



**Dartmoor National Park Authority**  
Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 9JQ  
Tel: (01626) 832093  
Fax: (01626) 834684  
E-mail: [hq@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](mailto:hq@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)



To: All Members  
of the Dartmoor National Park Authority

(see below)

**Please quote: NPA/08/Agenda**  
Tel: (Direct Line) 01626 831001  
Please ask for: **Lorna Brown**

All press enquiries to John Weir  
Tel: 01626 832093  
Date: 23 April 2008

## **DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Friday 2 May 2008**

A meeting of the Dartmoor National Park Authority will be held on the above date at 12 noon or on the rising of the Development Control Committee, whichever is the later **in the Meeting Room at Parke, Bovey Tracey** to consider the following matters.

Kevin Bishop  
Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

### **Access to Information - Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

#### **Agenda and Reports**

Copies of the Agenda and Part I reports are available for inspection by members of the public at the above address five clear days prior to the meeting. They are also published on the DNPA website prior to the meeting. A limited number of copies are available for reference at the meeting.

#### **Background Papers**

The Background Papers relating to Part I reports, except any containing exempt information, can be inspected by members of the public at the above address between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, by prior arrangement.

**Nigel Hoskin** Chairman **Kevin Bishop PhD** Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

The purposes of the Dartmoor National Park Authority are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the area's special qualities.

In pursuing these purposes the Authority has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the community.

A Member of the Association of National Park Authorities

# AGENDA

## **PART I - OPEN PROCEEDINGS**

### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

### **2 Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 4 April 2008 – attached (Page 1)**

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Members are invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interest relating to any agenda item at this stage in the meeting.

### **4 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

### **5 Public Participation**

To answer any questions or to receive any statements, representations or petitions which relate to the published reports in Part I of the Agenda. Representations will be heard immediately prior to the item to which they refer.

## **Section A – Park Management**

### **6 Clam Bridge (NPA/08/029) (Page 7)**

Report of the Director of Park Management

## **Section B – Corporate Matters**

### **7 Disposal of Land at South Brent (NPA/08/030) (Page 11)**

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

### **8 Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation (NPA/08/031) (Page 14)**

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

### **9 Financial Outturn 2007/2008 (NPA/08/032) (Page 18)**

Report of the Head of Finance

### **10 Annual Governance Statement (NPA/08/033) (Page 23)**

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

### **11 Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 (NPA/08/034) (Page 31)**

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

### **12 Review of Grants (NPA/08/035) (Page 33)**

Report of the Director of Park Management

- 13 **Joint Meeting between the Authority and Dartmoor Commoners Council** (NPA/08/036) (Page 40)

Report of the Director of Park Management

## **Section C - Planning and Sustainable Development**

- 14 **Update of the Dartmoor Economic Model** (NPA/08/037) (Page 42)

Report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

- 15 **Request for Additional Grant Aid for the Devon Rural Housing Enablers** (NPA/08/038) (Page 44)

Report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

## **Section D – Items for Information**

- 16 **Tree Preservation Orders and Section 211 Notifications (Works to Trees in Conservation Areas) Determined Under Delegated Powers** (NPA/08/039) (Page 46)

Report of the Director of Park Management

### **Members' Attendance at Outside Bodies**

To receive reports of salient matters from Members attending meetings of outside organisations.

### **Member Appointments**

Appointment to Exmoor Development Control Site Visit Thursday, 11 September 2008.

## **PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED.**

It is recommended that, in accordance with s.100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the following Agenda item is taken in the absence of the Press and Public, on the grounds that exempt information within the meaning of Part I Paragraph 3 to Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act (as amended) will be discussed, namely:-

*Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)*

- 17 **Land Valuation Report - Land at South Brent** (Appendix 1 to report NPA/08/030)

## **MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

Membership:

T Archer, S D Barker, Ms L Bennett, P Cook, M C Date, P Harper, P W Hitchins,  
L J G Hockridge, N Hoskin (Chairman), A Hosking, D Houseago, M Jeffery,  
Miss H Jenny (Deputy Chair), Mrs C Marsh, J McInnes, Mrs S Morgan,  
Miss D Moyse, S Purser, M H Retallick, T Smale, D W Webber, J Young

# DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Friday 4 April 2008

**Present:** T Archer, L Bennett, P Cook, M Date, P Harper, B Hitchins, J Hockridge, N Hoskin (Chairman), D Houseago, M Jeffrey, H Jenny, J McInnes, S Morgan, D Moyse, S Purser, M Retallick, T Smale, D Webber, J Young.

**Apologies:** A Hosking, C Marsh

**2210** The Chairman welcomed Mr Harper to the Authority as the recently appointed Secretary of State Member.

**2211 Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 7 March 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 7 March 2008 were signed as a correct record.

**2212 Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

**2213 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

The Authority received a report of the Director of Park Management (NPA/08/028).

**Works to Bridleway / Access Road – Shipley Bridge to Avon Dam, South Brent.**

The Director of Park Management confirmed that the surface of the bridleway / access road would be finished in tarmac.

Mr Harper explained that the current surface has been badly affected by water erosion and asked whether drainage works had been considered as part of the proposal to ensure the long term maintenance of the route. The Director of Park Management agreed to discuss this issue further with South West Water and to write to all parties involved to ensure that the funds are to be used wisely to ensure the long term maintenance of the route.

Mr Hitchins proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr Houseago.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (i) The Authority contributes £5,000 to the re-instatement of the bridleway / access road to Avon Dam, to secure the long term future of this route as an accessible, all ability route.
- (ii) Written confirmation to be given to South West Water that this contribution is made on a without prejudice basis and shall not be taken to assume or as evidence of any intention to assume responsibility for the future condition or maintenance of the route.

## **2214 Public Participation**

The Chairman advised the Authority that he had received a petition from Manaton and Lustleigh this morning in relation to the retention of the old clam bridge. A meeting will be held with all parties, including Devon County Council on 17 April to discuss the future of the bridge. The Chairman agreed to report back the outcomes from the meeting to the next meeting of the Authority.

## **2215 Performance Review Group**

The Authority received the report of the Director of Corporate Services (NPA/08/023).

The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) left the meeting room whilst the report was being discussed.

The Chairman suggested that the professional assistance of the South West Provincial Employers (SWPE) be sought during the review if required. This was supported by Members. It was requested that the Director of Corporate Services, should amend the terms of reference accordingly.

Whilst Members were in favour of the recommendations, clarity was sought as to how Members would be involved in the setting of key targets and whether or not this could be achieved through the involvement of the Audit and Governance Committee. The Chairman considered that the corporate priorities would give a clear steer to the setting of key targets.

Ms Bennett noted that the composition of the Performance Review Group was gender biased and suggested that SWPE be asked to comment and advise. The Chairman agreed and noted that the Authority considered and approved the composition of the Performance Review Group in June 2007. The Chairman agreed to report progress to the next meeting of the Authority.

Mr Hitchins proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr Houseago. The Authority voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

### **RESOLVED:**

Members:

- (i) Approved the composition of the Review Group as outlined in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.7 of the report and confirmed the appointment of Messrs Hoskin, Houseago and McInnes.
- (ii) Approved the terms of reference attached in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (iii) Delegated the functions in Appendix 1 to the Performance Review Group under Appendix 2 Paragraph 5 of Standing Orders.
- (iv) Approved seeking the professional assistance of the South West Provincial Employers during the review.

## **2216 Member Appraisal and Skills Audit**

The Authority received the report of the Chief Executive (NPO) (NPA/08/024).

The Chief Executive (NPO) explained that currently only the Secretary of State appointees receive a yearly appraisal and that DEFRA have expressed a desire for all Members to be appraised. The report recommends a 'light touch' approach to an appraisal system which will be based on self assessment. The results will assist Members in undertaking and fulfilling their roles. It was stressed that once completed the self assessment will remain confidential between the Member, Chief Executive, Chairman and Monitoring Officer (with the exception of Secretary of State appointees for whom completed appraisal forms to be submitted to DEFRA).

The majority of Members were supportive of such a 'light touch' scheme. Devon County Members were especially supportive and referred to the process adopted at County which encourages Members to look at their existing skill sets whilst giving them the opportunity to develop skills in specific areas and explore issues further with one to one sessions, should the Member so wish. Some Members were not comfortable with reference being made to an 'audit' and recommended that the terminology be amended to reflect a more inclusive process and recommended 'Member Self Assessment and Skills Questionnaire'. Members agreed that the process should be reviewed in twelve months time and suggested that a Member Development Group be established to progress the scheme. The Chairman suggested that the issue be explored further at the Members Away Day on 4 July 2008.

The Director of Corporate Services recognised that it was important to get the language and terminology correct and stressed that it was important for the Authority to determine where Members strengths, skills and opportunities lie and what training co-opted Members have received from elsewhere. This will in turn lead to a yearly training and skills development programme. It was suggested that the self assessment and skills questionnaire be returned by 25 April rather than 2 May as stated in the report. This additional week will give Members the opportunity to discuss the appraisal with the Chairman should they so wish.

Members suggested that that once the first round of the self assessment is completed, the Chief Executive (NPO) will provide feedback to the Authority.

Mr Hitchins proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Mr McInnes, the Authority voted in favour of the recommendation.

**RESOLVED:**

Members:

- (i) Approved the proposed appraisal process for Members as described in Section 3 of the report
- (ii) Approved the proposed appraisal process for the Chairman as described in paragraph 3.3
- (iii) Amend the title to Member Self Assessment and Skills Questionnaire
- (iv) Agreed that The Chief Executive (NPO) provide feedback to the Authority once the first round of the self assessment is complete.

**2217 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – Review of Current Dog Exclusion to Access Land in West Dart River Valley**

The Authority received the report of the Director of Park Management (NPA/08/025).

Members were informed that the main cost associated with the review would be Officer time.

Members questioned whether or not the review was being undertaken too early and asked if enough evidence had already been gathered on the impact on otters and wildlife. The Director of Park Management explained that the review would also be looking specifically at people and their impact. Mr Harper explained that the Local Access Forum were keen to see the review being undertaken within three rather than the recommended five years time. However it was considered that the survey lacked structure and needs to include a more detailed analysis. The early review was generally supported by Members. The Director of Park Management agreed that it would be useful to engage with and pursue further discussions with the Park Management Working Panel.

The Head of Recreation, Tourism and Ranger Services informed Members that the review is unlikely to be completed by 31 August 2008 as previously stated, but that she hoped that the Local Access Forum would be content that the review would commence in April / May 2008.

The Authority voted in favour of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

Members approved the commencement of a review of the current restriction on dogs in the West Dart River Valley.

**2218 Dartmoor National Park Authority Local Development Framework: Adoption of Core Strategy Development Plan Document.**

The Authority received the report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development (NPA/08/026).

The Director of Planning and Sustainable Development explained that the Inspector's Final Report found the Core Strategy to be 'sound'. Members were informed that DNPA are the first National Park to have their Core Strategy found as sound.

Members were informed that the Inspector's Report recognised the lack of national planning policy guidance specifically relating to National Parks, the statutory constraints on development within National Parks and the Management Plan as the strategic plan for a National Park. The Inspector also made several recommended minor changes to the Core Strategy to improve its clarity which were highlighted within the report.

The Director of Planning and Sustainable Development proposed that a Members Seminar be held on the Core Strategy, summarising the key policy areas where

significant change has occurred. The Chairman suggested that this could be incorporated into the Members Away Day on 4 July 2008.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development and his team for their hard work and commitment and congratulated them on the Core Strategy being found sound.

Mr Smale praised the performance of all Officers participating in the Examination and stated that credit should be given to all Officers involved in pursuing with the Core Strategy.

The Director of Planning and Sustainable Development thanked Members for their involvement in the Core Strategy, particularly to the input and commitment of the Planning and Sustainable Development Working Panel.

The Authority unanimously voted in favour of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) The Inspector's report on the independent examination of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document was accepted.
- (ii) The Core Strategy Development Plan Document as amended by the recommendations of the Inspector's Report was adopted
- (iii) The Core Strategy Development Plan Document be brought into operation from 9 June 2008.

**2219 Validation of Planning and Other Applications Guide – Local Requirements**

The Authority received the report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development (NPA/08/027).

The Head of Development Control explained that the validation guide had recently been presented to the Planning and Sustainable Development Working Panel for its consideration and that where possible, the comments received have been incorporated into a revised guide. Members were informed that the guide should be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

Members asked whether or not the guide would have any implications for people in under-represented groups and suggested that literacy awareness needed to be considered and addressed. Members were informed that Authority can provide any document in large scale print and that further consideration will be given to this before the guide is published for wider consultation.

Members suggested that a simple summary leaflet to accompany the guide to explain the process and its wider context would be extremely useful.

Ms Bennett commented that Section 2.7 on Ecological Assessment may have omitted a protected species and asked Officers to confirm.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Development Control for producing the Validation Guide.

The Authority voted in favour of the recommendation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft Guide be accepted as a basis for wider consultation in accordance with the Government's draft guidance for local planning authorities.

**2220 Members' Attendance at Outside Bodies**

Mr Archer informed the Authority that he attended a meeting of the South West Water Recreation and Conservation Forum last week. A report was presented by Roger Golding of the Environment Agency and highlighted the impact of increased demand of sport and recreation on the County's waterways and lakes. In order to help reduce the impact it was suggested that webcams be installed on popular stretches of rivers so that canoeists can decide whether the water flows and levels are sufficient before they leave home.

The Chairman informed Members that he and the Chief Executive (NPO) had recently met with representatives from the Boundary Commission to discuss the forthcoming structural review. The meeting proved to be a positive one, with consultation planned during the summer and the Commission advising the Government on potential new local government structures by 31 December 2008.

The Chief Executive (NPO) agreed to update Members on progress at the next meeting of the Authority.

The Chairman recently attended a Climate Change Conference organised by DEFRA where delegates were informed that there are no more funds available from Government and that Authorities should be implementing their climate change strategies and proposals as soon as possible.

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**CLAM BRIDGE**Report of the Director of Park ManagementRecommendation : **It is recommended that:**

- (i) The Authority should offer practical support to Manaton and Lustleigh Parish Councils if they can find a way to take responsibility themselves for the protection of the Clam Bridge**
- (ii) The Authority should not take on responsibility or liability for the old Clam Bridge.**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Clam Bridge is situated over the River Bovey on the boundary of Manaton and Lustleigh parishes. There has been a clam bridge on this site since 1896. The clam design in Lustleigh Cleave is currently two single tree trunks spanning the river with a handrail on the downstream side. Over the years the bridge has been replaced and repaired, the last major repair being approximately 11 years ago when one of the tree trunks was replaced. Devon County Council (DCC) is responsible for the old Clam Bridge (and the new one).
- 1.2 The bridge is on a public bridlepath and in recent years Rangers have received comments about the safety and accessibility of the bridge. Incidents have been reported of both dogs and people falling off the bridge and at high water levels the old Clam Bridge has been submerged making it, and the right of way, impassable. During an annual inspection of the bridge in 2006 concerns were raised about the lifespan of the existing bridge and further advice was sought from DCC bridge engineers. The decision arising out of that meeting was that the whole of the main span was beyond salvage and there was a very high risk of someone falling from the bridge, therefore a new bridge should be built.
- 1.3 Given the width of the river at this point and the susceptibility to rapid changes in water level the bridge kit used more generally across Dartmoor and Devon was not appropriate and a custom design was required for the site. DCC designed three bridges; the first a bridle bridge was regarded to be too large and did not receive support locally and two further designs for footbridges were therefore developed. The design adopted and implemented was the most favoured, through a thorough consultation process with local communities, but there were some objections to all three designs.
- 1.4 During the consultation with local people, officers were made aware of the desire to keep the old Clam Bridge because of its historic significance. It was suggested at this time that the Parish Councils might take on any future responsibility for the old bridge and at subsequent Parish Council meetings DNPA officers confirmed with the Parish Councils that the upkeep of the old bridge would be the Parish Councils'

responsibility. It was not clarified at this time whether the bridge would remain as a purely historic feature or be open to the public.

## **2 Current Situation**

- 2.1 The new bridge was opened for public use in the autumn of 2007; it provides a safe, accessible crossing for everyone including older and disabled people, the very young, dogs and cyclists. At present DCC is responsible for both bridges. It was the County Council's intention, that once the new bridge was open, it would either remove the old bridge or fence it off to avoid the risk of anyone falling into the river should they decide to use it.
- 2.2 In January this year the County Council asked the Parish Councils to confirm that if they wanted to keep the bridge open for public use they would take on responsibility for the future maintenance of the old Clam Bridge and indemnify the County Council against all claims arising from loss or injury.
- 2.3 With growing concerns amongst the local people and the Parish Councils that the old Clam Bridge might be removed or fenced off, a campaign to save the Clam Bridge was initiated. The NPA was asked to take on responsibility for the bridge, because of its cultural and historic significance. Officers have stated that the new bridge fully serves the purpose of providing a safe route across the river. It is accepted that the old Clam Bridge is of local cultural interest but officers have advised that its historic value as an artefact is diminished by the fact that the wood has been replaced on more than one occasion and will in the future require further replacement.
- 2.4 Due to the strength of feeling on this issue officers have met twice with local representatives to consider options for the future protection of the Clam Bridge, the second meeting involved a bridge engineer and a public rights of way officer from DCC.
- 2.5 A petition containing approximately 400 names was presented to the Chairman of the Authority on 4 April 2008 and reported to members at the Authority Meeting. The petition now has nearly 500 names.

## **3 Issues**

- 3.1 The clam design is a concept rather than a prescriptive design. Clam is an alternative word for "clapper" and therefore the design concept is the use of natural resources, granite slab(s) or tree trunk(s) placed across a stream or small river to provide a crossing. It is thought that the Clam Bridge over the River Bovey is the last of its kind on a public right of way on Dartmoor but there are examples on private land where the public do not have access. This is one of the reasons why local people feel it is important to retain the old bridge. William Crossing in his Guide to Dartmoor, 1912, noted that timber clam bridges are seldom seen on Dartmoor.
- 3.2 The current Clam Bridge is unsafe for public use and it is a barrier for some walkers; however the Parish Councils and some members of the local community want to keep it open for public use. They are not satisfied with it being fenced off to the public in the long term, although would accept this as a temporary measure until a long term future for the Clam Bridge can be found. They argue that the NPA has a duty to preserve the Clam Bridge as a significant part of the cultural heritage of Dartmoor.

## **4 Proposals**

- 4.1 The two local communities are willing to raise money to adapt the existing Clam Bridge to make it safe for public use. The communities suggest that this would require a new, slightly wider oak beam to replace the existing beam on the Lustleigh side of the river, and two handrails, one on each side of the beam. (The existing clam has just one handrail on the downstream side). They would retain the existing abutments and the beam on the Manaton side, both of which are in good repair but an additional handrail may be added to the Manaton beam if necessary. This design has been adapted from the BTVC Handbooks and is recommended in remote and adventurous locations. The works would probably need consent from the Environment Agency.
- 4.2 The communities do not feel it is their responsibility to take on the maintenance and liability of the structure. They feel strongly that this is the responsibility of DNPA or DCC in light of the cultural and historic significance of the Clam Bridge.
- 4.3 The local communities believe that DNPA should take on responsibility and liability for public use of the Clam Bridge if the local communities can source funds and the local materials to improve it, provided that the design proposed can be made safe for public use and the Environment Agency approve the design.
- 4.4 Any decision to take on liability for the “old” Clam Bridge will have implications for resources, including officer time.
- 4.5 DCC has also been asked to take on responsibility for the bridge. DCC officers have already given a view that the County Council does not wish to allocate further resources to the old bridge now that the new one is open for use. Any further response will be reported at the meeting.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The new bridge provides a safe, accessible route across the river which is appropriate to modern needs and will address concerns raised with the Authority by users in the past. The old Clam Bridge is not required for access. The main reason for the Authority to take on the old Clam Bridge would be to preserve any cultural and historic significance of the clam design in this valley.
- 5.2 The other possible benefit as promoted by the Parish Councils is to test a less engineered, more sustainable, safer, “clam type” design which might help the Authority when looking at bridge designs in other remote locations across the National Park.
- 5.3 During discussions with the local communities, it has been indicated that officers do not believe it appropriate for the Authority to take on responsibility and liability for the Clam Bridge.
- 5.4 If the Clam Bridge is adopted by the Authority, by virtue of its historic significance, as a bridge open for public use it will require resource from Access and Ranger budgets. It is not anticipated that this will be a large commitment but there will be two bridges on the site and DCC will only continue to allocate resources for the continued upkeep of the new bridge. Two public authorities will be paying for two separate bridges across the river at this point.

5.5 If neither DNPA nor DCC agree to take on responsibility for the Clam Bridge, the future of the bridge is uncertain. DCC are happy to fence off the old bridge to stop people using it and thereby preserve it in the short term. This needs to take place as soon as possible for public safety reasons. The Parish Councils do not see fencing off the bridge as an acceptable option in the long term but will accept it as an interim measure. At the current time the Parish Councils do not feel it is their responsibility to take on liability for the old Clam Bridge.

5.6 It is recommended that DNPA does not take on the responsibility and liability for the Clam Bridge because the new bridge provides an accessible and safe route across the river. The Authority should offer practical support to the local communities if they can find a way to take responsibility for the improvement and ongoing maintenance of the Clam Bridge as a locally important, historic resource.

## **6 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

6.1 The new bridge has improved access across the river.

### **Background Papers**

File 15/5/11

Suzanne Goodfellow

For further information please contact Alison Kohler, Head of Recreation, Tourism and Ranger Service)

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**DISPOSAL OF LAND AT SOUTH BRENT**Report of the Director of Corporate ServicesRecommendation : **That Members:**

- (i) Declare the land at Brent Mill, South Brent, surplus to requirements**
- (ii) Approve the disposal of the land by tender for sale or lease**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 In 1997, when the Authority came into being as a free-standing National Park Authority, Devon County Council (DCC) executed a Deed of Transfer relating to a number of properties and land holdings which it had been agreed should become the possession of the new National Park Authority. These parcels of land were detailed in a schedule to the Transfer Deed, and included a former roads depot at South Brent.
- 1.2 This parcel of land is approximately 0.10 hectares (0.25 acres) in size and is located at Manor Mills, South Brent, between the new A38 and a football field. It is adjacent to the South West Water Depot. The land was acquired by the County Council in two tranches the first in February 1926 and the second from South West Water on 6 July 1981. The land was used as a depot and open air store by DCC highways department jointly with Dartmoor National Park Authority until the latter years of the 1990s, when the need for it diminished and the use became sporadic.
- 1.3 In late 2001/2002 the Authority received complaints of vehicles being repaired and other related activities taking place on the land. Enforcement action was taken and in February 2002 the site was cleared and secured by chainlink fencing and padlocked gates.
- 1.4 In October 2002 officers of the Authority became aware that an unauthorised encampment had been created on the land. Advice was sought from Devon County Council and their Gypsy and Travellers Liaison Officer made contact with the occupants. At that point in time DCC were understood to be keen to retain the land as a transit site for travellers and therefore undertook that DCC would deal with all issues arising from the unauthorised occupation of the land, including the day to day arrangements and needs (eg refuse collection and disposal, provision of water and sanitation, education of any person under the age of 16). Thereafter for a period of 3 years, DCC were allowed to manage the land and the encampment, as agreed.
- 1.5 In 2005 it was decided to regularise the situation regarding ownership of the site. As part of this process, it became clear that the Authority would have to resume active management of the site and take responsibility for dealing with the unauthorised encampment. The first step was to submit an application for first registration to the

Plymouth District Land Registry. This application was successful and absolute freehold title was granted to the Authority on 21 March 2006 as regards that part of the site title number DN120024 and 4 December 2006 as regards that part of the title number DN542910. Therefore, as at 4 December 2006, the Authority was in full legal registered ownership of the land.

## **2 Intended Use of the Land**

- 2.1 Prior to the unauthorised encampment becoming established in October 2002, the land had been under-utilised for some time. However, it was intended to bring forward an employment use of the land. This is in accordance with Local Plan policy and appropriate to the site and location. It would effectively represent a continuation and development of the use in place at the time the unauthorised encampment first became established and it would compliment the employment use of adjoining land by South West Water plc.
- 2.2 Unfortunately, the untidy state of the site, taken with the unauthorised encampment, made it unrealistic to pursue the intended employment use or seek to market the land for development of that use. The Asset Management Review indicated the need for the Authority to develop an effective asset management strategy and action plan, so that the maximum value could be realised from the Authority's land and other assets. In this context it was felt important to address the situation at South Brent and develop the land as a viable employment site. A residential use of the land would be contrary to Local Plan policy LE3 which states that *"Permission will not be granted for changes of use of existing or permitted employment land or business premises ..... unless it has been shown that there is no other likely employment use to be found for that land or premises. Exceptionally, permission for an alternative development or change of use will be granted where this would result in significant community benefits or improvements in environmental quality, road safety or public amenity"*.
- 2.3 More importantly, the site lies within the flood plain of the River Avon. Indeed, the course of the river is only a few metres away from the western boundary of the site. Local Plan policy UT2 states: *"Planning permission will not be granted for development that would itself be at risk from flooding or would increase the risk of flooding by reducing the capacity of a floodplain or otherwise lead to an increased risk of flooding causing additional hazards to life and property. Permission will be given where effective mitigating measures are possible and the applicant agrees to implement those measures. a planning obligation will be sought or a condition will be attached to secure their provision"*.
- 2.4 Following completion of the registration of the land and in consideration of the factors outlined above, a report was presented to the Authority on 3 August 2007 regarding the actions the Authority could take with regard to the unauthorised encampment. Approval was given by the Authority to commence eviction proceedings and following intensive efforts by the Legal Section the site was finally vacated on 31 October 2007. The site required clearance of three coaches and a significant quantity of rubbish and scrap metal. This was achieved by 21 December 2007 and the site was secured.

## **3 Current Situation**

- 3.1 Having regained possession of the site, NPS South West Ltd was requested to undertake a valuation of the land. The valuation report is set out in the confidential annex to this report which will be made available to Members for discussion under

Part II of the meeting in the absence of the press and public. This report is taken under Part II on the grounds that exempt information (within the meaning of Part I Paragraph 5 to Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) will be discussed, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information). Having reviewed the use of this site as part of the review process for all land and buildings owned or leased by the Authority, it has been determined that this parcel of land should be declared surplus to requirements as it has no practical use for the Authority and it cannot offer any useful contribution or support to the pursuit of the Authority's statutory purposes and socio-economic duty.

3.2 Members are recommended, therefore, to declare the land surplus to requirements and to approve the disposal of the land by tender for sale or lease as recommended in the report from NPS South West Ltd.

#### **4 Implications for People from Under-represented Groups**

4.1 None

LORNA BROWN

**Background Papers:** NPA/07/052

For further information please contact – Lorna Brown, Director of Corporate Services

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION**Report of the Director of Corporate ServicesRecommendation : **That Members:**

- (i) Approve the revised Financial Regulations**
- (ii) Approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as outlined in Appendix 1**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 1972 directs that Authorities shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs, and that some of their officers be responsible for the administration of those affairs.
- 1.2 Under powers contained in the Local Government Finance Act 1982 (s23 and 35) the Secretary of State also makes regulations as to the accounts themselves and requires them to be audited by the Audit Commission, or by an Auditor appointed by them and approved by the Authority. The 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' require that the 'Responsible Financial Officer' must determine and be responsible for the accounting systems and the form of both the accounts and supporting records of the Authority. That Officer must further ensure (by maintaining an effective and adequate audit) that rules so made are observed and that all records are maintained in a satisfactory manner. To conduct its business efficiently, a local authority needs to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and that they are adhered to. Part of this process is the establishment of financial regulations that set out the financial policies of the Authority.

**2 Status of Financial Regulations**

- 2.1 Financial Regulations provide a framework for managing the authority's financial affairs. They apply to every Member and Officer of the Authority and anyone acting on its behalf.
- 2.2 The regulations identify the financial responsibilities of the Authority, the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive/National Park Officer – CE(NPO)), the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer - CFO), the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and Service Directors.
- 2.3 All Members and Officers have a responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these assets is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.
- 2.4 The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the financial regulations and submitting any additions or changes as necessary to the Authority for approval. He/she is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of these financial regulations to the Authority.
- 2.5 Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their departments are aware of the existence and content of the Authority's financial regulations.

- 2.6 These regulations should be read in conjunction with:
- Standing Orders
  - Scheme of Delegation
  - Procedure manuals
  - VAT Manual
  - Financial Grant Memorandum issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
  - The Treasury Management Policy & Strategy
  - The Prudential Code
  - Instructions relating to Procurement, Including Orders, Contracts & Tenders

### **3 Current Situation**

- 3.1 The Authority's Financial Regulations were last substantially reviewed in 2005 and were approved by the Authority on 6 May 2005. Further to governance and structural changes within the Authority and with due regard to review outcomes and other guidance, a further review has been carried out in line with current CIPFA guidance on the framework and content of the Regulations to incorporate new legislation, the financial policies of the Authority and to give general guidance to Members and Officers in operating in the financial environment.
- 3.2 As a consequence of the review, revised Financial Regulations have been developed and are attached at Appendix 1 (for Members). They are also available on the website at [www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk). The main changes relate to:
- Governance changes (e.g. establishment of Audit & Governance Committee)
  - Delegations relating to Grants
  - Use of Consultants
  - Instructions relating to Procurement
  - Irregularities
  - Partnership arrangements
  - Work for third parties
- 3.3 As a consequence of the changes proposed in the revised Financial Regulations for Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), there is an impact on the current Scheme of Delegation. The revisions required to the scheme if the revised Financial Regulations are approved are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Members are recommended to approve the revised Financial Regulations, and subsequent to that approval agree to the amendments required to the Scheme of Delegation, for immediate implementation (from the close of the meeting).

### **4 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

None.

LORNA BROWN

**Background Papers:** Financial Regulations May 2005  
Scheme of Delegation

(For further information contact Lorna Brown, Director of Corporate Services)

**Attachments:** Appendix 1 – Financial Regulations  
Appendix 2 – Revisions to the Scheme of Delegation

# **DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**



## **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

# INDEX

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	4
Why do we have Financial Regulations?	4
Status of Financial Regulations	4
Statement of Principles	5
The Principles	5
<b>A. Financial Management</b>	
A1a The Authority	7
A1b Audit and Governance Committee	7
A1c Corporate Governance	7
A2 Statutory Officers	7
A3 Accounting Arrangements	9
A4 Budget Process	9
A5 Year End Accounting	9
A6 Financial Training	10
A7 Grants and Subscriptions	10
A8 Use of Consultants	10
<b>B. Financial Planning and Control of Expenditure</b>	
B1 Policy Framework	11
B2 Revenue Budget Preparation	11
B3 Determination of Affordable Borrowing	11
B4 Resource Allocation	12
B5 Maintenance of Reserves	12
B6 Revenue Budget Management and Control	12
B7 Monitoring and Control of Affordable Borrowing	13
B8 Authority to Incur Revenue Expenditure	13
B9 Virements	13
B10 Preparation of the Capital Programme	13
B11 Authority to Incur and Control of Capital Expenditure	13
B12 Capital Receipts	14
B13 Leasing	14
<b>C. Risk Management and Control of Resources</b>	
C1 Risk Management	15
C2 Internal Control	15
C3 Separation of Duties	16
C4 Retention of Records	16
C5 Investments and Treasury Management	16
C6 Security of Authority Property	16
C7 Sale of Assets	17
C8 Stocks and Stores	17
C9 Inventories	18
C10 Insurance	19
C11 Ex Gratia Payments	19
C12 Gifts and Hospitality	20
C13 Voluntary Unofficial Funds	21
C14 Irregularities	22

C15	Audit Requirements	22
C16	Staffing	23
C17	Official Conduct	23

**D. Systems and Procedures**

D1	General Controls	25
D2	Purchasing Arrangements	25
D3	Orders for Goods and Services	26
D4	Payments of Accounts	27
D5	Company Credit Cards	29
D6	Imprest Accounts and Advances	29
D7	Salaries, Wages and Pensions	30
D8	Travelling, Subsistence and Financial Loss Allowances	31
D9	Income and Banking	31
D10	Taxation	33
D11	Controlled Stationery	34

**E. External Arrangements**

E1	Partnership Arrangements, Joint Ventures and Pooled Budgets	35
E2	External Funding	35
E3	Work for Third Parties	36

# INTRODUCTION

## **Why do we have Financial Regulations?**

The Local Government Act 1972 directs that Authorities shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs, and that some of their officers be responsible for the administration of those affairs.

Under powers contained in the Local Government Finance Act 1982 (s23 and 35) the Secretary of State also makes regulations as to the accounts themselves and requires them to be audited by the Audit Commission, or by an Auditor appointed by them and approved by the Authority. The 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' require that the 'Responsible Financial Officer' must determine and be responsible for the accounting systems and the form of both the accounts and supporting records of the Authority. That Officer must further ensure (by maintaining an effective and adequate audit) that rules so made are observed and that all records are maintained in a satisfactory manner. To conduct its business efficiently, a local authority needs to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and that they are adhered to. Part of this process is the establishment of financial regulations that set out the financial policies of the Authority.

## **Status of Financial Regulations**

Financial Regulations provide a framework for managing the authority's financial affairs. They apply to every Member and Officer of the Authority and anyone acting on its behalf.

The regulations identify the financial responsibilities of the Authority, the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive/National Park Officer – CE(NPO)), the Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer - CFO), the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and Service Directors.

All Members and Officers have a responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these assets is legal, properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.

The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the financial regulations and submitting any additions or changes as necessary to the Authority for approval. He/she is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of these financial regulations to the Authority.

Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their departments are aware of the existence and content of the Authority's financial regulations.

These regulations should be read in conjunction with:

- Standing Orders
- Scheme of Delegation
- Procedure manuals
- VAT Manual

- Financial Grant Memorandum issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- The Treasury Management Policy & Strategy
- The Prudential Code
- Instructions relating to Procurement, Including Orders, Contracts & Tenders

### **Statement of Principles**

The Authority expects high standards of conduct from its members and officers and those with whom it has dealings. Further to this the Authority expects honesty, openness and integrity to be the values which underpin its financial affairs and all those involved with the Authority's finances should work with these values in mind. The Principles below provide the basis for the detailed guidance in Financial Regulations.

### **The Principles**

The Authority is responsible for the stewardship of public money and will make arrangements to safeguard the interests of all its stakeholders.

The Authority expects its members and officers to exercise high standards in financial management and administration and aims to stimulate openness and a climate of frankness that it will support through policies and regulations, such as the "whistle blowing" policy.

The importance of planning, monitoring and controlling the use of resources is of vital importance to the Authority and it will make arrangements for these activities to be undertaken effectively.

Issues of probity will be dealt with effectively and the Authority will work to meet its duty to maintain proper accounts and related records.

Value for money is at the core of the Authority's financial activity and the way in which it administers its financial affairs.

Compliance with statutory requirements, accounting standards and appropriate codes of practice will be inherent in the Authority's arrangements for financial matters.

Allocation of responsibility and authority in relation to financial matters will be clearly identified.

The Authority is mindful of the need for consistent standards in financial administration and management across all its operations and will set in place guidance to be adhered to by all its directorates. In particular, it expects staff to consult with and use all of the expertise in financial matters that it has available and act on advice from such sources.

The assets and resources of the Authority must be protected from loss, damage and theft. Identifying and quantifying risks to the Authority is of key importance and arrangements must be made to reduce, eliminate or insure against them as appropriate.

The accurate, appropriate and timely payment and collection of monies forms much of the routine financial business of the Authority and arrangements will be made for its proper administration.

## **A Financial Management**

Financial Management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the Authority including the policy framework and budget. Below are set out the main areas of responsibility of financial management.

### **A1a The Authority**

The Authority is responsible for adopting the Authority's Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Members code of conduct and for approving the policy and corporate governance framework and budget. It is also responsible for approving and monitoring compliance with the Authority's overall framework of accountability as set out in its Standing Orders and is responsible for monitoring compliance with agreed policy and reporting decisions taken.

### **A1b Audit and Governance Committee**

The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for scrutinising the activity of the Authority with particular reference to its governance, performance and use of resources (including human resources, property & IT). Acting under delegated power from the Authority, the committee will agree the District Auditor's annual Audit and Inspection Plan; agree the Internal Audit Service programme; monitor the financial performance of the Authority and the management and maintenance of the Authority's assets; monitor and review the Corporate Risk Strategy and Register; and scrutinise and keep under review Internal Control Mechanisms.

### **A1c Corporate Governance**

The Authority is responsible for approving the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance. The principle of the Code will be openness, integrity and accountability and the Code will be in accordance with CIPFA/Solace guidance.

### **A2 Statutory Officers**

A2.1 The Chief Executive Officer / National Park Officer [CE/ (NPO)] is responsible for the corporate and overall strategic management of the Authority as a whole. He/she must report to and provide information for the Full Authority and other committees. He/she is responsible for establishing a framework for management direction, style and standards and for monitoring the performance of the organisation.

A2.2 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of financial conduct and for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration and for ensuring that the procedures for recording and reporting key decisions are operating effectively. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising all members and officers about who has the authority to take a particular decision and whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary to the policy framework. The Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer are also responsible for advising the Full Authority if a decision could be considered contrary to the aims and intentions of the approved budget. An example of such decision would be promoting a new policy without thought as to the budget implications.

A2.3 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) or Section 151 Officer is responsible for advising the Authority on all financial matters and will, after consulting with the CE(NPO) and the Monitoring Officer, report to the Full Authority and the Authority's External Auditor, if he/she considers that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause loss or deficiency, or if the Authority is about to enter an item of account unlawfully. The CFO, if necessary, in conjunction with the CE (NPO) and after consultation with the Chair of the Authority, shall have the powers to take any action necessary to safeguard the interests of the Authority.

The CFO has responsibility for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs. This responsibility is set out in statute such as Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Authority's Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Finance represent the interests of the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) at local level.

A2.4 The Director of Corporate Services (DoCS) has, in consultation with the CFO responsibility for the provision of financial services to the Authority is to be given adequate opportunity to provide written comments in any report with financial implications.

A2.5 The CFO delegates the day to day financial administration to the Head of Finance who reports to the DoCS. The HoF through the DoCS, has authority to act on behalf of the CFO in the day to day operation of:

- Ensuring that systems are in place to process financial transactions efficiently and effectively
- Providing accounting services and financial advice to the Authority and its officers
- Preparing and submitting an annual budget
- Preparing and submitting final accounts
- Preparation and submission to Government and other bodies of bids, estimates, budgets and any other financial information

The HoF is to be given adequate opportunity to provide written comments in any report with financial implications. The HoF and DoCS will meet with the CFO quarterly, to review financial administration and regulation throughout the Authority.

A2.6 The CFO will ensure that procedures are in place to satisfy the requirements of anti money-laundering legislation as they impact upon local government, in line with recommendations from the relevant professional bodies.

A2.7 Directors must operate efficient systems of financial control and are responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring that the Authority is advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that financial implications have been agreed by the CFO through the HoF
- (b) Ensuring that the Authority is advised of legal implications of all proposals and that legal implications are agreed with the Monitoring Officer.

- (c) The signing of contracts on behalf of the Authority where they have delegated authority to do so.
- (d) Consulting with the CFO, via the DoCS and / or the HoF and seeking approval on any matter that could materially affect the Authority's financial position before any commitments are incurred.

### **A3 Accounting Arrangements**

A3.1 The CFO is responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate systems in force for keeping the accounts and financial records of the Authority and that the Authority's annual financial accounts and reports are prepared to meet statutory requirements. The CFO must also approve the accounting systems and accounting records in use.

A3.2 Accounting procedures will reflect recommended professional practices, and follow accounting principles determined from time to time by the CFO, in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) standards or practice, the Financial Grant Memorandum issued by DEFRA under which grant funding is paid and instructions and advice received from DEFRA and auditors.

A3.3 No change must be made to existing accounting procedures without agreement from the CFO.

A3.4 Failure to comply with the Financial Grant Memorandum could involve the Authority incurring grant penalties.

A3.5 Accounting procedures will be reviewed as necessary by the CFO in consultation with the CE (NPO) to ensure that they provide the information required by both the CFO and the CE (NPO) without duplication of records.

A3.6 The CFO must examine and certify where required any submission, estimate or claim for payment of grant by a Government Department or funding from any other body. Officers responsible for the administration of such grants, funds and spending associated with them must ensure compliance with the conditions of the grant/funding. (Delegated to the HoF)

A3.7 The CFO must examine and certify where required any financial return to a Government Department or other body. (Delegated to the HoF)

### **A4 Budget Process**

A4.1 The Financial Grant Memorandum issued by DEFRA sets out a timetable to prepare an annual bid for grant support towards planned revenue and capital expenditure. A budget will be prepared by the Authority for submission to and approval by DEFRA in line with the timetable.

### **A5 Year End Accounting**

A5.1 The CFO is responsible for ensuring that the annual statement of accounts is prepared in accordance with the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK: A Statement of Recommended Practice" (CIPFA/LASAAC). The Authority is responsible for approving the annual Revenue and Capital Outturn and for agreeing procedures for carrying forward any under and over-spending on budget

headings. The Authority's final financial position as presented in the Annual Statement of Accounts will be approved by the Full Authority.

## **A6 Financial Training**

A6.1 Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training to undertake their financial responsibilities, in accordance with standards set by the Authority and the CFO.

## **A7 Grants & Contributions**

A7.1 Grants or contributions up to a value of £2,000 may be authorised by the approved budget holder. Grants or contributions between £2,001 and £5,000 may be authorised by the relevant Director. Grants or contributions over £5,000 must be approved by the Authority prior to payment. All individual grants over £1,000 approved under this delegation, must be reported to the Authority bi-annually. See also Section E – External Arrangements.

A7.2 Historic Building Grants are to be administered in accordance with Section 78 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990, the approved Guidance Notes and delegated limits.

A7.3 Officers must satisfy themselves that organisations to be grant-aided are financially viable for the duration of the appropriate project or activity. They must give adequate notice to third parties of any grant they propose to make or withdraw.

## **A8 Use of Consultants**

A8.1 If any professional person or firm is to be engaged on behalf of the Authority to provide consultancy support on a project, review or task involving expenditure in excess of £10,000, the prior approval of the Authority must first be obtained.

A8.2 The CE(NPO) may approve the appointment or engagement of consultancy support on any project, review or task involving expenditure not exceeding £10,000.

A8.3 For projects or activities under their control, any Director may appoint or engage consultancy support involving expenditure not exceeding £5,000.

A8.4 For the purposes of these regulations, consultancy support shall include but not be limited to work by external contractors, chargeable work by other local authorities or public sector bodies, and the work of agencies, firms and companies.

## **B Financial Planning and Control of Expenditure**

The importance of this area is in the need for sound financial planning, monitoring and control of resources. Sound budget management is crucial to informing good decision making and achieving best value in the use of the Authority's resources.

### **B1 Policy Framework**

B1.1 The Authority is responsible for agreeing the Authority's framework and budget. In terms of financial planning the key elements are:

- The National Park Purposes
- The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan
- The Corporate Plan
- The Financial Grant Memorandum
- The Annual Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan
- The Capital Strategy and Annual Capital Programme
- Prudential Indicators (limits for external borrowing, other long term liabilities and related matters and Treasury Management Strategy)

### **B2 Revenue Budget Preparation**

B2.1 The CE (NPO) in consultation with the CFO is responsible for ensuring that a revenue budget for the coming year and a medium term financial plan for the two subsequent financial years is prepared for consideration by the Authority.

B2.2 The HoF in consultation with the CFO is responsible for providing guidance on the general format of the budget.

B2.3 Directors will prepare, in consultation with the relevant working panels and in accordance with the framework set down by the CE (NPO) an estimate of income and expenditure for the ensuing financial year within the spending targets set by the CE (NPO) and Defra.

B2.4 The CE (NPO) will submit a Medium Term Financial Plan to the full Authority for approval by 31 March each year.

B2.5 The CE(NPO) in consultation with the CFO is responsible for reporting to the Authority on the robustness of estimates contained within the budget and adequacy of reserves allowed for in the budget proposals.

### **B3 Determination of Affordable Borrowing**

B3.1 It is the responsibility of the HoF in consultation with the CFO to provide the Authority with a written report on affordable levels of borrowing. This report is to be presented at the meeting when the annual budget is set and should have regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance issued by CIPFA. The report will contain a number of prudential indicators that demonstrate that capital expenditure plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

#### **B4 Resource Allocation**

B4.1 The CFO is responsible for developing and maintaining a resource allocation process that ensures that both capital and revenue expenditure plans take account of the Authority's policy framework and changing priorities within that.

B4.2 It is the responsibility of Directors to ensure that the revenue and capital budget estimates reflect the priorities and goals in the National Park Management Plan, the Corporate Plan and agreed service plans are in line with the medium term financial plan and capital strategy.

#### **B5 Maintenance of Reserves**

B5.1 It is the responsibility of the CE (NPO) in consultation with the CFO to provide the Authority with a written report on levels of reserves that are considered to be prudent. This advice is to be based on the annual risk assessment of the Authority.

B5.2 The medium term financial plan should, in part, be based on how to either reach or maintain the recommended level of reserves.

#### **B6 Revenue Budget Management and Control**

B6.1 Management and control of each section of the Authority's budget (or part where appropriate) is the responsibility of the appropriate Director.

B6.2 The appropriate Director must ensure that there is a designated officer managerially accountable to them for the detailed management of their budget and notify the Chief Executive (NPO) of those so designated.

B6.3 Service Directors will jointly carry out regular budget monitoring and reporting to identify financial problems and recommend to the Chief Executive (NPO) management action necessary to resolve them. Reference may also need to be made to DEFRA under the grant regulations. Responsibility for management action rests with the appropriate Director.

B6.4 Monitoring reports defining service financial problems and key issues with recommended action will be made to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis, and to the Authority at year end and at any other time as determined by the Chief Executive (NPO) and CFO. Where agreement on information or recommended action cannot be reached, the Chief Executive (NPO) and CFO have the duty to report separately.

B6.5 With the explicit approval of the Authority, and subject to DEFRA requirements, in each case, at the end of each financial year any net under spend within operational budgets may be carried forward into the ensuing year. Under spending carried forward into the ensuing year and not retained corporately, can be allocated back to the operational budget that gave rise to that under spend.

B6.6 The Authority's final financial position as presented in the Annual Statement of Accounts will be approved by the full Authority.

## **B7 Monitoring and Control of Affordable Borrowing**

B7.1 It is the responsibility of the HoF in consultation with the CFO to develop and maintain systems to monitor performance against prudential indicators. Reports on performance against indicators including early warning of any possible breach of any prudential indicator will be made to the Audit and Governance Committee on a regular basis.

## **B8 Authority to Incur Revenue Expenditure**

B8.1 No expenditure shall be incurred nor any reduction in income authorised unless such expenditure or reduction in income is:

- (a) Covered by the annual or supplementary budgets approved by the Authority.
- (b) The benefit of a carried forward under spending within Regulation B6.5
- (c) Covered by a virement (see B9).

## **B9 Virements**

Movements of budget provisions between headings

B9.1 Where a virement represents a major change in policy and is greater than £25,000, the CE (NPO) and the HoF need to prepare a brief written report for the Authority seeking its approval to the policy change and associated virement.

B9.2 All other virements below £25,000 must be approved by the CE (NPO) and CFO with a written record being submitted to the HoF (forms are available from Finance).

## **B10 Preparation of the Capital Programme**

B10.1 The CFO is responsible for ensuring that a capital strategy for the ensuing financial year and three subsequent financial years is prepared, or for a longer period as may be specified by the Authority and this must be submitted to the Authority.

B10.2 Before items included in an approved Capital Programme may be committed, a detailed estimate of their cost must be submitted to the Authority for approval.

B10.3 The amount of capital expenditure to be financed by borrowing, in accordance with the Prudential Code, must be approved by the Authority.

## **B11 Authority to Incur and Control of Capital Expenditure**

Capital expenditure includes the following however financed:

- The acquisition of land and buildings, furniture, equipment, plant and vehicles
- The construction of new buildings or improvements to existing buildings
- Road improvements, bridgeworks, traffic management and waste disposal schemes
- Grants and advances for capital purposes
- Property leases for more than 3 years duration

B11.1 All capital expenditure proposals must be included in the Capital Programme.

B11.2 Revised approval from the Authority must be obtained if the cost of an item increases above the approved estimate by more than the excess permitted under the Authority's Instructions relating to Procurement including Orders, Contract and Tenders. Approved increases must be contained within the approved total programme. Exceptionally, the Authority's approval may be sought to increase the approved total Programme and its financing.

B11.3 The introduction of new capital items after the Capital Programme has been approved (where additional or in substitution) requires the Authority's advance approval.

B11.4 The Authority must approve any re-phasing or alterations to Capital Programme

B11.5 Capital items purchased must be recorded in the appropriate asset register or inventory.

## **B12 Capital Receipts**

The sale of land, buildings and leases of land or buildings of more than three years duration, are capital receipts. Particular rules must be observed in dealing with the proceeds and they must not be confused with revenue income such as fees and charges.

B12.1 The CFO must be informed of all proposed sales of land and buildings so that the effect on financial and property management can be assessed.

B12.2 The procedures for declaring properties surplus to requirements are set out in the Authority's Asset Management Plan.

B12.3 The CFO/CE (NPO) will be responsible for the negotiations of all such sales.

B12.4 Capital receipts must be accounted for separately from revenue income and officers banking these monies must ensure accurate use of capital codes, as well as compliance with other regulations concerning income and banking.

## **B13 Leasing**

B13.1 All vehicle, plant, furniture and equipment leasing must be negotiated in consultation with the DoCS, and where appropriate the Authority's Lawyer and the HoF. Provision for the acquisition of leased items must be included in the Capital Programme.

B13.2 All property leases and other property acquisitions must be notified to the CFO who will seek approval of the Authority before a commitment is entered into so that the effect of Central Government and DEFRA controls on the Capital Programme can be assessed.

## **C Risk Management and Control of Resources**

It is essential that robust, integrated systems are developed for identifying and evaluating all significant operational risks to the Authority. Equally, regulations are needed to ensure arrangements are in place to protect assets and resources of the Authority.

### **C1 Risk Management**

C1.1 The Authority is responsible for approving the Authority's risk management strategy and for reviewing the overall effectiveness of the strategy.

C1.2 The CFO, in conjunction with Directors is responsible for preparing the Authority's Risk Management Policy Statement and for promoting it throughout the Authority and updating it.

C1.3 The general controls for risk management are:

- Procedures are in place to identify, assess, prevent or contain material known risks and the procedures are operating effectively throughout the authority
- A monitoring process is in place to review the effectiveness of risk reduction strategies and operation of these controls
- Managers know which risks they are responsible for managing and are provided with relevant information
- Provision is made for any losses that might result from the risks that remain
- Claims are investigated within a given time scale
- Acceptable levels of risk are determined and insured against where appropriate
- The Authority has identified business continuity plans in the event of a disaster that results in significant loss or damage to its resources

### **C2 Internal Control**

Internal control refers to the systems of control devised by management to help ensure the Authority's objectives are achieved in a manner that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources and that the Authority's assets are safeguarded.

#### **Systems of Internal Control**

C2.1 The CFO is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations and other relevant statements of best practice.

C2.2 Directors are responsible for establishing sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and for achieving their financial and non-financial performance targets.

C2.3 The DoCS in consultation with the CFO shall prepare an annual statement of the effectiveness of the Authority's system of internal control incorporated into the Annual Governance Statement. This statement will be published as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts and will be approved by the full Authority.

### **C3 Separation of Duties**

C3.1 Financial procedures must be undertaken wherever possible using separate persons to undertake different parts of any one transaction.

### **C4 Retention of Records**

C4.1 Accounting and other records must be retained for periods that comply with relevant legal requirements. Detailed standards are contained within the Authority's Retention Policy.

### **C5 Investments and Treasury Management**

C5.1 All investments of money under its control and all borrowings shall be made in the name of the Authority.

C5.2 All securities that are the property of or in the name of the Authority and the title deeds of property in its ownership, shall be held by the CFO, or appointed custodians, or the Authority's bankers as appropriate.

C5.3 The HoF will maintain the Authority's register of stocks, bonds and mortgages and will maintain records of all borrowing of money by the Authority.

C5.4 Funds held in trust will wherever possible be in the name of the Authority.

C5.5 All officers acting as trustees or controlling funds by virtue of their official position have a duty to exercise due care over the custody of valuables and documents and the administration of funds.

C5.6 The Authority adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice.

C5.7 Accordingly the Authority will create and maintain a Treasury Management Policy Statement, suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMP's) and will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year and an annual report after its close.

C5.8 The Authority delegates responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the CFO, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMP's and, if a CIPFA member, with CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

C5.9 The full Authority is required to approve certain maximum borrowing levels before the start of each financial year based on recommendations made by the CFO.

### **C6 Security of Authority Property**

C6.1 The CFO will ensure that a register of land and buildings owned by the Authority is maintained and will ensure custody of all title deeds under secure arrangements.

C6.2 Service Directors are responsible for maintaining proper security of Authority property and cash holdings in accordance with the detailed standards below:

- Other than where approved by the CE (NPO), the Authority's property must not be removed other than in the ordinary course of the Authority's business or used other than for the Authority's purposes.
- Where Authority property is held in the homes of Officers or Members, those individuals must make reasonable arrangements for its safe custody and return the property when required by the Authority.
- Maximum limits for cash holdings must be agreed with the CFO and must not be exceeded without the CFO's express permission. All reasonable steps should be taken for the secure storage of cash
- Keys to safes and similar receptacles must be subject to adequate security and the loss of keys must be reported to the Head of Finance & Accountancy immediately. Safes and similar receptacles must be subject to an annual contents review, listing and certification by an appropriate manager.

C6.3 The DoCs and Head of ICT are responsible for maintaining proper security and privacy of information held in the main computer installation.

C6.4 The DoCs and Head of ICT are responsible for controlling access to main computer installation data and within directorate computer data in accordance with the Authority's Data Protection and Computer Security Policy Guidelines.

## **C7 Sale of Assets**

C7.1 The CE (NPO) may make arrangements for disposal for surplus items (excluding land, buildings and leased items) with an estimated market value of up to £1,000. For surplus items above £1,000 approval must be obtained from the Authority and the disposal must be via public auction or by sealed bid after public advertisement.

C7.2 All disposals relating to land, buildings and leases are to be approved by the Authority in accordance with the Authority's Asset Management Plan and disposals will be via public auction or by tender after public advertisement.

C7.3 All disposals of assets and surplus items must be undertaken in accordance with the Section 123(2) of the LGA 1972 so as to obtain the best consideration for the Authority and no favour should be shown to staff or other third parties.

## **C8 Stocks and Stores**

Directors are responsible for the custody and control of stocks and stores in their Sections in accordance with detailed standards below:

C8.1 A complete record of all stores received on behalf of the Authority, whether from suppliers, surplus stores, gifts, or material returned from work sites, together with a record of all stores issues made and stores balances in hand at any time, must be kept in a form agreed by the HoF in consultation with the CFO.

C8.2 In addition to the periodical testing of stocks in hand, Directors must make the necessary arrangements to undertake a complete stocktaking of all stores at least once during each financial year.

C8.3 Where required, stock sheets must be prepared and passed to the HoF showing at 31 March (as nearly as may be) the actual stocks in hand and the value thereof as revealed by the stocktaking, the stocks in hand and the value thereof shown in the stores accounts, together with any surpluses or deficiencies.

C8.4 The stocktaking must be supervised by a responsible person (other than the person responsible for the stores) nominated for the purpose by the appropriate Director and both the person taking the stock and the person supervising must certify the stock sheets.

C8.5 Any deficiency, theft or other loss in value including obsolete stock exceeding £200 or any combination of items revealed on the occasion of the annual stocktaking or otherwise, must be reported at the earliest opportunity to the HoF, for the necessary authority to write off each deficiency, or to obtain a decision as to other action to be taken. The report must state quantities and values in question, together with any other relevant information. The CE (NPO) is empowered to write off deficiencies up to £1,000. Items or a combination of items in excess of £1,000 requires the approval of the Authority. The CFO must be informed of any write-offs which exceed £1,000 at the earliest possible time.

C8.6 Wherever a storekeeper or person in charge of stores hands over, leaves or ceases to have custody of stores, the appropriate Director must ensure that a prior reconciliation is made of the stores concerned and that a handing over certificate is signed by the out-going and incoming officers.

C8.7 Stocks and stores must not be carried by any Directorate in excess of reasonable requirements as ascertained by experience, or in excess of authorised levels notified from time to time.

## **C9 Inventories**

C9.1 Directors are responsible for the maintenance of inventories of plant and equipment in their control in accordance with the instructions issued by the HoF. Such inventories must include items held at the homes of Officers or Members. Directors must ensure that:

- Inventories are kept up to date and original copies will be held by the HoF
- Items held under leasing arrangements are appropriately identified
- Any deficiency, theft or other loss is reported at the earliest opportunity to the HoF.
- The deletion of items from inventories is authorised by the CE (NPO), subject to the limits in C7.1
- Details of the disposal of the items are stated on the inventory
- An adequate record is maintained of transfer of control and any temporary borrowing or other removal from the establishment of any item which is (or should be) listed in the inventory including items held at the homes of Officers or Members

- Where an officer who is responsible for the custody of the items recorded in an inventory hands over that responsibility to another, the inventory is checked and the incoming officer must sign as accepting responsibility for the custody of the items recorded in the inventory
- A complete inventory check is carried out at least once each year and the result certified by the head of section
- All property owned or acquired by the Authority must, as far as practicable, be effectively marked as Authority property

## **C10 Insurance**

The Authority faces many risks of different kinds in carrying out its functions. Regulations here are designed to protect the interests of the Authority, its staff and the people it serves.

C10.1 The Authority will decide and approve the Authority's policy of insurance. Directors must notify the DoCs and if appropriate the HoF and the Authority's Lawyer promptly of all new risks or properties which may need to be insured, and of any alterations affecting existing risks or insurances indicating the amount of cover required.

C10.2 The DoCS is responsible for advising the CE (NPO) of the insurance required and of market changes.

C10.3 Any event which gives rise to a claim under any policy of insurance must be notified immediately to the DoCS, who will make arrangements to deal with all claims.

C10.4 Any officer in respect of whom the Authority is required by Section 114 of the Local Government Act 1972 to take security and any other person handling public money or money's worth, in respect of whom the Authority consider it desirable, must be covered by insurance in such form as the Authority approves.

C10.5 Any officer who uses his own motor vehicle on Authority business is required to insure against third party risks in such form as to indemnify the Authority against claims arising, and the policy, including any necessary endorsements and renewal receipts, must be produced for inspection by the DoCS if so required. Directors are responsible for acquainting officers under their control of the foregoing requirement.

C10.6 Before any contract is made the Authority's Lawyer must approve the insurance cover to be furnished by the contractor in respect of any act or default.

## **C11 Ex Gratia Payments**

Ex-gratia payments are made in situations where no legal obligation exists.

C11.1 The CE (NPO) may make any ex gratia payment in a sum not exceeding £1,500 to any person who is proved to have suffered a direct identifiable loss as a result of the Authority's actions or failure to act.

C11.2 The CE (NPO) may reimburse the costs of damage or loss of an Officer's personal property up to a maximum of £500 in any one case, provided it is shown that the damage or loss arose in the course of the Officer's duties without negligence or carelessness on the Officer's part.

## **C12 Gifts and Hospitality**

The Authority and the public expect the highest standards of integrity from public servants. Formal standards are in place to guide staff and Members on these matters and to ensure consistency of judgement.

C12.1 All employees must observe the provisions of the Authority's policy on Gifts and Hospitality set out in the detailed standards below.

C12.2 A particular source of conflict between the private and public interest is the offer of gifts, hospitality or benefits in kind to Members and officers in connection with their official duties. An exercise of judgement may sometimes be necessary to decide how the public interest and the Authority's good name may be served. A reasonable amount of entertainment is a normal part of the courtesies of public life and extreme strictness can give unnecessary offence to people and organisations with whom the Authority's relationships should be cordial. But an appearance of improper influence is easily created and with it encouragement of cynicism about the motives of those who serve in local government.

C12.3 With the exceptions listed below, a Member or officer should refuse any personal gift offered to him/her or to a member of his/her family, by any person or body who has or seeks dealings with the Authority. Any such offer should be reported immediately to the CE (NPO). These paragraphs are particularly directed to individuals or organisations or persons who already provide or who seek to provide work, goods or services to the Authority, e.g. building contractors, suppliers of goods or equipment and firms to provide professional or commercial services to the Authority.

C12.4 Exceptions:

- A modest gift of a promotional character given to a wide range of people. These gifts are usually given at Christmas time and include calendars, diaries, desk sets, tape measures, scales and other articles of use in the office
- Gifts on conclusion of any courtesy visit to a factory or firm of a sort normally given by that firm
- A modest gift where refusal would cause needless offence and the giver is not seeking a decision of business, but merely wishes to express thanks for advice, help or co-operation received

It is wise to err on the side of caution and an obviously expensive gift should raise a question, even if it otherwise falls within one of the above categories. If in doubt, seek the advice of the CE (NPO).

C12.5 When a gift has to be refused, this should be with tact, because the offer of gifts is common practice in the commercial world. In some cases a gift is simply delivered and there may be a problem over returning it. It is sometimes acceptable

to the giver for the gift to be the subject of a raffle and the proceeds placed to a charitable fund. An arrangement of this sort should only be made with the CE(NPO's) approval and recorded by letter.

C12.6 Hospitality is sometimes offered to representatives of the Authority and is accepted at official level because it is reasonable in all circumstances. Where it is offered to individual employees, special caution is needed where the host is seeking to do business with the Authority or to obtain a decision from it. It is important to avoid any suggestion of improper influence. The question is one of judgement and the following examples are intended to give general guidance:

Acceptable:

- A working lunch of modest standard provided to allow the parties to continue to discuss business. Officers should seek approval for reciprocation on a subsequent occasion, if there is a need for a further meeting
- Invitation to a Society or Institute dinner or function
- Invitation to take part in a sporting event
- Invitation to take part in Company jubilee or other anniversary celebration.

Unacceptable:

- Holiday abroad, at home or weekend in a holiday centre
- Offer of hotel or theatre tickets
- Use of a company flat or hotel suite
- Invitation to attend a sporting events at the courtesy of a private individual or company

C12.7 In general terms it will often be more acceptable to join in hospitality offered to a group than to accept something unique to oneself. When a particular matter is currently an issue with the Authority, e.g. arbitration, then clearly common-sense dictates that offers of hospitality be refused; even if in normal times they would be acceptable.

### **C13 Voluntary Unofficial Funds**

For reasons of probity and accountability, the good practice applied to Authority funds should also applied to unofficial funds.

C13.1 These are any funds (other than those of the Authority) controlled wholly or in part by an officer by reason of employment. They include monies collected from fund raising events, donations and other sources.

C13.2 Officers controlling, wholly or in part, any voluntary unofficial fund must ensure that accounting arrangements are in place which comply with the detailed standards below and other guidance issued by the CFO.

C13.3 Directors must ensure that they are aware of all voluntary unofficial funds in their directorates, maintain a record of them and ensure that the accounts are audited and put before the management bodies annually.

C13.4 Officers must ensure that arrangements are in place to:

- Ensure that a suitably experienced person (not necessarily professionally qualified) audits the fund in accordance with procedures recommended by the CFO
- Arrange for audited statements of accounts to be submitted to and received by the appropriate management body at least annually. Such statements must include a signed certificate in a form prescribed by the CFO
- Ensure other guidance issued by the CFO is complied with

#### **C14 Irregularities**

C14.1 All Officers and Members are responsible for giving immediate notification to the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer where there are grounds to suggest any financial impropriety or irregularity concerning income, expenditure, cash, stores, or other property of the Authority or held by the Authority.

The same applies to any suspected irregularity in the exercise of the functions of the Authority (corruption).

C14.2 Any suspected financial irregularity will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's policy entitled 'Strategy for Dealing with Financial Irregularities'.

C14.3 Where, upon investigation, the Monitoring Officer or CFO believes that reasonable grounds exist for suspecting that a loss may have occurred as the result of misappropriation or fraud, he/she shall report the matter to the CE(NPO), CFO, Monitoring Officer and the Authority's Lawyer for a decision whether the circumstances warrant investigation by the police.

14.4 Where, upon investigation, the Monitoring Officer or CFO believes that a loss has occurred as a result of waste, extravagance or maladministration, or that no loss has occurred, he/she shall report the matter to the CE(NPO), Monitoring Officer and CFO for a decision whether any further action is required.

#### **C15 Audit Requirements**

The Authority has a statutory responsibility to maintain an effective and adequate system of internal audit. Regulations in this area are therefore important to provide a formal framework for the activities of the internal audit team. There are also statutory requirements in respect of external audit and other inspection agencies.

##### **Internal Audit**

C15.1 As required by legislation the CFO will maintain an internal audit of the Authority's financial dealings.

C15.2 Internal audit will follow professional standards and guidelines issued by CIPFA and the Auditing Practices Board.

C15.3 The CFO or his authorised representatives may, for the purposes of audit:

- Enter on any premises or land and have access to all property in the keeping or ownership of the Authority;

- Have access at all times to all records, documents and correspondence relating to all financial and other transactions of the Authority or non-official funds operated by staff of the Authority;
- Require and must receive any explanations as are necessary;
- Require any employee of the Authority to produce cash, stores or any other property of the Authority or that of an unofficial fund under his control;
- Remove records, documents or assets required for further investigation

### **External Audit**

C15.4 The Audit Commission is responsible for appointing external auditors to each local authority. The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by section 15 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, as amended by section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

### **Other Review Bodies**

C15.5 The Authority may, from time to time, be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies such as HM Revenue and Customs and, who have statutory rights of access.

### **C16 Staffing**

C16.1 Service Directors are responsible for the operation of the following controls over staffing:

- A staffing strategy is in place that matches staffing requirements and budget allocations
- Appropriate methods are used to forecast staffing requirements and related costs
- Staffing establishments specified as full time equivalents are approved by the Authority alongside the annual budget
- Any subsequent increases in establishment levels will require the approval of the CE(NPO), subject to adequate budgetary provision being available to finance the addition
- Any additions to the staffing establishment and any salary or pension related changes that result in an increased budget requirement, must be approved by the Authority
- Procedures are in place to ensure that only authorised vacancies are advertised
- Monitoring of full time equivalents against budget is undertaken on monthly basis and is reported to SMT
- Corporate minimum standards on recruitment and selection, as defined by the Authority's Recruitment and Selection Policy, are followed at all stages of the recruitment process

### **C 17 Official Conduct**

Directors are responsible for ensuring that Officers are properly inducted and understand their terms and conditions of employment (NJC, and as laid down in the Statement of Particulars) and the rules and local agreements made by the Authority.

C17.1 It is expected that local government officers will demonstrate the highest level of integrity and although off duty hours are personal, officers should never put

themselves into a situation where there is any possibility that private interests could conflict with their official duty as a local government officer.

C17.2 If it comes to an Officer's knowledge, that a contract or transaction, in which that officer has a personal or pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, (not being a contract to which the officer is a party) had been, or is proposed to be, entered into by the Authority, the Officer should give notice in writing to the CE (NPO) of that interest, as soon as is practicable.

C17.3 Officers above DNP Grade 5 are expected to devote their whole time service to the work of the Authority and not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointment without the express consent of the CE(NPO).

C17.4 Officers must not disclose to the public the confidential (Part II) proceedings of any Committee meetings, etc. nor the contents of confidential documents relating to the Authority unless required by law or expressly authorised to do so by the Chief Executive (NPO).

## **D Systems and Procedures**

This area forms much of the routine financial business of the Authority and involves large numbers of transactions and staff. This area will be of interest to many people and it is important that such a major area of activity is clearly regulated and those regulations are supported by thorough detailed standards.

### **D1 General Controls**

D1.1 The general controls for systems and procedures are:

- Basic data exists to enable the Authority's objectives, targets, budgets and plans to be formulated
- Performance is communicated to the appropriate managers on an accurate, complete and timely basis
- Early warning is provided of deviations from targets, plans and budgets and management action taken
- Operating systems and procedures are secure

### **D2 Purchasing Arrangements**

D2.1 Directors must ensure and be able to demonstrate that the Authority obtains value for money in purchasing activity and that purchasing accords with corporate and service priorities, where appropriate the procurement plan and is sustainable in nature.

D2.2 Where any goods or a service involves tendering or contracts, these arrangements must conform to the requirements set out at in the Authority's Instructions relating to Procurement.

D2.3 The most effective and sustainable purchasing arrangements must be used and must always be in compliance with the Authority's Instructions Relating to Procurement eg:

- Joint procurement arrangements with other local authorities or public bodies eg Devon Procurement Partnership (DoCS approval is required)
- Use of Framework Agreements set up by Government Offices eg OGC, Catlist (DoCS approval is required)
- Low cost items may be purchased through an imprest account in accordance with D6
- Low value high volume purchases may be made via a Government Procurement card in accordance with D5

D2.3 The HoF must ensure that e-business / purchasing processes maintain the security and integrity for transacting business electronically and must approve the introduction of such systems.

D2.4 In accordance with the relevant codes of practice, every officer and member of the Authority who is involved in contractual or purchasing decisions and issuing payments on behalf of the Authority, has a responsibility to formally declare any links or personal interests which they may have with purchasers, suppliers or contractors and in respect of partnership arrangements.

### **D3 Orders for Goods and Services**

Directors are responsible for the control and use of all orders and requisitions within their service directorates and for access to the systems that generate them in accordance with the detailed standards below:

D3.1 The design and issue of all order books and requisition forms must be approved in advance by the HoF.

D3.2 Directors are responsible for:

- The control and use of all orders and requisitions
- Ensuring safe custody of unused orders
- Providing the CE (NPO) and HoF with the names and limits of their authority of those authorised to sign orders and requisitions and a specimen of their signatures
- Ensuring that staff issuing orders have received appropriate purchasing training
- Ensuring every order is dated and signed by an authorised officer
- Ensuring every order clearly specifies the standards, quality and quantity of goods and services required
- Ensuring every order states the agreed price or contract terms and times of delivery
- Ensuring every order is in compliance with the Instructions relating to Procurement
- A Director's counter-signature is required for any order over the value of £5,000

D3.3 Directors and authorised spending officers are responsible for ensuring that budget provision exists for all purchases and commitments created.

D3.4 Orders will be forwarded to the HoF so that the official order can be raised and a commitment made in the Authority's Financial Ledger. There are two transaction stages in raising an official order, carried out by two separate officers from the Finance Team. The Finance Team will make checks against all of the items listed at D3.2 & D3.3 above.

D3.5 For orders place by telephone, email, internet or verbally, the Director is responsible for ensuring systems approved by the HoF are in place to ensure the person ordering has the appropriate authority and that the Authority receives the goods that have been ordered. A copy of the order must be confirmed by written order sent to the supplier not later than the next working day, or the transaction must be entered onto the Officer's procurement card log sheet, approved each month by the Officer's Line Manager and forwarded to the HoF to be reconciled at each month end.

D3.6 Orders are required for all purchases except:

- Rents (previously agreed)
- Rates and water charges
- Gas and electricity

- Telephone charges, grants and minor cash purchases – but a record of the submission for payment of such items must be kept
- Small items purchased from imprest accounts
- Items purchased by via a Government Procurement Card

D3.7 The detailed standards, financial limits, number of quotations required and instances where tendering must be undertaken are laid out in the Authority's Instructions for Procurement. Directors are to ensure that officers responsible for procurement are appropriately trained by the Authority's Lawyer and that their staff comply with these instructions.

D3.8 Staff of the Authority are not permitted to purchase goods privately under the Authority's contract arrangements or solicit preferential treatment in a private capacity from the Authority's suppliers. Staff are not permitted to accept gifts from the Authority's suppliers, or potential suppliers as set out in the Authority's statement of official conduct and referred to in section C17 of this document.

D3.9 If any professional person is to be engaged as a consultant or advisor, the appointment must be in accordance with A8 Use of consultants and must comply with the Authority's Instructions relating to Procurement.

#### **D4 Payment of Accounts**

All payment of accounts shall be under the direction of the CFO as set out below.

D4.1 The Officer that issues the order shall be responsible for the examination, certification and submission for payment of the related invoice within the appropriate payment terms. The authorising officer will be required to certify that:

- The invoice request for payment relates to a proper liability of the Authority which has not previously been discharged
- The goods or services have been received and are of the quality and quantity ordered and all procedures have been followed
- The officer certifying each of the foregoing matters shall sign on the appropriate section of the certificate
- The expenditure is allocated to the correct analysis code
- Sufficient budget provision exists to meet the liability
- A Director's counter-signature is required for any payment over the value of £5,000

D4.2 Certified invoices for payment will be forwarded to the HoF so that the Finance Team can ensure that:

- All 'brought forward' items have been excluded
- The prices, extensions and tax are correct; all available discounts, allowances and credits have been deducted; arithmetical calculations are correct; the total certified for payment agrees with the invoiced amount and the document is a proper tax invoice within the meaning of Value Added Tax Regulations
- The expenditure is allocated to the correct analysis code and is covered by an approved estimate

- Where specific authorisation is required for the expenditure, the appropriate authority (e.g. minute) is quoted
- Where appropriate, entries have been made on inventories, stores, records, stock books and on the Authority's copy of the order
- The three stages of processing an account payable; i.e. registering, approving and funding each claim is carried out with due regard to a separation of duties as approved by the CFO and Internal Audit.

D4.3 Directors will supply specimens of the signatures of the authorised officers and the extent of authority in monetary terms to be exercised. The HoF will make arrangements for an annual certification by the CE(NPO) of the list of approved signatories.

D4.2 Suppliers invoices must not be prepared by officers of the Authority. If it is necessary for an officer to amend an invoice, that fact and the reason therefore shall be shown on the invoice and the amendment must conform to VAT regulations.

D4.3 If, on examining any item submitted for payment, the HoF is not satisfied that it is in order, such investigations as deemed necessary, either before or after payment will be instigated and brought to the attention of the CFO.

D4.4 In exceptional circumstances payment may be required in advance of the supply of goods or services, though this is not best practice. In such cases, payment must follow the normal authorisation process as stated above, with the exception that the goods or services will not yet have been received, the HoF should approve each such transaction. The authorising officer must take extra care in such transactions and ensure:

- Only reputable suppliers are used
- That the amounts of such payments are appropriate to be paid in advance and do not present unnecessary risk
- All other reasonable steps are taken to protect the Authority from risk and potential loss

D4.5 Officers must ensure that valid payments are processed in sufficient time to meet payment deadlines and to avoid late payments and avoid potential penalties being incurred.

D4.6 The use of Direct Debits as a payment method requires the prior agreement of the HoF.

D4.7 The Authority's preferred method of payment of accounts, grant-aid and other contributions is via the BACS payment system and so Officers should endeavour to obtain the required banking details from third parties in all instances. (Forms are available in Finance).

D4.8 Staff who have contact with suppliers of goods or services who are engaged in pressure selling activities, or who receive unsolicited promotional or direct marketing materials, or who receive invoices for goods or services not received, are required to report the matter to their line manager, who, in turn, will advise the HoF.

## **D5 Company Credit Cards and / or Government Procurement Cards**

D5.1 The CFO will ensure that proper arrangements are made for the administration of “company” credit card(s) and Government Procurement Cards. The HoF will issue cards where circumstances require, once approval had been given by the appropriate Director.

D5.2 Directors are responsible for ensuring that “company” credit cards and Government Procurement cards used within their Directorates are only held by appropriate staff and are used strictly in compliance with the specific guidance issued by the HoF.

## **D6 Imprest Accounts and Advances**

These are separate bank accounts, with a cheque book facility, to which an advance is made to facilitate quick payment for small items.

D6.1 Advances may be made to appropriate officers on account of imprest expenditure or for other reasons as may be agreed by the HoF.

D6.2 Imprest accounts may only be established and their details amended by the HoF, who will make any necessary arrangements with the Authority’s bankers.

D6.3 Imprest holders must maintain a complete record of all transactions. At least once in each month expenditure must be certified by the Head of Service or other authorised officer as correctly paid; the cash in hand (and where applicable, reconciled bank account balances) reconciled with the balance shown on the account; and reimbursement, supported by all relevant vouchers claimed from the HoF in such a form as he/she may require must be verified. The reconciliation should take account of any reimbursement already claimed but not yet received.

D6.4 In no circumstances may cash received, other than imprest account reimbursement, be paid into these accounts.

D6.5 None of the following items of expenditure shall be paid out of imprests:

- Sums which fall due for payment periodically (e.g. rents)
- Travelling expenses of officers (other than very minor items below £5 for occasions which are neither regular nor frequent) or of Members of the Authority
- Single payments of £25.00 or more
- Payment of (or on account) of salaries or wages or payment to an individual of employed status

D6.6 Payments must not normally be made from imprests to creditors with whom the Authority has regular dealings.

D6.7 When required each officer holding an imprest must certify in writing to the HoF that such items are held either in cash or in vouchers to be reimbursed.

D6.8 It is the duty of Directors:

- To verify balances independently of the imprest holder at frequent intervals

- To notify the HoF well in advance whenever an officer who holds and imprest gives notice of leaving the employment of the Authority, or immediately it is known that an officer otherwise ceases to be responsible for such imprest account

D6.9 A bank account must be opened for all imprest accounts exceeding £100; such bank accounts must not be allowed to run into overdraft. Directors must notify the HoF of all authorised signatories and subsequent changes. Such bank accounts will require two signatories to authorise cheque payments.

D6.10 All reasonable steps should be taken for the secure storage of cash.

## **D7 Salaries, Wages and Pensions**

Regulations are essential in this area and are vital to ensuring staff are paid accurately, on time and that payroll information of sound quality is available to management. The payment of salaries, wages, pensions, compensation and other emoluments to all employees will be made by the CFO or under arrangements as detailed in the standards below:

D7.1 The Head of HR will be responsible for the administration of the payment of salaries, wages, pensions, compensation and other emoluments to all employees or former employees of the Authority.

D7.2 Directors will ensure that all necessary information is supplied to the Head of HR to enable the Contracted Payroll Provider to be advised in accordance with the timetables and in the form prescribed of all matters affecting the payment of emoluments and in particular:

- Appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments and transfers
- Absences from duty for sickness or other reason, apart from approved leave.
- Changes in remuneration, other than normal increments and agreements of general application
- Information necessary to maintain records of service for superannuation, income tax, national insurance etc.

D7.3 Appointments of all employees must be made in accordance with the regulations of the Authority concerning establishments, grades and rates of pay.

D7.4 All time records or other pay documents must be maintained and in a form prescribed or approved by the Head of HR in consultation with the CFO and the Payroll Provider and must be certified by or on behalf of the appropriate Director.

D7.5 In accordance with the Authority's Job Evaluation Scheme when applying scales of salaries or wages, Directors must confer as necessary with the Head of HR and the HoF.

D7.6 Where errors in the payment of salaries, wages or pensions are discovered, the Head of HR must be informed immediately. It is the responsibility of the Head of HR to inform employees or former employees of errors and to require the

Contracted Payroll Provider to recover any sums overpaid in accordance with prescribed procedures.

D7.7 The CE(NPO) may write off any overpayment not exceeding £1,000 if he/she is satisfied:

- After consultation with the HoF and the Head of HR that all steps have been taken to recover the sums due; or
- That the cost of recovering any sums due would exceed the sum involved; or
- After consultation with the Head of HR that recovery would cause hardship to the employee concerned

D7.8 The prior approval of the Authority must be obtained to write off any overpayment in excess of £1,000.

### **D8 Travelling, Subsistence and Financial Loss Allowances**

D8.1 All claims for payments of car allowances, subsistence allowances, travelling and incidental expenses must be submitted to the HoF with all relevant receipts in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Authority scheme. The claims must be duly certified and in a form approved by the Authority and made up to a specified day of each month.

D8.2 The certification by the approved authorising officer will be taken to mean that the allowances are properly payable by the Authority.

D8.3 Officers claims submitted more than three months after the expenses were incurred will be paid only with the express approval of the CE(NPO) or an officer designated by him/her.

### **D9 Income and Banking**

It is important that all income due to the Authority is identified, collected on time and recorded accurately in the Authority's accounts. Also banking arrangements must be appropriate and well recorded for the Authority to exercise adequate control.

#### **Income**

D9.1 Directors are responsible for making arrangements for the collection of sums due to the Authority and for the issuing of official receipts and invoices in accordance with detailed standards below.

D9.2 Scales of charges for services and any allowances and any variations thereof (except where fixed by statute) must be reviewed at regular intervals by the appropriate Director and agreed with the CE(NPO) before submission to the Authority for approval.

D9.3 The HoF must be consulted by Directors on any proposal to acquire any cash till or accounting equipment.

D9.4 The records kept by each Directorate with regard to items of income must be in such form as agreed by the CFO.

D9.5 Directors must provide to the HoF such particulars in connection with work done, goods supplied, or services rendered and all other amounts due, as may be required to record correctly all sums due to the Authority and to ensure promptness in the rendering of accounts and the recover thereof.

D9.6 The HoF must be promptly notified of all money due under contracts, leases, tenancy and other arrangements entered into which involve the receipt of money by the Authority and must have access to the original documents or relative particulars.

D9.7 The Principal Land Management Officer must maintain a detailed record of operational land within the Park Management Directorate in respect of which rent is or may be receivable, together with sufficient details of the terms of tenancy/usage to enable the correct amount of rents to be recovered, either directly from the tenant or by deduction from salary or wages in the case of service tenants.

D9.8 The DoCS (or other appropriate officer nominated by him/her) must maintain a detailed record of operational land & buildings not covered in D9.7 above and all non-operational land & buildings in respect of which rent is or may be receivable, together with sufficient details of the terms of tenancy/usage to enable the correct amount of rents to be recovered, either directly from the tenant or by deduction from salary or wages in the case of service tenants.

The DoCS (or other appropriate officer nominated by him/her) is responsible for an annual review of the Authority's rent roll in respect of all land and buildings held by the Authority.

D9.9 The CE(NPO) may authorise the writing off of any sum not exceeding £1,000 due to the Authority if he/she is satisfied that all reasonable recovery action has been taken to recover the sum due. The prior approval of the Authority must be obtained to write off any sum in excess of £1,000.

D9.10 Where the Authority contracts to supply goods or services to external parties, the arrangements must avoid inappropriate subsidy.

### **Banking Arrangements**

D9.11 The HoF is authorised to make arrangements regarding the Authority's bank accounts. All such bank accounts will be in the name of the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

D9.12 The HoF will ensure that a monthly bank reconciliation is carried out for all of the Authority's bank accounts and will carry out a summary bank reconciliation annually.

D9.13 Officers will be advised by the HoF on secure arrangements for the collection and banking of cash and for prompt reconciliation and monitoring of these monies.

D9.14 Unless otherwise agreed by the Authority, officers authorised to collect Authority money must issue official receipts promptly, at such intervals as the Authority may direct, pay over all sums received to the HoF, or by arrangement, to

the Authority's bankers. All reasonable steps should be taken for the storage of cash, and should conform to the requirements imposed by the Authority's insurers.

D9.15 Each officer who receives money on behalf of the Authority must keep an accurate and chronological account of all receipts and deposits.

D9.16 Money received or held on behalf of the Authority must be banked in full and not be used to cash personal or any other cheques whatsoever.

D9.17 Receipts must only be issued on officially authorised receipt books, tickets and other documents of a similar nature which have been ordered and issued by, or under the direction of the HoF. A record must be maintained of every issue of such documents.

D9.18 When banking monies, care must be taken to ensure accurate use of analysis codes.

## **D10 Taxation**

D10.1 Compliance with taxation rules is important for the Authority to meet its legal requirements and avoid unnecessary costs. Failure to comply with tax legislation can result in penalties and interest payments or may lead to the overpayment or under-recovery of taxes.

D10.2 Directors must ensure all staff are aware of the various tax regimes that impact on their areas of operational activity and ensure that they are compliant with legislation governing tax and the standards below.

### **VAT**

D10.3 Officers should be aware of the Authority's VAT manuals and have access to them as the primary reference document for VAT related matters.

D10.4 VAT must be paid and recovered within the time constraints laid down by H.M. Revenue & Customs.

D10.5 Officers are responsible for obtaining and issuing proper tax documents (e.g. invoices, receipts) to ensure compliance with VAT law and to facilitate full VAT recovery on expenditure.

### **Other Taxation**

D10.6 Guidance on taxation matters, other than VAT will be issued from time to time by the CFO and HoF.

D10.7 Officers responsible for the issuing or payment of invoices must give consideration to the impact of various taxes. Particular attention should be paid to the correct treatment of employment taxes and VAT.

D10.8 In instances of doubt over the correct treatment of taxation, staff should contact the HoF, who will consult with the Contracted VAT & Taxation Provider in respect of VAT and taxation matters or the Head of HR who will consult with the Contracted Payroll Provider in respect of P.A.Y.E and National Insurance.

**D11    Controlled Stationery**

D11.1    The HoF will ensure that a proper record of controlled stationery is maintained , recording stocks of controlled stationery and providing details of to whom such items have been issued.

## **E External Arrangements**

The importance of this area is in the Authority's distinctive leadership role for the community, bringing together contributions from various stakeholders, maximising funding opportunities and achieving best value. This may involve the establishment of partnership arrangements, joint ventures, pooled budgets and externally funded projects. It is therefore essential that the responsibilities, obligations and commitment attached to such arrangements are properly managed and accounted for.

### **E1 Partnership Arrangements, Joint Ventures and Pooled Budgets**

E1.1 The HoF must be consulted on the financial and probity implications of all partnership agreements, joint ventures, pooled budgets and similar arrangements before any such agreements are finalised. Such arrangements must be approved by the CFO and be in accordance with the detailed standards below. Directors are expected to agree and formally accept the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners involved before the project commences and to communicate regularly with partners for the duration of the project.

E1.2 Directors are responsible for assessing the risks and benefits associated with partnership, joint venture, and pooled budget arrangements and for ensuring any such arrangement is in the best interest of the Authority and service users.

E1.3 Directors are responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships, joint ventures and pooled budgets that apply throughout the Authority.

E1.4 Partnership arrangements may be used as a means of employing staff, acquiring goods, commissioning works or services and may be of a complex nature. It is therefore essential that the HoF and the Authority's Lawyer are consulted on the arrangements before any commitment is made, in particular that:

- Costs and income are provided for in the Authority's budget
- A written partnership document has been prepared, setting out roles, responsibilities, duties and accountabilities
- Appropriate accounting arrangements are in place
- Sufficient controls are in place for the successful operation of the partnership, including arrangements for access to financial and other records
- A formal risk assessment has taken place and a management strategy devised
- Insurance issues have been addressed
- An auditing regime has been established
- Carry forward arrangements have been determined
- An exit strategy has been determined

### **E2 External Funding**

E2.1 The HoF must be consulted on the financial and probity implications of all projects involving funding from external sources e.g. Lottery grants, European Social Funds etc. Particular care should be taken to ensure that funding conditions are fully compatible with the aims and objectives of the Authority.

E2.2 All funding from external bodies or associated parties must be recorded in the Authority's accounts.

E2.3 Key conditions of funding and any statutory requirements must be understood and followed.

E2.4 Any matched funding requirements must be given due consideration prior to entering into long-term agreements and future revenue budgets must reflect those requirements.

E2.5 Consideration of employees' rights, funded by such finance, should be carefully reviewed prior to appointment.

### **E3 Work for Third Parties**

Current legislation enables the Authority to provide a range of services to other bodies, within prescribed parameters. The following matters must be addressed before any commitment is made or work undertaken:

- **Legality** - the Authority's Lawyer should be consulted to ensure that the proposed work is within the Authority's powers.
- **Finance** - proposals should be costed properly and provision made to ensure that the Authority is not at risk of non-payment for work done.
- **Contract** - a formal written contract should be drawn up in consultation with the Authority's Lawyer and approved by the relevant Director.
- **Capacity** - it must be clearly shown that the Authority has the appropriate expertise and insurance to undertake the contract and that the delivery of the contract will not adversely impact upon the Authority's work.

## DNPA Financial Regulations 2008

### Consequential Revisions to the Scheme of Delegation (Adopted 4 May 2007)

#### (a) Grants & Loans

in paragraph 8(b) for £5,000 substitute £1,000 [Financial Regs A7.1]

in paragraph 8(c) for £5,000 substitute £2,500 - Financial Regs do not contain an aggregate limit, but the intention is clearly in the Scheme of Delegation to prevent a number of grants being made to circumvent the limitation on the size of a single grant

#### (b) Miscellaneous

Delete paragraph 10 and replace with the following:

The Chief Executive (NPO) is hereby authorised to:

- 10.1 approve the appointment or engagement of consultancy support on any project, review or task involving expenditure not exceeding £10,000 **PROVIDED THAT:**
  - (i) for projects or activities under their control, any Director may appoint or engage consultancy support involving expenditure not exceeding £5,000
  - (ii) for the purposes of this Scheme of Delegation, consultancy support shall include but not be limited to work by external contractors, chargeable work by other local authorities or public sector bodies, and the work of agencies, firms and companies.
- 10.2 make arrangements for disposal for surplus items (excluding land, buildings and leased items) with an estimated market value of up to £1,000 **PROVIDED THAT:**
  - (i) all disposals relating to land, buildings and leases approved by the Authority, will be in accordance with the Authority's Asset Management Plan and will be via public auction or by tender after public advertisement
  - (ii) all disposals of assets and surplus items must be undertaken in accordance with the Section 123(2) of the LGA 1972 so as to obtain the best consideration for the Authority and no favour should be shown to staff or other third parties.
- 10.3 make an ex gratia payment in a sum not exceeding £1,500 to any person who is proved to have suffered a direct identifiable loss as a result of the Authority's actions or failure to act.
- 10.4 reimburse the costs of damage or loss of an Officer's personal property up to a maximum of £500 in any one case, provided it is shown that the damage or loss arose in the course of the Officer's duties without negligence or carelessness on the Officer's part.

10.5 write off any overpayment not exceeding £1,000 made to an Officer if satisfied, after consultation with the Head of Finance and the Head of Human Resources that:

- all steps have been taken to recover the sums due; or
- the cost of recovering any sums due would exceed the sum involved; or
- recovery would cause undue hardship to the Officer concerned

These new provisions incorporate the following changes in Financial Regs:

- A7.1 (grants)
- A8.1 to 8.4 (consultants)
- C7.1 to 7.3 (disposals)
- C11.1 & 11.2 (ex gratia payments)
- D7.7 (overpayments)

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2007/08**Report of the Head of Finance

Recommendation : **That, subject to any amendment, the Members see fit to propose:**

- (i) the content of this report be noted; and**
- (ii) that £48,482 be appropriated to the Budget Management Fund, that slippage of £41,746 and the Planning Delivery Grant of £101k be carried forward**

**1 Revenue Budget 2007/08**

1.1 The initial budget for 2007/08 approved by Members was £4,656,662 which was funded by National Park Grant, Planning Delivery Grant, B/Fwd slippage of £105,600 and £201,532 from reserves held in the Budget Management Fund. Members at year end (2006/07) approved further slippage of £50,823 producing a final approved revenue budget of £4,707,485.

1.2 During the course of the year (2007/08) Members approved further expenditure to be funded from reserves. The approved expenditure was in respect of:

- £100k – Job Evaluation
- £8k – Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)
- £22k – NPO recruitment

The Authority also approved £100k expenditure on accommodation improvements, as part of the capital programme (NPA/07/015) to be met from reserve balances.

**2 Financial Outturn 2007/08**

2.1 In March 2008 the 'Financial Management and Forecast Outturn Report 2007/08' presented to the Authority reported a forecast outturn deficit of £2,074. The final unadjusted Revenue Outturn before applying any approved reserves is now £4,670,890 (see Appendix 1) producing an outturn surplus of £36,595 against the original net budget requirement.

2.2 In accordance with the Authority's carry forward policy, it is proposed that the following amounts be carried forward to 2008/09 to be spent against the projects listed below:

<b>Cost Centre</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>£000</b>
Access	Line top people counters	10
Visitor Management	Implementation of Haytor top car park re-design	10
Archaeology	Grimpspound Archaeology Leaflet	3
ICT	DMS Disaster recovery upgrade	2
Communications	New Displays	3

	Signboards	2
	Information boards / graphics	1
	Walking on Dartmoor Leaflet reprint	3
Forward Planning	Design Guides	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>

In addition, the Authority agreed a range of expenditure to support the planning process at its meeting on 7 September 2007, to be funded by Planning Delivery Grant. (NPA/07/067). Therefore the remaining unspent balance of £101k is to be appropriated to reserves to be utilised in 2008/09 as previously approved.

- 2.3 The provisional outturn figure presented in paragraph 2.1 has been achieved without calling on reserves, as outlined in 1.2. The costs incurred to date, including expenditure on the new roof at Station Yard, are being absorbed within the net revenue budget due to slippage in some work programmes, approximately £50k additional income from external contributions, sales income and fees & charges together with significantly improved income from treasury management, providing an additional £66k.
- 2.4 After applying the Authority's carry forward policy the adjusted Revenue Outturn for 2007/08 is £48,482 (surplus) which will be taken to the Authority's Reserve Balances.

<u>Unadjusted Revenue Outturn</u>		£
2007/08 Net Revenue Outturn		4,670,890
<u>Funded By</u>		
National Park Grant		(4,321,078)
Planning Delivery Grant		<u>(183,085)</u>
Net Revenue Outturn - Deficit		166,727
<u>Appropriations to (from) Reserves</u>		
Budget Management Fund		(201,532)
Approved Slippage B/Fwd from 2006/07		(156,423)
Requested Slippage to be C/fwd to 2008/09		<u>142,746</u>
Adjusted Revenue Outturn (surplus)		<u>(48,482)</u>

- 2.6 It should be noted that the final outturn figure may change slightly now that the Job Evaluation Appeal process has been completed. Final costs to be incurred for successful appeals are not available at the time of writing this report, but are not thought to be significant. There are however several new and/or restructured posts that are currently going through the JE process. It is recommended that the 2007/08 surplus, after being appropriated into reserves, is earmarked for any further JE related costs and the review of Directors' salaries to be undertaken in 2008/09.
- 2.7 The General Reserve, as at 31 March 2007, stands at £270,000 which equates to approximately 5.93% of the 2008/09 Net Budget Requirement; the recommended minimum level being 5%.
- 2.8 Subject to any amendments Members see fit to propose, the Final Accounts for 2007/08 are currently being drawn up and will be presented to the Authority on 27 June 2008 for approval. The Audit of the 2007/08 Accounts is planned to commence in August 2008, to be completed by 30 September.

### **3 Capital**

3.1 The capital project to replace the information centre at Haytor is almost complete, with the internal shop fitting work currently in progress. As at 31 March 2008 expenditure incurred totals £278,337 which will be charged against the Capital Reserve set aside to finance the project. A more detailed report will be brought to the Authority in June with the Statement of Accounts report.

### **4 Conclusions**

4.1 Members are asked to note the current year end financial position as forecast.

4.2 It is recommended that:

- the 2007/08 revenue surplus of £48,482 be appropriated to the Budget Management Fund and be earmarked for JE costs and the review of Directors' remuneration;
- slippage totalling £41,746 be carried forward; and
- the Planning Delivery Grant balance of £101k is carried forward

Donna Laws

### **Background Papers:**

NPA/07/042; NPA/07/027; NPA/06/039; NPA/07/067; NPA/08/012; NPA/07/015

(For further information please contact Donna Laws, Head of Finance)

**Attachments:** Appendix 1 – 2007/08 Revenue Budget Outturn Report and Variations

dl 0508 Financial Outturn Report.doc

**Appendix 1 to NPA/08/032**

**Dartmoor National Park Authority 2007/08 Revenue Budget Outturn Report as at 31 March 2008**

<b>Functional Strategy</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Variance (Under)/Over</b>
				<b>£</b>
Biodiversity	54,354	82,325	69,188	(13,137) (1)
Action for Wildlife	30,000	27,042	22,599	(4,443) (2)
Moorlands	132,114	153,682	153,128	(554)
Woodlands	145,905	165,066	171,661	6,595 (3)
Restoring Ancient Woodlands	28,665	27,288	27,288	0
Hill Farm Project	22,250	30,211	35,845	5,634 (4)
Farmed Land	54,030	94,492	90,572	(3,920) (5)
Wetlands	36,100	54,800	41,387	(13,413) (6)
<b>Natural Environment</b>	<b>503,418</b>	<b>634,906</b>	<b>611,668</b>	<b>(23,238)</b>
Archaeology	88,406	118,732	87,010	(31,722) (7)
Built Environment	108,179	139,133	126,756	(12,377) (8)
Higher Uppacott	1,007	4,620	19	(4,601) (9)
Local Customs	41,806	51,788	44,525	(7,263) (10)
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>239,398</b>	<b>314,273</b>	<b>258,310</b>	<b>(55,963)</b>
Visitor Management	145,600	163,159	133,044	(30,115) (11)
Access	84,925	101,653	77,770	(23,883) (12)
Public Rights of Way	25,945	23,641	22,850	(791)
Public Transport	61,698	61,403	60,979	(424)
Rangers	520,444	524,647	561,331	36,684 (13)
<b>Recreation, Tourism &amp; Rangers</b>	<b>838,612</b>	<b>874,503</b>	<b>855,974</b>	<b>(18,529)</b>
Information Service	130,390	Restructured Service 2007/08		
Projects	0	41,136	51,907	10,771 (14)
Information Network	193,441	269,082	254,438	(14,644) (15)
Communications	130,581	163,015	150,339	(12,676) (16)
Education	120,608	179,067	172,526	(6,541) (17)
<b>Education, Information &amp; Communication</b>	<b>575,020</b>	<b>652,300</b>	<b>629,210</b>	<b>(23,090)</b>
<b>Conservation Works Service</b>	<b>191,872</b>	<b>182,421</b>	<b>185,998</b>	<b>3,577</b> (18)
<b>Development Control</b>	<b>353,501</b>	<b>356,836</b>	<b>439,822</b>	<b>82,986</b> (19)
<b>Forward Planning &amp; Community</b>	<b>261,299</b>	<b>323,722</b>	<b>308,908</b>	<b>(14,814)</b> (20)
Traffic Management	10,579	13,344	13,577	233
<b>Corporate and Democratic Core</b>	<b>188,152</b>	<b>245,192</b>	<b>231,825</b>	<b>(13,367)</b> (21)
Information Technology	221,448	228,604	249,998	21,394 (22)
Central Services	527,545	554,359	579,344	24,985 (23)
Job Evaluation Provision		80,000	0	(80,000) (24)
Office Accommodation Parke	79,280	103,519	109,325	5,806 (25)
Office Accommodation Princetown	52,478	57,872	58,015	143
Property Maintenance	43,797	42,500	96,943	54,443 (26)
Training	32,815	43,134	41,973	(1,161)
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>957,363</b>	<b>1,109,988</b>	<b>1,135,598</b>	<b>25,610</b>
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>4,119,214</b>	<b>4,707,485</b>	<b>4,670,890</b>	<b>(36,595)</b>

<b>Funded By:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>(Over)/Under</b>
				<b>£</b>
National Park Grant	(4,209,116)	(4,321,078)	(4,321,078)	0
Planning Delivery Grant	(134,865)	(28,452)	(183,085)	(154,633) (19)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(4,343,981)</b>	<b>(4,349,530)</b>	<b>(4,504,163)</b>	<b>(154,633)</b>

<b>Revenue Outturn - (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>(224,767)</b>	<b>357,955</b>	<b>166,727</b>	<b>(191,228)</b>
--	------------------	----------------	----------------	------------------

<b>Appropriations to/(from) Reserves</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
Slippage b/fwd from 2006/07	(158,707)	(156,423)	(156,423)	0
Slippage & Planning Delivery Grant to be C/fwd	156,423	0	142,746	142,746 (27)
(From)/To Budget Management Fund	117,051	(201,532)	(201,532)	0
(From)/To Other Reserves at year end	110,000			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>224,767</b>	<b>(357,955)</b>	<b>(215,209)</b>	<b>142,746</b>

<b>(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(48,482)</b>	<b>(48,482)</b>
--	----------	----------	-----------------	-----------------

<b>2007/08 Revenue Budget Outturn Report Variations</b>	
(1)	Vacancies in year and increased income
(2)	Support service costs are charged at year end
(3)	Reduction in sales income and external contributions
(4)	Under provision re Moorland Vision work
(5)	Variations to Management Agreements and works budgets
(6)	Variations to Management Agreements and salary savings
(7)	Increased income, Cultural Heritage Strategy & other work programme deferrals
(8)	Salary, travel & Conservation Area Appraisals / work programme deferrals
(9)	Utility cost savings & maintenance budget not utilised
(10)	Only 2 virtual tours implemented instead of 3
(11)	Vacancies in year, increased income, work programme deferrals
(12)	Vacancies in year and access management and CROW projects deferred
(13)	Job evaluation, temporary staff costs, recruitment and vehicle / travel costs
(14)	Salary & pension costs
(15)	Increased income and reduced running costs
(16)	Vacancy in year, publications / interpretation budgets not fully utilised
(17)	Increased income, resources / publications budgets not fully utilised
(18)	Increase transport costs
(19)	Increased income, Job evaluation, temporary staff and service improvements to be met from Planning Delivery Grant, balance to be c/fwd at year end
(20)	Job evaluation costs offset by savings from reduced cost of LDF inspection fee
(21)	Job evaluation, members allowances & statutory subscriptions offset by increased Treasury Management income
(22)	Temporary staff, aerial photography, CRM and IT maintenance contracts
(23)	Temporary staff, legal and insurance costs
(24)	Original budget provision for JE, now re-allocated to specific cost centres
(25)	Job evaluation, cleaning & security, offset by utility savings
(26)	Accommodation improvements and Station Yard roof
(27)	PDG & slippage requests as outlined in the body of the report

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**Report of the Director of Corporate ServicesRecommendation : **That Members:**

- (i) **Approve the 2007/08 review of governance arrangements, the findings and action plan; and**
- (ii) **Approve the 2007/08 Annual Governance Statement attached at Appendix 1.**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Every local government body operates through a governance framework which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes from the services provided.
- 1.2 Reports have previously been presented both to the Authority (NPA/06/027) and Audit and Governance Committee (NPA/AG/06/009) regarding the Governance arrangements within the Authority and the Audit & Governance Committee was specifically established to allow more in-depth consideration of the key governance elements of the Authority's business.

**2 Recent Developments**

- 2.1 In 2001, CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) drew together a range of governance issues into a single framework of good governance. Since the framework was published, local government has been subject to continued reform intended to improve local accountability and engagement and CIPFA/SOLACE have therefore produced a revised framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" published in 2007. The Framework applies to all local authority bodies including National Park Authorities.
- 2.2 The Framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government body and provides a structure to help individual authorities with their own approach to governance. The six core principles are:
  - 1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
  - 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
  - 3 Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective
- 6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability

2.3 In England, the preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with this Framework is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 for authorities to prepare a statement of internal control in accordance with "proper practices". The Statement of Internal Control no longer exists as a separate document.

2.4 The draft Annual Governance Statement for Dartmoor National Park Authority for 2007/08 was considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 8 February 2008, and advice received on its content. The final Annual Governance Statement is attached at Appendix 1 for approval.

### **3 2007/08 Annual Governance Review**

3.1 Production and publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) are the final stages of an on-going review of governance and not an activity which can be planned and viewed in isolation. Compilation of an AGS involves the whole Authority:

- Reviewing the adequacy of its governance arrangements
- Knowing where it needs to improve those arrangements, and
- Communicating to users and stakeholders how better governance leads to better quality public services

3.2 During 2007/08 the review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements has been informed by the work of Officers of the Authority, who have responsibility for the maintenance and review of governance, the Internal Auditor (Devon Audit Services) and by responding to recommendations made by external auditors and inspectors.

### **4 Further Work**

4.1 Members will note within the Annual Governance statement reference to a local code of Corporate Governance. Although DNPA operates within a Corporate Governance framework, to date we have not adopted or published a local code of Corporate Governance.

4.2 It is proposed that a local code will be developed over the next few months with advice from our external auditor and with input from Members of the Audit & Governance Committee.

### **5 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

5.1 None

### **6 Conclusions**

6.1 The Authority has carried out a robust review of its Governance arrangements, and has arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its system of financial internal control

is sound, arrangements to detect and deter fraud and corruption and to ensure the legality of its transactions are adequate and effective.

- 6.2 An audit of the review of governance by our internal auditors has given it full assurance.
- 6.3 It is recommended that the action plan for improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement is implemented and/or continued in 2008/09 and that an on-going review of governance arrangements is continued during the forthcoming financial year in order to provide reasonable assurance of the effectiveness of the governance framework and to advise the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

LORNA BROWN

### **Background Papers**

NPA/06/027; NPA/AG/06/009 ; NPA/AG/08/004

For further information please contact – Lorna Brown, Director of Corporate Services

**Attachments**      **Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2007/08**

Ib0508 Annual Governance Statement

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

### **1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. DNPA also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, DNPA is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

DNPA is developing a code of corporate governance, which will be consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. A copy of this code will be on our website and will be available from The Monitoring Officer, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9JQ. The Annual Governance Statement explains how DNPA has complied with its Governance Framework and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

### **2 THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which DNPA is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community, including residents, visitors and stakeholders. It enables DNPA to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of DNPA's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at DNPA for the year ended 31 March 2008 and up to the date of approval of the Corporate Plan and statement of accounts.

### 3 THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

DNPA operates within a Corporate Governance Framework which ensures accountability to its users, stakeholders and the wider community to which it relates. It comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values by which decisions are made and functions undertaken to deliver the purposes and duties of the organisation.

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise DNPA's governance arrangements include:

- The vision, objectives and priorities for the local area (Dartmoor) for the next 5 years are set out within the National Park Management Plan (NPMP). Extensive community involvement is undertaken in developing the overall vision and objectives within the NPMP
- The Corporate Plan for the Authority translates the objectives from the NPMP into 3 year organisational objectives supported by performance targets and a 3 year financial management plan. These plans are then reviewed annually.
- The principles of decision making are set out in the Authority's Standing Orders, supported by:
  1. Financial Regulations and Instructions Relating to Tenders and Contracts;
  2. The Authority's adopted codes of practice in relation to treasury management for investments and for capital finance and accounting (the Prudential Code)
  3. Scheme of Delegation
  4. Code of Conduct for Members and Officers
  5. Job descriptions for Members and Officers
  6. Policies and Procedures
- Public involvement and transparency in decision making is facilitated through formal consultations, workshops, involvement in service reviews, twice a year consultative forum with members of the community representing land use and conservation, and community interests and public participation at Authority
- Ensuring that established policies, procedures, laws and regulations are complied with is the responsibility of nominated statutory Officers, the Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer as laid down in the Authority's Standing Orders & Financial regulations
- A Risk Management Strategy that defines and identifies the process for ongoing risk management and the responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the risk management process
- A Corporate Strategic Risk Register is incorporated into the Authority's Annual Corporate Plan, is reviewed by the Audit & Governance Committee on a quarterly basis & approved by the Authority annually;
- Operational Risks are identified and recorded in Service Plans, signed off by the Strategic Management Team and monitored on a quarterly basis.
- A programme of service reviews or value for money/business reviews that look closely at and challenge service provision and delivery and discharges the Government's Best Value requirements for the Authority
- Comprehensive budgeting systems set targets to measure financial performance which is reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis, and is reviewed monthly by the Strategic Management Team
- Performance management is applied consistently throughout the Authority against a Performance Management framework. Reports of progress against performance targets and implementation of Authority decisions is reported quarterly to Audit & Governance Committee

- Performance against Corporate processes and outcome targets is further assessed through the NPAPA process

All of the above elements are subject to independent challenge and scrutiny through Internal and External Auditors and other review bodies such as Defra .

#### **4 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

Dartmoor National Park Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system is informed by the work of the Strategic Management Team and other Officers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's (Devon Audit Services) annual report and also by responding to comments and recommendations made by external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Authority's Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer have also provided assurance that there have been no significant control issues that have required the need for: formal action in their respective roles; significant additional funding; had a material impact on the accounts; or resulted in significant public interest, damaging the reputation of the Authority.

Although a review of the effectiveness of the Governance arrangements is reported once per year to the Authority, the process of gathering evidence and monitoring performance is continual and is managed through reports to Audit & Governance Committee.

Significant improvements undertaken during 2007/08 have been:

- Review of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- Adoption of a new Code of Conduct for Members and a comprehensive induction and training event for new and existing Members
- Recruitment of 2 additional Independent Members to the Standards Committee
- Publication of a new National Park Management Plan 2007-2012
- Adoption of Instructions relating to Tenders and Contracts together with training
- Revised Management structure to improve co-ordination and governance arrangements
- Member support was strengthened with the establishment of a Member Services Officer

Internal Audit has provided an audit report and opinion on the internal control environment, based on the work undertaken during the year. The report concluded that the statement of Internal Control is complete and a true reflection of the control environment present within the Authority and that the control environment is appropriate. No significant issues or weaknesses were identified.

The Chairman of the Authority and the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) have been advised on the implication of the results of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit and Governance Committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of system is in place.

## 5 SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Although no areas of significant weakness have been identified, to ensure the continuous improvement of the Authority's governance arrangements, it is proposed that the following work is implemented to deal with governance issues:-

- Asset Management Plan

Work has progressed during 2007/08 to assess the performance of assets owned or leased by DNPA against an evaluation framework. This information will be taken forward in 2008/09 to develop an Asset Management Plan

- Review Programme

A programme of Best Value Reviews was re-introduced in 2007/08, but with the change in legislation and the removal of the requirement to undertake BVRs, the Authority needs to determine the future review programme. In addition, the change to the requirement to publish a Best Value Performance Plan will require a consideration of the future composition of the Corporate Plan. Major change is not anticipated, however, as the Corporate Plan was introduced in anticipation of the BVPP not being required

- NPAPA (Corporate Improvement Action Plan)

The current Improvement Action Plan should be largely completed in 2007/08. Work will commence in 2008/09 to prepare for the introduction of the revised NPAPA process in 2009/2010

- Member Development and Appraisal

Work will continue on developing and implementing a competency framework for Members and ensure all Members receive an annual Appraisal

- Communications Strategy

A Communications Strategy Action Plan was developed during 2007/08 and this will be taken to the Authority for approval in June 2008 for implementation over the 3 years 2008-2011. It will encompass internal and external communications

- Partnership working

A review of Partnerships is currently being undertaken. This will capture information on all current partnership arrangements and identify areas where action is needed, including improved governance, risk management, financial security etc. This will be taken forward in 2008 to ensure DNPA is only involved in partnerships which are beneficial to securing progress on our priority objectives and have sound financial and governance arrangements

- Risk Management

Risk assessment and risk management is now embedded in the business processes of the organisation. On going monitoring and review will continue to be strengthened through reports to Management team, service plan quarterly monitoring and reports to the Audit & Governance Committee

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

**Signed:** ..... **Signed:**.....

**N Hoskin**  
Chairman of the Authority

**K D Bishop**  
Chief Executive (National Park Officer)

**Date:** ..... **Date:** .....

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2008**Report of the Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring OfficerRecommendation : **That Members:**

- (i) **Note that The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 come into force on 8 May 2008**
- (ii) **Approve interim arrangements for complaint handling as described in paragraph 2.4 pending approval of revised procedures**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that with the implementation of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The Act) the role of the Standards Committee will change significantly.
- 1.2 The key changes to the standards framework will be:
  - Standards Committees will be responsible for receiving allegations regarding Members and deciding whether any action needs to be taken (referred to as 'local assessment')
  - Standards Committees must be chaired by an Independent member
  - Standards Committees will report periodically to the Standards Board
  - Standards Committees will be allowed to enter into joint working arrangements with other Standards Committees
  - The Standards Board will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of local arrangements, including supporting authorities which are experiencing difficulties and driving up their performance.
- 1.3 The Standards Board for England has advised that we should expect specific guidance in respect of:
  - the role and make-up of Standards Committees
  - local assessment and how it will work
  - local investigations
  - local determinations
  - monitoring and audit arrangements.
- 1.4 In preparation for these changes, two additional Independent Members were recruited and their appointment to the Standards Committee was approved by the Authority on 1 February 2008. Introductory training has been delivered and the two new Independent Members are ready to commence their duties.
- 1.5 In respect of the work of the Standards Committee, Members will be aware that following the adoption of the revised Code of Conduct in 2007 and the implementation

of 'The Act' regulations governing the operation of a system of local regulation need to be produced before the detail of future committee arrangements can be determined. Additional training for Standards Committee Members may also be necessary.

- 1.6 The Government consulted on Orders and Regulations relating to the conduct of Local Authority Members in England with a closing date of 15 February 2008. Considering the timing of the consultation, it was not anticipated that Regulations would be in place prior to 1 April 2008, the intended implementation date. It was intended to bring a report to the Authority as soon as practically possible after 1 April 2008 to approve the new arrangements for handling complaints.

## **2 Current Situation**

- 2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government laid The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 before Parliament on 18 April 2008. These Regulations allow for local assessment of allegations about the conduct of Members. The Regulations will come into force on 08 May 2008.
- 2.2 The Standards Board is intending to publish its toolkit guidance on the assessment of allegations on its website during the week beginning Monday 21 April 2008. Their guidance on local assessment and standards committees will be published as soon as possible in early May.
- 2.3 Although consideration has been given to the operation of the Local Filter and the role of the Standards Committee in assessing complaints against Members, detailed work was deliberately left until the Regulations had been received. Notwithstanding, therefore, the fact that the Regulations come into force on 8 May 2008, the Standards Committee will not have opportunity to discuss the revised procedures until its meeting on 23 May 2008. A report will then be brought forward for the approval of Authority at its meeting on 27 June 2008.
- 2.4 Members are asked to note the effective date of implementation of the Regulations and to agree that, prior to detailed procedures being approved by the Authority, any complaint received in respect of the conduct of a Members shall be considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, to determine what action, if any, is required to ensure compliance with the new Regulations.

## **3 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

- 3.1 None.

LORNA BROWN

### **Background Papers**

- NPA/SC/07/002
- NPA/SC/07/003
- NPA/07/08
- NPA/07/049
- NPA/08/006

(For further information please contact Lorna Brown, Director of Corporate Services)

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**REVIEW OF GRANTS**Report of the Director of Park Management

**Recommendation : That the Authority agrees to move towards a single grant process, with a single point of entry and standard application process and terms and conditions.**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 A review of grant giving within Dartmoor National Park Authority has recently been carried out by Devon Audit Services which involved interviews with staff and a comparison with other National Park Authorities. The final report has now been received and an executive summary and list of recommendations is attached.
- 1.2 These include a number of matter of fact recommendations which, when implemented, will streamline administration, create consistency and make our grants easier for the public to access.
- 1.3 There is also a recommendation to consolidate grants within a single budget within Service areas, but with a centralised data base. The suggestion is for three grant budgets – cultural heritage, natural environment and community support.
- 1.4 To develop this further, it is proposed that the feasibility of a single Dartmoor Grant to help local people and organisations to deliver National Park purposes and particularly Management Plan objectives should be explored. For now, this should be separate to the SDF (for practical reasons, including governance and reputation). The Dartmoor Grant should be well publicised, have a single gateway contact with clear terms and conditions and be supported by a centralised data base. Overall grant spend could then be programmed and monitored centrally across the year (and this could be shared with applicants so that they knew if money was still available, using a traffic light system as recommended in the review). Once received, a grant request would be passed to the relevant Service to respond to in the three budget areas suggested. Opportunities could also be sought for contributions from external funders for this grant and for adding value/signposting to other grant sources e.g. Dartmoor Trust.
- 1.5 Further recommendations refer to the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. Grants to the value of £2000 should be approved by the budget holder and between £2000 and £5000 by the relevant Director or Chief Executive. Grants over £5000 should be approved by the Authority. All grants over £1000 should be reported to the Authority retrospectively twice a year, which would also provide an opportunity for publicity. Adoption of this recommendation is subject to the approval of revised Financial Regulations elsewhere on the agenda.

1.6 If approved, the Dartmoor Grant will be developed internally by a small task and finish group. This will consider the legal, financial and administrative recommendations in the grant review, and design new processes and standard terms and conditions. The new grant will be fully implemented at the start of the 09/10 financial year. In the meantime, the current grant regime will continue, with changes gradually phased in as appropriate.

## **2 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

2.1 The single grant process outlined above will improve accessibility to DNPA grants for under-represented groups.

SUZANNE GOODFELLOW

### **Background Papers**

Grant Giving within Dartmoor National Park Authority – Report by Devon Audit Services, February 2008

For further information: Please contact Suzanne Goodfellow, Director of Park Management

**Attachments:**            **Appendix 1 - Exec. Summary and Recommendations**

**Grant giving within the Dartmoor National Park Authority  
Report by Devon Audit Services  
February 2008**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations  
(extracted from the full report. Appendices relate to the full report)**

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Authority's main funding is by grant from DEFRA who provide approximately £4.3 million of the total £4.7 million budget. The budget available for grant giving within the Authority in 2007/08 appears to be £160k which equates to approximately 3.5 percent of the overall budget (but see below re definition of 'grants'). With increasing pressures on budgets funds available to offer grants to others have been reducing and there are no indications that this will change in the near future.
- 1.2 A number of anomalies were identified within the financial records. In the current financial year a number of grant budget codes at the time of this review showed credit figures indicative of income paid in against the financial code. Investigation revealed in one case that the programmed spend had not been achieved within the financial year and that accounting adjustments to carry forward the commitment into the new year had resulted in the credit. It was also indicated to us that expenditure which is not strictly grants spend may have been coded to grant budget codes.
- 1.3 There is no definition of what constitutes a grant and this leads to other community support type payments being treated as grants. A definition of a grant which is clear and unambiguous must be agreed and all other payments analysed within the finance system separately to grant payments.
- 1.4 There is scope for some centralisation of processes relating to grant applications and this would largely be supported by introducing a central database into which all grant applications are logged. A centralised database would provide many advantages and improvements both internally and potentially in communicating budget availability to those who are eligible to apply. At present a pilot is running with a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) with the Dartmoor Sustainability Development Fund which should be capable of providing this database functionality. There are plans within the IT Team within the Authority to encompass all other grants within the CRM system.
- 1.5 There are clearly inconsistencies as to what a grant is and this is reflected within the Finance system where grant spend codes show unusual figures. Spend against budget in several services is not high indicating that there may be options for providing more support through grants to achieve the purposes of the Authority (see Appendix E) and this could be through improved and/or wider advertising. Consideration could also be given to having a single grant budget to provide greater flexibility to the public and community groups.
- 1.6 Staff from various Services within the Authority have responsibility for different types of grants and in some cases have a detailed specialist knowledge associated with the particular terms and conditions associated therewith. Centralising the grant claim process would introduce a further line of communication which would increase the risk of delay and/or errors, but overall would be better in most cases for the

public/customer. A centralised database could allow management to monitor the progress and identify and take action if delays begin to occur.

- 1.7 There are wide differences between park authorities in the nature of grants which they provide. Six replies to the survey we conducted amongst other national parks show that in some cases authorities may only provide three or four different types of grant aided support, while others provide as many as DNPA and more. None of the authorities who responded had a single grants scheme.
- 1.8 We have considered the options for a single grant scheme, a single point of administration, devolved grant management, budgetary control, the use of existing systems to manage and monitor grants and new or enhanced systems to provide better and more focussed management information. Also considered were the arrangements for advertising grants and publicising the result of what has been done with grant spend
- 1.9 While a single grant scheme may be preferable for public accessibility and administration purposes such a scheme would be difficult to accommodate given the special needs and circumstances under which some grants are awarded. Best efforts have been made since Grant Giving was the subject of an audit review in the 2002/03 financial year. Arising from this, standard application formats have, where possible, been adopted and checklists and control mechanisms improved to verify the decision making process. Discussions indicate that the checklists and decision making documentation are not equally applied throughout the Authority. A centralised grants database would help to establish consistency in processes between services.
- 1.10 Scope exists to establish a grant provider forum consisting of all the staff within the Authority responsible for processing and awarding grants. As grants are mostly awarded by staff from services under the Director of Park Management we would see this forum as one which would be chaired by this officer. The forum could be responsible for ensuring consistency in approach, ensuring that there is an agreed definition for a grant and that budgets are set accordingly and non-grant support payments are coded appropriately within the accounts. This same forum could also set priorities for achieving the purposes as set out within the Dartmoor National Park Management Plan (DNPMP) and DNPA Corporate Plan.
- 1.11 Grants available are all detailed on the Authority's web site although it is not immediately obvious using the web site where to find details. Searching for grants did not pinpoint the page which listed all grants and it was only by discussions with staff that the route to a grant page was identified. The page was comprehensive and did provide for potential applicants to download application forms and guidance notes although these were sometimes out of date. Grant availability was sometimes communicated by word of mouth and flagged with district councils and other fund raising web sites.
- 1.12 Best practices which have been identified as a result of this review are included in Appendix J.

## 2. Recommendations

Recommendations	
Application process (including forms used)	
1	<p><b>Consideration should be given to providing an on-line applicants process from the Authority's web site.</b></p> <p>Applicants could complete and submit the application electronically and submit separately any required supporting documentation using a reference generated by the on-line process.</p> <p>An electronic application could then be forwarded to the grant processor and if the grant is to be approved the form could be printed and returned for the applicant's signature.</p> <p>Care will need to be taken to prevent automated web crawler programs from completing applications; we would suggest the use of misshaped letters which would need to be keyed by the applicant and which could not be read electronically.</p> <p>It may possible to link any electronic submission process with the centralised database/CRM system to minimise the keying of information</p>
2	<p><b>Grants should be consolidated within a single budget within service areas.</b></p> <p>There are too many small grants at present and a consolidation would provide more flexibility to provide better support for appropriate projects and causes.</p>
3	<p><b>Grant application forms to be redesigned to include the recipient's bank account details</b> to avoid the need for finance to obtain this information. Consistency of general terms and conditions between grants should also be clear by the introduction of sections for a) General terms and conditions and b) specific terms and conditions.</p>
4	<p><b>All grant application forms/guidance notes to be reviewed for accuracy and consistency</b> of format annually and the date of revision to be clearly included.</p>
5	<p><b>The current status and availability of grants should be shown on the Authority's web site.</b> The potential for linking this to the centralised database should also be considered (this could use a traffic light system).</p>
6	<p><b>Site visits for low value grants should not be routinely made.</b> Only in exceptional circumstances should site visits for grants of less than £250 be undertaken.</p>
7	<p><b>All applications should state as part of the general terms and conditions that the grant should only be spent for the purpose it was intended.</b></p>
8	<p><b>A clear definition of a grant needs to be introduced</b> to ensure clarity of understanding by all staff who administer grants which should help to ensure that only payments in respect of grants which are the subject of application are included in the grants budget.</p>

9	<b>A further review of budget codes should be undertaken</b> and grant codes used only for the payment of grants which have been the subject of a formal application. Support payments to organisations which are not applied for should be analysed separately within the accounts.
10	<b>Budgeting arrangements for the management of grants needs to be improved</b> as there are many grants which are not paid within the financial year they are awarded.
11	<b>Coding of expenditure to the grants budget needs to be improved</b> to ensure that only grant expenditure as defined above is coded to the budget for grants.
12	<b>A grant provider's forum to be established</b> and to consist of Director of Park Management and staff responsible for administering grants within service areas. This forum could set and agree priorities for grant spend, agree budget allocation, agree the definition of a grant and levels of approval and establish a formalised communications process for ensuring consistency of process and agreeing what constitutes general terms and conditions.

<b>Recommendations</b>	
<b>Centralised Database / CRM System</b>	
13	<b>A centralised database such as that offered by the CRM system should be developed</b> for use by all staff who are responsible for processing and administering grants for the Authority. This database should track applications from receipt to actual payment and should include budget code information.  A specification for this database is provided in Appendix C.
14	The central database / CRM system should provide a means of determining the exact number of applications received in a year and the number rejected.
15	The location of sites where grant spend has been given should be included in an agreed common format in the central database. This should aid the possible identification of potential duplicate applications.
16	The central database should be capable of providing a total for committed grants and actual payments.
17	<b>Consideration to be given to the issue of a land owner's news letter</b> or for information on grant availability to be included in Council Tax literature sent to every home.
18	<b>Greater use of press releases</b> should be considered where grant have been used for the greater interest of members of the public.

19	<p><b>Consideration should be given to more prominent advertising of available grants on the Authority's web site.</b> A review of application levels should subsequently be conducted to determine the level of additional work that this may have generated.</p>
20	<p><b>The promotion of other funding sources</b> could be given more prominence on the Authority's web site.</p>
21	<p><b>The link to DSDF Grant details on the Authority's grant web pages</b> should be improved to provide more details on the purpose of the grant and the criteria under which applications can be made and its relationship to other grants available from the Authority.</p>
22	<p><b>Scheme of delegation</b> to clearly define the financial limits on grant approvals for the Chief Executive, Directors, Service Heads and grant administrators.</p>
23	<p><b>Approval levels for grants should be consistent</b> across all Services.</p>
24	<p><b>Grants to the value of £2k to be approved by the budget holder and between £2k and £5k by a Director or Chief Executive (NPO). Grants over £5k to be approved by the Authority.</b></p> <p><b>All grants over £1k to be reported to the Authority retrospectively bi-annually.</b></p>
25	<p><b>The register of grant decisions</b> as mentioned in the Scheme of Delegation needs to be extended to include all grant decisions.</p>

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE AUTHORITY AND DARTMOOR COMMONERS COUNCIL**Report of the Director of Park ManagementRecommendation : **That Members:**

- (i) Support the establishment of a formal joint meeting between representatives of the Authority and the Dartmoor Commoners' Council**
- (ii) Approve the membership arrangements (subject to individual members being appointed at the AGM)**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Dartmoor Commoners' Council are a key partner in the management of the National Park and the delivery of the National Park Management Plan. The Council has recently indicated a desire to work more closely with the National Park Authority and have proposed a mechanism for this.
- 1.2 The proposal is for up to four members of the Authority (supported by Chief Executive, Director of Park Management and Head of Natural Environment) to meet representatives of the Dartmoor Commoners' Council on an annual basis. Chairmanship of the meeting would alternate. This 'steering group' would agree its terms of reference at the first meeting but would have the power to establish task and finish groups to work on areas of joint interest (eg implementation of the Dartmoor Vision, review of bye-laws).
- 1.3 The Commoners' Council (at its meeting on 26 March 2008) approved these proposals and suggested that they would be represented by the four quarter men, chairman and/or vice chairman and secretary.

**2 Conclusion**

- 2.1 The establishment of this group would help to ensure a strong and effective relationship between the Commoners' Council and the National Park Authority. The model of an annual meeting supported by task and finish working groups (as required) should ensure efficient partnership working.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Members
  - (i) Support the establishment of a formal joint meeting between representatives of the Authority and the Dartmoor Commoners' Council

- (ii) Approve the membership arrangements (subject to individual members being appointed at the AGM)

### **3 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups**

3.1 None

Suzanne Goodfellow

(For further information please contact Robert Steemson, Head of Natural Environment Services)

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**UPDATE OF THE DARTMOOR ECONOMIC MODEL**Report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

**Recommendation : That members agree to fund the update of the Dartmoor Economic Model at a cost of £5,000; the funding to be taken from the 2008 Forward Planning and Community budget.**

**1 Background to the Model**

- 1.1 The Authority has been operating an Economic Model for the national park area since 2000 within the Forward Planning and Community Service. The model was developed by economic consultant Owen Nankivell in pursuit of a methodology for modelling small area economies. The model has now been adopted by Devon County Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority, as well as other Local Authorities in the South West, where it is used to report annually on trends in the local economy.
- 1.2 The model is capable of estimating the value of different business sectors, levels of employment and identifying the changing trends in the local economy; these are analysed and set out in an annual report. It is a complex economic tool and requires regular refinement and updates, in particular annual changes are needed to maintain compatibility with national figures and day to day configurations for changing data inputs. The model contains a data run back to 1993; it shows trends over time and provides an important insight into an otherwise little understood area. In particular the model can identify (and quantify) trends such as the decline of farming outputs or the rise of business and professional services on Dartmoor and presents robust evidence of change, rather than a reliance on assumptions. Additionally, the model has been used in external funding bids, as part of the evidence to support the local development framework and in preparing and monitoring the Management Plan. It has also been used as an aid for Economic Development Officers in the development of economic strategies and priorities. The model is particularly valuable as it can be compared with local, regional and national economic data; it has also proven complementary with the STEAM tourism model.
- 1.3 Whilst this Authority operates the model using in-house staff, the model is more closely led by the consultant in the rest of the region. Given this, the Dartmoor model can diverge from the consultant's original version. Recent changes to national datasets and major changes due this year have meant that the Dartmoor model will require significant work to bring it in line with the original model. This work is beyond the capacity and capabilities of staff in-house.

## **2 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The consultant has been approached with a view to carrying out this work. This will involve revising the model to bring it in line with the original; a 2006 version of the model will then be run. This work will also include revisions to previous years where necessary in order to maintain a consistent historic run of data. Later in 2008, as data becomes available, the consultant will undertake the revisions to the model required for 2007, and complete a run of the model for that year. In addition to this the consultant will provide officer training in the updating and interpretation of the model.
- 2.2 In order to eliminate the need to undertake this exercise on a regular basis it has been agreed that the future updating of the Dartmoor model is undertaken by the consultant as part of his contract with Devon County Council. This contract currently includes an annual update of each of the Devon districts and a county-wide model.

## **3 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups.**

- 3.1 As the model is capable of providing an insight into the economy at a local level, declining business sectors can be identified and this evidence used in support of bids for project funding. This might include evidence on more volatile business areas such as agricultural or tourism related businesses and identifying the need for, and facilitating support in these areas.

CHRISTOPHER FRANCE

## **Background Papers**

The most recent report *The Dartmoor Economy 1994-2004* is available on the Authority's web site at [www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dartmoor\\_economy\\_1994-2004.pdf](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dartmoor_economy_1994-2004.pdf)

(For further information please contact – Phil Markham ,Head of Forward Planning and Community Service)

## DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL GRANT AID FOR THE DEVON RURAL HOUSING ENABLERS**Report of the Director of Planning and Sustainable Development

**Recommendation : That members agree to provide an additional £2000 towards funding for the Devon Rural Housing Enablers in 2008/9, the funding to be taken from the Forward Planning and Community Budget**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 Over a number of years the Authority, along with other local authorities and housing associations, has helped to fund Rural Housing Enablers in Devon. The enablers have worked with communities and local authorities in lobbying work, assessing the extent of housing need and bringing sites forward for the provision of affordable housing in rural communities. The Authority has already agreed to provide a grant of £950 towards the costs of employing the enablers and continuing their work in 2008/9.
- 1.2 The enablers working in the county are employed by the Devon Rural Community Council and each enabler is allocated a dedicated part of the county in which to work. The enabler dealing with Dartmoor National Park is Susan Hitchcock. She has undertaken a great deal of work to advise and assist local communities in the national park on affordable housing provision since her appointment and worked collaboratively with the officers of the Authority in doing so. In particular over the past twelve months, Mrs Hitchcock has overseen the local housing need surveys which have been carried out in the parishes of Chagford, Drewsteignton, Throwleigh, Gidleigh, Sticklepath, Holne, Buckfastleigh West and Hennock.
- 1.3 A substantial part of the core funding for the enablers has to date come from DEFRA but DEFRA has withdrawn all of its funding for 2008/9. As a result, a request has been received from the Community Council asking whether the Authority would consider additional funding in 2008/9 to help secure the extension of the posts in the current financial year, and give time to secure a longer term financial solution. Most of the rural district councils in Devon have already considered this request and pledged grant aid of an additional £4000, while West Devon Borough Council has committed £2000.
- 1.4 The work of the Rural Housing Enablers is considered to be vital in assisting with the evidence base for the Local Development Framework and in pursuing Management Plan housing priorities and it is felt that the request from the Community Council should be viewed sympathetically. It is therefore recommended that an additional grant of £2000 should be offered, which will match that offered by West Devon. This can be accommodated within existing budgets.

## **2 Implications for People in Under-represented Groups.**

- 2.1 The work of the rural housing enablers is focussed on providing housing for those members of local communities who are unable to afford open market houses and therefore has a direct and beneficial impact on the well-being of those individuals and families which would directly benefit from affordable housing provision as well as providing wider benefits for the social well-being of the local communities in the Dartmoor National Park.

CHRISTOPHER FRANCE

### **Background Papers**

Recent Housing Need Surveys in Hennock, Sticklepath, Holne and Bckfastleigh West

(For further information please contact – Philip Markham Head of Forward Planning and Community Service)

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 May 2008

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS AND SECTION 211 NOTIFICATIONS  
(WORKS TO TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS)  
DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

Report of the Director of Park Management

Recommendation : **That the decisions be noted**

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

**West Devon**

**Ref: 27/12/4/13                      Bridge House Lodge, Lydford                      SX 5096 8427**

Application to fell a mature birch tree. The tree is in poor condition.

Permission was granted subject to the following conditions;

- 1 The works are carried out within two years of the date of this consent.
- 2 Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the Commencement of approved works.
- 3 Replacement planting of a half standard silver birch tree within the crown spread of the original during the first planting following felling.

**Ref: 27/12/4/145                      Bailey's Hey, Chagford                      SX 6992 8761**

Application to remove two low branches from a mature ash tree.

Permission was granted subject to the following conditions;

- 1 The works are carried out within two years of the date of this consent.
- 2 Five working days' notice to be given to the Authority prior to the Commencement of approved works.
- 3 All works to be carried out in accordance with BS 3998 : 1989 Recommendations for Tree Work

**TREE PRESERVATION ORDER APPEAL**

**Ref : 27/12/4/147                      Lower Kerries, South Brent                      SX 7024 5695**

The Authority has received an appeal against the Authority's decision to grant partial consent for works on two oak trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

An appeal statement has been submitted to Government Office South West by the Authority and the results of the appeal will be reported to Members in due course.

## **SECTION 211 NOTIFICATIONS**

### **Teignbridge**

**Ref: 27/12/3/07/31                      71 North Street, Ashburton                      SX 7356 7010**

Notification to fell a mature cypress and crown reduce a semi-mature mimosa. The cypress is in very poor condition and the works to the mimosa will have minimal impact on the amenity of the area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 27/12/3/07/32                      Wreyland Manor, Lustleigh                      SX 7875 8123**

Notification to fell a semi-mature sequoia and crown lift a mature horse chestnut. The sequoia is in very poor condition and the works to the horse chestnut are minor will have minimal impact on the health or appearance of the tree.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

### **West Devon Borough**

**Ref: 27/12/3/07/29                      River Taw House, Sticklepath                      SX 6441 9407**

Notification to crown reduce two mature sycamores and to fell a heavily suppressed semi-mature sycamore. The works will have minimal impact on the amenity of the area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

**Ref: 27/12/3/07/30                      Millaton House, Chagford                      SX 6987 8757**

Notification to fell a semi-mature Norway maple. The proposed felling will have minimal impact on the amenity of the area.

A Tree Preservation Order has not been made.

SUZANNE GOODFELLOW

(For further information please contact Brian Beasley – Trees & Landscape Officer)