YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY **ITEM 5**

Minutes of the meeting held at the offices of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL on Tuesday 26 March 2024.

Present:
Liz Appleton Hall, Libby Bateman, Lizzie Bushby, Mark Corner, Phil Dew, Richard Foster, Neil Heseltine (in the Chair), Robert Heseltine, Julie Hutton, David Ireton, Peter Jackson, Allen Kirkbride, Ian Mitchell, Jim Munday, Andrew Murday, Simon Myers, David Noland, Yvonne Peacock, Jenny Purcell, Karin Sedgwick, Steve Shaw Wright, Graham Simpkins, Neil Swain and Derek Twine.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chair thanked Kathryn Beardmore (Director of Park Services) on behalf of the Members and announced her retirement after 24 yrs. He thanked her for her hard work, professionalism, passion and dedication during her time at the Authority. He mentioned in particular the legacy of specific projects including the Green Lanes Policy, the National Park extension in 2016 and more recently the Coast to Coast and Hawes to Garsdale Multi Use route.

He also welcomed Kathryn Beardmore's successor Elliott Lorimer as the new Director of Park Services.

01/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

02/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

03/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

Steve Webb, Threshfield Village Development Concern Group, read out a public statement and asked questions about the allocation of housing sites.

Ruth Annison read out a public statement regarding public transport.

The Chair responded to the statement and questions raised.

04/24 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

No declarations of lobbying were received.

05/24 BUDGET 2024/25 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

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

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.

- 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.

- An additional £100,000 from Active Travel England to support the Authority to develop an Active Travel Plan for the National Park. (not showing in the Budget for 24/25)

- The core grant offer letter from Government has not been received and neither has the 2024/25 agreement, therefore National Parks England will be writing to the Secretary of State as a matter of urgency.

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.

Members agreed that the Chair should write to Gareth Dadd (Deputy Leader at NYC) to ask that money raised in the National Park from the new Council Tax Premium on second homes should be ring-fenced to support the building of more affordable housing in the National Park

RESOLVED: To approve: -

a) the draft budget for 2023/24;
b) the indicative budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26; and
c) the Reserves Strategy.
d) A letter from the Chair to the Deputy Leader of North Yorkshire Council requesting ring fencing money from the new Council Tax premium to support affordable homes in the National Park

06/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY MARCH 2024

The Authority CONSIDERED the report of the presentation of the Treasurer.

In response to Members' queries, the Treasurer advised that:

The Financial strategy adopted by the Authority is that of North Yorkshire Council (NYC) and in relation to the enquiry of a Member regarding what consideration has been given to Ethical Banking and Investment, the response from NYC is that it is an emerging field

and that ESG compliant investments are still an emerging area for local authority treasury management. There are limited options available, often on less favourable terms and obviously only available from the limited number of counterparties included on the Approved Lending List due to Security and Liquidity considerations.

The significant Capital Expenditure on Property and IT related to the new Ranger base – and refreshing of laptops/desktops and audio visual solutions for the Committee Room.

RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategies as set out in the report Annexes.

07/24 STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

The Authority CONSIDERED the report of the Director of Corporate Services.

A Member requested clarification of the complicated wording in Appendix 1 Para 5.2 d) relating to Relatives of Members or Employees. The Director of Services agreed to respond direct to Members after checking the background legislation.

Another Member requested clarification of Appendix 1 Para 2.4a) Proceedings of Committees and Sub Committees, the Director of Corporate Services agreed to respond to Members via email.

RESOLVED: To approve

(i) the proposed changes to Standing Orders; and
(ii) Adopt a Statutory Officers' Disciplinary Procedure; and
(iii) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make consequential amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Committee and Officers.

08/24 EXTENSION TO INDEPENDENT PERSONS TERM OF OFFICE

The Authority CONSIDERED the report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Members extended an invitation to the Independent Persons to attend the Full Authority meeting in June 2024, for all members to have the opportunity to meet them.

RESOLVED: To approve the extension of the term of office of Alex Rocke, Independent Person for a further three years until June 2027

09/24 SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2024/25

The Authority CONSIDERED the report of the Committees Officer.

A Member queried Para 6.2 Notes in the Scheme of Members Allowances relating to appropriate Railcards and it was agreed by the Director of Corporate Services to remove the reference to 'State Retirement Age'.

A Member asked for clarification relating to the establishment of the multipliers used for the Special Responsibility Allowances(SRA).

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to review and report back to Members.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2024/25

10/24 LEVELLING UP ACT AND NEW STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

CONSIDERED and **NOTED** the report of the Director of Conservation and Community

11/24 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CONSIDERED and **NOTED** the report of the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive agreed to write to the new Mayoral candidate Paul Haslam with the Authority's Transport Statement in line with information provided to all Mayoral candidates.

12/24 CHAIRS REPORT

CONSIDERED and **NOTED** the report of the Chair, Neil Heseltine.

13/24 MEMBER FEEDBACK ON PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTATION AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS' REPORTS

CONSIDERED and **NOTED** – the report of the Committees Officer and the reports contained therein.

A Member questioned the Member Champion for Sustainable Development about the progress of the review of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
He responded by saying that it was still ongoing, the research had been completed and hopefully the results would be included in the Local Plan update going to the Authority meeting in June 2024.

The Member Champion reported verbally on his recent attendance at the North Yorkshire Shared Prosperity Fund and pointed out that there are still monies left for Small Business Grants £1 to 10K, Community and Village Hall Grants.

The New Business Grant Scheme for over £10k requires a business plan and cash flow analysis. This will be launched on the 16 April 2024 and details would be provided to Officers to circulate.

14/24 RESOLUTION - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded during the discussion of item 16 to Approve the Private Minute relating to the Hawes to Garsdale Multi Use Route on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

15/24 APPROVAL OF THE PROVATE MINUTE HAWES To GARDSALE MULTI USE ROUTE UPDATE

RESOLVED: That the private minute of the meeting held on 12 December 2023, having been printed and circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:00pm.