

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT (PM)

1. Purpose

To up-date Members of key items since the previous Authority meeting and to give an update on corporate risks.

2. Context

National issues

The new government has made water quality a key focus and appears to be taking action to force water companies to raise standards. At the same time a BBC report into water quality in National Parks found widespread breaches of standards, particularly for pharmaceutical elements found in rivers. One of the highest levels of such pollution was found near Tideswell which attracted some national media coverage. Addressing the issue lies largely outside of the responsibility or control of the Authority but the new duty to seek to further our purposes is something we should be able to use when dealing with water companies.

The national media has also been covering the state of nature in National Parks and issues around governance. Again, we would not really argue with the analysis of nature in National Parks, however the media invariably fails to make it clear that National Park Authorities do not have sufficient powers or resources to be able to address many of the causal factors. The governance issues raised are worth further discussion although any reduction in the number of Members would need to be supported or led by government, which has been lacking in the past. The diversity of Members is something Authorities should have more influence over or at least those nominating Members to the Authority should have. The age, gender, ethnic and knowledge specialism diversity of the Peak District's Members seems broader than some other National Parks but it does feel there is more that we could do to address this locally. Links to two Guardian articles below:

[How national parks failed nature – and how to fix them | National parks | The Guardian](#)

[England's national parks overseen by 'bloated', mostly white male boards | National parks | The Guardian](#)

National Parks England is keeping a close watch on any future financial settlement for National Parks. There is as yet no indication of what the future might look like but it seems as though we will be getting a one year settlement for next year and then a three or four year settlement to follow on from a comprehensive spending review. We know that Defra, as a non-protected department, is inevitably going to face cuts. We don't yet know whether National Parks will be protected in some way within Defra or whether we will be looking at some form of continued or further cut.

By the time of this Authority meeting the National Parks UK conference will have taken place in Newcastle. A verbal update/report will be given to Members at the Authority meeting.

At our Authority we host the UK Communications Unit for all National Parks, National Parks Partnership and National Parks England. Unfortunately, the Director of the unit, Meg Orpwood-Russell, will shortly be leaving us so I will now undertake a recruitment process and put temporary cover measures in place. You may also have seen that the Director of National Parks Partnership, Naomi Conway, will be leaving and a recruitment process is also underway for that role. Thankfully, the Director of National Parks England, Jayne Butler, is doing a tremendous job and the team at NPE is growing in response to funding opportunities for specific pieces of work.

National Park Management Plan issues

Recently there was a well-attended meeting of the Management Plan Delivery Group with representatives from most partners on the call. We are still exploring and learning how best to rally this group and use the meetings to share information, inspire each other and do some holding to account. A subsequent meeting with Derbyshire County Council took place which reflected DCC's key role in the Management Plan and also the size and complexity of their organisation. The meeting was aimed at making sure key officers at DCC were fully aware of and aligned to Management Plan issues and likewise that the Authority understands the range and challenge of issues DCC are dealing with.

Engagement with our new MPs has also started. Jon Pearce from High Peak came in to Aldern House for a good discussion with the Chair and myself. We are planning a wider MP briefing event where we are inviting all nine MPs to attend. Take up has so far been limited, possibly whilst new MPs get a measure of their local issues and better understand the parliamentary timetabling requirements.

We recently hosted a workshop of partners and potentially interested parties to explore the new National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Landscape Connections' programme, which is the largest and longest-term funding stream NLHF have ever created for protected landscapes. There was an excellent level of attendance and engagement and a number of potential project ideas were discussed. This work will now be taken forward via a small group and the Authority will fund some project management capacity. It is hoped that we can be in a position to make a submission for a development grant next spring which we would hope would lead to significant funding for a long-term project. The focus of the new grant programme is very much nature recovery with a secondary emphasis on making National Parks more accessible, especially to new audiences.

Moors for the Future Partnership recently ran an excellent conference on natural capital financing for upland restoration. The event in Buxton was well attended and included many inspiring case studies of restoration and partnership working. The second day of the event involved a field trip to see the Combs Moss restoration programme. The Moors for the Future team put together a fantastic programme and delivered a first-class event. I cannot imagine a more cutting-edge and informed debate on these important topics happening anywhere else. Very well done to the team.

Work continues with our Visitor Centre and Cycle Hire review. It has taken some time to carefully understand our current operations and consider future developments. That is now largely complete and we should be able to move forward at a quicker pace to implement the changes we will be seeking. The Foundation have secured additional funding from their donor to help support change and innovation in our operations. This support is incredibly helpful. Through the Foundation I would like to express my continued gratitude to this benevolent individual, who the Authority is fortunate to have supporting our work.

Work has been continuing in the development of a sustainable travel framework for the Authority. This is still at an early stage but will be brought to Members at a forthcoming Forum. Related work on area management and addressing user pressure is continuing, which again will be brought to a future Forum.

We have started work on producing a new Communications Plan for the Authority. This is at an early stage but aims to be comprehensive, with a view to ensuring our approach to and delivery of communications matches the changed environment we are operating in. Part of our existing approach to communications is to meet residents and local businesses through the CEO Roadshows, which are now resuming after a summer break. Forthcoming Roadshows will be covering Bradfield, Kettlethulme, Parwich and Winkle.

By the time of the Authority meeting we will also have held a 'Wider Management Team' awayday. This is the team of people who report to our Heads of Service. This vital group of colleagues directly line manage most of the other staff we have and as such they are a significant group of leaders. It is important this group has a clear say in what we deliver and how we do it. They are also key in delivering downwards and the awayday will be a chance to share more across the organisation. One of the key outcomes is to identify how we can work better together across the organisation for our shared objectives...thinking beyond team or Service. We will also be beginning the Service level planning for next year and it is important that thinking does not happen within the silos of Services alone. Thanks to some of our Chairs and Vice Chairs for attending part of this day to help build relationships between Members and staff.

Below is a list of some of the meetings attended recently:

- Helen Garvey, Bakewell Mayor
- Victoria Manton, Natural England
- Peak District National Park Summit Site Visit & meeting, Nicolle Ndiweni Derbyshire PCC
- South Yorkshire Local Visitor Economic Partnership (LVEP)
- Stephen Vickers, CEO Devonshire Group
- Natural England Peak District visit along with Tony Juniper, the National Trust and Forestry Commission
- CEO Roadshow for local businesses and launch of the Peak District Business Hub at Aldern House
- Jon Pearce MP High Peak
- Patrick Flaherty, CEO Staffordshire County Council
- Chatsworth Show
- National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Connections – Brainstorming session
- Craig Best, General Manager National Trust
- MFFP Green Financing in the Uplands Conference
- Jo Dilley MD of Visit Peak District & Derbyshire
- CEO Roadshow at Bradfield Village Hall

3. Proposals

3.1 None

4. Recommendations

1. For Members to note the report

5. Corporate Implications

- a. Legal
None
- b. Financial
None
- c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan
None
- d. Risk Management
None

e. Net Zero
None

6. Background papers (not previously published)
None.

7. Appendices
None.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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