN) is working through a wide range of local health, wellbeing, conservation, ageing and wildlife partners to help the target audience to develop the confidence to enjoy and access the natural surroundings on their doorstep. The five year programme is funded (£500,000) by Sport England through Lottery sales and is being seen as one of the flagship national initiatives to tackle inactivity amongst older people. Over the 5 year project lifespan a target of 3000+ people who are either 'inactive' (Public Health-England definition) or who are at the contemplating behaviour change to be more active. This is a Devon wide target and some will have direct experience of Dartmoor.
- 2.5 CAN officially launched this July when Sport England funding was confirmed. The Authority contributed a small amount of match funding (£1k p.a. = £5,000 over five years). We also contribute 'in-kind' through attendance at steering groups (in the region of four days a year) and by being an activity partner which may take the form of co-leading events and activities. The time commitment is small and manageable within existing workloads. Currently much of the CAN focus is on engaging with people who are inactive 'on their doorstep' with the ambition that Dartmoor and other more remote green and blue spaces will become destinations in the future.
- 2.6 This project specifically:
- aligns with our ambitions to continue to develop opportunities for people to maximise the physical health and mental wellbeing benefits of Dartmoor National Park, building on our own Naturally Healthy Project;
  - supports our ambition to demonstrate impact against the health gains National Parks offer as outlined in Defra's 8-Point Plan for National Parks and the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- 2.7 As part of the development phase *Active Devon* undertook a considerable amount of research into the target demographic, developed a theory of change model and proposed a co-designed behaviour change intervention that should see lasting impact beyond the funded phase.

2.8 The volunteer 'peer support' element is a critical part of this project and considerable time and energy has been committed to developing volunteer support structures, materials and 'ambassador engagement' events. We participated in one of these in early October: *Living well in Later Life*, organised by one of the CAN partners *Age UK* at Newton Abbot racecourse. This provided the opportunity to meet other providers, to engage with potential volunteers and to make the natural environment offer clearer to those who might otherwise discount this.

### **3 CAN in context**

3.1 Building on our successful *Naturally Healthy Project* we have also continued to be active in demonstrating the benefits of natural space to physical health and mental wellbeing. As an illustration of the scope – from strategic links to service provision our activity includes:

- Being part of a strategic network across Public Health-England's (PH-E) 'south' region which includes PH-E South East, PH-E South West, Dartmoor, Exmoor, New Forest and South Downs National Parks. This network is the first in the country and other PH-E regions are interested in replicating it. We benefit by having access to the substantial data, knowledge and guidance provided by PH-E and in return they use our work as case study evidence.
- Delivering mental well-being courses in partnership with *Devon Recovery Learning Community* for people who are in the process of recovery from mental illness.

3.2 CAN is therefore part of a wider approach to our engagement with the naturally healthy agenda and helps demonstrate our wider social impact.

### **4 Financial Implications**

4.1 Please refer to paragraph 2.5.

### **5 Conclusion**

5.1 Although early in the long-term project life-cycle for CAN we are already seeing return on our small investment in terms of new partnerships, increased profile with a specific, targeted and evidenced demographic and opportunities for engagement with volunteers motivated primarily by concern for health rather than our traditional volunteers who are more motivated by concern for environment. Our small contribution illustrates a combined support approach with partners and is good evidence of working beyond our boundaries in this long term societal behaviour change initiative and complements our other work – both strategic and delivery. By being part of the wider Devon project there will be greater legacy and reach both with participant partners and government.

ORLANDO RUTTER

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 December 2018

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

Report of the Trees and Landscape Officer

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

**TPO APPLICATIONS**

**Teignbridge**

**Ref: 18/0034**

**Underwood, Lustleigh**

**SX 7826 8135**

Application to crown lift a lime and fir tree. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

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

**Ref: 18/0048**

**4 Fullaford Park, Buckfastleigh**

**SX 7330 6588**

Application to fell a Holm oak. The tree is damaging the adjacent property. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. Replacement planting of a standard Rowan or Birch tree within the crown spread of the original in the first planting season following felling.

**West Devon**

**Ref: 18/0047**

**Briar Tor, Yelverton**

**SX 5222 6813**

Application to crown lift three ash trees. Consent was granted subject to conditions:

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

## SECTION 211 NOTICES

### Teignbridge

**Ref: 18/0031**                      **Cleave House, Sticklepath**                      **SX 6389 9420**

Notification to fell four sycamore trees. The trees are heavily suppressed and have poor form.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 18/0032**                      **Little Gate Cottage, North Bovey**                      **SX 7408 8383**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

### West Devon

**Ref: 18/0033**                      **Penshurst, South Zeal**                      **SX 7358 9094**

Notification to fell a maple. The tree is heavily suppressed and has poor form.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 18/0044**                      **Whispering Winds, Brentor**                      **SX 5368 7171**

Notification to reduce a large lateral branch of a sycamore. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 18/0045**                      **Town Head Cottages, Mary Tavy**                      **SX 5062 7920**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 18/0046**                      **The Barton, Throwleigh**                      **SX 6686 9080**

Notification to fell several cypress, larch and alder. The cypress is damaging the thatch of the adjacent listed building. The other felling will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.



**South Hams**

**Ref: 18/0049**

**Station Car Park, South Brent**

**SX 6984 6024**

Notification to fell an ash tree. The tree is infected with Ash Die Back disease.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

BRIAN BEASLEY

**DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Friday 2 November 2018**

**Present:** Members  
G Gribble, P Harper, S Hill, B Hitchins, C Pannell, M Retallick,  
P Sanders, P Woods, R Parkinson

Officers  
K Bishop, A Kohler, D Healy, S Hill, N White, M Allott

**Apologies:** K Ball, A Cooper, J McInnes, D Webber

**486 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2018**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2018 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

**487 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**488 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

A Member expressed concern regarding the current state of the public toilet facilities and the possible misconception of this being the responsibility of the National Park Authority. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) advised Members that this was the responsibility of the National Trust and that he understood that they had plans to address the issue.

Minute 478 – Reports from Devon Audit Partnership: the Authority's Internal Audit Service - the Chair advised that Mr Rob Hutchings has been invited to attend the next Audit and Governance Committee meeting, scheduled for 1 February 2019, to explain and provide an update regarding internal quality reviews.

**489 Public Participation**

None.

**490 Verbal Update – Communication Via Parish & Other Local Magazines**

The Head of Communications and Fundraising advised that during their workshop 12 months ago, Members had asked Officers to consider ways of improving communications with local residents. Officers agreed to develop two pilot areas, Christow and Ilsington, to test the effectiveness of including

DNPA updates into parish magazines. These pilots should be up and running in the near future. Some issues that have held up the process include the new GDPR regulations and the regular changes in newsletter editors. A Member commented and the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) confirmed that, due to the reduction in resources available to the Authority in recent years, it was no longer possible for Rangers and other officers to regularly attend parish council meetings. It was noted that Rangers are required to attend one Parish Council meeting a year and this was generally the annual general meeting. Some Members suggested that articles could be sent to parish clerks or Members for inclusion within the parish magazine; officers could use the parish clerk list which is held centrally.

**491 Financial Management 1 April to 30 September 2018 and Forecast**  
**Financial Outturn 2018/19**

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/AG/17/012) which is for the first six months of the year.

At the current time, if programme spend continues in the same way a year-end surplus of £99,524 is likely, which represents a minus 2.34% variance against the budget. Section 2.3 of the report sets out the most significant items; the largest contributors to the surplus would be income including:

- £9,374 filming income
- Forecast increased income of £65k in respect of car parks and mobile vending licences
- Forecast increased planning fee income of £30k, set against a loss of circa £10k due to the suspension of the pre-app advice service
- Increased treasury deposit income of £8,000
- Extra external grant income of circa £11,000

Salary costs are currently forecast to be in surplus against budget which reflects the impact of vacancies due to normal staff turnover. Recruitment is ongoing for two posts: a Planning Officer and a Historic Buildings Officer.

Bids made to the Project Fund, and approved by Leadership Team are listed within the report at section 2.4. There is currently just over £50k remaining but it is anticipated that the fund will be fully allocated by year-end. Members noted that the fund is occasionally used to engage temporary staff in order to back-fill and add capacity to services, when needed.

The mid-year Treasury Management Strategy performance report required by the Code of Practice is set out in section 3. Interest rates have been at their lowest rates for 10 years; the impact of the restructuring of the banking system, the capitalisation requirement of the banks by government and the previous downgrading credit ratings has hampered the Authority's ability to make significant returns in recent years. A recent interest rate rise has, however, resulted in a doubling of last year's treasury income receipt.

Section 4 of the report also provides details of new capital expenditure that was not included in the original budget. A Land Rover was procured by the Ranger Service to replace an end-of-lease vehicle; this was funded from earmarked reserves and Members received a report in May (NPA/18/017) requesting approval to pursue external funding for Postbridge Visitor Centre, the costs to date also being funded from earmarked reserves.

Members were advised that the earmarked reserves position for the current year, including detailed movements and forecast movements for the next two years are detailed in Appendices 3 and 4 and Section 5 of the report; reserves could be reduced by 31% by the end of 2020/21 if all events were to come to fruition. Reserve balances and allocations will be considered in more detail as the Authority moves through the new Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process.

The budget and the management of it is a dynamic process and variations are inevitable and acceptable as long as they are managed and sound budget management processes are well established and robust. The Head of Business Support advised that the current surplus was mainly as a result of favourable events and could help replenish earmarked reserves for the next MTFP. Members would be updated at month nine and as the new budget is set in early 2019.

In response to Member queries, the Head of Business Support advised that: the income from the newly introduced car parking charges has covered the capital costs of buying and installing machines and clear picture of total running and maintenance costs will be available at year end; and in respect of whether there is a minimum or maximum level of reserves that is required for the Authority, this is a matter for Members to decide, based on commitments, ring-fencing and risk management, which is done on an on-going basis and more formally when the budget is set at the start of each financial year.

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report.

#### **492 Business Plan Monitoring 2018/19**

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/AG/18/013).

Members noted the Authority's performance for the first half of the year for each of the 28 key actions within the current Business Plan. Two actions have been identified as being unlikely to be completed in this business year:

- Non-native Invasives Project;
- Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme

However, in response to a Member query, it was confirmed that these actions would be carried forward into the next financial year 2019/20. With regard to the Non-native Invasives Project, the Director of Conservation and

Communities advised Members that the team has now drawn up a project which will be ready to implement in Spring 2019.

There are delays to the actions relating to Peatland Restoration and Natural Flood Risk Management – these highlight the nature of partnership working in that sometimes the Authority is not able to control the timeline which has been set. However, the overall picture is that through the collective efforts of 'Team Dartmoor' - staff, Members and volunteers – good progress has been made during the first six months of the year.

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report.

#### **493 Performance Indicators 2018/19**

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/AG/18/014).

Members were reminded that the full set of performance indicators are reported annually to Authority. This Committee focuses on the 25 (of 38) Performance Indicators that focus on how services are performing.

Levels of sickness absence within the Authority are higher than the target set. A strategic discussion between Leadership Team and Human Resources has recently taken place and work is ongoing to identify strategies to address and improve these figures. Member attendance at committee meetings fell during Quarter 2 and is currently below target. A report will be taken to the Authority meeting in December and Members will be asked for their approval to publish Member attendance figures.

Members were advised that good performance has been maintained within the Development Management team, despite some significant staff absences and vacancies. For the time-being, the provision of pre-application advice remains suspended.

With regard to complaints, Members' attention was drawn to the Annual Review letter 2018 from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, in which details of two complaints and enquiries are provided.

In response to Member queries regarding the levels of sickness absence, the Head of Organisational Development provided a more detailed breakdown of the overall figures. He also advised that the Authority does provide access to an employee assistance programme, including access to counselling, which staff can either self-refer or be referred to. Leadership Team is also looking into how early intervention can assist and is considering other ideas and interventions that could be employed.

A Member noted the fantastic work being undertaken by staff and volunteers in respect of litter collection; however, they also noted the cost of disposal of the litter to the Authority. The Director of Conservation and Communities

advised that this issue had been raised previously with litter collection and disposal authorities with a view to them paying or contributing to the costs – especially the disposal costs. Members felt another approach should be made.

Members agreed that Member attendance is a concern and should remain on the agenda. However, it was acknowledged that there was the possibility that some under-reporting was happening; officers agreed that this would be looked into and emphasised that Members needed to take responsibility for reporting their attendance. With regard to attendance at Parish Council meetings, a Member suggested that a card specifying the expectations from Members could be provided. It was noted that Members already receive 'In Touch', 'Dartmoor Matters' and a weekly update from the Chief Executive (National Park Officer).

Members were provided with a verbal update regarding an ongoing complaint and the Authority's current position.

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report.

#### **494 Strategic Risk Register 2018/19**

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/AG/18/015).

The Strategic Risk Register forms part of the Authority's overall risk management strategy. It is important that Members regularly review the strategic risks for the Authority to raise issues for consideration and highlight areas of risk to be added or removed. The Authority's Leadership Team has recently reviewed the register and concluded that F4 - *Moor than meets the eye* Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme – be updated to recognise the risk of project officers on fixed-term contracts finding alternative employment before their contract with DNPA ends.

**RESOLVED:** Members APPROVED the current Strategic Risk Register for 2018/19, subject to the amendment to F4 as detailed above.

#### **495 Moor than meets the eye (MTMTE) Landscape Partnership Scheme**

Members received the report of the *Moor than meets the eye* Scheme Manager (NPA/AG/18/016).

The Director of Conservation and Communities reminded Members that the Scheme started in August 2014 and runs to August 2019. However, the Partnership and DNPA as lead partner, the Authority has until December 2019, to tie up loose ends, submit final claims and evidence, and complete the Scheme.

The importance of the final year cannot be stressed enough. It will be crucial that a very close eye is kept on all of the projects to ensure that they deliver against their outcomes and spend their agreed budgets. The projects with the biggest risks to the Authority are those that contribute to the Common Fund because if they do not spend their original budgets the Fund may be short on monies to pay others. The Scheme Manager has undertaken full assessments with most of the project leads over the summer to ensure that he is happy about projected spend and delivery.

The projects that contribute to the Common Fund are not showing any major risks at the moment. Close monitoring of all projects that have significant forecast spend over the next 12 months will be needed. This is a key role for the Scheme Manager.

There is currently £969,000 left to spend; approximately £600,000 of that is already committed either as staff costs or tender/contracts that have already been advertised or let. There is a confirmed underspend of £73,000. Priorities for re-allocating this spend have been discussed with both the Project Board and the Heritage Lottery Fund. A short business case will be required to confirm the priorities as follows:

- Claiming against the overspend in the core costs of the staff team - HLF have been aware of this since the start of the scheme
- Increasing contracts for the staff team to ensure they are all fully employed until the end of December 2019 – this will reduce the risk of staff leaving early; it will also provide some resilience and ensure that we have a full and comprehensive evaluation, celebration and legacy for the scheme.
- small additional costs for the Whitehorse Hill Community Play.
- Claiming against underspend on Eco Skill

The HLF will withhold the final 10% of grant (£190,000). The current forecast is that this will kick in in Year 5, Quarter 3 (Mar to May 2019). The Authority has allocation in reserves to manage the cashflow.

Officers confirmed that there are a number of successful outcomes that have already been delivered by the scheme:

- Community Engagement and Volunteering through Parishscapes, Moor medieval and a number of other projects including the two digs at Holwell and North Hall Manor over the summer (over 200 days of volunteer help at Holwell alone). The HLF is using Parishscapes as a model for other Landscape Partnership Schemes across the country;
- Outreach and Education- the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) exhibition last year - 40,000 visitors, many of them new audiences; Moor Meadows Conference – two days with a specialist audience on the

- Saturday and the public on the Sunday; the lantern festivals which have taken place each year attracts about 200 – 250 people;
- the dramatic change in the fabric of Higher Uppacott and projects such as the Fernworthy Reservoir path have seen similar physical improvements appreciated by the public;
  - Moorland Birds project and Ancient Boundaries have started to bring benefits to the farming community; the latter is now oversubscribed;
  - The Dartmoor Story being embedded into the interpretation branding for all key partners;
  - Welcome to Widecombe – a model for other settlements on how to work with local businesses and the community

A legacy plan is being drawn up and will be put before Members, along with the full annual report, at the Authority meeting in January 2019.

A Member commended the team. As a member of the Stakeholders Group he has taken part in many of the events and added that he was looking forward to the legacy events.

The Head of Business Support confirmed that 'exception reporting' would be provided over the next 12 months. A Member requested that, with this in mind, future spreadsheets be reduced in size to report areas of concern, with an explanation column. A good example of this type of spreadsheet is Appendix 2 to report number NPA/AG/18/012, page 17.

**RESOLVED:** Members NOTED the content of the report and the progress made to 31 August 2018.

**Action:** Scheme Manager to refine reporting spreadsheets to accompany next report to Authority meeting in January 2019.