



MINUTES

Meeting: **National Park Authority**

Date: Friday 2 February 2024 at 10.00 am

Venue: Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell

Chair: Mr K Smith

Present: Mr J W Berresford, Cllr M Beer, Cllr P Brady, Cllr M Buckler, Prof J Dugdale, Cllr C Farrell, Cllr P G Fryer, Cllr N Gourlay, Cllr C Greaves, Cllr A Gregory, Cllr B Hanley, Cllr A Hart, Cllr L Hartshorne, Cllr D Murphy, Cllr A Nash, Cllr Mrs K Potter, Cllr K Richardson, Dr R Swetnam, Mr S Thompson, Cllr J Wharmby, Ms Y Witter and Cllr B Woods

Apologies for absence: Cllr M Chaplin, Ms A Harling, Cllr Mrs G Heath, Cllr I Huddleston, Cllr C O'Leary and Cllr V Priestley.

1/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER AND 1ST DECEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the National Park Authority Meeting held on 10 November 2023 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute Number 92/23 – Chair's Briefing

Where it states "Attended a meeting of the Derbyshire Archaeology Society" it should state "Attended a meeting of the Derbyshire Archaeology Advisory Committee".

The minutes of the last meeting of the National Park Authority Meeting held on 1 December 2023 were approved as a correct record.

2/24 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

3/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present to make representations to the Committee.

4/24 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5/24 CHAIR'S BRIEFING

The Chair introduced and welcomed Hannah Turner, the newly appointed Head of Assets and Enterprise, and Ben Cookson, the Interim Finance Manager, to the Members.

The Chair of the Authority provided the following verbal update to Members:

- Attended meeting of Planning Committee
- Attended meeting of Programme & Resources Committee
- Attended Members Forum and Workshops
- Along with the Chief Executive met with Lord and Lady Manners
- Participated in the interviews for the Head of Resources
- Joined a National Parks England Board Meeting via Teams
- Attended a face to face National Parks England Board Meeting in Southwark
- Attended Derbyshire Archaeology Day in Chesterfield
- Attended two meetings of the Governance Review Working Group which would report to the Authority in due course.

6/24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT (PM)

Updates from the Chief Executive since the production of his report:

- Angela Edwards had been appointed as the Authority Solicitor and would be starting in March 2024
- A notification of retirement had been received from Chris Dean, Moors for the Future Manager.
- The CEO roadshows had been launched
- The newsletter for MPs had been circulated to all Members
- A Briefing Paper on the role of the National Park will be sent to the Derby and Derbyshire, and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Combined Authority Mayoral candidates
- Supporting taking forward some proposals to take “in-house” the enforcement of car parking

Major announcement from DEFRA on Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.

- This is a very significant announcement which relates to setting the targets for Protected Landscapes and tying them into the Environment Plan. This will have significant impact on National Park and the methods of reporting. The Chief Executive shared with Members via a presentation the headlines of this announcement, the slides from this presentation will be circulated to the Members. The targets are set nationally and will need to be explored and digested. There are 3 categories of targets. These targets will need to be incorporated into the next Management Plan.
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act have a New Duty which public bodies have to take into account and these targets and the outcome framework will be addressed in the next management plan, more interim guidance is expected to arrive soon to explain the implications and how it is put into effect.

- A future funding settlement for Protected Landscapes and National Parks will be linked in some way to performance under this new framework. Due to expected political change and the implications of this only currently looking at a one year spending review for 2025/2026.

The Members noted that it was good to see that some clarity is coming through and noted that the management plan will need to be revisited. It is expected that in 18 months time there will be agreement for the targets that need to be apportioned to each protected landscape. The next Management Plan will need to incorporate the targets and reflect the Management Plan guidance that is still awaited.

It was recognised that Moors for the Future directly delivers to two of the targets. The Local Nature Recovery Plan would be reported to Members for adoption in the near future, it may need changing in light of this new information.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

7/24 STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT 2022/23 (JW)

The report, which asked Members to consider the External Auditors 2022/23 Annual Report, was presented by Mark Surridge of Mazars LLPA.

It was noted that there was an update to page 97, section 2 of the report. As a result of the work an additional error arose relating to the valuation of land and buildings by the Valuer and consequently there had been a book adjustment to comply with financial reporting standards. The 2022/2023 accounts can now be signed off with “clean opinion” later this month.

The report refers to a letter regarding the Derbyshire pension fund which should arrive this February, the letter is required to complete the signing off of the accounts. No impact on the accounts is expected from the contents of this letter.

Members queried the position the pension fund was in and whether there would need to be a change to the contributions over the next year. It was noted the Authority contribution is set for the next 3 years so no change is expected until 2026.

It was clarified that any fluctuations in the pension fund was not a risk for the Authority. The Chair asked for clarification and a more detailed response regarding the query about the huge movements on the pension scheme and asked what the term “other experience” means (page 73 of the report). The pension surplus/deficit is calculated as a snapshot and has not impacted on Authority reserves.

The recommendations set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the audited Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. To consider and note the External Auditor’s Audit Completion Report (ACR) at Appendix 2 of the report.**

- 3. To note the letter of management representation at Appendix A within Appendix 2 of the report needs to be signed by the Chief Finance Officer.**

8/24 2022/23 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

There were no updates to the presented report.

There was a discussion around Core Principle A- Issue 3 and whether it would be more appropriate within Core Principles D or E. It was agreed that Officers should amend the current Annual Governance Statement (AGS) accordingly and agreement was delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.

Members felt that there was scarcity in the report regarding governance arrangements and the effectiveness of the arrangements to deliver our aims. It was noted that this is a backward looking report (2022/23) and the points raised will be taken forward when producing the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.

There was a question to where the core principles come from and whether they overlap each other e.g. B and G both mention openness and transparency and there was possible duplication here. It was noted that the core principles are given to the Authority by CIPFA.

It was agreed that the Governance Review Working Group would consider the issues raised with regard to the format, content and nature of the content for future AGS reports.

The recommendations, with the agreed amendment to recommendation 1, were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 for sign off by the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of the Authority, subject to Officers reviewing the relevant sections (Core Principle A) and delegated to the Chair and the Chief Executive to agree the changes.**
- 2. To authorise the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make minor changes to the Code of Corporate Governance each year following publication of the Annual Governance Statement.**

9/24 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT BLOCK 1 2023/24

The report was presented by Mark Thomas of Veritau.

The report presented to Members the Internal Auditors recommendations for the first block on the 2023/24 Internal Audits and the agreed actions for consideration.

It was agreed to remove the wording "and the agreed actions considered" from recommendation 1.

The recommendation, with the agreed amendment, was moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

1. That the Internal Audit reports for the three areas covered under Block 1 for 2023/24 Project Management, Performance Management and Planning Enforcement be received.

10/24 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2027/28 (JW)

The report, which presented the Authority's 2024/25 revenue budget for Member approval was presented by the Head of Finance.

There were no updates to the published report.

The Chair thanked Justine Wells, the Finance Manager, for her work over the past 3 years and wished her good luck in her new role.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Authority's annual budget for the 2024/25 financial year as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To approve the increase of the Vacancy Factor from 4% to 5%.
3. To note the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the Authority in the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

11.49am Ben Cookson, Interim Finance Manager, left the meeting for the duration of the following item

11/24 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (S151 OFFICER)

There were no updates to the report.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To appoint the interim Finance Manager as interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) from 2nd February 2024 until the first day of service of a permanent Finance Manager.
- 2) To delegate the appointment of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chair of the Authority, as part of the appointment process for the permanent Finance Manager.

11:51 am Ben Cookson returned to the meeting

12/24 AUTHORITY PLAN 2023-28 UPDATE AND YEAR 2 LOOK FORWARD (2024/25 DECILE 3 & 4)

There were no updates to the presented report.

It was noted that this was a much improved document being more measurable than past documents and thanks were extended to the authors.

A question was asked as to why rights of way targets have not been set to exceed the national average and the reasons for this were explained.

Clarification was given regarding how each of the objectives in the report has one post responsible for the objective and this was the most appropriate post. Comments from Members were taken on board and regard would be given to them for the production of reports in the future.

The Chair queried the dates on Objective H and whether the date of March 2024 in the end column was correct and Officers agreed to look at this.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To approve the updated Authority Plan 23-28 provided at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2) To approve the Year 2 look forward actions provided at Appendix 2 of the report.
- 3) That any necessary changes to the proposed wording of the updated Authority Plan 23-28 are delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair.

11.05 AM Cllr Buckler declared an interest in the following item being a member of the Farming and Protected Landscapes Panel and left the room for the duration of the item.

13/24 FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES PROGRAMME - ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FOURTH YEAR

There were no updates to the presented report.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To approve the extension of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme for 2024-25, and to accept the additional funding allocated to the Authority for 2024-25.
- 2) To continue to temporarily suspend the operation of Standing Order 7.C-3 for the delivery of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme only, and to continue to adopt the requirements set out in the National

Framework document for the authorisation of grants under that programme.

- 3) To continue to delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer or their nominee to complete grant agreements authorised in accordance with the National Framework, in the standard form provided within the National Framework documents.**

11.07 Cllr Buckler returned to the meeting

14/24 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

There were no updates to the presented report.

Cllr Jean Wharmby was moved and seconded to be appointed to the Planning Committee in place of Cllr O'Leary until the annual meeting in July. This was put to the vote and carried.

The recommendations as set out in the report were moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To agree to the request from Cllr O'Leary, the Cheshire East representative, to move from the Planning Committee to the Programmes and Resources Committee and to confirm his appointment to the Programmes and Resources Committee until the annual Authority meeting in July 2024.**
- 2. To appoint Cllr Jean Wharmby as a Local Authority Member to the vacant Cheshire East place on the Planning Committee until the annual Authority meeting in July 2024.**

15/24 PROPOSED DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY JOINT WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING IN THE NATIONAL PARK AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The were no updates to the presented report.

Cllr Buckler asked if he needed to declare an interest in this item as he is the representative for Derbyshire Dales. It was not felt this was a conflict of interest.

Any Members who wish to be considered for appointment to this group were requested to email the Chair and Chief Executive with an expression of interest. A number of members indicated they would be interested in being appointed to the panel (Ms Harling, Cllr Brady, Cllr Beer and Cllr Nash). As some members were not in attendance at the meeting it was agreed that absent members would receive an email about membership on this joint working group.

Members requested that the efforts of former Members Cllr David Chapman and Cllr Chris Furness be acknowledged for that the work they did over the years in furthering this initiative, that it is had come to fruition and was being discussed with a way forward.

An amendment was made to Recommendation 2 to delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority the appointment of 3 Members to the Joint Working Group.

The recommendations with the amendment to Recommendation 2 were moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To agree to set up a Joint Working Group with Derbyshire Dales District Council regarding Housing in the National Park.**
- 2. To delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Authority the appointment of 3 Members to the DDDC and PDNPA Joint Working Group on Housing in the National Park.**
- 3. To confirm that attendance at meetings of the Joint Working Group is an approved duty for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances as set out in Schedule 2 of the Members' Allowance Scheme.**

16/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Hart gave a brief verbal update regarding the "Enjoy Staffordshire" initiative.

There were no other reports from outside bodies for consideration.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am