

North York Moors National Park Authority

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on 19 December 2011.

Present: Mrs V Arnold, J Bailey, M Bowes, B Briggs, Mrs J Frank, D Hugill, D C Jeffels, M Knaggs T Lawn, P Lawson, Mrs J Mitchell, E Sanderson, S Scoffin, Mrs C Seymour, G H Simpson, B Suthers, Mrs H Swiers, R I Thompson, H Tindall, P Wheeler

Officers in attendance: Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Carole Dunn (Monitoring Officer), Barry Hearsay (Planning Officer Policy), Rebecca Thompson (Conservation Project Officer), Fiona Farnell (Committees Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

74/11 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2011, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

75/11 Minutes of Special Authority

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2011, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

76/11 Public Question Time

There were no questions from Members of the public.

77/11 Members Interests

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

78/11 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 5 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

79/11 Budget Estimate 2012/13

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services presented this item, a powerpoint presentation was shown, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

The Chief Executive updated Members that work to budgets still needed to be carried out to cover aspirations in the Business Plan and Management Plan and therefore asked Members to delay setting final budgets until March 2012 with the potential for a February Special Authority Meeting to discuss the Management Plan and financial/priority issues; Pace Cycles have shown interest in the Sutton Bank retail space with a view to promoting cycling in the area; the Moors Centre tea room license has been advertised and legal services contract process as agreed by Performance Monitoring and Management Committee is nearing the end and it is hoped that a decision would be made before Christmas.

Members supported the idea of delaying some the financial decisions and the recommendation to hold a Special Authority Meeting in February; debated the pros and cons for having a reasonably large reserve but noted the balance of risk/opportunities available; agreed that at the end of 3 years they did not want to see the Authority using reserves to fund revenue and noted that money from the Farm Scheme could be used to help farmers and land managers increase performance not just assist practically.

In answer to questions from Members the Director of Corporate Services, Director of Park Services and the Chief Executive answered Members questions as follows:

- Pace Cycles would be hiring and selling cycles and looking at promoting road cycling with the possibility of less extreme off road cycling subject to land owners consent.
- It is entirely the decision of the Authority to decide on the level of reserve.
- From January as agreed by Members, a fee for pre-application planning advice would come into effect, also Planning Performance Agreements may be used for larger applications which ties both the applicant and Authority into agreed timescales, the applicant may also fund the additional level of work that the application creates.

Resolved:

That Members noted the content of the report and Annex, approved the work undertaken to date on the draft budget, and the further work to be undertaken to finalise the budget before approval in March 2012.

80/11 Review of the Delivery of Authority Grants

Considered:

The report of the Director of Conservation.

This item was presented by the Chief Executive with the assistance of the Conservation Projects Officer.

The Chief Executive noted that Farm Scheme grants had declined due to most farms transferring to Entry Level Scheme, Higher Level Scheme and Upland Entry Level Schemes. A number of the remaining farms were on 3 monthly extension agreements covering the remaining elements of the old schemes. This was making the administration of the scheme disproportionately costly; currently the Farm Scheme Agreements were working more like the Authority's Wildlife Conservation Scheme agreements which were much simpler to administer.

Therefore Officers were asking Members to agree to stop the Farm Scheme in its current form and move to a simpler scheme which would not stop grants being available but be simpler to operate.

Members debated this item with some having concerns that the Authority needed to look to the future, 10 years hence when the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme agreements would come to a close, while others felt that the scheme needed reforming and bringing more in line with issues which would tie in with the Management Plan. All Members agreed that the message from the meeting needed to be that there would still be a commitment to farmers in the future in the form of practical grant schemes being available to help farmers achieve Park purposes. This issue would be returned to as part of the Business Plan discussions.

A Member asked Officers to confirm how much money was coming into the area from the England Woodland Grant Scheme?

Action – Officers to report back on the England Woodland Grant Scheme.

Recommendation:

That Members approve the proposals for more efficient grant delivery and administration as outlined in Section 6.

Resolved:

That Members approved the proposals for more efficient grant delivery and administration as outlined in Section 6 with a maintained commitment to support and assist farmers and land managers to achieve Park purposes.

81/11 **Review of Committee Structure**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive

Members discussed the proposed committee structure and made the following comments:

- Welcome lead role for some Members
- Unsure where tourism fits but will become clearer once the Head of Promotions Officer is in post. Unfinished business on local tourism structures.
- Need to ensure that businesses unrelated to tourism are not missed
- Request better titles for the 1st and 2nd purpose forums
- Timings of meetings for young people may need to be looked at perhaps starting meetings late afternoon or early evening.
- Publish member attendances with allowances
- Perhaps a review of the proposed structure could be undertaken after a year
- Task and finish groups work effectively when required
- Need to look at the Sustainable Development Fund and panel

In answer to a question from a Member the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the proposed approach with regards to amalgamating Standards work into the Finance Management and Standards Committee was a consistent approach but agreed that if a complaint against a member was received then that committee would have to appoint a sub-committee to deal with the complaint.

Members went on to discuss a potential reduction in the number of committee members.

The Chief Executive noted that any reduction would not take place until 2013. Members agreed that a reduction in numbers was desirable in principle and that a paper be brought to the Special Authority Meeting in February to be written by the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer; that the current Defra appointment process of Secretary of State Members should not be stopped but that one of the appointments may need a short term of office than normal.

Recommendation:

1. That Members:
 - i) Approve in principle the Committee structure outlined in **Appendix 1** and Section 4 of this Report;
 - ii) Note that, subject to 1) above, proposals for amending the Scheme of Delegation will be developed and presented to Special Authority in early 2012 for discussion and approval at the full Authority in March;
 - iii) Give Officers their view on a potential reduction in the number of Members and if positive request that a report be presented to the Special Authority for further consideration.

Resolved:

1. That Members:
 - i) Approved in principle the Committee structure outlined in Appendix 1 and Section 4 of the Report;
 - ii) Noted that, subject to 1) above, proposals for amending the Scheme of Delegation will be developed and presented to Special Authority in early 2012 for discussion and approval at the full Authority in March;
 - iii) Gave Officers their view on a potential reduction in the number of Members and requested that a report be presented to the Special Authority meeting in February 2012 for further consideration based on the principles for reduction previously agreed.

82/11 Local Sustainable Transport Fund

Considered:

The report of the Planning Policy Officer

The Officer answered Members questions as follows:

- An electric bicycle is a standard bicycle fitted with a small motor which can be used to assist with a more strenuous cycle ride.
- The proposed financial contribution would be funded from existing budgets.

The Officer confirmed that if the bid was successful the Park and Ride would be up and running for Easter 2014 with a hopper service into Whitby including the addition of the hopper going out to the Moors Centre.

A Member noted that currently a Glaisdale to Whitby hopper service existed and should not be compromised by the bid.

Action – The Officer to look into the possibility of a conflict between the hopper and the current service provided in from Glaisdale.

Resolved:

That Members noted the progress of the bid relating to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

83/11 **Performance Indicators – Update of Targets**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Resolved:

That Members approved the corrected planning targets as reported in paragraph 2.3 to be used in all future publications.

84/11 **Sustainable Development Fund – Loan to Esk Energy Ruswarp Hydro Scheme**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Park Services and the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services presented this item, a powerpoint presentation was shown, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

Mr Lawson declared a personal interest in this item as a Member of the Sustainable Development Fund panel.

The Director noted that in the table at 4.2 the first risk likelihood/impact should be medium and not low/medium.

The Chief Executive confirmed that Officers would have been happy to recommend the sum as a grant but European State Aid rules prevented this. As a loan, the capital would be repaid with interest. However, in order to minimise risk to the project and to the Authority's investment further steps would be taken to ensure there were no contingent liabilities and confirm the assessment of risk had been made in light of this.

The Director confirmed that loan repayments be made every six months and that the applicants business plan showed that some money would still be able to be invested in the local community by the company.

Members noted that there was a risk attached to the project and that the contingency sum had increased again but felt that it was a good project that needed to be supported.

Resolved:

That the offer of a loan is increased up to a maximum of £210,000 to account for the facility to draw down an additional £53,000 as described in the report.

85/11 **Miscellaneous Report**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer

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| Resolved: That the report be noted. |
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86/11 **A Presentation by Young People**

A presentation was given by Cameron Spittal, Jacob Bates-Firth and Elizabeth Dodsworth, a copy of the presentations appears in the minute book.

Members questions were answered as follows:

- Contact with young people should still be done by going into schools, the electronic phase is not yet totally embraced by all young people
- More events should be held in the 'Inspired by
- Revisions to the Esk Valley railway timetable could help with journeys/independent travel.

Suggestions made:

- More events targeted at young people
- Provision of a cycle specific route.

Members thanked Cameron, Jacob and Elizabeth for attending and presenting.

Action – Officers commitment to look into the rail times of the Esk Valley rail line.

87/11 **A Presentation by ENPAA Director - Paul Hamblin**

The Director gave a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which appears in the minute book and was agreed to be circulated to Members.

In answer to a question from a Member the Director noted that ENPAA worked hard to get senior officials out into the National Parks and where possible assisted/briefed Defra when they seek an opinion. However ENPAA also on occasion goes direct to ministers etc.

The Director confirmed ENPAA's time was spent; 70% spent working with Defra, with the rest of the time spent improving relations with CLG and DCMS and working with other bodies.

The Chair thanked the Director for his presentation and work that is done by ENPAA on behalf of the National Park.

88/11 **Parish Forum Update**

Considered:

The report of the PA to Chief Executive

Resolved:

That the issues raised at the Parish Forums be noted.

89/11 **60th Anniversary Celebrations**

Considered:

The report of the Information and Interpretation Manager

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

**Public Summary of Items considered “in private”
at the meeting of the Authority
on 19 December 2011**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2011, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the chairman as a correct record.