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, 5 March 2024.

Members Present:

Phil Dew, Neil Heseltine, Julie Hutton, Peter Jackson, Simon Myers, Stuart Parsons, Jenny Purcell, Karin Sedgwick, Neil Swain and Derek Twine (Chair)

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

01/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Libby Bateman, Richard Foster and David Noland.

02/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

03/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS / STATEMENTS

No public questions or statements had been received.

04/24 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

There were no declarations of lobbying.

05/24 DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25

The Authority CONSIDERED the report and presentation of the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance/Treasurer.

The Chief Executive provided Members with an overview of the key issues and assumptions for the 24-25 budget, which was positive one, but added that 2025/26 may not be as certain.

Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- The major work programmes (see para 5), are to be delivered within an estimated gross expenditure for the year of **£13.1 million**, set against an objective of just under £10 million.

- The projected gross expenditure for 25/26 is actually under £9 million, a reduction of over £4 million, mainly due to the ending of the FIPL programme and the Grow Back Greener project.

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- Government funding of £500k for this year is Capital Funding, but there are indications from Defra that it may be included in future core settlements and therefore an assumption has been made and is included in the draft budget.

- New sources of external funding are being pursued key to delivering the projects members have agreed and £0.5 million has been set aside to match fund.

The Head of Finance/Treasurer drew Members' attention to the following: -

- A balanced budget for 2024/25 only using £2k of General Reserves.

- The following two years also shows a balanced budget, but this does rely heavily on the assumption that there will be £500k uplift in core grant. Without this, savings or extra income of £257k in 2025/26 and £433k in 2026/27 would be required.

- £543k of reserves already set aside will be used to pay for Capital works next year.

- Assumptions have been made around salary increases, each 1% higher or lower equates to approximately £50k, assumptions around inflation rates for various goods and services have also been made.

- Significant changes to note were;

  - Savings in total salaries of £79k & £88k in the first 2 years of this budget
  - An increase in FiPL allocation of £1.3m
  - A new Regenerative Farming project of £100k
  - Multi User routes project of £360k
  - Coast to Coast implementation project of £391k
  - Construction of a new Ranger base of approx. £400k from Earmarked Reserves

- The reserves strategy in appendix 5 lists all the Earmarked and General reserves. The Authority holds a 10% contingency reserve to reflect the higher risk environment we are working under relying on new funding steams, plus other more specific Earmarked Reserves. The total useable reserves are expected to be in the region of £3.6m by the end of this financial year.

Members raised concerns about the lack of funding from North Yorkshire Council towards the Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the National Park. Representative members from North Yorkshire Council encouraged the Chief Executive to continue to highlight the need for funding for PROW.

A Member queried if any increase in car park charges or a charge for public conveniences would be considered. The Director of Park Services responded and explained the approach taken by the Authority regarding charges for public conveniences.

RESOLVED – To approve the draft budget for 2024/25, indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and the Reserves Strategy for submission to the full Authority for final approval.

06/24 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT: 3RD QUARTER TO 31ST DEC 2023

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Finance.

In RESPONSE to Members' questions:

The underspend on the Westmorland Dales project could not be carried over due to the spending criteria of the Heritage Lottery Funding. Another Member suggested that parts of the project could be funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund UK.

The expenditure on specialist surveys on Semerwater was to be met by Natural England who are the third party mentioned in Appendix 4.

07/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE QUARTERLY REPORT

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Finance.

08/24 24 MONTH IIP REVIEW ASSESSMENT

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

The Chief Executive explained the reason for carrying out the Investors in People accreditation; to drive improvement and provide external validation. This, along with the other accreditation schemes the Authority has signed up to, leads to good performance management.

The Member Champion for Corporate Management, who was involved in the thorough process added that the assessor challenged Members and thanked the Head of Human resources and staff for their hard work.

09/24 STAFFING

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

10/24 SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

11/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FOR ITEM 13 – LANGCLIFFE QUARRY UPDATE

RESOLVED – That the Public be excluded during the discussion of item 13 **(**Langcliffe Quarry Update), on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

12/24 LANGCLIFFE QUARRY UPDATE

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Director of Corporate Services and the Estates Manager.

RESOLVED –That on completion of the acquisition of the plot at Langcliffe Quarry Enterprise Centre, the plot should be developed to meet future staff accommodation needs.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:35 a.m.