

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

GOVERNANCE POLICIES REVIEWReport of the Head of Business Support

Recommendation: **That Members note and approve the minor changes to Financial Regulations, Procurement Procedures, Anti-Fraud & Corruption policy and Confidential Reporting policy as set out in the report.**

1 Staffing and postholder changes

- 1.1 In July 2016 Members approved the appointment of the Head of Business Support to the post of Chief Financial Officer (s151 Officer) which was previously held by The County Treasurer at Devon County Council.
- 1.2 It is essential to keep all of the Authority's core governance documents under continuous review to ensure appropriate levels of delegation, clear accountability, business continuity and resilience.
- 1.3 This report brings before Members some minor revisions to four core governance documents:
 - Financial Regulations,
 - Procurement Procedures
 - Anti-Fraud & Corruption policy
 - Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) policy

2 Financial Regulations

- 2.1 Financial Regulations were last revised in May 2015 to reflect the changes made at the Leadership Team level of the organisation, to define individual responsibilities of the s151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and other posts and to confirm and re-state financial limits and thresholds.
- 2.2 The opportunity was also taken to introduce a new definition into Financial Regulations of an "officer" of the Authority. This was done to recognise that some work involving procurement, contracts and financial dealings is now done by or on behalf of the Authority through Service Level Agreements, secondment arrangements, partnerships and use of volunteers.
- 2.3 The only changes made to Financial Regulations on this occasion are to remove all references to Devon County Council holding the post of Chief Financial Officer (as previously approved). A copy has therefore not been provided for Members, but it can be viewed on the website.

3 Procurement Procedures

- 3.1 These Procedures were last reviewed by Members in May 2015. No changes are proposed other than removing any reference to Devon County Council holding the

post of Chief Financial Officer (as with Financial Regulations). A full copy of the Procurement Procedures is available on the website.

4 Other Policies / Protocols

4.1 The Authority's "Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy" was introduced in 2008 and revised in 2012 and 2015. The policy sets out the Authority's commitment to protect the public funds it administers against fraud and corruption, and actively:

- promote high standards of honesty and integrity;
- encourage prevention of fraud and corruption;
- maintain strong systems of internal control;
- promote detection;
- pursue a zero-tolerance policy;
- seek to recover any losses incurred by the Authority.

4.2 The approach set out within the policy remains as before. The only changes are minor amendments to job titles and reporting lines, to reflect the current staffing structure. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.

4.3 The Authority's Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy was introduced in 2008 to give effect to rights and safeguards in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and aims to:

- provide avenues for employees, Members and volunteers to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- allow employees, Members and volunteers to take the matter further if dissatisfied with the response;
- reassure employees, Members and volunteers that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation when reporting concerns in good faith.

4.4 It was also reviewed in 2015. There are no proposed changes to the policy text, other than minor amendments to job titles and reporting lines to reflect the current staffing structure. A copy can be found at Appendix 2.

5 Equality and Impact Assessment

5.1 It is not believed that the proposed changes will have any relevant impact.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The revised governance documents will not have any financial implications.

DONNA HEALY

Attachments: Appendix 1 - Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy
Appendix 2 - Confidential Reporting (*Whistleblowing*) Policy

STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED IRREGULARITIES ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Dartmoor National Park Authority is a special purpose local authority which the public expects to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and integrity. The Authority is mindful of the high expectations of the public and the degree of scrutiny to which its affairs are subject.
- 1.2 Public accountability, a reputation for honest and efficient administration and transparency in dealing with suspected misconduct are key features of local government practice. This strategy document sets out the procedures to be followed by any person who suspects financial or other irregularity, theft, fraud or corruption involving the Authority.
- 1.3 The Authority is determined that the culture and tone of the organisation should embody honesty and opposition to corruption and dishonesty. Members and employees are expected to lead by positive example.
- 1.4 In fulfilling its responsibilities to protect the public funds it administers against fraud and corruption the Authority will actively:
 - promote high standards of honesty and integrity;
 - encourage prevention of fraud and corruption;
 - maintain strong systems of internal control;
 - promote detection;
 - pursue a zero-tolerance policy;
 - seek to recover any losses incurred by the Authority.

2 What Constitutes a Financial or Other Irregularity

- 2.1 A financial irregularity means any act or omission which results or could result in unapproved loss to the Authority. It includes the unauthorised use of the Authority's resources and any expenditure in breach of Financial Regulations.
- 2.2 Fraud may be defined as "the intentional distortion of financial statements and accounting records and/or misappropriation of assets" ¹
- 2.3 Corruption is "the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence a person to act against the interests of the organisation"
¹ Corruption in the public sector is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts of 1889, 1906 and 1916, and the Bribery Act 2011.

¹ Audit Commission

3 Policy Statements

- 3.1 The Authority is committed to preventing and detecting fraud and corruption. Members and employees are expected to be aware of the conduct expected of them and the procedures designed to reduce the risk of fraud and corruption occurring.
- 3.2 All staff and Members are required through their contracts of employment and the Authority's codes of conduct to notify their Line Manager, a Member of Leadership Team, the Monitoring Officer or the Head of Devon Audit Partnership (Internal Audit) as soon as he or she suspects that an irregularity has occurred. The Manager must, at the same time, inform the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer or the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) where there are grounds to believe any financial impropriety or irregularity concerning income, expenditure, cash, stores, or other property of the Authority or held by the Authority may have occurred or may be occurring or about to occur. The same applies to any suspected irregularity or corruption in the exercise of the functions of the Authority.
- 3.3 Members of the public are also encouraged to report any concerns they may have to the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, CFO or The Head of Devon Audit Partnership (DAP).
- 3.4 Employees and Members may also wish to refer to the Authority's Confidential Reporting Policy – 'Whistleblowing'.

4 Prevention

- 4.1 The Authority operates within a framework of corporate governance, including Standing Orders, a Scheme of Delegation, Financial Regulations, systems and procedures which are designed to ensure the integrity of decisions, activities and transactions.
- 4.2 The principal documents, policies and procedures forming this corporate governance framework are listed at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 All Members and employees of the Authority have a responsibility to play their part in seeking to prevent fraud and corruption and to report any concerns they may have.
- 4.4 All Members and employees also have a responsibility to protect the assets and integrity of the Authority, and are expected to take all reasonable steps to safeguard and protect its physical assets including cash and equipment.
- 4.5 Members and employees must at all times comply with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Equipment and other facilities should only be used for authorised purposes on Authority business, except where express permission has been obtained for personal use.
- 4.6 Members and employees are accountable for their part in any financial or related transactions and must be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that they take, being prepared to give reasons for their decisions. In particular, employees should be aware that in certifying an invoice for payment, they take responsibility for that transaction.

- 4.7 All decisions must be taken solely in terms of the Authority's best interests. Personal relationships, friendship, family links or personal advantage must not influence decisions. Similarly, Members and employees must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations which might influence them in the performance of their Authority duties.
- 4.8 Any conflict of interest must be declared to the Monitoring Officer. Where the conflict of interest is judged to be material, an individual with such an interest shall not take part in any decision-making process.
- 4.9 Procurement of goods and services must be in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Procurement Procedures. Value for money must always be the principal criterion in any procurement decision. However, this does not mean that price is an overriding consideration, as other factors such as quality and suitability for purpose will also be relevant.
- 4.10 Members and employees should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to corruptly receive or give any gift, reward or favour for doing anything in their official capacity. The provisions of the Authority's policy on gifts and hospitality and of the Members Code of Conduct must be followed strictly at all times.

5 Investigations

- 5.1 Allegations of financial impropriety, irregularity, or corruption will be investigated and resolved in accordance with the procedure summarised below.
- 5.2 Upon receiving a report of a suspected irregularity, the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy), the CFO or The Head of DAP will arrange a meeting with the person who has reported the matter to establish the basis of their concern.
- 5.4 After establishing the basis of concern, the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy), the CFO and the Head of DAP will agree how to address the allegation(s) and who should act as investigating officer. It may be determined to:
- commence an internal investigation; and/or
 - commence a disciplinary investigation (employee); and/or
 - Refer the matter to Internal Audit (DAP); and/or
 - refer the matter to the Standards Sub-Committee (Member); and/or
 - inform the police without delay.
- 5.5 Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles of natural justice, and with due regard to the rights of all individuals involved. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that an investigation is concluded as quickly as possible.
- 5.6 Where, upon investigation, the investigating officer believes that reasonable grounds exist for suspecting that a loss may have occurred as the result of misappropriation or fraud, he/she shall report the matter to the CFO and Monitoring Officer for a recommendation to be made to the Chief Executive (NPO) whether the circumstances warrant investigation by the police.

- 5.7 Where, upon investigation, the investigating officer believes that a loss has occurred as a result of waste, extravagance or maladministration, or that no loss has occurred, he/she shall report the matter to the Monitoring Officer and CFO for a recommendation to be made to the Chief Executive (NPO) whether any further action is required.
- 5.8 On completion of an investigation a formal report will be submitted by the Monitoring Officer or the CFO to the Audit and Governance Committee, who will review the report and the actions taken to resolve the issue and may request further actions or require a further report to satisfy itself that the matter has been fully resolved.
- 5.9 In the event that any Member is believed to have been involved in any irregularity, impropriety or corruption the matter will be reported to the Authority's Standards Sub-Committee for consideration whether this behaviour amounts to a breach of the Members Code of Conduct
- 5.10 In the event that any Member or employee is found to have breached the Authority's rules, policies or procedures resulting in loss to the Authority, the Authority reserves the right to take legal action to recover that loss.

Appendix 1

Corporate Governance Documents

- Code of Corporate Governance;
- The Grant Memorandum agreed with Defra;
- Standing Orders;
- Financial Regulations;
- Scheme of Delegation;
- Procurement Policy and Procedures;
- Risk Management policies and procedures;
- Members Code of Conduct;
- Employee travel and subsistence scheme;
- Members Allowances Scheme;
- Protocols:
 - Member and Officer Relations;
 - Development Management Good Practice Guide;
- H R Policies and Procedures;
- IT use policy;
- CIPFA Codes of Practice:
 - The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK
 - Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
 - Treasury Management in the Public Services
 - Corporate Governance in Local Government
- Confidential Reporting Policy (“Whistleblowing”).

Dartmoor National Park Authority



Confidential Reporting Policy

'Whistleblowing'

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 aims to ensure that irregularities can be identified and addressed quickly and seeks to strengthen employment rights by protecting responsible workers who report wrongdoing or failures in the workplace.
- 1.2 Employees may be the first to realise that something seriously wrong appears to be happening within the Authority. However, they may be reluctant to express their concerns either because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Authority or because they fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern than to report a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.3 The Authority is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability as is shown in its separate Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. In line with that commitment the Authority encourages employees and others with concerns about any aspect of the Authority's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It recognises that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. This policy makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals and is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns **within** the Authority rather than ignoring a problem or reporting it to an outside body.
- 1.4 The Authority recognises and endorses that seeking advice from, and being represented by your Trade Union may be the best course of action for a member of staff to raise any issue under this policy.

2 Aims and Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - provide avenues for employees, Members and volunteers to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - allow employees, Members and volunteers to take the matter further if dissatisfied with the Authority's response;
 - reassure employees, Members and volunteers that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation when reporting concerns in good faith.
- 2.2 This policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. It is not intended as a mechanism to challenge lawful financial or business decisions made by the Authority or its Committees. Nor is it an alternative to disciplinary or grievance procedures. It may however overlap with other corporate policies for

dealing with suspected irregularities (fraud or corruption) complaints, the Member Code of Conduct and protocols for good working relationships within the Authority.

2.3 Concerns raised under this Whistleblowing Policy should be about something believed to be:

- unlawful;
- unauthorised;
- dishonest;
- corrupt;
- contrary to the Authority's Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation, Financial Regulations or Procurement Policy and Procedures;
- in breach of the Authority's duties regarding the health, safety and welfare of employees;
- improper conduct or unauthorised use of public funds;

3 Safeguards

3.1 Harassment or Victimisation

The Authority recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the suspected malpractice. The Authority will take action to protect any person who raises a concern in good faith. Harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated and will be treated as a serious matter to be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

3.2 The fact that a concern is raised under this Whistleblowing Policy by a person who is subject to any disciplinary, capability or redundancy process, shall not affect that process, unless the concern is directly related to the reasons for or conduct of that disciplinary, capability or redundancy process

3.3 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and the Authority will do its best to protect your identity if you do not want your name to be disclosed. If investigation of a concern discloses a situation which is sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action or police involvement then your evidence may be important. However, your name will not be released as a possible witness until the reasons have been discussed with you.

3.4 Anonymous Allegations

The Authority would strongly encourage you to put your name to your concern. It may not be possible to investigate or act upon concerns expressed anonymously, particularly if important information is not available. In deciding whether to take action in respect of an anonymous report the following criteria will be considered:

- the seriousness of the concern raised;
- the circumstances in which the concern is reported;
- whether there is a realistic prospect of investigating the concern.

3.5 For concerns raised anonymously, it will be more difficult for the matter to be investigated and for feedback to be provided. For this reason, if you wish to raise

your concern anonymously, it may be better to contact your trade union and ask them to raise the concern on your behalf.

3.6 Incorrect and Unsubstantiated Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make untrue, malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

4 **How to Raise a Concern**

- 4.1 As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your Line Manager, a member of Leadership Team or the Monitoring Officer. If for some reason you feel that this is inappropriate you may prefer to approach the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Financial Officer or the Head of the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) tel. 01392 382438; e-mail: audit@devon.gov.uk. These Officers will then liaise to ensure that the concern is properly investigated and that any such investigation is properly monitored.
- 4.2 Alternatively, if your complaint is that something seriously wrong is occurring at a senior management level within the Authority you may prefer to approach either the External Auditor or one of the Independent Members of the Authority's Standards Sub-Committee
- 4.3 To ensure that allegations are considered consistently you should seek a private meeting to raise your concern with any of the people listed above, who will ensure that the concern is properly investigated and that any such investigation is properly monitored.
- 4.4 Concerns can be raised orally but it is good practice for the concern to be recorded in writing at an early stage to ensure that all the details are correctly understood. You may be asked to set out the background and history of the concern (giving names, dates and places where possible) and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation. However, if you do not feel able to do this, the person to whom you voice your concerns will produce a written note of your concern and give you an opportunity to agree and sign this as a correct record.
- 4.5 The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.
- 4.6 Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will be asked to explain fully the grounds for your concern and any evidence in support.
- 4.7 If you are a member of a Trade Union, you may wish to seek advice from your Trade Union representative on how best to raise your concern. Where you wish to raise your concern anonymously it may be possible to do this through your Trade Union.

5 **How the Authority will Respond**

- 5.1 The action taken by the Authority will depend on the nature of the concern. After initial enquiries to assess the seriousness of the matter it may be:
 - investigated internally;
 - the subject of an independent (external) investigation;

- referred to Internal Audit (Devon Audit Partnership)
- referred to the police;
- referred to the Standards sub-committee;

5.2 Some concerns may be resolved without the need for investigation and without the person or persons under investigation being aware of the process.

5.3 In any event, within ten working days of a concern being received, the Authority will write to you at your home address:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a response;
- telling you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not;
- naming an independent officer to support you during any investigation.

5.4 The named support officer will make contact with you, to explain his/her role, agree frequency of contact and keep you informed about the progress of the investigation. You should raise with this support officer any concerns you have about the conduct of the investigation. The support officer will take appropriate steps to support you in the workplace and at any criminal or disciplinary proceedings which may eventually result from your concern and at which you are asked to give evidence.

5.5 The Authority accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, you will receive information about the outcome of any investigations and/or proceedings.

6 Detriment

6.1 The Authority is committed to ensuring that an employee, Member or volunteer who reports a concern in good faith suffers no detriment by reason of doing so.

7 How the Matter can be Taken Further

7.1 This policy is intended to provide you with a way to raise concerns within the Authority. The Authority hopes you will be satisfied by its response. If you are not you may wish to raise the matter with the Chief Executive (NPO) or the Chairman of the Authority.

7.2 If you feel that it is necessary to take the matter outside the Authority, you may wish to consider:

- your Trade Union [Unison hotline for whistleblowers 0800 5979750];
- the Local Government Ombudsman;
- relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- your solicitor or legal adviser;
- the Police;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- 'Public Concern at Work' – a Registered Charity.
- Independent Member
- External Auditor

8 The Responsible Officer

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the operation of this policy. The Monitoring Officer will maintain a record of all concerns raised under this policy and the outcomes of any investigations (but in a form which does not compromise confidentiality) and report as necessary to the Authority.

APPENDIX 1

(a) Persons to whom concerns should be reported and / or contacted in confidence for advice

The Monitoring Officer - Christopher Walledge, Head of Legal & Democratic Services

The Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer) - Donna Healy, Head of Business Support

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) - Kevin Bishop

Leadership Team - Alison Kohler, Samantha Hill, Neil White, Donna Healy, Kevin Bishop

The Head of Devon Audit Partnership - Rob Hutchins (01392 383438)

Your Trade Union representative

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

**LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE
STATEMENT 2016-17**Report of the Building Conservation OfficerRecommendations: **That Members :**

- (i) Adopt the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance;**
- (ii) Consider and adopt the assessment of the Authority's governance arrangements set out in the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 1; and**
- (iii) Approve the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement at Appendix 2**

1 Background

- 1.1 "Governance" is about how public sector bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 1.2 The Authority has based its corporate governance arrangements the Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" produced by CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) in 2007, adopted by the Authority in 2008 and revised in 2012.
- 1.3 A fundamental review of the Framework was undertaken by CIPFA and SOLACE in April 2016. This has changed the core principles and sub principles which underpin the Local Code of Governance. The changes to the Framework mean that the Authority's Local Code of Governance needs to be reviewed and updated accordingly, and this report deals with that review. The new Framework also applies to Annual Governance Statement also prepared for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 1.4 The Authority is required to report publicly on an annual basis on compliance with its Local Code, in particular on how the effectiveness of the governance arrangements has been monitored, and any planned changes. This is not done in isolation, but in conjunction with the processes which operate as part of the Authority's governance arrangements. These include:
 - Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation, Financial Regulations, procurement Procedures, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing) etc
 - the Business Planning process
 - production of the annual Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan to reflect the priorities and actions in the Business Plan
 - the regular monitoring and reporting in public of performance against objectives,

- targets, and performance indicators;
- the monitoring and reporting of progress in relation to the National Park Management Plan;
- performance appraisals of staff, including the setting of actions designed to deliver the objectives in the Business Plan;
- the maintenance and monitoring of the Strategic Risk Register
- the maintenance of the Local Code of Corporate Governance;
- the continual refreshment, through review, of the Authority's suite of policy and strategy documents;
- training delivered through the year to Members and to officers;
- External and Internal Audit;
- The production of an Annual Governance Statement

2 Review of Existing Arrangements

- 2.1 The Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance matches what the Authority does against the governance principles which have been adopted by the Authority. This is reported to the Leadership Team (LT) annually and to both Audit and Governance Committee and the Authority as part of the Annual Governance Review and production of the AGS.
- 2.2 The aim of the 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE Framework is to ensure:
- *that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities*
 - *that there is sound and inclusive decision making, and*
 - *that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities*
- 2.3 The Governance Principles have changed from the previous 2015 Framework. In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for Principles C to G;

2015: Previous Principles were	New Principles to be adopted are
Principle 1: Focussing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the National Park.	Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values , and respecting the rule of law.
Principle 2: Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles	Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
Principle 3: promoting values for the Authority, and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.	Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
Principle 4: taking informed, transparent decisions, and managing risk.	Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Principle 5: developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective.	Principle E: Developing the Authority's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
	Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
	Principle G: Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

2.4 The Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance can be found at Appendix 1. Members are invited to comment and / or propose amendments.

3 Review of effectiveness 2015/16

3.1 The Actions identified in the 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement to be addressed during 2016/17 were:

Action	Progress
Develop a programme to enable a wider use of apprenticeships, internships and volunteers to support the Authority's work	1 apprentice currently employed and 1 apprentice found other employment in March. Advertising for 2 apprentices for April 2017 200+ volunteers engaged - see Volunteer days performance indicator for outcomes On-going and included in 2017/18 Business Plan
Continue the Local Plan Review preparation Programme	On going (3 year programme)
Undertake a Dartmoor residents survey (repeat of survey held in 2013 to gather information on what local residents think about our services)	Will be completed by May 2017
Implement a proactive programme to develop new funding streams to support the work of the Authority at a local and national level	On-going. Progress includes Donate for Dartmoor and Moor Otters.
Continue with the Dartmoor Communities Grant Fund to provide support to local communities	Achieved and continuing in 2017/18
Work with other authorities in the Heart of the South West to develop a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten	Devolution Prospectus published; work on Productivity Plan commissioned and agreement amongst Leaders on a joint committee to oversee this process
Seek support and funding for a Rural Productivity network (in partnership with Exmoor National Park Authority)	Proposal submitted to Government for funding

Launch a new Organisational Development Strategy (and action plan) to support staff, volunteers and members, to improve processes and sustain high performance	Achieved. Action plan in place and progress being made
Launch the revised website as a two-way tool for communication, focused on user needs	Launch will be in 2017/18
Advertise and seek to appoint a second Independent Person in a accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the new Standards Regime	Achieved
Undertake a first dry run towards a quicker closedown for the 2015/16 Accounts. A new deadline has been set for the 2017/18 Accounts; 31 May instead of 30 June	Achieved
Review the Service Level Agreement for provision of the role of Chief Financial Officer, now that the Authority's Head of Business Support has qualified and been admitted as a member of CIPFA	Achieved

3.2 Other Significant improvements undertaken during 2016/17 include:

- Reviewed Financial Regulations, Procurement Procedures, Anti-Fraud & Corruption policy and Confidential Reporting policy
- Reviewed and updated the Local Code of Corporate Governance to ensure compliance with the 2016 Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government"
- Continued engagement with the Heart of the South West (HoTSW) devolution deal process to ensure that the interests of Dartmoor National Park and the communities that live within the National Park are represented
- Developed a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten
- Contributed to work at a national and local level to develop fundraising and new income sources
- Launched a new Organisational Development Strategy (and action plan) to support staff, volunteers and members, to improve processes and sustain high performance
- Successfully completed and achieved the first dry run towards a quicker closedown for the 2015/16 Accounts; meeting the new 31 May deadline instead of 30 June
- Appointed a new (internal) Chief Financial Officer
- Carried out a Dartmoor Residents Survey
- Continued to administer the Dartmoor Communities Grant Fund to provide support to local communities
- Local Plan Review: public consultation on key issues completed

3.3 A draft copy of the Annual Governance Statement can be found at Appendix 2. Members are invited to comment and / or propose amendments.

4 Review of Current Arrangements.

- 4.1 A review of the Authority's governance arrangements has been conducted taking into account the changes to the CIPFA guidance. Whilst we continue to have strong Governance arrangements in place, to ensure continuous improvement, it is proposed that the following work is undertaken during 2017/18:
- Develop a programme to enable a wider use of apprenticeships, internships and volunteers to support the Authority's work
 - Continue the Local Plan Review preparation Programme
 - Continue to implement a proactive programme to develop new funding streams to support the work of the Authority at a local and national level
 - Work with other authorities in the Heart of the South West to develop a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten
 - Seek support and funding for a Rural Productivity network (in partnership with Exmoor National Park Authority)
 - Launch the revised website as a two-way tool for communication, focused on user needs
 - Review the complaints procedure

5 Sources of Assurance

- 5.1 Authority Members need to look for assurance that proper governance arrangements are in place, and this report is part of that process. The revised Local Code refers to the various sources of assurance which are available. There are no issues arising from this review to draw to Members' attention.
- 5.2 Members may also wish to refer to the annual report of the external auditor (as considered at the meeting of the Authority on 2 September 2016) which led to an unqualified opinion on the truth and fairness of the Authority's financial statements.
- 5.3 External Audit is required to issue a conclusion on the arrangements made by the Authority in relation to securing economy, efficiency, effectiveness and value for money in its use of resources and issued an unqualified audit opinion on the 2015/16 Statement of Final Accounts. The External Auditor has also issued a positive audit opinion as a conclusion to their value-for-money review, which is based on an assessment of whether the Authority has proper arrangements for securing financial resilience, and proper arrangements for challenging how economy, efficiency and effectiveness are secured.
- 5.4 Internal Audit concluded that the Authority operates to a High Standard - "*The system and controls in place adequately mitigate exposure to the risks identified. The system is being adhered to and substantial reliance can be placed upon the procedures in place*".
- 5.5 The three statutory officers of the Authority (the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer) have independent legal obligations which include reporting on any matters where the probity or legality of the Authority's actions or proposed actions are at stake. To date no such reports have been necessary.

6 Update on Ombudsman complaints.

6.1 The Local Government Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by councils and other authorities, including National Park Authorities.

6.2 The Ombudsman's 'purposes' are as follows:

- *to provide independent, impartial and prompt investigation and resolution of complaints of injustice caused through maladministration by the authorities that come under the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsmen*
- *to offer guidance intended to promote fair and effective administration in local government.*

6.3 Each year, the Ombudsman publishes a summary of statistics on complaints received during the previous twelve months. The summary, in the form of an Annual Letter, is specific to individual authorities and includes the number of enquiries and complaints received, and the decisions made, during the period as well as a breakdown of any upheld investigations and how they were remedied.

6.4 The Annual Letter for 2015/16, which can be viewed 'online' at www.lgo.org.uk , summarises the complaints and enquiries relating to the Dartmoor National Park Authority received by the Local Government Ombudsman in the year to 31 March 2016. One complaint was considered, relating to Planning & Development; which was invalid or incomplete. This compares with two complaints for 2014/15, both relating to Planning & Development: both were "closed after initial enquiries".

6.5 The complaints considered by the Ombudsman had previously been investigated by the Authority through the Authority's own complaints procedure and, as such, were reported to Audit & Governance Committee at the relevant six monthly summary.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The Authority has carried out a robust review of its Governance arrangements, and is satisfied that:

- Our system of internal control is sound;
- We have in place proper and sound arrangements to detect and deter fraud and corruption; and
- Our arrangements to ensure the legality of our business transactions are adequate and effective.
- We have a Local Code of Corporate governance and governance arrangements in place that are compliant with the CIPFA framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government".

DONNA HEALY

**Attachments: Appendix 1 - Local Code of Corporate Governance
Appendix 2 – 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement**



DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Adopted: December 2009
Reviewed: April 2014
Reviewed: March 2017

Introduction

Every local government body operates through a governance framework which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. Corporate governance arrangements encompass all of the policies and procedures that determine and control the way the authority operates. Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes from the services provided.

The foundation of the Dartmoor National Park Authority's corporate governance arrangements can be traced directly to the "Good Governance Standard for Public Services" published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services in January 2005, and subsequently refined for local government through a framework promulgated in 2007 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

In December 2009, the Authority adopted its own governance principles, customised to its own needs and circumstances from this framework. Since then, local government has been subject to continued reform to improve local accountability and engagement, and in 2016 CIPFA and SOLACE produced a revised framework "Delivering Good Governance".

This framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government body, and provides a structure which should assist individual authorities with their governance arrangements.

The Core Principles are:

- Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values , and respecting the rule of law;
- Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
- Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;
- Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
- Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management;
- Principle G: Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

In addition to the ***overarching requirements for acting in the public interest*** in Core Principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to Core Principles C to G. In order to translate these principles into practice, the Authority needs to operate through a clear Corporate Governance policy supported by a Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The Authority's Values

Dartmoor National Park Authority will apply the following values to all its work:

1 Strong and Fair Leadership

Members and Officers will provide strong and effective leadership and provide a clear vision for the organisation, acting as champions for Dartmoor National Park, both within the Park and beyond

2 Integrity

We will strive to ensure that our relationships with the public, partners and each other are founded on honesty transparency, impartiality and consistency. We welcome and respect diversity and will demonstrate equality in all aspects of our work

3 Involvement

We will seek to be open and approachable and proactively seek participation from all sectors of society in achieving our statutory purposes

4 Accountability

We will take responsibility for our decisions and ensure all decisions and actions of the Authority are open and transparent, with clear reasons.

5 Improvement

We will endeavour to continually improve our performance in delivering National Park purposes and welcome feedback to help us achieve this

6 Valuing People

We value the people who work for us and will ensure staff, Members and volunteers are equipped to undertake their roles effectively

7 Action Focused

We will remain focused on our agreed priorities and doing what we say

Responsibilities

Members of the Authority are collectively and individually responsible for good governance. Primary responsibility lies with the Chairman who has a key role in ensuring there is a culture within the organisation which reflects its values. The Chairman is supported in this role by all members, but particularly the Deputy Chairman and the Chairmen of the committees and sub-committees of the Authority.

The Audit & Governance Committee is responsible for advising the Authority on its corporate governance policies and agenda, and implementing and managing the Authority's agreed policies in this area. It will receive an annual governance report incorporating the Annual Governance Statement. The Standards Sub-Committee is responsible for the oversight of ethical issues.

Officers of the Authority are responsible for following the policies and procedures of the Authority in support of the Governance arrangements. Particular responsibility is vested in the "Statutory Officers", namely the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service, the S151 officer who has responsibility for the financial affairs of the Authority and the Monitoring Officer. The lead officer on Governance issues is the Monitoring Officer.

Internal and external auditors are responsible for assessing the Authority's governance arrangements and providing assurance to Members through audit reports and the Annual Governance Report.

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

Supporting Principles:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Behaving with integrity</u></p> <p>Ensuring Members and Officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Authority.</p> <p>Ensuring Members and Officers take a lead in establishing specific standard principles or values for the organisation (based on seven Nolan Principles)</p> <p>Leading by example and using the principles as framework for all actions and decisions</p> <p>Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles through appropriate policies and processes, which are regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness</p>	<p>Member & Officer Codes of Conduct Officer and Member Induction programme Officer and Member performance appraisals</p> <p>Organisational Development Strategy Communications Strategy Statement of Community Involvement Mission Statement and Core Values in Business Plan & National Park Management Plan</p> <p>Standing Orders Register of Interests & declaration at meetings Declaration of gifts and Hospitality Record of decisions made Appointment of Independent Persons to Standards Sub-Committee Arrangements for dealing with complaints and regular review to make changes and improvements Declaration of interests made at meetings Scheme of Delegation, and records of decisions Financial Regulations & Procurement Procedures Confidential Reporting Policy - Whistleblowing Anti-fraud & Corruption Policy</p>
<p><u>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</u></p> <p>Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the Authority's ethical standards and performance</p> <p>Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Authority's culture and operation</p> <p>Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values</p> <p>Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Authority act with the integrity and ethical standards expected by the Authority</p>	<p>Organisational Development Strategy Roles and Responsibilities of Members Job Descriptions for Chairman and Members Codes of conduct Staff Appraisal process Equal Opportunities Policy Statement HR policies Fair Trade and sustainability principles embedded in procurement policy Contractor vetting Partnership arrangements backed up with robust formal legal agreements, setting out roles, responsibilities and behaviours</p>

<p><u>Respecting the rule of law</u></p> <p>Ensuring Members and Officers demonstrate strong commitment to the rule of law</p> <p>Creating the conditions for the three Statutory Officers and Members to fulfil their regulatory responsibilities</p> <p>Striving to optimise the use of full powers available for the benefit of stakeholders</p> <p>Dealing effectively with breaches of legal or regulatory provisions</p> <p>Ensuring corruption and misuse of powers are dealt with effectively</p>	<p>Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Role of three Statutory Officers</p> <p>Role of Monitoring Officer to report on illegality</p> <p>Role of Chief Financial Officer to report on unlawful expenditure</p> <p>Appointment of Internal and External Auditors and reporting arrangements in place to Audit and Governance Committee</p> <p>Annual Governance Review and Statement</p> <p>Registration of Related Party Transactions</p> <p>Declarations of lobbying and declarations of interests at committee meetings</p> <p>Transparency about business dealings between the Authority, Members and senior Staff</p> <p>Record of decisions and legal advice given</p> <p>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</p> <p>Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) procedures</p>
--	--

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principles:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Openness</u></p> <p>Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating our commitment to openness.</p> <p>Making decisions that are open and transparent; presumption against confidentiality without justification</p> <p>Providing clear reasoning and evidence relating to actions and decisions, and ensuring the impact and consequences are clear</p> <p>Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate courses of action</p>	<p>Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act</p> <p>Access to Information arrangements</p> <p>Agreed actions to comply with the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014</p> <p>Agreed actions to implement the requirements of the Data Transparency Code and arrangements for the information to be available on the website</p> <p>Adoption of the ICO’s standard Publication Scheme</p> <p>Publication of agendas, reports and minutes for the Authority and its Committees on the website</p> <p>Record of decisions made published on the website</p> <p>Published calendar of meetings and internal corporate calendar to ensure timetable met</p> <p>Reports include legal, financial, and human resources (HR) equality implications where necessary.</p> <p>Record of discussion and decisions recorded in minute and published on website</p> <p>Residents (and other) Surveys</p> <p>Consultations undertaken on range of service delivery matters and strategic plans</p>

	<p>Formal and informal consultation NPMP steering group Local plan consultations Stakeholder consultations Attendance by Officers and Members at Parish Council meetings National Park Forum Dartmoor Farmers Forum Parish Council workshops Local Access Forum</p>
<p><u>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</u></p> <p>Ensuring that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.</p> <p>Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.</p> <p>Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, and a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners; the added value of partnership is explicit</p>	<p>Communications Strategy</p> <p>Corporate Contacts database to enable engagement with stakeholders for correct purposes</p> <p>Extensive partnership working, with signed formal agreements</p>
<p><u>Effective engagement with individual citizens and service users</u></p> <p>Establishing a clear policy on consultation with stakeholders to ensure service provision contributes to intended outcomes Ensuring communication methods are effective in relation to community engagement</p> <p>Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views of stakeholders including reference to future needs</p> <p>Implementing effective feedback mechanisms and ensuring inclusivity of all feedback</p> <p>Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other groups to ensure inclusivity.</p> <p>Taking account of impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers/service users</p>	<p>Communications Strategy Statement of Community Involvement Public consultations undertaken as required, well publicised and results and feedback reported to the Authority</p> <p>Formal and informal consultation: NPMP steering group Local plan consultations Stakeholder consultations Attendance by Officers and Members at Parish Council meetings National Park Forum Dartmoor Farmers Forum Parish Council workshops Local Access Forum</p>

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Supporting principles:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Defining Outcomes</u></p> <p>Having a clear vision as an agreed formal statement of the Authority's purpose and intended outcomes</p> <p>Specifying the intended impact on stakeholders</p> <p>Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within resources</p> <p>Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes</p> <p>Managing service users expectations with regard to determining priorities</p>	<p>The Authority's role defined by the two statutory purposes and the Mission Statement & Vision in the NPMP and Business Plan.</p> <p>Service Plans and individual work programmes</p> <p>The National Park Management Plan: developed together with partner organisations - sets 20 year vision and 5 year objectives.</p> <p>The Business Plan is developed from the Management Plan to implement the objectives</p> <p>Financial planning - annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>Risk management policy & Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>Performance Management Framework and reporting quarterly to LT and Audit & Governance Committee</p>
<p><u>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</u></p> <p>Consider and balance the combined economic social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions</p> <p>Taking a long term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently in the face of conflicting interests</p> <p>Determining the wider public interest when balancing conflicting interests, through consultation where possible</p>	<p>Equality, sustainability and environmental impact assessment undertaken for projects, work programmes and service delivery when relevant</p> <p>Devolution Prospectus for Heart of the South West</p> <p>Member Working Panels provide opportunities for Officer / Member discussion, evaluation and assessment in advance of and to aid decision making process</p> <p>Records of decisions published on website in committee minutes</p> <p>Public consultations undertaken when required with groups as set out previously</p>

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Supporting principles:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Determining Interventions</u></p> <p>Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating associated risks, thereby ensuring best value is achieved</p> <p>Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making service improvements in order to prioritise competing resource demands</p>	<p>Member Working Panels provide opportunities for Officer / Member discussion, evaluation and assessment in advance of and to aid decision making process</p> <p>Committee reports contain rationale and relevant considerations / options appraisals / Financial implications on which decisions are based.</p> <p>Equality, sustainability and environmental impact assessments considered when relevant</p>
<p><u>Planning Interventions</u></p> <p>Establishing and maintaining robust planning and control cycles for plans, priorities and targets</p> <p>Engaging with stakeholders in relation to planning and delivery; considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks</p> <p>Ensuring arrangements are flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances</p> <p>Establishing key performance indicators; and ensuring capacity exists to generate information needed to review service quality regularly</p> <p>Prepare budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan</p> <p>Inform medium and long term resource planning through a sustainable funding strategy</p>	<p>Reporting cycles for Business Plan targets, priorities , financial budget, corporate governance and risk management in place</p> <p>Communications Strategy</p> <p>Residents survey, consultation exercises and Forums in place as described previously</p> <p>Risk management policy and Strategic Risk Register focuses on key risks; monitored and reviewed quarterly and plans adapted accordingly</p> <p>National Park family and local performance indicators to reflect Business Plan outcomes. Service delivery Dashboards in place for all service areas. Reviewed and reported quarterly</p> <p>Annual budget and MTFP process that is aligned with Business Plan, NPMY and Eight Point Plan</p> <p>Service plans and individual work programmes produced to reflect Business Plan priorities</p> <p>Reserves reviewed and maintained on a risk based approach</p>

<p><u>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</u></p> <p>Ensuring the budget process is all-inclusive of full cost of operations over medium and longer term</p> <p>Ensuring medium term financial strategy is responsive to external circumstances to optimise resource usage/integrates and balances resource constraints</p>	<p>Annual budget and MTFP process that is aligned with Business Plan, NPMY and Eight Point Plan</p> <p>Regular budget monitoring reports to LT and Audit & Governance Committee allows realignment if required.</p>
--	---

Principle E: Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;

Supporting principles:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Developing capacity</u></p> <p>Reviewing operations and resources to ensure continued effectiveness</p> <p>Improving allocation of resources so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently</p> <p>Recognising the benefits of partnership working where added value can be achieved</p> <p>Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance allocation of resources</p>	<p>Workforce planning overseen and reviewed by LT</p> <p>ICT Strategy</p> <p>Internal and external audit of processes</p> <p>NPMP review cycle</p> <p>Business Plan review cycle</p> <p>Budgetary control reported to LT and A&G committee</p> <p>Continuous review of Partnerships and delivery of outcomes</p> <p>Performance Indicators and benchmarking undertaken with other National Parks</p>
<p><u>Developing capability of leadership</u></p> <p>Developing protocols to ensure that shared understanding of roles and responsibilities is maintained</p> <p>Ensuring Chairman and CEO have clearly defined roles</p> <p>Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions</p> <p>Developing capabilities of Members and Senior Management by giving access to induction and ongoing training; Members and Officers have appropriate skills and support to fulfil roles and this is kept</p>	<p>Codes of conduct</p> <p>Officer Job descriptions, person specification and competency framework</p> <p>Organisational Development Strategy</p> <p>Role/Protocols of Statutory Officers</p> <p>Clear Members Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>Member Champion role</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations regularly reviewed</p> <p>Decisions published through Open Data requirements</p> <p>Member job descriptions</p> <p>Staff and Member induction programme</p> <p>Training and Development programmes for Members and Officers</p> <p>Staff Development & Training Days</p>

<p>updated; development through shared learning and learning from identified weaknesses</p> <p>Ensure structures in place to encourage public participation in development</p> <p>Taking steps to ensure leadership's effectiveness through peer reviews and appraisals</p> <p>Holding staff to account through performance reviews</p> <p>Ensuring arrangements in place to maintain physical and mental wellbeing of Officers</p>	<p>Bi-annual All Staff Meetings</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Residents Survey</p> <p>Forums and groups as described previously</p> <p>Member and Officer Appraisals; including CEO</p> <p>Role of Chairman Job Descriptions</p> <p>Member and Officer personal development plans and Officer competency framework</p> <p>HR Policies and procedures</p> <p>Access to Occupational Health scheme</p> <p>Employees Assistance Programme in place</p>
---	--

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

The local code requires us to:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Managing risk</u></p> <p>Ensuring risk management is an integral part of all decision making</p> <p>Implementing robust and integrated risk management</p> <p>Ensuring individual responsibilities for managing risk are clearly allocated</p>	<p>Risk Management Policy in place and Strategic Risk Register approved annually and reviewed by LT and A&G Committee on continual basis</p> <p>Operational risk is built into service plans and work programmes and monitored by Heads of Service</p> <p>Scheduled risk and review meetings with insurers</p> <p>Risk based approach to financial management and maintenance of Reserves and working balances</p> <p>Internal and External Audit report to Members on a risk based approach</p>
<p><u>Managing performance</u></p> <p>Monitoring service delivery effectively</p> <p>Making decisions based on clear and relevant objective analysis including risks</p> <p>Providing Members and LT with regular reports on service delivery</p> <p>Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives</p> <p>Ensuring consistency between specification stages and post implementation reporting</p>	<p>Robust performance management framework in place: Business Plan monitoring, Performance Indicators, Service delivery Dashboards, Risk Register and Financial Management; reviewed by Leadership Team and Audit & Governance Committee on quarterly basis</p> <p>Working Panels review and debate new policies and projects in advance of formal approval being sought</p> <p>Performance Improvement reviews are carried out by small member/officer teams including Members via Audit & Governance Committee</p> <p>Terms of Reference for Audit & Governance Committee and appropriate training provided</p> <p>Financial Regulations and financial management</p>
<p><u>Robust internal control</u></p>	

<p>Aligning risk management strategy and policies</p> <p>Evaluation and monitoring risk management</p> <p>Ensuring counter-fraud and anti-corruption measures in place</p> <p>Ensuring additional assurance through effective internal audit</p> <p>Ensuring audit committee independent of the executive</p>	<p>Risk management policy and strategic risk register in place and reviewed and monitored on quarterly basis</p> <p>Anti- fraud and corruption policy I place a regularly reviewed</p> <p>Internal Audit provided by Devon Audit Partnership Audit & Governance Committee in place as previously described</p>
<p><u>Managing data</u></p> <p>Ensuring effective arrangements for safe collection and use of data including sharing of personal data</p> <p>Effective arrangements for sharing data with other bodies</p> <p>Regularly reviewing and auditing quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring</p>	<p>Data Protection Policy and Procedures</p> <p>Nominated Data Protection Officer</p> <p>Data Sharing arrangements made and signed off as required with third parties</p> <p>Access to information Policy includes storage and retention guidelines</p> <p>Compliance with Payment Card Industry Standard</p>
<p><u>Strong public financial management</u></p> <p>Well-developed financial management to support long term and short term financial and operational performance</p> <p>Ensuring financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control</p>	<p>Robust financial planning processes and procedures: Annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan linked to the Business Plan and NPMP</p> <p>Quarterly budget monitoring reports to LT, and A&G Committee.</p> <p>Risk based approach to maintenance of reserve balances</p> <p>Financial implications considered and reported in all committee reports and in project management framework</p>

Principle G: Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

The local code requires us to:	Evidenced by:
<p><u>Good Practice in Transparency</u></p> <p>Writing and publishing reports in a balanced, understandable and easily accessed style</p> <p>Striking a balance with regard to the amount of information provided</p>	<p>Reports template used for all committees and reports reviewed and signed off by senior officers before publication</p> <p>All committee business published on website</p> <p>FoI/EIR compliance</p> <p>Publication Scheme</p> <p>Open Government requirements (including delegations)</p> <p>Annual Review published on Website</p>
<p><u>Good Practice in Reporting</u></p>	

<p>Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources in a clear, timely way</p> <p>Ensuring members and officers take “ownership” of the reported results</p> <p>Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the principles in this framework are applied, including an action plan for improvement Ensure this framework is applied to joint working/shared services</p> <p>Ensuring that performance information accompanying the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and allows for comparison with similar organisations</p>	<p>Robust performance management framework in place: Business Plan monitoring, Performance Indicators, Service delivery Dashboards; reviewed by Leadership Team and Audit & Governance Committee on quarterly basis Annual Review External Audit reports to Authority annually on Value for Money and Use of Resources</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations</p> <p>Continual review of systems of internal control by officers and Internal / External audit. Formal review of governance arrangements in order to produce the Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Statement of Accounts</p> <p>Annual Review report produced at year end that summarises the Authority’s performance against Business Plan objectives and outcomes. National Park family performance indicators reported annually</p>
<p><u>Assurance and accountability</u></p> <p>Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted on</p> <p>Ensuring an effective internal audit service is in place</p> <p>Welcoming peer challenge and regulatory inspections and acting on recommendations</p> <p>Gaining assurance on risks delivered through third parties and ensuring that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement When working in partnership, ensuring arrangements for accountability are clear</p>	<p>Internal and External audit plans and reports taken to Audit & Governance Committee and to the Authority at year end. All recommendations and actions reported publically</p> <p>Provided by the Devon Audit Partnership who demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards</p> <p>Benchmarking and Officer working groups in place across National Parks family to challenge, learn and share best practice. Audit report recommendations are implemented</p> <p>Formal partnership agreements are always put in place that set out roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and risk. Continual risk management undertaken and reported to Members during the year to provide assurance</p>

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

2016/17

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. DNPA also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, DNPA is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

DNPA has developed a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. A copy of the code is available on our website or from The Monitoring Officer, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9JQ. The Annual Governance Statement explains how DNPA has complied with the Local Code of Corporate Governance and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which DNPA is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community, including residents, visitors and stakeholders. It enables DNPA to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of DNPA policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at DNPA for the year ended 31 March 2017 and up to the date of approval of the Business Plan and Statement of Accounts. The framework has been further supported by the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK & LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

DNPA operates within a Corporate Governance Framework which ensures accountability to its users, stakeholders and the wider community to which it relates. It comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values by which decisions are made and functions undertaken to deliver the purposes and duties of the organisation.

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise DNPA's governance arrangements are based on the 7 core principles contained in the Local Code of Corporate Governance and include the following aspects:

- The vision, objectives and priorities for the local area (Dartmoor National Park) for the period 2014 -2019 as set out in "Your Dartmoor", the National Park Management Plan (NPMP). "Your Dartmoor" was developed via a process of extensive community involvement and the associated action plans are being revised annually in a process involving a wide range of partners/stakeholders
- The Business Plan for the Authority is a strategic document which provides a link between the National Park Management Plan and work programmes (for teams and individuals). The Business Plan, including priorities and targets, is reviewed annually and a separate annual review is produced in June to report on performance and highlight key projects undertaken in - year.
- The Authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government (2010).
- The principles of decision making are set out in the Authority's Standing Orders, supported by:
 1. Financial Regulations, a Disposals Policy, a Sustainable Procurement Policy and Procurement Procedures;
 2. The Authority's adopted codes of practice in relation to Treasury Management for Investments and for Capital Finance and Accounting (the Prudential Code)
 3. Scheme of Delegation
 4. Code of Conduct for Members and Officers
 5. Job descriptions for Members and Officers
 6. Policies and Procedures
- Public involvement and transparency in decision making is facilitated through formal consultations, workshops, involvement in service reviews, consultative forums with members of the community representing access, land use, conservation, businesses and community interests and public participation at the Authority and its Committees
- Ensuring that established policies, procedures, laws and regulations are complied with is the responsibility of nominated statutory Officers, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer as laid down in the Authority's Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

- A Risk Management Strategy that defines and identifies the process for ongoing risk management and the responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the risk management process
- A Strategic Risk Register is discussed and approved annually by the Authority and then actively monitored/reviewed on a regular basis within year by the Audit and Governance Committee. The Strategic Risk Register is monitored by Leadership Team on a quarterly basis together with consideration of more operational risks. The Authority's internal project management guidance requires identification and management of risks
- A programme of service reviews or value for money/business reviews that look closely at and challenge service provision and delivery and discharges the Government's Value for Money requirements for the Authority
- Comprehensive budgeting systems set targets to measure financial performance which are reviewed by the Leadership Team and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis for detailed review and scrutiny.
- Performance management is applied consistently throughout the Authority against a Performance Management Framework. Reports of progress against performance targets is reported quarterly to the Leadership Team and the Audit & Governance Committee
- The Standards sub-Committee monitors the ethical framework for the Authority and will alert the Authority to any potential issues arising from its decision making processes.

All of the above elements are subject to independent challenge and scrutiny through Internal and External Auditors and other review bodies such as Defra.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Dartmoor National Park Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system is informed by the work of the Leadership Team and other Officers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's (Devon Audit Partnership) annual report and also by responding to comments and recommendations made by external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Authority's Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer have also provided assurance that there have been no significant control issues that have required the need for: formal action in their respective roles; significant additional funding; had a material impact on the accounts; or resulted in significant public interest, damaging the reputation of the Authority.

Although a review of the effectiveness of the Governance arrangements is reported once per year to the Authority, the process of gathering evidence and monitoring performance is continual and is managed through reports to Audit & Governance Committee.

The Actions identified in the 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement to be addressed during the year were:

Action	Progress
Develop a programme to enable a wider use of apprenticeships, internships and volunteers to support the Authority's work	1 apprentice currently employed and 1 apprentice found other employment in March. Advertising for 2 apprentices for April 2017 200+ volunteers engaged - see Volunteer days performance indicator for outcomes On-going and included in 2017/18 Business Plan
Continue the Local Plan Review preparation Programme	On going (3 year programme)
Undertake a Dartmoor residents survey (repeat of survey held in 2013 to gather information on what local residents think about our services)	Will be completed by May 2017
Implement a proactive programme to develop new funding streams to support the work of the Authority at a local and national level	On-going. Progress includes Donate for Dartmoor and Moor Otters.
Continue with the Dartmoor Communities Grant Fund to provide support to local communities	Achieved and continuing in 2017/18
Work with other authorities in the Heart of the South West to develop a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten	Devolution Prospectus published; work on Productivity Plan commissioned and agreement amongst Leaders on a joint committee to oversee this process
Seek support and funding for a Rural Productivity network (in partnership with Exmoor National Park Authority)	Achieved
Launch a new Organisational Development Strategy (and action plan) to support staff, volunteers and members, to improve processes and sustain high performance	Achieved. Action plan in place and progress being made
Launch the revised website as a two-way tool for communication, focused on user needs	Launch will be in 2017/18
Advertise and seek to appoint a second Independent Person in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the new Standards Regime	Proposal submitted to Government for funding
Undertake a first dry run towards a quicker closedown for the 2015/16 Accounts. A new deadline has been set for the 2017/18 Accounts; 31 May instead of 30 June	Achieved

Action	Progress
Review the SLA for provision of the role of Chief Financial Officer, now that the Authority's Head of Business Support has qualified and been admitted as a member of CIPFA	Achieved

Other significant improvements have been undertaken during 2016/17 as follows:

- Reviewed Financial Regulations, Procurement Procedures, Anti-Fraud & Corruption policy and Confidential Reporting policy
- Reviewed and updated the Local Code of Corporate Governance to ensure compliance with the 2016 Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government"
- Continued engagement with the Heart of the South West (HoTSW) devolution deal process to ensure that the interests of Dartmoor National Park and the communities that live within the National Park are represented
- Developed a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten
- Contributed to work at a national and local level to develop fundraising and new income sources
- Launched a new Organisational Development Strategy (and action plan) to support staff, volunteers and members, to improve processes and sustain high performance
- Successfully completed and achieved the first dry run towards a quicker closedown for the 2015/16 Accounts; meeting the new 31 May deadline instead of 30 June
- Appointed a new (internal) Chief Financial Officer
- Carried out a Dartmoor Residents Survey
- Continued to administer the Dartmoor Communities Grant Fund to provide support to local communities
- Local Plan Review: public consultation on key issues completed

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Although the Authority has been assessed as having strong Governance arrangements in place, to ensure continuous improvement, it is proposed that the following work is undertaken during 2017/18:

- Develop a programme to enable a wider use of apprenticeships, internships and volunteers to support the Authority's work
- Continue the Local Plan Review preparation Programme
- Continue to implement a proactive programme to develop new funding streams to support the work of the Authority at a local and national level
- Work with other authorities in the Heart of the South West to develop a productivity plan as part of wider work on devolution and ensure that the rural dimensions to this agenda are not forgotten
- Seek support and funding for a Rural Productivity network (in partnership with Exmoor National Park Authority)

- Launch the revised website as a two-way tool for communication, focused on user needs
- Review the complaints procedure
- Review the Member Code of Conduct

CERTIFICATION

We have been advised on the implication of the results of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit and Governance Committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of systems is in place.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: **Signed:**.....

Chairman of the Authority

K D Bishop
Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Date: **Date:**

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

CAR PARK CHARGESReport of the Head of Recreation, Access & EstatesRecommendation: **That Members:**

- (i) **approve the implementation of formal car parking charges as outlined in the report; and**
- (ii) **agree that officers undertake full public consultation on proposed implementation of formal car park charges at the sites included in this report**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members and present proposals to introduce formal car park charging at Haytor, Postbridge, Meldon and Newbridge with a “pay and conserve” message as a way of generating income from our assets to pay for future maintenance and to support the Authority’s work in promoting key messages to the public. This follows a review of current charging and donation arrangements for car parking on Authority owned and managed sites.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2015 the Authority commissioned a review of car park charging, donations and signage, in order to consider opportunities to increase revenue to offset maintenance costs and how to make the best use of our car parks i.e. promoting our work and our key messages. The review was driven in part, by reductions in National Park Grant in recent years and the ambition to increase income from other sources, therefore becoming less reliant on central government funding. Significant investment is required to maintain car parks over the next few years details of which are shown later in the report.
- 2.2 The findings were presented to Leadership Team on 23 February 2016. The report concluded that the principal means to significantly increase income from car parks was to introduce charges, rather than rely on voluntary donations.
- 2.3 Informal discussions with Members were held in April 2016, at the Park Management Working Panel in June 2016, and again in January 2017 following more detailed work. The clear view and direction of travel received was that the Authority’s approach should be to implement formal charging where possible.
- 2.4 Formal car park charging was introduced at our car park in Princetown in 2013 via a Service Level Agreement with West Devon Borough Council. The income received has increased by 360% as donations averaged £5,000 per annum, whereas charging produces a gross income of approximately £23,000 per annum. The experience at Princetown has shown that visitors expect to pay and are willing to

pay for car parking and that modest charges used to improve local facilities and services is considered to be acceptable.

3 Planning implications

- 3.1 The Authority's Planning Service has confirmed that ticket machines and associated signage does not require planning permission or advertisement consent, unless engineering works were required to provide an electricity supply to the machines. As it is intended to install solar powered units, this is unlikely to be required.

4 Cost proposals and forecast income

- 4.1 Further work has been undertaken since June 2016 on the feasibility of introducing charging at the car parks at Haytor, Postbridge, Meldon and Newbridge. This has included an assessment of income received through donations and reviewing numbers of vehicles using the car parks. Work has also been carried out with a ticket machine supplier to determine site suitability and the best location to site machines.
- 4.2 The proposed parking fees and hours of operation for all car parks would be in line with those currently in place at Princetown. The hours of operation are between the hours of 10.00am and 6.00pm every day. This enables regular visitors (e.g. local dog walkers) to park at the beginning and end of the day, without the need to pay for parking.

Class of vehicle	Up to 3 hours	Over 3 hours
Cars	£1.00	£2.00
Coaches or PSV's	£4.00	£4.00

Parking for blue badge disc holders would be free.

- 4.3 The following table sets out the estimated costs to implement car parking charges, the ongoing revenue costs, the current level of donations received and the potential income that could be generated from charging (based on experience at Princetown) with the number of spaces available.

Car Park	Estimated capital costs	Estimated annual revenue costs	Current Income - Donations	*Forecast Income - Charging
	£	£	£	£
Postbridge	10,900	4,150	(9,500)	(27,000)
Haytor Lower	10,900	4,150	(2,000)	(11,000)
Haytor Upper	5,800	1,975	(500)	(2,500)
Meldon	5,800	1,975	(1,500)	(7,000)
*Newbridge	5,800	1,975	(1,800)	(7,000)
Total	39,200	14,225	(15,300)	(54,500)

*Subject to partnership agreement with landowner

- 4.4 If income estimates prove correct, annual income could be circa £54,500 (net of VAT) for charging at the above car parks and circa £77,000 including Princetown. An income analysis is provided at appendix 1.

- 4.5 It is anticipated that breakeven on capital costs could be achieved within a year for all but Haytor Upper Car Park if the income projections are achieved.
- 4.6 Significant investment is required to maintain car parks over the next few years, whether we implement formal charging or not. The car park maintenance programme approved in the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes:

Car Park	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Haytor Lower	£35,000		
Postbridge		£72,000	
Meldon			£78,000
*Newbridge			£20,000

- Not included in the MTFP and is subject to partnership agreement with landowner (see para 5.6)

5 Programme for Implementation

- 5.1 It is proposed that public consultation is undertaken during 2017 with a phased implementation over the next two years:

Car park	Charging start date
Postbridge	October 2017
Newbridge (subject to landowner agreement)	October 2017
Haytor	April 2018
Meldon	April 2018

5.2 Postbridge Car Park

At the Postbridge car park, it is proposed to install ticket machines and associated signage. This will form part of a wider set of programmed improvements to the Postbridge and Forestry Commission car parks due to be implemented through the *Postbridge & Bellever Trails* project, as part of the Moor than meets the Eye scheme. The Authority is already working in partnership with the FC to deliver the Postbridge and Bellever Trails project as part of the Moor than meets the Eye, Heritage Lottery scheme.

Improvements to both the Forestry Commission car park and Postbridge car park are planned, including white line markings being added to the surface to aid visitor parking.

5.3 Haytor Lower and Upper Car Parks

At Haytor it is proposed that the introduction of formal car park charging at both Haytor car parks should coincide with the next Mobile Vending Licence renewal date of 1 April 2018. At the lower car park one ticket machine, would be installed close to the Visitor Centre and public toilets with associated signage. Signage from the Coach Park would be required so that charging for coach parking can be included.

At Haytor upper car park, it is proposed to install a single ticket machine and associated signage.

5.4 Meldon Car Park

At Meldon car park, it is proposed to install one ticket machine and associated signage

5.5 Newbridge Car Park

Discussions are taking place with the landowner about the possibility of introducing formal charging in the future and a partnership agreement is currently being drawn up. Through this potential agreement, the Authority would receive the income from car parking which would be re-invested in the maintenance of the site. Any such agreement would be subject to separate Authority approval.

6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The capital expenditure required to implement car park charging is detailed in the report at paragraph 4.2 along with an assessment of the annual revenue costs. In the report to Authority NPA/17/008 Net Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Budget (March 2017) Members will recall that implementation of formal car park charges was included as a potential project for funding through the Project Fund.

It is anticipated that the payback period is between one and two years. Other cost implications include officer time for Finance, Conservation Works Team and Visitor Centre staff (not calculated). Cash counting, reconciliation and banking processes undertaken by third parties are estimated to amount to £1,000.00 per annum. Increased insurance cover will also be required for both the machines and the cash, prices are not currently available, but it is not likely to be significant.

7 **Risks and Mitigations**

- 7.1 There are several risks associated with the introduction of car parking charges:

Risk	Level/ Mitigation / Explanation
Income levels not achieved and thus payback takes longer	Medium - The experience at Princetown is that the public expect to pay and that as the charges are set at a relatively low level, these are considered by visitors as representing good value
Vandalism or theft of machines	Low - only one incident at Princetown to date. However members may be aware that there has been a spate of machine thefts or damage to machines caused by attempted theft of cash.
Reputational risk	Low - experience at Princetown has shown that visitors accept / expect / are willing to pay
Displaced parking, causing increased erosion or nuisance	Low - experience at Princetown is that this not significant. Sites will be monitored (see note below)
Machine failures	Low - although if solar does not work could be increased cost and officer time

**The Haytor middle car park may get increased use if the public choose to avoid using the other two. Postbridge could experience some limited displacement whilst at Meldon and Newbridge, displaced parking is less likely.*

8 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 8.1 The Authority is facing increased challenges to effectively fund the maintenance of the car parks it has responsibility for; it is apparent that the public now expect to and are willing to pay for parking. The introduction of parking charges at Princetown has generated a significant increase in income which can support the maintenance of the infrastructure and helps us promote our key messages
- 8.2 If Members are minded to support the proposals, a formal consultation programme will be undertaken (as happened at Princetown). If there are significant issues raised through the consultation process, a further report will be brought back to Members for consideration.

ANDREW WATSON

Income Analysis and Basis of Forecast

Donations	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Actual 2013/14	Actual 2014/15	Actual 2015/16	Forecast 2016/17
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Princetown	(6,860)	(5,371)	(8,690)	0	0	0
Newbridge	(2,509)	(1,729)	(1,586)	(1,853)	(1,743)	(1,803)
Meldon	(1,409)	(1,297)	(1,376)	(1,880)	(1,568)	(1,885)
Haytor Lower	(2,935)	(2,109)	(2,059)	(2,009)	(1,611)	(1,598)
Haytor Upper	(671)	(492)	(444)	(447)	(572)	(701)
Postbridge	(5,384)	(4,833)	(4,976)	(5,638)	(5,800)	(6,036)
TOTAL	(19,768)	(15,831)	(19,131)	(11,827)	(11,294)	(12,023)

Charges	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Forecast Per annum	
	£	£	£	£	
Princetown	(20,442)	(22,861)	(23,000)	(23,000)	Less running costs £6k
Meldon				(7,000)	Estimates based on vehicle counter information and experience at Princetown
Haytor Lower				(11,000)	
Haytor Upper				(2,500)	
Postbridge				(27,000)	
Newbridge				(7,000)	
TOTAL	(20,442)	(22,861)	(23,000)	(77,500)	

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

IDENTIFYING AND RECORDING NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETSReport of the Building Conservation OfficerRecommendation: **That Members approve:**

- (i) **The procedure for the identification of Non-designated Heritage Assets outlined in this paper; and**
- (ii) **The inclusion of explicitly identified Non-designated Heritage Assets on the Historic Environment Record (HER).**

1 Background

- 1.1 The concept of Non-designated Heritage Assets as a planning consideration has been part of planning policy guidance since the 1990s but has been more closely defined in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and National Planning Policy Framework Practice Guidance (NPPFPG, 2014).
- 1.2 Non-designated Heritage Assets are a consideration in planning applications submitted to Dartmoor National Park Authority but there is currently no formal procedure in place to identify and record these Assets.
- 1.3 To address this, this paper introduces and outlines a procedure that is robust and will provide a greater degree of certainty and clarity for the Authority and its stakeholders.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Heritage assets are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 2, NPPF, 2012) as: 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).' (Annex 2, NPPF, 2012).
- 2.2 There are of two classes of Heritage Asset:
 - *Designated Heritage Assets - defined as those with statutory protection/ recognition through national designation, such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Registered Parks and Gardens;*
 - *Non-designated Heritage Assets - defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance*

meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated.

3 Current situation

- 3.1 It is best practice for a Local Planning Authority to identify Non-designated Heritage Assets (Para. 39, NPPFPG, 2014) and record these on a Historic Environment Record (Para. 169, NPPF, 2012).
- 3.2 Dartmoor National Park Authority complies with this guidance by maintaining a Historic Environment Record (HER). It should be noted, however, that not all the sites on the HER are Heritage Assets and currently there is no formal procedure for explicitly identifying Non-designated Heritage Assets.
- 3.3 For the built environment, guidance states that only a minority of buildings have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process (Para. 39, NPPFPG, 2014).
- 3.4 For archaeology two categories of Non-designated Heritage Assets are identified: those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same; and those of archaeological interest but lesser heritage significance, but still subject to the conservation objective.

4 Non-designated Heritage assets and Planning

- 4.1 Non-designated Heritage Assets are a material consideration in planning applications. The effect of an application on the significance of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly Non-Designated Heritage Assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (Para. 135, NPPF, 2012). There are also certain policies in the National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Management and Delivery Plan Document (DMD) which make reference to heritage assets, giving them special consideration in the processing of development proposals.
- 4.2 To assess the impact on Non-designated Heritage Assets the guidance assumes that information is held within the HER and that this can be called upon to assess the impact of a development. While the information is available, it usually requires a degree of processing. Currently staff adopt informal processing of data when considering a planning application.

5 Criteria for identification

- 5.1 The national guidance states that when considering development proposals, local planning authorities should establish if any potential Non-Designated Heritage Asset meets the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework at an early stage in the process. Ideally, in the case of buildings, their significance should be judged against published criteria (Para. 41, NPPFPG, 2014).

5.2 All Heritage Assets have a degree of significance and this should be the basis for identifying them. Significance is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting and its historical and cultural associations. (Appendix 2, NPPF, 2012).

5.3 Significance, is made up of one or more of the following heritage values set out in the Historic England 'Conservation Principles' (2008) document:

Evidential - the potential of an asset to yield evidence about past human activity and our understanding of it.

Historical - the potential of an asset to act as a link between past and present people, to illustrate past events and the ways in which people and communities lived in the past.

Aesthetic - derived from the sensory and intellectual stimulation a heritage asset might provide which can be due to chance and the way in which a place has developed through time, design or a combination of both.

Communal - the result of the meanings from a place for the people that relate to it placed on a heritage asset by people and communities through collective experience or memory.

5.4 The adoption of these values is now well established in the heritage sector and recognised as providing the best basis for assessing significance. In addition, other factors to be taken into account include, age, state of preservation, rarity, fragility or vulnerability to damage, contribution to setting, group value, and the degree to which a Heritage Asset is characteristic of a given period.

6 Recording

6.1 Potential Heritage Assets will be assessed against the significance criteria by either the DNPA Archaeologist or Building Conservation Officer.

6.2 Where, in the professional view of the officer, the archaeological site or building has the potential to be regarded as a Heritage Asset then, if the site is the subject of a development proposal, further information may be requested from the applicant.

6.3 Where there is sufficient information provided to assess the site then, if the significance criteria are met, the information will be entered onto a pro-forma and the site added to the Historic Environment Record as a Non-designated Heritage Asset.

6.4 On rare occasions it may be necessary to put the site forward to the relevant statutory authority for formal designation. This is current practice.

6.5 The planning team will be able to use this evidence from the HER to inform them in the event that an application is received. In addition pre applicants will be pointed to the HER as a source of information so that they can take this into account in formulating any development proposals.

6.6 Members are referred to the simple proforma at Appendix 1 which sets out the way in which the assessment will be carried out and why the feature is considered to be a heritage asset.

7 Financial implications

7.1 The process outlined above is a formalisation of current practice. There will therefore be only minimal additional work involved in entering data onto a form and input onto the HER. This can be accommodated without recourse to additional resources. The Authority employs a dedicated HER officer who can update records.

8 Sustainability and equality impact assessment

8.1 It is not considered that there are any specific issues in respect of sustainability and equality. Assistance can be given to those with different needs in the assessment of heritage assets either through the pre application or application procedures as happens at present.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The identification and recording of Non-Designated Heritage Assets and their role in determining planning applications is embedded in national planning policy guidance and best practice.

9.2 The introduction of a more formalised procedure for identifying and entering a Non-designated Heritage Asset onto the HER would give the process more transparency and greater clarity and provide applicants with a higher degree of certainty. It would also allow an informed assessment of the potential impact of the development to be made at an early stage.

9.3 The adoption of a formalised process would reduce the potential for challenges to the Authority from outside agencies as to what constitutes a Non-designated Heritage Asset.

NIGEL PRATT

Attachments: Appendix 1 - Proforma to be used in the assessment of heritage assets

**APPENDIX 1 IDENTIFYING AND RECORDING NON-DESIGNATED
HERITAGE ASSETS**

Proforma to be used in the assessment of heritage assets

Name of site				
Address				
Parish:				
NGR				
Map Y/N	Tithe Map	1 st edn OS	2 nd edn OS	Other
Heritage value Y/N	Evidential	Historical	Aesthetic	Communal
Asset type				
Period				
Description of significance:				
Sources				

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST DEVOLUTION BIDReport of the Chief Executive (National Park Officer)Recommendation: **That Members:**

- (i) **Note the up-date regarding the Heart of the South West devolution deal and the proposal to establish a Joint Committee.**
- (ii) **Agree:**
 - a. **in principle to the establishment of the a Heart of the South West Joint Committee with a commencement date of Friday 1 September 2017 in accordance with the summary proposals set out in this paper; and**
 - b. **that the 'in principle' decision at (a) above is subject to further recommendation and report to the constituent authorities after the County Council elections in May 2017. This subsequent report will seek formal approval for the establishment of the joint Committee and detail the constitutional arrangements, the inter-Authority agreement for support arrangements, process for appointing representatives to the Joint Committee and arrangements for an Administering Authority to support the work of the Committee.**

1 Background

- 1.1 In July 2016 the Authority agreed, in principle, to support a potential Combined Authority to deliver a devolution deal for the Heart of the South West (HotSW) area (counties of Devon and Somerset plus unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay) (NPA/16/025). Since then the Government has changed and the EU Referendum has taken place. Both of these events have had a significant impact on Government policy and, in particular, the approach to devolution.
- 1.2 Prior to the change of Government the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had indicated support for the establishment of a Combined Authority for the HotSW area and indicated that an elected mayor would not be imposed or a pre-condition of any initial devolution deal. Although it was made clear that a mayor was required to achieve extensive funding and powers. The partnership was encouraged to push the limits of an initial deal, with the potential for further deals in the future. At that stage the aim was for an initial deal to be announced in the 2016 Autumn Statement.
- 1.3 Following the change of Government, the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has given a clear indication that a Mayoral Combined Authority is required in order to achieve a significant devolution deal.

1.4 The view of Leaders is that the partnership put in place to shape a devolution deal must maintain the momentum achieved to date by establishing arrangements across the HofSW area to deliver the key ambition of raising productivity and avoid the area being disadvantaged compared to its neighbours. Pending any progress being made on a devolution deal and to allow the area to capitalise on the emerging, National Industrial Strategy, the Leaders are recommending the following:

- The creation of a HotSW Productivity Plan; and
- That consideration is given to the creation of a joint Committee of HofSW partners to drive the development and delivery of the Productivity Plan and be the basis for identifying further public sector reform opportunities for recommendation to the partner authorities.

2 Heart of the South West Productivity Plan

2.1 The report to the Authority in July 2016 outlined the proposal to develop a detailed Productivity Plan for the HotSW, building on the [Prospectus for Productivity](#) that was submitted to Government in February 2016. This remains a priority.

2.2 The Productivity Plan will replace the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan, will guide the long term growth aspirations for the area and be the key strategic document for engaging with Government and local communities for future prosperity. In the absence of a combined authority/devolution deal at this stage, a mechanism is required to enable the partners to collaborate formally to maximise what can be achieved within existing structures and resources as well as continue negotiations with Government over a range of policy agendas to help deliver the partnership's productivity ambitions.

2.3 Productivity is defined as: "the amount of goods and services that a person, industry or country produces per hour". The more goods and services that are produced, the more productive – and ultimately wealthy – an economy is. The Government has identified five drivers of productivity which must be addressed for productivity to rise:

1. Competition

- Which encourages business to innovate and be more efficient; and
- Access to national and international markets through good infrastructure.

2. Enterprise

- New business opportunities for existing firms and start-ups where competition encourages new ideas and ways of working; and
- Support for businesses and entrepreneurs.

3. Investment in physical capital

- Machinery, equipment, buildings and infrastructure. More capital generally means that more can be done, better and quicker; and
- Infrastructure and somewhere to 'set up shop' are essential, and investment capital must be available.

4. Skills

- Skills are needed to take advantage of investment in new technologies and ways of running a business; and

- Skills alone can determine productivity but so do good management, creativity and investment.

5. Innovation

- The successful exploitation of new ideas: technology, products or ways of working boost productivity, for example as better equipment works faster; and
- Research and development and general support for innovators is essential.

2.4 The Prospectus for Productivity confirms the commitment by the HotSW partners to increasing productivity across the area to ensure a successful future economy. We know the new Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who is developing the National Industrial Strategy, is keen to hear and reflect the local narrative in the strategy. The Productivity Plan will provide the platform for the area to engage with Government on this agenda with a view to delivering our collective aspirations for growth in the HotSW.

2.5 The Productivity Plan will be developed through an evidence base produced by the LEP's Future Economy Group and engagement with stakeholders and the community. In developing the Plan a range of issues will be explored:

- Productivity in the public and private sector
- Understanding how the local economy works and interventions required to guide investment decisions
- Bringing together local government, business community, public, the universities and other groups
- The need to build an inclusive economy with growth for all.

2.6 Work to create the Productivity Plan is intended to be a fully inclusive process involving all stakeholders and will include public consultation. It will take the form of several stages as follows:

Stage 1 – publication of a ‘Green Paper’ setting out some of the emerging challenges for Heart of the South West productivity identified by the LEP's Future Economy Group. Consultation on the Green Paper closed on 10 March 2017 (our response, joint with Exmoor National Park is attached at Appendix A). The results from this discussion paper will form the basis of a formal consultation paper on the vision and priorities for a Productivity Plan (see below).

May 2017 (post County Council elections) – A formal consultation ‘White Paper’ will be released to all Councils and stakeholders. This will be a public consultation to directly inform the content of the Productivity Plan.

September 2017 – The Productivity Plan will be considered for formal adoption.

3 Heart of the South West Joint Committee Proposal

3.1 Work on the establishment of a Combined Authority for the HotSW area was suspended following the change of Government focus outlined above. The partnership decided that until we have clarification locally from the Secretary of State of the criteria for moving forward on devolution, it would take forward a less risky and more cost effective short term option of forming a HotSW Joint Committee to oversee and own the development and delivery of the Productivity Plan.

Although the Joint Committee would not have the statutory status of a Combined Authority and cannot therefore deliver the full range of benefits that a Combined Authority can, it has the potential to provide cohesive, coherent leadership and formal governance to agree and oversee delivery of the Productivity Plan and bring forward other pan-HotSW proposals for recommendation to the constituent authorities, as desired and necessary. Its role will focus on collaboration, negotiation and influencing with full delegated decision making responsibilities limited to agreeing and overseeing the implementation of the HotSW Productivity Plan. All other matters where a decision is required will be referred back to the constituent authorities for approval.

- 3.2 Ultimately the aims of the Joint Committee, through delivery of the Productivity Plan, will be 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;
 - Ensure that the necessary strategic framework, including infrastructure requirements, is in place across the HotSW area to enable sub-regional arrangements to fully deliver local aspirations; and
 - Improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector.
- 3.3 The creation of a single strategic public sector partnership covering the HotSW area will: facilitate collaborative working; help us to remove barriers to progress; and will provide the partnership with the formal structure to engage with Government at a strategic level to maximise the opportunities/benefits available to the area from current and future government policy. It will also enable the constituent authorities and partners to have discussions with neighbouring councils/combined authorities/LEP areas on South West peninsula priorities and issues, as well as the ability to move swiftly towards a devolution deal and Combined Authority model in the future, if the conditions are acceptable.
- 3.4 A Joint Committee will also provide a formal mechanism for the constituent authorities to engage effectively with the LEP across common boundaries and agendas. The LEP is in the process of adopting a new assurance framework, as part of new government requirements, which require improvements in the LEP's transparency and accountability. The direct involvement of the LEP in the Joint Committee on many common agendas, will provide a mechanism to enable the councils to have a more direct involvement in and greater influence over the activities of the LEP.
- 3.5 The detail of the proposed functions of the Joint Committee and how it will operate will be set out in a draft 'Arrangements' document, which will be presented to the constituent authorities for approval in the summer. The reason for only seeking an 'in principle' approval to the creation of a Joint Committee at this stage, is because of the local County Council elections scheduled for May 2017. Therefore final decisions to establish the Joint Committee will be sought from all authorities in July/August, with a view to the Committee being established on the 1st September 2017.
- 3.6 In detail the proposed functions of the Joint Committee are as follows:

- (a) Develop, own and implement the HotSW Productivity Plan in collaboration with the LEP;
- (b) To identify and develop proposals (for recommendation to constituent authorities / partner agencies as necessary) in response to policy opportunities presented by the Government to secure functions and funding for the benefit of improving productivity. Examples include Industrial Strategy, Brexit, and Devolution;
- (c) Develop and make recommendations to the constituent authorities / partner agencies for actions emerging from the work of the Brexit Opportunities and Resilience Task Group;
- (d) Continue discussions / negotiations with the Government / relevant agencies to secure delivery of the Government's strategic infrastructure commitments, eg, strategic road and rail transport improvements;
- (e) Identify opportunities for rationalising / improving existing public sector governance arrangements and make recommendations to the constituent authorities/partners;
- (f) To work with the LEP to identify and deliver improvements to the LEP's democratic accountability and to assist the organisation to comply with the revised (November 2016) LEP Assurance Framework. This includes formally endorsing the LEP's assurance framework on behalf of the constituent authorities as and when required and before it is formally approved by the LEP's Administering Authority;
- (g) To ensure that adequate resources (including staff and funding) are allocated by HotSW partners to enable the objectives in (a) to (f) above to be delivered.

3.7 In addition to the functions set out above, the Joint Committee Arrangements document will set out in detail:

- (a) Membership arrangements: based on 1 Authority (and to include the 2 National Park Authorities, 1 Member (normally the Leader of the Council / Chairman of the National Park Authority), 1 named substitute member and 1 vote. Partner organisations such as the LEP and the Clinical Commissioning Groups will also have non-voting membership of the Joint Committee
- (b) Standing Orders / Rules of Procedure: An Administering Authority will be identified to support the operation of the Committee and it will be recommended that the Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure of the Administering Authority will apply to the operation of the Committee. This will include the usual Access to Information rules which apply to local authority meetings.
- (c) Provisions to enable a Constituent Authority to formally withdraw from the Joint Committee and for the Joint Committee to be dissolved.
- (d) Appointment of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman on an annual basis.
- (e) The ability for the Joint Committee to appoint sub-committees or establish working groups as required.

3.8 A draft Inter-Authority Agreement will accompany the 'Arrangements' document for approval in the summer. This will detail how the Joint Committee will be supported and set out the obligations on the constituent authorities.

3.9 In particular this document will set out the Administering Authority functions in support of the operation of the Committee, including the provision of financial, legal, constitutional and administrative support to the Committee.

3.10 The Agreement will also include:

- (a) The cost sharing agreement setting out how the costs of running the Joint Committee will be met by the constituent authorities
- (b) The roles and responsibilities of the constituent authorities in support of the Joint Committee
- (c) The roles and duties of the Chief Executives' Advisory Group that will support the Joint Committee
- (d) Accounts, Audit and Insurance arrangements
- (e) Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities and Data Protection provisions
- (f) Dispute Resolution provisions.

3.11 The Inter-Authority Agreement will be brought to the Authority for formal agreement and at this stage (subject to agreement to join a Joint Committee) and nominations for Joint Committee membership will be sought. Arrangements for an Administering Authority to support the Committee will also be detailed.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 To-date the Authority has contributed £5,000 to the costs of the Devolution Programme Office. We have also contributed officer time and entered into a service level agreement with Exmoor National Park Authority to pay for the time of one of their officers to work on the Productivity Plan on behalf of both National Parks.

4.2 The establishment of a Joint Committee is seen as a low cost option compared to a Combined Authority structure. It is anticipated that the Committee will receive considerable in kind support from partners and direct running costs will be limited to potentially providing direct officer support for the meetings (if there is insufficient 'in-house' capacity) and the costs of the meetings themselves. In respect of the latter, meeting costs can be minimised through the use of council premises for meetings if that is the wish of the Authorities. The assumption at this stage is that the direct support costs will be kept to a minimum, but could potentially rise to an estimated maximum of £40k per annum as a shared cost between all constituent authorities. The final costs figure will be dependent on the views of the Leaders on the issues raised above. Clarification on these issues will be sought before the decision point is reached in the summer to establish the Joint Committee. It is anticipated at this stage that even if the costs are at the upper figure detailed above, then in the first year (2017/18) of the operation of the Joint Committee, the costs are likely to be covered by the residual devolution budget, so requiring no further call for funding from the authorities.

4.3 In addition to the direct costs of administering the Joint Committee there is also the issue of a budget to fund its work. At this stage it is recommended that this should be an early issue for discussion and recommendation by the Joint Committee, once established, as this will be dependent on the eventual work programme.

5 Conclusion and Next Steps

5.1 The proposed HotSW Joint Committee will provide a formal strategic partnership to complement and maximise the ability of local sub-regional arrangements. It will allow partners to collaborate, agree and deliver the Productivity Plan and provide the basis for engagement with Government on economic development/growth/productivity

issues. It will also provide a mechanism to work alongside and influence the LEP. The Authority would be a full member of the Joint Committee (normally represented by the Chairman) and have full voting rights. The detailed operating/governance arrangements will be brought to the Authority for agreement in summer 2017 (after the County Council elections).

- 5.2 The Joint Committee offers the Authority an enhanced opportunity to engage with the LEP and other local authorities on the shared agenda of productivity and prosperity and to ensure that these agendas do not damage the special qualities of the National Park. It enables us to remind our partners of their obligations, under Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, to have regard to the relevant National Park purposes when coming to decisions, or carrying out their activities relating to, or affecting, land within the National Park.

KEVIN BISHOP

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities

Heart of the South West Productivity Plan Green paper response

This is a joint response on behalf of both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities.

1. In seeking higher productivity, what sort of area do we want to be?

There is a need to formulate and agree a vision for the area. We believe this vision should be bespoke to the Heart of the South West area, not simply seeking to 'be all things to all people', or to emulate success elsewhere in the country.

The vision for increasing productivity should capitalise on the distinctiveness of the Heart of the South West and seek to integrate productivity growth with environmental and social outcomes. The area should be recognised as one that is developing productivity on the back of, and in harmony with, the local environment. The Heart of the South West is recognised for the quality of its environment and the quality of life the area can offer. We need to build on these assets: they are world-class and part of our unique selling point and should not be 'sold' in the pursuit of short-term growth/productivity

We support the vision outlined in the green paper for the Heart of the South West being the ideal location to trail blaze natural [and cultural] capital led productivity growth.

2. What in your view would make the biggest impact to productivity in HotSW?

From our perspective the biggest impact is likely to be achieved from recognising the diverse nature of the area and providing interventions that are flexible and tailored for this diversity, and that enhance the qualities that support the Heart of the South West brand (namely its rural nature and valued natural environment).

A one size fits all approach is unlikely to maximise the potential for productivity given the differing needs between, for example, a start-up diversification business on Exmoor or Dartmoor and the expansion of a science park along the M5 corridor.

Our Rural Productivity network proposal (see appendix A) identifies some key asks and opportunities in terms of rural productivity.

3. What is the main barrier to raising productivity in your business/sector (including public sector)?

With relatively low unemployment levels and limited opportunities for large scale innovations we believe under-employment is a significant barrier to raising productivity that can be overcome – addressing issues around part time and seasonal work and those whose skills are not fully utilised. Many of the skills and qualifications available in rural areas are under used, and many people are in

part-time employment with the capacity to take on increased employment with the right opportunities. To achieve this, fragmentation needs addressing.

The rural economy is dominated by micro enterprises within the National Parks. The proportion of self-employed is approximately double the national average (26% on Exmoor and 19% on Dartmoor, compared to 10% across England) and just 1% of businesses across both National Parks employ over 50 or more people). These micro enterprises are often dispersed and working in isolation. Current business support initiatives, whilst welcome, are too generic and remote for many small, rural business to take advantage of.

Facilitated networks (such as the Dartmoor and Exmoor Hill Farming Networks) at a local level have successfully demonstrated their value in overcoming this fragmentation and we believe there is a significant opportunity to utilise such networks further. Such networks offer the opportunity to provide peer support, supply chain development, collaborative opportunities and increased economies of scale whilst nurturing entrepreneurship and distinctiveness.

The proposed rural productivity Network mentioned in (2) above and attached as appendix A provides an opportunity to address some of these issues in the deeply rural areas of the Heart of the South West.

4. What drivers are most important to you – inward investment, levels of innovation, availability of finance, skills, competition and export, connectivity in transport and broadband, successful partnerships outside area, natural capital assets, other?

The natural and cultural capital assets of the area underpin much of our economy and brand within the Heart of the South West. They underpin many of the area's core sectors identified in figure 4 of the Green Paper (employment volumes and intensity) and those sectors identified in figure 5 as being more productive than the region's average (including agriculture, accommodation and food services, retail and water supply).

For the rural areas DEFRA research has highlighted three key challenges for rural growth which we would support:

- Good communication (and in particular broadband) connections
- Access to local markets
- Transport infrastructure

Of these, developing good communication should be the priority in terms of value for money and achievability in order to have the greatest impact on driving up productivity through utilisation of new technology (e.g. ultrafast broadband and 4G coverage) and developing local networks. There is evidence from the Dartmoor Business Survey that confirms the lack of superfast broadband connections continues to be a major barrier in raising productivity.

Further work can be done to enhance and utilise the brands of the South West to aid competitiveness and productivity.

5. How do we build on our natural capital assets?

As outlined above, the natural and cultural capital of the area underpins significant employment opportunities. Some of these opportunities for growth are detailed in the diagram below.



There is a need for continued investment in the management of the National Parks of the Heart of the South West including the environment, access to it and promotion. Without this, the resource will degrade and opportunities for sustainable rural growth will be lost. The National Parks are an essential foundation for growth in the Heart of the South West attracting inward investment through the high quality environment and recreational opportunities and sustaining rural livelihoods (primarily in tourism and agriculture).

The Local Enterprise Partnership commissioned report into the Environment as a Driver for Economic Growth included recommendations to create a vision for sustainability and articulated the value that the environment offers to the area, in addition to looking at examples such as how the North West Local Enterprise Partnership has embedded environmental sustainability into their economic development priorities and work streams.

Investing in our natural and cultural capital will enrich the experience of visitors to the area, boost the rural economy and ensure protection of the special qualities of the area including its landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage.

6. How do we build on and improve our cultural assets?

Cultural capital should be included alongside natural capital. Our natural environment and the assets within have been influenced by over 8,000 years of human intervention and the two are inextricably linked.

7. What is the role for the public sector in improving the HotSW productivity levels?

There are two key roles for the public sector:

- To provide leadership and facilitation – working across sectors and local geographies to ensure a coherent and evidence based approach.
- To act in areas of market failure where this will contribute to productivity. For example investing in the natural capital of the area and in marketing of rural tourism.

It is important to create a climate whereby the Public Sector provides support, facilitation and seed funding (where required), but allows initiatives to be run independently as enterprises.

8. How can we ensure that the benefits of productivity growth are felt by all?

There needs to be a recognition of sustainable growth in productivity for all. This requires specific interventions for key hubs, urban areas and more rural areas. Focusing all investment on the urban areas with the expectation that this will trickle out to the rural areas is not proven and a 'one size fits all' approach and reliance on web-based delivery to initiatives such as business support is not adequate. It is important that the need for proportional growth across the area is recognised.

Many recent interventions, such as the Rural Growth Network, have had some success in reaching the deeply rural areas and there is opportunity to learn from this Defra funded pilot scheme. The evaluation of the Rural Growth Network pilots highlighted "the most effective business support projects made use of local agencies and personnel who already had knowledge of the area and existing community links". A long-term commitment and consistent approach is also an important factor in reaching the most rural areas and in supporting small and micro businesses that have potential for growth.

Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks have worked with the County Councils and Local Enterprise Partnership to prepare a proposal to trial Rural Productivity Networks across the region's National Parks which would provide a tailored approach to tackling productivity in these deeply rural geographies (see Appendix A). At the heart of the proposal is the concept of 'place-based, facilitated, innovation' with the proposed networks building on our strongest assets – our people, communities and spectacular environment.

There is a need to try something new, and to offer start-up funding for a 5 year period to pilot a new approach that will help demonstrate how:

- Rural productivity can be improved through, for example, collaborative action to foster entrepreneurship, promote innovation and knowledge transfer
- A high quality, resilient environment and cultural heritage can be at the heart of rural growth and productivity
- New models of service provision and delivery can be developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of our rural communities
- Rural areas can provide effective and economic services to other areas (for example, health and water management)
- Traditional land-based industries can be developed to improve productivity and growth but also to deliver a range of environmental services

The model proposed seeks to take advice from the Rural Growth Network evaluation and to build on successful initiatives such as the Exmoor Hill Farm Network which have provided a cost effective approach to bring disparate micro enterprises together to provide tailored support and networking.

The concept is embedded in the 'Devolution for the Heart of the South West: A prospectus for productivity'. Current funding arrangements are not available and the new Productivity Plan provides an opportunity to address this imbalance.

March 2017

For further information please contact Dan James, Sustainable Economy Manager, Exmoor National Park Authority, on 01398 322234 or DTJames@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

APPENDIX A

Rural Productivity Networks for Dartmoor and Exmoor – a proposal

Rural Productivity Networks for Dartmoor and Exmoor

A proposal to Defra



© Ashburton Cookery School



Contents

Summary	2
Background	3
Our offer and asks	5
What next?	10

Summary

This paper outlines a proposed demonstration initiative to deliver improved rural productivity and growth focused on Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks. The inspiration for this was drawn from the Rural Productivity Plan¹ published by H M Treasury and Defra in August 2015.

The **Dartmoor and Exmoor Rural Productivity Network** (RPN) will deliver a new approach to rural growth and productivity: one based on local engagement; that will use the natural and cultural capital of the areas; build on existing initiatives and work with businesses and communities to develop local solutions.

At its heart is the concept of 'place-based, facilitated innovation' – helping local businesses to help themselves by supporting growth and productivity. The RPN will take forward the themes in the Rural Productivity Plan through such activities as:

- Knowledge transfer
- Collaborative action
- Improved connectivity
- Making the most of our resource base
- Clusters and supply chain integration

The initiative would build on existing work and help to:

- **Improve productivity** in economic and environmental terms. In an economic sense – improved GVA. In environmental terms – a landscape that can deliver multiple benefits (a natural capital approach).
- **Foster a sustainable rural economy with strong local roots** using and developing local skills, fostering entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer
- **Enhance resilience** to environmental change and economic pressures.
- **Act as a demonstrator project** for Defra's Rural Growth and Productivity policy and the forthcoming Environment and Food and Farming Strategies – a model of integrated delivery.

We are seeking support from Defra to develop the RPN as a demonstrator scheme for integrated rural growth and productivity.

The following document provides more detail on the concept which has been developed with local stakeholders from the business, land and community sectors. As a model, it builds on our strongest assets: the people, communities and spectacular environment of the National Parks.

Background

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks are unique and special places that make a positive contribution to the sustainable economic growth of their surrounding areas.

An economic prospectus for the two National Parks demonstrates that they are world class environments, enjoyed by millions and generating millions: they are home to over 3,000 businesses with an annual turnover in excess of £770million. There is a strong opportunity to increase their contribution; however, mainstream economic tools tend to have an urban bias where high business densities make them more effective.

Our aim is to develop a new rural growth model, designed by rural areas, for rural areas – **‘The Dartmoor and Exmoor Rural Productivity Network’**. It builds on activity already underway in the two National Parks to promote rural growth and improve productivity and to do this in ways that also deliver environmental benefits and support local communities.

Examples of the proactive work we have been doing include:

Hill Farm Projects

There are separate Hill Farm Projects for both National Parks that work with the farming community to promote collaboration, innovation and knowledge transfer in order to improved productivity. They have a proven track record of delivery and have provided the basis for this proposal.

Superfast Broadband

The two Authorities (working with Connecting Devon and Somerset) are helping to deliver superfast broadband to 96% of all premises in the two National Parks. We envisage that this network will be in place by the end of 2016. A significant part of this coverage will be via a new wireless network. We are also exploring the feasibility of this network providing improved mobile coverage

Pro-active management of the National Park landscapes

This management, often in partnership, provides a sustainable resource for enjoyment and business development – 5 million visitor days per annum worth in excess of £230m per annum.

The proposal also builds on other evidence that supports the need for a “tailored, place-based approach that meets local constraints and opportunities”^{2,3}. The approach is supported by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HoSWLEP), Devon and Somerset County Councils and other stakeholders including National Farmers Union, district/borough councils, private businesses and LEADER groups.

¹ Defra and H M Treasury (2015) Towards a one nation economy: a ten point plan for boosting productivity in rural areas, Defra, London. ² Phillipson, J and Turner, R (2013) Rural areas as engines of economic growth, Rural Economy and Land use Programme, Newcastle upon Tyne. ³ Nesta (2013) Impacts of innovation policy: synthesis and conclusion, Working paper 13/21, Nesta, London.

The five themes (and associated ten points) identified in the Rural Productivity Plan, have been used to shape the RPN proposal:

Connections

Rural areas fully connected to the wider economy – broadband, mobile communications, transport.

Skills

A highly skilled rural workforce – training, apprenticeships, knowledge transfer.

Growth

Developing strong conditions for business growth – building on existing networks, clusters and collaborative action.

Living

Easier to live in rural areas – housing, affordable childcare, access to services.

Devolution

Greater local control – devolution and local engagement/empowerment.

At the heart of the RPN is the concept of 'place-based, facilitated innovation' – helping local businesses to help themselves by supporting growth and productivity through such activities as:

Knowledge transfer

Building on existing links with Universities to ensure 'hands on' and practical knowledge transfer. Ensuring that businesses learn from each other (not just farmers talking to farmers; but how farmers might learn from some of the creative and software-based businesses in the two National Parks and wider hinterland and vice versa). Using the knowledge and experience of older people who have retired to the area but have skills that could be shared through mentoring and networking.

Collaborative action

Two-thirds of rural businesses are micro businesses and these need particular attention. The RPN would help rural businesses organise themselves to create a critical mass in terms of buying or supplying (e.g. shared back-office for some of our smaller businesses so that they might benefit from reduced costs). Assisting with project development: from ideas to action.

Improved connectivity

Ensuring, for example, that people are aware of the opportunities that superfast broadband can provide and are able to make the most of these.

Making the most of our resource base

Developing new markets and services from the special qualities of the two National Parks.

Clusters and supply chain integration

Working with businesses to establish and expand local, and resilient, supply chains that enable businesses to develop. For example, potential development of food clusters around common services.

Discussions with the partners involved in developing this proposal have highlighted the importance of a facilitation resource – the capacity to act as a catalyst, taking ideas and helping to develop them, getting people to work together, identifying opportunities to learn and innovate etc. This capacity is particularly important in rural areas, like the two National Parks, where the economy is dominated by micro and small enterprises.

In the following pages, we set out our offer, the opportunity and our 'ask' in relation to the five themes that will underpin the network.

Our 'offer' and 'asks'

Connections

Rural areas fully connected to the wider economy (broadband, mobile, transport)



Our offer:

- Dartmoor and Exmoor will achieve 96% superfast broadband coverage by the end of 2016. A significant part of this coverage will be via a new wireless network
- Co-ordinated management and appropriate promotion of world class environments to ensure that the environment can provide a sustainable resource for growth and productivity

The two National Park Authorities will:

- Manage and enhance recreational routes as a driver to the visitor economy
- Engage with broadband and mobile infrastructure providers to extend coverage

Through the Rural Productivity Network we will:

- Exploit opportunities presented by superfast broadband coverage to over 96% of premises by encouraging business and household take-up of digital technologies to drive productivity improvements (e.g. digital livestock monitoring) and skills development
- Maximise private sector investment in innovative and integrated mobile solutions linked to superfast broadband network; promote the two National Parks as pilot areas for new technology in terms of communication
- Test innovative transport solutions in support of economic activity

- Support local businesses to use the world class environment as a driver for business development but in a way which does not damage the resource people seek to enjoy

Our asks:

- C1. DCMS** – Be a test-bed for innovative solutions to ultrafast broadband in rural areas (including driving up wireless broadband speeds through software improvements)
- C2. LEP** – Planned digital business support to recognise the unique challenge of delivery in the National Parks; engagement with the National Parks in the deployment of Mobile 4G infrastructure project
- C3. DCMS** – Gap funding to pilot integration of mobile telephony with superfast broadband
- C4. DfT/LEP** – Improved signage for National Parks from major trunk roads and enhanced transport links to Exmoor (via improvements to the A358 and around Taunton)
- C5. DfT/LEP** – Seed funding for innovative transport solutions to improve rural accessibility within the productivity network (e.g. wheels to work, community transport solutions, on-line training materials)
- C6. Innovate UK/Local Partners** – A test-bed for applied digital innovation (rural)
- C7. Defra** – Make EAFRD tourism infrastructure funds open to public and voluntary sector applications.

Skills

A highly skilled rural workforce (training, apprenticeships)



Our offer:

- We have an established delivery mechanism for skills training of the farming communities in both National Parks that we can build upon. For example, Dartmoor farmers have already established their own company – Moorskills Ltd – to run be-spoke apprenticeship and training programmes
- Evidence base of skills gaps and shortages in relation to key sectors that are currently inhibiting business growth
- Work to bring together different sectors and to involve young people in knowledge transfer (through, for example, the Next Generation Group of farmers on Dartmoor)

The two National Park Authorities will:

- Develop their own apprenticeship programmes and look to involve the private sector in these through placements etc.
- Help to assist with knowledge transfer by building on existing links with Universities and developing cross-sector networks

Through the Rural Productivity Network we will:

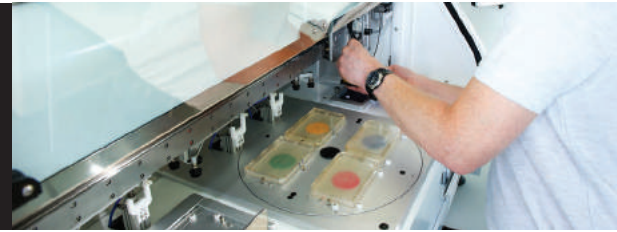
- Increase participation of farming, tourism and other businesses in training and development programmes and provide opportunities for knowledge transfer and exchange of best practice
- Bring together businesses, education and FE sectors to train the next generation workforce (collaboratively and in partnership with local providers such as the Colleges and Skills Group) to meet the needs of the area: an employer rather than education-led programme of apprenticeships

Our asks:

- S1. Defra** – Devolution of Countryside Productivity skills funding to roll-out the successful 'Moor Skills' model of apprenticeships and skills development to ALL key sectors in the National Parks
- S2. Defra** – to consider how EAFRD growth programme could be used to support an employer-led training model and work with the LEP to bring forward this activity
- S3. Defra** – support for Farm and Food Network to deliver integrated actions to increase farm profitability within environmental limits

Growth

Developing strong conditions for business growth



Our offer:

- Distinctive local businesses and products that build on the unique environment within the two National Parks
- A track record of successful local collaboration (e.g. farming and tourism networks) that will provide a firm foundation for the Rural Productivity Network
- To develop a new type of Rural Productivity Network, for each National Park, based on collaboration both between and across clusters. The network will utilise a cluster facilitation approach (similar to that employed by the successful Hill Farms Projects) to support key sectors, working with businesses to, for example:

The two National Park Authorities will:

- Seek to develop their proactive approach to positive planning – using it as a tool to support development that both sustains the resource and supports local growth
- Use their role as place-based leaders, enablers and catalysts for change to host and support the Rural Productivity Network

Through the Rural Productivity Network we will:

- Test and develop a new approach to integrated development that is based on collaboration, local engagement, bringing together local businesses to support their development, improve their productivity and develop new markets and products

Our asks:

- G1. Defra** – to support the LEP and wider ESIF committee to bring forward a call under measure 16.4 (co-operation in supply chains) to allow the Parks to bid in for EAFRD resources for revenue funding to facilitate the establishment of the Network
- G2. Defra** – commitment to use Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks as test beds for development of innovative models to boost rural productivity
- G3. Defra** – work with us to explore Protected Geographical Status for key products from the two National Parks
- G4. Local partners** – to work with us to explore options for long-term financial sustainability through local devolution process
- G5. LEP** – resources (via the Local Growth Fund) to unlock workspace infrastructure requirements
- G6. DCMS** – DMO recognition for Exmoor / Dartmoor

Living

Easier to live in rural areas
(housing, affordable childcare)



Our offer:

- Positive planning practices are in place and the National Parks have been pilot authorities in the Government's Vanguard Self-build project
- Underemployment within the Parks is compounded by limited childcare options
- Housing stock old and difficult to treat for energy efficiency, leading to fuel poverty

The two National Park Authorities will:

- Continue to provide a flexible planning policy framework to help deliver new homes that meet the needs of local communities and employers
- Develop a collaborative approach to rural housing delivery and respond positively to the strong demand for self-build housing as part of the Vanguard pilot

Through the Rural Productivity Network we will:

- Develop collaborative childcare solutions in support of employment
- Continue and develop innovative approaches to energy in homes and communities (including woodfuel)

Our asks:

- L1. Homes and Communities Agency** – funding to create revolving self-build fund to assist with site acquisition and infrastructure provision to address the shortage of affordable housing and the need to retain a stock of affordable homes for local needs
- L2. DfE/Local Partners** – Seed funding to develop collaborate childcare models to address the difficulties of providing childcare in rural areas
- L3. LEP/ESIF Committee** – to bring forward call in relation to rural renewables

Devolution

Greater local control (devolution) and working with our neighbours



Our offer:

- National Parks provide a model of integrated delivery combining the management of ecosystem services (such as biodiversity, public access and water management) with wider economic development
- The existing Dartmoor Farming Futures pilot project has successfully involved farmers in the design, delivery and monitoring of an agri-environment agreement. This model of local empowerment and partnership working offers potential cost savings and a better evidence base for policy making
- Existing 'Green Prescription' models being piloted to improve mental and physical well-being and save money in the long-term

The two National Park Authorities will:

- Integrate local delivery of land management initiatives
- Actively work with Local Nature Partnerships and the voluntary sector to enhance biodiversity and support the aims of Defra's 25 year Environment Plan and link this with the Food and Farming Strategy
- Expand provision of health and well-being services within the National Parks, supporting the health of the wider area.

Through the Rural Productivity Network we will:

- Engage with businesses and communities to realise the opportunities for growth and productivity provided by high quality natural environment; developing a model where productivity applies not just to the economy but also to the environment
- Monitor natural capital in the National Parks and the contribution it makes to the wider economy and quality of life in the Heart of the South West area

Our asks:

- D1. Defra** – To work with us to join-up nationally led activity (including RDPE) at a local level, following the Farming Futures model
- D2. Defra** – To allow local schemes such as LEADER to set local priorities and criteria for EU funding streams within EU eligibility framework.
- D3. Neighbouring Authorities** – To work with us to develop a new model that helps cross subsidise environmental management in the National pParks from development on the boundaries that will increase visitor and other forms of pressure
- D4. Clinical Commissioning Groups and Neighbouring Authorities** – To work with us to further develop health and well-being proposals, building on the Green Prescription pilot work and devolution opportunities

What next?

We are seeking assistance from Defra to develop the Dartmoor and Exmoor RPN as a demonstrator project that will help deliver the Government's productivity agenda and achieve this in a way that integrates with the forthcoming Environment and Food and Farming Strategies.

As a model, the RPN builds on our strongest assets: the people, communities and spectacular environment of the National Parks. Our current networks are pioneers of collaborative approaches (e.g. hill farming and tourism) and local businesses clearly have an appetite to come together to tackle problems. We have worked with local businesses and stakeholders to develop this concept.

The HofSWLEP has also been actively involved and supports the proposal. The concept is also embedded in the 'Devolution for the Heart of the South West: A Prospectus for Productivity'. The HofSWLEP has confirmed that, at present, there is no opportunity for funding via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development though it could be eligible for funding (for example, under Measure 16.4).

The initiative offers Defra the opportunity to pilot a new approach that will help demonstrate how:

- Rural productivity can be improved through, for example, collaborative action to foster entrepreneurship, promote innovation and knowledge transfer
- A high quality, resilient environment and cultural heritage can be at the heart of rural growth and productivity
- New models of service provision and delivery can be developed to ensure the long-term sustainability of our rural communities
- Rural areas can provide effective and economic services to other areas (for example, health and water management)
- Traditional land-based industries can be developed to improve productivity and growth but also to deliver a range of environmental services

Our aim is for the initiative to become a recognised model of good practice that others can learn from. The proposal has the potential to fill a 'market gap': many of the examples of potential productivity and growth opportunities identified by local businesses are unlikely to happen without the capacity to support micro and small enterprises and get them to work together. The Network would provide capacity to do this.

Our key ask of Defra is to help us secure funding to establish and develop the RPN (perhaps through the Rural Development Programme for England).

Further information

For further information,
please contact:

Dr Kevin Bishop

Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Dartmoor National Park Authority
Parke
Bovey Tracey
NEWTON ABBOT
TQ13 9JQ

Email: aharris@dartmoor.gov.uk

Tel: **01626 831004**

Dr Nigel Stone

Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

Exmoor National Park Authority
Exmoor House
Dulverton
TAUNTON
TA22 9HL

Email: cacarder@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

Tel: **01398 322229**

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK PLANNING AUTHORITY

7 April 2017

**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.**

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

West Devon

Ref: 16/0048 Old Station Road, Horrabridge SX 5113 6941

Application to coppice a mature ash tree. The tree is in very poor condition. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.

Ref: 16/0059 Birchy Lake, Belstone SX 6201 9312

Application to reduce the canopy of a beech tree. The tree has an unbalanced crown and the works will improve the form of the tree. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

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

South Hams

Ref: 16/0049 Highfield, South Brent SX 7005 6034

Application to fell two cypress trees. The trees are suppressed and have poor form. Consent was granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the commencement of approved works.
2. Replacement planting of one standard rowan tree within the crown spread of the originals during the first planting season following felling.

SECTION 211 NOTICES

Teignbridge

Ref: 16/0050 **Wisteria Cottage, Lustleigh** **SX 7839 8107**

Notification to fell a cypress tree. The tree has minimal public amenity value and its removal will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0051 **Hoskings Court, Buckfastleigh** **SX 7394 6604**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0054 **Greenawell Lodge, Ashburton** **SX 5097 8475**

Notification to reduce a willow tree. The tree has lost several large limbs and the works are necessary to prevent further failure.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0057 **66 East Street, Ashburton** **SX 7587 7000**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

West Devon

Ref: 16/0052 **The Coach House, Lydford** **SX 5094 8475**

Notification to fell two rowan and three cherry trees, and to reduce a whitebeam and sycamore tree. The works will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0053 **Torside, Mary Tavy** **SX 5091 7865**

Notification to fell a group of poplar and a cypress tree. The poplar trees dominate the house and garden and branches are starting to fail. The cypress has little amenity value.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0055 **Eastholme, Chagford** **SX 6975 8772**

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

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0056

Heylands, Chagford

SX 6984 8761

Notification to remove overhanging branches from a eucalyptus and a maple. The works will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the trees.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0058

Clearview , Lydford

SX 5110 8487

Notification to fell a beech tree and reduce the canopy of another beech tree. The trees are growing in a small garden close to an adjacent property. Whilst the tree is in good health the garden is not large enough to sustain two mature trees. The Parish Council supported the removal of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

Ref: 16/0060

40 New Street, Chagford

SX 7018 8728

Notification to fell several semi-mature elm and ash. The trees have minimal amenity value and the felling will have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

BRIAN BEASLEY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Friday 3 February 2017

Present: Members:
K Ball (Chairman), A Cooper, P W Hitchins, D Lloyd, J McInnes, C Pannell
(Deputy Chairman), P Sanders, D Webber, M Retallick.

Officers:
A Kohler (Director of Conservation and Communities)
D Healy (Head of Business Support)
S Belli (Head of Planning)
N White (Head of Organisational Development)
A Shaw – Grant Thornton

Apologies: S Hill

451 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016 were signed as a correct record.

452 Declarations of Interest

None

453 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

None

454 Public Participation

None

455 Audit Plan for Dartmoor National Park Authority

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Shaw, Grant Thornton.

Mr Shaw presented the Audit Plan to Members and highlighted the planned scope and timing of the audit focusing on areas of significant risk and value for money. He highlighted the materiality levels set for the Authority's audit and brought any new risks to Members attention. The main change highlighted was the financial reporting presentation of accounts early close down and sign off by 31 July 2018 which given the success of the trial run last year, Mr Shaw believes to be achievable in 2017.

Mr Shaw confirmed the recently undertaken value for money initial risk assessment, did not identify any significant risks from those in the original risk assessment.

456 Financial Management 1 April to 30 December 2016 and Forecast of Financial Outturn 2016/17

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/AG/17/001), covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2016, quarters 1 to 3.

The Head of Business Support advised that, based on current projections a budget surplus of £26,274 is predicted. Members' attention was drawn to the main variations set out in section 2.3 of the report and detailed analysis at appendix 2.

The Head of Business Support took Members through the tables showing the majority of projects and work programme overspends and demonstrated how these are matched with income.

The only overspend not matched is the planning related professional fees but Members were advised that there is provision in reserves to cover this, if it cannot be met from in year underspends.

The Authority has also outperformed expectation in other income generating areas, for example:

- Payments for support and assistance from companies filming on the Moor
- Visitor Centre Sales up by over £20k
- Treasury deposit interest up by £7.5k

And for voluntary fundraising activity:

- £ for the Park £8,987
- Mend our Mountains Crowd Funding campaign £8,497
- And Donate for Dartmoor - in its inaugural year - £10,766

Of the £216,526 Project Fund budget - £207,204 has been allocated by Leadership Team for a variety of purposes as set out at 2.4 of the report. Some balances will be carried forward at year-end for projects and posts that span more than one financial year.

The final forecast year-end Reserve Balances will be determined between now and 31 March and is also dependent on the outcome of a report being presented to the Authority later today in respect of pensions.

The Head of Business Support concluded that it has been another year of good financial performance, expenditure continues to be well managed and the income generated to date has again exceeded expectation.

A Member commented that it is good to see the increase in Visitor Centre sales and asked whether this is being looked into to be increased further. In response, the Head of Business Support advised that a new Retail Officer commences in post next week with the intention to drive sales forward.

In response to a Member query relating to overspend on Development Management, the Head of Planning advised that planning fees are on target and that Planning are closely monitoring these. He also confirmed that it has been necessary to buy in some expert advice around some of the bigger planning issues which were unforeseen.

In response to a Member query relating to the deficit in the Communication budget, the Head of Business Support confirmed this is in relation to the Public Arts Project which is being funded from Reserves. A full report on the project will be provided at the next meeting in May.

A Member questioned the Visitor Management and Visitor Centres surplus which the Head of Business Support explained may have been partly due to a budget error and that the Key Campaigns Work has been deferred in Visitor Management, and with regard to Visitor Centres, sales income of £23,000 and vacancy savings.

Members commended the Head of Business Support and her team for their hard work.

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

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

457 Business Plan Monitoring and Performance Indicators Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 3

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/AG/17/002).

This report sets out how the Authority has performed in delivering the key actions identified in the Business Plan, as well as Performance Indicator data to Quarter 3.

Leadership Team has reviewed progress against the 26 key actions.

The Head of Organisational Development highlighted to Members the table at 2.3 showing a summary of progress and to note that 3 actions have been identified that are unlikely to be completed this year.

He also highlighted the Business Plan monitoring spreadsheet shown at Appendix 1 providing the detail of progress against the 26 key actions including updates from lead officers.

Members were invited to comment on the Authority's performance to date in delivering the current Business Plan.

The Director of Conservation and Communities responded to a Member query relating to the delivery of Moor than Meets the Eye projects where the Authority is the lead partner, reporting good progress with the Heritage Trail and Bellever and Postbridge Trails, but Postbridge Visitor Centre is delayed. An agreed way forward is required by autumn 2017.

The Head of Planning discussed with Members the change to red of Action 17 'planned delivery of key development sites' stating that the Authority has progressed matters as we are awaiting applications for these sites.

The Head of Organisational Development confirmed that a consultant will be assisting with the Local Plan work to help move it forward.

A Member commented on the spending targets of the Moor than Meets the Eye projects (Action 9) raising a concern about progress and financial liability. The Director of Conservation and Communities stated that given their concerns it would be opportune to bring a report to Audit and Governance meeting in May showing full details of the current position.

The Head of Organisational Development highlighted to Members the performance indicators set out in Appendix 2 setting out performance to Q3 against 40 indicators and Members were invited to comment on progress against the performance indicator targets.

The Head of Organisational Development reported that the performance indicator S12, sickness absence, remains a concern and a high risk to performance. Sickness absence has an impact financially and operationally and the Authority is not going to meet the target of 7 days in 2016/17. The Head of Organisational Development advised that he had met with managers in January to discuss how the issue of sickness might be addressed and actions were agreed to take forward now as priority.

These actions included a need to better understand the data, explore best practice in other National Parks and organisations, including benchmarking data from other NPAs. A Member asked whether the age profile had any influence and the reasons for sickness, for instance whether sickness due to stress is rising.

The Head of Organisational Development suggested that it would be useful to bring a report to the next meeting in May, including the benchmarking data and an update on progress with identified actions. He confirmed a number of measures are already in place to promote health and wellbeing including; flexible working practices and an employee assistance programme. The Head of Organisational Development also highlighted the Organisational Development Strategy, Developing Team Dartmoor which in part aims to improve organisational culture and morale which have an impact on sickness absence.

The performance indicators P1 & P2 show performance in Development Management has remained on target to Quarter 3; however, there are currently two vacancies in Planning (Head of Planning and Planning Officer (Development Management & Enforcement)) that may impact on performance.

Leadership Team recognise that the performance indicator E11, relating to number of events organised by DNPA, does not reflect the good work across Authority and in effect is under-reporting, therefore the methodology is being revised for 2017/18 to capture all events organised by Dartmoor National Park Authority (previously only Education).

In response to a Member question about the reporting of performance indicator P3 relating to number of volunteer days, the Director of Conservation and Communities

confirmed that the Voluntary Wardens hours only get reported at year end and therefore are not included to date; however, it is considered that we are under-reporting our Volunteer numbers and this is being reviewed.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Retallick

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report.

DRAFT