

## **INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To up-date Members of key items since the May Authority meeting

### **2. Recommendation**

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

### **3. Key Items**

#### **National Park England Bulletin**

The monthly activity reports from National Parks England at **Appendix 1** provide highlights of areas of interest during the period April – June 2022.

#### **A57 Link Roads Scheme Examination – Authority Update**

Following the Authority's formal objection to the scheme in February, Officers attended Issue Specific Public Hearings of the Examination in both February and April. Specific questions were addressed to the Authority in advance, with the Hearings providing the opportunity to provide oral representations in response to these questions. Officers also provided written responses to these and a number of rounds of written questions from the Examining Authority.

As the Examination progressed, it was evident that the Examining Authority recognised and understood the tensions between the applicant's submission and the requirement to have regard to Section 62 of the Environment Act; and to demonstrate that regard.

National Highways and Officers of the Authority prepared Statement of Common Ground, but ultimately, this served to highlight the differences in perspective between the two organisations with regard to the impact of the scheme on the National Park.

The Examination officially closed at midnight on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The Examining Authority's report will be published no later than 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The Secretary of State should then make a decision no later than 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

#### **Investors in People Re-Assessment**

The Authority has been Investors in People accredited since 2013. This year we are delighted to have received Silver in our latest assessment. Silver is a fantastic achievement and something that only 15% of organisations that are assessed, achieve. Investors in People measure organisations using a four-stage performance model. At our last assessment in 2019, we were accredited at the Developed Bronze level. Despite how challenging the last three years have been, we have progressed to the Established Silver level. Our ambition moving forward over the next three years is to strive towards the Advanced Gold level.

In 2019 we also opted to be assessed for the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Award. Over the last three years the health and wellbeing of our people has been our priority. This effort has been recognized by receiving Silver accreditation. This award puts us in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of wellbeing.

Action plans will be drafted based on recommendations from the reports. Progress will be monitored by the Investors in People Delivery Group. To keep our accreditation, we need to keep meeting, or exceeding the requirements of the awards. We will meet with

our assessor again in 12 and 24 months to discuss our progress, and will be reassessed in no more than 3 years.

### **Updates from the Asset Management Service**

- **Cattis Side Cottage & North Lees Campsite**

The works to refurbish and fit out Cattis Side Cottage as a holiday let are now complete and bookings are being taken. The former warden's accommodation was in a dilapidated condition prior to the works after a lengthy tenancy and subsequently being empty for a number of years while options for the property and wider North Lees Estate were considered and developed. Cattis Side Cottage has now been fully refurbished including full re-plastering using insulated lime plaster, an air source heat pump, new spring water supply and sewage treatment system, full internal fit out and furnishing. It is now in excellent condition and provides a very attractive property for visitors to the Estate. Work will now progress to monitor the success of the site before decisions are brought forward regarding other accommodation proposals for the Estate.

Works are also now complete on the modernisation of the facilities at North Lees Campsite which were constructed in the 1970's. The facilities now meet the needs of the changing customer base of the campsite which attracts people from a wide range of locations and backgrounds. The refurbishment element of the project will be followed by the installation of a heat pump to provide heating and hot water and solar PV panels once the busy summer period is over.

- **Woodland Work**

In April 2021, the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum*, a highly infectious plant disease, was confirmed in Stanage Plantation on the North Lees Estate. We were issued with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) that legally required us to remove all larch and sweet chestnut trees in the plantation by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022. In mid-January 2022 a further extension to the SPHN required the additional removal of all larch and sweet chestnut trees in three more compartments of woodland at North Lees (Tain Wood, Dennis Knoll and Ridgewayside) by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

All four sites were subject to a variety of constraints, including the SSSI surrounding Stanage Plantation, the very steep topography of Tain wood, ecological constraints at Ridgewayside and the Scheduled Monument covering the majority of Dennis Knoll plantation.

The works were completed successfully meeting the tight SPHN deadlines, imposed by Natural England to avoid the bird nesting season, for Stanage Plantation, Tain and Dennis Knoll felling all the stated trees safely and removing them across a SSSI. Throughout the works we were able to keep access open to the public using effective and timely communications.

Due to the presence of a protected species the works for the Ridgewayside will be undertaken during September/ October later this year.

To date these works have resulted in the extraction of a total of 877 tonnes of timber (422 tonnes Woodchip quality, 435 tonnes of saw log quality). Which is being marketed and removed from site.

Felled areas will be re-stocked through natural regeneration and re-planting with a mixture of broadleaf species, including oak, birch, alder and rowan. Though felling of infected areas change the feel and look of our woodlands, we have taken this as an opportunity to look at how we can help to make our woodlands resilient to other tree pests and diseases and other pressures such as climate change.

- **Warslow Moors Estate – Pump Farm-Development project**

The second phase of a major development project at Pump Farm on the Warslow Moors Estate is nearing completion. A new workshop and machinery shed has been constructed for the use of the Estate Ranger and to house a range of machinery utilised including a tractor, trailer and Soft Trak all-terrain vehicle. This phase builds on the first phase which saw the complete restoration of a large traditional barn and conversion to office accommodation for a number of field base Authority staff including the Estate Ranger, Area Ranger and Peak Park Conservation Volunteers staff. The site is now a 'hive of activity' in the centre of Warslow village which realises one of the intentions of the project to bring the Authority's work on the Estate closer to the local community.

Further development of the site is proposed with a report to Programmes and Resources Committee following the approval of our revised Capital Strategy.

#### **4. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – National Parks England Bulletin April/May & May/June 2022.

#### **Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Andrea McCaskie, Interim Chief Executive, 13 July 2022