

## **10. REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

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

To consider the recommendations arising from the discussions at meetings of the Governance Review Working Group.

#### **Key Issues**

- **During 2023 a range of issues were highlighted that it was felt would benefit from being reviewed by the Governance Review Working Group. The Group has met monthly since December 2023 to develop a number of recommendations and its first report is attached as Appendix 1.**

### **2. Recommendations**

- 1. To approve the recommendations of the Governance Review Working Group as set out in Appendix 1.**

#### **How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. Our existing Code of Corporate Governance states that Governance is about how we ensure that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises of the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which we are directed and controlled and through which we account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead communities. Governance is more than making sure that things do not go wrong or fixing them if they do. Good governance adds value by ensuring effectiveness in ever changing circumstances
4. Although both our Internal and External Auditors have raised no issues with our current governance procedures it is expected that the Authority will periodically review its governance arrangements and it was anticipated that this review would contribute to this process.

#### **Background Information**

5. The Authority established a Governance Review Working Group in 2018 with terms of reference agreed to undertake a review of the governance arrangements of the Authority in so far as they relate to the making of decisions by both Members and Officers. Reports were made in 2019 and 2020 and the Group continued to be appointed to annually to enable it to respond to issues as they arose.
6. The current Members of the Working Group are Prof Janet Dugdale (Chair of the Group), Mr James Berresford, Cllr Patrick Brady, Cllr Charles Greaves, Cllr Ken Richardson, Mr Ken Smith and Cllr Becki Woods.
7. In 2023 a range of issues were identified as needing consideration by the Group and meetings were arranged starting in December 2023. The topics currently being considered are:
  - Standing Orders
  - Role of Members
  - Member Champions
  - Public Participation
  - Audit, Budget and Project Monitoring
  - Cycle of Meetings
  - Committee Report Template

- Information for Members in Advance of the Annual Meeting
  - Member Learning and Development
8. The recommendations of the Working Group have been developed through discussion and, where relevant, looking at examples of best practice from other National Park Authorities and our constituent councils. The discussions centred around visibility, being transparent, effectiveness and officers and members working in partnership. They also included how to use the Member Forum more effectively, enabling Members to be more aware of workstreams before being asked to make decisions at Authority and Committee meetings
  9. The Group will be reviewing the current Committee report template. This will include considering workstreams and their visibility, for example, budget setting and annual Authority Plan actions being more visibly aligned in their presentation.
  10. The first report from the current Working Group covers the following issues and sets out a number of recommendations. These were presented to the Member Forum on 12 April 2024:
    - A. The Role of Members
    - B. Member Champions
    - C. Creation of a new Audit, Budget and Project Risk Monitoring Group
    - D. Pre-Information for Members in advance of Annual Authority Meetings.

### **Proposals**

11. The Working Group is proposing a number of recommendations which the Authority is asked to approve, details of which are set out in Appendix 1. The recommendations include (i) changes to Member role description, (ii) the replacement of the current Budget Monitoring Group with a new Audit, Budget and Project Risk Monitoring Group with a wider remit, (iii) discontinuation of the Member Champions to allow more Members to be involved in more areas of the Authority's work, and (iv) provision of pre-information to inform the Annual General Meeting.

### **Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

#### **Financial:**

12. The proposals in this report can be delivered within existing budgets. However any additional proposals may have an impact on budgets and staffing resources.

#### **Risk Management:**

13. The Working Group has considered risks to achieving expected outcomes and how to mitigate these as part of its work.

#### **Sustainability:**

14. There are no issues to highlight.

#### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:**

15. There are no issues to highlight.

#### **16. Climate Change**

There are no issues to highlight.

#### **17. Background papers (not previously published)**

None.

**18. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Report of the Governance Review Working Group - May 2024.

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

Ruth Crowder, Customer and Democratic Support Manager, on behalf of the Governance Review Working Group, 09 May 2024.