

## North York Moors National Park Authority Scrutiny Meeting

Public Minutes of the meeting Scrutiny Meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on Monday 10 July 2017.

### Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Ena Dent, Alison Fisher, David Hugill, David Jeffels, Caroline Patmore, Clive Pearson, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott, Jeremy Walker. Andy Breckon (Independent Member)

### Apologies:

Leslie Atkinson, Janet Frank, Heather Moorhouse, Sarah Oswald, Stuart Parsons

### Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Briony Fox (Director of Polyhalite Projects), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), David Shaw (Director of Conservation), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Lisa Dixon (Monitoring Officer), Joan Childs (Acting Head of Volunteer Service), Ryan Chenery (Volunteers Officer), Jo Swiers (Performance Officer), Vanessa Burgess (Committees & Customer Services Officer).

---

### Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

---

Prior to the start of the meeting Lisa Dixon, Monitoring Officer gave members a brief refresher training session on standards.

#### 01/17 **Members Interests**

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

#### 02/17 **Progress towards Targets and Desired Direction of Change in the National Park Management Plan**

Considered:

The report of the Performance Officer

Jo Swiers gave members a brief overview of the main headlines relating to the Management Plan:

- % of NP managed in line with Conservation objects – declining
- Access to Broadband – target not achieved
- Tourism – improving

Members commented as follows:

- A lot of encouraging news, some good work being done

- Elements in decline – are these due to National trends/current climate or are they things we could change?
- NP should be influencing others
- Consider whether the NP is trying too hard to measure in certain areas where it is difficult to gather data or areas outside our influence, perhaps the NP should focus in future on: areas where data is readily available, areas where the NP can make a difference, areas which can be readily monitored.

**Resolved:** Members reviewed and commented as indicated above, on the report which provided information on progress against 40 targets in the National Park Management Plan, and an overview of performance of a number of organisations.

### 03/17 **Business Plan Progress (Verbal Presentations by Directors)**

Each Director gave members a brief presentation in turn, highlighting; key achievements, main challenges and looking ahead to the coming year for each of their work areas.

**Conservation** – Members commented on the following:

- Ideas for future CLM Forums, including Ryevitalise related work
- BREXIT – uncertainties re: farming, challenging issues for NP
- A number of new staff, catching up on workloads
- Challenges around woodland planting
- Concerns re: take up of Countryside Stewardship, farms which drop out of the scheme will mean less land protected
- Language is key to getting the Conservation message across to farmers

**Park Services** – Members made the following comments:

- No real target/presentation didn't reflect the increasing work taking place in urban areas
- Visitors survey results showed that 98% of visitors were happy with their visit to the NP, but what about the other 2% who were unsatisfied?

**Action:** RHG to update members regarding the 2% who weren't satisfied

- More work needed in relation to under-represented groups
- RoW work, impact of changing relationship with NYCC and prioritising of work

Richard Gunton informed members that more work was needed in relation to under-represented groups, including; the Disabled, Young people and Minority Ethnic groups. With regard to RoW work, Richard Gunton informed members that the new agreement was designed to offset the reduction in resources. Responsibility for larger structures had been handed back to NYCC, while the NP was concentrating its efforts on more localised RoW work, routes used most, which had the greatest impact on public enjoyment.

- 4x4 usage/damage to paths, NYCC responsibility?
- How RoW survey conducted?

Richard Gunton informed members that NYCC was responsible for dealing with issues relating to 4x4 damage to paths. Where there was serious damage the NP tried to encourage NYCC to action, as a result more TRO's were being put in place to help elevate problems.

With regard to the RoW survey, Richard Gunton informed members that the way the survey work is carried out has remained the same for the last 20 years, 2.5% of the network is surveyed twice a year, the work is currently carried out by members of the Ramblers Association.

**Planning** – Much of the members discussions centred round the issue of Broadband coverage, members commented as follows:

- Continued use of NPE as a vehicle to lobby Govt about Broadband issues
- For communities which don't have access to Broadband, wireless is an option
- Need the LEP to support
- "Leadership" of the issue to progress forward

**Polyhalite** – Briony Fox gave members a brief update on progress to date, advising members that they would be encouraged to input to the draft Compensation & Mitigation Action Plan at the Members Evening Seminar in August.

**Corporate Services** – Members commented on the following:

- Greater emphasis on H&S over the last few years, which was a good thing
- Improved presentation of Finance information at meetings, plus, sharing services with NYCC seemed to be working well
- Need to try and spread spend better across the year
- Members welcomed the feasibility work being undertaken to improve working conditions to both Beaconsfield and the Old Vicarage
- Marked increase in staff turnover?

Ian Nicholls informed members that the recent increase in staff turnover had mainly been due to a number of long term staff either retiring or deciding to move on to do other things. He did not think that there was an underlying issue..

- Request from members to Include more information about Staff leavers in the Members bulletin

**Action:** Michael Graham to look at members' suggestion to include more information on individual staff leavers in the members' bulletin

**David Jeffels left the meeting at 12.30pm**

04/17 **Volunteer Strategy**

Considered:

The report of the Acting Head of Volunteer Services

Before the presentation by Joan Childs, Acting Head of Volunteer Services and Ryan Chenery, Volunteer Officer, Richard Gunton explained to members that the Volunteer Strategy work had stalled over the past few months due to the depletion in staffing resources, which had, at times proved very challenging.

**Jeremy Walker left the meeting at 12.55pm**

Joan Childs/Ryan Chenery updated members on the current situation in relation to the Volunteer Service/Strategy.

After the presentation members thanked Joan and Ryan for their excellent presentation and then asked about the following:

- How volunteers were interviewed/selected
- Did volunteers help in more urban settings as well as more rural landscapes
- Average travel to work distances for volunteers
- Need to maintain numbers of volunteers, maintain the level of good work

**Resolved:** Members scrutinised performance in delivering the Volunteer Strategy and agreed to the planned future action.

**A copy of all presentations can be found in the appropriate e-file**

..... (Chair)  
25 September 2017