**Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority** **Item 2**

## Finance and Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Officers, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL, on Tuesday, 24 February 2026.

## Members Present:

Libby Bateman (Chair), Richard Foster, Neil Heseltine, Dan Holmes
Peter Jackson, Andrew Murday, David Noland, Stuart Parsons, Karin Sedgwick, Derek Twine

**Co-opted Members:** Zachary Anderson, Katie Norgate

**Copies of all Documents considered are in the Minute Book**

## 01/26 Apologies

Apologies were received from Julie Hutton, Ian Mitchell and Nigel Swales.

## 02/26 Minutes

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2025, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 03/26 Public Questions / Statements

No public questions or statements had been received.

## 04/26 Declarations of Lobbying

There were no declarations of lobbying.

## 05/26 Draft Budget 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee **considered** the report of the Head of Finance presented by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive reported a positive financial position, including projected income of £12m, a capital grant of £1.1m, continued FIPL funding, and retention of a £500,000 match-funding reserve. Pension contributions have been reduced and the budget supports delivery of 36 long-term objectives adopted by the Authority in December.

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- The authority is in a comparatively strong and confident position moving into the new financial year
- A balanced budget for 2026/27 was presented
- Availability of Capital funding has allowed us to invest in the Authority's infrastructure (visitor centres, car parks, toilets etc).
- Defra has indicated that, National Park Authorities will receive a three-year settlement which includes Revenue, Capital, FIPL and Access for All Grant. Year 1 is fixed and years 2 and 3 are indicative.
- The reduction in the employer pension contribution from 12.4% to 6.3% provides a major saving of around £270k per year.
- Capital project allocation details will be brought to the May F&R Committee meeting.

A Member raised concerns about North Yorkshire Council's Home-to-School Transport Policy regarding impacts on rural communities.

Officers and the Chair confirmed the Authority has no statutory remit but can raise the issue via Parish Forums, the Management Plan Steering Group, and informal leadership discussions.

In response to a Member's question about whether car parking charges will be reviewed or increased to ensure they keep pace with inflation, given the importance of this income stream, the Director of Park Services confirmed there is a planned review annually when budgets are reviewed.

**Resolved –** To approve the draft budget for 2026/27 and indicative budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28 (**Appendix 1**); the Reserves Strategy (**Appendix 5**), and the amendments to the Authority's objectives (**Appendix 7**) for submission to the full Authority.

## 06/26 Statement of Final Accounts 2024/25

The Committee **considered** the report of the Head of Finance presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

The Director of Corporate Services informed the meeting that following two consecutive years of disclaimed audits, the audit for 2024/25 had been completed, including a full audit of 2022/23 to restore the necessary assurances for the missed year. An unqualified audit opinion had been achieved, placing the Authority on a strong footing for future governance. Thanks were extended to Forvis Mazars and the Finance Team, particularly the Head of Finance, for their significant efforts in meeting the backstop deadline.

The External Auditor from Forviz Mazars provided the context and difficulties faced nationally in completing delayed Audits. They emphasised the importance of the co-operation and hard work of the Head of Finance and their team, thanking those staff.

The Chief Executive advised Members that there were additional audit fees of £30k which were not reported in Paragraph 9 of the report and a virement has been approved for this.

**Resolved –** To note the Audit Completion Report; approve that the Chair of the Finance and Resources committee sign the final Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 and approve that the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee co-sign the letter of representation along with the Treasurer.

## 07/26 Recruitment and Selection Policy

The Committee **considered** the report of the Head of Human Resources.

A Member welcomed the addition of inclusive approaches for neurodivergent candidates as well as reasonable adjustments for disabled people. They provided a suggestion to include a section on the application form where all applicants can indicate any adjustments they may need for an in-person interview. The Head of Human Resources reassured Members that this was already included in the interview invitation letter sent to applicants.

**Resolved –**To approve the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy as set out in Appendix A.

## 08/26 Grant application to the Sustainable Development Fund

The Committee **considered** the report of the Sustainable Development Officer.

In response to a Member's question whether charges for public conveniences could be seen as discriminatory and how this was managed, the Sustainable Development Officer confirmed that the donation point at the entrance to the public conveniences would not prevent people entering the facility.

**Resolved** - that Members approve a grant from the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund of £11,025 towards the Hebden Parish Public Toilets Refurbishment project.

## 09/26 Financial Performance Report - 1 April 2025 – 31 December 2025

The Committee **considered** and **noted** the report of the Treasurer presented by the Director Corporate Services

The Chief Executive drew Members attention to paragraph 13 of the report, outlining capital expenditure during the past year. The Committee was reminded that DEFRA had allocated £1.6 million in capital funding at short notice, with the requirement that it be fully spent by year-end. Proposals to utilise this funding were presented to the Committee in May 2025. As a result, the Authority has been able to make significant improvements to its infrastructure, including toilet refurbishments, the installation of new Changing Places facilities and refurbishment of National Park Centres.

In response to a Member's question about the increase in income from retail and car parks, the Director of Park Services explained that the introduction of cashless car park machines had contributed to this increase in car park income. An increase in payments,

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particularly at Grassington National Centre Car Park, may be due to the popularity of recent TV series and the recent extension of the car park has increased seasonal use and capacity.

## 10/26 Treasury Management Review – Quarter Three Review

The Committee **considered** and **noted** the report of the Treasurer presented by the Director Corporate Services

Quarter three report continues to show strong performance by North Yorkshire Council's Treasury team with average interest rate in excess of the Bank of England interest rate. The interest should exceed budget by around £44k this year.

## 11/26 Quarterly Staffing Report

The Committee **considered** and **noted** the report of the Head of Human Resources.

## 12/26 Sickness Absence

The Committee **considered** and **noted** the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:47 a.m.

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