NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Northumberland National Park Offices, Hexham NE46 3PQ

WEDNESDAY 11 JULY 2018 at 1000 - 1335

Present
Mr Mike Bell (SoS) Cllr Johnny Wilson (SoS Parish)
Ms Fiona Gough (SoS) (till 1315) Mr Peter Murray (SoS)
Cllr Anthony Murray MBE (SoS Parish) Cllr Glen Sanderson (Chairman) (NCC)
Cllr Sue Bolam (SoS Parish) Cllr Alan Sharp (NCC) (till 1305)
Cllr Chris France (SoS Parish) Cllr Julie Foster (NCC) (from 1015)
Cllr Val Gibson (SoS Parish) till 1305 Cllr Eileen Cartie (NCC) (till 1155)
Mrs Pippa Ross (SoS) Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell (SoS Parish)
Mr Chris Mullin (SoS National) till 1305 Cllr Frieda Gough (SoS Parish)
Cllr Andy Saunders (SoS Parish) Mrs Jean Davidson (Deputy Chairman) (SoS)

In attendance:
Officers: Rosie Thomas (Director Business Development); Sarah Glynn (Head of Visitor Development and Engagement/Sill Manager); Hazel Fitzsimmons (Head of Business Support); Tracey Craft (Finance Manager); Claire Mason (Interim Sill Manager); Clive Coyne (Head of Forward Planning); Pete Trumpe (Head of Access and Estates); Duncan Wise (Visitor Development Officer (urgent item); Gill Thompson (Ecologist) (Item P2); Robert Mayhew (Head of Conservation) (Item P 2);
Others: Jayne Phillips (Independent Person); Frances Glassford, (Legal Representative) Newcastle City Council); Nicola Wright (Associate Partner/Auditor) Ernst & Young LLP

Apologies: Cllr John Riddle OBE

NPA25-2018 Election of Authority Chairman and Deputy Chairman

Cllr Glen Sanderson stood down as Authority Chairman and Tony Gates, Chief Executive (National Park Officer) presided over the election of the Chairman.

Election of Chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority

Cllr Glen Sanderson was nominated by Mr Mike Bell and seconded by Cllr Sue Bolam. There were no further nominations and Cllr Glen Sanderson was duly elected Chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority from 11 July 2018 until the 2019 Authority Annual Meeting.

Cllr Sanderson assumed the role of Chairman.

Election of Deputy Chairman

Mrs Jean Davidson was nominated by Mr Peter Murray and seconded by Mr Mike Bell. There were no further nominations and Mrs Jean Davidson was duly elected Deputy Chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority from 11 July 2018 until the 2019 Authority Annual Meeting

NPA26-2018 Apologies for absence: Apologies noted from Cllr John Riddle.

NPA27-2018 Chairman’s Introduction

The Chairman reported recent staff charges: New posts: Gillian Teasdale (Sill Hires Co-Ordinator); Sharon Robson (Corporate Support Manager and PA to the Chief Executive); Rosie Thompson
(Sill Supervisor/Events liaison). Leavers: Andrew Miller (Head of Programmes and Conservation); Catherine Holborn (Assistant Trail Maintenance Ranger); Therese Burgess (Corporate Support Manager and PA to Chief Executive); Caroline Mann (Sill Welcome Team Assistant); Athena Taylor (Sill Welcome Team Assistant); Claire Bromley (Planning Policy Officer).

The Chairman advised Item 12 ‘Designated Landscapes Review’ would be taken after Item 6 and there was an item of urgent business which would be taken at the end of the meeting.

NPA28-2018 Question Time; there were no questions from members of the public.

NPA29-2018 Declaration of Interests:

Cllr Alan Sharp declared an interest in Item P (2) and signed the Declaration of Interest Form.

Cllr Val Gibson declared an interest in Item P (2) and signed the Declaration of Interest Form.

NPA30-2018 Minutes of Authority Meetings held on 21 March 2018 and the Special Authority Meeting held on 27 April 2018

There being no issues arising, the draft Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Wednesday 21 March 2018 were noted, proposed as a true record by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson and approved by members who

RESOLVED that the draft Minutes of the meeting of Northumberland National Park Authority Meeting held on Wednesday 21 March 2018, as circulated, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

There being no issues arising, the draft Minutes of the Special Authority meeting held on Wednesday 27 April 2018 were noted, proposed as a true record by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Cllr Chris France and approved by members who

RESOLVED that the draft Minutes of the Special meeting of Northumberland National Park Authority Meeting held on Wednesday 27 April 2018, as circulated, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

NPA31-2018 Item 1: Receive Chairman’s Annual Report 2017 - 2018

The Chairman introduced his report and thanked members, staff and volunteers for their continued hard work, commitment and dedication to the work of the Authority over the past busy year.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b), proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Mr Mike Bell and approved by members who

RESOLVED
a) to note the contents of the report on the governance of this Authority; and
b) to approve the publication of information on members’ attendances and allowances as set out in Table 1 of Appendix 1 to this report, on the Authority’s website and in relevant performance reports as part of the Authority’s accounts.

NPA32-2018 Item 2: Receive Chief Executive’s Review of Performance 2017 - 2018

The Chief Executive gave an overview of performance against targets to end of March 2018 and highlighted a few key areas.

He advised members that following his staff re-structuring the new Leadership Team was now appointed with the new Director of Park management due to start in September. He spoke about
fundraising which had flat-lined due to several unexpected issues which had arisen and expressed his gratitude to staff who had stepped in to assist with the operation of the Sill. He was pleased to report the Authority’s Planning Services were amongst the top ten in the country. He concluded by saying the Authority was on an ongoing journey of transformation to go but all staff, members and volunteers should take stock of what has been achieved, sometimes in quite challenging conditions, and conveyed his thanks to all.

2017 – 2018 Out turn position

The Head of Business Support drew attention to Section 5, Appendix 2 which summarised the 2017-2018 outturn position of a £964,000 deficit against a £791,500 planned deficit and how this is made up. The Head of Business Support sought to re-assure members that as per the Budget Plan which they had signed off in March, the current out turn was due mainly to an exceptional year with the completion of the Sill Capital Build, it was not an on-going position and the overall out turn was a small increase to unallocated reserves of £3,500. The Head of Business Support said that with carry forwards, the planned 2018-2019 deficit would be £63,300 (see Item 9).

The Head of Business Support said that the Finance & Audit Group had previously discussed the key financial reports on the out turn, drew attention to Table 3 in this regard and to para 6 (c) with regard to the cash surplus/deficit for each of the trading elements of the Sill Trading report.

The Head of Business Support said the prudent management of finances for 2017-2018 had resulted in an overall impact on reserves of only £3,500, several budgeting challenges had been successfully handled and budget monitoring received a higher management focus and scrutiny from the Finance & Audit Group especially during this time of change for the Authority.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b), proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson and approved by members who

RESOLVED to
a) note the Authority’s performance for 2017-2018 as set out in this report and as detailed at Appendix 1 to Item 2; and
b) note the budget out turn for the year as set out at Appendix 2 to Item 2.

NPA33-2018 Item 3: Annual Accounts to 31 March 2018

The Finance Manager introduced the report; drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b); introduced Ms Nicola Wright, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young LLP (not Deloitte LLP as stated in the report) who would present a summary of the audit findings as reported in Appendix 2 ‘Audit Results Report to 31 March 2018’; and drew attention to para 4 (g) relating to Appendix 3 ‘Key Financial Results 2017/18 (including 5-year comparatives)’.

The Finance Manager highlighted some key financial results for members’ attention:

- gross income decrease (£3.17 million) was mainly due to a capital grants decrease as work at the Sill diminished and to offset this there was an increase in sales, fees and charges income of £270,000 mainly from Sill income streams;
- gross expenditure [para 4 (h)] decrease of £4.26 million mainly due to the Sill capital spend occurring in 2016/17 and within this is a £270,000 salary costs increase partly due to the Sill becoming operational with the resultant employer pension contributions increase of £49,000;
- reduction in useable reserves to £676,000 from £1.64 million (£964,000 deficit) is the prudent result of planned spending from accumulated balances. Useable reserves include capital and pension reserves;
- in the financial statement an unadjusted audit difference of £6,221 had been identified which was related to IT maintenance costs, included in fixed assets even though it was a revenue
cost; the matter had been discussed in full by the Finance and Audit Group and would be included in the Letter of Representation.

Questions and Comments

A member asked about the pension deficit and was advised that the figure was based on a triennial valuation taken at a single point in time.

A member asked about the valuation of the Sill and was advised this had been based on a dual valuation approach [(DRC) - depreciated replacement cost basis for the Sill Visitor Centre and on an investment basis for the YHA]. This valuation had resulted in an impairment of £1.1 million which, though recognised as a loss in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, the Head of Business Support re-iterated would not affect the useable reserves.

Ms Nicola Wright was invited to provide a resume of the Audit Results Report to March 2018 (Appendix 2) and highlighted key points:

- confirmed that receipt of the Pension Fund auditor’s report and consideration of EY’s review of the actuarial report had now been received the Audit was complete;
- Management Representation letter (Appendix B to Appendix 2) – all actions now complete to allow this to be finalised;
- she was content with the valuation by a professional valuer of the Sill and clarified the YHA position in this regard, which had also been discussed fully by the Finance and Audit Group;
- noted that the Strategic Risk register (SRR) had not been adopted nor updated since the members Risk Register workshop (December 2016); and
- noted governance framework in place to manage efficiencies and value for money and no significant risks or weaknesses were identified;

Ms Wright reminded members hers was an unqualified opinion and in that regard, she was happy the Authority’s financial statements were materially correct.

There being no other issues, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b), proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr J Morrison-Bell and approved by members who

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<td>a) approve the audited Statement of Accounts 2017/18 (Appendix 1 to Item 3) and authorise the Chairman and Chief Executive (National Park Officer) to sign off the accounts for issue; and</td>
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<td>b) endorse the findings in the Audit Results Report for the year ended 31 March 2018 from Ernst &amp; Young LLP (Appendix 2 to Item 3).</td>
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The audited Statement of Accounts 2017/18 was signed by the Chairman and Chief Executive.

NPA34-2018  Item 4: The Annual Assurance Framework

The Head of Business Support reminded members that the Internal Audit Annual Report had been prepared by the previous internal auditors, RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP whilst the Forward Plan (Internal Audit Strategy) had been provided by the Authority’s new Internal Auditor, Newcastle City Council. The third component of the assurance framework was the Authority Review 18 month forward work programme.

The Head of Business Support drew attention to page 2 of the Annual Report where the Head of Internal Audit had advised that although the Authority’s risk management framework was adequate in most areas including governance, some further improvements to the framework were being suggested.
The Head of Business Support explained that as the Internal Audit Strategy had been prepared by Newcastle City Council, they would require some time to learn about the Authority and gain a clear understating of how it works and assured members that the Chief Executive, Director of Business Development and Head of Business Support were working with them in this regard.

There being no other issues, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (d), proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Mr Peter Murray and approved by members who

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<td>a) endorse the Assurance Framework set out in the report;</td>
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<td>b) note the Internal Audit Annual Report 2017-2018 as at Appendix 1;</td>
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<td>c) approve the Internal Audit Strategy 2018-19 to 2020-21 as at Appendix 2; and</td>
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<td>d) approve the Authority Review Group work programme for 2018-2019 as at Appendix 3.</td>
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NPA35-2018  Item 5: Annual Review of the Authority’s Corporate Documents

The Monitoring Officer explained the proposed changes to the Authority’s Corporate Documents as detailed in the recommendations (a) to (c). The main changes would be:

a) new governance structure for the Sill – the Sill Advisory Board (para 5b) and subsequent changes to the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) and

b) change to structure of Development Management Committee to allow greater flexibility for membership of this committee due to previous difficulties in ensuring it was quorate (para 5c).

Questions and comments

a) Development Management Committee

Members asked what the aims of the proposed changes to the Development Management Committee were and if the Authority was at risk if no group was represented at a meeting. The Monitoring Officer advised there had been issues this year in particular, with ensuring a quorum and attendance of the County Council DMC members at meetings.

The Chief Executive explained that member engagement had not been at the level hoped for therefore the proposal for two from each category plus three others was to give more quorum flexibility and ensure attendance at meetings.

A member supported the proposal as a pragmatic way forward as membership of DMC was demanding in terms of knowledge, experience and commitment therefore the committee needed Authority members who were committed, interested, and experienced in planning matters going forward.

b) Sill Advisory Board

Members noted the amalgamation of the Sill Project and Activities Boards to become the new Sill Advisory Board. Members felt that the proposal for six members was too few and therefore proposed a membership of eight members which was unanimously agreed.

(Amendment: During elections at Item 6, due to interest in the Sill Advisory Board, a resolution was put forward to further amend the Scheme of Delegation to Committees, Groups and Officers July 2018 for this committee from eight to ten members, including the Chairman, with a quorum of three, proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Mr Mike Bell and agreed by all members.)
c) **Member Officer Protocol**

A member referred to the *Protocol Member/Officer Relations*, page 3 para 1.17, and asked when a 'case for obstruction' might arise. It was agreed this was somewhat clumsy wording and it was therefore agreed to delete two sentences in para 1.17 as follows: ‘Members sometimes assume that this is a case of Officers deliberately obstructing the wishes of members. In fact this is hardly ever the case.’

There being no other issues, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (d) noting the amendments as follows:

- recommendation (a): ‘to sign off the Terms of Reference for the Sill Advisory Board (Appendix 1 to Item 5) noting membership would be eight members not six’; and
- recommendation (c i): ‘Protocol Member/Officer Relations (July 2018) updated to reflect the new Leadership Team structure (Appendix 2 to Item 5) amended with deletion of two sentences in para 1.17 (from ‘Members sometimes .... the case’;

There being no further changes, recommendations (a) to (d) were proposed by Mr Peter Murray, seconded by Cllr Sue Bolam and approved by members who

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**RESOLVED to**

a) * to sign off the Terms of Reference for the Sill Advisory Board (Appendix 1 to Item 5) noting membership would be eight members not six; this was subsequently amended to ten members;  
b) to approve changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Committees Groups and Officers (July 2018) as described in the report and as set out at Appendix 1 to Item 5;  
c) To note the following:  
   i) Protocol Member/Officer Relations (July 2018) updated to reflect the new Leadership Team structure (Appendix 2 to Item 5) amended with deletion of two sentences in para 1.17 (from ‘Members sometimes .... the case’; and
   ii) Member Job Descriptions and Roles (July 2018) updated (Appendix 3 to Item 5); and  
d) To endorse the unchanged Standing Orders for Regulation of Authority Proceedings and Business (December 2014).

*[Note: see Item 6 referring to recommendation (a) approving ten members of Sill Advisory Board]*

**NPA36-2018 Item 6: Appointment of Office Bearers and appointments to the Authority’s committees, sub-committees, groups and other representations**

The Chairman confirmed appointments were effective from 11 July 2018 until the date of the 2019 Annual Meeting. The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with the Standing Orders for the Regulation of the Authority’s Proceedings and Business December 2014, voting would be by show of hands and in the case of a tie, by voting slip unless otherwise stated.

**Development Management Committee:** (nine members)

Members were reminded of the change to the Scheme of Delegation July 2018 agreed at Item 5 of this meeting whereby membership of the Development Management Committee would now be two from each category plus three others.

- **Secretary of State (National):** Ms Jean Davidson, Ms Pippa Ross and Mr Mke Bell  
- **Secretary of State (Parish):** Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell, Cllr Val Gibson, Cllr Sue Bolam and Cllr Johnny Wilson  
- **Northumberland County Council:** Cllr Julie Foster, Cllr Anthony Murray
The above members expressed interest in membership of this committee and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Development Management Committee (DMC).

i. **Chairman of Development Management Committee**: Cllr Sue Bolam was proposed as Chairman of DMC by Cllr Johnny Wilson, seconded by Mr Mike Bell and there being no further nominations, **Cllr Sue Bolam** was duly elected Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

ii. **Deputy Chairman of Development Management Committee**: Mr Mike Bell was proposed as Deputy Chairman of DMC by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson and there being no further nominations, **Mr Mike Bell** was duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

**Authority Review (eight members plus two independent members)**

- **Secretary of State (National)**: Ms Fiona Gough, Mr Chris Mullin
- **Secretary of State (Parish)**: Cllr Chris France, Cllr Val Gibson and Cllr Andy Saunders
- **Northumberland County Council**: Cllr Anthony Murray, Cllr Alan Sharp and Cllr John Riddle

Cllr John Riddle was proposed by members in absentia with the remaining members expressing interest in membership of this committee and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to Authority Review.

i. **Chairman of Authority Review**: Ms Fiona Gough was proposed by Mr Mike Bell, seconded by Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell and there being no further nominations received, **Ms Fiona Gough** was duly elected Chairman of Authority Review.

ii. **Deputy Chairman of Authority Review**: Cllr Alan Sharp was proposed by Ms Fiona Gough, seconded by Cllr Chris France and there being no further nominations received, **Cllr Alan Sharp** was duly elected Deputy Chairman of Authority Review.

**Standards and Appeals Committee (five members)**

Ms Pippa Ross, Cllr Val Gibson, Mr Peter Murray, Cllr Alan Sharp and Cllr Julie Foster expressed interest in membership of this committee and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Standards and Appeals Committee.

**The Sill Advisory Board (ten members including the Chairman)**

Members were reminded of the change to the Scheme of Delegation July 2018 agreed at Item 5 of this meeting whereby membership of the Sill Advisory Board would now be eight members, including the Authority Chairman, who could also be Chairman of this committee. The Sill Advisory Board replaces the Sill Project and Sill Activity Boards.

However, due to interest in the Sill Advisory Board, a resolution was proposed to further amend the Standing Orders July 2018 for this committee to **ten** members, including the Chairman, with a quorum of three, proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Mr Mike Bell and agreed by all members who

RESOLVED to sign off the Terms of Reference for the Sill Advisory Board (Appendix 1 to Item 5) noting membership would be **ten** members including the Chairman.
The amendment to recommendation (a) Item 5 (Sill Advisory Group membership to be eight) was subsequently updated to reflect this change to ten members including the Authority Chairman.

Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell, Ms Fiona Gough, Cllr Sue Bolam, Cllr Val Gibson, Ms Pippa Ross, Mr Peter Murray, Cllr Alan Sharp, Ms Jean Davidson and Cllr Anthony Murray expressed an interest in membership of this committee and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Sill Advisory Board.

Finance & Audit Group (six members plus Chairman)

Mr Peter Murray, Cllr Sue Bolam, Ms Fiona Gough, Cllr Alan Sharp, Cllr Andy Saunders and Ms Pippa Ross expressed interest in membership of this Committee and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Finance & Audit Group.

Estates Task & Finish Group (five members)

Cllr Sue Bolam, Cllr Val Gibson, Cllr Alan Sharp, Mr Peter Murray and Ms Jean Davidson expressed interest in membership of this group and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Estates Task & Finish Group.

Local Plan Task & Finish Group (six members)

Mr Mike Bell, Cllr Sue Bolam, Cllr Val Gibson, Cllr Andy Saunders, Ms Pippa Ross and Mr Chris Mullin expressed interest in membership of this group and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and were duly elected to the Local Plan Task & Finish Group.

Appointments to other bodies and representations

a) Campaign for National Parks: Cllr Sue Bolam and Ms Pippa Ross expressed an interest in being the Authority representative on the Campaign for National Parks. The Chairman said he wished this vote to be by Secret Ballot.

A motion was proposed by Mr Peter Murray, seconded by Mr Mike Bell, to suspend the Authority’s Standing Orders December 2014, para 4.3 ‘Suspension of Standing Orders’ and para 2.1 ‘Voting’ for this item only. This motion was approved by members and Standing Orders 4.3 and 2.1 were suspended to allow for voting by Secret Ballot for this item only. Members voted using a voting slip, the results were verified by Ms Rosie Thomas, the Authority’s Monitoring Officer and Ms Pippa Ross was duly elected as the Authority’s representative to the Campaign for National Parks.

b) Appointments to other bodies and representatives were agreed as follows:

- UK ANPA Executive: Chairman (substitute Deputy Chairman)
- National Parks England: Chairman (substitute Deputy Chairman)
- Northumberland JLAF: Mr Mike Bell (shadowed by Ms Fiona Gough)
- Harden Quarry Liaison Committee: Cllr Chris France and Mr Mike Bell
- Kielder Water Development Trust: Cllr John Riddle
- Campaign for National Parks: Ms Pippa Ross
- Historic Environment Champion: Cllr Val Gibson
- Equality Standard Champion: Ms Jean Davidson
- Youth Engagement Champion: Cllr Julie Foster
- Local Government Association: No longer required
NPA42-2018 Item 12: Designated Landscapes Review

The Chief Executive provided a summary of the Secretary of State’s Designated Landscapes Review (DLR), noting the tabled addendum to the report; drew attention to Appendix 1 (Terms of Reference for the DLR); and drew attention to recommendations (a) to (c).

The Chief Executive advised members the main purpose of the DLR is for an Independent Panel, led by Julian Glover, (see addendum) to review the country’s 34 AONB’s and 10 National Parks and evaluate whether they meet the needs of the 21st century.

The Chief Executive referred to the addendum and explained more fully, the meeting he had attended on 5 July 2018 in London when representatives of some National Parks had met with a few members of the DLR Panel and the Defra secretariat. The Chief Executive stressed the DLR timescale was quite short and though the timetable was not yet agreed, it was likely Julian Glover would visit the National Park in early Autumn, followed by a call for evidence and the Panel anticipated reporting back to the Secretary of State in 2019, within the 70 year anniversary of the designation of National Parks.

The Chief Executive drew attention to recommendation (c), the initial half day member workshop, other meetings to be arranged as required as the DLR develops, and concluded his summary by reminding members the DLR would not be without its challenges with the likelihood of some demanding conclusions and recommendations.

Questions / comments

Members had a number of initial observations relating the DLR including:

- concerned DLR may result in negative impacts on forestry in national parks;
- ‘re-wilding’ - appeared to be a strong lobby for this in the Park as well as others who may see this as a threat and hoped that such issues would result in a compromise;
- National Parks England (NPE) could have differing views about the Review to individual Parks therefore possible areas of conflict;
- concerns at possible governance changes;
- workshop: members suggested as there would likely be public interest in the DLR recommended a broader scoped workshop to include other groups, communities and members of the public;
- other workshops or meetings might be required as the Review progressed;
- Authority needed to be aware of other models of National Park and AONB governance across Europe and elsewhere and what can be learnt from them; need to look outside the Park boundaries at what was going on elsewhere.

The Chief Executive advised members he had been in discussion with National Parks England about the Review and agreed that whilst there were areas of common ground, there was also the potential differences of views across the different National Parks.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b) and from discussions, recommended a change to recommendation (c) ‘to hold a member workshop, to which some partners and the wider community should be invited, to inform how the Authority wishes to engage with the Review’ which were proposed by Ms Fiona Gough, seconded by Mr Mike Bell and approved by the members who

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1 Rewilding is large-scale conservation aimed at restoring and protecting natural processes and core wilderness areas, providing connectivity between such areas, and protecting or reintroducing apex predators and keystone species.
RESOLVED to:
The Authority is recommended to:
   a) note the details of the recently launched Designated Landscapes (National Parks and AONBs): 2018 Review as set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2;
   b) note the request from the Chairman of the Review, Julian Glover, to visit Northumberland Park Authority before the end of September 2018; and
   c) to hold a member workshop, to which some partners and the wider community should be invited, to inform how the Authority wishes to engage with the Review.

NPA37-2018 Item 7: Forward Work Programme and Strategic Risk Register Update

The Head of Forward Planning introduced the report and reminded members of the six key strategic risks which they should reflect upon [Appendix 3 (a) Strategic Risk Register page 3]. He also summarised the Forward Work Programme (the Operational Plan 2018-2019 and the Management Plan Action Plan 2018-2019).

Questions/comments

A member referred to Aim 4 (d) of the Operational Plan (Appendix 1) and commented that training opportunities appeared to be focussed mainly on the Sill. The Head of Forward Planning clarified that a large percentage of activities would be undertaken through, and at, the Sill but also wanted to reassure members there would, going forward, be other training opportunities available.

A member referred to the Strategic Risk Register (SRR), asked if the Authority felt it had the capacity and ability to deliver the Forward Work Programme and was a workshop required to consider this. The Chief Executive reminded members the Forward Work Programme was guided by the current Management Plan’s priorities and the new five-year Business Plan was driving the current Operational Plan. He reminded members that each Head of Department had considered the capacity and ability of their team to deliver. It was highlighted that capacity remained a challenge in the light of the Authority’s ambition and that staff are currently operating at full operational capacity with little scope for additional work.

Members stressed the importance of SRR annual update as well as the regular updates; asked that a mechanism be put in place to ensure this happened; noted there were no timelines in the SRR e.g. succession policy. It was recommended the SRR be discussed by the Finance and Audit Group at their meeting in August and to go back to the Full Authority in September. The Head of Forward Planning pointed out that the SRR was already reported as part of the regular Corporate Performance updates three times a year (six months, Q3 and end of the financial year).

A member asked if there was sufficient scope in the Operational Plan for urban community liaison and suggested this topic required further discussion, possibly in September. The Chief Executive reminded members the Authority had to agree a deliverable work programme and that it was not possible to do everything and that the Operational Plan was aiming to deliver the agreed priorities within the current Business Plan.

The Chairman drew attention to recommendations (1) to (3) and proposed two further recommendations:
   • recommendation (4): ‘agree that the Finance and Audit Group will continue to review the Strategic Risk Register at their meetings’ and
   • recommendation (5): ‘request an update on the Strategic Risk Register at the September 2018 Authority meeting with regular updates thereafter’.

There being no further points raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (1) to (3), the two new suggested recommendations (4) and (5), which were proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Mr Fiona Gough and approved by members who
RESOLVED to

1. endorse the Operational Plan 2018-19 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. endorse the changes to the monitoring method in the Management Plan Annual Action Plan 2018-19 as set out at Appendix 2 to this report;
3. endorse the Strategic Risk Register 2018 – 2021 as set out at Appendix 3a to this report;
4. agree that the Finance and Audit Group will continue to review the Strategic Risk Register at their meetings’ and
5. request an update on the Strategic Risk Register at the September 2018 Authority meeting with regular updates thereafter.

NPA38-2018 Item 8: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Preferred Options Draft Local Plan (Local Plan Preferred Options)

The Head of Forward Planning went through the report; highlighted key policy changes in the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan; drew attention to the Public Consultation exercise due to start on 30 July for eight weeks’; thanked the Local Plan Task & Finish Group for their input to the documents; and drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b).

The Head of Forward Planning particularly wanted members to be aware that one of the main challenges to the Local Plan delivery is the National Park’s population profile and without positive policy intervention, projections show there is likely to be an accelerating ageing population and further reduction in the work-age population. The impact of this will be a shrinking labour force and fewer working age families within the National Park.

Questions/Comments

A member felt the Local Plan was unrealistic in terms of provision for affordable smaller housing units, including conversions of farm steadings and outbuildings for smaller housing units and therefore, felt the Local Plan was not doing enough to address the needs of a changing demographic or encourage people to stay in the Park.

A member said the Local Plan Task and Finish Group had discussed the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of families, the elderly and rural workers (including the conversion of buildings outside settlements) at great length and that all these issues were addressed in the policies in the draft Local Plan., as well as sustainable housing, styles, design and development opportunities. The change from local need to principal occupancy was also referred to in the draft Local Plan therefore felt the issues raised by the other member had been adequately addressed in the draft Local Plan document.

A member said that though the new, more liberal draft planning policies were going some way towards helping free up affordable housing opportunities in the countryside, it was expensive to alter buildings such as those within farm steadings and there were very few grants available for such work. The Head of Forward Planning also pointed out that the Authority was working with some housing delivery providers to identify opportunities to provide community led affordable housing in the National Park.

Members’ reiterated their request for a simplified summary of the Local Plan Preferred Options and the Head of Forward Planning said this was currently being prepared.

There being no other issues raised, the Deputy Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b) and (b), proposed by Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell and seconded by Ms Jean Davidson. Cllr Andy Saunders declared he wished to abstain from the vote on this proposal which was approved by the other members who
RESOLVED to:
(a) approve the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Preferred Options Draft Local Plan document for public consultation; and
(b) authorise the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) to make any minor amendments to the final text of the consultation draft document prior to commencement of formal consultation.

NPA39-2018 Item 9: Medium Term Budget Update and Treasury Management Strategy including revisions to key financial documents

The Head of Business Support went through her report, highlighting that the report included the Treasury Strategy; capital finance reporting indicators; sought member approval of updates to some key financial documents; and drew attention to the recommendations.

The Head of Business Support emphasised a few key points from the report:
- Table 1 and Table 2 detailed the net positive carry forward of £176,000;
- Table 3 includes changes from the March 2018 budget reports resulting in a deficit reduction at June 2018 to £63,300 and an overall reduction in reserves of £6,500;
- Table 4 showed the reserves summary with levels set in March 2018 taking into account the £3,500 surplus returning to reserves;
- it is proposed the Finance & Audit Group become involved in setting levels of reserves;
- reminded members, at Section 6, there were no new loans proposed or changes to the treasury and investment strategy needed and monthly cash flow forecast were prepared;
- the best interest rates will continue to be monitored; and
- the biennial updates to the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and the Financial Regulations were for approval and the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy had been updated for approval.

Questions / comments

A member asked about the Authority’s reserves being kept in a low interest back account. The Head of Business Support said the Authority could not risk investing public funds in other avenues even though they may give higher interest rates and that judicious cash-flow management helped to mitigate low interest rates.

A member asked for clarification about the budget surplus being paid back in 2019-2020 as the deficit in 2018-19 was £480,000 and the surplus in 2019-20 £425,000 bigger therefore the total deficit was £550,000. The Head of Business Support said there was a 10% retention on the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) budget allocation and that a loan facility had been taken on to manage this which it was hoped would not be required unless there were extenuating circumstances such as the HLF changing their budget distribution policy.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (e) and proposed a new recommendation (f) ‘that the Finance & Audit Group consider a Reserves Policy at their next meeting’, which were proposed by Mr Mike Bell, seconded by Ms Fiona Gough and approved by the members who

RESOLVED to:
(a) approve the carry forwards as detailed in paragraphs 4 (b) and 4 (c);
(b) approve the Treasury Management Strategy as detailed in Sections 7 and 8 of the report;
(c) approve the updated Standing Orders Relating to Contracts (Appendix 1);
(d) approve the updated Financial Regulations (Appendix 2);
(e) approve the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (Appendix 3); and
(f) agree that the Finance & Audit Group consider a Reserves Policy at their next meeting.
NPA40-2018  Item 10: The Sill Update

The Interim Sill Manager introduced the report and highlighted that by the end of July visitor figures were heading to being over 170,000; YHA stays were 147% of target; retail performance was now £1 per head spend, with sales 86% of target; and car parking income was now 90% of the revised target. She added that the extreme weat[1]her in March had adversely impacted on some of the figures but was pleased to report that things were picking up well now.

The Head of Visitor Development (Sill Manager) drew attention to the recommendations (a) to (c) in the report and emphasised a few key areas:

- Activity days: numbers lower due to move towards lower volume, higher income events hence fewer people at each activity; 560 activity days to date – progress is being made and new ways of working beginning to reap rewards. The Activity Plan will be discussed with the HLF with the aim of working towards a more workable and realistic Business Plan.

- Events: a quarterly thematic approach to events was being trialled including ‘Digital Landscapes’ and each quarter will have a specific theme corresponding to an element of the National Park’s work to share with the wider public. The third exhibition was now underway in the temporary exhibition space.

- Volunteering: on target and transformation is being seen in the types of volunteering population and a transformational change towards more diverse volunteering.

- On-line activity: on-line reviews were showing about 80% excellent reviews, and negative comments were noted and actioned as far as possible e.g. temporary signage in the exhibition area, how car park income is used; a comprehensive visitor survey by an external facilitator is also to be undertaken at the Sill and other venues which would cover why people visit the Sill, views on the shop and café etc.

- Business support: a review of the Sill team had been undertaken and new posts now active to address areas such as corporate hires and business use of the Sill.

Questions / comments

Members wanted to complement staff on the positive changes that had occurred at the Sill and introducing high interest topics such as ‘Digital Landscapes’.

Members asked what impact situations such as adverse weather, as in March, and major sporting events, such as the world cup football, had on visitor numbers and spend, as no clear pattern for either was emerging.

Members asked for clarification on visitor numbers and the Head of Visitor Development (Sill Manager) explained a ‘magic eye’ counter system on the main door was used which was adjusted to take account of staff and other visitors and cross-referenced against car park use and other way of entering the building e.g. access to the roof that is currently not counted, and she was currently looking at placing ‘magic eye’ counters in other locations.

Members enquired about the new CRM and booking systems. The Director of Business Development advised the new booking system was currently being tested but care was required in launching this programme and ‘tweaking’ was still required before the launch in September 2018.

A member commented on the stretched targets for the Sill and particularly cash generation – v cash expenditure and could income targets realistically be achieved. The Head of Visitor Development (Sill Manager) explained that the Sill Business Plan was written in such a way as to
be achievable and changes made as the elements of the project developed such as the revision to the Business Plan for changes to the car park. She added that retail uptake was higher and several areas have potential such as using the Sill for weddings, to help the earned income forecasts. The Head of Business Support said an update on the Sill, including income targets would be brought to the September Authority meeting. A member complemented the report for its useful content and asked that the Finance & Audit Group review the Sill figures.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (c) proposed by Cllr Johnny Wilson, seconded by Cllr Alan Sharp and approved by the members who

RESOLVED to
a. note the progress being made in all aspects of the project;
b. note that visitor figures have now exceeded the Year One target agreed with the HLF and are on track to achieve, and has now exceeded the stretch target set by the Authority; and
c. note that income generation remains below target; however, significant progress across retail, activities and venue hire has been made in the last quarter.

NPA41-2017  Item 1: Authority Review Meeting update

The Chief Executive provided a very brief summary of the 23 February 2018 Review meeting on ‘Youth Engagement’.

Ms Fiona Gough, Authority Review Chairman pointed out at point 3 in the report, ‘ongoing’ should be added. She asked about progress with the actions as several were still ‘ongoing’ and stated that for some actions, it would be useful to have an indication of a timescale for when they would be completed.

The Chairman reminded members they had to take a balanced view of such matters and be aware of resource issues as reported earlier in the meeting.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (c), with an amendment to (c) ‘................. noting that ‘ongoing’ should be added to bullet point 3’, proposed by Cllr Chris France, seconded by Mr Peter Murray and approved by members who

RESOLVED to:
1. note the findings of the Review meeting held on 23 February 2018;
2. note and consider the response from Leadership Team in respect of the recommendations from these meetings; and
3. endorse the actions planned our currently underway as set out in Appendix 1 to Item 11, noting that ‘ongoing’ should be added to bullet point 3.

NPA43-2018  Item 13: The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The Interim Sill Manager provided a brief introduction to the report on the General Data Protection regulations, which were replacing the old Data Protection Regulations, and advised members that Susannah Buylla, Head of Development Management, would be the Authority’s Data Protection officer going forward and would receive training to ensure ongoing compliance.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to the recommendations, proposed by Cllr Sue Bolam, seconded by Cllr Chris France and approved by members who

RESOLVED
1. to note the changes the former Data Protection Regulations; and
2. to note the action plan developed in response to the new regulations.
NPA44-2018 DELEGATED DECISIONS: there were no Delegated Decisions.

NPA45-2018 URGENT BUSINESS


The Chief Executive tabled an urgent item ‘Improving the Visitor Welcome in the Breamish Valley– Action Plan 2018-2019 Q2’ following the Authority Review meeting held there on 13 June 2018, and members were provided with time to read this report.

The Head of Visitor Engagement (Sill Manager) introduced the report; pointed out the recommendation; drew attention to the Action Plan and said it was anticipated all but six of the actions would be complete by the end of July 2018; and that approval for a budget of up to £10,000 was being sought from members.

The Chairman of Authority Review said a key message was to make actions comprehensive, carried through and emphasised.

Questions and comments

A member spoke about the discussion at the Review meeting on the car parking difficulties at the far end of the valley. The Chief Executive said this was a longer term issue and further detail from the discussions would be recorded in the Authority Review notes.

A member asked about Digital Marketing and was advised that the website design is in conjunction with the Heart of Northumberland Tourism so venues such as the Ingram Café could join both this and North Northumberland Tourism.

A member suggested the information points at Bulby’s Wood toilets needed to be freshened up with more cohesion to other sites in the National Park. The budget of £2,500 was noted and the Chief Executive said he believed it was sufficient for all signage improvements. He added that the brown and white signage was done in conjunction with the County Council so the Authority was driven by their timescale.

With no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to the recommendation, proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson and approved by members who

RESOLVED to note the actions listed in the Action Plan and to approve the resources necessary to implement them by Q3 of 2018-2019.

b) Recruitment Update

The Chief Executive advised members that after a lengthy and thorough recruitment process, the new Director of Park Management had been appointed. Mr Steve Trotter had been offered the position and the Chief Executive asked members to endorse this appointment. Members unanimously agreed to this appointment and

RESOLVED to endorse the appointment of Steve Trotter as the Director of Park Management.

NPA46-2018 MEMBERS’ QUESTION TIME:

The Chairman reminded members the aim of this item was for members to raise questions or to discuss topics of specific interest, on an informal basis. There were no questions on this occasion.

This part of the meeting ended at 1255. Part One was followed by Part Two
PART TWO: EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Part Two started at 1300.

The Chairman proposed members pass the resolution: “That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, press and public be excluded from this meeting as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act”.

The reason for the exclusion of press and public for this part of the meeting was clarified as:

The reports NNPA47-2018 Item 1 (P) and NNPA48-2018 Item 2 (P) contain exempt information as per Part 1, Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 [as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006] relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

The legal representative reminded members that they required to be satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing information.

Cllr Sue Bolam proposed the resolution, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson and approved by members who

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from Part Two of the meeting.

Members of the public, some officers and the Independent Person withdrew from Part Two.

NPA47-2018 Item P (1): Exempt Minutes Authority Meeting 12 March 2018

The draft Exempt Minutes of the Authority meeting of 12 March 2018 were approved for signing.

Cllr Alan Sharp and Cllr Val Gibson, having declared an interest at the start of the meeting, withdrew for Item P (2).


The Exempt Minutes are recorded separately.

The meeting, including Part Two concluded at 1335.