
MINUTES

Meeting:	National Park Authority
Date:	Friday 15 March 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, Cllr M Chaplin, Cllr C Farrell, Cllr P G Fryer, Cllr N Gourlay, Cllr C Greaves, Cllr A Gregory, Prof J Dugdale, Cllr B Hanley, Cllr L Hartshorne, Cllr C O'Leary, Cllr Mrs K Potter, Cllr V Priestley, Cllr K Richardson, Dr R Swetnam, Mr S Thompson, Ms Y Witter and Cllr B Woods
Apologies for absence:	Ms A Harling, Cllr A Hart, Cllr Mrs G Heath, Cllr I Huddleston, Cllr D Murphy, Cllr A Nash and Cllr J Wharmby.

17/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2024

The minutes of the last meeting of the National Park Authority Meeting held on the 2nd February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Members asked whether clarification had been received from Mazars regarding the very large movement in the so called "other experiences" in the pension fund. The Interim Finance Manager reported that he hadn't received clarification as yet so he would go back to Mazars to chase that up.

18/24 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

19/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

20/24 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21/24 CHAIR'S BRIEFING

The Chair of the Authority provided the following verbal updates to Members.

- Attended an introductory meeting with the Leaders and CEO of High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- Attended a Europarc webinar presentation on the use of remote sensing in peatland recovery which was also attended by some of the Moors for the Future staff. The presentation was led by a representative of the North Pennine National Landscape.
- Together with the CEO attended a CNP meeting on the 28th February ahead of the launch of their health check report on the state of nature in National Parks. The meeting was to give an opportunity for National Parks to comment on the issues as presented verbally before they were finalised. The publication will appear on the 10th April 2024.
- Met Matt Relf, the Independent Mayoral Candidate for East Midlands Combined Council Authority.
- Attended a briefing regarding the use of AI in assessing land cover in the Peak District. This is to be discussed at a future Member Forum.
- Together with the CEO, attended an introductory meeting with the Leader and CEO of Staffordshire County Council.
- Attended a briefing on the development and the launch of the East Midlands Combined Council Authority, which the Chair and CEO will attend in Chesterfield on the 20th March.
- Attended various other meetings within the Organisation and currently shortlisting for the post of Head of Resources with the CEO.

Members asked that thanks be given to the Data Strategy and Performance Officers Simon Geikie and David Alexander on their work on AI to enable the Authority, landowners and policy makers to make much more nuance decisions about the best use of the land for nature recovery and other activities.

Ms Witter joined the meeting at 10:15

22/24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

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

- Toby Perkins, Shadow Nature and Rural Affairs lead MP for Chesterfield visited the park on the 8th March looking at rural affairs within the National Park including rural housing, farming and tourism/visitor issues.
- Met representatives from Homes England discussing rural housing and the extra cost in building affordable houses in a National Park. Homes England agree that building rural housing is a priority for them and they are aware that it costs more to build houses in a protected landscape so they are prepared to offer an extra grant for that.
- Attended another delivery group meeting for the National Park Management Plan with presentations from representatives from Chatsworth and the National Trust on their estate plans. DEFRA will be producing a non-statutory guidance to assist public bodies on how the new duty affects them to further the purposes of National Parks.
- DEFRA have set a new outcomes framework and targets that the Authority is going to have to meet. A timetable setting out when they are going to release the data will be sent out in April. A contract for consultants to work out the apportionment will be sorted.

Cllr Potter noted that funding of 100k had been confirmed via Active Travel England for the Authority to work on walking and cycling strategies but asked that Parishes affected

be notified on proposed extensions of any cycleways. The CEO confirmed that Officers would consult the Parish Councils and local communities on anything proposed.

Ms Swetnam asked if there was any indication from Homes England on the mechanism on the extra funding available and who it needs to get too? The CEO confirmed that it was for the developers to apply for the funding not the Authority.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

23/24 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT

The Chair introduced Sinead Butler as the newly appointed Finance Manager and Chief Financial Officer. Sinead was currently working with the Interim Finance Manager, Ben Cookson during a handover period.

The report which asked Members to approve the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement was introduced by Ben Cookson, the Interim Finance Manager.

It was noted that there was no climate change implications mentioned in the report, but where investment strategies are concerned they may include fossil fuels and the Authority needs to be aware of this. The Interim Finance Manager stated that he would check with North Yorkshire Council to see what their investments are and report back to Members.

Members queried whether the interest on borrowings was fixed or variable and the Interim Finance Manager confirmed that it was fixed.

Members also asked whether a similar liability graph that the NYC had produced could be circulated to Members as it was very useful. It was also noted that the recommendations in the report needed correcting as the section numbers referenced were incorrect.

Members asked what happens after 2025 when the current SLA expires. The Interim Finance Manager responded that there was a 6 month notice period with NYC so this would need to be considered, however, the Authority did not have the expertise in-house so would need an SLA with another Authority or Organisation.

The recommendations, subject to amendments to the renumbering of the sections referenced were, moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Authority considers and approves the Treasury Management Strategy Statement in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. That the Authority considers and approves the strategies contained within the Strategy Statement, namely the Annual Investment Strategy (section 5), Interest Rate Strategy (section 6) and Borrowing Strategy (section 7) of the report.**
- 3. That the Authority adopts the Annual Investment Strategy from the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) as the over-arching Investment Strategy for the Authority's invested reserve funds.**
- 4. That the Authority reviews and approves the Prudential Indicators (section 8) of the report.**

5. That the Authority reviews and approves the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (section 9) of the report.

24/24 PAY REVIEW POLICIES

Theresa Reid the Head of People Management presented the report to Members and informed them that the report had been presented to the Resource Management Meeting on the 12th March and it had been agreed on how the new incentive arrangements would be funded.

In response to Members queries the Head of People Management informed Members that there were 9 hard to fill posts but that 5 of them were now on offer following recent interviews, leaving 4 posts still vacant.

Members were concerned that it needed to be clear on who was making the decision on the incentive payments as there could be some dispute if identical posts were being paid at different rates. The Officer explained that a case had to be made by the Recruiting Manager supported by the Head of Service, before seeking support from the Chief Financial Officer and People Manager.

Members thanked the Officer for the detailed report.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Recruitment and Retention Incentives Policy in Appendix 1 of the report is approved.**
- 2. The Probation Policy in Appendix 2 of the report is approved.**
- 3. The Acting-up and Honoraria Policy in Appendix 3 of the report is approved.**

25/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES - NONE SUBMITTED

It was noted that no reports had been received.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am