NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Northumberland National Park Offices, Hexham NE46 3PQ

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2019 at 0930 – 1310

Present
Mike Bell (SoS Nat) Cllr Johnny Wilson (SoS Parish)
Fiona Gough (SoS Nat) Peter Murray (SoS Nat) (till 1130)
Cllr Anthony Murray (NCC) Cllr Glen Sanderson (NCC) (Chairman)
Cllr Sue Bolam (SoS Parish) Cllr Alan Sharp (NCC)
Cllr Chris France (SoS Parish) Cllr Mark Purvis (NCC)
Pippa Ross (SoS Nat) Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell (SoS Parish)
Cllr John Riddle (NCC) (from 1130) Cllr Eileen Cartie (NCC)
Jean Davidson (SoS Nat) (Deputy Chair)

In attendance: Officers: Tony Gates (Chief Executive (National Park Officer)); Pauline Wall (Director of Park Management); Rosie Thomas (Director of Business Development and Monitoring Officer); Hazel Fitzsimmons (Head of Business Support, Chief Financial Officer, Section 151 Officer)); Tracey Craft (Finance Manager); Claire Mason (Head of Sill Operations); Robert Mayhew (Head of Conservation); Susannah Buylla (Interim Head of Planning).
Others: Jayne Phillips (Independent Person); Frances Glassford, (Legal Representative) Newcastle City Council); Nicola Wright (Ernst & Young LLP till 1020).

NPA23-2019 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 unopposed by members as Chairman and there being no further nominations Cllr Glen Sanderson was duly elected as Chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority from 10 July 2019 until the date of the 2020 Authority Annual Meeting. Cllr Sanderson said this would be his fifth and final year as Chairman and he would not seek re-election. Cllr Sanderson assumed the role of Chairman.

Election of Deputy Chairman

Mrs Jean Davidson was nominated as Deputy Chairman by Cllr Sue Bolam and seconded by Cllr Eileen Cartie. There were no further nominations and Mrs Jean Davidson was duly elected Deputy Chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority from 10 July 2019 until the date of the 2020 Authority Annual Meeting.


NPA25-2019 Chairman’s Introduction

Members noted recent staff charges: Leavers: Alison Allcock (Sill Visitor Welcome Team); Clive Coyne (Head of Forward Planning). New starters: Lorna McDonald, Catherine Grant and Jean Craney (Sill Visitor Welcome Team). Changes: Tess Wenham (Sill Visitor Welcome Team Assistant and Volunteer Support Officer to Assistant Trail Maintenance Ranger). Margaret Anderson (Volunteer Support Officer and Ranger); Susannah Buylla [Interim Head of Planning (Development Management and Forward Planning)]
The Chairman:
- thanked everyone involved in arranging the recent Staff, Member and Volunteer Day;
- welcomed Cllr Mark Purvis, new County Council member replacing Cllr Julie Foster;
- congratulated Andrew Mitchell, Digital Officer and Ed Hudspeth, GIS Officer on winning a national ESRI award for the Digital Landscapes exhibition; and
- informed members of the presentation of the Curlew Cup (cycling) sponsored by the National Park on 7 July 2019.

NPA26-2019 Question Time; there were no questions from members of the public.

NPA27-2019 Declaration of Interests: there were no declarations of Interest.

NPA28-2019 Minutes of Authority Meeting held on 20 March 2019 and Special Authority Meeting held on 15 May 2019

There being no issues arising, the draft Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Wednesday 20 March 2019 were noted and approved by members who

RESOLVED that the draft Minutes of the meeting of Northumberland National Park Authority held on Wednesday 20 March 2019, 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 15 May 2019 were noted and approved by members who

RESOLVED that the draft Minutes of the Special meeting of Northumberland National Park Authority held on Wednesday 15 May 2019, as circulated, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

NPA29-2019 Item 1: Receive Chairman's Annual Report 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

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

The Chairman was pleased to advise members that Mr Peter Murray and Mr Mike Bell, Secretary of State National members, had had their term of membership extended by the Secretary of State for one final year to 31 March 2020. Defra's recruitment procedure for new Secretary of State (National) members would start later in the year.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b) proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Ms Fiona Gough and approved by members who

RESOLVED to:
(a) note the contents of this report on the governance of the Authority; and
(b) approve the publication of information on members’ attendances and allowances, 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.


The Chief Executive joined the Chairman in thanking staff, volunteers and members for their continued commitment to the Authority’s work over the past busy year; gave an overview of the Authority’s positive performance against targets to end of March 2019; went through his report, highlighting some key areas and drew attention to the two appendices.
The Chief Executive spoke about DEFRA’s programme for supporting farmers and said the transition between the old scheme and the new ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) was proving to be a challenge due in no small part to uncertainty about the future due to Brexit. The Authority was keen to participate in Tests and Trials to help shape ELMS and were keen that it be tailored locally to the needs of land management in the national park.

The Chairman advised members he had spoken to National Parks England about the future of farming and commented we needed to be more on the ‘front foot’ and instil more confidence into farming in the future, including ELMS. The Chairman believed more had to be done to raise important issues such as the future of farming with ministers and he would take the opportunity to raise farming issues with DEFRA junior minister, David Rutley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Food and Animal Welfare, who would be visiting the national park later in July.

The Chief Executive added that National Parks England would be undertaking some PR re its position on farming, a copy of which would be sent to members. Referring to the Designated Landscape (Glover) Review, which is due to report in the autumn, the Chief Executive said that the Authority had to remain flexible and adaptable and be aware that the outcomes from the Glover Review will impact on the Authority.

It was agreed that a member and officer session would be arranged post the Glover Review outcome, likely end of November or early December 2019.


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

RESOLVED to
(a) note the Authority’s performance for 2018-2019 as set out in this report and as detailed at Appendix 1, Item 2; and
(b) note the budget outturn for the year as set out at Appendix 2 to Item 2.

NPA31-2019  Item 3: Annual Accounts to 31 March 2019

The Finance Manager introduced the report; drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b); drew attention to the appendices and introduced Nicola Wright, Ernst & Young LLP. The Finance Manager reminded members that the Finance & Audit Group had discussed this report at their meeting on 19 June 2019.

The Head of Business Support drew attention to a self-explanatory e-mail update she had sent to members on 9 July which included an updated Appendix 1 (Statement of Accounts 2018-2019) and Appendix 3 (Key Financial Results 2018-2019). This was sent because of a national matter that Ernst & Young had been made aware resulting in an update to the actuarial valuation which could impact on the final accounts relating to disclosures and in-year charges relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Head of Business Support advised members that the Statement of Accounts issued with the papers for the meeting had shown a long term balance sheet liability of £3.9 million therefore the revised report increases this by £470,000 to £4.37 million and the Statement of Accounts has been altered accordingly. Members would receive a further update once the pension auditors have concluded their work (this was subsequently sent to members on 26 July 2019).
The Finance Manager drew attention to page 22 of the Statement of Accounts issued with the papers (the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to 31 March 2019); page 24 (the Balance Sheet); pointed out that Falstone Old Tearooms was being marketed for sale; and the sale of Ridley Stokoe had raised £4,500; and Appendix 3 (Key Financial Results) which highlighted that gross income had decreased by £1.03 million mainly due to a year-on-year decrease in capital grants as the capital work at The Sill was completed.

A member asked for an explanation of unusable reserves. The Head of Business Support clarified these were accounting reserves to allow for depreciation and thus not currently available cash.

Ms Wright went through Appendix 2 (Audit Results Report) and advised members this had been discussed by the Finance & Audit Group on 19 June 2019. Ms Wright referred to 1 - the Executive Summary - and explained about the McCloud/Sargeant case and the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) issue. Ms Wright said that as all audit evidence was not available Ernst Young had been unable to sign-off the accounts at this meeting even though members approved them.

Ms Wright said the Risk Register observation from last year had been noted as being actioned and with regard to ‘value for money’ Ernst Young had not identified any issues.

Ms Wright thanked the Authority’s finance team for the quality of the accounts. A member highlighted the fact that this was the first time they could recall receiving an Annual Audit Report without any issues reported and congratulated the staff involved.

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) approve the audited Statement of Accounts 2018-2019 (Appendix 1 to Item 3) and authorise the Chairman and Chief Executive (National Park Officer) to sign off the accounts for issue;
(b) endorse the findings in the Audit Results Report for the year ended 31 March 2019 from Ernst & Young LLP (Appendix 2 to Item 3).

Note that on 26 July 2019 the version of the Audit Results Report issued for the meeting was subsequently updated and re-issued to members and website [recommendation (b)].

The audited Statement of Accounts 2018 - 2019 was signed by the Chairman and Chief Executive.

NPA32-2019 Item 4: The Annual Assurance Framework

The Head of Business Support introduced the report and the three appendices; drew attention to recommendations (a) to (d); reminded members this was the first year the Authority had worked with Newcastle City Council as the new internal audit provider; and that both internal audit reports had been presented to the Finance & Audit Group by the Head of internal Audit.

The Finance Manager highlighted that the Internal Audit Annual report detailed the audits undertaken during the year and actions had been categorised as summarised in Appendix A (page 4 of Appendix 1).

The Finance Manager drew attention to the Strategic Internal Audit plan report (Appendix 2 to Item 4) and reminded members the areas chosen for the audit had been income generation; a high-level review of financial systems controls; Data Protection (GDPR); and Appendix 1 on page 5 of the report which showed indicative audit areas throughout the three year audit plan which will be re-visited annually to ensure it is the best fit for assurance purposes for that period.
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

| RESOLVED to |
| (a) endorse the Assurance Framework set out in this report; |
| (b) note the Internal Audit Annual report 2018-2019 as at Appendix 1 to Item 4; |
| (c) approve the Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2019-2020 to 2021-2022 as at Appendix 2 to Item 4; and |
| (d) approve the Authority Review Group work programme for 2019-2020 as at Appendix 3 to Item 4. |

NPA33-2019 Item 5: Annual Review of the Authority’s Corporate Documents

The Monitoring Officer explained the proposed change to the Authority’s Scheme of Delegation to Committees, Groups and Officers (July 2018) as detailed in the recommendation.

The main change would be increasing membership of the Standards & Appeals Committee from five to seven members and the Monitoring Officer explained this was to help ensure the committee would be quorate. Members were in agreement.

With regard to the Terms of Reference for this committee and the recommendation the current balance and quorum be retained, this was proposed by Mr Mike Bell, seconded by Mrs Jean Davidson and approved by all members. The Standards and Appeals Committee would therefore comprise three Secretary of State Appointees (National and Parish) two local Authority appointees (Northumberland County Council) and now two others.

There being no other issues, the Chairman drew attention to the recommendation proposed by Mr Mike Bell, seconded by Mrs Jean Davidson and approved by members who

| RESOLVED to approve changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Committees, Groups and Officers (July 2018) pending the decision by members to increase membership of the Standards and Appeals Committee from five to seven members and retaining the current balance and quorum (Item 6). |

NPA34-2019 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 10 July 2019 until the date of the 2020 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.

The Chairman reiterated the change to the Scheme of Delegation (2018) as detailed at Item 5 that the Standards and Appeals Committee would comprise seven members and there were no other changes to committee or group membership numbers.

Development Management Committee: (nine members)

Members were reminded the Development Management Committee would be two from each category plus three others. From nominations received, there were nine expressions of interest in this committee with too many SoS (National) members expressing an interest and not enough County Council members expressing an interest.

Mr Mike Bell agreed to stand aside as one of the Secretary of State (National) members. The Chairman thanked Mr Bell for his hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to this committee.
Cllr Anthony Murray expressed an interest in the County Council category, proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr Eileen Cartie. The expressions of interest for this committee were therefore:
- Secretary of State (National): Jean Davidson, Pippa Ross and Chris Mullin
- Secretary of State (Parish): Cllrs Julian Morrison-Bell, Sue Bolam, Val Gibson, Johnny Wilson
- Northumberland County Council: Cllrs John Riddle and Anthony Murray

There being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and all 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 Julian Morrison-Bell, seconded by Cllr Johnny Wilson 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:** Cllr John Riddle was proposed as Deputy Chairman of DMC by Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell, seconded by Cllr Sue Bolam and there being no further nominations, **Cllr John Riddle** was duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

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

Fiona Gough, Chris Mullin, Pippa Ross, Peter Murray, Andy Saunders, Val Gibson and Alan Sharp had expressed an interest in membership of Authority Review.

Cllr Anthony Murray expressed an interest in the County Council category, proposed by Mr Mike Bell, seconded by Cllr Eileen Cartie. The expressions of interest for this committee were therefore:
- Secretary of State (National): Fiona Gough, Chris Mullin, Pippa Ross, Peter Murray
- Secretary of State (Parish): Cllrs Andy Saunders, Val Gibson
- Northumberland County Council: Cllrs Alan Sharp, Anthony Murray

There being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and all were duly elected to the Authority Review Group.

i. **Chairman of Authority Review:** Fiona Gough was proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr Anthony Murray and there being no further nominations received, **Fiona Gough** was duly elected Chairman of the Authority Review Group.

ii. **Deputy Chairman of Authority Review:** Pippa Ross was proposed by Fiona Gough, seconded by Jean Davidson and there being no further nominations received, **Pippa Ross** was duly elected Deputy Chairman of Authority Review.

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

The Chairman reminded members of the change to the Scheme of Delegation (2018) as detailed at Item 5 that the Standards and Appeals Committee would comprise seven members, retaining the current balance of membership of three Secretary of State Appointees (National and Parish, two local Authority appointees (Northumberland County Council) and now two others.

Jean Davidson, Pippa Ross, Peter Murray, Fiona Gough, Val Gibson and Alan Sharp had expressed an interest in Standards and Appeals Committee. Cllr Mark Purvis was proposed by Cllr Eileen Cartie, seconded by Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell. The expressions of interest in this committee were therefore:
- Secretary of State: Jean Davidson, Pippa Ross, Peter Murray, Fiona Gough
- Northumberland County Council: Cllrs Mark Purvis, Alan Sharp and Val Gibson
There being no further nominations received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and all were duly elected to the Standards and Appeals Committee. The Chairman of this committee will be elected at their first meeting.

The Sill Advisory Board (ten members including the Chairman): Jean Davidson, Pippa Ross, Fiona Gough, Peter Murray, Alan Sharp, Sue Bolam, Julian Morrison-Bell and Val Gibson had expressed an interest in membership of The Sill Advisory Board. Cllr Mark Purvis was proposed by Jean Davidson, seconded by Cllr Julian Morison-Bell.

There being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations (including the Chairman) were agreed by members present and all were duly elected to the Sill Advisory Board.

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

Estates Task & Finish Group (five members): The Chairman said in future, this Task and Finish group would only meet as and when required. Jean Davidson, Peter Murray, Val Gibson, Alan Sharp and Sue Bolam had expressed an interest in membership and there being no further expressions of interest received, these nominations were agreed by all members present and all were duly elected to the Estates Task & Finish Group.

Local Plan Task & Finish Group: The Chairman pointed out that as the work of this Task and Finish group was now complete, the group had been wound up and thanked its members for their input to the preparation of the new Local Plan.

Representations associated with particular responsibilities and representation by individual members to outside bodies

Mrs Pippa Ross said she wished to stand down as Authority representative on the Campaign for National Parks (CNP). She nominated Mr Chris Mullin, seconded by Mr Peter Murray and there being no other nominations received, Mr Chris Mullin was elected the Authority’s representative on CNP. Representations were agreed as follows:

- UK ANPA Executive: Chairman (substitute Deputy Chairman)
- National Parks England: Chairman (substitute Deputy Chairman)
- Campaign for National Parks: Chris Mullin
- Northumberland JLAF: Mike Bell (shadowed by Fiona Gough)
- Harden Quarry Liaison Committee: Mike Bell and Chris France
- Kielder Water Development Trust: Cllr John Riddle

Cllr S Bolam advised there had been a meeting of Harden Quarry Liaison Group which the Authority did not seem to have been invited to. It was agreed the Chief Executive would write to Harden Quarry advising them of the appointments to their committee and reminding them to send invitations to their meetings.

Lead members

a) Policy Conference Lead member: Mr Peter Murray raised the issue of member Policy Conference planning, asked for a forward plan for policy conferences for the next two years and offered to help put this in place before he retires on 31 March 2020. The Chief Executive provided further clarification on this role which followed on from the Authority Review Governance meeting and said it was an opportunity for enhanced strategic discussions, as policy conferences were member lead in liaison with the Authority’s senior Leadership Team.
Cllr Johnny Wilson proposed Mr Murray as Policy Conference Lead Member, seconded by Cllr Sue Bolam and approved by all members. The Monitoring Officer confirmed there was no need to change the Authority’s Standing Orders or Scheme of Delegation (Item 5).

b) Other lead members were agreed:
- Historic Environment Champion: Cllr Val Gibson
- Equality Standard Champion: Jean Davidson
- Youth Engagement Champion: Cllr Mark Purvis.
- Policy Conference Lead Member: Peter Murray

NPA35-2019 Item 7: Forward Work Programme

The Chief Executive took this item and reminded members the Operational Plan was based on the Business Plan 2017 - 2021; some issues will impact on the work of the Authority going forward such as the outcome of the Glover Review and the fall-out from any changes in government; and there would be a need to refresh the current key documents including the Management Plan.

The Chief Executive said that a strategic discussion is planned with members following the outcome and government response to the Glover Review.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the Strategic Risk Register (based on the Five Year Business Plan) and although no risks had been removed, the nature of risks and how they were measured had changed. The Finance & Audit Group had reviewed this at their meeting on 19 June 2019 and had reported there was not a clear enough definition between Risk 2 and Risk 4, so this had been refined in the report issued for today’s meeting.

Questions / comments

A member felt Table 2 (Management Plan Action Summary Matrix) was hard to understand. The Performance & Intelligence Officer explained that the capacity constraints of the Management Plan Partnership had meant that reporting has been reduced to nine broad themes which did not align exactly with the 16 outcomes of the Management Plan, and therefore the matrix indicated areas where a theme matched an outcome and these are defined areas where the Authority would expect an outcome to be achieved.

A member observed there appeared to be some difficulty with Management Plan reporting and keeping up with changes; consequently, some reporting was not up to date and the member asked for a reporting approach that was more responsive to changes. The Chief Executive asked if members felt officers were reporting too much detail or if there was too much operational reporting, adding that officers were only being transparent with their provision of information. The Chief Executive agreed to look at reporting information to members to make it more succinct and suggested that future reports now have a section showing any connection to the Business Plan.

A member referred to the Authority’s ambitious Business Plan 2017 - 2021 and asked how close the Authority was to delivering Business Plan objectives. A member referred to the Authority Review meetings and asked if agreed actions had been incorporated into the Business Plan actions as this did not appear to have been done. The Chief Executive advised members that it was not possible to report on everything and the member therefore asked for more connection between the Authority’s work and the ambition in the Business Plan.

The Director of Park Management explained about the current staff Strategic Delivery Plan workshops which would obtain more team-relevant input relating to four key components of the Authority’s work – business-as-usual tasks; the Authority’s statutory duties; specific projects; and visions and strategies. The Director explained that the Strategic Delivery Plan, which would plot organisational milestones over a period of 10 years, should include key strategic aims which link to
NNPA’s Management Plan, Business Plan, finance and budget capability, key points noted within the 25 year Plan for the Environment and National Park Statutory Aims. The Director said that the Authority’s ambition, in many cases, may spread beyond the end of the current Business Plan.

A member commented there were Business Plan targets where current reporting did not indicate progress being made e.g. Sill Satellite sites. The Director of Business Development explained this type of detail was not currently included in reporting and members were asked if they wished to receive this level of detail as not all actions translate to specific KPIs.

A member referred to Risk 4 “Authority lacks capacity to complete or meet the ambitions of major parts of the Business Plan” and asked how the probability of this coming to fruition could be averted. The Chief Executive re-iterated the Authority had to be realistic about what it could achieve within its capabilities both now and in the future. The Chief Executive added the next Comprehensive Spending Review was due later in 2019 and it was only prudent the Authority anticipated the impact of this around possible future core grants and likely reductions as well as monitoring the situation with the Authority’s partners particularly any impact on them that might consequently impact on the current and ongoing work of the Authority.

A member referred to Operational Plan Aim 5 ‘Contributing to a Valued Asset’ (b) ‘holding more National Park and partner events at The Sill’ and said the Authority had to challenge itself to holding more meetings away from Eastburn. The Chairman said he and the Chief Executive believed they had a high profile already in the National Park e.g., by attending all parish council meetings and thought would be given to continuing with the practice of holding one Authority meeting a year in the National Park. The Chief Executive also reminded members that they had plenty of opportunities to attend events in the National Park themselves and thereby learning more about the National Park, and they should consider taking up these opportunities more regularly.

There being no further points raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations (a) to (c) proposed by Cllr Alan Sharp, seconded by Cllr Sue Bolam and approved by members who

RESOLVED to
(a) endorse the Operational Plan 2019-2020 as set out at Appendix 1 to Item 7;
(b) endorse Management Plan Annual Action Plan 2019-2020 as set out at Appendix 2 to Item 7;
(c) note and endorse the updates to the Strategic Risk Register 2018 - 2021 as stated within the report.

NPA36-2019 Item 8: Medium Term Budget Update and Treasury Management Strategy including revisions to key financial documents

The Head of Business Support introduced the report, which included the treasury strategy and capital finance key indicators, and drew attention to recommendations (a) and (b).

The Head of Business Support highlighted the increase in business rates for The Sill for which the additional cost in the current financial year is £89,900 and members were being asked to approve the budget surplus of £75,000 to cover a substantial part of this liability whilst the Authority sought to appeal the decision. The Head of Business Support said the decision of the appeal could mean a major long term liability if the appeal was overturned and in this case, budget options would require to be carefully considered. The Head of Business Support reminded members that increases in rates was a key risk to the Authority.

The Head of Business Support drew attention to Table 3 (Summary of Budget Changes) which highlighted the latest budget position assuming carry forwards and allocation of budget surplus were agreed [recommendation (a)] and the overall result is an increase in the budget deficit for 2019-2020 to £374,300.
The Head of Business Support drew attention to Table 4 (Reserves Summary) and said that overall, reserves were reduced by £10,000 from the approved medium term budget report being the £10,000 additional one-off allocation approved at the March Authority meeting.

The Head of Business Support referred to Section 6 relating to loans taken and the approval in place for a cash-flow loan should it be needed and if the pre-approved cash flow loan was required, this is unlikely to be needed any earlier than 2019.

Members noted there was no change to the treasury and investment strategy and that any opportunity would be taken where possible to maximise interest returns.

Questions / Comments

A member was concerned about the valuation of The Sill, particularly the basis of the valuation and methodology and criteria used to calculate rates. The Chief Executive spoke about the rates appeal and said the ‘access to Park’ exemption had been removed plus the method of valuation of The Sill and he believed they had misunderstood the role of The Sill. The Head of Business Support spoke about the appeals process and the scant amount of case law which could be referred to.

A member reiterated their earlier warnings about the cost of running The Sill and the impact on the rest of the business of the Authority and stressed the need to keep a careful eye on The Sill costs.

A member spoke about the Authority’s increasing dependency on commercial income generation and fundraising activity and said the Authority as a whole had to be prepared with the right resources to take this forward.

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

RESOLVED to
(a) approve the carry forwards as detailed in Table 1, paragraph 4(g) and Table 2; and
(b) approve the Treasury Management Strategy detailed on Sections 7 and 8 of the report.

NPA37-2019 Item 9: The Sill Quarterly Update

The Director of Business Development said this report would be discussed fully at The Sill Advisory Board meeting due to take place later that day. There were no questions from members. There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to the recommendation, proposed by Mrs Jean Davidson, seconded by Mr Peter Murray and approved by members who

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

NPA38-2019 Item 10: Authority Review Meeting 17 April 2019 ‘Revitalising Redesdale’

The Chief Executive introduced the report, highlighting the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1. The Authority Review Chairman said this meeting had been a good example of the benefits of being out in the Park and seeing issues on the ground. She said projects like this had a funding lifetime and there was risk the impetus would be lost when funding ended so it was necessary to do what we could to build future opportunities for such projects and their legacy.

Questions / comments

A member had observed that more and more people, such as volunteers, were becoming involved in the National Park since projects such as ‘Revitalising Redesdale’ came along and there was a
lesson here on how to engage with ‘places’ rather than ‘concepts’. Members noted that the Authority’s Volunteer Development Officer had captured the involvement of volunteers and lessons learned for the evolution of the Authority’s volunteer programme.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendations proposed by Mrs Jean Davidson, seconded by Cllr John Riddle and approved by the members who

RESOLVED to
(a) note the findings of the Review of the Revitalising Redesale Landscape Partnership Scheme at the meeting on 17 April 2019;
(b) note and consider the response from the Leadership Team in respect of the recommendations from this meeting; and
(c) endorse the actions planned or currently underway as set out in Appendix 1 to Item 10.

NPA39-2019  Item 11: Climate Change Update

The Head of Conservation provided an historical update on the Authority’s involvement with the climate change agenda over the past few years and reminded members of the detrimental impact on this area of work due to the government’s budget cuts from 2011 – 2016 which had caused it to regrettably slipping down the Authority’s priority list.

The Head of Conservation reminded members of the positive changes the Authority had made regarding climate change issues in the past, including having a Climate Change Champion, and how methods were afoot to re-invigorate this such as the installation of a ‘Green Team’ who were looking at ways to e.g. cut down on paper use, re-cycle food waste etc.

Members also noted there was a new National Parks England Climate Change Working Group and were keen the Authority became involved in this.

Questions / Comments

A member asked about ‘right tree in the right place’ and the Head of Conservation said the Forestry Commission were currently being consulted on a formal definition of ‘right tree in the right place’ specifically for all national parks.

A member commented on the Authority’s good record for carbon capture and credit and the Head of Conservation updated members on the hydro-map and micro-hydro scheme for Low Bleakhope. Member asked how hydro-systems could be facilitated and if there was a conflict of interest with this and rewilding of rivers.

A member believed the Authority was the enabler with regard to carbon capture but that the landowners had to also be involved therefore there was an issue around how the Authority could influence landowners to be more involved with carbon capture and storage. In this regard, the member felt that if government wanted national park authorities to be more influential in this area they needed the resources to do so.

A member asked that the Authority identified the three biggest climate change internal and external areas affecting the national park which they should target and that a more strategic view should be taken on the Authority’s climate change agenda. The Chief Executive advised members of the discussions on climate change being held at a national level through the National Policy Group and the benefits of engaging at this level.

A few members spoke about the future of farming and the impact of climate change, spoke about engaging with landowners and farmers, re-wilding, sensitive tree planting, controlling flood plains and getting management of the Authority’s land correct.
After extensive discussion it was agreed an update would be provided to members on climate change following the members’ Policy Conference on 13 November (topic is Natural Capital); consideration would be made to moving climate change up the Authority’s list or priorities; and consideration given to bringing forward the Authority Review meeting where Climate Change would be discussed from October 2020 to an earlier date as action on climate change was required now.

There being no other issues raised, the Chairman drew attention to recommendation (a) and, from discussions, suggested three new recommendations:

b. engage with the NPE Climate Change Working Group through National Parks England;
c. climate change to be reviewed after the October 2019 member policy conference; and
d. consideration be given to bringing forward Climate Change as a topic on the Authority Review programme from October 2020.

There being no further issues raised, Cllr Anthony Murray proposed recommendations (a) to (d), seconded by Cllr Eileen Cartie and approved by the members who

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RESOLVED to
a. note the content of the report;
b. engage with the NPE Climate Change Working Group through National Parks England;
c. recommend climate change be reviewed after October 2019 member policy conference; and
d. recommend consideration be given to bringing forward Climate Change as a topic on the Authority Review programme from October 2020.
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**NPA40-2019 DELEGATED DECISIONS:** there were no Delegated Decisions.

**NPA41-2019 URGENT BUSINESS:** there was no urgent business.

**NPA42-2019 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.

1. Question: A member asked when their next trip to another National Park would be organised.

   Answer: The Chairman said he was keen to continue with these exchange visits whether it was Northumberland visiting another National Park or vice versa and was keen to see one more such visit during his last year as Chairman, The Chief Executive said nothing was planned in this calendar year as he, the Director of Park Management, Chris Mullin and Jean Davidson were attending the National Park Conference.

2. Question: A member asked that meeting venues outside the National Park e.g. Wooler be considered for more meetings.

   Answer: The Chief Executive said one Authority meeting per year was already being held in other venues such as The Sill and village halls e.g., Elsdon.

3. Question: A member asked about the viability of battery storage for solar panel energy.

   Answer: The Chief Executive said he would ask the Head of Access and Estates to investigate.

4. Question: A member asked about the May 2020 Walking Festival.
Answer: The Director of Business Development said this was being worked on and if viable would be a fund raising challenge in the national park led by Conrad Dickinson.

5. Question: A member noted the Rural Development Programme for England Leader programme was drawing to a close and asked if there was an alternative programme in place.

Answer: The Chief Executive said that the Shared Prosperity Fund, led by Local Enterprise Partnerships, would be a key source of funding to replace Leader. The Chief Executive also spoke about other funding-type programmes such as the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal and the Local Industrial Strategies. The Chief Executive believed the Local Enterprise Partnerships should have a rural element to their strategies and then delivery could be aided by national parks and he was in discussion about this. It was agreed that the Rural Development paper, which highlighted place-based delivery, could be circulated to members now.

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

Part Two started at 1256. Apologies were noted from Mr Peter Murray, Mr Chris Mullin, Cllr Val Gibson and Cllr Andy Saunders.

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 report NNPA43-2019 Item 1 (P) contains 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.

NPA43-2019 Item P (1): Exempt Minutes Authority Meeting 20 March 2019

There being no issues arising, the draft Minutes of the Authority meeting held on Wednesday 20 March 2019 were noted and approved by members who

RESOLVED that the draft Exempt Minutes of the meeting of Northumberland National Park Authority held on Wednesday 20 March 2019, as circulated, be approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

The draft Exempt Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

A member asked for an update on Falstone Old School Tearooms. The Director of Park Management provided a brief progress update and advised members the property was currently being marketed for sale with a view to finalisation September 2020 or thereabouts.

The meeting, including Part Two concluded at 1310.

Signed: .................................................................
(Glen Sanderson, Chairman)

Date: ..............................