Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 4**
Finance and Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Officers, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL, on Tuesday, 20 May 2025.

Members Present:

Richard Foster, Michael Hanley, Julie Hutton (Chair), Peter Jackson, David Noland, Stuart Parsons, and Derek Twine.
Co-opted Member: Katie Norgate

Copies of all Documents considered are in the Minute Book

01/25 Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Libby Bateman, Neil Heseltine, Simon Myers, Karin Sedgwick, Zac Anderson (Co-opted Member)

02/25 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

03/25 Public Questions / Statements

No public questions or statements had been received.

04/25 Declarations of Lobbying

There were no declarations of lobbying.

05/25 Budget Update 2025/26

The Committee **Considered** the report of the Chief Executive.

Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Representatives from the English NPAs recently met with Ministers and officials from Defra to discuss the funding position and the prospects for the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR is unlikely to be concluded before Jan/Feb 2026. This is outside the budget planning timetable that had previously been reported to Members.
- Officers will share some scenario planning with Members to assist in future budget deliberations.

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- The total grant from Defra for 2025-26 is £6.5m.
- There is now no need to use all the reserves as previously reported, the call on reserves has reduced to £83K.
- Approval is being sought for additional capital expenditure following an increase in the capital grant from Defra, see **Annex**

In **Response** to a Member's question about the potential impact on the Authority following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, the Chief Executive responded that expectations were that whilst the capital grant may be higher, the revenue grant is unlikely to increase.

In **Response** to a Member's question about whether the infrastructure work will be completed in time to use the additional capital, the Director of Corporate Services was able to reassure Members that the projects were realistic, and that two consultant project managers will be engaged to fulfil the work commitment.

In **Response** to a Member's question about the 'Invest to Save' element in relation to the additional carbon reduction measures in the Annex, the Director of Corporate Services advised that the new Carbon Reduction Plan will be presented to the Authority in June and this report would contain more detail about the potential savings.

In **Response** to a Member's question about engagement with Defra and whether there will be any steer from them about how to direct capital expenditure, the Chief Executive responded that Government is increasingly providing and accelerating their steer on the revenue side but that the capital expenditure criteria is broader.

In **Response** to a Member's question about installing further EV Chargers at Yoredale for staff and Members, the Chief Executive confirmed that this would be considered.

In **Response** to a Member's question about the list in the Annex being over committed and whether it is over committed enough to achieve the target, the Chief Executive reassured Members that more projects would be added to the list as more capital based projects are identified.

Resolved – To note the update and approve the capital expenditure proposals for 2025/26 in the **Annex**.

06/25 Financial Outturn for the Year Ending 31 March 2025

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

Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- The target had been achieved to bring in enough income to support spending in real terms at the same level as 2015 which was £9.7m. We brought in income of £14.2m. The total spend in 2024/25 was £13.9m.
- The year end variance against budget was of £888k.

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- We managed to support FiPL projects to the value of £2.6m against a budget of £2.7m and £325k of Grow Back Greener projects against a budget of £696k. The remainder of the budget couldn't be spent due to schemes withdrawing.

In **Response** to a Member's question about whether the amount of salary savings were detrimental to overall resources and whether that has that impacted service delivery, the Chief Executive explained that the savings were mainly on unplanned vacancies and because the pay award was less than expected. Some posts had been difficult to recruit to e.g. Planning and Land Management posts. A regional pay benchmarking exercise is being undertaken by an external consultant to help us understand how the Authority's pay compares to similar organisations across the region and sector. The results will be brought to Members later this year.

In **Response** to a Member's question about whether the FiPL lunches were well attended and if there scope for something similar for other schemes e.g. Grow Back Greener, the Director of Conservation and Community agreed this would be looked at.

Resolved – To note the contents of the report and approve the carry-forward of 2024/25 budget allocations into 2025/26, totalling **£549k (net)**, as detailed in **Appendix 5.**

07/25 Action Plan 2025-26

The Committee **Considered** the report of the Director of Conservation and Community.

In **Response** to a Member's question about whether there is there a revision of the Authority's Housing target after the change to the national housing targets, the Director of Conservation and Community responded that the Authority sets its own target and is not affected by the increase to national housing targets.

Resolved – To approve the attached Action Plan as the basis for managing the Authority's day-to-day work in 2025/26, to approve the plans to spend the additional Defra capital funding for 2025/26 and to agree to officers including additional actions in the Action Plan 2025/26 to implement this expenditure.

08/25 Sickness Absence Policy

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Head of Human Resources.

Resolved – To approve the revised Sickness Absence Policy, as set out in **Appendix A**.

09/25 Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Head of Human Resources.

Resolved – To approve the revised Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy, as set out in **Appendix A**.

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10/25 Treasury Management Performance 2024/25

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Treasurer.

11/25 Income Generation Strategy Progress Update

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Deputy Chief Executive

12/25 Annual Human Resources Report

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Head of Human Resources

13/25 Annual Volunteer Resources Report

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Volunteer Development Officer.

14/25 Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Director of Park Services

15/25 Staffing

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Head of Human Resources.

16/25 Sickness Absence

The Committee **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12:04 p.m.

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