

North York Moors National Park Authority

Item 6, Public minutes of the National Park Authority Committee meeting held on 23 March 2026

Present

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Jane Harper, George Jabbour, Patrick James, David Jeffels, Heather Moorhouse, Clive Pearson, John Ritchie, Janet Waggott, Colin Williamson

Apologies

Michelle Donohue-Moncrieff, David Hugill, John McCue, Abida Nayyar, Christine Robertson, Keith Wilkinson (Independent Person)

Officers in attendance

Tom Hind (Chief Executive), Pete Williams, (Director of Corporate Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), Joel Brookfield (Director of Recreation and Wellbeing), Judith Seaton (Executive Support Team Leader).

Copies of all documents considered are in the minute book

7/26 Minutes

Resolved: That the public minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2025, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

8/27 Minutes

Resolved: That the public minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Officers and Members discussed an addition to recommendation 4 concerning the process for approving and reporting the use of contingency funds in relation to the new Office development. This proposed setting a threshold of £50k as a trigger for requiring member approval. Members asked that any use of contingency be reported to Members, alongside quarterly reporting of the property project to Members via FRASC. The resolution in the minutes as worded in the minutes covered these points effectively.

9/26 Public Question Time

Members noted that the Countryfile edition focussing on the North York Moors was extremely good publicity and reflected their pride in the National Park. They wished to convey their appreciation of the officers and volunteers involved in filming for their hard work and input.

10/26 Members Interests

Members were reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interests relating to any agenda item prior to its consideration.

11/26 Exclusion of the public

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Items 20 & 21, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

12/26 Strategy and Business Plan – Annual Milestones for 2026/27

Considered:

The report of the Performance Management Officer

Members queried the milestone relating to a refresh of the social return on investment evaluation. Officers explained that the update aims to provide current, broader evidence to engage stakeholders and demonstrate the National Park's value to support effective advocacy, communications and funding bids.

Members discussed coordination with North Yorkshire Council and Parish Councils on public conveniences. The Director of Recreation and Wellbeing confirming ongoing collaboration and a presentation will be given at the next Members' update on the Authority's toilet strategy.

The importance of partnership delivery for management plan objectives was emphasised, with reporting mechanisms via the annual monitoring statement and the Partnership Delivery Group in place to monitor progress.

Questions were raised about funding health and wellbeing initiatives, with officers confirming a diversified funding approach, including leveraging the Mayor's fund and other government sources, and highlighting the role of combined authority duties and Active Travel England funding in supporting milestone delivery.

Members discussed challenges in engaging young people as volunteers and board members. Officers outlined ongoing efforts such as youth programmes, a review of the Authority's volunteering strategy, and plans to recruit additional young Authority members, while recognising safeguarding and structural constraints with work commitments, requirement for physical attendance at formal committee meetings and the times that meetings are held.

Action: Details of booking arrangements for the Dark Skies Station (Danby Lodge) to be shared with Members.

Action: Future Generations Wellbeing Manager to give an update on youth engagement work at the appropriate Member Forum.

Resolved: That Members approve the Strategy and Business Plan milestones for 2026/27.

13/26 Budget 2026/2027

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

A triennial pension revaluation had resulted in a surplus on the employer's contributions, reducing required contributions from 16% to 8.1% for 15 years, generating a £250,000 annual core saving for the next 3 years. It was confirmed that there will be an annual review and potential smoothing via reserves if future rates increase.

Officers recommended that additional resources should be allocated from the pension surplus to corporate support, health and wellbeing, and project management to address organisational growth and delivery pressures. Members emphasised the need for efficiency checks on capital projects and discussed the importance of not overcommitting to projects without clear returns.

Members sought clarification on the ability of the Authority to generate a surplus on its bottom line. Officers clarified that whilst the NPA could not make a commercial profit on the total of its activities, it is able (and expected) to reinvest surpluses from specific activities (eg car parks) to support the delivery of the NPA's operations.

Resolved: That Members approved the 2026/27 budget.

14/26 BNG Application Process

Considered:

The report of the Ecologist

It was clarified that the Authority cannot complete biodiversity metrics on behalf of applicants due to legal complexity concerns about the separation of roles but can provide review and advice similar to the pre-application planning services.

It was noted that similar services exist in other National Park Authorities. The demand is uncertain and may change with future legislation; the service will be optional and its uptake.

Resolved: That Members approve the introduction of a chargeable BNG review service. The provision of the service to be reviewed and reported to Members 12 months following its introduction.

15/26 Risk Register Annual update

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Resolved: That Members approved the draft Corporate Risk Register for 2026/27, making any comments they wish to.

16/26 Treasury Management and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Resolved: That Members:

- i. Approved the Annual treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 as detailed in appendix B.
- ii. Adopt the Annual Investment Strategy agreed by the Authority for 2026/27.
- iii. Approve the Capital Strategy as laid out in appendix C.

17/26 Feedback from lead Members on Committees and Forums

Considered:

The report of the Executive Support Team Leader

- Conservation and Climate Forum: The Forum discussed the Fylingdales wildfire recovery, climate action plan development, and the Biodiversity Duty on public bodies, with upcoming member approval required for the climate action plan.
- Recreation and Wellbeing Forum: Key topics included the visitor levy, public convenience strategy, and dark skies initiatives, with ongoing discussions about signage and accessibility.
- EDI Group Initiatives: The EDI group reviewed progress on targeted transport, accessibility improvements, blue badge parking policy, neurodiversity, and upcoming policy reviews, with actions identified for further exploration and reporting.
- Development Planning Working Group: The group noted the impact of new planning regulations and the NPPF on local plan development, with further meetings planned to refine policies and prepare for public consultation.

Resolved: That the feedback was noted by Members.

18/26 Reports from Members on outside bodies

Considered:

The report of the Executive Support Team Leader

Resolved: That the report be noted by Members.

19/26 Chief Executive's report

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive Officer

Action: Members requested a visit to the Riccal Drive site.

Action: Staff survey to be discussed at a Members' Update meeting.

Resolved: That Members note the content of the report.

20/26 Biodiversity Duty report, 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2025

Considered:

The report of the Performance Management Officer

Resolved: That Members note the report.

21/26 On the record

Considered:

The report of the Executive Support Team leader

Resolved: That Members express any interest in attending the National Parks UK Conference in Northumberland by Monday 20 April 2026.

22/26 Other business

There was no other business discussed.

.....(Chair)
29 June 2026