

6. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT (SLF)**

1. **Purpose of the report**

To up-date members of key items since the previous Authority meeting

2. **Recommendation**

1. **For members to note the report**

3. **Key Items**

National Park Management Plan/Corporate Strategy review: work on this review continues and a separate up-date paper is provided at this meeting for members.

Performance management – Quarter 1 exceptions: At the Authority meeting in November 2020 it was confirmed that future performance monitoring will be presented to Members twice a year - at 6 months into the financial year (end of quarter 2) and the end of the financial year (end of quarter 4). Members were reassured this will not affect Member scrutiny of Authority performance because the KPIs, strategic interventions and corporate risk register will continue to be monitored quarterly by the Management Team and any significant changes will be reported to Members within this Chief Executive’s update report to the Authority at Quarters 1 and 3. I have reviewed, with the Management Team, the quarter 1 progress and below are the key strategic areas of concern for reporting to members:

- In Q1 the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions have affected some of our strategic interventions, including developing and adopting the remaining Conservation Area appraisals (part of KPI 10), implementation of our diverse audience plan (part of KPI 11) and maximising income (part of KPI 13) although we have made some good progress in pay and display car parks and at North Lees campsite.
- Losses to staff plus Covid-19 restrictions and increased workload continued to affect the planning service in Q1 (see below for further detail of action being taken)
- The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme brings a risk of not spending the funding that is available this year by the deadline. This risk was highlighted in the report to the Authority on 2nd July 2021 (please see [here](#)) and whilst mitigation action is in train the strategic concern remains. This new programme is also having a knock-on impact on our capacity to deliver strategic intervention to develop a methodology for strategic sustainable landscape monitoring (part of KPI 12).
- The South West Peak Landscape Partnership Programme was due to be completed by the 31 December 2021. However, due to the impacts of Covid-19, a short extension beyond this date has been agreed for 2 of the projects together with key programme staff. Securing the legacy of all 18 projects is still on-going together with a strategic forward look with partners at further priority work required. The Authority’s future role is uncertain as it is still unable to recover all costs when accessing National Lottery Heritage Fund funding.
- There is no change to the 2021/22 corporate risk register.

Planning service up-date: In July I shared with members the plan we’ve put in place to help with resourcing in the planning service. These immediate measures are starting to assist - we’ll be welcoming 4 new starters in September, the temporary capacity we’ve added is assisting with moving through a backlog of planning application cases and Team Managers are continuing to use case management reviews to more actively triage applications to move cases along. However, there remain gaps which have occurred at a time when nationally planning applications have been rising, we have seen an increase in complaints and there has been an impact on staff morale. We are maintaining our focus on recovery - most notably building the capacity in the Monitoring and Enforcement Team, keeping moving through the large number of cases and maintaining the

momentum achieved in the Area Planning, Minerals and Planning Policy Teams on recruitment, induction and development pathways. While the focus for now is on recovery, we are also putting in place the foundation for maintaining the resilience of the service, such as more active case management reviews, process reviews, better use of management information and forward work planning. My thanks to the staff in the planning service, and the many others who support this work, for their hard work in these difficult times.

Deputy Chief Executive role: On 1st October the Deputy Chief Executive role will rotate from Emily Fox (who is undertaking the role from 1 April to 31 September 2021) to Andrea McCaskie (who will undertake the role until 31 March 2022). As agreed by the Authority, I will review this arrangement after a year of operation.

Peak District National Park Foundation: In its first two years the Peak District National Park Foundation raised £143,319 exceeding its £70,000 target and paid £91,939 to projects delivering management plan outcomes. This year the Foundation has had a positive start to Q1 of 21-22 with £32,176 in income. This is significantly up on Q1 income of £2,155 last financial year – demonstrating the impact of the first lockdown on fundraising. The Foundation now has 22 regular donors and [17 Peak Partners](#). The focus for Q1 public facing fundraising has been the [Peak District Proud Fund](#), which has enabled the purchase of [50 litter picking kits for volunteers](#) across the Park as well as a £500 grant to support other **Peak District Proud** Ambassador activities. Volunteer [Ranger Andy Yates has raised an additional £480 for the PDP fund in just one week!](#) The fundraising focus remains on increasing regular donors with a social marketing campaign planned for September, growing Peak Partners, applying for funding and developing a major gifts programme. The Foundation has appointed Andy Robinson CEO of the Lindley Educational Trust as a treasurer trustee.

Sustainable Travel: Throughout the last year we have continued to develop our thinking with our partners about the future for sustainable, low carbon travel in the Peak District, reducing and managing the impact of car use whilst seeking better integration from mass public transit to active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) for all. Headlines include:

- The link below is a presentation for Business Peak District by myself and the Chair of the Authority, Andrew McCloy, in May on our the emerging ideas [Sustainable Transport in the Peak District National Park - YouTube](#)
- The Hope Valley Explorer seasonal bus service has returned this summer, again in partnership with Stagecoach. The service is running on weekends and Bank Holidays from 24 July until 30 October 2021. The timetable is here: [Novus-Publish Service Specific Vertical Normal - Copyright © Trapeze Group \(UK\) Ltd. \(derbysbus.info\)](#). For the first time the buses will also include on board cycle storage for two bikes via specially designed racks. As a result of the use of larger vehicles, for COVID requirements, the route will unfortunately not be able to take in Edale due to the narrow roads, but will continue to link up the sites in the Upper Derwent down to the Hope Valley and through to Castleton and the Blue John Mine.
- We have added a short statement to our website in regard of our position with proposals for re-instating a railway line along the Monsal Trail – it can be seen [here](#).

4. Appendices

None

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive, 25 August 2021