

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting held at Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes on Tuesday, 28th November 2006.

Present:

J Blackie, Mrs A Brooks, WH Brown, SHK Butcher, G Dalton, W Fenten, C Hammond, TRN Harrison-Topham, D Heather, D Ireton, HA Kirkbride, KJ Lancaster, C Lis (in the Chair), SR Macaré, Mrs D Millward, A Osborne, Mrs Y Peacock, JJ Pearlman, Dr KM Petyt, Mrs FG Ramsbottom, Ms N Stedman and W Weston.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

109/06**MINUTES****RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2006, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to Minute No 100/06 (c) being amended (final bullet point) to read “one member to be selected from amongst the Parish group of members...”.

110/06**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No notifications of public questions or of the intention to make a statement had been received.

111/06**EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC****RESOLVED –**

That pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the consideration of each of the items of business listed in column 1 of the following table on the grounds that each involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 specified in column 2:

| Item No on the agenda | Paragraph No |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 18 | 5, 6 and 7 |
| 19 | 1,2 and 3 |

112/06**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from RA Bird and OJ Kendall.

113/06

**DECLARATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE
OF PERSONAL INTERESTS**

A Osborne declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 15 (Reduction in the size of the National Park Authority) as an employee of Defra.

Mrs D Millward declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in items that referred to the Limestone Country Project.

114/06

DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

No declarations of lobbying were made at the meeting.

115/06

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chairman.

A member commented that the 'Yorkshire Dales Society conference' had, in fact been a conference for national parks' societies that the Yorkshire Dales Society had hosted. The Chairman stated that:

- reports on his attendance at meetings of National Park Associations would be circulated through the Members' Information Bulletin; and
- he would write expressing the Authority's concern at the possible closure of rural post offices.

RESOLVED –

That the report and further comments be noted.

116/06

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive.

A member referred to the reference in the Chief Executive's report to an interview with the Yorkshire Post newspaper and his visit to Catterick Garrison to discuss expansion plans for the Garrison. Concern was expressed that the newspaper report gave the impression that the National Park Authority was 'at odds' with the Ministry of Defence. The Chief Executive stated that the interview had covered a range of National Park issues, including the possible benefits for the National Park as well as potential disadvantages of the proposed expansion of Catterick Garrison. Unfortunately, the newspaper report had focussed primarily on the possible disadvantages of the expansion.

As a result of the newspaper report, senior officers from the Garrison and Ministry of Defence had contacted the Chief Executive and a meeting had been held to discuss a range of issues including those concerns raised in the press report. The Chief Executive stated that the meeting and subsequent exchanges of correspondence had been very beneficial in clarifying the respective positions, in particular, that the developments at the Garrison would not lead to any expansion of the training area into the National Park. However, the increased intensity in the use of the existing

training area and the possible construction of an additional live firing range on Bellerby Ranges would be concerns for the Authority.

The meeting also flagged up the possibility of closer working between the Authority and military personnel on conservation projects and the increased opportunity that military families would have to understand and enjoy the National Park.

A number of other issues were raised by members including:

- The Authority's general press coverage. The Chief Executive stated that an analysis of how the Authority fared in the press, locally, regionally and nationally had just been produced and would be circulated through the Members' Information Bulletin (MIB).
- The rumoured closure of the Natural England (former English Nature) offices in Leyburn, as part of the rationalisation of the new agency's offices. The Chief Executive stated that he would enquire what was proposed and report back to members.
- The absence from the report of an invitation for the Authority to be represented at the European Landscape convention in December. The Chief Executive stated that the Mrs D Millward, Member Champion for Conservation of the Natural Environment, was to represent the Authority, but if members so wished further member representation could be approved.

RESOLVED –

That subject to member and office comments:

(a) the report be noted;

(b) the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Messrs Butcher, Dalton and Heather represent the Authority at the Council for National Parks' event in Harrogate on 11th December 2006, attendance to be an approved duty; and

(c) in addition to Mrs D Millward, JJ Pearlman represent the Authority at the European Landscape convention at Losehill Hall in December 2006, attendance to be an approved duty.

117/06

NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated officers on its preparation. The Head of Conservation and Policy stated that there were a number of typographical errors that would need to be corrected.

It was pointed out that, for accuracy, the 'Issues facing the Yorkshire Dales National Park' quoted the average house price as being 8 times the average household income, whereas recent statistics showed that this should be '10 times' (the average household income being £25,000 compared to average house price of £250,000).

RESOLVED –

That, subject to the comparison of house price to household income being amended, the revised draft of the National Park Management Plan be adopted as the basis for publication and for further work with partner organisations to identify how the Plan objectives will be delivered and monitored.

118/06

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PRIORITIES 2007/08

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

Members generally welcomed the report and considered that there had been a thorough debate on the issues at the Policy Development Forum.

The following two proposals were debated and voted on:

- a revision to the priorities set out in Annex G to move 'Green Lanes' from 'A' to 'C'; 'Recreational Activities' from 'B' to 'A' and 'Planning Policy' from 'C' to 'B'; and
- Recommendation (d) in the report be amended to provide for a more fundamental review of priorities in the coming year.

with both proposals being defeated.

RESOLVED –

That:

- a) the work carried out to date as part of the fundamental review of the Authority's priorities be noted;
- b) the Authority's priorities for 2007/08, as set out in Annex G to the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy be approved as the basis for preparing the Authority's budget and Best Value Performance Plan;
- c) a revised approach be agreed to the presentation of the priorities to make it clearer to external audiences; and
- d) the priorities be subject only to 'light touch' reviews in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

119/06

PLANNING PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Planning.

In considering the report members raised a number of issues, including:

- suggesting that a type of 'exit survey' be introduced for users of the planning service. The Head of Planning responded that the Authority had recently completed the Government's three yearly survey of service users and he would discuss the results of the survey with the Member Champions for Development Control, together with the possibility of the Authority introducing its own survey on a more frequent basis.
- The extent to which comments on planning applications are 'sifted' before those applications are considered by the Planning Committee. The Head of Planning confirmed that this issue would also be considered by the Member Champions.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to member and officer comments being taken into account, the report be noted.

120/06

YORKSHIRE DALES LOCAL PLAN
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2005/06

CONSIDERED – the report of the Strategic Planning Officer.

Members commented on the report being comprehensive and well written.

However, a number of specific issues were raised by members, including:

- Suggesting that references in the report should be general rather than specific.
- A reference to a possible application that had not yet been submitted should be deleted.
- Concern at the accuracy of Environment Agency flood maps.
- Requesting reference in the report to the closure of Youth Hostels and the resulting loss of bed spaces in the Park.
- Questioning whether there should be 'Employment Enablers' to facilitate the creation of employment generating opportunities, in the same way that Housing Authorities employ 'Housing Enablers'.
- Questioning the appropriateness of some of the judgements made in the report on issues such as 'impact on National Park purposes', enforcement cases 'that raise issues of irreversible harm to the special qualities of the National Park', and 'development confined to village edges'.
- Suggesting that the report should have greater emphasis on facts and figures, such as approval rates.
- Regretting the reference in the 'Aims of the Local Plan' to "facilitate development in ways that will cause the least harm to the statutory National Park purposes of conservation and public enjoyment", and suggesting that the 'Aim' should be to facilitate development that would enhance the landscape.

RESOLVED –

That the Annual Monitoring Report be accepted for publication, to meet the deadline of 31st December 2006, subject to:

- (a) an amended report taking into account the issues raised by members being circulated to all members of the Authority;
- (b) any additional comments resulting from (a) above to be considered by the Strategic Planning Officer and Member Champion for Forward Planning before the production of the final draft version for publication, that final draft to be circulated to members for information.

121/06

ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

CONSIDERED – the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, as appended to the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer, be adopted and steps be taken to ensure that all staff are aware of it.

122/06

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE CRAVEN RURAL HOUSING ENABLER

[Note: Members of Craven District Council, Messrs Butcher, Heather, Ireton and Lis declared personal non-prejudicial interests in this item.]

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive.

In considering the report, a number of specific issues were raised by members, including:

- suggesting that the matter be referred to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration as part of the budget process;
- noting that the Authority was contributing towards the employment of a similar post in Richmondshire by providing accommodation for the post-holder;
- commenting that determination of the matter would make a mockery of the policy priorities and other budget setting processes.

It was proposed and seconded that no retrospective payments be made, but that a contribution of £3000 be made for 2007/08. An amendment to this proposal was put forward to support the request in principle, but to refer final determination to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration as part of the budget process. This amendment was defeated, and it was -

RESOLVED –

That in respect of the request from the Yorkshire Rural Community Council for financial assistance towards the cost of the post of Craven Rural Housing Enabler:

- (a) no retrospective payments be made for the 2005/06 and 2006/07 financial years, and
- (b) the Finance and Resources Committee be instructed to set aside the sum of £3000 from the 2007/08 budget as the Authority's contribution towards the costs of the post of Craven Rural Housing Enabler.

[Note: The following members requested that their votes be recorded - D Ireton and SHK Butcher in support of the resolution, and Mrs A Brooks abstained.]

123/06 REDUCTION IN SIZE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

124/06 MEMBER FEEDBACK

CONSIDERED – the report of the Secretariat Officer, together with two further feedback reports from the Chairman, circulated at the meeting, on his attendance at the National Park Societies Conference on 13th to 15th October and his attendance at the Rural Affairs Forum on 7th November 2006.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

125/06

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CONSIDERED – the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 12th September and 10th October 2006.

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 12th September and 10th October 2006 be received.

126/06

AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee held on 15th September 2006.

RESOLVED –

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Review Committee held on 15th September 2006 be received.

The remainder of business was considered in private

PUBLIC SUMMARY OF BUSINESS CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

127/06

PRIVATE MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Private Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2006, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

128/06

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE CRAVEN RURAL HOUSING ENABLER
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive that provided additional information of a personal nature.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.