

Peak District National Park Authority

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## MINUTES

Meeting: **National Park Authority**

Date: Friday 22 May 2020 at 10.00 am

Venue: Cisco Webex Meeting Room

Chair: Cllr A McCloy

Present: Cllr D Chapman, Cllr J Atkin, Cllr W Armitage, Mr J W Berresford, Cllr P Brady, Cllr M Chaplin, Cllr C Farrell, Cllr C Furness, Cllr A Gregory, Prof J Haddock-Fraser, Mr Z Hamid, Cllr Mrs G Heath, Mr R Helliwell, Cllr B Lewis, Cllr C McLaren, Cllr Mrs K Potter, Cllr V Priestley, Miss L Slack, Mr K Smith, Cllr P Tapping, Cllr R Walker, Cllr G D Wharmby, Ms Y Witter and Cllr B Woods

Apologies for absence: Mr P Ancell, Cllr A Hart, Cllr I Huddleston and Mrs C Waller.

### **24/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the last Authority meeting on 13 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### **25/20 URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business

### **26/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no public speakers

### **27/20 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

#### **Item 13**

The majority of Members had received an email from Anne Robinson on behalf of Friends of the Peak District regarding this item.

Cllr Mrs K Potter also declared she had a personal interest as a member of Friends of the Peak District.

Cllr B Woods declared a personal interest as the Derbyshire County Council Councillor for the area of the county where the project would take place.

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## **28/20 AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE**

The Chair reported the following items:

- The Chair of the Authority paid tribute to Cllr Doug Birkinshaw who had recently passed away after serving as a Member of the Authority since 2012 and as Vice Chair of Planning Committee since 2014. The Chair asked the meeting to pause for a moment as a mark of respect for Cllr Birkinshaw and also all those who had lost their lives and suffered as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for her leadership through this difficult time and all Officers for their continued work through the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that emergency procedures for Planning Committee had been invoked and it was noted that Chairs and Vice Chairs had regular updates with the Leadership Team of the Authority. The Chair identified the following three key messages:
  - i. The importance of National Parks as a National Asset for mental and physical health
  - ii. Respecting and protecting the communities
  - iii. Post Covid opportunities to make National Parks centre of environmental and economic recovery.

## **29/20 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (SLF)**

The Chief Executive thanked the Chair and Members for their support and outlined the following key areas:

1. Community Support – clear messaging on support for communities including asking visitors to consider the impact of their visit and the safety of the communities.
2. All Authority owned car parks had been opened to relieve the pressure on roads and communities with a trial car park status report system providing information regarding which car parks were open or full. It was confirmed that all other visitor-facing services remained closed.
3. Rangers were working with the police and continued to monitor the high fire risk.

## **30/20 INTERNAL AUDIT 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT (DH)**

Ian Morton, Audit Manager, Veritau, introduced the report and confirmed that there were no special investigations during the year and the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating in the Authority in 2019/20 was that it provided Substantial Assurance.

A qualification had been added to the report in light of the current coronavirus pandemic which had occurred at the end of the audit year but Veritau had no specific concerns regarding the Authority's approach.

The Internal Audit team thanked Officers for their cooperation throughout the year.

The recommendation as set out in the report was moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note and accept the 2019/20 Annual Report from the Internal Auditors as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**

### **31/20 OUTTURN REPORT (A.137/22/PN)**

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the outturn report for the 2019/2020 financial year, the final year of the four year National Park Grant commitment confirmed in 2016. It was noted that some income targets for the year had not been reached due to the impact of poor weather during 2019. Adjustments had been made to the end of year figures to take into account the impact of closures due to Covid-19 and adjustments had been made to the budget for 2020/21. No specific assistance was expected from Defra to deal with the impact of Covid-19 on budgets and a recommendation was made in the report to set up a Covid Emergency Reserve to cover income gaps.

Further consideration would be given to the likely cost to the Authority during the first and second quarters of the financial year to enable a more accurate calculation of costs and which reserves would be needed to cover the losses.

Clarification was provided on cycle hire centres under performance due to work on merging management roles resulting in an increase in the use of casual staff and a loss of income due to wet weather.

The Director of Corporate Strategy & Development and the Chief Financial Officer provided clarification on large variances shown in Appendix B of the report.

Variances on the South West Peak Project were due to the nature of the funding for the project.

The Head of Policy & Communities confirmed that funding received for brown field sites was a set amount for all local authorities to be used for community initiatives and development.

The Chair requested that Members received regular updates on the budget and the impact of the Covid-19 Emergency.

The recommendation as set out in the report was moved, seconded, voted on and carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the outturn be noted, and the slippage requests and specific reserve appropriations shown in Appendix C of the report be approved.**

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 11.05 and reconvened at 11.15.

### **32/20 2019/20 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2019-20 PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS PLAN AND 2020/21 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Senior Strategy Officer – Research introduced the Performance & Business Plan section of the report which provided monitoring information for the end of Quarter 4 2019/20, the first year of the Corporate Strategy for the period 2019-24. Changes to the

format of the 2020/2021 report were outlined including the inclusion of a summary from Leadership Team on their respective areas of the Performance & Business Plan.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there were no amber indicators in the 2019/20 report as they were not used at the end of the year report. Those actions with red indicator showed what action management need to take. Not all of the resolutions were within the control of the Authority as they relied on work with partners or were pioneering or new work.

It was noted that consideration would be given to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance during the last two weeks of the 2019-20 year. The financial plan and strategy would be reviewed and a report presented to Members when there was a clearer understanding of the impact.

The following points were noted in response to questions from Members:

- KPI6 - it was confirmed that a presentation on the Tree Strategy which had been deferred from a previous Member Forum would be rescheduled to address the issues Members had raised. Members were asked to report back to the Director of Conservation and Planning any tree planting they were aware of so the information could be included in the statistics.
- KPI7 - Breeding Birds Survey – It was confirmed that discussions were taking place with the consultants that carried out the work to check the methodology used for the report.

Members were invited to send more detailed queries to the Director of Conservation and Planning following the meeting.

The Director of Commercial Development & Engagement provided an update on the status of the Peak District National Park Foundation, confirming that £80,000 had been raised and distributed to several projects.

The Director of Commercial Development and Engagement also provided an update on the response to Covid-19 regarding facilities within the National Park and confirmed that the Authority was benchmarking against other organisation regarding provision of toilet facilities and working with partners to address issues caused by the lockdown rules being eased. He confirmed that the Peak District Proud message was an important campaign and would be at the heart of the National Park's recovery. Members were asked to promote the campaign.

The Chief Executive confirmed that further funding from the Discover England Fund had not been received as it had been reallocated to support Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Head of Policy & Communities confirmed that over half of the Peak District Parishes had responded to the engagement on the Parish Statements and added more detail. The documents would be regularly updated and promoted as ongoing documents.

The Senior Strategy Officer – Research introduced the Corporate Risk Registers section of the report. A new risk had been added for the 2020/21 year relating to the Covid-19 impact.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Recovery Plan both for the National Park and the organisation as follows:

- The recovery plan for the National Park included communication with communities and visitors and the management of visitor facing activities. The aim was to provide a safe home for communities and a safe welcome within the remit of what the National Park Authority was able to do.
- The recovery plan for the National Park Authority as an organisation focused on staff and the financial impact on the Authority. Leadership Team were meeting twice a week to look at the impact on staff and to plan and work with them. Weekly communications from the Chief Executive and Human Resources were sent out to staff and a survey sent to staff had had a good response and showed that staff were feeling supported. The survey also provided good information to help plan the next stages of recovery for staff and the work of the Strategic Leadership Team with the Chief Financial Officer continued.

The recommendation as set out in the report was moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Q4 and year end performance report, set out in Appendix 1b of the report, be noted and any actions to address issues agreed.**
- 2. That the Performance and Business Plan content in Appendix 2 of the report be approved and completion of details delegated to the Chief Executive, to allow publication by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2020.**
- 3. That the 2019/20 year end corporate risk register given in Appendix 3 of the report be noted and the status of the risks accepted.**
- 4. That the start of year 2020/21 corporate risk register given in Appendix 4 of the report be noted and the proposed risks agreed.**
- 5. That the status of the complaints, Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests, given in Appendix 5 of the report be noted.**

Cllr Mrs Potter left the meeting during this item.

**33/20 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS (JS)**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and confirmed that the proposals reflected the issues identified in a previous presentation to the Members Forum. The report provided clarification on the temporary changes during the Covid-19 Lockdown to support the Governments emergency legislation which would end in May 2021.

**RESOVLED:**

- 1. To approve the temporary amendments to Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. To note the etiquette for virtual meetings of the Authority and its Committees as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.**

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 12.15 and reconvened at 12.25 with Cllr B Lewis and Cllr Mrs G Heath leaving the meeting during this time.

#### **34/20 SECOND REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

The Chair introduced the report and confirmed that the Authority's Annual General Meeting on 3 July would take place as a virtual meeting. Members were invited to contact the Chair if they wished to discuss any concerns regarding the proposal.

Members requested clarification on how a secret ballot would be held during a virtual meeting and the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that work to enable this would continue. The Chair confirmed that a virtual AGM would not take place unless a secret ballot was possible.

It was noted that appointments would be made to the Governance Review Working Group at the AGM with a view to carry out a six month review of the impact of the changes introduced.

The Chair took the meeting through the 16 recommendations as set out in the report which were moved, seconded, put to the vote and carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note the recommendations of the Governance Review Working Group as set out in Appendix 1 of the report**
- 2. To approve the Appointment Principles as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 3. To confirm that the Member Appointment Process Panel should continue to be part of the process for preparing for Annual Meetings.**
- 4. To continue to receive an annual report on Member attendance based on Member attendance at meetings of the Authority, Standing Committees and essential learning and development events/workshops only.**
- 5. To approve the changes to the terms of reference of the Programmes and Resources Committee as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 6. To confirm that no changes are made to the existing arrangements for Member Scrutiny.**
- 7. To confirm that quarterly meeting of the Local Joint Committee should be scheduled on the understanding that they will only take place if there are sufficient items to make a meeting viable.**
- 8. To confirm that there is no need for Member representation on the Health and Safety Committee.**
- 9. To approve the continuation of the Governance Review Working Group and agree to make appointments to it at the 2020 Annual Meeting.**
- 10. To approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to the Chief Executive as set out in Appendix 3.**

- 11. To ask the Chief Executive to carry out a review of the format and content of the Officer Delegation Scheme.**
- 12. To continue to use the current format of the Revenue Budget.**
- 13. To ask Officers to explore the options for using the annual workshops to give Members greater ownership of budget proposals including the possibility of inviting a selection of budget holders to a session where they can provide more detail about their budgets, how they are used to support the Corporate Strategy and what the key issues were around delivery.**
- 14. To approve the Member Champion Role Description set out in Appendix 4.**
- 15. To appoint Members to the following Member Champion roles at the 2020 Annual Meeting:**
  - **Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Farming.**
  - **Cultural Heritage and Landscapes**
  - **Engagement (includes sustainable tourism, recreation, health and wellbeing)**
  - **Thriving and Sustainable Communities (including social housing)**
  - **Climate Change (including transport) (This Member Champion should chair the Climate change Working Group)**
  - **Business Economy**
  - **Member Learning and Development**
- 16. To approve the Guidance for Members appointed to Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix 5.**
- 17. To remove the following from the list of Outside Bodies to be appointed to at the 2020 Annual Meeting:**
  - **Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership Rural Forum**  
**Derbyshire Partnership Forum**
  - **National Parks UK**
  - **Peak Park Parishes Forum Annual Liaison Meeting**

**35/20 TRANS-PENNINE TUNNEL STUDY AND A628 UPGRADE (JRS)**

The Director of Conservation and Planning introduced the report confirming that there was a delay regarding the decision to proceed with the project as the Department of Transport Investment Panel would not meet until July 2020. If the funding was confirmed by the Investment Panel the project team would develop a more detailed scheme, if funding were not approved it was likely that the scheme would be shelved.

The Director of Conservation and Planning agreed to keep Members informed of the progress of the project.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note the contents of the report.**

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm