

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 5 January 2018

Present: S Barker; A Cooper; G Gribble; P Harper; S Hill;
P W Hitchins; M Jeffery; J McInnes; C Pannell; M Retallick;
P Sanders; M Simpson; D Webber; P Woods

Apologies: K Ball; W Cann; J Christophers; D Moyses; N Oakley

3313 Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 1 December 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2017 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3314 Declarations of Interest

None

3315 Chairman's Report

Mr Retallick (Vice Chairman) had attended the National Parks England Board Meeting, in London, where he and others had met the Shadow Minister. Although the Minister was very interested in the work of the National Parks, with Dartmoor's *Farming Futures* and *Naturally Healthy* models receiving accolades, it was noted that no official transcripts of that meeting were taken.

The Farmers' Forum, just before Christmas, had been well attended. Among the items on the agenda was a presentation from Rebecca Davies (Communications Officer) regarding the new pictogram signage that the Authority is working on. This had been very well received and had instigated lots of questions and comments from those present.

Pamela Woods (Deputy Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee) thanked the Head of Business Support for the excellent training day held in December. She found it most interesting and informative, and advised Members that the Head of Business Support had brought copies of the Member tool kit for those Members who had not attended.

3316 Items requiring urgent attention

None

3317 Public Participation

None

Signed



Date

16.3.18

3318 Local Plan Review : Direction of Travel

Members received the report of the Forward Planning Manager (NPA/18/001)

Members were invited to endorse the issues, outline strategies, and scope, as set out in the Direction of Travel paper, to enable officers to progress with further detailed appraisal and policy drafting over the coming months. They were reminded of the importance that any concerns/issues are raised now, rather than later in the process which may then cause significant delay and additional costs. The Forward Planning Manager highlighted the key potential changes recommended as part of the local plan review.

A Member raised concerns about the lack of public transport and people's reliance on cars, which can be problematic for those in remote settlements who do not have access to private transport.



The Forward Planning Manager replied that the upcoming Transport Topic Paper will look into evidence on transport issues, including public transport and car parking. The recent Parish Councils consultation had highlighted that public transport was a common issue in many of Dartmoor's communities. The topic paper has not yet been completed; Devon County Council will be providing evidence to inform its policy recommendations.

A Member commented that the sizes of affordable houses are getting too small and asked if they are set by Government or whether we, as an Authority, have any control on this. Also the policy document, post-Brexit, would need to consider how on-site accommodation for workers outside settlements can be provided for tourism and businesses and not solely for the agricultural industry, although we will need to be careful about any unintended consequences of introducing a more flexible policy.

It is up to the Authority to strike the right balance between size of properties and affordability. There are minimum national space standards which the Authority are proposing to adopt, these standards are slightly larger than the Authority's current affordable housing standards. Limits on size are currently for reasons of affordability, so that we have reasonable, affordable homes.

A Member reported that the Local Plan Steering Group had discussed the problems facing those who are unable to save for a deposit on a home, and asked if there would be an opportunity to respond to this, including by making more properties available for rent.

The Forward Planning Manager stated the Authority needs to ensure that the mix of housing coming forward is based on an understanding of local need. The local plan will allow for sale and rent 'products' that are affordable and viable, and this will be tested through viability testing. Policy is seeking to ensure developers bringing sites forward respond to what is needed in the community at that point in time in a viable way. It will be important for the Authority to develop policies that are right for Dartmoor, and not just follow a standardised national approach.

Signed  Date 

A Member had several issues with regard to homes and affordability, the biggest being land prices which can push up house prices and make it more difficult to deliver the proportion of affordable housing sought by policy. They wondered if it were possible to put time constraints on allocated sites, which could encourage them to be built and not land banked. The current residential extension policy limits young families who, very often, get on the property ladder with a small home then, as their families grow, they find they need to extend their homes. They felt that having a more flexible extensions policy in the Plan may be of advantage to these people and may be one way of helping young families to stay living in the National Park. It was also identified that CIL could help incentivise development and widen its benefits further than just affordable housing provision. Another member commented that a more flexible extensions policy would require a supply of smaller properties to come through to ensure the stock of affordable housing is retained.

A member highlighted the need to consider the national drive to improve productivity and how this might influence the future requirement for business premises. We may need more flexibility around employment uses to support improved productivity.

Mrs Pannell left the meeting.


A Member pointed out that, as much as they were essential, cars could also be a problem in some villages, whilst in other settlements the constraints of double yellow lines often mean that local people struggle to find parking.

There is no easy solution to Dartmoor's constrained highway network and disperse population which results in a reliance on the car. This issue needs to be dealt with on a case by case basis depending on evidence and the individual needs of communities. Inevitably it requires close partnership working with the Authority, Devon County highways and local people. The local plan is exploring ways to allow housing development which provides community infrastructure, including car parking. In pursuing this strategy the Authority also needs to be mindful of people's general preference to park outside their own homes rather than in car parks.

The Forward Planning Manager confirmed the date of the next Steering Group meeting (29 January 2018).

A Member reiterated what had been said by the Chairman and the Forward Planning Manager that, if Members chose to endorse the Direction of Travel paper at this meeting, then they were committed to it, as it was not a 'draft' paper.

RESOLVED: Members AGREED to endorse the issues, outline strategies and scope, as set out in the Direction of Travel paper.

Signed  Date 16.3.18

3319 Fees and Charges

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/18/002)

Fees and charges, excluding planning fees, are not a major source of income for the Authority. However, based on experience at Princetown, the introduction of car parking charges at Postbridge, Haytor and Meldon Reservoir should increase our revenue in 2018/19.

The schedule of fees and charges will be incorporated into the 2018/19 Revenue Budget to be presented for approval in March.

Mr McInnes left the meeting.

RESOLVED: Members approved the recommendations made in section 3 of the report and approved the 2018/19 schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix 2.

3320 Make Great Memories in England's National Parks- Discover England Fund Project Update

Members received the report of the Visitor Services Manager (NPA/018/003)

"Make great memories in England's National Parks" is a two year project in collaboration with nine of the English National Park Authorities. The aim is to introduce a new collection of National Park Experiences to the overseas travel trade in Australia & Germany by March 2019.

The Peak District NPA has agreed to be the lead and accountable body for the scheme, dealing with recruitment and hosting the project manager and team. Nine of the ten English National Parks are supporting the scheme through match-funding and officer time and DNPA is one of four National Parks that will pilot the Ranger Experience programme. The aim will be to trial the effective use of rangers and volunteers to create a selection of compelling ranger-led experiences.

The tender to deliver the programme has been advertised on the Peak District National Park's website and it is anticipated that a consultant/consultancy will be appointed in January 2018 to deliver the programme across five phases over 15 months.

Mr Harper left the meeting

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the progress of the implementation of this fund.

Signed  Date 16.3.18

3321 Principles for an Environmental Land Management Scheme for Dartmoor

Members received the report of the Head of Conservation & Land Management and Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

In the summer of 2017, the Authority established its own 'farmer-led' Task & Finish Group to further develop the work of the proposals set out by National Parks England, using Dartmoor as a case study.

The Task & Finish Group has developed a set of principles that, it is hoped, will be the foundation for future environmental land management schemes on Dartmoor and, potentially, beyond. It is recommended that the Authority adopt these principles and submit them to Defra for consideration. Members of the Group were also keen for the Authority to seek support from Defra and Natural England for a pilot, or demonstration scheme, on Dartmoor to test these principles.

RESOLVED: Members AGREED to endorse the principles for a new Environmental Land Management Scheme for Dartmoor, developed by the Task & Finish Group; and to submit these to Defra as a contribution to post Brexit policy development; and authorised further work on a potential environmental land management pilot that builds on the learning from Dartmoor Farming Futures.

3322 Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas Determined Under Delegated Powers

Members received the report of the Trees and Landscape Officer (NPA/18/005)

RESOLVED: Members NOTED the content of the report.