



EXMOOR

NATIONAL PARK

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
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18 February 2021

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing software on **Tuesday 2 March 2021 at 10.00am.**

The meeting will be open to the press and public subject to the passing of any resolution under s.100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There is Public Speaking at this meeting, when the Chairperson will allow members of the public two minutes each to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition relating to any item relevant to the business of the Authority or relating to any item on the Agenda. Anyone wishing to ask questions should notify the Corporate Support Officer as soon as possible, or at the latest by 4pm on the working day before the meeting of the agenda item on which they wish to speak, indicating a brief summary of the matter or matters to be raised (contact Judy Coles on 01398 322250 or email jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Please be aware that this is a public Authority Meeting and will be **audio and video recorded**. We will make the recordings available via our website for members of the public to listen to and/or view, within 72 hours of the meeting taking place.

Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting. Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairperson so that those present may be made aware.

(The agenda and papers for this meeting can be downloaded from the National Park Authority's website www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive

AGENDA

The first section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, the Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson shall preside.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest/Lobbying of Members/Unaccompanied Site Visits

Members are asked to declare:-

- (1) any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting;
- (2) any lobbying by anyone concerned with a planning application and any unaccompanied site visits where contact has been made with any person concerned with a planning application.

(NB. When verbally making these declarations, members are also asked to complete the Disclosures at Meetings form – attached for members only).

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. **Minutes** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 2 February 2021 (Item 4).

- (2) To consider any Matters Arising from those Minutes.

5. **Public Speaking:** The Chairperson will allow members of the public to ask questions, make statements, or present a petition. Questions of a general nature relevant to the business of the Authority can be asked under this agenda item. Any questions specific to an agenda item can be posed when that item is considered subject to the discretion of the person presiding at the meeting.

Agenda items relating to the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area including determination of planning applications. This section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr S Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning)). If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall be preside.

6. **Development Management:** To consider the report of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development on the following:-

Agenda Item	Application No.	Description	Page Nos.
6.1	62/11/20/015	Lawful development certificate for the proposed change of use of tourist information centre to café/shop – County Gate, Countisbury, Lynton, EX35 6NQ	1 – 8
6.2	6/9/21/101	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed erection of a second car parking machine – Tarr Steps Car Park, Tarr Steps, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9QA	9 - 18
6.3	6/21/21/101	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed creation of banking around informal car parking areas – Land at North Hill, Hill Road, Minehead	19 - 32
6.4	WTPO 20/08	Works to Trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order: T1. Remove damaged, hanging limb. T2. Fell leaning tree – Old Coach House, Woody Bay, Parracombe, Barnstaple, EX31 4QX	33 - 37

7. **Application Decisions Delegated to the Chief Executive:** To note the applications determined by the Chief Executive under delegated powers (Item 7).
 8. **Site Visits:** To arrange any site visits agreed by the Committee (the reserve date being Thursday 1 April 2021 (am)).
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The remaining section of the meeting will be chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairperson of the Authority. If the Chairperson is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the Authority shall preside.

9. **Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2025/26 and Budget 2021/22:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 9)
10. **Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2021/22:** To consider the report of the Head of Strategy and Performance. (Item 10).
11. **National Working:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive (Item 11)
12. **Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021-22:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 12)
13. **Scheme of Members' Allowances 2021/22:** To consider the report of the Head of Finance & Operations (Item 13)
14. **Personnel Update**
Starters:
02/03/2021 – Chris Dubery – Finance Officer
15. **Any Other Business of Urgency**

Further information on any of the reports can be obtained by contacting the National Park Authority at the address and telephone numbers at the top of the agenda. Details of the decisions taken at this meeting will be set out in the formal Minutes which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. In the meantime, details of the decisions can be obtained from Judy Coles, Corporate Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing software.

PRESENT

Mr R Milton (Chairperson)
Miss A V Davis (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr S J Pugsley (Deputy Chairperson (Planning))

Mrs L Blanchard	Mr E Ley
Mr R Edgell	Mrs F Nicholson
Mr M Ellicott	Mr J Patrinos
Mr D Elson	Mr P Pilkington
Mr J Holtom	Mr B Revans
Mr J Hunt	Mrs E Stacey
Dr M Kelly	Mr N Thwaites
Mr M Kravis	Mrs P Webber
Mrs C M Lawrence	Mr V White

Apologies for absence were received from Dr S Warren.

254. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest

255. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Members of the public could watch a livestream of the meeting via a link on the Meeting Agendas and Reports page of the Authority's website. A recording of the meeting would also be uploaded to the website within 72 hours of the meetings conclusion.
- Confirmation had been received that Mrs L Blanchard's appointment as a Secretary of State Member of the Authority had been extended for a further 2 years.

256. MINUTES

- Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 12 January 2021 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

257. PUBLIC SPEAKING: See Minute 259 for details of public speakers.

Items relating to the Authority's role as sole local planning authority for the National Park area including determination of planning applications. This section of the meeting was chaired by Mr S J Pugsley, Deputy Chairperson (Planning).

APPEALS

258. The Committee noted the **decision** of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to dismiss Appeals A and B and uphold the Enforcement Notice – Middle Dean Farm, Dean, Trentishoe, Devon, EX31 4PY.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

259. Application No. 6/3/20/119

Location: Springhayes, Exton, Dulverton, TA22 9LD

Proposal: Proposed construction of replacement dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings (re-submission of refused planning application ref. 6/3/20/101)

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Public Speaking:

(1) Mr S Gammon, Applicant

The Authority's Consideration

Having considered the detailed information contained within the Committee Report, the Authority Committee agreed with Officers that planning permission should be granted for the construction of a replacement dwelling. However, on this occasion, a number of Members disagreed with the Officers view that timber was the only acceptable material to be used for the windows and doors in this development.

Members noted that the application before them was for a new non-traditional building. Furthermore, that the proposed replacement dwelling would be built to a very high environmental specification and in order to meet the standard of thermal efficiency and air tightness the Applicant is seeking, there is no evidence that it was possible to source timber windows and doors of sufficient quality locally. Therefore, some Members felt that, in this instance, it would be appropriate for aluminium windows and doors to be used in the development, rather than to require the Applicant to source timber alternatives from much further afield.

It was considered that this was in line with the principles of Policy CE-S6, particularly in relation to Clause 3 which states that "Proposals that reduce carbon emissions further than required by Building Regulations, including through improving energy efficiency or through renewable and low carbon technologies (CC-S5) will be encouraged".

Consequently, it was proposed and seconded that the application be approved, subject to Condition 4 being amended to allow the use of aluminium windows and doors, details of which must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to their installation.

The motion was put to the vote and was passed by a majority of Members.

RESOLVED: To approve planning permission subject to the following conditions.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawing number ARPC 1, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 29th September 2020, drawing numbers ARPC 2, SPEX-20-101, SPEX20-103 and SPEX-20-105, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 24th December 2020, drawing number SPEX-20-102B, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 5th January 2021, and drawing number SPEX-20-104B, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 18th January 2021, unless otherwise required by condition below.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity.

3. The removal of any areas of hedgerows, trees or shrubs around the site, and the demolition of any buildings, shall not take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless an ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared or works to, or demolition of, buildings commences and provided written confirmation to the Local Planning Authority that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. In no circumstances shall netting be used to exclude nesting birds.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with Exmoor National Park Local Plan Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure).

4. Prior to their installation, details of the aluminium windows and doors to be installed in the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The windows and doors of the replacement dwelling shall only be installed in accordance with the approved details and they shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To allow the Local Planning Authority to consider the form, colour and finish of the windows and doors in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the application site and the wider landscape.

5. The rooflights in the roof of the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be fitted so that their external faces are flush with the external faces of the surrounding roof tiles. The rooflights shall be retained as such thereafter and any subsequent replacement rooflights shall comply with the requirements of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

6. The solar panels on the roof of the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall only be matt black with matt black frames and they shall be integrated within the roof tiles so that their external faces are flush with the external faces of the surrounding roof tiles. The solar panels shall be retained as such thereafter and any subsequent replacement solar panels shall comply with the requirements of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

7. Prior to its installation, sample(s)/details of the facing stone of the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Also prior to the installation of the stone facing on the replacement dwelling, a sample panel measuring at least 2 metres by 1 metre, using the approved facing stone and demonstrating the proposed coursing, mortar mix and pointing detail, shall be constructed on site, and no stone facing shall be installed on the replacement dwelling until the sample panel has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The replacement dwelling shall then only be faced in stone in accordance with the approved sample panel and it shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

8. Prior to its installation, sample(s)/details of the natural slate roof tiles to be used on the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The roof of the replacement dwelling shall only be clad with natural slate tiles in accordance with the approved sample(s)/details and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

9. Prior to its installation, sample(s)/details of the timber cladding to be used on the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The replacement dwelling shall only be clad with timber in accordance with the approved sample(s)/details and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

10. Prior to their construction, details of the supporting posts forming part of the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The posts shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

11. Prior to first occupation of the replacement dwelling hereby approved, the two buildings shown on approved drawing numbers SPEX-20-101 and ARPC 1 shall be demolished and removed from site.

Reason: To ensure that the planning benefits proposed through the application are carried out as part of the case for approving a replacement dwelling that is contrary to the adopted Local Plan in terms of its gross internal floorspace.

12. The sewage package treatment plant shown on approved drawing number SPEX-20-101 shall be installed and fully functioning prior to first occupation of the replacement dwelling hereby approved.

In addition, and for the avoidance of doubt, the area for the sewage package treatment plant contained within the red line area on ARPC2 shall not form part of the garden curtilage of the replacement dwelling hereby approved. The garden curtilage of the replacement dwelling shall be limited to the areas coloured green on approved drawing number SPEX-20-101.

Reason: To ensure that the sewage package treatment plant is installed to serve the dwelling in the interests of amenity and to clarify the extent of the garden curtilage in the interests of protecting the landscape and visual amenity of the National Park.

13. Prior to first occupation of the replacement dwelling hereby approved, a "Lighting Design for Bats", following Guidance Note 8 - Bats and Artificial Lighting (ILP and BCT 2018), shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The design shall show how and where external lighting will be installed (including through the provision of technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the design, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the design. Under no circumstances shall any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of populations of European protected species and in accordance with Exmoor National Park Local Plan Policy CE-S3 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure).

14. Prior to first occupation of the replacement dwelling hereby approved, the following ecological enhancement measures shall be integrated into the construction of the building, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:
- a) 1 no. Habitat 001 bat box, or similar, shall be built into the replacement dwelling at least four metres above ground level on the west or south facing elevations of the building;
 - b) 2 no. Schwegler 1a swift bricks, or similar, shall be built into the external wall of the replacement dwelling at least 60cm apart and at least five metres above ground level on the north facing elevation of the building;
 - c) 1 no. bee brick shall be built into the external wall of the replacement dwelling at 1 metre above ground level on the south or southeast elevations of the building;
 - d) Planting within the garden of the replacement dwelling shall include high nectar producing plants to encourage a range of invertebrates to the site and to provide continued foraging for bats. The shrubs shall also appeal to nightflying moths which are a key food source for bats. The Royal Horticultural Society guide, "RHS Perfect for Pollinators" (www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators) provides a list of suitable plants both native and non-native.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in Paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. The garage attached to the replacement dwelling (the area of the dwelling labelled as Garage on approved drawing number SPEX-20-102B), shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles and the storage of domestic items associated with the dwelling. The garage shall not be used as ancillary living accommodation, unless planning permission is granted by the Local Planning Authority for such a use.

Reason: The replacement dwelling has a net internal floorspace that is greater than the internal floorspace of the existing dwelling, contrary to Policy HC-D17 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and has only been concluded as acceptable due to the material fallback created by a previous extant planning permission. To prevent a further increase in floorspace under permitted development rights, which would see the replacement dwelling become larger than the floorspace granted under the previous planning permission, it is necessary to remove such rights so that the Local Planning Authority can formally consider a proposal to increase the floorspace further.

16. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the replacement dwelling hereby approved shall not be extended or enlarged without the specific granting of planning permission for such development by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The replacement dwelling has a net internal floorspace that is greater than the internal floorspace of the existing dwelling, contrary to Policy HC-D17 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031, and has only been concluded as acceptable due to the material fallback created by a previous extant planning permission. To prevent a further increase in floorspace under permitted development rights, which would see the replacement dwelling become larger than

the floorspace granted under the previous planning permission, it is necessary to remove such rights so that the Local Planning Authority can formally consider a proposal to increase the floorspace further.

260. Application No. 62/11/20/014

Location: County Gate, Countisbury, Lynton, EX35 6NQ

Proposal: Advertisement consent for the proposed installation of 5 no. car park and information signage

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

RESOLVED: To grant advertisement consent subject to the conditions set out in the report.

261. Application No. WTPO 20/07

Location: Hawkcombe Wood, Porlock, Somerset

Proposal: Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order: Felling 434 common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) affected by ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) based on detail survey by Devon Tree Services. Works will be phased over 2 years as trees decline beyond a safe

The Authority considered the [report](#) of the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.

RESOLVED: To grant permission for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Order to fell 434 common ash trees in accordance with the conditions set out in the report.

262. APPLICATION DECISIONS DELEGATED TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The Authority noted the [decisions of the Chief Executive determined under delegated powers](#).

263. SITE VISITS: There were no site visits to arrange.

The remaining section of the meeting was chaired by Mr R Milton, Chairperson of the Authority.

264. EXMOOR CONSULTATIVE & PARISH FORUM: The Authority received and noted the [meeting notes](#) from the Exmoor Consultative & Parish Forum meeting held on 12 November 2020.

265. PERSONNEL UPDATE: The Authority noted the recent staff changes as set out on the agenda.

On behalf of all Members, the Chairperson formally thanked Mr Gurnett and Mrs Morris for their considerable and valued contribution to the work of the Authority. Details of their many achievements were relayed for the public record and they were both wished well in their future endeavours.

266. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF URGENCY: There was none

The meeting closed at 11.45am

(Chairperson)



AGENDA ITEMS RELATING TO THE AUTHORITY'S ROLE AS SOLE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY FOR THE NATIONAL PARK AREA INCLUDING DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

This section of the meeting will be chaired by the Deputy Chairperson (Planning).
If the Deputy Chairperson (Planning) is absent, the Deputy Chairperson of the
Authority shall preside.

2 March 2021

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

6.1



Committee Report

Application Number:	62/11/20/015
Registration Date:	18-Dec-2020
Determination Date:	09-Feb-2021
Applicant	Mr D Raymond, National Trust
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	County Gate, Countisbury, Lynton, EX35 6NQ
Proposal:	Lawful development certificate for the proposed change of use of tourist information centre to café/shop.
Recommendation:	Approve
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The application has been called in by the Head of Planning and Chief Executive due to Exmoor National Park Authority having an interest in the land.

Relevant History

6/25/75/001 – Proposed erection of extension to refreshment store – Approved on 10th March 1975

62/11/78/004 – Erection of temporary mobile information centre – Approved on 6th June 1978

62/11/78/005 – Extension and improvement and new garage – Approved on 6th June 1978

62/11/78/012 – Conversion to form new County Gate Information & Glenthorne Management Building – Approved on 20th March 1979

62/11/78/013 – Use of land as a site for a temporary mobile information centre – Approved on 16th January 1979

62/11/79/011 – Temporary siting of information caravan – Approved on 15th January 1980

6/25/88/101 – Proposed conversion of disused building to walkers shelter – Approved on 7th June 1988

6.1

Site Description & Proposal

County Gate consists of a public car park, a building that used to be the National Park tourist information centre and another building that contains public toilets and a bus/walkers' shelter. The former tourist information building is Grade II listed. The site is isolated within the open countryside and straddles the border between Somerset and Devon. There are numerous public rights of way near to the site.

The applicant, the National Trust, is seeking a certificate of lawfulness to formally establish whether the use of the former tourist information building at County Gate as a café and shop would require planning permission.

Consultee Representations

North Devon Council – In accordance with the agreed protocol, the District Council, as a consultee to the Exmoor National Park Authority, has no observations.

Brendon & Countisbury Parish Council – Support the application with the following comments:

- 1) The car park should remain free in perpetuity and signage kept to a minimum; in keeping with the ethos and beauty of the Exmoor National Park; and
- 2) Council noted that it would have presented an ideal opportunity for a local person to rent the property and run it as a local business.

ENPA Historic Buildings Officer – I note that there is a new stove and a small alteration to an internal wall shown in the proposed plans. This is likely to require listed building consent (and planning permission if a new flue is needed) as explained in the pre-application process. The Design and Access statement explains that a separate application will be made for these alterations once the change of use is secured. Therefore, have no concerns regarding the change of use provided these works are not carried out without the necessary permissions.

Natural England – No objection, based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Representations

One public representation has been received in relation to this application. The comments made revolve around the author's concern over charging for parking at County Gate and the number of signs proposed under a separate application for this site. In terms of comments on the use of the application building, the author states that it would bring the building back into use, but the building should be offered first to local residents and businesses.

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Officers have noted the comments made by the member of the public. However, the comments relating to charging for parking at County Gate and the installation of signs are not a consideration in respect of determining this particular application for a certificate of lawfulness. The comments about the use are acknowledged, but the only consideration for this application is whether the proposed café and shop use would require planning permission and whether the building is made available to be run by local residents or businesses is not relevant to the determination of this application.

Policy Context

This is a CLOPUD application and it is therefore not a matter of considering the planning merits of the scheme, but a legal determination based on the facts to ascertain whether the use of the application building as a café and shop would require planning permission for change of use.

Planning Considerations

In terms of the historic use of the building, the Historic England listing for the building confirms that it was originally a toll house. By the time an application was submitted in January 1975 (reference 6/25/75/001), the building was identified on the submitted plans as a residential dwelling.

Deemed planning permission was then granted in April 1979 under application reference 62/11/78/012 for the use of the building as an information centre and management building. Exmoor National Park's Historic Environment Record confirms that the use as a visitor centre was commenced around 1980.

The Historic England listing description confirms that at the time it was visited by Historic England in 1988 it was being used as an information centre. This is supported by the information submitted with a 1988 planning application (reference 6/25/88/101) for the bus/walkers' shelter building, which identified the building on the plans as an information centre.

Officers understand that the building functioned as a tourist information centre until it was boarded up in 2015. The building has since been vacant and Officers shall now consider whether the tourist information use has been abandoned. The four key factors in applying an objective test of abandonment as established in the judgement of *Trustees of Castell-y-Mynach Estate v Taff-Ely BC, [1985] JPL 40* are:

- 1) The physical condition of the buildings;
- 2) The period of no use;
- 3) Has there been any other use; and
- 4) The owner's intentions (objectively viewed by the 'reasonable man with knowledge of the matter').

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The building may be boarded up, but this is to protect the building from damage. The interior is still useable as a tourist information centre and with minor external repairs the building can easily be brought back into this use. The building is certainly not in a state of disrepair.

The period of non-use is five to six years and there has been no intervening use, nor has any permission been granted since 2015 for an alternative use. The period of non-use, when compared against the approximate 35 years of use as a tourist information centre, is not considered to be material in respect of the tests for abandonment when having regard to the case law on this particular matter.

The intention of the Authority has been to explore options for alternative uses for the building, but as noted above, no application has ever been submitted for an alternative use and the discussion had within the Authority have only ever been exploratory. Even if the Authority has looked at alternative uses for the building, it would not be a sign of active abandonment in isolation when the other three factors do not point towards abandonment.

Having regard to the four factors of abandonment, Officers are satisfied that the tourist information use of the building, granted in 1979 has not been abandoned and it remains the lawful use of the building.

The Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended, essentially categorises different types of property and land into classes. The 1987 Order was amended on 1st September 2020 and one of the amendments was to move various uses into a single new use classes, Use Class E and Prior to the September 2020 amendment, tourist information centres would have fallen into Use Classes A1, A2 or B1 of the 1987 Order, depending on the type of service provided. A café would have fallen into Use Class A3 and a shop would have fallen into Use Class A1. Following the September 2020 amendment, Use Classes A1, A2, A3 and B1 have all be moved into the new Use Class E.

It is noted that shops selling essential goods, including food, where the shop is not more than 280 square metres and no other within 1000m radius of the location would not fall into Use Class E and would fall into the new Use Class F2 instead. However, it is not proposed to provide a shop that would sell mainly essential goods. The submitted floor plans show that the customer area would mainly be set out with tables and chairs as a café with a small area to display items for sale that would typically be seen in a National Trust shop.

Following the September 2020 amendment to the 1987 Order, the existing use of the building as a tourist information centre would now fall into Use Class E (no matter whether it would have fallen into the old Use Classes A1, A2 or B1) and the proposed use as a café and shop would also fall into Use Class E.

6.1

Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, sets out that the material change of use of any building or land would constitute development that under Section 57 would require planning permission. However, Section 55(2)(f) of the 1990 Act states that in the case of buildings or other land which are used for a purpose of any class specified in an order made by the Secretary of State under this section, the use of the buildings or other land or, subject to the provisions of the order, of any part of the buildings or the other land, for any other purpose of the same class would not constitute development.

As already established, the existing use of the building falls into Use Class E and the proposed use falls into Use Class E. Therefore, under Section 55(2)(f) of the 1990 Act, the change of use from a tourist information centre to a café and shop would not constitute development requiring planning permission.

Before Officers conclude that the proposed change of use of the building does not require planning permission, it is important to consider whether there are restrictions on a historic planning permission that would prevent such a change of use without the necessary permission.

The existing lawful use of the building was granted under deemed planning permission in 1979. The Authority's own records demonstrate that this permission as implemented, and the site history confirms that the use of the building has been a tourist information centre.

Officers have looked at this 1979 permission and it is noted that the description of the permission was for a tourist information centre. However, there are no conditions attached to the permission that prevent it from changing use or requiring the use to remain as a tourist information centre. It has been established in planning law through the judgement in *I'm Your Man Ltd v Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions [1998]* that the description of the development permitted by a planning permission is insufficient to control its nature unless conditions are also imposed.

There are no other planning permission since 1979 that relate to the application building and Officers are satisfied that there is no restriction on a historic planning permission that means that the applicant's proposed change of use is prevented without planning permission being granted for said change of use.

In the case of whether a historic planning permission without a condition preventing a certain activity or development taking place without planning permission actually prevents such activities or development taking place, it would be common to consider whether a material change of use would occur from an intensification resulting from a proposed activity or development. However, The High Court in *Brooks and Burton v SoS [1977]* made it clear that whilst intensification can trigger a material change of use, a change of use by intensification cannot occur where a use is one defined within a Use Class set out in the Use Classes Order. Therefore, intensification of a use

6.1

within a class in the Order does not constitute development unless and until its effect is to take the use outside of that class altogether.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the September 2020 amendment to the Use Classes Order 1987 means that the existing use of the application building and the proposed use now fall into the same Use Class. Under Section 55(2)(f) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, this proposed change of use would not require planning permission. Having checked the planning history of the site, Officers are satisfied that there is no restriction attached to a historic planning permission that requires permission to be sought for the proposed change of use.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed change of use of the County Gate building from a tourist information centre to a café and shop would not require planning permission and it is recommended by Officers that the certificate sought by the applicant is granted.

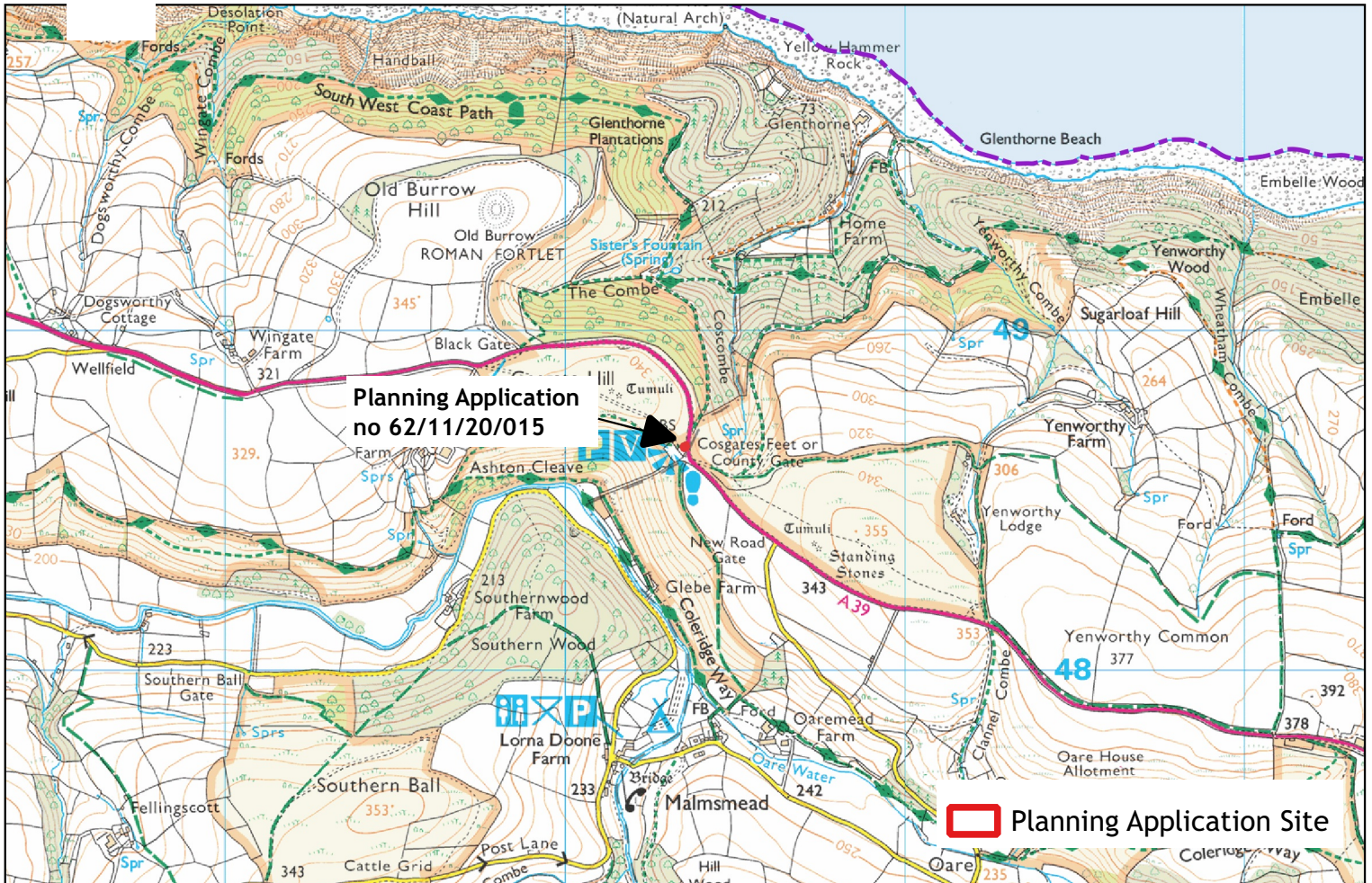
Recommendation

Approve



Site Map
Scale 1:2500

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Overview Map
Scale 1:20000

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Committee Report

Application Number:	6/9/21/101
Registration Date:	13-Jan-2021
Determination Date:	05-Mar-2021
Applicant	Michael Eddisford, Exmoor National Park
Agent:	Mr A Elston, Architectural Studio
Case Officer:	Kieran Reeves
Site Address:	Tarr Steps Car Park, Tarr Steps, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9QA
Proposal:	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed erection of a second car parking machine.
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Exmoor National Park Authority are the applicants and land owners

Relevant History

6/9/03/135 – Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the erection of public toilet building and associated landscaping following demolition of existing toilet – Approved on 3rd December 2003

0850 – Proposed car park and public conveniences – Approved on 12th January 1966

Site Description & Proposal

Tarr Steps Car Park is a public car park owned by Exmoor National Park Authority. It is located to the north east of Tarr Steps, adjacent to the public road that leads to the eastern bank of the River Barle and Tarr Farm, the nearest property to the application site. The site consists of an open air car park that is split across the sloping site in three levels. There is also a public toilets building and the existing car parking machine is located next to this building.

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a second car parking machine to serve the public car park. It was originally proposed to install the machine on an area of grass on the southern edge of the car park. Following discussions with Officers, the machine has been moved to a position where it would be partially cut into the sloping bank between two levels of the car park. A low stone wall would be constructed around the machine.

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An advertisement application was also originally submitted for the erection of a sign that would have contained parking information (reference 6/9/21/101). Following discussions with Officers, it was concluded that the sign was not necessarily required as the machine itself could have the parking charges on it. This advertisement application was subsequently withdrawn.

Consultee Representations

The following comments were received in relation to the original position of the proposed car parking machine.

Winsford Parish Council – Support as Council understand it is required for management of car park.

SCC Highway Authority – No observations

ENPA Public Rights of Way & Access Officer – There are no public rights of way in the immediate vicinity of the Tarr Steps car park but there is a permitted footpath which runs from the car park down to Tarr Steps which runs over private land. There is also an area of access land to the south where the public have a right of access on foot only.

I have no objection at all to the proposed development from an access point of view. The smooth management of the car park and facility are extremely important for the large number of visitors to Tarr Steps and I fully support the proposed development. I am pleased to note the storm drain near the area of hard-standing which should prevent any water run-off running down the permitted path.

Natural England – No objection. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

The following comment has been received after the application was re-consulted on due to a re-location of the proposed car parking machine.

Dulverton Town Council – Members assume that the proposal will aid the general management of the car park so have no objections.

SCC Highway Authority – No observations

Officers would like Members to note that that at the time of writing this report, the re-consultation period has not expired and any comments received between now and the date of the Committee meeting shall be read out to Members at the Committee meeting.

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Representations

No public representations have been received at the time of writing this report.

Policy Context

Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2011 – 2031

GP1 – General Policy: Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development

CE-S1 – Landscape and Seascape Character

CE-D1 – Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes

CE-S2 – Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky

CE-S3 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

CE-S6 – Design and Sustainable Construction Principles

AC-S3 – Traffic Management and Parking

AC-D3 – Parking Provision and Standards

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material planning consideration.

Planning Considerations

The main material planning considerations in this case are considered to be the principle of development, the design, scale and materials of the development, and the impact on the landscape, wildlife, neighbouring amenity and parking provision.

Principle of Development

The justification provided in the application papers for a second parking machine is that the existing machine has stopped working in the past and a second machine would form a backup and allow payments to continue to be made should the existing machine stop working again in the future. It is also understood that a second machine within the car park is potentially required due to the size of the car park and it would stop people crowding around one machine.

The justification above aside, the use of the site as a public car park would remain as such after the proposed parking machine is installed. Given that it would have a directly ancillary and associated role to the use of the site as an established car park, it is considered that the siting of such infrastructure within the car park would be acceptable in principle, subject to material planning considerations being satisfied

Design, Scale and Materials & Impact on the Landscape

The proposed pay and display machine is of a standard design and size for such a form of development and the materials that would be used in its construction are typical. It is difficult to install a machine which is of a "conservation style" as they are designed and built with practicality and functionality in mind. The fact that the machine is designed with function over form is accepted, particularly in a car park setting, but

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the impact of this part of the proposed development on the landscape and visual amenity needs to be considered carefully.

As set out above, the impact of the pay and display machine on the landscape and visual amenity of the site needs to be considered carefully as it does constitute a non-traditional form of development.

The proposal was originally to site the parking machine on an area of grass on the southern edge of the car park. This would have involved the area of grass being replaced with hardstanding and the machine and an associated sign being erected on said hardstanding. Officers raised concerns with this siting of the machine as it would be very visible on the edge of the car park and it would be viewed separate from the existing built form of the application site. In addition, it was also felt that it would interrupt key views out of the site over the open landscape.

Following discussions with Officers, the application has been amended to re-locate the machine to another area of the car park and the sign has now been omitted. The machine has been re-located further within the car park, partially on an existing area of tarmac adjacent to the sloping bank between two levels of the car park. The bank would be partially cut away and the machine would sit within this space with a low stone wall around it.

Officers consider that the re-located machine would lead to significantly less visual harm than the originally proposed location. When stood on the lowest level of the car park, it would be seen with the backdrop of the bank and the public toilets building behind that. From this viewpoint it would be seen in the context of existing built form and therefore would not appear as isolated development within the car park. When stood on the middle level of the car park, the machine would be predominantly screened by the bank below as it would be installed within a partially cutting of the bank. This means that it should not overtly jar within the context of the car park. In addition, important views out of the car park would not be interrupted as viewers would look over the top of the machine and it would not draw the eye away from the open landscape.

Officers conclude that the re-location of the machine has led to the material harm to the landscape and visual amenity that would have occurred as a result of the original proposal being removed. Officers acknowledge that the machine is an alien object within a National Park context but its re-location has meant that it would be seen in the context of existing built form or not overtly seen altogether. Officers therefore consider that the proposed development is policy compliant in respect of landscape and visual impact.

Impact on Wildlife

The application site is located approximately 100 metres from the Barle Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest and approximately 400 metres from the Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods Special Area of Conservation to the west. Natural England have

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commented that based on the plans submitted they consider that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and they therefore have no objection to the proposed development.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The nearest property to the application site is Tarr Farm. The proposed parking machine would be situated approximately 400 metres away from this neighbouring property. This distance, together with the small scale of the parking machine, has led Officers to the conclusion that there would not be a noise disturbance from the machine and people using the machine. Officers conclude that the proposed parking machine would not cause material harm to neighbouring amenity.

Impact on Parking Provision

The proposed parking machine would be erected within the existing car park, partially on the surface where vehicles park. However, its location would not interrupt the movement of vehicles manoeuvring around the car park and it would not overlap an existing marked parking space. As such, the proposed development would not interfere with the ability for vehicles to park within the car park. The development would not lead to a loss of parking provision on site.

Other Matters

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency.

Policy GP1 of the Local Plan sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding. Policy CC-S5 seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and Policy CE-S6 seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

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There would be a climate impact associated with constructing and installing the parking machine and there would be a need for electricity for it to function, but its small scale means that the overall climate impact would not be significant. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the proposed development would not be such that the application should be refused.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the installation of the parking machine within the Tarr Steps car park is considered to be acceptable in principle. Although its design is a matter of function over form, Officers are satisfied that the re-located siting of the machine would not lead to material harm to the landscape or visual amenity. The impact on wildlife, neighbouring amenity and parking provision has also been judged to be acceptable. Officers therefore recommend that planning permission be granted, subject to the attachment of appropriate planning conditions.

Officers would like Members to note that at the time of writing this report, the re-consultation period has not expired and any comments received between now and the date of the Committee meeting shall be read out to Members at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawing number 2141/200D, date stamped by the Local Planning Authority on 1st February 2021, unless otherwise required by condition(s) below.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity.

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3. Prior to its construction, sample(s)/details of the facing stone of the low stone wall around the parking machine hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Also prior to the construction of the low stone wall, a sample panel measuring at least 1 metre by 1 metre, using the approved facing stone and demonstrating the proposed coursing, mortar mix and pointing detail, shall be constructed on site, and the low stone wall shall not be constructed until the sample panel has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The low stone wall shall then only be constructed in accordance with the approved sample panel and it shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development and to conserve the character and appearance of the landscape and locality.

4. In the event that the use of the hereby approved pay and display machine ceases, the machine shall be removed from the site within six months of the cessation of charging for parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the removal of a redundant structure in the interests of conserving the character and appearance of the landscape and the visual amenity of the area.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on or around the parking machine hereby approved unless details have first been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated fully in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of conserving and protecting wildlife interests, visual amenity and Exmoor's dark night sky.

Informatives

Positive and Proactive Statement

This Authority has a pro-active approach to the delivery of development. Early pre-application engagement is always encouraged. In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, in determining this application, Exmoor National Park Authority has endeavoured to work positively and proactively with the agent/applicant, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to ensure that all relevant planning considerations have been appropriately addressed to achieve a

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positive outcome.

Monitoring of Development

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Conditions and Informatives and the Submission of Further Details

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time.

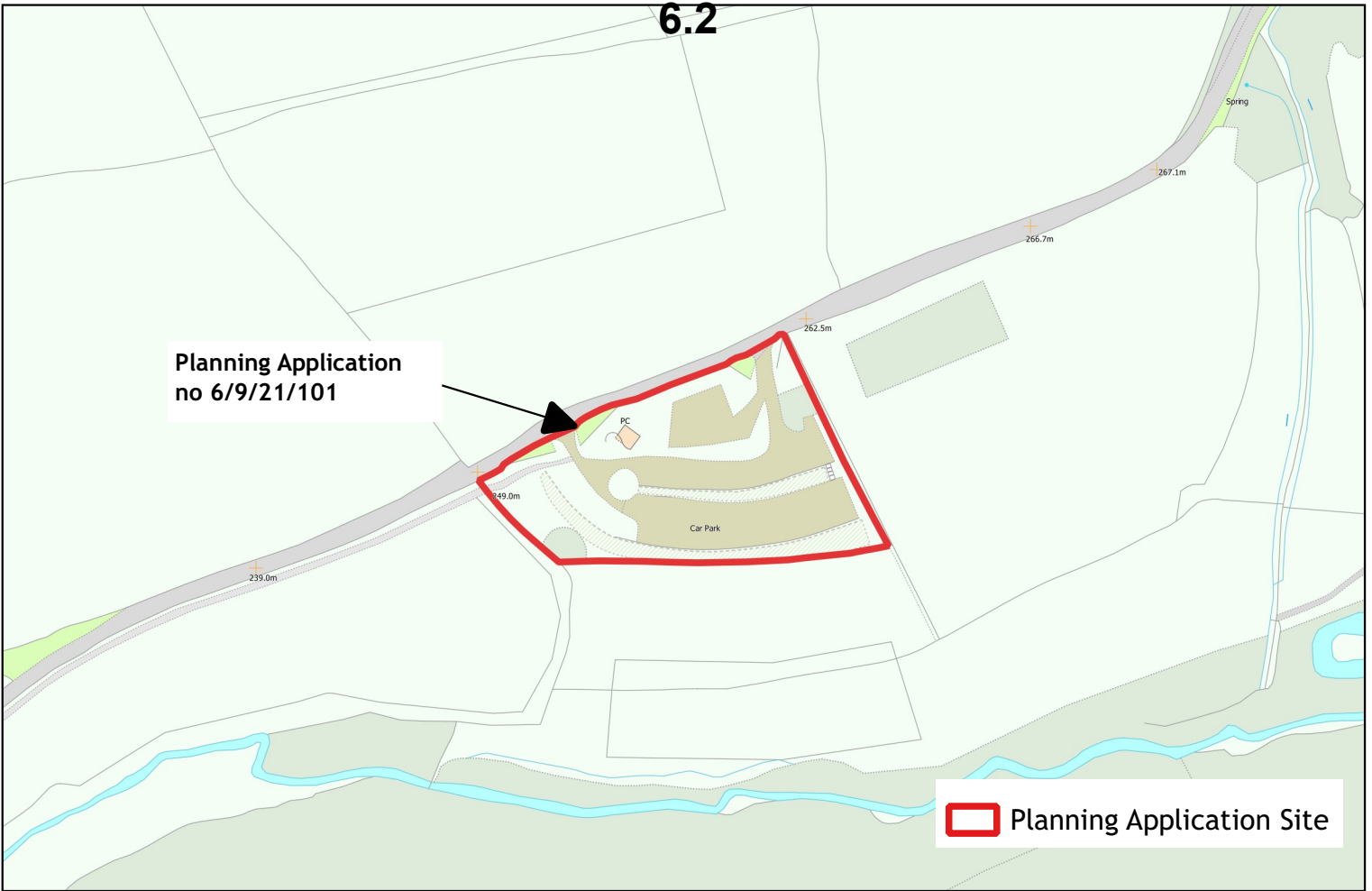
Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications on an informal basis.

The Department of Communities and Local Government have introduced a process whereby it is now possible to apply for a non-material amendment to a permission. This can deal with changes to plans which do not fundamentally alter the form of permission but are a variation to the approval. The appropriate form is available by request at Exmoor House or by downloading from the National Park Authority web site. Applications can be made via the Planning Portal.

Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

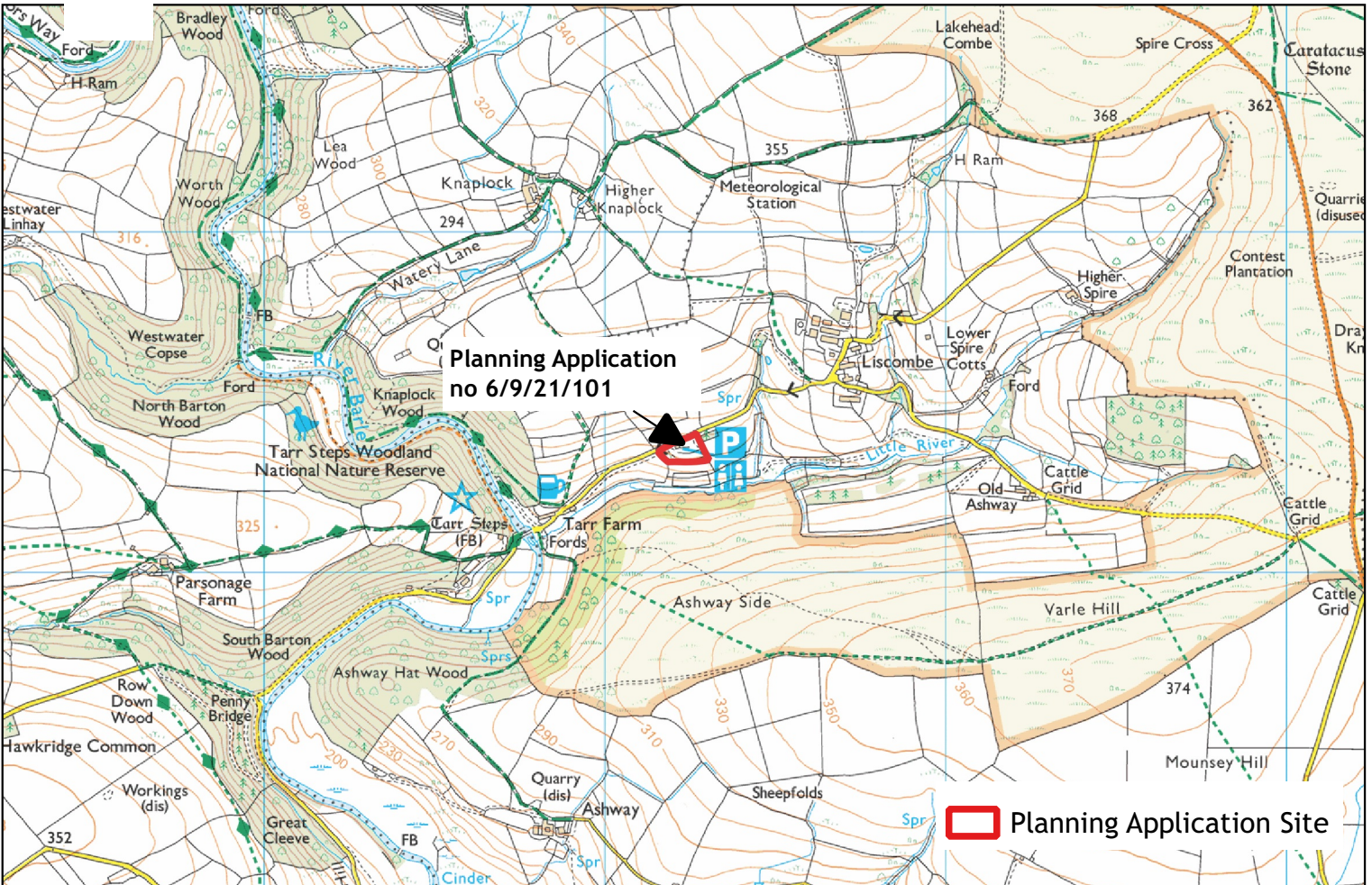
Planning Application
no 6/9/21/101

Planning Application Site



Site Map
Scale 1:2500

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Overview Map
Scale 1:20000

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6.3



Committee Report

Application Number:	6/21/21/101
Registration Date:	19-Jan-2021
Determination Date:	12-Mar-2021
Applicant	Mr M Harley
Agent:	Mr. T Parish, ENPA
Case Officer:	Joe White
Site Address:	Land at North Hill, Hill Road, Minehead, Easting: 295300 & Northing: 147400
Proposal:	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the proposed creation of banking around informal car parking areas.
Recommendation:	Approve subject to conditions
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	Exmoor National Park Authority is the applicant

Relevant History

None relevant to this application

Site Description & Proposal

The application proposes earth banking works around a number of areas used for vehicle parking on North Hill, Minehead. The works are proposed to restrict unauthorised vehicular access on to the moorland. The proposals also include the provision of barriers to existing vehicle access routes to permit authorised vehicular access.

The details provided outline that the banking works will comprise earth banks of between 600mm and 750mm high. The banks would be finished with turf and are designed to reflect the form and appearance of banking works carried out to car parks located further west of the tank grounds along North Hill.

It is proposed that material for forming the banks will be sourced locally, including from material gathered from clearing track drains on North Hill. Where gaps within the banks are required to enable necessary pedestrian access, the end of the banks to either side of the gap will comprise Oak posts that will be 600mm high. Barriers required to existing authorised vehicle access points will be formed with a single horizontal timber pole with a galvanised steel brace to the hanging post at one end.

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The proposals relate to seven distinct areas either side of the public highway leading up from the cattle grid to the tank grounds.

The sites lie within the Heritage Coast. One of the areas lies to the north of the public highway, just below (south east) of the tank grounds parking area, and within a Local Wildlife Site, which is a large mixed species plantation.

Those areas to the south of the public highway lie within the Exmoor Coastal Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The moorland is also access land and works are proposed along the route of public bridleway WL31/37.

Consultee Representations

NB At the time of writing this report the consultation period, under the site notice advertisement, is live. Any further comments that are received prior to the Authority Committee meeting will be presented verbally and may require further consideration of the recommendation.

Somerset County Council Highways – Standing advice can be applied on the basis there is no encroachment onto/over the public highway.

Conservation Officer (Historic Environment) – These proposals were discussed at pre-application stage and are supported. The works are away from sensitive archaeological areas including the remains of the military base and the works may well help their conservation. Material for the work is from off-site. It is sad to have to close one of the main military roads at Area 5, but this work would be reversible should it ever become possible to reopen it.

Selworthy & Minehead Without Parish Council – No objection

Minehead Town Council – See no material planning reason to refuse this application.

Conservation Officer (Wildlife) – The proposed banking works installed to prevent vehicles access and damaging the moorland are located within an area around existing vehicle parking provisions and, as such, away from areas containing the Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation primary and qualifying features. Therefore, the project is not considered to have a likely significant effect on the protected habitats site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); therefore the impact can be screened out with no appropriate assessment required. Furthermore, the earth banks can be considered to be directly connected to the conservation management of the features for which the site was designated.

Protected Species

6.3

From reviewing the site photos including an overlay of the proposed locations there looks to be some areas of tall ruderal herbs, including bracken, and possible scrub patches, which could potentially support ground nesting birds, that may require clearance prior to banking works. Therefore, please attach the following conditions:

- No removal of tall ruderal herbs and scrub shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared or works to or demolition of buildings commences and provides written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the ecologist accompanied by dated photos showing the site before and after clearance. In no circumstances should netting be used to exclude nesting birds.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with ENPA Local Plan: Policy CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

Public Rights of Way Officer – North Hill is a very popular area for public access – there are numerous public rights of way and much of the area is also open access land.

I have already been consulted about the banking plans and am fully supportive of them. Sites 1, 5 and 6 involve public bridleways and I am pleased to see that gaps of 4'6" have been left for bridleway access in the appropriate locations (see larger scale plans below). Gaps of the same width have been left elsewhere which should allow unimpeded access to access land both for those on foot and for less able users.

Natural England – Natural England considers that the application, as submitted, should not adversely affect the interest features of Exmoor Coastal Heaths SSSI. Given the proximity of the proposal site to the SSSI and the associated potential for damage as a result of storage or disposal of materials, and operation of machinery or plant within the SSSI, should the Council be minded to grant permission, we advise that the following informative is appended to any consent:

- The applicant is advised that should storage, access or encroachment within the Exmoor Coastal Heaths SSSI be found to occur as a result of the proposals during or after the works, this will be considered an offence under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) whereby the applicant may be liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £20,000 or on conviction on indictment to an unlimited fine.

We advise that the following should be secured by way of a condition on the planning permission:

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- All contractors working on site should be made aware of the informative and should be provided with a map that clearly shows the boundaries of the Exmoor Heaths SSSI in relation to the development site.

European site – Exmoor Heaths SAC

Based on the plans submitted and the SSSI advice above, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on the Exmoor Heaths Special Area of Conservation and has no objection to the proposed development.

To meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, we advise you to record your decision that a likely significant effect can be ruled out.

Representations

No comments received at the time of preparing this report.

NB. At the time of writing this report the consultation period, under the site notice advertisement is live. Any further comments that are received prior to the Authority Committee meeting will be presented verbally and may require further consideration of the recommendation.

Policy Context

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031
GP1 Achieving National Park Purpose and Sustainable Development
CE-S1 Landscape Character
CE-D1 Protecting Exmoor's Landscapes and Seascapes
CE-S2 Protecting Exmoor's Dark Night Sky
CE-S4 Cultural Heritage and Historic Environment
CE-D3 Conserving Heritage Assets
CE-S3 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
CE-D2 Green Infrastructure Provision
CE-S6 Design and Sustainable Construction Principles
CC-S1 Climate Change and Mitigation and Adaption
CC-D1 Flood Risk
AC-S1 Sustainable Transport
AC-D2 Traffic and Road Safety Considerations for Development
RT-D12 Access Land and Rights of Way

The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration.

Planning Considerations

6.3

The main planning issues are considered to be the impact on ecological, particularly the special interests of the SAC and SSSI, impact on character and scenic beauty of the landscape, archaeological interests and impact on highway safety.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SCENIC BEAUTY

Policy GP1 advises that sustainable development will conserve and enhance the National Park, its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and its special qualities. Development should promote opportunities for their understanding and enjoyment by the public and, in doing so, foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. Policy CE-D1 advises that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of Exmoor's landscape. Policy CE-S6 requires that development proposals deliver high quality sustainable designs that conserve and enhance the local identity and distinctiveness of Exmoor's built and historic environment.

These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and the protection of the National Park, and have regard to the purposes of designated National Parks and their status.

The proposed works seek to restrict unauthorised vehicular access over the moorland mainly in the interest of the SSSI and SAC, but there are also potential benefits to the wider scenic beauty of this part of the landscape and the enjoyment of this area by users. The proposed works are around existing tracks and areas already used for vehicle parking. The earth banks and barriers would have an impact on the visual amenity of the immediate vicinity, particularly to users of the road and tracks passing the areas affected, and particularly in the short term. However, the initial impact of the earth works are relatively limited and will soften over time.

The overall landscape impact in restricting unauthorised vehicular access and allowing the moorland to 'recover' is considered to be of benefit to visual amenity and scenic beauty. This is considered to outweigh the direct impact caused by the proposals with the formation of earth banks. The earth banks are relatively low in height and reflect other similar works carried out to parking areas further to the west and along the moorland.

ECOLOGY

In accordance with CE-S3 the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and habitats will be given great weight and development likely to cause harm to sites designated for their international, national or local importance will not be supported. Development should also not lead to harm to legally protected species or lead to the loss of or damage to their habitats.

6.3

A large part of the development proposals lie within the Exmoor Heaths SAC and the Exmoor Coastal Heaths SSSI. Although the development would be at the edge of the designations and close to the boundary, which is the public highway.

The Exmoor Heaths SAC is over 1000 hectares in area. It is variable in nature and has in places been modified by management, particularly burning. Typically, heather dominates, with scattered plants of purple moor-grass, cross-leaved heath, bilberry and deergrass. The heaths are also important as a stronghold for the heath fritillary butterfly, associated with sheltered slopes in the transition to woodland.

The development proposed is related to the management of the moorland, to prevent unauthorised access by vehicles. The proposals also seek to manage existing parking areas to ensure vehicles do not encroach further onto the moorland in the interests of protecting the heath from damage.

The works are considered necessary for the management of the land and to address damage that has been caused. The works themselves are contained to those areas already used by vehicles and to the edges of the sites designated for special ecological interest. The works are next to the public road or existing tracks.

The Wildlife Officer has viewed the proposals and considers the works to be away from areas containing the SACs primary and qualifying features. Therefore, the proposed development is considered to unlikely to significantly impact on the protected habitats site, either individually or cumulatively.

The Wildlife Officer has commented that the works may impact on some areas of tall ruderal herbs, including bracken, and possible scrub patches, which could support ground nesting birds. He has therefore recommended a condition of planning permission, should that be granted, to ensure that vegetation clearance is not carried out during the bird nesting season unless a check for nesting birds has first been carried out by a qualified ecologist.

The National Park Authority under the Habitat Regulations is classed as a competent authority and is required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment before approving development that is likely to have a significant effect on SAC. However, this applies if the development is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site. The proposed development in this instance is considered necessary for the management of the site and, having regard to the above, is not considered to cause harm to the special interests of the SAC or SSSI. An Appropriate Assessment is not therefore considered to be necessary under the Habitat Regulations and it is considered that a likely significant effect can be ruled out in accordance with the advice of Natural England.

ARCHAEOLOGY

6.3

Policy CE-S4 of the Local Plan advises that, among other things, Exmoor National Park's local distinctiveness, cultural heritage, and historic environment, will be conserved and enhanced to ensure that present and future generations can increase their knowledge, awareness and enjoyment of these special qualities. The Policy advises that development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the historic environment and ensure that the character, special interest, integrity, and significance of any affected heritage asset and its setting is conserved and enhanced. Where development proposals are likely to cause significant harm to, or loss of, designated heritage assets or assets of national significance, permission should be refused in accordance with CE-S4.

Policy CE-D3 advises that development should demonstrate a positive contribution to the setting, understanding and enjoyment of the heritage asset.

North Hill was used extensively for military training during World War Two. After the war, military training ceased leaving archaeological remains, some of which are visible on the ground. The tank training range is recorded on the Historic Environment Record for the National Park and is a local heritage asset.

The archaeologist explains that the proposals are away from sensitive archaeological areas and she supports the application. It is noted that part of the proposals involve banking works to a historic military road, at the southern extent of the proposed works. This has the potential to cause some harm to the understanding of the heritage asset. It is however acknowledged that those works are reversible and Officers consider that the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset is unavoidable and the harm is outweighed by the public benefit of conserving the special interests of the moorland through preventing unauthorised vehicular access and the damage associated with that.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Policy AC-D2 advises that development which will cause unacceptable levels of traffic in terms of environmental or physical capacity of the local road network, or would prejudice road safety interests, will not be permitted.

Policy RT-D12 relates to safeguarding access land and Rights of Way in terms of their condition, users' interests and character and appearance. Where proposal would adversely affect the network it will be necessary to meet a number of criteria including that there is a need for the development, that there is no appropriate alternative location and any harm will be kept to a minimum.

The proposed works would not obstruct use of public rights of way and are not considered to compromise the existing level of access to permitted areas of parking. The parking areas are established, and the proposals are not considered to cause material harm to the existing level of highway safety.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

6.3

In May 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency, Exmoor National Park followed this by declaring a Climate Emergency in October 2019. To help meet this challenge the Local plan includes policies which seek to influence, contribute and challenge development to help meet the Climate Emergency. GP1 'Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development' Sets out that the need to consider future generations, through sustainability and resilience to climate change and adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Policy CC-S1 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption' states that climate change mitigation will be encouraged, development which reduces demand for energy, using small scale low carbon and renewable energy, looks to situate development which avoids sites that would put wildlife at risk together with measures which avoids the risk of flooding. Furthermore, Policy CC-S5 'Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development' seeks to support small scale renewable energy schemes that assist in contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a carbon neutral National Park and policy CE-S6 'Design and Sustainable Construction Principles' seeks to incorporate sustainable construction methods which future proof against climate change impacts, including flood risk.

Paragraph 148 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that "the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

There would be an impact on the climate from the construction process and the sourcing of construction materials. The papers submitted explain that the applicant will use locally sourced timber and locally sourced materials in the construction of banks. Officers consider that the impact on the climate resulting from the construction of the proposed development would not be such that a reason for refusal should be given.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The works proposed are designed to safeguard the interests of the locality, particular in terms of its ecological significance and to prevent vehicle damage through unauthorised access and encroachment of vehicles on to the moorland.

The proposals are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and scenic beauty of the locality. The international, national and local ecological

6.3

importance of the area is considered to be safeguarded through the proposed works. A condition is necessary to ensure potential interests of ground nesting birds are protected. Natural England and the Wildlife Officer are satisfied that the proposals are acceptable.

The works are supported by the Archaeologist. There is some harm to the significance of the tank training range, which is a locally important heritage asset, through the closing off of a historic military road. That harm is however considered to be very minor, unavoidable and the banking work proposed is reversible works. The public benefit offered through the proposals with the protection of the heathland is considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused to the heritage asset.

Authorised public access is maintained and the proposals are not considered to cause material harm to the existing level of highway safety.

At the time of writing the report the consultation period for the application under the site notice is live. Comments that are received prior to the Authority Committee meeting will be verbally reported at the meeting. In having regard to the above and subject to further comments that may be received and may require further consideration at the Authority meeting, the impacts of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable and the proposal is judged to comply with the relevant development plan policies. The recommendation is therefore one of Approval.

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (as amended by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans; drawing numbered 1 to 9 by the Local Planning Authority and date stamp received 19 January 2021.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the development accords with the approved plans.

3) No removal of tall ruderal herbs and scrub shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written

6.3

confirmation should be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to vegetation removal works commencing.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with Local Plan Policy CE-S3.

4) All contractors working on site should be made aware of the Natural England informative, set out below, and should be provided with a map that clearly shows the boundaries of the Exmoor Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation in relation to the development site.

Reason: To ensure the special interest of these designations are safeguarded in accordance with Local Plan Policy CE-S3.

Informatives

NATURAL ENGLAND INFORMATIVE

The applicant is advised that should storage, access or encroachment within the Exmoor Coastal Heaths SSSI be found to occur as a result of the proposals during or after the works, this will be considered an offence under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) whereby the applicant may be liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £20,000 or on conviction on indictment to an unlimited fine.

PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY NOTE

Public rights of way should be open (easy and safe to use) at all times. Please note the following:

Care should be taken to avoid obstructing or interfering with the public rights of way or creating a hazard for users. If it is impossible to avoid interference or potential danger, the appropriate legal steps (e.g. path closure application) should be taken in advance of any works. If this is likely to be necessary, please contact the Highway Authority or seek legal advice as soon as possible.

Any disturbance to the surface of rights of way should be avoided but if any such disturbance does occur due to the owner/occupier or their agents' use of the way, the surface should be reinstated.

Where planning permission is granted, this does not authorise any person to stop up or divert any public right of way. Separate legal steps are needed for this

The driving of a vehicle is only permitted on a public bridleway/footpath where the driver has lawful authority to do so.

6.3

Parking on the public right of way may be deemed to constitute an obstruction
Changes to the surface/drainage of a public right of way require prior authorisation from the Highway Authority (in this case ENPA as its agent).

New furniture (e.g. gates) being needed along a public right of way require prior authorisation from the Highway Authority (in this case ENPA as its agent).
Where an increase in vehicular traffic or other alteration in the private use of a public right of way this route is expected as a result of the development, there will be other considerations such as the impact on the maintenance requirements of the right of way.

CONDITIONS AND INFORMATIVES

Please check all the conditions and informatives attached to this Decision Notice. If there are any conditions which require submission of details and/or samples prior to work commencing on site it is vital that these are submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before work starts. Given the High Court's interpretation of the Planning Acts and their lawful implementation it is unlikely that the Local Planning Authority will be able to agree to a sample/details after the commencement of works if that sample/details should have been approved prior to commencement. If a sample/detail is not agreed as required prior to commencement and works have started then it is likely that this matter may only be able to be rectified by the submission of another application. To avoid delay, inconvenience and the need to submit a further application, please ensure that all appropriate details/samples are submitted and agreed at the specified time.

Please also note that due to other decisions of the High Court it is now not normally possible for the Local Planning Authority to agree to minor amendments to approved applications. It will be necessary to adopt a formal approach and that if changes to approved plans are proposed then it will be necessary to make a new planning application. Please ensure that works comply with the approved plans so as to avoid the possibility that works are unauthorised and liable for enforcement action.

MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENT

The applicant/developer is reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the requirements of each planning condition are met and that the works are undertaken in accordance with the approved plans. Any failure to meet the terms of a planning condition or work which does not accord with the approved plans leaves the applicant/developer liable to formal action being taken. The National Park Authority endeavours to monitor on site the compliance with conditions and building works. This has benefits for applicants and developers as well as the National Park. To assist with this monitoring of development the applicant/developer is requested to give at least fourteen days notice of the commencement of development to ensure that effective monitoring can be undertaken. The Planning Section can be contacted at Exmoor

6.3

National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL or by telephone on 01398 323665 or by email plan@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

SUMMARY OF REASON FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The Local Planning Authority, having regard to all planning considerations material to the determination of this application, including particularly impact on amenity, design, highway safety, flood risk, archaeology and impact on the character and appearance of the designated landscape and wildlife, and all consultations and representations made in connection with the application, conclude that the proposal accords with the provisions of the development plan as applicable to it, including the policies and proposals noted below, and there are no grounds which justify its refusal.

6.4



Committee Report

Application Number:	WTPO 20/08
Registration Date:	12-Nov-2020
Determination Date:	04-Jan-2021
Applicant	Mr J Patrinos
Agent:	
Case Officer:	Graeme McVittie
Site Address:	OLD COACH HOUSE, WOODY BAY, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4QX
Proposal:	Works to Trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order: T1. Remove damaged, hanging limb. T2. Fell leaning tree.
Recommendation:	Approve
Reason for bringing before Authority Committee:	The applicant is a Member of Exmoor National Park Authority.

Relevant History

None Relevant

Site Description & Proposal

The trees, subject to this application, stand adjacent to the access to The Old Coach House in an extensive area of woodland which characterises this part of Woody Bay. The trees are protected by a Woodland Tree Preservation Order ref F14/1/6 "Woody Bay Slattenslade Area" W1 dated 1964.

The application seeks the removal of a damaged limb (T1) and the felling of a leaning tree.

Consultee Representations

ENPA - Ecologist - From reviewing the photos within the case file T1 contains significant damage than has led to splits within the stem and branches. These splits may recede sufficiently to create crevices and gaps which may support roosting bats. The main stem of T2 looks to be in a good condition, however the photos provided do not show the full extent of branches and their condition; therefore, it is not possible to make an initial assessment of the potential roost features (prfs) associated with branches. Both trees look to contains some ivy coverings which may support summer

6.4

temporary roosts or conceal PRFs within the tree. Both trees have the potential to support nesting birds.

Informants:

Bats roost in trees throughout the year, with some species of birds, including the pigeon/dove family, also nesting throughout the year. Therefore, for trees works to continue without potentially impacting protected species, the landowner and/or their contactors would need to ensure that trees are assessed prior to works to check for potential roost features and the presence of other protected species, in order to maintain due diligence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This should be carried out using the following guidance, and by a qualified and experienced ecologist, or experienced bat surveyor: <http://battreehabitatkey.co.uk/> <https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/bat-surveys-for-professional-ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-3rd-edition> <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-1.pdf>

For any potential bat roost features present I would advise that the landowner should consult an experienced ecologist to undertake presence/absence surveys to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Vegetation removal should be undertaken between Sep - Feb to avoid impacts to nesting birds. Along with the advice above, please request that the landowner and/or their contractors follow the standard informative/advice re bats and birds: - The landowner and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

In the event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop, and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity. - The landowner and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

In the event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop, and advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity

North Devon Council - Planning - **No Observations**

Representations

No representations received.

Policy Context

6.4

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Considerations

The Authority need to assess the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the area and whether the proposal is justified, having regard to the reasons and additional information put forward in support of the application.

Works to remove a damaged hanging limb (T1) have been carefully considered. The tree officer for the Authority considers that in the interest of the health of the tree, works to remove the damaged limb is considered appropriate and justified.

The Sessile Oak (T2) is located in close proximity to a private drive way and the public Highway. The oak is leaning significantly towards the road while at the rear side of the tree the ground drops away steeply to the driveway. The stump is sat on top of dry stone walling that is holding the bank back. It was also identified that the root plate is not balanced in relation to the lean and is a cause for concern. The tree surgeon inspected the tree a couple of months ago, while it was still in leaf, and the vigor was good and there were no major cavities around the base. However, since this time the land owner has confirmed that the tree has started to lean significantly. There is concern that without works to the tree it could topple and damage the existing bank and driveway of the nearby property.

The woodland is predominantly sessile oak and parts are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The damage reported to the trees and the works proposed to rectify the damage are typical and expected of trees of this age, species and location. In the body of the woodland it would be recommended to simply allow them to fall and decay naturally. Their position directly next to the main drive however poses a risk and they need to be removed in a controlled manner.

The application confirms that the Brash from all the work is to be left stacked as habitat piles on site.

Therefore, officers consider that the application to remove tree T2 and remove a damaged limb from T1 should be approved.

Human Rights

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.

Conclusion

The proposals are considered appropriate and acceptable. ENPA Ecologist recommended that the information laid out below should be issued to the applicant to avoid any impacts on protected species.

6.4

Recommendation

Recommend that the application to remove tree T2 and remove a damaged limb from T1 should be approved.

Informatives

Bats roost in trees throughout the year, with some species of birds, including the pigeon/dove family, also nesting throughout the year. Therefore, for trees works to continue without potentially impacting protected species, the landowner and/or their contactors would need to ensure that trees are assessed prior to works to check for potential roost features and the presence of other protected species, in order to maintain due diligence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This should be carried out using the following guidance, and by a qualified and experienced ecologist, or experienced bat surveyor:

<http://battreehabitatkey.co.uk/>

<https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/bat-surveys-for-professional-ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-3rd-edition>

<https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-1.pdf>

For any potential bat roost features present I would advise that the landowner should consult an experienced ecologist to undertake presence/absence surveys to inform appropriate mitigation measures.

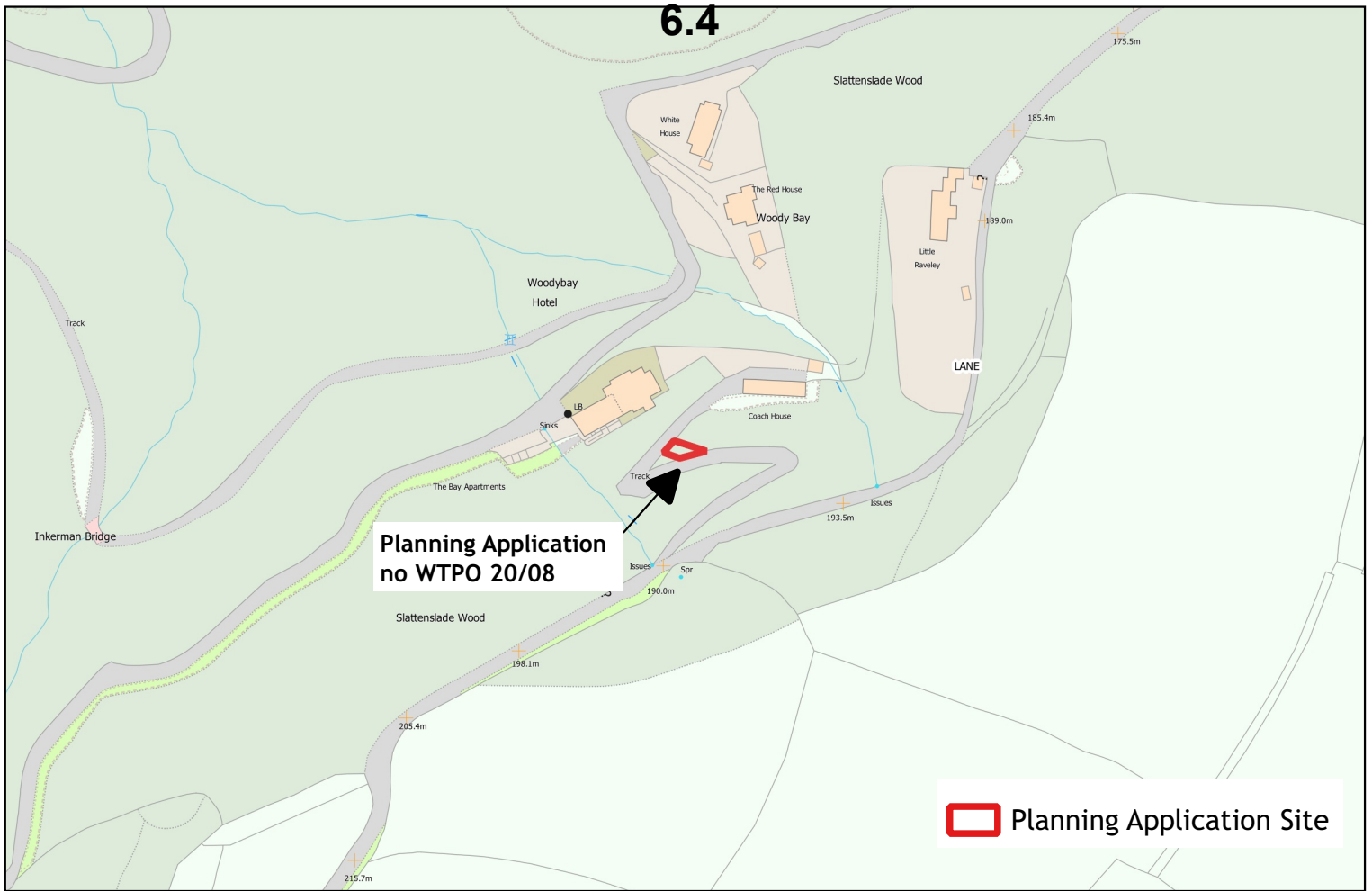
Vegetation removal should be undertaken between Sep - Feb to avoid impacts to nesting birds.

Along with the advice above, please request that the landowner and/or their contractors follow the standard informative/advice re bats and birds:

- The landowner and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In the event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop, and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

- The landowner and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to nesting birds under legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In the event that nesting birds are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop, and advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

6.4



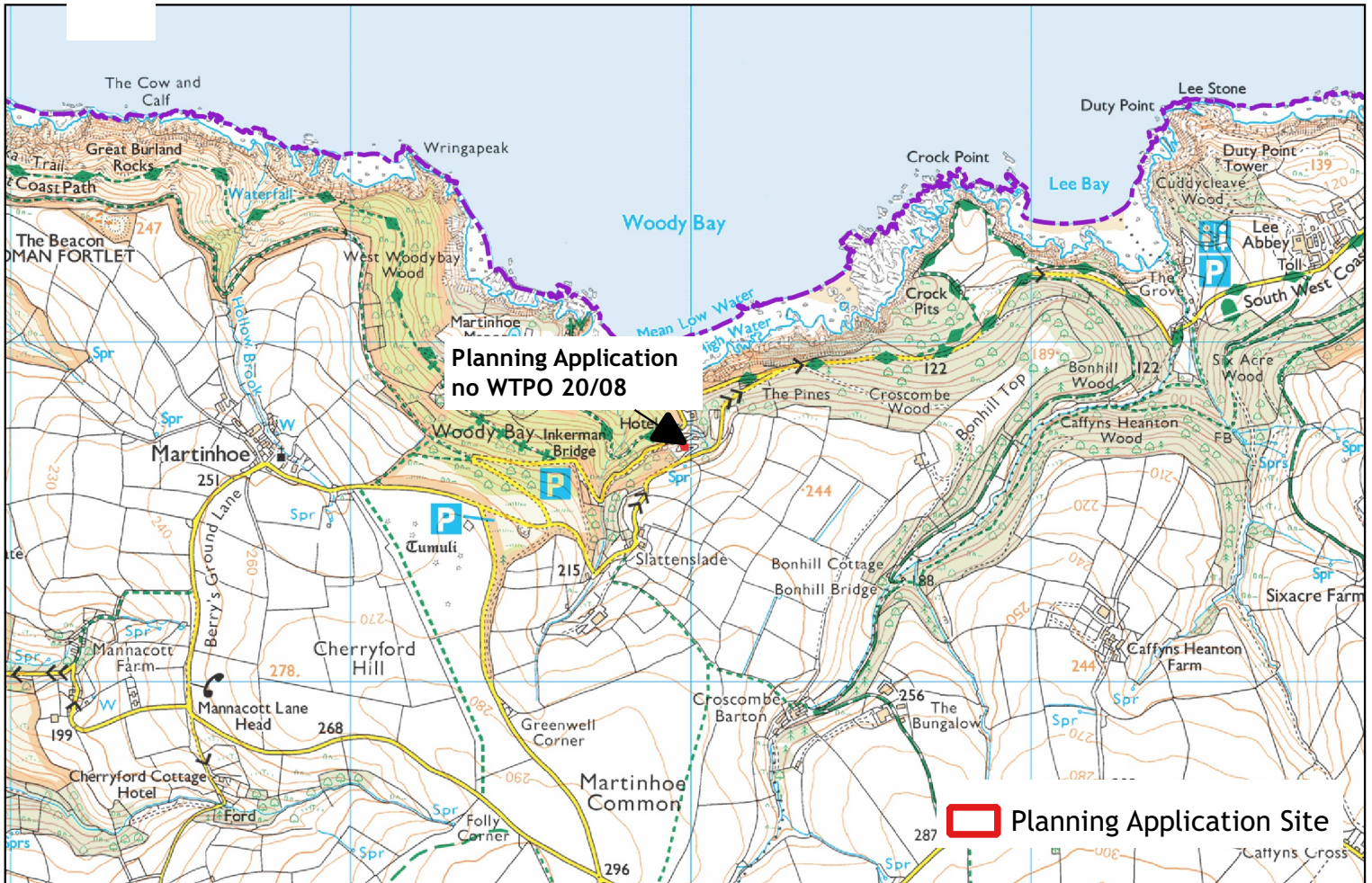
Planning Application
no WTPO 20/08

Planning Application Site

Site Map

Scale 1:2500

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Planning Application
no WTPO 20/08

Planning Application Site

Overview Map

Scale 1:20000

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Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
GDO 21/01	Mr & Mrs B Woollacott - Prior notification for the proposed extension to agricultural building (27.43m x 12.19m) for storage of fodder, bedding and agricultural equipment. (GDO - Agricultural/Forestry) - Land at Broomstreet, Minehead, TA24 8JR	GDO - Prior Approval Not Reqd 12-Feb-2021
6/9/21/102	Michael Eddisford, Exmoor National Park Authority - Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of display board adjacent to proposed parking meter to display parking fees and general information. (Advert) - Tarr Steps Car Park, Tarr Steps, Dulverton, Somerset	Withdrawn 01-Feb-2021
62/43/20/004LB	Mr G Towell - Listed building consent for the reopening of blocked internal doorway. (Listed Building Consent) - BIRCH COTTAGE, MARTINHOE, PARRACOMBE, BARNSTAPLE, EX31 4QT	Approved with Conditions 04-Feb-2021
6/42/20/111	Mr & Mrs Larcombe - Proposed variation of Condition 2 of approved application 6/42/94/101 to allow guests to occupy the holiday unit throughout the year. (Alteration/Lift Condition) - West Hollowcombe Farm, West Hollowcombe, Hawkridge, Dulverton, TA22 9QL	Approved with Conditions 10-Feb-2021
6/42/20/110	Mr & Mrs Larcombe - Proposed variation of Condition 2 of approved application 6/42/89/113 to allow guests to occupy the holiday units throughout the year. (Alteration/Lift Condition) - West Hollowcombe Farm, West Hollowcombe, Hawkridge, Dulverton, TA22 9QL	Approved with Conditions 10-Feb-2021
GDO 20/13	EE Ltd - Prior notification for proposed 12m telecommunications mast and ground-based apparatus. (GDO - Telecomms) - Field off A396 (Easting: 297808 Northing: 143037), Opposite Avill Farm, Dunster, TN24 7TA	Prior Approval Required-Prior Approval Approved 15-Feb-2021
6/43/20/111	c/o Agent, Airwave Solutions Ltd - Proposed retention of temporary non ground electronic transmission relay station, including mast and associated equipment. Retrospective. (Full) - Land at Easter Farm, Wootton Courtenay, Minehead, TA24 8RL	Approved with Conditions 11-Feb-2021

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
6/40/20/116LB	Mr C Phippen - Listed Building Consent for proposed replacement of chimney stack (Listed Building Consent) - BEVINS HOUSE, WINSFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7JE	Approved with Conditions 05-Feb-2021
6/40/20/115	Mr C Phippen - Proposed replacement of chimney stack (Householder) - BEVINS HOUSE, WINSFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7JE	Approved with Conditions 05-Feb-2021
6/15/20/107	Mr D Selley - Proposed erection of PVCU conservatory to side of property. (Householder) - STOLFORD RISE, EXTON, DULVERTON, TA22 9LA	Approved with Conditions 12-Feb-2021
GDO 20/08	EE Ltd - Prior notification for Proposed installation of 12m communications mast and associated apparatus. (GDO - Telecomms) - Existing barn off Thorne Lane, Wheddon Cross, Minehead, TA24 7EZ	Prior Approval Required-Prior Approval Approved 27-Jan-2021
6/40/20/113LB	Mark Broadwith - Listed Building Consent for the proposed change of use of attached disused wing to ancillary accommodation, together with works to exterior of dwelling and attached disused wing and works to log store and rear yards, including ground retaining structure and replacement surfaces. Including repairs and internal and external alterations and re-roofing of listed building. (Listed Building Consent) - Great Nurcott Farm, WINSFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7HR	Approved with Conditions 15-Feb-2021
6/40/20/112	Mark Broadwith - Proposed change of use of attached disused wing to ancillary accommodation, together with works to exterior of dwelling and attached disused wing and works to log store and rear yards, including ground retaining structure and replacement surfaces. (Full) - Great Nurcott Farm, WINSFORD, MINEHEAD, TA24 7HR	Approved with Conditions 15-Feb-2021
62/11/20/011	Mr. Rob Joules, The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty - Lawful Development Certificate for change of use of part of buildings at Lorna Doone Farm to use as three separate residential dwellings (Use Class C3). (CLEUD) - Lorna Doone Farm Cottage, Road to Malmsmead Bridge, Malmsmead, EX35 6NU	Approved 29-Jan-2021

Application decisions delegated to the Chief Executive

Ref and Grid Ref	Applicant & Location	Decision and Date
6/20/20/106	Chargot Estate - Proposed erection of a single storey outbuilding (45m ²), incorporating a garage and a stable, the proposed erection of a single storey outbuilding for use as a kennel (28.7m ²), together with, the blocking up of existing access onto highway and creation of new access route from existing farm drive. (Full) - Langham Hill Cottage, Chargot Estate, Luxborough, Watchet, Somerset, TA23 0SL	Approved with Conditions 26-Jan-2021

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 March 2021

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 TO 2025/26 AND BUDGET 2021/22

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Purpose of Report: To consider and approve a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2021/22 to 2025/26 and to adopt the revenue budget for 2021/22 within the level of funding being provided by way of National Park Grant (NPG) from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and self-generated income.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to:

- 1) ADOPT the attached Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 1 and AGREE the Financial Strategy that underpins the MTFP and Budget as set out in Section 8;
- 2) APPROVE the Core and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets for 2021/22 as summarised in Appendices 2 and 3;
- 3) Approve the Capital Investment Strategy shown in Section 6; and
- 4) NOTE the position on reserves as detailed in Appendix 5.

Authority Priority: Getting best value from our resources and improving our performance – Finance and Performance - Financial Management.

Legal and Equality Implications: Local Government Act 2003, Parts 1-3 (Capital Finance, Financial Administration and Grants), and Sections 1-39

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, Part 2 (Financial Management and Internal Control).

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

Financial and Risk Implications: The setting of a budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy are the key elements in the management of financial risk. Section 7 details in more detail the risks surrounding the current budget and our future financial health.

The recommended budget is in accordance with the *assumed* amount of National Park Grant being provided by DEFRA towards the net expenditure of the Authority for 2021/22. Budgetary control and financial management arrangements are in place to minimise any risk of overspending and to ensure that spending is kept in line with the approved budget. The budget will be reviewed at the half year stage and a progress report made to the November 2021 meeting of the Authority. The budget may have to be revisited before this point if significant adjustments need to be made.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the time of drafting this report we have not been formally notified of the level of National Park Grant (NPG) for 2021/22. The additional risks and complications that this introduces to the budget setting process are detailed in section 7. All assumptions are clearly stated within the report.
- 1.2 Funding for ENPA from DEFRA peaked at £4,177,453 back in 2010/11. Since then the Authority has experienced reductions in grant and increases that are below the rate of inflation.
- 1.3 This report needs to be read in conjunction with the 2021/22 Corporate Plan. That report is based upon the same financial assumptions as this and if the assumptions prove to be inaccurate then targets within the Corporate Plan may also have to be revisited.
- 1.4 As the last twelve months have been unusually dynamic it may perhaps be beneficial to the Authority to recall key events and decisions in the recent financial cycle.
- 1.5 When the 2020-21 budget was set the National Park Grant figure did not include any uplift for inflation and funding for biodiversity was included within the NPG figure to bring it back to cash neutral. We have since been informed that funding equivalent to the Biodiversity Grant is included within the NPG figure so the 2021-22 grant will start with this included.
- 1.6 When the accounts for 2019-20 were closed the initial financial impact of the pandemic was becoming clearer. This provided the timely opportunity to set aside funds for the Outdoor Education Centre at the point where it was unclear what support would be forthcoming and how much activity would be possible. As it turns out we have received significant government support to a variety of service areas because of the pandemic. We have currently received just under £150k. The Authority also established a COVID-19 Response Fund to assist businesses, social and community groups with the immediate impact of the pandemic at this time.
- 1.7 The key financial adjustment when the budget was revised in November was the transfer of funds into the Modernisation Reserve to fund the redundancy process that was a key part of the restructure. We were also able to have a clearer view on the pandemic's financial impact upon car parking, Planning and National Park Centre income.

2. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is a key feature of the Authority's forward planning process and it is reviewed annually on a rolling five-year basis. The MTFP is a key document for:
 - outlining future resources, funding opportunities and cost pressures;
 - highlighting key assumptions; and
 - providing an overview of the future financial position of the Authority.

Appendix 1 details the overarching income and expenditure categories for the Authority for the next five financial years. It is the only Appendix that brings together the Core ongoing budget and investment in Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves. We start with the MTFP as it sets the scene.

MTFP - Income

- 2.2 As mentioned, at the time of drafting the report we do not know what our National Park Grant for 2021/22 will be. The MTFP presented assumes a cash neutral NPG figure for next year. This is the more prudent assumption. From 2022/23 the MTFP assumes a 2% increase, as per the assumed staff salary increases. These are significant assumptions as this grant provides approximately 80% of our funding. Analysis of the impact of pessimistic and optimistic scenarios of NPG changes upon savings targets are shown in the table in 2.17.
- 2.3 In addition to NPG the Authority receives:
- income generated from fees, charges, rents, grants for joint works and from interest earned on the investment of funds held in reserves etc;
 - contributions from the County Councils towards the maintenance of the rights of way network; and
 - external funding for specific projects that either the Authority delivers in its own right or in partnership with others. This will be a key theme in accessing additional resources in the medium term.
- 2.4 The figures in Appendix 1 show slight increases over the period of the MTFP. Trading income from the National Park Centres and the Outdoor Education centre is forecast to continue to increase gradually. The investment in our car parks is intended to improve the visitor experience and bring in additional funds.
- 2.5 The figures in Appendix 1 assume that contributions from Somerset and Devon County Councils towards the management of Public Rights of Way will be maintained at their current rate. However, the continued impact of austerity on local government may well mean that these contributions will fall below the current level. In the last few years, a reduction in revenue support from the County Councils has been more than made up for by capital grants to maintain specific sections of the network.
- 2.6 Rent from the estate has for many years been highlighted as potentially impacted by the UK's exit from the EU. Information on future Environmental Land Management Schemes is starting to become available but is not yet so clear that we can assess the impact. The MTFP continues to assume consistent income from the Estate though the real picture that will evolve will be less stable than that appears.
- 2.7 We continue to assume that the Outdoor Education Centre breaks even in the medium term.

MTFP - Expenditure

- 2.8 Appendix 1 also anticipates future expenditure over the MTFP period. The single largest areas of expenditure for ENPA is staff salaries. The unions and bodies representing local government employers have yet to reach agreement over future years pay awards. Central government has expressed the wish that salaries in the public sector do not get an inflationary increase in 2021-22, though they do not control the process by which this is determined. The MTFP therefore prudently assumes a 1% for next year and 2% for later years.
- 2.9 Members will also recall that the Authority developed a new grading structure and undertook a Job Evaluation exercise in 2018-19. The financial impact of this will last for 6 years as staff who are affected move through the new increments. For year 2022-23 – 2024-25 this entails an additional 1.5% p.a. on the salary estimates.

2.10 For other categories of cost to the Authority a small provision has been found for future years increases. If this proves insufficient then additional resources will have to be found in future years. The MTFP assume that the organisation undertakes the same activities in the future as it does now. The reality may be very different. It contains an inherent assumption that if significant new funding streams arise, that the broader cost of delivering these will be funded.

MTFP – Programmes, Partnerships & Contributions to Reserves

- 2.11 The updated version of the plan in Appendix 1 summarises not only the income and expenditure projections across the period of the plan but also the proportions proposed for Core (the recurring costs and unavoidable commitments for essential services) and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets. Section 4 details the objectives of the Programmes & Partnerships budget area and planned use in 2020/21.
- 2.12 The MTFP developed, sets aside £150k p.a. to meet one-off pressures and priorities. This is considered necessary due to recent experience of costs arising in the estate. The MTFP also contains a Planning assumption that we continue to support those external bodies to the same degree that we are currently.

MTFP - Overview

- 2.13 The MTFP presented includes a significant proportion of estimates and assumptions. It isn't always like this. In previous years we have had the certainty of multi-year pay awards or 3 or 4 year 'settlements' from Defra. It is therefore quite likely to change as circumstances evolve.
- 2.14 The bottom section of Appendix 1 contains a number of key metrics that consider forward looking financial resilience.
- 2.15 The Authority has historically monitored the proportion of National Park Grant that is needed to meet the costs of employing permanent staff. This is a proxy for the ability of the Authority to manage short term fluctuations in funding. Staff costs as a percentage of NPG are projected at 75% in 2021/22 and are anticipated to continue to increase further over the period of the MTFP unless alternative options are explored.
- 2.16 The medium-term financial aspirations of staff costs being only 70% of NPG and having £200,000 of uncommitted funds to meet one-off pressures (or a steep grant cut) is still out of reach. We will not lose sight of these aspirations but at or near the bottom of the funding cycle and with significant new pressures arising, medium term aspirations are effectively becoming longer term. However, we continue to proactively manage resources and set balanced budgets.
- 2.17 The final section of Appendix 1 shows a savings gap from year 2 onwards. It is important to show how this will be affected by movements in the key funding stream.

£'000's	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Current savings Gap	60	80	106	97
Scenario 1 - Optimistic	5	25	51	42
Scenario 2 - Pessimistic	124	144	170	161

2.18 The Optimistic Scenario (1) shows a reduction in the savings gap if the Authority receives an increase in the NPG in 2021-22 equivalent to what was received for the 4 years to 2019-20. Scenario 2 (Pessimistic) shows how the savings gap will increase

if we do not receive the assumed NPG increase in 2022-23. This table attempts to illustrate the effects of small changes in assumptions concerning the NPG on the savings gap.

3. CORE BUDGET FOR 2021/22

- 3.1 The Authority is statutorily required to set a balanced budget in furtherance of the Purposes of its National Park designation. Appendix 1 shows the Authority's MTFP on an income and expenditure basis. Appendix 2 shows the budget for 2021/22 in a service structure. This has been reviewed and updated to reflect the new organisational structure and other cost pressures.
- 3.2 A significant piece of work has been undertaken to reconsider roles, responsibilities and available resources, and the Authority has been working through a consultation process. Leadership Team confirmed the proposed changes on 29 January 2021 after considering responses from staff and aims to have these changes in place by 1 April 2021. In essence, certain posts will no longer exist, some Fixed Term (FT) posts will become permanent, there is 1 less Leadership Team post, a new post will be funded from external resources and 2 new FT posts to manage service pressures in Planning and corporate administration and Rural Enterprise. This explains the bulk of the movements in service budgets between 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- 3.3 Other areas to be drawn to the attention of members are as follows:
- There are small increases in budget for Audit Fee and Insurance.
 - The Pinkery Centre starts the year without any Authority support towards its trading activities however provision is made within Programmes and Partnership to meet a likely deficit.
 - The budget for Corporate Subscriptions has been maintained. Members are to determine how this is to be allocated.
 - Income from car parking is assumed to increase.
 - The Legal Services budget has increased to reflect the new SLA with DCC.
 - There is a slight reduction in travel for those service areas where national travel was previously assumed. It is assumed that video conferencing is now a permanent fixture of professional life.

4. PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS & CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES

- 4.1 The Programmes and Partnerships element of the budget is an important element in achieving National Park purposes and priorities through the engagement and influencing of partners and funding for initiatives aimed at achieving Partnership Plan priorities. We contribute to reserves on an ongoing basis to meet one-off costs that do not arise in a consistent or predictable manner or to put money aside to meet pressures that arise in-year.
- 4.2 Attached at Appendix 3 is the proposed Programmes, Partnerships & Contributions to Reserves Budget for 2021/22. This shows £155,000 contributed to reserves, £79,400 top sliced for fixed term programmes and £20,000 being made available for small grants.
- 4.3 The total amount available in Programmes and Partnerships is only £14k lower than the figure from last year even though we are experiencing two years without any increase to grant, we are in the process of implementing an organisational restructure and are midway through managing the financial impact of Job Evaluation. This provides further evidence that resources are being actively managed.

4.4 Detail on the additions to reserves are listed below:

- Woodlands. This draft budget recommends £60k added to the reserve to meet the costs related to Ash- Die back. This is the third instalment of this amount. Service managers anticipate needing one more tranche of £60k to complete this week. This may be required before the end of 2021-22.
- Estates Reserve. £85,000 is requested to repair a section of the roof at the Pinkery Centre and to undertake some external repairs to the Lynmouth Pavilion.
- Interns. The Authority has an ongoing assumption that we fund one intern a year. In recent years we have received external funding to support many of our interns and so the pot of money available has built up. For this reason, we are only seeking £10,000 to maintain the commitment even though the true cost is closer to £20,000 for a twelve-month intern. Generation Green and Kickstart programmes will also fund work placements in 2021/22.

4.5 ENPA requires £50,000 p.a. in the medium term to maintain the current size of the vehicle fleet. However, there are a lot of pressures that need funding this year so for one year only it is recommended that we do not set aside funds for vehicles this year. This is considered reasonable in the circumstances as we will start next year with £200k in the relevant reserves, in the current year there has been minimal wear and tear on vehicles and there is the opportunity to top up the reserve in the future if it is necessary. This is not a practice we want to turn in to a habit, but I do think it is the best option in the circumstances. This is a key decision this year in being able to deliver a balanced budget.

4.6 If the Authority does receive some increase to the core NPG for 2021-22 then I recommend that the first £50k of that be added to the Vehicle Equipment reserve. This will support the aspiration to transition to EV as and when vehicles need replacing.

4.7 Detail on the fixed term discretionary programmes included in this budget that are £10,000 or above are shown below.

- Tourism (£20,000). This allocation provides support in relation to our 2nd purpose and includes support to the tourism sector to help promote Exmoor National Park as a special destination and to develop the Exmoor brand, providing advice and support to tourism businesses and those who provide services to visitors to improve their experience, in addition to seeking to grow the capacity of the industry. Work will be led by ENPA and partners such as Visit Exmoor.
- Exmoor Hill Farming Network (£19,000). ENPA has provided financial contributions to the successful and well-regarded Exmoor Hill Farming Network since its genesis, and on 31 January 2020 the Network took the significant step of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Company. Funding support during 2021/22 will provide essential funds in this crucial year.
- Though core budget to support the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning has now been withdrawn, it is considered prudent to set aside £20,000 in case it does not break even.

4.8 As stated in 1.6, funds were set aside in July for the anticipated deficit at the outdoor education centre due to the impact of the pandemic. It is now anticipated that this will not all required in the current year. This is because of central government support but also because the service adapted their offer to what circumstances

allowed at the time. This entailed more day visits from schools and some extended family breaks with gaps between each visit. For next year it is reasonable assume that the running of the service will continue to be affected by the pandemic but, with

optimism, we hope that some service will resume by late spring / early summer. It is very difficult to predict the level of operations that will be possible in the new year, if any additional government support will be forthcoming, or the likely deficit at the centre. Setting aside £20k now, plus the balance on the in-year deficit provision is potentially sufficient. This may have to be revisited.

- 4.9 2021-22 will be the second year with the reduced amount for small grants pot (£20k).
- 4.10 This budget presented maintains the existing level of support to Tourism and the small grants pot. In 2020-21 these pots were utilised to provide COVID-19 support to business sector. In 2021-22 these will again be available to support recovery in local businesses from the pandemic. The exact shape and direction of this support continues to evolve.

5. RESERVES (level of)

- 5.1 Appendix 4 shows the anticipated level of reserves as at the end of 2020/21 and reflects the additions to reserves described in section 4 that are recommended as a part of this budget.
- 5.2 The following assumptions have been maintained as part of the review:
- The General Fund Reserve has been maintained at a level of approximately £300,000 as per the Medium-Term Financial Plan. It is the view of the Chief Finance Officer that this is sufficient to manage in-year fluctuations.
 - The recently established Contingency Fund is not anticipated to go below the level at which it will require topping up (£250,000).
 - The Legal Support Reserve has been maintained at £100,000. This is established for the purpose of ensuring that funds are available to meet any large one-off legal costs such as related to a large planning inquiry.
- 5.3 Though in recent years there has been a fall in the overall level of reserves, the Authority's financial resilience has been maintained as we have established a contingency, met liabilities that have arisen and are actively seeking new areas of funding such as capital receipts to improve resilience.
- 5.4 In 2020-21 the Authority has sold three parcels of land for a total of £110k at Cutcombe, Malmsmead and Whitecross Lodge. This provides some financing flexibility and improves resilience. The Authority has also received £50k as part of a legacy. As and when the position of County Gate is confirmed that will also allow funds to be returned to the unallocated pots.
- 5.5 The Authority continues to face significant unknowns however reserves are adequate to meet the challenge.

6. CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- 6.1 The obligation to provide a Capital Investment Strategy has arisen as some authorities have become increasingly willing to invest significant amounts in commercial developments to generate returns that will offset some of the financial impact of austerity. This part of budget setting will ensure that decision makers are fully briefed on the risks attached to the local authority's Capital Investment Strategy.
- 6.2 Exmoor National Park Authority does not have a Capital Programme or ongoing need for significant investment in physical assets in the same way as local authorities whom have responsibility for highways or housing. Capital spend is commonly of a small-scale nature such as related to vehicles or IT. For larger schemes such as

White Rock Cottage or Weir Cleave stabilisation, members will receive a specific report to support decision making. This will provide background, the reasons for the scheme being recommended and sources of finance. In advance of the report being presented to the Authority the Finance and Performance Advisory Panel will have scrutinised the scheme.

- 6.3 No capital schemes are being recommended as part of this budget setting process. The schemes mentioned above are nearing completion and there are no current plans to request further sums on them.
- 6.4 The Authority historically has a low risk attitude towards capital investment. It has never internally or externally borrowed to fund capital schemes nor has it entered into other long-term liabilities such as Private Finance Initiatives and does not invest for commercial purposes. Capital investment decisions are made to support National Park purposes.
- 6.5 We seek external contributions towards supporting our capital spend wherever possible. Where capital receipts are available these will be used to finance spend. In the absence of both of these then revenue is applied.
- 6.6 Stewardship of our assets is delivered by a small Land and Property team and led by a qualified Chartered Surveyor. The portfolio is relatively large and diverse, and the Authority is carrying out a review of the assets at time of writing. This involves assessing which ones deliver National Park Purposes, identifying liabilities and opportunities for prudent disposals. We have also recently updated the Authority's Acquisitions and Disposals policy.
- 6.7 Built assets are subject to regular condition assessment, with the majority on a 5-year cycle of external repair and redecoration. Rental income is optimised through regular rent reviews and other opportunities to generate income from property are maximised.
- 6.8 Please note our existing risks attached to property liabilities in the table in section 7 also.
- 6.9 In the current year the Authority has delivered the new Woodside Bridge in Lynmouth and is in the process of completing the White Rock Cottage development and transferring the property to the local trust.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The budget and MTFP recommended contain within them a number of assumptions that may or may not prove accurate. In addition, events may occur that have the potential affect the Authority's underlying finances. The risk analysis is as follows:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Factors
National Park Grant is not as high as anticipated	Medium	High	Level of Reserves held. Annual Review. Some notice will be provided of future funding reductions sufficient to enable a timely response.
Pay awards may be higher than anticipated.	Low	Medium	Annual review of MTFP Some variations containable.

Liabilities related to the Property Estate arise.	Medium	Medium	A Contingency fund has been established to meet one off costs that arise. Opportunities for developing a pot of capital receipts is being explored.
The existing stabilisation scheme at Weir Cleave could require ongoing work.	Medium	Medium	The Authority has committed specific sums to these schemes and any further requests for money must come back to the Authority.
The pandemic continues to disrupt commercial activity and partnership work.	Medium	Medium	A Contingency fund has been established to meet one off costs that arise.
The UK's exit from the European Union impacts upon the Land and Property income stream.	Low	Low	The establishment of UK led Land Management schemes should become clearer soon. Existing stewardship schemes end gradually in the period up to 2023.
Economic situation could deteriorate and impact on self-generated income and costs. Areas of income generation in the budget prove unrealistic.	Low	Low	MTFP constructed on a five-year time span with a review each year. Budgetary Control arrangements in place to monitor income and expenditure on a monthly basis. The Pinkery Centre will be looked at directly.
Contributions from County Councils and Public Rights of Way may continue to be reduced.	Medium	Medium	This is subject to an annual review. Reduction in income will be projected in the MTFP.

7.2 This year the level of risk we are exposed to as part of the budget setting process is greater than in many previous years. The two most important numbers, the change to National Park Grant and staff pay award, we still do not know. Also, when we do get the formal notification, it will only relate to one financial year and we do not know what the direction of travel is for NPG. The aspirations contained within the Landscape Review necessitates a much greater level of funding. It suggests that current levels should be protected in real terms and refers to the importance of medium-term settlements to aid financial planning. These may or may not be forthcoming.

8. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

8.1 In previous years the financial strategy of the Authority has been built around managing the impact in the 40% reduction in National Park Grant that has occurred since 2010/11. This required the careful management of costs, the development of new funding streams and seeking external funding for one off projects. The notification from DEFRA that NPG between 2016/17 and 2019/20 would be protected in real terms

changed the basis for financial planning and restored some funding stability. However, the annual increases in grant were never sufficient to meet the increases in the cost base or new obligations that arose. It is the additional external income that was brought in each year that allows the organisation to continue to deliver the existing priorities and implement the National Park Partnership Plan.

- 8.2 Over the last twelve months we have sought to manage the impact of the implementation of the new grading system, job evaluation and a cash neutral NPG figure for 2020-21 by undertaking an organisational restructure. This has been a substantial and exhaustive process, but it has generated some headroom and allowed the Authority to reconsider priorities.
- 8.3 With the funding assumptions stated, within the MTFP there remains a savings target from year 2 onwards however relatively small changes to funding could see this reduce. Of greater urgency could be indirect financial pressures relating to supporting service delivery, increased visitor numbers, the financial impact of the pandemic to us and to the local community, the need to reduce carbon and engage in opportunities with new funding opportunities. It is therefore vital that we continue to search out and maximise funding opportunities that are available to us.
- 8.4 The Authority continues to provide a broad range of activities and maintain a large estate. There are inherent liabilities and opportunities that stem from this. We continue to learn from others wherever possible, keep looking ahead and seek out opportunities that arise.

9. CONCLUSION AND FINANCIAL STANDING

- 9.1 The Authority has experienced many years of decreasing financial support from central government. The Authority responded to these pressures with a co-ordinated response with the restructuring of the organisation, expenditure reviews and use of opportunities to generate increased income.
- 9.2 It is perhaps worth considering that while most National Parks have been obliged to furlough staff and some have received significant emergency support from Defra, this Authority continued to manage its own resources without having to ask for additional help.
- 9.3 This Authority has an excellent record of managing its financial affairs within the resources that are made available and that it is able to generate. The Medium Term Financial Plan and 2021/22 Budget continue this effective stewardship.
- 9.4 The proposed MTFP, Core Budget and Programmes and Partnerships Budgets for 2021/22 are contained in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 which the Authority is requested to approve.
- 9.5 Careful management of the budgets and reserves transactions will be required as we progress through the current year. As we travel through this coming year all those estimates, projections and assumptions on which the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2021/22 budget is based will be refined and updated and will feed into the update of the MTFP towards the final quarters of 2020/21.

Gordon Bryant
Chief Finance Officer
February 2021

Exmoor National Park Authority
Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26

	2020/21 Original £'000	2021/22 Original £'000	2022/23 Projected £'000	2023/24 Projected £'000	2024/25 Projected £'000	2025/26 Projected £'000
Income						
National Park Grant Income (Defra) - including one off funding	3,211	3,211	3,275	3,341	3,408	3,476
- Fees - planning,	88	88	91	94	97	100
- Fees - car parks	60	70	80	85	90	95
- Interest earned	20	18	20	20	20	20
- Rents & Contributions	300	300	300	300	300	300
- National Park Centre Sales Income	93	93	96	99	102	105
- Grants	10	10	10	10	10	10
- Rights of Way Income	50	50	50	50	50	50
- Pinkery Trading Income	155	140	145	150	155	160
- Other	13	13	13	13	13	13
Total:	789	782	805	821	837	853
Total Income	4,000	3,993	4,080	4,162	4,245	4,329
Expenditure						
Core budget - Pay						
Current Establishment (excluding Pinkery)	2,323	2,335	2,417	2,501	2,589	2,641
Pension Costs - Fixed Element	138	140	143	148	153	159
Target Pay Budget	2,461	2,475	2,560	2,649	2,742	2,800
Core budget Non-Pay						
Member costs	96	97	98	99	100	101
Premises costs	189	189	191	193	195	197
Insurance	48	50	46	46	46	46
Travel / vehicle costs	107	105	112	114	114	114
Equipment	61	61	61	61	61	61
Contracted work (e.g. audit fees, legal services)	248	254	250	252	254	256
Grants and contributions	11	11	11	11	12	13
Subscriptions	34	34	34	34	34	34
National Park Centre Cost of Goods Sold	57	57	59	61	63	65
Consumables	71	72	72	73	74	75
ICT Expenditure	67	67	68	69	70	71
Communications	34	34	36	36	37	38
Toilet & car park costs	92	92	93	94	95	96
Pinkery	155	140	145	150	155	160
Total non-pay budget	1,270	1,263	1,276	1,293	1,310	1,327
Total Core Budget	3,731	3,738	3,836	3,942	4,052	4,127
Programmes, Partnerships & Contributions to Reserves						
Contributions to Reserves	175	156	210	210	210	210
Top Sliced Programmes	74	79	74	69	69	69
Partnership Fund - small grants scheme	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total available Programmes & Partnerships Budget	269	255	304	299	299	299
Total expenditure	4,000	3,993	4,140	4,242	4,351	4,426
Savings yet to be identified		0	-60	-80	-106	-97

Section	Budget Heading	2020/21 Original Budget £	2021/22 Expenditure £	2021/22 Income £	2021/22 Original Budget £	Variance between 20/21 Original and 21/22 Original
Support to Land Managers	Access & Recreation	139,200	170,100	-27,500	142,600	3,400
	Archaeology & Historic Environment	77,400	80,800	-1,200	79,600	2,200
	Field Services	276,300	309,200	-23,000	286,200	9,900
	Conservation Advice & Support	282,300	288,500	-4,000	284,500	2,200
	Rangers	129,400	118,400	-18,000	100,400	-29,000
Support to Land Managers Total		904,600	967,000	-73,700	893,300	-11,300
Support services to the Community	Development Management	316,400	395,500	-88,000	307,500	-8,900
	Sustainability & Economy	77,900	87,900	0	87,900	10,000
Support services to the Community Total		394,300	483,400	-88,000	395,400	1,100
Support to National Park Users	Education & Volunteers	62,800	55,100	-2,000	53,100	-9,700
	National Park & Information Centres	152,300	294,800	-137,500	157,300	5,000
	Information & Interpretation Management	219,300	204,500	0	204,500	-14,800
	Pinkery	0	140,000	-140,000	0	0
	Visitor Facilities	31,400	91,400	-70,000	21,400	-10,000
Support to National Park Users Total		465,800	785,800	-349,500	436,300	-29,500
Strategy & Performance	Legal Support	65,000	70,000	0	70,000	5,000
	Strategy & Performance	327,800	325,500	0	325,500	-2,300
Finance and ICT Services	Finance and ICT Services	367,900	407,000	-18,000	389,000	21,100
Land and Property Services	Land and Property Services	17,400	278,500	-252,000	26,500	9,100
Support Services Total		778,100	1,081,000	-270,000	811,000	32,900
Corporate Management	Corporate Management	133,500	152,500	0	152,500	19,000
	Historic Pensions Contributions	138,000	140,000	0	140,000	2,000
	Corporate Subscriptions	32,000	32,000	0	32,000	0
	Members	95,800	96,600	0	96,600	800
Corporate Management Total		399,300	421,100	0	421,100	21,800
Total Core Budget		2,942,100		-781,200	2,957,100	15,000

ITEM 9 - Appendix 3**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMMES, PARTNERSHIPS AND
CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES****2021/22**

ORIGINAL BUDGET	254,400
LESS: Contributions to Reserves	
Woodlands	60,000
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	-
Estates Reserve - Lynmouth Pavilion external works	15,000
Estates Reserve - Pinkery Roof	70,000
Land Visioning	-
Environmental Resilience	-
Internship and Trainee Fund	10,000
Research & Data Gathering	-
	155,000
LESS: Top sliced Programmes	
Tourism	20,000
Hill Farm Network	19,000
Potential Pinkery overspend	20,000
Naturally Active in Later Life	5,000
Website Development	5,000
SERC/DBRC Bio-records	5,000
STEAM	4,000
Joint committee	1,400
	79,400
Partnership Fund - small grants scheme	20,000
2021/22 Programmes & Partnership Fund	254,400

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
ANALYSIS OF RESERVES**

	Balance 31/03/20	2020/21 Budget Allocations	2020/21 In year Reserve Transfers	Projected Transfers (from) Reserves 2020/21	Current Balance	2021/22 Budget Allocations	Projected Balance 01/04/21
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
REVENUE EARMARKED RESERVES							
Support to Land Managers							
Ashcombe Garden Restoration	10,000			-5,000	5,000		5,000
Mire - Archaeology	29,758			-15,000	14,758		14,758
Headwaters of the Exe	28,731		-28,731		(0)		(0)
Heritage Projects	52,109			-40,000	12,109		12,109
Deer Monitoring Study	13,424				13,424		13,424
Woodland Mgt Reserve	50,784	60,000	-17,268	-60,000	33,516	60,000	93,516
External Funding Bids	23,274				23,274		23,274
Rights of Way	259,663			-100,000	159,663		159,663
Simonsbath Project Delivery	32,792			-32,792	0		0
Landscape Conservation Grant Scheme	11,244			-11,244	(0)		(0)
Support to National Park Users							
Caremoor For Exmoor	15,016			-7,500	7,516		7,516
National Park Centres spend to save	17,336				17,336		17,336
Get Involved Programme	38,676			-30,000	8,676		8,676
Toilet Upgrade Programme	15,000				15,000		15,000
Health & Well-being	22,771			-20,000	2,771		2,771
Engagement & Outreach	15,911				15,911		15,911
Support to the Community and Business							
Development of Planning Service	41,257			-20,000	21,257		21,257
Conserv Area Appraisals & Neighbourhd Plan	12,283				12,283		12,283
Dunster Action Plan	21,189				21,189		21,189
Strategy & Performance							
Environmental Resilience	20,000	0	18,731	-18,000	20,731		20,731
IT and Web Development	92,175			-15,000	77,175		77,175
Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement	159,425	50,000		-60,000	149,425		149,425
Planning Policy	145,356				145,356		145,356
Research & Development	41,701	0			41,701		41,701
Modernisation (<i>Spend to Save</i>)	86,106		120,000	-120,000	86,106		86,106
Internship and Trainee Fund	43,533	15,000		-10,000	48,533	10,000	58,533
Authority Estate	226,428	50,000	17,268	-150,000	143,696	85,000	228,696
	1,525,940	175,000	110,000	-714,536	1,096,404	155,000	1,251,404
PROGRAMMES & PARTNERSHIPS							
Programmes - fixed term	326,236	4,400		-150,000	180,636	79,400	260,036
Partnership Fund/ small grants scheme	59,256	20,000		-30,000	49,256	20,000	69,256
Programmes & Partnership Earmarked - County	90,000				90,000		90,000
	475,492	24,400	0	-180,000	319,892	99,400	419,292
GENERAL FUND AND CONTINGENCIES							
General Fund	325,494				325,494		325,494
Contingency Fund - General (pf uncommit)	458,193		-110,000		348,193		348,193
Contingency Fund - Legal	100,000				100,000		100,000
	883,686	0	-110,000	0	773,686	0	773,686
TOTAL RESERVES	2,885,118	199,400	0	-894,536	2,189,982	254,400	2,444,382

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 March 2021

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2021/22

Report of the Head of Strategy and Performance

Purpose of Report: To present to Members the draft Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1) APPROVE the Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2021/22.
- 2) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Chairman authority to agree minor amendments following member discussion and in the light of National Park grant budget settlement, and production of the final Plan.

Authority Priority: The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities for the Authority for the period to end of March 2022.

Legal and Equality Implications: Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to “do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:-

- (a) the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s.65 (1) [National Park purposes]
- (b) the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”

The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows: There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s). Engagement through the outreach work within the plan is designed to have a positive impact on protected groups.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows: There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

Financial and Risk implications: No financial or risk implications have been identified. Performance management exerts a positive influence on financial and risk management.

Climate Response: The Corporate plan includes action to respond to the climate emergency.

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2021/22 Corporate Plan sets out the key priorities for the Authority for the next financial year and reflects Government priorities for how National Parks can help to deliver national objectives.
- 1.2 In preparing the Corporate Plan the National Park Grant settlement for this year had not been confirmed by Defra. The Corporate Plan has been prepared on the assumption of no change to the National Park Grant. The Budget report also being

presented to Members at the Authority meeting in March, sets out in more detail how the budget has been prepared, including the impact of the recent organisational changes, staff pay awards. If the National Park Grant settlement from Defra is significantly different, then changes to the budget and subsequently the Corporate Plan will be needed, and Leadership Team will need to review the commitments in the Plan and report back to Members at a future meeting.

2. Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2021-2022

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan 2021-2022 updates the previous 2020-21 Plan. A number of actions have been rolled forward, some have been deleted (completed actions or those not being progressed), and new actions added. The Plan highlights a number of priority actions where efforts will be focused this year.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan is closely aligned with the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023. This is a Statutory Plan for the National Park as a whole, for everyone who cares about Exmoor, the place, its communities and the benefits the National Park provides to the nation. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will lead delivery of the Vision and Ambitions set out in the Partnership Plan, working with our partnership groups. This year marks the mid-point in delivery of the Partnership Plan, and we will work with our partnership groups to report progress, as well as begin scoping work for the next State of the Park report.
- 2.3 The Plan has been developed against an ongoing background of national changes including the UK leaving the European Union, and we expect further changes to be announced by the Government this year including responses to the Landscapes Review by Julian Glover and the Planning White Paper.
- 2.4 It is also set within the ongoing changes arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and this will continue to influence delivery moving into the 2021-22 financial year. We expect that many people will want to enjoy the benefits that the National Park provides once lockdown restrictions are lifted, and we will focus our visitor management to help them do so responsibly and safely. This may impact on our ability to deliver other actions in the Corporate Plan, and we will carefully monitor delivery and report back to Members any issues that arise. Staff have demonstrated great agility in responding to the changing Covid-19 restrictions and we will continue to assess and review our operations to improve the service provided and ensure we work flexibly and effectively. We will also support our local businesses and communities in response to the pandemic and supporting a green recovery.
- 2.5 The Plan outlines a number of exciting partnership projects across the National Park. Our response to the climate emergency is a cross-cutting theme which will be woven through all our activities. Nature recovery will also be a major focus, working with landowners, partners and other Protected Landscapes on a joined-up response across the National Park and beyond our boundaries. We will continue to work with the Exmoor Hill Farming Network, including on delivering the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. We have developed a number of projects to support positive management of our own Estate following the land visioning exercise, to see how we can use our assets more effectively to deliver National Park purposes.

2.6 Given the major changes taking place, we want to spend some time looking at what this means for Exmoor's future landscapes, and how people will respond to these changes, to inform future plans. We will continue to use our outreach and engagement activities to connect people with Exmoor's special qualities, particularly the new audiences who began to discover Exmoor following the lockdown last year. In the light of the budget pressures we face, we continue look to increase alternative sources of income, through a pipeline of external funding projects.

3. Monitoring progress

3.1 Progress is reported to Leadership Team and Delivery Team on a quarterly basis which enables managers to highlight key achievements and any issues regarding delivery. A six-month progress update is reported to the Authority in December and at the end of each financial year an annual performance review is completed and reported at the Authority's Annual General Meeting. This provides information about the progress made in delivering the actions in the Corporate Plan, together with achievement against the Authority's set of performance indicators.

Clare Reid
Head of Strategy and Performance
March 2021

Appendix Draft Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2021-2022

Exmoor National Park Authority Draft Corporate Plan 2021-22

Foreword

2020 was an extraordinary and challenging year for our staff, communities and visitors to Exmoor National Park. Our staff responded with resilience, flexibility and compassion. We saw new audiences on Exmoor and we coped with the restrictions of successive lockdowns on our working patterns and daily lives.

As we slowly emerge from the pandemic in 2021, we are even more aware of the importance of nature and landscape in our lives; of the value of resilient communities; and of the need to access tranquil, historic and beautiful places, for both our mental and physical well-being. Over 70 years on, the purposes of designation still resonate.

This year we will be responding to the Landscapes Review, led by Julian Glover and drafted in 2019. We look forward to working with government and the family of Protected Landscapes to start to implement the ambition of the report.

Our plan this year focuses on three themes; helping people to connect with Exmoor's special qualities, particularly people who are new to Exmoor; working with landowners, conservationists and the public to develop our exciting vision for nature recovery; and responding to the climate emergency.

We will use our land as a core element of this, developing projects and exploring how best to deliver these aspirations in a way that enhances Exmoor's natural beauty and historic environment. And we will help to deliver the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, supporting farmers to transition to the new environmental land management scheme, whilst recognising the scale of change and intense financial pressures many may be facing.

Looking further ahead, we know that there will be changes to Exmoor's landscape in the future, whether from climate change and nature's response, or societal, policy, regulatory and legislative changes influencing what happens here. While much is outside the National Park Authority's influence or control, we will do what we can to understand what this means for Exmoor's landscapes and how people will respond to this.

We will continue to deliver our core services, including managing our rights of way network, improving our planning performance and reviewing our Local Plan policies to see how they are being implemented and whether any changes are required.

To enable us to deliver against this ambitious programme of work, we will look at ways of growing our income and securing external funding. Our staff team is our greatest asset, and we will support them to work effectively across teams, and in a flexible way learning the lessons from how we have adapted to working through the pandemic.

As summarised by Julian Glover in his Landscapes Review, *'We want our national landscapes to work together with big ambitions so they are happier, healthier, greener, more beautiful and open to everyone.'* We look forward to working with all our partners this year to help achieve this.

In delivering National Park purposes, our priorities for 2021-22 are:

- Connecting people with Exmoor's special qualities, particularly new audiences and finding new ways to engage with people
- Responding to the climate emergency as a core element of all the work we do
- Delivering our Exmoor nature recovery vision as part of wider cross-boundary local nature recovery strategies

In order to achieve this we will:

- Plan for and deliver visitor management in the National Park to ensure that visitors are able to enjoy Exmoor responsibly and safely within Covid-19 regulations
- Work with farmers and neighbouring AONBs to deliver the Government's 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme and help farmers to transition to new environmental land management schemes
- Use ENPA's Estate as an exemplar to deliver Government priorities regarding climate, nature and farming; scoping and implementing key projects and incorporating natural beauty and heritage
- Collaborate with other National Park Authorities on joint working, and with other Protected Landscapes to respond to Government priorities and response to the Glover Review, including establishment of a National Landscape Service
- Grow our income base and external funding to support our work
- Monitor what we do by reporting on progress towards delivering the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan, and updating the State of the Park Report

We will continue to deliver high quality services to our visitors, communities and businesses through:

- Maintaining a first class rights of way and access network
- Assisting Exmoor's communities and businesses during the Covid pandemic and supporting the green recovery
- Updating and improving our Planning service and reviewing our planning policies in the light of Local Plan implementation and any future changes to the planning system following the Government's Planning White Paper proposals
- Support the delivery of affordable housing
- Develop our staff team and cross team working to effectively deliver our services and priorities, including flexible working due to the Covid pandemic.

Robin Milton, Chairman and Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive

The Role of Exmoor National Park Authority

National Park Authorities fulfil two statutory purposes established within the Environment Act 1995:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public

In taking forward these two purposes, we have a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

Our 22 Members have responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the Authority and ensuring we achieve our objectives through effective use of our resources:

- 12 are appointed by the County and District Councils with land within the National Park
- 5 are nominated by and elected from the Parish Councils within the National Park
- 5 are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Members meet monthly as an Authority to consider priorities and make decisions relating to our duties as a National Park Authority, including determining planning applications for development on Exmoor. These are public meetings that anyone can attend.

We employ a team of around 60 core staff but we additionally employ project and seasonal staff, deliver through partnerships and through shared services. Our knowledgeable and dedicated staff team are a key resource in ensuring we deliver this Corporate Plan. Working with partners and sharing services not only helps us make the best use of our resources but also benefits all parties through shared learning and understanding.

The Corporate Plan is closely aligned with the Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023. This is a statutory Plan for the National Park as a whole: whilst led by the Authority, it is a Plan for everyone who cares about Exmoor, the place, its communities and the benefits the National Park provides to the nation. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will lead delivery of the Vision and Ambitions set out in the Partnership Plan, working with our partnership groups.

Much of what we do would simply not be possible without our partners, local communities, interest groups and volunteers. We are committed to working closely with others to deliver National Park purposes and protect the special qualities of Exmoor. We will continue to develop close working relationships with local businesses and communities alongside our regional and national partners, and provide opportunities for people to get involved in the delivery of our plans.

Regular meetings of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum provide a forum for consultation and discussion about matters affecting the National Park and an opportunity to promote understanding between the Authority, local communities and other bodies with an interest in the National Park. The Forum meets at different venues across the National Park and members of the public are welcome to attend.

Monitoring and Delivery

The Authority carries out a six month progress update and at the end of each financial year completes an annual performance review. This provides information about the progress made in delivering the actions in the Corporate Plan, together with achievement against the Authority's set of performance indicators.

What We Do to Deliver National Park Purposes

Conservation Projects and Programmes	Developing projects to help conserve and enhance Exmoor's landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, working with farmers, woodland owners, game shoot managers, conservation organisations, the local community and the general public.
Public Rights of Way and Recreation	Maintenance and improvement of the 986km of rights of way and access land on Exmoor and promotion of the diverse range of recreational activities and opportunities available
Ranger Service	Public access management and engagement with land managers and recreational users of the National Park to promote and conserve its special qualities and help to manage the impacts of public recreation on Exmoor's special qualities
Public Facilities	Maintenance and improvement of Authority owned picnic sites, toilets and car parks
Education/Volunteers/Outreach	Provision of formal and informal education, training, volunteer opportunities and greater involvement of non-traditional users, including health and wellbeing initiatives
Information/Interpretation	Information and interpretation of Exmoor's special qualities through publications, website, social media, display boards
National Park Centres	Centres in Lynmouth, Dulverton and Dunster providing information about Exmoor National Park, with informative displays, maps, publications and staff with specialist knowledge about the area
Rural Enterprise	Engagement with business sector and local communities and liaison with local authority economic development services to help sustain a thriving economy on Exmoor
Development Management	Ensuring that development is of the right scale, directed to appropriate locations and conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the National Park
Planning Policy	Support to community/neighbourhood planning and policy guidance, including development and implementation of Local Plan policies
Land Management	Management of Authority land for landscape, wildlife and recreation benefits. Opportunities to demonstrate best practice and emerging land management techniques.

Corporate Plan at a Glance



Corporate Plan Actions 2021-22

Priority actions shown in **bold**

People: The Exmoor Experience
1. Promote and support a wide range of volunteering opportunities, linked to National Park purposes, through the Get Involved Programme
2. Promote the health and well-being benefits that Exmoor provides by trialling our “welcome to Exmoor” days and delivering the externally funded <i>Families United through Nature</i> Project
3. Priority action: Deliver an inspiring and inclusive learning and engagement programme, reaching out to people from a wider range of backgrounds and providing opportunities for increased connection to Exmoor’s special qualities, including by running a “Young Rangers Week” at Pinkery and delivering the Exmoor element of the “Generation Green” project
4. Deliver a range of public engagement events including the Dark Skies Festival, farming and heritage events, the “Wildwatch” programme and attend local shows
5. Ensure our response to climate change and its impact on Exmoor’s special qualities is an integral part of our Learning and Engagement Programme
6. Undertake a strategic review of National Park Centres to maximise their contribution to National Park purposes and income generation; review and reinvigorate the Local Information Point scheme
People: Well Managed Recreation and Access
7. Priority action: Plan for and deliver visitor management in the National Park to ensure that visitors are able to enjoy Exmoor responsibly and safely within Covid-19 regulations
8. Priority action: Maintain the Public Rights of Way network, ensuring that at least 95% are open and easy to use and that key permitted paths and access land are available. Ensure the network is resilient to climate change and meets the needs of all users
9. Begin scoping a strategy to guide recreation and access work, reviewing use of, and demands on, the Public Rights of Way and access network
10. Develop and deliver a programme of enhancement works for ENPA car parks
11. Follow up results of the feasibility study into family friendly cycle trails within or linking to the National Park. Secure planning permission if possible
12. Develop ‘Exmoor Classics’, a range of longer walks to be promoted on the Exmoor Walks website and sold within National Park Centres
13. Fundraise and develop specification and consents for ‘Great Bradley Bridge’

14. Provide support, guidance and monitoring for large public recreational events to minimise impact on others or on normal economic activity
15. Continue management of popular locations including public liaison to ensure that they offer an enjoyable visitor experience without being damaged
People: Thriving Tourism Built on Sustainability
16. Priority Action: Work with tourism partners to ensure that Exmoor is a leading visitor destination and tourism is promoted and managed sustainably for the benefit of all with a specific focus on responding responsibly to Covid-19 recovery
17. Support the development of new experiences targeting UK domestic visitors, as the legacy of the English National Park Experience Collection project
18. Work with Visit Exmoor to continue roll out of Eat Exmoor promotion and branding
Place: Celebrated landscapes
19. Priority action: Develop a programme to explore Exmoor's Landscapes of the Future, to include monitoring landscape change, climate change, understanding the drivers of change, future land management options, public perceptions and attitudes
20. Continue the restoration of Ashcombe Gardens with volunteers and work with the Simonsbath & Exmoor Heritage Trust to manage and utilise White Rock Cottage and Simonsbath Old School, including transfer of responsibility to the Trust
21. Continue the restoration of the Ashley Combe designed landscape through targeted woodland management and enhancement works
Place: Wildness and Tranquillity with dark Night skies and Sensitive Development
22. Deliver the Dark Skies Tourism development project including new Dark Sky Discovery Trail and Hub, business engagement, interpretation and events
23. Support the Design Group to encourage high quality, locally distinctive design and take account of new national design guidance
Place: Valued Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage
24. Work with volunteers to build understanding of Exmoor's heritage assets, undertake condition surveys on ENPA's Estate, and develop a programme of assessment of Exmoor's Scheduled Ancient Monuments
25. Progress work on Conservation Area appraisals, new designations, guidance for homeowners, and Article 4 directions
26. Continue to enhance and promote the Historic Environment Record (HER) by delivering projects to transfer entries from national database to ENPA and develop a Local list of heritage assets

27. Update the Historic Environment Research Framework, including assessment of climate change implications on Exmoor's heritage assets
Place: Rich in Wildlife
28. Priority action: Work with our farmers and partners to take forward the Exmoor Nature Recovery Vision, as part of wider cross-boundary local nature recovery strategies and climate response, and develop monitoring for the Vision
29. Work with the National Trust on a joint nature recovery and heritage project for the Exmoor Coast and Exmoor Forest
30. Encourage exemplars of species rich grassland and support pollinators through developing a More Meadows project
31. Update the Exmoor Wildlife Research and Monitoring Framework, including assessment of climate change implications on Exmoor's wildlife and natural habitats
32. Implement the extended Exmoor Non-native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project
33. Support peatland restoration as part of the climate response through trialling new approaches and working with the Mires Partnership, including hosting the Historic Environment Officer
34. Trial approaches to tree planting in the upper catchments as part of the climate response, and establish the Exford tree nursery
Prosperity: Working Landscapes
35. Priority action: Deliver the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes project on Exmoor, supporting farmers to transition to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme
36. Work with game shoot managers and others to help ensure game shoots provide a positive impact on Exmoor's special qualities by encouraging good practice and improved communication
37. Work with partners to support delivery of national ambitions for appropriate woodland planting by producing the Exmoor Woodland and Trees strategy and developing principles to enable the 'right tree in the right place'
38. Work with partners to investigate opportunities for integrated catchment management to ensure that Exmoor's rivers, streams and associated catchments are in good condition
39. Help promote and conserve the iconic Exmoor Pony breed including management of the Authority's pony herds
Prosperity: Strong Local Economy
40. Develop the Rural Enterprise Exmoor vision and support businesses to deliver this
Prosperity: Thriving Communities
41. Deliver a small grants programme via the Partnerships Fund supporting community efforts to further National Park Purposes, prioritising Covid-19 green recovery
42. Support delivery of locally needed affordable housing

43. Support implementation of the Local Plan, and produce the Authority Monitoring Report
44. Priority action: Carry out a 5-yearly check of Local Plan policies
45. Work with the police and other agencies to combat rural crime particularly poaching, unauthorised off-road driving and fly-tipping
Prosperity: A Valued Asset
46. Work with Defra and other Protected Landscapes to strengthen joint working and respond to the Landscapes Review recommendations
47. Plan the UK National Parks conference in Autumn 2022. Plan for Exmoor hosting the SNPS (Society of National Park Staff) conference in May 2022
48. Work with Heart of the South West (HotSW) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Joint Committee to contribute to and benefit of Exmoor economy
Monitoring and Research
49. Priority action: Monitor Exmoor's special qualities and update the State of the Park report by gathering data and commissioning research to fill gaps. Develop a longer term monitoring strategy for the National Park
50. Conduct an Exmoor visitor survey
51. Support the annual deer count
Corporate Priorities: Manage Corporate finances and diversify income streams
52. Increase income from the 'CareMoor for Exmoor' fundraising scheme, and other initiatives to support delivery of National Park purposes.
53. Priority action: Implement the External Project Funding strategy through development of a project pipeline and prospectus
Corporate Priorities: Work with communities, businesses and partners to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan and statutory purposes
54. Priority action: Lead the implementation of the National Park Partnership Plan, and prepare a mid-term Partnership Plan progress report
Corporate Priorities: respond to the climate emergency and work towards becoming a carbon neutral National Park
55. Priority action: Continue to deliver actions in the ENPA Climate action plan, establish an annual target for emissions reductions and a dashboard for reporting
56. Work with partners to support projects and actions that move Exmoor closer to being a carbon neutral National Park and contribute to implementation of the climate action plans for Devon and Somerset
57. Work with local communities and businesses to secure plastic free status for Exmoor National Park

Corporate Priorities: Develop and maintain effective and efficient services
58. Priority action: Deliver the National Park Planning service, maintaining performance within national targets
59. Priority action: Develop and implement a new Organisational Development Strategy to support our staff team and enable the best use of our knowledge, skills and experience in delivering National Park purposes
60. Provide short study/work placements and internships. Host several short term posts as part of the Government's Kickstart programme to help people get back into work
61. Develop a costed and detailed plan for upgrade of the ENPA main website and begin implementation
62. Begin a review of the effectiveness of our communications publications (ParkLife and Exmoor Visitor) and strategy for communications work
Corporate Priorities: Manage the Authority's Estate and operations to support delivery of National Park purposes
63. To continue the programme of improvements to the Pinkery Centre for Outdoor Learning to: enhance the experience of users; the sustainability and energy efficiency of its operation; and the potential for year round income generation
64. Priority action: Develop a long term strategy for the ENPA Estate and begin the implementation of projects identified under Land Visioning to enhance National Park purposes, (including car parks, Exmoor Forest, Exmoor coast, tree nursery, Bye Wood, new design and branding for ENPA properties)
65. Continue with an ongoing maintenance programme for the Authority's estate, implement priority maintenance projects and complete planned major works.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 March 2021

NATIONAL WORKING

Report of the Chief Executive

Purpose of Report: To update Members with developments in national working and to confirm subscriptions to national groups in 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1) NOTE the intent to cap overall corporate subscriptions at £32k
- 2) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Chairperson to agree level of subscription to National Parks England
- 3) CONFIRM a £6,073 contribution to the UK Communications Unit
- 4) SUPPORT a subscription to National Parks Partnership Ltd of £8,500

Authority Priority: Achieve Best Value from our resources and improve our performance.

Legal and Equality Implications: Section 65(4) Environment Act 1995 – provides powers to the National Park Authority to “do anything which in the opinion of the Authority, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to:-

- (a) the accomplishment of the purposes mentioned in s.65 (1) [National Park purposes]
- (b) the carrying out of any functions conferred on it by virtue of any other enactment.”

The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows: There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected group(s).

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows: There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.

Financial and Risk implications: Financial and reputational risks are discussed in the report.

Climate Response: Response to climate change continues to be a focus for national working.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This paper is to update Members with progress on national working and to confirm subscriptions for 2021/22.
- 1.2 Collective working takes place in England through National Parks England and across the United Kingdom through National Parks UK. Attracting commercial sponsorship is the responsibility of National Parks Partnership Ltd and raising the profile of national parks with the public is led by the Communications Unit. A summary of activity over the last year is set out in section 2.

1.3 Members will recall that in February 2019, it was agreed to:-

- Note changes in the staff team at National Parks England and support a subscription of £21,300 in 2019/20
- Confirm support for the winding up of NPUK
- Withhold support for the national communications work as proposed and work with others to develop an alternative communications strategy
- Decline to make further financial investment in NPPL at this time.
- Continue to monitor developments, structure and governance of the proposed national charity.
- Authorise the Chief Executive to encourage a move to proportional subscriptions to all national groups

2. PROGRESS UPDATE

Landscapes Review

- 2.1 Since the last report, Members will be aware that there has been ongoing discussion around national working, partly driven by the 2019 *Landscapes Review*. The Review identified the need to improve national working and proposed a National Landscape Service. It was suggested that the National Landscape Service would help to share skills and good practice, improve coordination between protected landscapes, raise awareness, help set national priorities and improve reporting.
- 2.2 Since publication of the Review, Defra and others have been exploring the potential role and structure of a National Landscape Service. It is understood that various options are under discussion and National Parks England has been part of that debate along with the National Association of AONBs, Natural England and others. Such a significant change in the management of NPAs and AONBs is likely to need parliamentary time to enact. In the meantime, work at a national level has aimed to improve our collective efforts and to respond to some of the criticisms in the Review.

Covid-19

- 2.3 The global pandemic has also impacted on our work. It has prevented face to face meetings but has enabled the development of virtual meeting platforms with associated cost savings. Throughout the year, regular meetings and discussion have enabled the National Park CEOs and staff to support each other, learn from events in other areas and generate national messages as we dealt with lockdowns, followed by significant visitor pressures.

National Parks England

- 2.4 Based in London, NPE works to inform policy, raise the profile of National Park Authorities in Government and amongst stakeholders, secure resources for NPAs and strengthen collective working through the various officer groups.

- 2.5 There are three staff members: Paul Hamblin (CEO), Hoda Gray (Head of Policy) and Wendy Totts (Executive Assistant). The NPE Board is made up of the Chairs of the 10 NPAs and meets three times a year. Throughout 2020 regular meetings of CEOs have been held by video conference (at least monthly during times of rapid change such as the start and end of lockdowns)
- 2.6 The main piece of work for NPE has been the development of four “Delivery Plans” which respond to the *Landscapes Review* and cover Sustainable Farming and Land Management, Wildlife, Landscapes for Everyone and Climate Leadership. Each workstream was led by the relevant National Park Officer(s). These are available on the ENPA website <https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/key-documents>
- 2.7 The lead National Park Officer rotates across the National Park CEOs. In 2020 Kevin Bishop, the Dartmoor CEO was the lead. This has become an increasingly important role taking a significant amount of time for the lead officer. Since January 2021 the lead NPO has been the Lake District CEO, Richard Leafe. External (policy) communications from NPE are contracted out to an advertising consultancy (Coast). An update to the NPE Board from Coast is expected shortly.
- 2.8 The cost of NPE (which covers the staff, the London office, communications and a small budget) is currently split equally between the ten NPAs, each paying a subscription of £21,300. Over recent years the Chair and CEO have raised the need for future subscriptions to be reduced and to be proportionate to the Defra grant. To date NPE has not accepted this request. There are ongoing discussions about the future of NPE and ways of working, particularly in light of the possibility of a National Landscape Service. A number of Chairs have asked for a review of NPE and a refreshed Business Plan. Members will be updated with progress with these discussions.
- 2.9 The value of joint working across England is recognised and Members are recommended to continue to support NPE and to work with NPE to review its operation and Business Plan over the coming months with the aim of improving the efficiency of national working. Our financial constraints mean that in order to support all elements of national working, savings will need to be made in either the subscriptions budget or elsewhere.

National Parks UK

- 2.10 NPUK (formerly the Association of National Park Authorities) was established as a private company in 2015. The company is currently being wound up following a NPUK Board meeting decision in spring 2018. The process is being overseen by Francis ClarkPFK and it is anticipated that this will be completed by summer 2021. The costs of winding are being taken from remaining NPUK budget.
- 2.11 The lead Chair for NPUK in 2020 was James Stuart, Convenor at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the lead National Park Officer was Sarah Bryan. Members will recall that James visited Exmoor in February 2020 and attended a briefing session alongside Peter Harper (National Parks Partnership Ltd). The lead Chair for 2021 is Robin Milton and the lead NPO will be shared by the two Scottish CEOs.

- 2.12 CEOs have not been able to meet face to face and meetings have been held on-line over the last 12 months. The main tasks have been completing the winding up of NPUK, redrafting the Collaboration Framework (Appendix), commencing discussion on COP2 and planning the Conference. Member training did not take place in 2020 but will be carried out on-line in March 2021.
- 2.13 The NPUK Conference takes place every other year and in 2021 it was Exmoor's turn to host. The pandemic has meant that it has been delayed for twelve months but preparations will be taking place in 2021 to host in 2022. It has been proposed by Exmoor NPA and agreed by the CEOs and Chairs to refresh the format to create a less formal event, which reinforces messages about the purposes of National Parks. There is likely to be greater engagement with the public and it is hoped that Members will continue to benefit through networking and field visits. Discussion is ongoing with National Parks Partnership Ltd around the potential for two events – a media focussed, sponsored conference in a central location, with separate field visits to the host National Park. Members will be kept updated with progress.

NPUK Communications

- 2.14 The Communications Unit is currently based with the Broads Authority. It promotes all 15 National Parks. In early 2019 an ambitious Communications Plan was developed and after discussion with Chairs, was revised and costs reduced. The Unit oversees the www.nationalparks.uk website and social media channels. The focus over 2020 has been engaging new and more diverse audiences, communicating the importance of National Parks to the UK Green Recovery and improving public health and wellbeing through connection with nature. The cost of the Unit is split between the 15 NPAs, each paying £6,073 per year. Members are recommended to continue to support this work.

National Parks Partnership Ltd

- 2.15 NPPL was established in 2015 and exists to source commercial funding or other resources to benefit National Parks. Central to its establishment was the principle that it represented all 15 National Parks, and any income secured/other benefits would be distributed evenly across all members. The original business case, which envisaged significant sums of unrestricted cash proved unrealistic and the current model focusses on a series of partnerships which deliver resources, publicity and grants to projects in the National Parks.
- 2.16 The Columbia agreement is currently providing kit for staff as well as a cash sum of £100,000 (over the five years) to NPPL. Additional partnerships have been developed with Sykes, Forest Holidays, Tarmac, Clif Bar and others. Discussions are taking place with other commercial sponsors and it is hoped that some may develop into more significant financial partnerships. This is in line with the *Landscapes Review* recommendations which encouraged NPAs to explore alternative sources of funding, and to explore potential partners in the private sector.
- 2.17 In 2019/20 ENPA did not contribute towards NPPL. All other NPAs paid the £10k subscription. Since that time the Chair of NPPL has resigned and a new Chair, Cat Hawkins has worked hard to transform the organisation. Financial Contributions from NPPL to ENPA since April 2019 have included:-

Forest Holidays	£5,000	Funded trips for disadvantaged schools to Pinkery
Tarmac	£5,000	Big Picnic sponsorship
Clif Bar	£5,000	£2.5 k Conservation works at Ashcombe. £2.5k CareMoor unallocated as yet
NPPL	£3,500	Dividend

- 2.18 In addition to developing partnerships, NPUK has run a series of online events with staff to develop potential project themes to “sell” to commercial sponsors. These have included “Net Zero With Nature” - a programme which included ideas such as the Exmoor Temperate Rainforest and the Great North Bog as well as engagement programmes such as Wild Weekends. The “Net Zero With Nature” portfolio of projects is beginning to attract the interest of commercial partners.
- 2.19 Indications from the Director of NPPL are that Exmoor National Park Authority is likely to benefit from Clif Bar funding in 2021 (£10k for a Conservation project). The Clif Bar partnership grant has been delayed due to COVID-19 but it is likely to continue in 2021. In addition, NPPL is working on a proposal for support of £175k for tree planting on Exmoor between 2021-2024.
- 2.20 The current three-year NPPL Business Plan finishes in March 2021. For 2021/22 NPPL has presented a one-year plan given uncertainty around budgets, COVID-19 and Brexit. There is a proposed 15% reduction of subs to £8,500 dependent on all NPAs subscribing. The next Business Plan will be a three-year plan for 2022-2025, the final version to be presented in late 2021.
- 2.21 Nine NPAs have confirmed their subscription and the remainder are to discuss with Members over the coming weeks. Value for money from NPPL remains a crucial consideration, but evidence of income streams and project development over the last 18 months has been impressive. The *Landscapes Review* has increased the expectation for NPAs to work on income generation and collective working and NPPL is now a potential vehicle for achieving this. Members are therefore recommended to support NPPL in 2021/22.

3. OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 3.1 For completeness, Members should be aware that subscriptions are also paid to the following organisations. No changes are proposed.

Europarc	£500
NFU	£430
SW Councils	£440
Joint Committee	£1,400
Rural Services Partnership	£230
National Trust	£350

4. TOTAL PROPOSED SUBSCRIPTION BUDGET

- 4.1 It is proposed that in order to support national working £32,000 is confirmed for this work and the following sums are allocated.

National Parks England	To be agreed (£15,000 tbc)
NPUK Communications	£6,073
National Parks Partnership Ltd	£8,500
JC, NT, RSP, SW Councils, NFU, Europarc	£3,350
Total Corporate Subscription budget	£32,000

- 4.2 £15,000 has notionally been allocated to NPE. Should NPE not accept the proposed reduction in subscriptions, it has the option to suspend ENPA's membership.
- 4.3 At a time of cash neutral funding settlements and with the Authority reducing the number of core staff it employs each year, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that all costs are closely monitored. The fact that NPPL is requesting less funding next year and is providing significant new opportunities means that it is worthwhile considering fully engaging with them again. At the same time, we do not wish to uplift the overall pot of money for Corporate Subscriptions while we scale back in so many other areas. As such we wish to provide a contribution towards NPE that is proportionate to our overall size and scale. This is less than they are seeking but we feel that it is a generous offer in the circumstances.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 National working continues to evolve, driven particularly over the last two years by the *Landscapes Review* and the impacts of the global pandemic. We have started to rethink how National Park Authorities work together, with a renewed focus on national priorities alongside new ways of working. We will continue to improve the way we communicate with the public particularly to "new" audiences and we are exploring a variety of potential new funding streams. The next two to three years are likely to see greater change as the National Landscape Service is developed and rolled out.
- 5.2 Members are recommended to support the intent to cap overall corporate subscriptions at £32k, to delegate the CEO and Chair to agree a level of subscription to National Parks England, confirm ongoing support to the UK Communications Unit and support subscription to National Parks Partnership Ltd of £8,500.

Sarah Bryan
Chief Executive
February 2021

Appendix: Collaboration framework

UK National Parks Framework for Collaboration January 2021

1. PURPOSE

This framework provides:

- A focus for **Collaboration** across the 15 UK national parks. Activities include the Chairs Forum, CEO meetings, staff working groups and Member training
- A focus for **Communications** with the public, stakeholders and partners on strategic messages about national parks
- A focus for the organisation of national events such as the **Conference**

2. COLLABORATION takes place through:

2.1 The Chairs Forum

The UK national parks Forum is for Chairs and Convenors, supported by the lead CEO. Other people are invited to attend for specific events or discussions at the discretion of the Chair. The Forum meets at least once a year, virtually or face to face at the discretion of the Chair.

2.2 CEO Meetings

The lead CEO normally organises 2 meetings of CEOs of UK national parks a year either virtually or face to face. The purpose of the meetings is to identify areas of collaboration and joint working, to receive feedback from working groups, to network and share good practice.

2.3 Staff Working Groups

A number of working groups exist which offer opportunities for staff development through visiting other national parks, learning from colleagues, projects, ways of working and from activities of partner organisations. Each working group has a NPO lead.

2.4 Member Training

The UK national parks jointly commission and support a national induction course for new Members which is currently (2019 – 2021) being managed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. This was procured through a tender process and will be similarly procured in future. The NPA which runs the programme submits an annual report to the UK national parks each year. The course typically involves Members from a spread of national parks and includes informal opportunities to explore issues through group work, field trips and discussion sessions. It complements induction in individual national parks.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

The NPAs in the UK have currently (up to March 2022) agreed to jointly fund a “Communication Unit”. The Unit is currently based with the Broads Authority. Its goal is to speak with one voice on non-policy related matters on behalf of all 15 national parks, in order to reach as broad an audience as possible, so that UK citizens feel that national parks are relevant to them and a valuable part of the fabric of national life.

The Communications Unit provides strategic direction: either creating assets and campaigns itself or coordinating the work of the 15 National Parks communications teams and NPP to create shared value and impact. Major assets include the nationalparks.uk website and dedicated social media channels. Key goals include: engaging new and more diverse audiences; communicating the importance of National Parks to the UK Green Recovery; and improving public health, wellbeing and social cohesion through enhanced nature connectedness.

4. THE CONFERENCE

Each UK NPA takes it in turn to organise an event which explores relevant issues in their national park. The form of the Conference is currently under discussion amongst the Chairs, CEOs, National Parks Partnership Ltd and the Communications Unit.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 March 2021

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021-22

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Purpose of Report: To remind Members of the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes, and the Local Government Act 2003 Guidance on Investments, and to adopt the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22.

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is RECOMMENDED to:

- 1) NOTE the report of the Chief Finance Officer.
- 2) APPROVE the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22 as set out in sections 2 and 3 of this report.
- 3) NOTE the Prudential Indicators for 2021-22 to 2023-24 as set out in section 4 of this report (Although some are currently set at zero, all Treasury Management indicators are included for completeness of information and others may well be used in the future).

Authority Priority: Achieve Best Value from our resources and improve our performance.

Legal and Equality Implications: The Local Government Act 2003 (LGA 2003), specifically Guidance under Section 15(1)(a) 3rd Edition, effective from 1st April 2018.

The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes: Revised 2017 Edition (CIPFA TM Code).

The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities: Revised 2017 Edition (CIPFA Prudential Code).

Financial and Risk Implications: Interest from investments forms part of the revenue income of the Authority. This income is impacted by the market fluctuations in interest rates. The Authority's revenue cash is aggregated with that of Somerset County Council (SCC). SCC invests sizeable sums into the London Money Market in its name only. Comfund cash is also aggregated with that of other Comfund investors and lent into the market in the name of SCC. For this, SCC assumes the risk to capital of counterparty default, but any loss of interest would reduce the overall return of the Comfund.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and treasury investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has no debt but has investments that average over £3m and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risks are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

- 1.2 Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 1.3 Under Section 3 of the LGA 2003 (duty to determine affordable borrowing limit), a Local Authority must have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code. This code requires the setting of a number of Prudential Indicators, benchmarks within which Treasury and Investment Management, and Capital Financing are managed. The setting of Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management requires Authorities to recognise key implications of their borrowing and investment strategies. These relate to the affordability of overall borrowing limits, the maturity structure of borrowing, and longer-term investments.
- 1.4 In formulating the Treasury Management Strategy, and the setting of Prudential Indicators, Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) adopts the Treasury Management Framework and Policy recommended by CIPFA. These can be found in Appendix A.

External Context

- 1.5 The impact on the UK from coronavirus, lockdown measures, the rollout of vaccines, as well as the new trading arrangements with the European Union (EU), will remain major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2021-22.
- 1.6 The Bank of England (BoE) maintained Bank Rate at 0.10% in December 2020 and Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion having extended it by £150 billion in the previous month. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously for both, but no mention was made of the potential future use of negative interest rates. In the November Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecasts, the Bank expects the UK economy to shrink -2% in Q4 2020 before growing by 7.25% in 2021, lower than the previous forecast of 9%. The BoE also forecasts the economy will now take until Q1 2022 to reach its pre-pandemic level rather than the end of 2021 as previously forecast. By the time of the December MPC announcement, a COVID-19 vaccine was approved for use, which the Bank noted would reduce some of the downside risks to the economic outlook outlined in the November MPR.
- 1.7 UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) for November 2020 registered 0.3% year on year, down from 0.7% in the previous month. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, fell to 1.1% from 1.5%. The most recent labour market data for the three months to October 2020 showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.9% while the employment rate fell to 75.2%. Both measures are expected to deteriorate further due to the ongoing impact of coronavirus on the jobs market, particularly when the various government job retention schemes start to be unwound in 2021, with the BoE forecasting unemployment will peak at 7.75% in Q2 2021.
- 1.8 GDP growth rebounded by 16.0% in Q3 2020 having fallen by 18.8% in the second quarter, with the annual rate rising to -8.6% from -20.8%. All sectors rose quarter-on-quarter, with dramatic gains in construction (41.2%), followed by services and production (both 14.7%). Monthly GDP estimates have shown the economic recovery slowing and remains well below its pre-pandemic peak. Looking ahead, the BoE's November MPR forecasts economic growth will rise in 2021 with GDP reaching 11% in Q4 2021, 3.1% in Q4 2022 and 1.6% in Q4 2023.

- 1.9 GDP growth in the euro zone rebounded by 12.7% in Q3 2020 after contracting by 3.7% and 11.8% in the first and second quarters, respectively. Headline inflation, however, remains extremely weak, registering -0.3% year-on-year in November, the fourth successive month of deflation. Core inflation registered 0.2% y/y, well below the European Central Bank's (ECB) target of 'below, but close to 2%'. The ECB is expected to continue holding its main interest rate of 0% and deposit facility rate of -0.5% for some time but expanded its monetary stimulus in December 2020, increasing the size of its asset purchase scheme to €1.85 trillion and extended it until March 2022.
- 1.10 The US economy contracted at an annualised rate of 31.4% in Q2 2020 and then rebounded by 33.4% in Q3. The Federal Reserve maintained the Fed Funds rate at between 0% and 0.25% and announced a change to its inflation targeting regime to a more flexible form of average targeting. The Fed also provided strong indications that interest rates are unlikely to change from current levels over the next three years.

Internal Context

- 1.11 As at 31st December 2020 ENPA had no external debt. The investments of ENPA as at 31st December 2020 stood at just under £2.95m

	Balance on 31/03/2020 £000	Rate as at 31/03 %	Balance on 31/12/2020 £000	Rate as at 31/12 %
Revenue Balances	-41	0.00	243	0.00
Comfund Balances	2,800	0.91	2,700	0.45
Total Balances	2,759	0.91	2,943	0.41

- 1.12 In receiving funding for its functions, the National Park Authority effectively turns over approximately £5.0m a year. This represents significant cash movements, and it is important that the Authority has strategies and policies in place to manage such turnover effectively.
- 1.13 The Authority currently manages its investments and cash flow via service arrangements with the Finance and Treasury Management Sections of Somerset County Council. In so doing it needs to adopt policies consistent with the Council's. The Authority is, however, formally separated with its own bank accounts, and it is therefore important that it adopts a Strategy of its own, albeit following very closely that of the County Council.

2. Borrowing Strategy

- 2.1 The Authority is currently debt free. Any potential borrowing would be driven by the capital plan. There are no plans that would necessitate borrowing during 2021-22. As stated in previous strategy statements, when future borrowing is agreed, and Prudential Indicators set, the Chief Finance Officer will make specific decisions with regard to the timing of any borrowing and the length of maturities. Borrowing would be undertaken to minimise borrowing costs and would be consistent with the Authorities' Prudential Indicators.

2.2 The Chief Finance Officer has the delegated power to raise capital finance from such sources as is deemed appropriate within the statutory limitations that apply to the Authority. These are termed 'borrowing instruments' and include: -

- PWLB loans – Fixed or Variable
- Transferable loan instruments
- Non-transferable loan instruments
- Local bonds
- Other (e.g. commercial loan)
- Bank overdraft

2.3 **Sources of borrowing:** For such long-term funding as may be required, the most likely source would be the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). Short-term borrowing will be sought via Somerset County Council from the money market direct from lenders or from the Authority's bankers in the form of overdraft or otherwise. Internal resources may be used in lieu of external borrowing, and leasing or soft loans will form an alternative to borrowing where appropriate. No new borrowing will be in the form of LOBOs.

2.4 **Debt rescheduling:** The Authority is currently debt free.

3. **Investment Strategy**

3.1 In 2018, the MHCLG issued revised Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition). It states "Investments made by local authorities can be classified into one of two main categories:

- Investments held for treasury management purposes; and
- Other investments

3.2 "Where local authorities hold treasury management investments, they should apply the principles set out in the Treasury Management Code. They should disclose that the contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the local authority is to support effective treasury management activities. The only other element of this Guidance that applies to treasury management investments is the requirement to prioritise Security, Liquidity and Yield in that order of importance".

3.3 This strategy applies only to investments held for treasury purposes. Any non-treasury investments would be dealt with in a separate Investment Strategy.

3.4 The Authority's current arrangement with SCC for the provision of treasury management services includes investment management. Current arrangements will continue until such time that the Authority is informed otherwise. Under this agreement all surplus funds are lent to the County Council, as general cash balances, or in the SCC Comfund. General cash balances held with SCC currently attract a rate of base rate minus 0.375%. The return generated by the Comfund, although not fixed, has historically been above this rate. For 2020-21 the benefit of investing in the Comfund stood at £17,831 for the first nine months of the year and is predicted to be approximately £20,000 for the year.

3.5 **Strategy:** It is intended to continue to maximise returns by investing in the Comfund when possible. Cash flow balances will continue to be closely monitored by ENPA officers to identify any funds not needed in the immediate future. Investments or disinvestments from the Comfund will be made on a monthly basis, making this an extremely liquid investment.

- 3.6 It is intended that the Authority short-term cash balances be kept to a minimum in order to maximise monthly investment in the SCC Comfund. The timing of sizable grant receipt and investment decisions for the Comfund may mean being occasionally overdrawn for a day or so with SCC short-term balances. The risk of non-payment of grant and debit interest of base rate plus 1% for a day or two, are more than offset by the excess returns of Comfund that would not otherwise be available for approximately 30 days (the next monthly investment/disinvestment day).
- 3.7 **Credit rating:** As SCC is the only counterparty to the Authority there is no need for specific policies or procedures regarding counterparty creditworthiness, to be set out in this strategy. Full details of SCC counterparty policy and procedures will be available on their website when approved by Full Council. For information the current 2020-21 SCC counterparty criteria is included at Appendix B.
- 3.8 SCC has constructed and will maintain a counterparty list based on the criteria set out in Appendix B. The minimum credit quality is proposed to be set at A- or equivalent. The credit standing of institutions (and issues if used) will be monitored and updated on a regular basis.
- 3.9 SCC will continuously monitor counterparties creditworthiness. All three credit rating agencies' websites will be visited frequently, and all ratings of proposed counterparties will be subject to verification on the day of investment. (MHCLG guidance states that a credit rating agency is one of Standard & Poor's, Moody's Investor Services Ltd, and Fitch Ratings Ltd). All ratings of currently used counterparties will be reported to the monthly treasury management meeting, where proposals for any new counterparties will be discussed. New counterparties must be approved by the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) before they are used. Any changes to ratings that put the counterparty below the minimum acceptable credit quality whilst we have a deposit, or a marketable instrument will be brought to the attention of the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) immediately, and an appropriate response decided on a case-by-case basis. Sovereign credit ratings will be monitored and acted on as for financial institution ratings. Investment limits are set by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from the three rating agencies mentioned above. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used.
- 3.10 **Other information on the security of investments:** SCC understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect predictors of investment default. Full regard is therefore given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including those outlined below.
- Credit Default Swaps and Government Bond Spreads.
 - GDP and Net Debt as a Percentage of GDP for sovereign countries
 - Likelihood and strength of Parental Support
 - Banking resolution mechanisms for the restructure of failing financial institutions, i.e. bail-in
 - Market information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards the counterparties and sovereigns
 - Underlying securities or collateral for 'covered instruments'
 - Other macroeconomic factors

4. **Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators**

4.1 The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

4.2 **Authorised limit and Operational Boundary:** The Authority is required to set an authorised limit for total external debt, gross of investments, separately identifying borrowing from other long-term liabilities. The Authority is also required to set an operational limit separately identifying borrowing from other long-term liabilities. This prudential indicator is referred to as the operational boundary. They are both set for the forthcoming, and the following two years. The authorised limit will, in addition, need to provide headroom over and above the operational boundary sufficient for example to accommodate unusual cash movements. A contingency limit of £100,000 has been set for each.

	2021-22 £000	2022-23 £000	2023-24 £000
Authorised limit Borrowing	100	100	100
Operational boundary Borrowing	100	100	100

4.3 **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** The Authority has set for the forthcoming year, both the upper and lower limits with respect to the maturity structure of its borrowing.

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
>12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
>24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
>5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
>10 years	100%	0%

4.4 **Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. As all investments are with SCC and ENPA have the ability to access all funds at one month's notice, an indicator of zero is appropriate.

	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m
Prudential Limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than 1 year	0	0	0

4.5 **Credit Risk Indicator:** All of the Authority's investments are placed with SCC, as a result the Authority do not believe that adopting a credit risk indicator would be appropriate.

5. **Other Matters**

5.1 The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

- 5.2 **Derivative Instruments:** The code requires that the Authority must explicitly state whether it plans to use derivative instruments to manage risks. The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment). However, the Authority does not intend to use derivatives.
- 5.3 Should this position change, the Authority may seek to develop a detailed and robust risk management framework governing the use of derivatives, but this change in strategy will require Full Authority approval.
- 5.4 **External Service Providers:** The code states that external service providers should be reviewed regularly and that services provided are clearly documented, and that the quality of that service is controlled and understood.
- 5.5 Officers from the SCC Treasury Management team report investment positions and performance via a monthly statement. As required by the CIPFA TM Code, the Chief Finance Officer reports to the Authority on its treasury activities in the form of a mid-year review and an Annual Treasury Management Report.
- 5.6 **Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II (MiFID II):** As a result of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), from 3rd January 2018 local authorities were automatically treated as retail clients but could "opt up" to professional client status, providing certain criteria was met. This included having an investment balance of at least £10 million and the person(s) authorised to make investment decisions on behalf of the Authority have at least a year's relevant professional experience. In addition, the regulated financial services firms to whom this directive applies have had to assess that that person(s) have the expertise, experience and knowledge to make investment decisions and understand the risks involved.
- 5.7 SCC has met the conditions to opt up to professional status and has done so in order to maintain its erstwhile MiFID II status prior to January 2018. As a result, SCC, and thereby ENPA, will continue to have access to products including money market funds, pooled funds, treasury bills, bonds, shares and to financial advice.

6. **Background papers**

Local Government Act 2003 – Guidance under section 15(1)(a) 3rd Edition, effective from 1 April 2018.

The CIPFA 'Treasury Management in the Public Services' Code of Practice Revised Edition 2017.

CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities: Revised Edition 2017.

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

Gordon Bryant
Chief Finance Officer
February 2021

Treasury Management Policy Statement

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the code), as described in Section 5 of the Code
- 1.2 Accordingly, ENPA will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:
 - A treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities.
 - Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.
- 1.3 ENPA 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, a mid-year review, and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.
- 1.4 ENPA delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Chief Finance Officer as Section 151 Officer, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMPs and, if he/she is a CIPFA member, CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

2. Policies and Objectives of Treasury Management Activities

- 2.1 ENPA defines its treasury management activities as: -

“The management of the organisation’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
- 2.2 ENPA regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.
- 2.3 ENPA acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.
- 2.4 ENPA's borrowing will be affordable, sustainable and prudent and consideration will be given to the management of interest rate risk and refinancing risk. The source from which the borrowing is taken, and the type of borrowing should allow ENPA transparency and control over its debt.
- 2.5 ENPA's primary objective in relation to investments remains the security of capital. The liquidity or accessibility of ENPA's investments followed by the yield earned on investments remain important but are secondary considerations.

SCC Lending Counterparty Criteria 2020-21

The following criteria will be used to manage counterparty risks to Somerset County Council Investments for new deposits / investments from the time that the new Treasury Management Strategy is passed by Full Council at its meeting in February 2020.

Please note that the limits in this appendix apply only to Treasury Management Investments, not to those detailed in the Separate Investment Strategy.

Where deposits held were made under previous criteria, there will be no compulsion to terminate those deposits to meet new criteria, where a penalty would be incurred.

Deposits - Any Financial Institution that is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to accept deposits, or is a passported EEA institution, which is entitled to accept deposits in the UK, or is a UK Building Society can be lent to, subject to the rating criteria below at the time of the deposit.

Unrated Building Societies - Unrated Building Societies as identified by Treasury Advisors can be used, with a maximum of £1m per Society and a maximum maturity of 1 year.

Marketable Instruments – Any bank, other organisation, or security whose credit ratings satisfy the criteria below:-

Rating of Counterparty or Security

Deposits or instruments of less than 13 months duration (Refer to long-term ratings)

Fitch A- or above

S&P A- or above

Moody's A3 or above

The maximum deposit / investment amount for any authorised counterparty or security that has as a minimum at least two ratings of the three above will be £20m. This is approximately 7.7% of maximum balance, 9.0% of average balance for the year to 31st December 2019-20. The % may be significantly less if borrowing up to the CFR is taken early in the year.

The maximum deposit / investment amount for any authorised counterparty or security that has as a minimum - Fitch AA-, S&P AA-, and Moody's Aa3, will be £25m. This is approximately 9.6% of maximum balance, 11.3% of average balance for the year to 31st December 2019-20. The % may be significantly less if borrowing up to the CFR is taken early in the year.

Deposits or instruments of more than 13 months duration (Refer to long-term ratings)

Fitch AA- or above

S&P AA- or above

Moody's Aa3 or above

The maximum deposit / investment amount for more than 13 months for any authorised counterparty or security that has as a minimum at least two ratings of the three above will be £10m. This figure is to be included in the overall figure above.

The allowed deposit amounts above are the single maximum per counterparty at any one time, and that counterparty or security must be rated as above or better by at least two of the three agencies. Short-term ratings will be monitored and considered in relative rather than absolute terms.

It remains the Council's policy to suspend or remove institutions that still meet criteria, but where any of the other factors below give rise to concern. Also, when it is deemed prudent, the duration of deposits placed is shortened or lengthened, depending on counterparty specific metrics, or general investment factors.

Where deposits held were made under previous criteria, there will be no compulsion to terminate those deposits to meet new criteria, where a penalty would be incurred.

Operational Bank Accounts

As the Council's current bankers, Nat West are currently within the minimum criteria. If they should fall below criteria, the instant access Call Account facility may still be used for short-term liquidity requirements and business continuity arrangements. This will generally be for smaller balances where it is not viable to send to other counterparties or in the event of unexpected receipts after the daily investment process is complete. Money will be placed in the instant access Nat West call account overnight.

Public Sector Bodies

Any UK Local Authority or Public Body will have a limit of £15m and a maximum maturity of 5 years.

The UK Government, including Gilts, T-Bills, and the Debt Management Office (DMADF) will be unlimited in amount and duration.

The table below gives a definition and approximate comparison of various ratings by the three main agencies:-

Definitions of Rating Agency Ratings

	Fitch		Moody's		S&P
Short-Term	F1+ Exceptionally strong	P-1	Superior	A-1+	Extremely strong
	F1 Highest quality			A-1	Strong
	F2 Good quality	P-2	Strong	A-2	Satisfactory
	F3 Fair quality	P-3	Acceptable	A-3	Adequate
	B Speculative	NP	Questionable	B and below	Significant speculative characteristics
	C High default risk				
	(+) or (-)	(1,2, or 3)		(+) or (-)	
Long-Term	AAA Highest quality	Aaa	Exceptional	AAA	Extremely strong
	AA V High quality	Aa	Excellent	AA	Very strong
	A High quality	A	Good	A	Strong
	BBB Good quality	Baa	Adequate	BBB	Adequate capacity
	BB Speculative	Ba	Questionable	BB and below	Significant speculative characteristics
	B Highly Speculative	B	Poor		
	CCC High default risk	Caa	Extremely poor		

Financial Groups

For Financial Groups (where two or more separate counterparties are owned by the same eventual parent company) investments can be split between entities, but an overall limit equal to the highest rated constituent counterparty within the group will be used.

Country Limits

Excluding the UK, there will be a limit of £30m. This is approximately 11.6% of maximum balance, 13.5% of average balance for the year to 31st December 2019-20. The % may be significantly less if borrowing up to the CFR is taken early in the year.

Money Market Funds

With regulatory changes now effected, previously titled Constant Net Asset Value (CNAV) Money Market Funds have been converted into Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) funds. Any LVNAV Fund used must be rated by at least two of the main three ratings agency, and must have the following, (or equivalent LVNAV) ratings.

Fitch AAmmf Moody's Aaa-mf Standard & Poor's AAAM

Subject to the above, deposits can be made with the following limits: -

The lower of £15m or 0.5% of the total value for individual Funds.

No more than 50% of total deposits outstanding are to be held in LVNAV MMFs.

VNAV and other Pooled Funds

Currently, not all Variable Net Asset Value (VNAV) Funds carry a rating. Many VNAV bond funds are not rated. Equity, multi-asset and property funds are also not credit rated.

It is the Council's intention to invest further in Pooled Funds during 2020-21. The decision to invest in a particular asset class or fund will be based on the evaluation of the risk/reward characteristics including volatility, expected income return and potential for capital growth. Diversification of asset classes/funds and the overall level of investment will be determined by the Section 151 Officer with reference to the level of core balances and reserves. As potential investment would lock away capital for 3 to 5-years plus, the level of prudent investment would be commensurate with the level of core balances and reserves available for/during that timeframe.

Fluctuations in SCC cash balances, and particularly cash balances net of external bodies is difficult to predict over a 3 to 5-year timeframe. As the Section 151 Officer is to determine a suitable level of longer-term investment with reference to the level of core balances and reserves, it may be that a % of core balances and reserves is deemed the most appropriate limit for Pooled Funds, but in any case, this will not exceed £60m in total (Including current CCLA Fund), or £15m in any one fund.

Other Indicators

The Council will continue to use a range of indicators, not just credit ratings. Among other indicators to be taken into account will be:-

- Credit Default Swaps and Government Bond Spreads
- GDP, and Net Debt as a Percentage of GDP for sovereign countries
- Likelihood and strength of Parental Support
- Banking resolution mechanisms for the restructure of failing financial institutions, i.e. bail-in
- Share Price
- Market information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards the counterparties and sovereigns
- Underlying securities or collateral for covered instruments
- Other macroeconomic factors

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

2 March 2021

SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2021/22

Report of the Head of Finance and Operations

Purpose of the report: To consider and adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATION: To ADOPT the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1, subject to future adjustments to Members' Allowances as linked to staff cost of living pay awards.

Authority Priority: Achieve best value from our resources and improve our performance.

Legal and Equality Implications: The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Authority to adopt a scheme of allowances before the start of each financial year. The equality and human rights impact of the recommendation of this report has been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

Financial and Risk Implications: Provision has been made within the Core Budget for a 1% increase in the Scheme of Allowances for 2021/22. If the actual increase differs to this then there will be the opportunity when the Revised Budget is set in November 2021 to make the necessary adjustments.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Authority is required to publish a Scheme of Members' Allowances every 12 months and the Scheme for 2021/22 should be published before the start of the 2021/22 financial year on 1 April.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AND THE BASIC ALLOWANCE

2.1 Under the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances, adjustments to the Basic Allowance are linked to staff cost of living pay awards. As of February 2021, the staff pay award for 2021/22 has yet to be announced. When this has been agreed Members expenses will be uplifted and backdated to reflect this change.

2.2 The Scheme of Members' Expenses will therefore be revised to reflect this.

3. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

3.1 Special Responsibility Allowances are payable to Members who have been given significant responsibilities on the basis of the multipliers set out below:

Chairman of the Authority	2 x basic allowance
Deputy Chairman of the Authority	1.5 x basic allowance
Deputy Chairman (Planning)	1.5 x basic allowance
Chairman of the Standards Committee	.25 basic allowance
Chairman of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum	.5 x basic allowance

4. MILEAGE AND SUBSISTENCE CLAIMS

- 4.1 Mileage allowance rates are paid to Members and staff in accordance with the Authority's Green Travel Plan adopted in 2010/11.
- 4.2 Levels of subsistence allowances for Members and staff are broadly based on the movement of indices provided by others, such as the Consumer Price Index, and the scheme provides flexibility for allowances to be updated as necessary. The current levels of subsistence allowances are set out in the attached draft Scheme of Allowances.

Gordon Bryant
Head of Finance and Operations
February 2021

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2021/22**

1. INTRODUCTION

Exmoor National Park Authority's scheme provides for payment of:-

- A **Basic Allowance** which is a flat rate payable to each Member;
- A **Special Responsibility Allowance** for Members undertaking additional roles as defined by the Authority.

2. GENERAL POINTS

The term "Member" in these notes means a Member of the Exmoor National Park Authority.

Members have the option of not claiming all or part of any allowance. The Head of Finance and Operations must be notified in writing if a Member chooses this option.

All enquiries relating to Members allowances should be made to Judy Coles (tel 01398 322250) or e-mail jcoles@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

3. BASIC ALLOWANCE:-

- Is payable to all Members.
- Is £2,814.72 per annum from 1 April 2021, payable in arrears in monthly instalments. This is paid automatically (unless a Member has opted not to receive it in whole or in part) and Members do not need to claim it.
- Recompenses Members for time devoted to their work as a Member and is intended to cover
 - preparation for and attendance at Authority, committee, sub-committee, panel and working group meetings (including travel time to and from meetings)
 - preparation for and attendance at seminars, conferences and training sessions
 - representing the Authority on "outside organisations"
 - dealing with correspondence
 - single Member duties
 - other incidental costs for which no other specific provision is made, including use of Member's home
- Adjustments to the annual Basic Allowance of £2,814.72 will be linked to staff cost of living pay awards.
- Where the Member's term of office begins or ends at any time other than the start of the financial year, they are entitled to the appropriate proportion of the annual allowance.

4. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE:-

- Is payable in addition to the Basic Allowance.
- Is payable to Members who have been given significant responsibilities e.g. Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Deputy Chairman (Planning).
- Is allocated on the degree of responsibility and upon the perceived call on the Member's time, as agreed by the Authority, with no Member receiving more than one Special Responsibility Allowance at any one time.
- Is paid in arrears in 12 equal instalments automatically (with no need for the Member to claim) and where applicable is apportioned for part year entitlements.
- Is intended to cover:-
 - significant additional work preparing for meetings
 - meetings with officers
 - meetings with fellow chairmen
 - acting as the spokesperson for their area of special responsibility
 - dealing with correspondence
 - visits directly connected to the performance of a Special Responsibility Allowance, eg official openings, fact finding visits
- Does not include any element for travel expenses, which are claimable in the normal way for any Special Responsibility Allowance duty.
- Is banded on multiples of the basic allowance to reflect the work and responsibilities that have to be undertaken and will be paid as follows:-

Chairman of the Authority	2 x basic allowance
Deputy Chairman of the Authority	1.5 x basic allowance
Deputy Chairman of the Authority (Planning)	1.5 x basic allowance
Chairman of the Standards Committee	.25 basic allowance
Chairman of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum	.5 x basic allowance

- To cater for changes in circumstances that can occur during the year and to ensure that no individual cases of exceptional hardship are experienced, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance & Operations in consultation with the Chairman can agree Special Responsibility Allowances temporarily for individual Members as considered necessary.

5. TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

- Current rates are shown in Appendix 2.
- Can only be claimed for an approved duty (which is set out in Appendix 3) or one covered by a Special Responsibility Allowance.
- Should be claimed promptly at the end of each month on the Members' claim form.
- For official journeys outside Somerset and Devon see policy as set out in Appendix 2.
- Train fares are normally reimbursed at the standard class rate. Members eligible for a Railcard who regularly use the train for Authority business may reclaim the cost of the railcard.

NB The Corporate Support Officer can obtain pre-booked tickets for Members; such advance bookings attract cheaper fares and reserved seats.

- Wherever possible, Members should share transport.
- Taxi fares will be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances on production of receipts.
- Expenditure on tolls, parking fees, etc may be claimed for re-imburement on production of receipts.
- Members are advised to check the position with their insurer to ensure they have adequate vehicle insurance cover in place to include use of their vehicle for Authority business.

6. SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

- Is claimable for the actual cost of the meal or overnight expenses (excluding alcoholic drinks) up to the same maximum set out for staff which is updated annually. Current rates are shown in the attached Appendix 2.
- Subsistence claims should not include receipts for the purchase of alcoholic drinks.
- Is claimable for any approved duty or Special Responsibility Attendance exceeding 4 hours which spans the agreed meal time periods where additional expenditure is incurred.
- Should be claimed promptly at the end of each month on the Members' claim form and receipts must be attached to support the claim. Claims made without proof of expenditure will only be paid in special circumstances and will be referred for the approval of the Head of Finance and Operations in consultation with the Chairman or Deputy Chairman.
- Is not claimable if a meal is provided free of charge.
- For special circumstances the Head of Finance and Operations can agree allowances in excess of the maximum where this is considered necessary and appropriate.

7. NON CLAIMABLE DUTIES

- For the avoidance of doubt, the following duties are **not** approved for the purpose of claiming travel or subsistence allowances:-
 - Single Member duties
 - Attendance at Parish Council meetings
 - Attendance at any committee, panel or working group meetings to which a Member has not been appointed, unless as a previously named substitute

8. PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES

- Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances are paid automatically monthly after completion of:-
 - Written undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members
 - Declaration of interests
 - Tax, National Insurance and Bank detail pro-formas

These allowances are treated as imbursements and subject to Tax and National Insurance Contributions under PAYE regulations.

- Travel and subsistence must be claimed monthly on the Members' Claim Form. Mileage Allowances are taxed according to the profit element which is calculated by comparing the amounts paid per mile with the Inland Revenue's Authorised Mileage Rates. Reimbursement of subsistence and other expenses incurred (car park fees, tolls, taxis etc) should not give rise to a tax or national insurance contribution liability as there is no profit element involved.
- Fuel receipts which predate the dates of travel should be attached to the monthly mileage claim form in order that VAT can be reclaimed on the expenses paid.
- Claims must be submitted monthly. Claims not received by the Corporate Support Officer by the 5th day of the following month will not be paid that month.
- A supply of claim forms can be obtained from the Corporate Support Officer.
- Allowances must not be claimed where the Member is entitled to receive payment from another body for the same duty/activity.
- Payments are made through Somerset County Council which provides a payroll bureau service to Exmoor National Park Authority.
- Payment has to be made directly into a Bank or Building Society account.
- Members can request a PAYE code from the Inland Revenue for the taxable payments, otherwise payments will be taxed at the basic rate of tax. Some Members may be able to obtain an exemption card for national insurance. Some female Members may be able to obtain a reduced rate certificate (married women or widows). Members seeking advice on the national insurance calculation matters should contact their tax office or the Head of Finance and Operations.
- The Authority regularly reviews expenditure on Members Allowances to ensure the budget is not overspent. In order to assist with the monitoring of the budget Members are asked to submit claims monthly, no matter how small.
- Claims older than 2 months will be referred for the approval of the Head of Finance and Operations in consultation with the Chairman or Deputy Chairman and therefore payment may be delayed or refused.

9. UNEMPLOYMENT PAY and STATUTORY SICK PAY

- Members who are unemployed normally do not lose entitlements to unemployment benefit as a result of receiving a Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance, even though the earnings rule may be exceeded. Members entitled to Disability Benefits may find this entitlement is affected. In such cases Members should clarify the situation with their Tax Office.
- Members are regarded as "employees" under the Social Security and Housing Benefits Act 1982 and are entitled to receive sick pay for the first 28 weeks of sickness a year. If Members wish to pursue claims for sickness benefit, the period of sickness should be in excess of 3 consecutive days and the Corporate Support Officer must be given prompt notification of sickness.

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE**

1. **MILEAGE RATES** (up to 8500 miles per annum after which reduced rates apply) for journeys within Somerset and Devon, and between Members' homes and Dulverton:-
 A flat rate allowance: **46.9p**, Passenger supplement: **5p** per passenger per mile
 The rate for use of a motor cycle is 21p per mile.

2. **JOURNEYS OUTSIDE DEVON AND SOMERSET** For journeys outside Devon and Somerset Members should use public transport whenever possible and appropriate. Recognising that there are situations when it would be more appropriate to travel by private vehicle the rate of **35.2p** per mile is payable unless a case can be made for payment of the full mileage rate and this is subject to PRIOR approval by the Chairman or Deputy Chairman. Travel by car can be either by the use of a hire car or by the payment of the normal mileage rates for the journey. Situations where such prior approval is appropriate are on the grounds of:-

- sustainability where two or more people are sharing a vehicle
- inadequacy where public transport is not available or the journey is too time consuming involving changes of trains and taxis
- economy where the costs of using public transport are significantly greater, overnight stays would be avoided, etc.
- efficiency where savings in staff and Members time could justify the payment of the full rate

NB Members must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover for journeys made by them in respect of Exmoor National Park Authority business.

3. **SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES**

Breakfast	£7.50	Claimable if away from normal place of residence for more than 4 hours before 11.00am.
Lunch	£10.15	Claimable if away from normal place of residence for more than 4 hours including the lunch time period of 11.30am and 2.30pm.
Tea	£4.30	Claimable if away from normal place of residence for more than 4 hours including the period 3pm to 6pm and cannot be claimed if Evening Meal Allowance is also claimed.
Dinner	£14.00	Claimable if away from the normal place of residence more than 4 hours, ending after 7pm and cannot be claimed if tea is also claimed.
Overnight	£120.00	Claimable if away overnight from normal place of residence for overnight accommodation including breakfast.
Out of Pocket	£5.80 per night £23.25 per week	Claimable for residential courses and conferences.
Receipts must be submitted to obtain subsistence allowances up to maximum allowances above.		

Notes: Members will be taxed at their marginal rate for the cost of travelling between home and Exmoor House. Reimbursement of all other receipted subsistence and other expenses should not give rise to a tax or national insurance liability.

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
LIST OF APPROVED DUTIES FOR THE PAYMENT OF
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES**

Each of the following duties shall be regarded as authorised by the ENPA:-

- Attendance at any
 - Exmoor National Park Authority meeting
 - Meeting of any Authority Committee or Sub Committee to which the Member is formally appointed by the Authority or specifically invited by the Chairman
 - Working group or panel meetings to which the Member has been appointed by the Authority
 - “ad hoc” meetings and site visits set up by the ENPA or its committees when attending as an appointed Member.
 - Association of National Park Authorities meetings as agreed by the Authority.
- The undertaking of any duty associated with the ENPA or its committees and sub-committees, including briefing sessions, site visits, meetings with outside bodies or individuals, by
 - the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Deputy Chairman (Planning)
 - the Chairman of the Standards Committee
 - the Chairman of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum
- Attendance on Authority, committee and sub-committee tours of inspection and at Members' conferences or seminars where formally appointed by the ENPA
- Attendance as the ENPA's nominee or representative at meetings associated with approved bodies
- Attendance at Open Days, official ceremonies where the Member is performing a specific function
- Attendance at any approved conference where appointed by the ENPA or a committee or sub-committee.
- Any other attendance for which prior approval has been given by the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the ENPA

NB A duty cannot be approved, in retrospect, for the purpose of paying allowances.