Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Item 9

Audit and Review Committee

16 July 2024

Performance Reviews - Delegated statutory highways duties and Carbon Reduction Plan

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose membership of the teams who will conduct the Member-led performance reviews of the Authority's delegated statutory highways duties and the Carbon Reduction Plan and to set the scope of both reviews.

Recommendations

2. That Members:

   (i) agree membership of the team for the performance review of delegated statutory highways duties, including appointing one member of Audit and Review Committee to the team; and agree the scope of the review as set out in **Appendix 1**.

   (ii) agree membership of the team for the Carbon Reduction Plan performance review, including appointing one member of Audit and Review Committee to the team; and agree the scope of the review as set out in **Appendix 2**.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

   - Corporate Plan Objective 32:

     Operate Governance arrangements that are fit for purpose, as reported through the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Governance Report.

Background

4. At Audit and Review Committee on 24 April 2024, Members determined that light touch performance reviews of the Authority's delegated statutory highways duties and the Carbon Reduction Plan should be carried out.

5. As was made clear at the meeting, the Authority is committed to a huge programme of work in 2024/25, and – in line with Members' wishes – both reviews will need to be

genuinely ‘light touch’. Draft terms of reference for both performance reviews have been prepared for Member approval in accordance with the broad framework for all performance reviews and can be found in the Appendices.

Financial Implications

6. None, the performance reviews will be conducted using existing resources.

Legal Implications

7. None.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

8. None.

Conclusion

9. The Audit and Review Committee has agreed to conduct two light touch performance reviews. The review teams will focus on the options for change and report back to this Committee in November.

Elliott Lorimer	**Clare Burrows**
Director of Park Services	**Director of Corporate Services**

Appendix 1 – Performance Review of the delegated statutory highways duties

Proposed membership of the review team

- Member of Audit and Review Committee
- Lizzie Bushby, Member Champion for Recreation Management
- Clare Burrows, Director of Corporate Services
- Elliott Lorimer, Director of Park Services
- Alan Hulme, Head of Park Management

Background

The Authority has delegated Highway Authority responsibilities for maintenance of the 2,637km of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, and restricted byways) within the National Park area.

The delegation agreements are for: North Yorkshire Council 1922km and Westmorland & Furness Council 710km. In addition, since April 2021 delegated responsibilities also apply to the 16km in the Lancashire County Council area of the National Park.

The delegation agreements cover a broad range of duties that allow for the management of public paths on the ground. These functions can be summarised as:

- Signposting of public paths
- The maintenance and improvement of public paths
- The maintenance of river crossings
- Traffic Regulation Orders and Temporary Closure Orders
- Enforcement and protection of public rights.

The Authority's objective for public rights of way maintenance is outlined in the National Park Management Plan 2019-24:

B1 Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023.

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to:

a) Understand the effectiveness of the delivery of the delegated statutory highways duties currently performed by the Authority.
b) Consider whether the delegated arrangements should be uniformly applied across the three authorities in light of current and future financial commitments from those Authorities
c) Carry out a 'light-touch' assessment and evaluation of the cost effectiveness of this delivery (in line with direction from Members); comparing with other National Park Authorities where appropriate.
d) Make recommendations on how these delegated statutory highway duties could be delivered in future within the National Park.

Appendix 2 – Performance Review of the Carbon Reduction Plan

Proposed membership of the review team

- Member of Audit and Review Committee
- Julie Hutton, Member Champion for Corporate Management
- Clare Burrows, Director of Corporate Services
- Jon Tighe, Estates Manager

Draft terms of reference

The Authority has set an ambitious carbon emissions reduction objective -
"By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our operations by at least 95% compared to 2005/06, and achieve annual carbon savings from woodland planting that we have funded of at least 30 times our residual annual emissions"

The purpose of this review is to

(i) understand the effectiveness of the current Carbon Reduction Plan by reviewing performance in this area and the cost effectiveness of measures undertaken;
(ii) assess whether the existing objective is realistic; and,
(iii) identify potential further carbon reduction measures that could be explored as part of the new Carbon Reduction Plan 2025-2030