Minutes of the meeting held at the offices of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL on Tuesday 25 March 2025.

Present:
Libby Bateman, Lizzie Bushby, Mark Corner, Richard Foster, Michael Hanley, Neil Heseltine, Robert Heseltine, Julie Hutton, David Ireton, Peter Jackson, Allen Kirkbride, Ian Mitchell, Andrew Murday, Simon Myers, David Noland, Stuart Parsons, Yvonne Peacock, Karin Sedgwick, Graham Simpkins and Derek Twine.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

01/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Liz Appleton Hall, Jenny Purcell and Steve Shaw Wright

02/25 Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 December 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 December 2024 having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

03/25 Public Question Time

Ruth Annison read out a public statement and question regarding public transport and mobility.

The Chair responded to the public statement.

04/25 Declarations of lobbying

None

05/25 Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The paper was presented to the full Authority for following detailed consideration by the Finance & Resources Committee. There had been a number of changes since that initial consideration.

The Chief Executive provided Members with an overview of the key issues and assumptions for the 25-26 budget and pointed out, this was very much a one-year budget in order to better understand the position after Comprehensive Spending Review.

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

- The proposal represents a balanced budget for 2025/26, using £250k from the General reserve and £161k of earmarked reserves.

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- A proposed increase in internally generated income targets by £189k and a number of programme cuts totalling £128k.
- The recent Government announcement of additional capital grant of £1.5m is not included in the figures. Spending proposals will be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee in due course. The change to the NI rate and secondary threshold resulted in an additional charge for next year of £122k.
- The total salary increase in 25/26 is £314k, this includes scale point increases, market rates supplement, increases to National Minimum Wage and apprentice rates, NI increases and a small number of new roles.

Other changes for Members to note are:

- The Rights of Way budget has been increased back to £161k as North Yorkshire Council will be providing £50k for ROW works p.a. over the next 5 years.
- The Grow Back Greener project is extended for a further year.
- A shared Performance Manager post has been developed with the North York Moors NPA.
- The Website is outdated and due to be replaced in the coming year.
- The Authority's income target of £10m will be exceeded after confirmation of the FiPL allocation, the additional Capital Funding and the additional Access for All money.
- Beyond 2025-26 there are no balanced budgets. The deficit rises from £1.1m in 26/27 to £1.4m in 29/30 as the revenue budget cuts from this year are carried into future years as the new base. If, following the Spending Review, there is no increase in the Core Grant (revenue and capital) a more fundamental review of the Authority's structure and work programmes will be needed.

The Chair of F&R thanked Members and Officers for their work on the proposals. Members raised a number of points:

- The opportunities and difficulties around capital spending.
- The need for scenario planning.
- The need for longer term certainty in Government funding and greater clarity on the Government's vision for National Parks.

Resolved – To approve the budget for 2025/26 and indicative budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28 (**Appendix 1**), and the Reserves Strategy (**Appendix 5**).

06/25 Authority response to the Draft National Park Management Plan

The Authority **Considered** the report of the Deputy Chief Executive

The recent public consultation had received 105 responses.
A Member raised a point on the balance between improving access on rights of way for people with less mobility and the overall ease of use figure. This will be brought to the attention of the NPMP Partnership

A Member suggested that the second statutory purpose should be prioritised and ordered above those objectives that promote economic growth, and this should be reflected in the NPMP.
A Member asked if there was any way to enable the two co-opted members to sit around the Authority table and speak as Members. The Solicitor/Monitoring Officer agreed to investigate.

Resolved – To approve the points listed in paragraph 10 of the report and re-order the objectives to take account of statutory purposes and given preference as the basis for the Chair and Chief Executive to feedback to the other members of the Partnership.

07/25 Treasury Management and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance

The Authority **Considered** the report of the Treasurer.

Resolved – To approve the Annual Treasury Management and Capital Strategies, as set out in the Annexes.

08/25 Scheme of Members Allowances 2025/26

The Authority **considered** the report of the **Committees Officer**

A Member asked that the reference to the 'state retirement age' be removed at para 6.2.

A Member queried the circumstances around claiming for a railcard. The Chief Executive agreed to investigate and report back to Members.

A Member asked if consideration had been given to an allowance for the Chair of Finance and Resource Committee as a result of this being raised last year. The Committees Officer will investigate.

Resolved – To adopt the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2025/26 and remove the reference to "State Pension Age: at Para 6.2. The updated scheme to be circulated to Members.

09/25 Non-Attendance of a Member

The Authority **Considered** the report of the Chief Executive

Resolved – The Authority agreed not to take any action regarding Mr Myers non - attendance, and not to bring the matter to the attention of North Yorkshire Council.

10/25 Communication Strategy

The Authority **Considered** the Report of the Head of Communications.

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A Member queried whether sufficient attention was being paid to the audiences that were not so familiar with the National Park. Members commented on the recent discussions around 'Social Prescribing' and suggested the Strategy should reflect our role in promoting this work.

Resolved – To approve the new communication strategy (Annex)

11/25 Member officer protocol/Roles and responsibilities of Members

The Authority **Considered** the Report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Resolved – To adopt the Member Officer Protocol and Roles and Responsibilities of Members document.

12/25 Guidance on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes

The Authority **Considered** the Report of the Chief Executive.

Resolved – That Members note the report

13/25 Chair's Report

The Authority **considered** and **noted** the report of the Chair.

14/25 Chief Executive's Report

The Authority **considered** and **noted** the Report of the Chief Executive.

A Member asked about the outcome of the meeting with Yorkshire Water. The Chief Executive expanded on the discussions and the Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that he had written to YW asking how they were going to implement the objectives set out in the NPMP.
A Member informed the meeting about North Yorkshire Council's proposals for spending the funds available through the Second Homes tax and asked that the Authority signpost community led housing groups and rural housing associations to take advantage of this funding.

15/25 Member Feedback and Member Champions report - Sustainable Development

The Authority **Considered** and **Noted** the report of the Committees Officer.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 2:57 p.m.

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