

North York Moors National Park Authority Special Authority Meeting

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on 23 February 2012.

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

Apologies: P Wheeler

In Attendance: Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Julie Lawrence (Director of Projects), Sarah Housden (Policy Officer), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), Andrea McMillan (Planning Officer – Policy), Helen Atkinson (Legal), Fiona Farnell (Committees Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

01/12 **Public Question Time**

There were no questions from Members of the public.

02/12 **Members Interests**

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

03/12 **Review of National Park Management Plan**

Considered:

The report of the Policy Manager. A powerpoint presentation was shown, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

Members had a long discussion and made the following points/comments:

- Would like to see a higher percentage of SSSI's in a favourable condition.
- Pleased to see the Authority is again looking into managing sheep on the moor.
- This is a strategic document and therefore the request for more detailed targets to be added from RSPB should appear in the Business Plan.
- Using colour may help to relate and connect different sections. The table on the powerpoint presentation is very good. Perhaps need a subsidiary document to signpost to other documents.
- Need to make clear that Plan is not intended to be prescriptive with regard to management matters for agriculture or other businesses. No two farms or businesses are alike and they need to be sustainable, also need to remember businesses are competing with competitors from outside the Park.
- The plan is for the Park not the Authority, need to continue to meet with the larger stakeholders, the Business Plan link is critical and right that targets are in the Business Plan not the Management Plan.
- Encouraged that we are hoping to increase visitor numbers to the Park but they need to be managed when here, there is a danger of damaging the tranquillity and landscape that they come to enjoy.

- Agri Environment schemes are good but results not always achieved by preordained schemes.
- Hope that heather burning continues this year and that it is not cut and carried away.

In answer to questions from Members the Officers answered as follows:

- Following a meeting with Natural England, they are happy that the Authority is working towards the 50% target of SSSI's to be in a favourable condition by 2020. Such a low percent is in a favourable condition due to the low levels of lichen in them, if they were classed as low land heath then there would be enough lichen and the percentage in favourable condition would be higher.
- Natural England has commented on the prescribed stocking density of 1 sheep per hectare, this should be assessed on a case by case basis through Agri Environment schemes.

Officers noted the comments with regards to being too prescriptive with agriculture and the need to make this area much clearer.

Recommendation:

That Members consider the key responses that are discussed in this report and in Appendix 1 and agree the suggested responses so that the next version of the Management Plan can be produced.

Resolved:

That Members considered the key responses that were discussed in the report and Appendix 1 and agreed the suggested responses so that the next version of the Management Plan could be produced and be brought to the Authority meeting at the end of March 2012.

04/12 **Business Plan Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services. A powerpoint presentation was shown a copy of which appears in the minute book.

Financial Principles

A Member noted that Officers should not forget the ideal of maintaining 50% staff costs in the long term.

A further Member confirmed that it was right to keep the external funding target at 10% - 20%, as new opportunities were starting to come forward.

In answer to a question from a Member the Director confirmed that future additional money would be allocated to the general reserves fund rather than being added to the Landscape Intervention Fund but that this work would not stop.

World Café

Members noted:

- Cultural heritage links adjacent to the Park could be signposted or become part of a trail.
- A fresh approach to Listed Building could help the future of buildings within the Park.

- Agree that marine is not a priority but it should not be lost sight of.
- Need to remember the Coast to Coast and the alternative Coast to Coast.
- A Local Produce trail could be developed to compliment the popularity of cookery programmes.
- Not clear where village improvements and communities fit in.

The Director of Planning noted that the Government was undertaking a consultation about listing only the significant parts of a building rather than the building as a whole.

In answering a question from a Member the Director of Park Services confirmed that the future on both the Cleveland Way and the Wolds Way looked good.

Recommendation:

1. Approve the revised timetable at paragraph 3.1, including the proposals in relation to Members Seminar and Special Authority Meeting in paragraph 3.2.
2. Approve the proposal in relation to the Member/Officer Task and finish Group at paragraph 3.3 and if required make nominations to form the group.
3. Comment on the SWOT Analysis at Appendix 1 and the 'world café' ideas at Appendix 2.
4. Comment on the proposals from Performance Monitoring and Management Committee in relation to the Financial Principles and Reserves in Sections 5 and 6 above.

Resolved:

1. Approved the revised timetable at paragraph 3.1, including the proposals in relation to Members Seminar and Special Authority Meeting in paragraph 3.2.
2. Approved the proposal in relation to the Member/Officer Task and Finish Group at paragraph 3.3 and nominated Mrs Arnold, Mrs Frank, Mrs Swiers, Mr Scoffin, Mr Jeffels, Mr Hugill to the group.
3. Commented on the SWOT Analysis at Appendix 1 and the 'World Café' ideas at Appendix 2.
4. Commented on the proposals from Performance Monitoring and Management Committee in relation to the Financial Principles and Reserves in Sections 5 and 6 above.

05/12 Membership of the National Park Authority

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive

Members had a full and frank discussion about the options open to them. Members from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council made representations as to why they felt that their membership numbers should not be cut. Members from North Yorkshire County Council also noted that they would be reluctant to reduce their number of Members. Several Members expressed their opinions as to which option was preferable to them.

Members made the following comments:

- This is a difficult decision, as it is not many years since the Authority went from 26 to 22 Members.
- It would be a great shame to lose any Members.
- Staff have faced redundancy and a pay freeze, now it is the turn of the Members.

The Chair noted that the Councils likely to be affected had been contacted following the decision made at the Authority meeting in December. In response, both the Leader at Redcar and Cleveland and North Yorkshire County Council had contacted him to express their concerns at the possibility of losing members.

Recommendation:

Members are recommended to:

- a. Endorse the principle previously agreed as outlined in paragraph 5.2
- b. Reaffirm their desire to reduce the number of members of this Authority by a small number.

If this is supported

- c. Vote on the options set out in paragraph 5.8 above (and any alternative motions) in order until a majority vote in favour of one of them is reached.
- d. The preferred option not to be introduced before 2013 and the Secretary of State be asked to enact the appropriate one following consultation as resolved by Members.

Resolved:

Members:

- a. Endorsed the principle previously agreed as outlined in paragraph 5.2
- b. Reaffirmed their desire to reduce the number of members of this Authority by a small number.
- c. Voted on the options set out in paragraph 5.8 in order until a majority vote in favour of one of them was reached.

Option 1 – was not carried.

Option 2 – was carried.

- d. Agreed that the preferred option be not introduced before 2013 and the Secretary of State be asked to enact the appropriate one following consultation as resolved by Members.

The Chief Executive noted that the next step in the process was to notify Defra and all Councils of the decision made and the reasoning behind the decision which was a desire to see economy.

M Knaggs and Mrs C Seymour queried the voting procedure used. The Chief Executive explained that legal advice had been taken on the correct procedure and this had been followed. He undertook to write to Members after taking further advice on this subject in response to the Members' criticisms of the system used.

06/12 Revision of the Authority's Standing Orders

Considered:

The report of the Director of Projects.

Resolved:

That:

1. Members noted the proposed changes to the Standing Orders needed to implement the new committee structure
2. Members proposed and seconded a motion that the Standing Orders are revised.
3. Members tabled an agenda item to allow a full discussion on the proposed changes to take place at the next Full Authority meeting (March 2012)
4. The proposed changes to take effect at the Authority's 2012 Annual General Meeting.

07/12 Revision of the Authority's Scheme of Delegation

Considered

The report of the Director of Projects. A powerpoint presentation was shown, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

In answer to questions from Members the Director of Projects and the Chief Executive answered as follows:

- A lot more information on how the two forums would work was needed. However room was also needed to experiment with how the two forums would work for one year and come back to them if necessary.
- The quorum for the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee would be the same as the current Performance Monitoring and Management Committee.
- The Government has introduced a new way to deliver the Standards function following the Localism Act and therefore the two committees are being pulled together, as they used to be several years ago.
- The new Standards regulations are not being published until July of this year and therefore the Authority is going to seek advice from their new legal advisors with a view to possibly sharing Independent Members.

The Chair noted that a lot of useful links had been made and the Authority did not want to lose these and therefore it was difficult to reduce the number of committees/forums when people wanted to be more involved.

Resolved:

1. Members discussed the draft Scheme of Delegation and made comments for any changes to be made and
2. Members agreed to a final draft of all annexes of the Scheme be brought to the March 2012 full Authority Meeting.

08/12 **Appointment of Monitoring Officer and Deputy**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive

Mr Jeffels and Mr Lawn declared a personal interest in this item as Members of Scarborough Borough Council. Mr Briggs declared a personal interest in this item as he had previously worked with Richard Smith.

The Chair noted the good work that North Yorkshire Legal and Democratic Services had done on behalf of the Authority.

Resolved:

1. Members approved that with effect from 1 April 2012.
 - a. Lisa Dixon is formally appointed at the Monitoring Officer
 - b. Richard Smith is appointed to act as Deputy Monitoring Officer
2. Approved that the Chair of the Authority formally write to Carole Dunn to thank her for her formidable service and to express appreciation for excellent work undertaken by North Yorkshire Legal and Democratic Services on behalf of the Authority.