



# EXMOOR

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## NATIONAL PARK

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20 March 2025

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**To: All Members of the Exmoor National Park Authority**

A meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority will be held in the **Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton** on **Tuesday, 1 April 2025 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 [Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

The meeting will be **recorded**. By entering the Authority's Committee Room and speaking during Public Speaking you are consenting to being recorded. We will make the recording 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 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](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)).

Sarah Bryan  
Chief Executive

As set out above, the Authority welcomes public engagement with its work and believes that everyone attending a meeting of Exmoor National Park Authority or one of its Committees has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe at all times, including before, during and after the meeting they attend.

The Authority understands that some situations can be difficult and lead to frustration; however, the Authority is committed to promoting an environment where everyone feels listened to and respected and is not subjected to unacceptable behaviour. Further guidance is provided in our Customer Notice, available on our [website](#).

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies for Absence

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting.

### 3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. **Minutes** (1) To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4 March 2025 (Item 4).

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

5. **Business of Urgency:** To introduce any business which by reason of special circumstances the Chairperson, after consultation with the Chief Executive, is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency and to resolve when such business should be ordered on the Agenda.

6. **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.

7. **Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2025-26:** To consider the report of the Chief Executive (Item 7).

8. **Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts:** To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer (Item 8).

9. **Standards Committee:** To receive and note the draft Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 4 March 2025 (Item 9).

### 10. Personnel Update:

#### Starters:

17/02/2025 – Logan Schofield – Apprentice Ranger (fixed term)

24/03/2025 – Alan Weldon – Planning Enforcement Officer

29/03/2025 – Connie Ross – Seasonal Information Advisor (Lynmouth) (fixed term)

01/04/2025 – Chris Jenkins – Facilities Officer

#### Leavers:

31/03/2025 – Elisabeth Mackenzie – Planning and Customer Support Assistant

11. **Members' Reports:** To receive any updates and reports on meetings or events attended by Members as representatives of Exmoor National Park Authority.

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 the Corporate Support Officer, at Exmoor House.

## ITEM 4

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the Exmoor National Park Authority held on Tuesday, 4 March 2025 at 10.00am in the Committee Room, Exmoor House, Dulverton.

#### PRESENT

Miss A V Davis (Chairperson)

Mr R Milton (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr L Baker

Mrs M Chilcott

Mr M Ellicott

Mr W Geen

Mr J Holtom

Mrs C Lawrence

Mrs F Nicholson

Mr S J Pugsley

Mrs F Smith

Mr N Thwaites

Miss L Williams

Mr J Yabsley

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Bray, Mr T Butt Philip, Mr D Elson, Dr M Kelly, Mr M Kravis, Mr J Patrinos, Miss E Stacey and Dr S Warren.

**169. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**170. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were no Chairperson's announcements.

#### 171. MINUTES

- i. **Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Authority's meeting held on 4 February 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- ii. **Matters arising:** There were none.

**172. BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.

**173. PUBLIC SPEAKING:** See Minute 176 for details of a public speaker.

#### 174. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025-26 TO 2029-30 AND

**BUDGETS 2025-26:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

##### **The Authority's Consideration**

The meeting was advised that following preparation of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budgets for 2025-26, the Authority had received notification from Defra of an indicative 2025-26 National Park Grant settlement for the 10 English National Parks of £44.8m resources and £15m capital.

This represented a £4m reduction in the revenue department expenditure limit and a £12.5m increase in the capital department expenditure limit. Individual allocations for each National Park Authority had yet to be confirmed; however, each Authority was likely to face a revenue decrease, alongside some level of capital increase.

Given that the National Park Grant was the Authority's most significant income assumption, it was confirmed that the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget

documents as currently prepared would require review, and some budget areas would be re-assessed. It was anticipated that a secondary budget would be presented to the Authority Committee once the level of National Park Grant had been clarified.

On a positive note, there would be opportunity to utilise the capital increase, and it was hoped to negate the need for a further business review at this stage.

In terms of the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budgets 2025-26 set out in the report, the Chief Finance Officer advised as follows:

- Staff costs were projected to be over 90% of National Park Grant during the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan; however, achieving staff costs of 70% of NPG remained a budgetary aspiration and staff costs as a percentage of total income were forecast to be 62%. It was agreed to undertake a comparison exercise with other National Park Authorities in relation to staff costs as a percentage of National Park Grant.
- In terms of the risk analysis and based on the recent communication from Defra, it was agreed that the likelihood of a reduction in National Park Grant should be revised from medium to high.
- The Authority would continue to make use of funding available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme for projects on Authority owned land.
- Interest on cash balances had supported balanced budgets in 2024-25 and 2025-26; however, interest rates had now stabilised with base rates currently on a downward trend.

Members thanked the Chief Finance Officer for the achievement of a balanced budget for 2025-26 in a period of continuing financial constraint. Given the fiscal conditions, the challenges facing the Authority in terms of long-term forward planning were recognised.

Mr J Yabsley joined the meeting during this item and was therefore ineligible to vote.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To note the month 9 budget monitoring position for 2024-25.
2. To approve the Core, Capital and Programmes, Partnerships and Contributions to Reserves Budgets for 2025-26 as summarised in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the report.
3. To note the position on Reserves as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report.
4. To adopt the Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 6 of the report.

**175. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025/26:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Chief Finance Officer.

**The Authority's Consideration**

In response to Members' queries, the meeting was advised that the Service Level Agreement with Somerset Council for the provision of treasury management services and investment management was reviewed annually, and that the Authority was content with the current position in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme pension fund revaluation.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To note the report of the Chief Finance Officer.
2. To approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2025-26.
3. To note the Prudential Indicators for 2025-26 to 2027-28 as set out in the report.

**176. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:** The Authority considered the **report** of the Head of Head of Enterprise and Operations.

**Public Speaker:** Mr Roger Foxwell

**The Authority's Consideration**

Members welcomed the report and congratulated the communications team on the production of a Communications Strategy which was approved subject to suggested amendments as follows:

- Emphasis on positive collaboration and 2-way communication.
- Confirmation that Exmoor National Park was mostly privately owned.
- Removal of the Exmoor National Park Forum from owned media.

Opportunities to strengthen the Exmoor National Park Forum and to improve the Authority's listening communications were supported, and it was agreed that Members shared a collective responsibility to act as ambassadors for the National Park Authority and to promote its role.

The pro-active approach to communications by Officers, particularly on social media, was appreciated.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To adopt the Exmoor National Park Authority Communications Strategy 2025-2030.
2. To delegate to Officers:
  - the correction of typographical or factual errors; and
  - amendments in line with Members' suggestionsin advance of production of the final document prior to design and publication.

**177. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME:** The Authority Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive and the Head of Climate, Nature and Communities.

**The Authority's Consideration**

The meeting acknowledged that all local planning authorities were required to prepare a Local Development Scheme setting out a publicly available timetable for the key stages in producing a new or revised Local Plan for the area. It was also noted that the national framework for the review of Local Plans was continuing to evolve, and a revised Local Development Scheme may need to be presented to Members at a future date.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Exmoor National Park Local Development Scheme 2025.
2. To delegate to the Chief Executive/Head of Climate, Nature and Communities to correct typographical or factual errors in production of the final document for publication on the Authority's website.

**178. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2025-2026:** The Authority Committee considered the report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

**The Authority's Consideration**

It was confirmed that arrangements to refer the Members' Scheme of Allowances to an Independent Remuneration Panel would be progressed during 2025-26.

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2025-26 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report subject to future adjustments to Members' Allowances as linked to staff cost of living pay awards.

**179. PERSONNEL UPDATE:** The Authority Committee noted the recent staff changes set out on the agenda.

**180. MEMBERS' REPORTS:** There were none.

The meeting closed at 11.20am

(Chairperson)

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 April 2025

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2025-26

## Report of the Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:** To present to Members the draft Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan for 2025-26.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) APPROVE the Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2025-26.
- (2) DELEGATE to the Chief Executive and Chairperson authority to agree minor amendments following Member discussion, and production of the final Plan.

**Authority Priority:** The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities for the Authority for the period to end of March 2026.

**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:** The budget for 2025/26 was approved by Members in March 2025. Defra has provided an indicative settlement for the year which includes a reduction in revenue funding and uplift in capital. This may impact delivery of actions within the Corporate Plan.

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

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The 2025-26 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 The Authority’s priorities continue to be focused on delivering our two statutory purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Exmoor, and promoting opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of its special qualities. In fulfilling these purposes, we are also responding to the current priorities for the nation which include the nature and climate crises, enabling people from all parts of society to enjoy the National Park, and benefiting the nation’s health and wellbeing.

## **2. Exmoor National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2025-26**

- 2.1 This Corporate Plan for 2025-26 has been prepared within the context of a Corporate Strategy for ENPA 2023-2026 [Key Documents | Exmoor \(exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk\)](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk) which gives staff, Members and the public a clear view of our strategic direction. It describes our six priorities and the outcomes that we want to achieve.
1. A clear response to the nature and climate crises
  2. A welcoming place for all, improving people's health and well-being
  3. A cared for landscape and heritage
  4. A place with flourishing, vibrant, communities and businesses
  5. A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park purposes
  6. A great place to work
- 2.2 The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLOTf) was received from Defra in 2024. There are ten targets that Government expects National Parks and National Landscapes to help deliver, along with a range of indicators for monitoring. A new three-year Corporate Strategy will be drafted in 2025 – 26 which more fully reflects the emerging Partnership Plan and national Protected Landscapes Targets
- 2.3 At the time of writing the 2025/26 grant allocation has not yet been finalised by Defra but indications are that all NPAs will receive a cut to revenue budgets and an uplift in capital allocation, to be delivered in year. This shift in emphasis of funding will put some pressure on staff to deliver capital programmes on time and to budget and will need careful management.
- 2.4 In addition to the Defra grant, ENPA generates around £3m of externally derived income. We will continue to implement plans that will increase income and bring in external funding to support our work.
- 2.5 In addition to the list of actions for 2025-26 in Appendix 2, a section is included at the start of the plan (Appendix 1), setting out in more detail the services that the Authority delivers, and the indicators that are used to measure performance. This is to reflect the range of work that officers deliver, and to provide a clear link to performance reporting.

## **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.

**Sarah Bryan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**March 2025**

**Appendix 1: The Role of Exmoor National Park Authority and service delivery**

**Appendix 2: Corporate Actions 2025-26**

**Appendix 3: Use of our Resources**



## ENPA Corporate Plan

### The Role of Exmoor National Park Authority and service delivery

#### What we do to deliver National Park purposes

As well as leading on projects and programmes, Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) delivers services for visitors, local communities and land managers to help further the purposes of the National Park.

National Parks are designated to:

- conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and
- promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

In carrying out these purposes, ENPA has a duty to promote the socio-economic well-being of local communities.

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

Members consider priorities and make decisions relating to our duties as a National Park Authority, including determining planning applications for development on Exmoor.

We employ a team of around 80 staff which includes a range of core roles, project and seasonal staff. Our knowledgeable and dedicated staff team are a key resource in ensuring we deliver this Corporate Plan.

The 5 year Partnership Plan is 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 2025-2030 Partnership Plan will be adopted in July 2025.

Our Corporate Strategy sets the three-year work programme for the National Park Authority. In 2025-26 the Corporate Strategy will be revised to ensure it supports delivery of the emerging Partnership Plan. The Corporate Plan is drafted annually and sets out the work programme for each year.

Much of what we do would 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. 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. We will continue to develop close working relationships with our partners and provide opportunities for people to get involved in the delivery of our plans.

## **Delivering our services**

### **Conservation**

We deliver advice and develop projects to 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.

We measure our performance by:

- % SSSI land in favourable and unfavourable but recovering condition in the National Park
- % identified sites treated for invasive species
- Number and % of listed buildings and scheduled monuments at risk & number conserved
- % of Conservation Areas with up-to-date appraisals

### **Access & recreation**

We carry out 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.

ENPA has devolved responsibility from our local highway authorities for maintenance of our 1000km of public rights of way and associated legal work. We also have statutory responsibility for the 18,000 ha of Access Land on Exmoor, and maintain many permitted paths alongside improvement works, care for promoted routes and other work to help everyone enjoy Exmoor.

We measure our performance by:

- % rights of way open and easy to use (target 80%)
- % of rights of way network inspected
- % reported network faults resolved within 3 months (target 80%)
- Total number of major works completed
- Number of legal orders made (e.g. path diversions and temporary closures)
- Public satisfaction with the rights of way network
- Number of consultations relating to recreational events

### **Outreach, learning & engagement**

We provide formal and informal education, training, volunteer opportunities and greater involvement of new audiences, including health and wellbeing initiatives. This includes our Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre providing residential experiences for schools, and also for hire for private groups, we are the only National Park to offer this service. We provide a wide range of educational day visits as well as outreach work within and beyond the National Park.

We measure our performance by:

- Occupancy levels and number of users at Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre
- Number of Engagement Days for Residential Stays, Day visits and Outreach at Pinkery Outdoor Education Centre
- Number and value of volunteers
- Number of volunteer days attended by 'under-represented groups'
- Number of people attending events to promote understanding of the National Park

- Number of new audiences engaged

### **National Park Centres**

We run three Centres in Lynmouth, Dulverton and Dunster providing inspiration and information about Exmoor National Park, with interpretive displays, maps, publications and staff with specialist knowledge about the area.

We measure our performance by:

- Number of visitors to National Park Centres
- Net income from National Park Centres and online shop and profit margins
- Spend per visitor in National Park Centres
- Customer satisfaction

### **Communications**

We provide information and interpretation of Exmoor's special qualities through digital and print media, website, social media, display boards.

We measure our performance by:

- Total social media audience (followers across all channels)
  - o Facebook annual reach & content interactions
  - o Instagram annual reach & content interactions
  - o X (twitter) followers and post impressions
- Number of media articles / interviews across international, national, regional and local outlets
  - o % positive, neutral, negative
- Total website page views and unique users
- Total e-news subscribers (Constant contact)
- Usefulness and quality of publications (from Visitor Surveys completed every 2-3 years)

### **Planning**

ENPA is the local planning authority for the National Park and is responsible for developing and implementing planning policy through the Local Plan, and ensuring that development is of the right scale, directed to appropriate locations and conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the National Park. This includes determining applications for planning permission, listed building consent, tree preservation orders, as well as taking enforcement action against planning breaches.

We measure our performance by:

- % major applications determined within 13 weeks (target 60%)
- % minor and other applications determined within 8 weeks (target 70%)
- % planning approval (all determined applications)
- % applications registered within target time
- Number of appeals successfully defended
- Number of enforcement cases recorded and number resolved

### **Rural Enterprise**

We engage with the business sector, local communities and with local authority economic development services to help sustain a thriving economy on Exmoor, while maximising the opportunity for businesses to contribute to keeping Exmoor special. There is a particular

focus on working with tourism partners to ensure that Exmoor is a leading visitor destination and tourism is promoted and managed sustainably for the benefit of all.

We measure our performance by:

- Value of CareMoor donations, broken down by % from:
  - o businesses
  - o legacies & large gifts (+£1k)
  - o personal donations
  - o events & fundraising
- Number of CareMoor champions
- Number of Park Partners

### **Estate and Facilities**

ENPA owns 4,586 hectares of land (around 7% of the National Park), comprising mostly open moorland, along with 553 hectares of woodland. The estate also includes a number of buildings, including its head office – Exmoor House, National Park Centres, a field services Depot at Exford, an outdoor education centre at Pinkery, an historic farmstead, other historic assets as well as a number of ancillary properties. Such a large estate is unusual amongst National Park Authorities within the UK, but for a small National Park Authority, it is unique. We manage Authority land for landscape, wildlife, historic environment and recreation benefits, which also provides opportunities to demonstrate best practice and emerging land management techniques. We also maintain and improve Authority owned public facilities including picnic sites, toilets and car parks to provide a positive experience for visitors and locals accessing and enjoying the National Park.

We measure our performance by:

- Condition of SSSIs in ENPA ownership (% in favourable and unfavourable but recovering condition)
- % identified sites in ENPA ownership treated for invasive species
- % of ENPA woodland under appropriate management (with current Forestry Commission approved UK Forestry Standard long-term plan)
- Amount and value of ENPA timber harvested
- Number and % of Scheduled Monuments / Listed Buildings in ENPA ownership at risk and number conserved

### **Corporate and governance**

The operational running of the organisation is supported through HR, Finance, ICT, GIS, Corporate Planning, Administration and Governance.

We measure our performance by:

- % change in annual GHG emission from ENPA operations
- Sickness absence levels
- Total number of staff accidents and number reportable to the Health & Safety Executive
- Number of formal complaints received
- % undisputed invoices paid within 30 days
- Average time to respond to ICT help-desk queries
- Total amount of external income brought in

## Appendix 2

### Corporate Actions 2025-26

In addition to our ongoing service delivery, we identify actions that will be undertaken during the year. These include the targets set by Defra in 2024 through the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) as well as other priority actions for the Authority. The full list of PLTOF targets is set out on page 5 and reference to delivery against these new targets is shown in the right-hand column.

| Cross-cutting Actions   | PLTOF |
|---|-------|
| 1. <b>Priority action:</b> Review consultation responses, revise the draft Partnership Plan, and adopt the final Exmoor National Park Partnership Plan 2025 – 2030 at the Authority meeting in July 2025. Prepare Delivery Plans with partners and begin implementation. Establish a monitoring and reporting process for the 5-year Plan period. | ✓     |
| 2. <b>Priority action:</b> Commence delivery of the 5-year Lottery funded Pioneers programme, covering: nature enhancement, heritage at risk, an extensive engagement/learning programme and a skills programme.  | ✓     |
| 3. <b>Priority action:</b> Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes 2025/26 programme. <b>Target: allocate £520k in 2025/26.</b>   | ✓     |
| 4. <b>Priority action:</b> Deliver strategy for income generation. Maintain the project pipeline for external project funding and publish a revised prospectus while pursuing funding opportunities.  |       |
| 5. <b>Priority action:</b> Complete second year of development phase of the 'Reviving Exmoor's Heartlands' Landscape Recovery programme including land management plan, finance plan, governance arrangements and contracts.  |       |
| 6. <b>Priority action:</b> Progress building restoration and land management plans for Driver.  | ✓     |
| <b>Corporate Priority 1: A clear response to the nature and climate crises</b>  |       |
| 7. Assist lead authorities in completion of any outstanding tasks to ensure successful launch of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.  | ✓     |
| 8. Develop plans for ENPA Estate within the National Trust Holnicote Landscapes Recovery project.   |       |
| 9. Develop and submit ideas for a joint National Lottery Landscape Connections bid with the National Trust on the coast and the Barle valley.   | ✓     |
| 10. Complete Air Quality Management Strategy. Look at ways to implement and fund the strategy.  | ✓     |

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|--|---|
| 11. Deliver further year of the Sowing the Seeds project. <b>Target: restore 200ha of grassland, engage with 10 landowners and train 20 meadow owners.</b>   | ✓ |
| 12. Work with partners to progress species recovery including pine marten, beaver, white-tailed eagle, marsh fritillary and water vole. Scope the development of a species recovery plan.  | ✓ |
| 13. Seek funding to further implement Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species (ENNIS) Project.  | ✓ |
| 14. Work with Natural England on SSSI monitoring programme.  | ✓ |
| 15. Explore peatland restoration opportunities via Exmoor's Heartlands Landscape Recovery project and Exmoor Pioneers.   | ✓ |
| 16. Deliver national ambitions for expansion of tree and woodland cover including delivery of 'Exmoor's Temperate Rainforest' project in combes around Simonsbath and Exmoor Forest.   | ✓ |
| 17. Update ENPA Climate Action Plan for 2025-2030 and continue to deliver actions.   | ✓ |
| 18. Develop an action plan for Race to Zero by end of Q1. Complete annual report by end of Q2.   | ✓ |
| 19. <b>Priority action:</b> Commission a climate adaptation and risk assessment for Exmoor National Park to feed into the Partnership Plan delivery and action planning.   | ✓ |
| <b>Corporate Priority 2: A welcoming place for all, improving people's health and well-being</b>   |   |
| 20. Develop and recruit a Youth Voice board.   | ✓ |
| 21. Adopt and deliver a volunteer strategy to promote and support a wide range of volunteering opportunities within Exmoor.  | ✓ |
| 22. Promote the health and well-being benefits that Exmoor provides by working with partners to deliver the 'Nature prescriptions' project.  | ✓ |
| 23. Continue to maximise NPCs' contribution to National Park purposes and income generation. <b>Target: 5% increase in net spend whilst maintaining 40% margins</b> and continue to expand the Authority's online shop. <b>Target: 5% increase in gross profit year on year.</b> |   |
| 24. <b>Priority action:</b> Maintain a safe rights of way and access network with resources focused on the most popular routes. <b>Target: open and easy to use score above 80%.</b>   | ✓ |
| 25. Complete Exmoor Active Travel Plan and explore opportunities to fund implementation.   |   |

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|---|---|
| 26. Deliver year 3 of Defra Access for All funding to improve disability access infrastructure.   | ✓ |
| 27. Scope works needed to replace Hinds Pitt Bridge on the Tarr Steps Circuit.  |   |
| 28. Work with Visit Exmoor to maximise benefits to Exmoor through involvement in Somerset & Exmoor and Devon + Partners Local Visitor Economy Partnerships.   |   |
| 29. Work with the Exmoor Tourism Network to deliver ambitions outlined in the shared Good Tourism Plan for Exmoor. Manage a tourism challenge fund to support partners in delivering against the plan.              |   |
| 30. Finalise Exmoor Visitor Survey data collection (Q1) and publish results (Q2).   |   |
| 31. Deliver inaugural Exmoor Nature Festival in May and evaluate long term feasibility.   |   |
| 32. <b>New action:</b> Explore opportunities to further promote car free travel within and to the National Park.  | ✓ |
| <b>Corporate Priority 3: A cared for landscape and heritage</b>   |   |
| 33. Continue the restoration of Ashcombe Gardens.   |   |
| 34. Engage people in Exmoor's dark skies through delivery of the 2025 Dark Skies Festival.  |   |
| 35. Draft and consult on a Design Planning Document to encourage high quality, locally distinctive design and take account of national design guidance.   |   |
| 36. Produce Management Plans for all Conservation Areas including public consultation. Investigate potential for small scale improvement schemes.   |   |
| 37. Enhance engagement with the Historic Environment Record (HER).  |   |
| <b>Corporate Priority 4: A place with flourishing, vibrant, communities and businesses</b>  |   |
| 38. Support businesses and partners to deliver the Rural Enterprise Exmoor vision.  |   |
| 39. Promote philanthropic giving via CareMoor for Exmoor with a focus on promoting legacy opportunities. <b>Target: Increase general donations (excluding large gifts over £1,000) by 5% above 2024/25 figures.</b> |   |
| 40. Work with partners to support increased use and promotion of local produce including further roll out of Eat Exmoor branding.   |   |
| 41. Prepare for the review of the Local Plan.   |   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 42. Implement transfer to a new planning database.   |   |
| 43. Consult on and adopt updated local list of requirements for validating planning applications.  |   |
| <b>Corporate Priority 5: A highly performing Estate, delivering National Park purposes</b>   |   |
| 44. <b>Priority action:</b> Progress the ENPA Estate Strategy with a particular focus on completing baseline surveys and preparing management plans for priority land assets (those in Landscape Recovery).    | ✓ |
| 45. Continue management of ENPA woodland estate and develop the tree nursery. Progress timber sales. <b>Target: £14,000 in 2025/26.</b>  | ✓ |
| 46. Continue management of the Authority's Exmoor pony herds.  | ✓ |
| <b>Corporate Priority 6: A great organisation to work for</b>  |   |
| 47. Review and update Organisational Development Strategy  |   |
| 48. <b>Priority action:</b> Take positive action to support the Authority's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Adopt an EDI strategy and develop actions to ensure EDI is embedded into our work. |   |
| 49. <b>New action:</b> Implement new Communications Strategy.  |   |
| 50. Fully integrate Risk Management with Performance Management.   |   |
| 51. Develop use of innovative GIS and AI tools in project and service delivery.  |   |



## Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

In 2023/24 Defra set out ambitious targets to support Protected Landscapes in meeting their huge potential for nature, climate, people and place. They show how Protected Landscapes will help to achieve 3 outcomes from the [Environmental Improvement Plan \(EIP\) 2023](#):

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

These prioritised EIP targets are those that are most relevant to Protected Landscapes.

### Target 1

Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).

### Target 2

Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.

### Target 3

For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.

### Target 4

Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through agri-environment schemes by 2042.

### Target 5

Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

### Target 6

Reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in Protected Landscapes to net zero by 2050 relative to 1990 levels.

### Target 7

Restore approximately 130,000 hectares of peat in Protected Landscapes by 2050.

### Target 8

Increase tree canopy and woodland cover (combined) by 3% of total land area in Protected Landscapes by 2050 (from 2022 baseline).

### Target 9

Improve and promote accessibility to and engagement with Protected Landscapes for all using existing metrics in our Access for All programme.

### Target 10

Decrease the number of nationally designated heritage assets at risk in Protected Landscapes.

# Appendix 3

## Use of our Resources

The summary Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) set out below provides a projection of ENPA income and expenditure for 2025/26 through to 2029/30.

We continue to work within an annual grant allocation from Defra and have been promised a three-year settlement for 2026/27 onwards. This MTFP assumes zero growth in National Park Grant from 2025/26 onwards. Whatever funding is provided, the Authority will work hard to use the resources available to implement the Partnership Plan and work with Defra to deliver their priorities for England's National Parks.

Following preparation of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budgets for 2025-26, the Authority received notification from Defra of an indicative 2025-26 National Park Grant settlement for the 10 English National Parks of £44.8m resources and £15m capital.

This represents a £4m reduction in the revenue department expenditure limit and a £12.5m increase in the capital department expenditure limit. Individual allocations for each National Park Authority are yet to be confirmed; however, each Authority is likely to face a revenue decrease, alongside some level of capital increase.

Given that the National Park Grant is this Authority's most significant income assumption, the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget documents as currently prepared may require review, and some budget areas could be re-assessed. A secondary budget may be presented to the Authority once the level of National Park Grant has been clarified.

**Exmoor National Park Authority**  
**Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 - 2029/30**

|  | Previous<br>2024/25<br>£'000 | Original<br>2025/26<br>£'000 | Projected<br>2026/27<br>£'000 | Projected<br>2027/28<br>£'000 | Projected<br>2028/29<br>£'000 | Projected<br>2029/30<br>£'000 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Income</b>  |                              |                              |                               |                               |                               |                               |
| <b>National Park Grant Income (Defra)</b>                            | <b>3,211</b>                 | <b>3,211</b>                 | <b>3,211</b>                  | <b>3,211</b>                  | <b>3,211</b>                  | <b>3,211</b>                  |
| - Fees - planning,   | 116                          | 121                          | 124                           | 127                           | 130                           | 130                           |
| - Fees - car parks   | 95                           | 100                          | 105                           | 110                           | 115                           | 115                           |
| - Interest earned  | 150                          | 120                          | 100                           | 100                           | 100                           | 100                           |
| - Rents  | 197                          | 185                          | 189                           | 192                           | 196                           | 196                           |
| - Grants & Contributions (Including Farming in Protected Landscapes) | 2,078                        | 1,615                        | 1,647                         | 1,680                         | 1,714                         | 1,714                         |
| - National Park Centre Sales Income                                  | 152                          | 145                          | 148                           | 151                           | 154                           | 154                           |
| - Rights of Way Income   | 155                          | 155                          | 155                           | 155                           | 155                           | 155                           |
| - Pinkery Trading Income   | 187                          | 194                          | 199                           | 199                           | 203                           | 204                           |
| - Other  | 54                           | 56                           | 56                            | 56                            | 56                            | 56                            |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <b>3,184</b>                 | <b>2,691</b>                 | <b>2,723</b>                  | <b>2,771</b>                  | <b>2,823</b>                  | <b>2,824</b>                  |
| <b>Total Income</b>  | <b>6,395</b>                 | <b>5,902</b>                 | <b>5,934</b>                  | <b>5,982</b>                  | <b>6,034</b>                  | <b>6,035</b>                  |

| <b>Expenditure</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Pay</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Current Establishment (excluding Pinkery)                              | 3,456        | 3,598        | 3,671        | 3,743        | 3,817        | 3,817        |
| Pension Costs - Fixed Element  | 78           | 82           | 85           | 88           | 91           | 91           |
| <b>Target Pay Budget</b>   | <b>3,534</b> | <b>3,680</b> | <b>3,756</b> | <b>3,831</b> | <b>3,908</b> | <b>3,908</b> |
| <b>Non-Pay</b>   |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Member costs   | 96           | 96           | 97           | 98           | 99           | 99           |
| Premises costs   | 262          | 284          | 287          | 290          | 293          | 293          |
| Insurance  | 57           | 55           | 56           | 57           | 58           | 58           |
| Travel / vehicle costs   | 109          | 89           | 91           | 93           | 95           | 95           |
| Equipment  | 110          | 85           | 86           | 87           | 88           | 88           |
| Contracted work (e.g. project expenditure, audit fees, legal services) | 1,361        | 855          | 858          | 861          | 864          | 864          |
| Grants and contributions   | 4            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            |
| Subscriptions  | 24           | 24           | 24           | 24           | 24           | 24           |
| National Park Centre Cost of Goods Sold                                | 94           | 82           | 89           | 91           | 92           | 92           |
| Consumables  | 57           | 59           | 60           | 61           | 62           | 62           |
| ICT Expenditure  | 81           | 79           | 80           | 81           | 82           | 82           |
| Communications   | 24           | 19           | 20           | 21           | 22           | 22           |
| Toilet & car park costs  | 95           | 100          | 101          | 102          | 103          | 103          |
| Pinkery  | 187          | 194          | 199          | 199          | 203          | 204          |
| <b>Total non-pay budget</b>  | <b>2,561</b> | <b>2,021</b> | <b>2,048</b> | <b>2,065</b> | <b>2,085</b> | <b>2,086</b> |
| <b>Total Budget</b>  | <b>6,095</b> | <b>5,701</b> | <b>5,804</b> | <b>5,896</b> | <b>5,994</b> | <b>5,995</b> |
| <b>Programmes, Partnerships &amp; Contributions to Reserves</b>        |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Contributions to Reserves  | 270          | 151          | 100          | 100          | 100          | 115          |
| Top Sliced Programmes  | 30           | 30           | 30           | 30           | 30           | 30           |
| Partnership Fund - small grants scheme/ Contingency                    |              | 20           |              |              |              |              |
| <b>Total available Programmes &amp; Partnerships Budget</b>            | <b>300</b>   | <b>201</b>   | <b>130</b>   | <b>130</b>   | <b>130</b>   | <b>145</b>   |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>   | <b>6,395</b> | <b>5,902</b> | <b>5,934</b> | <b>6,026</b> | <b>6,124</b> | <b>6,140</b> |
| <b>Savings yet to be identified</b>                                    | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>0</b>     | <b>-44</b>   | <b>-89</b>   | <b>-104</b>  |

### Percentages

|   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Target Pay Budget as % of NPG             | 110% | 115% | 117% | 119% | 122% | 122% |
| Total non-pay Budget as % of NPG          | 80%  | 63%  | 64%  | 64%  | 65%  | 65%  |
| Pro & Part Budget as % of NPG             | 9%   | 6%   | 4%   | 4%   | 4%   | 5%   |
| Target Pay Budget as % of Total Income    | 55%  | 62%  | 63%  | 64%  | 65%  | 65%  |
| Total non-pay Budget as % of Total Income | 40%  | 34%  | 35%  | 35%  | 35%  | 35%  |
| Pro & Part Budget as % of Total Income    | 5%   | 3%   | 2%   | 2%   | 2%   | 2%   |

### Reserves

|   |                |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| woodlands                                 | 25,000         | 25,000         |                | 10,000         | 10,000         | 10,000         |
| R & D                                     | 50,000         | 36,000         | 25,000         | -              | -              | 15,000         |
| IT  |                |                |                |                |                |                |
| Corporate Equipment & Vehicle Replacement | 25,000         | 25,000         | 25,000         | 25,000         | 25,000         | 25,000         |
| Internship and Trainee Fund               | 20,000         | 15,000         | 15,000         | 15,000         | 15,000         | 15,000         |
| Modernisation                             | 100,000        |                |                |                |                |                |
| Estates - various                         | 50,000         | 50,000         | 50,000         | 50,000         | 50,000         | 50,000         |
|   | <b>270,000</b> | <b>151,000</b> | <b>115,000</b> | <b>100,000</b> | <b>100,000</b> | <b>115,000</b> |

### LESS: Top sliced Programmes

|                             |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Contingency                 |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Tourism                     | 10,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        |
| Potential Pinkery overspend | -             | -             | -             | -             | -             | -             |
| Hill Farm Network           | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         |
| HLF Bid                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Website Development         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         |
| SERC/DBRC Bio-records       | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         |
| STEAM                       | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         | 5,000         |
|                             | <b>30,000</b> | <b>30,000</b> | <b>30,000</b> | <b>30,000</b> | <b>30,000</b> | <b>30,000</b> |

# ENPA Budget 2025/26

| Section  | Budget Heading  | 2024/25 Revised Budget £                          | 2025/26 Expenditure £                              | 2025/26 Income £                                      | 2025/26 Original Budget £                          | Variance between 24/25 Revised and 25/26 Original Budgets | Notes   |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Conservation of Cultural Heritage                  | Archaeology & Historic Environment<br>Exmoor Pioneers (Project)   | 103,100<br>0                                      | 104,800<br>202,900                                 | -1,200<br>-202,900                                    | 103,600<br>0                                       | 500<br>0  |   |
| <b>Conservation of Cultural Heritage Total</b>     |   | <b>103,100</b>                                    | <b>307,700</b>                                     | <b>-204,100</b>                                       | <b>103,600</b>                                     | <b>500</b>  |   |
| Conservation of Natural Environment                | Woodlands<br>Landscape Recovery (Project)<br>ENNIS (Project)<br>Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) Project<br>Conservation Advice | 69,300<br>0<br>0<br>0<br>129,700                  | 141,600<br>51,100<br>42,800<br>620,500<br>331,300  | -77,400<br>-51,100<br>-42,800<br>-620,500<br>-177,000 | 64,200<br>0<br>0<br>0<br>154,300                   | -5,100<br>0<br>0<br>0<br>24,600                           | Treescapes Project ends in July 2025<br>Increased Ecology Support and impact of National Insurance changes  |
| <b>Conservation of Natural Environment Total</b>   |   | <b>199,000</b>                                    | <b>1,187,300</b>                                   | <b>-968,800</b>                                       | <b>218,500</b>                                     | <b>19,500</b>   |   |
| Forward Planning & Communities                     | Planning & Community<br>CareMoor (Project)<br>Rural Enterprise  | 99,500<br>0<br>123,200                            | 103,800<br>30,000<br>140,400                       | 0<br>-30,000<br>-10,000                               | 103,800<br>0<br>130,400                            | 4,300<br>0<br>7,200                                       | One day per week increase for rural enterprise support  |
| <b>Forward Planning &amp; Communities Total</b>    |   | <b>222,700</b>                                    | <b>274,200</b>                                     | <b>-40,000</b>  | <b>234,200</b>                                     | <b>11,500</b>   |   |
| Development Management                             | Development Management  | 312,500   | 443,500  | -121,000  | 322,500  | 10,000  | Combination of cost of living assumptions and increased National Insurance burden.  |
| <b>Development Management Total</b>                |   | <b>312,500</b>                                    | <b>443,500</b>                                     | <b>-121,000</b>                                       | <b>322,500</b>                                     | <b>10,000</b>   |   |
| Promoting Understanding                            | National Park Centres<br>Grants and Contributions<br>Pinkery<br>Media & Communication<br>Education & Interpretation                   | 184,400<br>3,700<br>0<br>101,400<br>94,600        | 315,000<br>200<br>194,400<br>121,300<br>131,000    | -163,500<br>200<br>-194,400<br>-24,000<br>-9,700      | 151,500<br>200<br>0<br>97,300<br>121,300           | -32,900<br>-3,500<br>0<br>-4,100<br>26,700                | Impact of Business Review changes to centres<br>Impact of Business Review changes<br>Increased establishment expenditure supported by DEFRA 1-Offs<br>Increased establishment expenditure   |
| <b>Promoting Understanding Total</b>               |   | <b>384,100</b>                                    | <b>761,900</b>                                     | <b>-391,600</b>                                       | <b>370,300</b>                                     | <b>-13,800</b>  |   |
| Rangers, Estates & Volunteers                      | Rangers<br>Field Services<br>FST Workshop<br>Estates<br>Volunteer Engagement  | 127,000<br>221,500<br>9,300<br>-178,900<br>67,300 | 208,700<br>391,100<br>27,300<br>236,300<br>62,200  | -83,000<br>-133,500<br>0<br>-432,900<br>0             | 125,700<br>257,600<br>27,300<br>-196,600<br>62,200 | -1,300<br>36,100<br>18,000<br>-17,700<br>-5,100           | Impact of assumed pay award and National Insurance changes £14.5k.<br>Reduction in internally generated income target of £20k.<br>New cost centre following TUPE of service in-house. Residual costs after recharging vehicle and equipment maintenance charges across services<br>Increased Countryside Stewardship income offset by increased estates maintenance expenditure.<br>Temporarily reduced establishment expenditure due to post holders working on Exmoor Pioneers project. |
| <b>Rangers, Estates &amp; Volunteers Total</b>     |   | <b>246,200</b>                                    | <b>925,600</b>                                     | <b>-649,400</b>                                       | <b>276,200</b>                                     | <b>30,000</b>   |   |
| Recreation Management & Transport                  | Access & Recreation<br>Visitor Facilities   | 87,000<br>400                                     | 172,200<br>100,000                                 | -61,000<br>-100,000                                   | 111,200<br>0                                       | 24,200<br>-400  | Increased project expenditure forecast  |
| <b>Recreation Management &amp; Transport Total</b> |   | <b>87,400</b>                                     | <b>272,200</b>                                     | <b>-161,000</b>                                       | <b>111,200</b>                                     | <b>23,800</b>   |   |
| Support Services                                   | Finance<br>Human Resources & Performance<br>ICT & GIS Services<br>Legal Services<br>Facilities  | 62,300<br>159,800<br>250,700<br>70,000<br>215,100 | 223,100<br>167,000<br>255,800<br>70,000<br>195,600 | -155,000<br>0<br>0<br>0<br>0                          | 68,100<br>167,000<br>255,800<br>70,000<br>195,600  | 5,800<br>7,200<br>5,100<br>0<br>-19,500                   | Fixed-term manager establishment support (met by contribution from reserves) and increased subscription costs for new finance system.<br>Increased Procurement Support charges<br>Increase in Microsoft licencing<br>Amended establishment structure following a resignation £10k, reduction in maintenance expenditure from an increased budget at revised estimate 2024/25.   |
| <b>Support Services Total</b>                      |   | <b>757,900</b>                                    | <b>911,500</b>                                     | <b>-155,000</b>                                       | <b>756,500</b>                                     | <b>-1,400</b>   |   |
| Corporate & Democratic Core                        | Corporate Management<br>Historic Pensions Contributions<br>Corporate Subscriptions<br>Members   | 405,500<br>78,400<br>18,500<br>96,200             | 420,100<br>82,000<br>19,200<br>96,200              | 0<br>0<br>0<br>0                                      | 420,100<br>82,000<br>19,200<br>96,200              | 14,600<br>3,600<br>700<br>0                               | Includes Leadership Team posts (previously within services). National Insurance changes account for £8k of increase.  |
| <b>Corporate &amp; Democratic Core Total</b>       |   | <b>598,600</b>                                    | <b>617,500</b>                                     | <b>0</b>  | <b>617,500</b>                                     | <b>18,900</b>   |   |
| Core Funding & Partnership Fund                    | National Park Grant<br>Reserves Transactions<br>Partnership Fund Top-Sliced   | -3,211,500<br>270,000<br>30,000                   | 0<br>151,000<br>50,000                             | -3,211,500<br>0<br>0                                  | -3,211,500<br>151,000<br>50,000                    | 0<br>-119,000<br>20,000                                   | Appendix 3<br>Appendix 3  |
| <b>Core Funding &amp; Partnership Fund Total</b>   |   | <b>-2,911,500</b>                                 | <b>201,000</b>                                     | <b>-3,211,500</b>                                     | <b>-3,010,500</b>                                  | <b>-99,000</b>  |   |
| <b>Total Core Budget</b>                           |   | <b>0</b>  | <b>5,902,400</b>                                   | <b>-5,902,400</b>                                     | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>  |   |

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1 April 2025

### FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS FOR THE REGULATION OF CONTRACTS

#### Report of the Chief Finance Officer

**Purpose of Report:** To consider the proposed refresh to the Authority's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Authority is recommended to:

- (1) APPROVE and ADOPT the Exmoor National Park Authority Financial Regulations
- (2) APPROVE and ADOPT the Exmoor National Park Authority Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts

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

#### **Legal and Equality Implications:**

The Procurement Act 2023

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:** Procurement Risk is often described as covering fraud, cost, quality and delivery risks. Updating and maintaining legally compliant procurement procedures is an important element in managing these risks.

**Climate Change Response:** This report does not have an adverse impact on our ability to respond to Climate Change. Contract standing Orders seek to enable sustainable procurement, minimising negative impacts on people and the environment.

**Financial and Risk Implications:** Procurement Risk is often described as covering fraud, cost, quality and delivery risks. Updating and maintaining legally compliant procurement procedures is an important element in managing these risks.

---

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Exmoor National Park Authority is committed to ensuring that its financial management and procurement processes are robust, transparent, and compliant with current legislation. To this end, we are proposing a refresh of the Authority's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts.
- 1.2 Financial Regulations were last brought to the Authority in December 2022 along with Contract Standing orders, Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation following the departure of the UK from the European Union.
- 1.3 These documents are essential for maintaining effective governance and ensuring that the Authority's financial affairs are managed in accordance with best practices and legal requirements.

## **2. EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 2.1 The Authority's Financial Regulations are a key document within the structure of governance. They set out key responsibilities across the range of financial activities and establish overriding principles. In essence, Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the financial affairs of the Authority.
- 2.2 The updated version of Financial Regulations is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 There is no change to the approach or underlying principles. This April 2025 refresh has been updated for staff job titles, new legislation and due to changes in the audit procurement process.

## **3 EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS**

- 3.1 Our Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts are another key document within the structure of governance. These sit within our overall Authority Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation pack which is reviewed annually. Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation will be brought to Authority this summer; therefore, it is purely the Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts which are the subject of this report.
- 3.2 Contract Standing Orders are a set of procedures which apply to all orders and contracts issued by the Authority and are there to ensure the best use of resources in support of the Authority's vision as defined in its Partnership Plan and annual Corporate Plan. Appendix 2 contains the updated Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts updated to reflect requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, amendments to procurement thresholds and to expand the document to give a background on how this Authority undertakes procurement and contract management.
- 3.3 The Procurement Act 2023 was finally implemented in February 2025. The Act was put in place to regulate public procurement by contracting authorities. It aims to create a simpler and more flexible commercial system, open public procurement to new entrants like small businesses and social enterprises and embed transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle.

**Ben Barrett**  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**March 2025**



**FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

*adopted 1 April 2025*

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## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Financial Regulations are required to enable the Authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs within the framework of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.2 The Chief Finance Officer shall be the responsible officer for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Authority in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all accounting procedures, systems and records of the Authority and its officers shall be determined by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.3 **The Authority's Work**

The long-term priorities for the Authority are set out in the National Park Partnership Plan which is reviewed every 5 years. Each year, the Authority publishes a Business Plan with its forthcoming programme of work and a review of the previous year's achievements. Additionally, the Authority has a five-year Medium Term Financial Plan which is updated annually.
- 1.4 Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the financial affairs of the Authority and are required to be approved by the Authority. The regulations apply to every member and officer of the Authority and anyone acting on behalf of the Authority.
- 1.5 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the financial regulations and advising the Authority of any additions or changes that need to be made. He/she is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the financial regulations to the Authority.
- 1.6 To conduct its business efficiently the Authority has approved a set of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation which set out the requirements for the regulation of meetings, proceedings and business for the Authority in accordance with all enabling powers.



## **SECTION 2 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- 2.1 Financial Management covers all the financial accountabilities in relation to the effective management and governance of the financial affairs of the Authority including the policy framework and the budget. Financial planning is an important aspect of our financial management and refers to the detailed policies and procedures required to prepare sound budgets and forecasts along with the preparation of accurate and high-quality statements of accounts.
- 2.2 The Authority is responsible for its internal constitutional arrangements and codes of conduct for member and officers and for determining the annual budget. The Authority is also responsible for the policy framework, including that for accountability and control, the budget and financial strategy for each financial year, and monitoring and improving performance.
- 2.3 The Authority is responsible for undertaking the review of service performance, including the best use of Resources.
- 2.4 The Authority has overall responsibility for internal audit and it has delegated the day to day responsibility for this to the Head of Enterprise and Operations. He/she consults the Authority as necessary on the content of annual audit plans of both the internal and external auditors. It reviews the internal auditors' annual report and the external auditors' governance reports and makes recommendations for appropriate further action. In addition the Authority considers the outcomes of any fraud investigations and the action taken.
- 2.5 On behalf of the Authority the Final Accounts Committee approves the final Annual Statement of Accounts.
- 2.6 The Statutory Officers of the Authority are:
- **Chief Executive (National Park Officer)**  
Head of the paid service and is responsible for the corporate and overall strategic management of the Authority and is referred to as the Chief Executive. He/she must report to, and provide information for the Authority and its Committees. Also he/she is responsible for establishing a framework for the management direction, style and standards and for monitoring the performance of the Authority. In addition he/she is also responsible together with the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for the system of recording Authority decisions.
  - **Chief Finance Officer (Head of Enterprise and Operations), S151 Officer**  
The S151 Officer is the responsible finance officer and has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Authority. The statutory responsibility cannot be overridden.

The statutory duties arise from:

- Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- Local Government Finance Act 1988;
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- Local Government Act 2003; and
- Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

- **Monitoring Officer**

Responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of overall conduct and therefore provides support to the Standards Committee. Also responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law, or instances of maladministration to the Authority.

2.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for:

- the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs and the production of the annual statement of accounts within statutory requirements.
- setting and monitoring compliance with financial management standards
- advising on the corporate financial position and on the key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management.
- preparing the draft medium term financial plan which incorporates the annual budget, including capital spending.
- advising the Authority on the requirements to be observed in setting the annual budget.
- treasury management

2.8 Under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Head of Enterprise and Operations is required to specifically report to the Authority and the external auditor if the Authority or one of its officers:

- has made, or is about to make, a decision which incurs unlawful expenditure; or
- has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action which has, or will result in a loss or deficiency to the Authority; or
- is about to make an unlawful entry in the Authority's accounts.

2.9 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for issuing advice to underpin the financial regulations which members, staff or others acting on behalf of the Authority are required to follow.

2.10 Section Heads are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their Sections are aware of their responsibilities under financial regulations and other internal regulatory documents and that they comply with them.

- 2.11 Members are responsible for discharging functions in accordance with policies and ensuring there is an appropriate framework of accountability and control considering compliance through the work of Officers, and internal and external audit.
- 2.12 All members and staff have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the care and security of the assets under their control and for ensuring that the use of these Resources is legal, is properly authorised and provides value for money.
- 2.13 In exceptional circumstances the Authority may approve the temporary waiver of any of the Financial Regulations.
- 2.14 The Leadership Team (LT) acts as the body in instigating policy proposals, considering Section Heads' proposals, ensuring the preparation of the medium-term financial plan, the annual business plan and in directing and monitoring the performance of the Authority in applying the approved policies and plans.
- 2.15 Section Heads are responsible for:
- Directing the delivery of services in compliance with these Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders and in accordance with all statutory requirements, the Authority's approved policy and performance framework and their service budget allocations.
  - Developing and proposing policy changes for service delivery; and
  - Ensuring that they identify and agree with the Head of Enterprise and Operations the financial implications of all proposals for new spending.
- 2.16 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for providing monthly financial information to enable Section Heads to monitor effectively their cash limited budgets.
- 2.17 Section Heads are responsible within their own service areas for controlling income and expenditure against their cash limited budget and for monitoring their service delivery financial performance targets. Section Heads must take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their financial allocation and this may in exceptional circumstances include the seeking of additional budget allocation.
- 2.18 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for monitoring performance of Section Heads in controlling income and expenditure against their cash limited budget allocations and he/she must report details of variance on a regular basis to the Chief Executive.
- 2.19 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for carrying out a review, in conjunction with Section Heads, and presenting a revised budget to the Authority in November each year.
- 2.20 Section Heads are responsible for agreeing in year virements with the Head of Enterprise and Operations who is responsible for ensuring that the Authority keeps within its cash limited budget.

- 2.21 All requests for carrying forward under and over spendings on budget headings at the year-end are to be agreed with the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 2.22 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for selecting appropriate accounting policies and for ensuring that they are applied consistently. In addition the Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for determining the accounting procedures to be followed and the accounting records to be maintained within the Authority.
- 2.23 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for ensuring that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared within the statutory timescales and in accordance with the appropriate CIPFA's Code and other legal requirements for presentation to the External Auditor and after audit for approval by the Authority.
- 2.24 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is authorised to make such banking facilities and arrangements as he/she considers necessary. All arrangements with the Authority's bankers shall be made by the Head of Enterprise and Operations. The Head of Enterprise and Operations will approve and maintain a list of authorised signatories for all bank accounts. Additionally, the Head of Enterprise and Operations is authorised to make arrangements for credit cards and account cards as he/she considers necessary.
- 2.25 All investments of money under the Authority's control shall be made in the name of Exmoor National Park Authority.
- 2.26 All securities which are the property of or in the name of the Authority shall be held securely and must be accounted for by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 2.27 No officer shall borrow or invest any money without the prior approval of the Head of Enterprise and Operations. Any borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Authority and must be fully accounted for by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 2.28 The Chief Executive shall be responsible for ensuring that all standing orders, financial regulations, and any other financial instructions the Head of Enterprise and Operations may issue from time to time, are complied with by all employees of the Authority.

### **SECTION 3 – FINANCIAL PLANNING**

- 3.1 The Authority is responsible for
- Preparing the medium-term financial plan and recommending an annual budget to the Authority for approval
  - Approving the Annual Business Plan
- 3.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for proposing the Business Plan initially for consideration by the Leadership Team before its submission to the Authority for approval.
- 3.3 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for ensuring that:
- a medium-term financial plan covering a three year period, or such other period as may otherwise be determined, is prepared/updated on an annual basis for consideration initially by the Leadership Team and subsequently by the Authority;
  - an annual budget is prepared for consideration initially by the Leadership Team and subsequently by the Authority.
- 3.4 Section Heads are responsible for ensuring that their financial plans reflect agreed service performance plans and their proposals for changes and are available for submission to the Leadership Team and the Authority as appropriate.
- 3.5 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for determining a process to identify on an annual basis the corporate financial position and any constraints which may limit the funding that is available for the period of the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The process must also identify all opportunities for optimising funding arrangements without impacting adversely on the delivery of the Plans.
- 3.6 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for developing and maintaining a process for allocating resources that ensures due consideration of the Authority's policy framework and priorities, notably the Corporate Plan and the Authority's role in preparing and implementing the Partnership Plan
- 3.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for advising the Authority on the prudent level of reserves to be maintained for the annual budget and over the medium term.

## **SECTION 4 – RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES**

- 4.1 It is essential that robust, integrated systems are developed and maintained to ensure the effective use of resources and for identifying and evaluating all the Authority's significant strategic and operational risks. This should include the proactive participation of all those involved directly or associated with the planning or delivering of services.
- 4.2 The Authority is responsible for approving the Authority's risk management strategy and policy statement and, in addition, for ensuring that proper insurance arrangements are effected where appropriate. Members are also responsible for maintaining an overview of the appropriateness of insurance arrangements.
- 4.3 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for preparing the Authority's Risk Management policy and Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans. He/she is also responsible for advising Section Heads of their responsibilities and for monitoring compliance.
- 4.4 Section Heads are responsible for complying with the risk management policy in respect of their service areas.
- 4.5 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for advising initially the Leadership Team and subsequently the Authority on any non-compliance by a Section Head with the approved risk management policy.
- 4.6 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for providing advice on and effecting the appropriate insurance arrangements and for dealing with all claims. Section Heads shall ensure employees using their own motor vehicles on the business of the Authority have insurance cover for business use.
- 4.7 Internal control is the system of control devised by management to help ensure the Authority's objectives are achieved in a manner which promotes economical, efficient and effective use of Resources and that the Authority's assets and interests are safeguarded.
- 4.8 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for advising Sections Heads on effective systems of internal financial control. These arrangements need to ensure that all statutory and corporate requirements and other relevant statements of best practice are met. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically and efficiently, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.
- 4.9 Section Heads are responsible for establishing, in line with that guidance, sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising, and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of Resources in the delivery of their service and the achievement of their financial performance targets.
- 4.10 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require every local authority to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit.

- 4.11 The Authority has delegated responsibility for the appointment of External Auditors to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) who undertook the national tender process. The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by Local Audit and Accountability Act 2013 and Section 15 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, as amended by Section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice. The Authority has opted in to these arrangements.
- 4.12 The Authority may, from time to time, be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies such as HM Revenue and Customs, which have statutory rights of access. Such inspections are to be managed by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 4.13 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for the development and maintenance of anti-fraud, anti-corruption and money laundering policies.
- 4.14 Section Heads are responsible for ensuring that all financial records, physical assets and supporting documentation used in the provision of their services are properly maintained, securely held, and, in respect of physical assets, suitably recorded.
- 4.15 They must also ensure that sound contingency plans for the security of those assets and for the continuity of service provision in the event of a disaster or other major system failure are in place, and that those arrangements are regularly tested.
- 4.16 The Authority has adopted CIPFA's 'Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities'. The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for presenting to the Authority an annual Treasury Management policy statement in line with statutory requirements and CIPFA guidance.
- 4.17 All money in the hands of the Authority is monitored and controlled by the Head of Enterprise and Operations acting as the officer designated for the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972.
- 4.18 The Head of Enterprise and Operations has delegated responsibility for implementing and monitoring the treasury management policy statement. All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to him or her, and he/she is required to act in accordance with statutory requirements and CIPFA Treasury Management advice and guidance.
- 4.19 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for reporting to the Authority at least twice a year on the treasury management activities and on the exercise of his/her delegated treasury management authority.
- 4.20 The Chief Executive is responsible for exercising overall management of staff. The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for determining and monitoring adherence to staffing policies and procedures, and for ensuring that there is proper use of the evaluation, or other agreed system, for determining the remuneration of a post.

## **SECTION 5 – SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 Sound systems and procedures are essential to form an effective framework of accountability and control.
- 5.2 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for the overall operation and maintenance of the Authority's form of accounts, the accounting and related systems, and all supporting financial records.
- 5.3 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for the operation of the Authority's accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records. Any changes to existing financial systems and procedures, or the setting up of new financial systems and procedures, must have the approval of the S151 Officer.
- 5.4 Section Heads are responsible for the proper operation of approved financial procedures within their own service area.
- 5.5 Section Heads must seek the prior approval of the Head of Enterprise and Operations to any proposed changes to the existing financial or related systems or to the establishment of any new financial or related systems which are / will be directly under their control.
- 5.6 Section Heads must ensure that, where appropriate, computer and other systems are registered in accordance with the Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2016, and that Officers are aware of their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 5.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for approving procedures for the writing-off of uncollectable debts as part of its overall control framework of accountability and control.
- 5.8 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for making all payments for salaries and wages to all staff and other benefit payments to relevant former employees, and for the payment of allowances to members.
- 5.9 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for advising Section Heads on all taxation issues that affect the Authority in the light of statutory requirements and relevant guidance issued by the appropriate bodies.
- 5.10 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for maintaining directly, and for making all tax payments, receiving tax credits / refunds and for submitting tax returns by their due date as and when appropriate.
- 5.11 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for advising on the establishment and the operation of suitable accounting records and supporting procedures for trading accounts and business units.



## **SECTION 6 - INTERNAL AUDIT**

- 6.1 In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, the Authority is required to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its systems of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control. Internal audit effectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control as a contribution to the proper economic, efficient and effective use of Resources. The work of internal audit is reviewed annually by the external auditor.
- 6.2 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall arrange for the provision of an adequate and effective system of internal audit that complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government and the Institute of Internal Auditors' Standards and Guidelines.
- 6.3 The appointed internal auditor and the Head of Enterprise and Operations or his / her authorised representative shall have authority to:
- access any Authority premises or land at all reasonable times, but where premises or land are in the control of a contractor or licensee such access shall be in accordance with the provisions of the contract;
  - have access to all records, documents and correspondence and control systems relating to any financial or other activity of the Authority which they consider relevant to audit;
  - require and receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination;
  - take such copies of any records, documents and correspondence as they consider necessary for the conduct of their work;
  - require any employee or member of the Authority to produce or account for cash, stores or any other Authority property under his/her control;
  - access, when required, records belonging to third parties, including those of contractors, so long as that access shall be in accordance with the provision of the contract; and
  - report directly to the Chief Executive or the Authority as appropriate.
- 6.4 Whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought might involve, irregularities concerning cash, stores, records or other property of the Authority or any suspected irregularity in the exercise of the functions of the Authority, employees shall immediately inform their Section Head who shall forthwith notify the Head of Enterprise and Operations. The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall take such steps as he/she considers necessary by way of investigation and report.
- 6.5 Where a response to an audit report has not been given within a month or such other responsible period as may be determined or where any matters arising from internal audit remains unresolved after three months, to refer,

- after consultation with the Head of Enterprise and Operations, the matter to the Chief Executive.
- 6.6 All losses or irregularities must be reported to the Head of Enterprise and Operations by the relevant Section Head.
  - 6.7 Internal audit shall report annually to the Authority on the internal audit work carried out, and the main issues arising from the internal audit activity undertaken during the period.
  - 6.8 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall prepare Strategic and Annual Audit Plans for approval by the Authority. In doing so the Head of Enterprise and Operations shall liaise with the External Auditor as necessary.

## **SECTION 7 – INCOME**

- 7.1 Each Section Head is responsible for the prompt and complete collection of their Section's income which should be collected at the time of service provision where practical.
- 7.2 The Head of Enterprise and Operations in consultation with Section Heads is responsible for ensuring that complete and accurate records are maintained of all moneys receivable and received by his/her section.
- 7.3 The Head of Enterprise and Operations in consultation with Section Heads must institute appropriate recovery action where income is not received by the due date.
- 7.4 The Chief Executive has the power to authorise the write-off of outstanding debts in excess of £5,000, (subject to 7.3 above) after having checked the Authority's indebtedness to the debtor. The Head of Enterprise and Operations has the power to authorise the write-off of outstanding debts up to £5,000
- 7.5 Any debts due from a single debtor to a total value £10,000 or more in any one financial year may only be written off on the authority of the Authority.
- 7.6 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall maintain a record of all debts written off showing what attempted recovery action was taken and justification for non-recovery, and report annually thereon, to the Authority for information.
- 7.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall ensure that secure and sound local arrangements exist for the ordering, receipt, custody and use of income stationery including accounts, receipts and tickets or their computer produced equivalents.
- 7.8 All money received by an officer on behalf of the Authority shall be banked without delay in an account approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 7.9 No deduction shall be made from any income received without the specific approval of the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 7.10 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall be notified of new sources of income or proposed change in procedures or systems of collecting income.

## **SECTION 8 – ACQUISITION OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

- 8.1 All goods and services to be procured in accordance with the Contract Standing Orders of the Authority and take account of the Authority's Procurement Policy.
- 8.2 Official orders shall be issued for all goods and services to be supplied to the Authority except where the Head of Enterprise and Operations has approved otherwise (e.g. recurring charges, periodic payments, petty cash purchases). All official orders are to be signed only by Section Heads or an officer approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 8.3 All official orders shall be in a form approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 8.4 Each order shall conform with any directions of the Authority with respect to negotiated purchasing agreements and other standardisation of goods and services.
- 8.5 All payments on behalf of the Authority for goods and services shall be made by the Head of Enterprise and Operations except where imprest accounts, credit cards, or account cards are used.
- 8.6 Each Section Head shall be responsible for ensuring that payments are only made:
  - in respect of goods or services which are satisfactorily received, and
  - at the correct prices including all available discounts
- 8.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations or the Head of Strategy and Performance will certify all expenditure for payment.
- 8.8 The Chief Executive is entitled to make ex-gratia payments up to a maximum value of £2,500 to any one payee per annum for damage to or loss of property or for personal injury where such payment is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of the functions of the Authority.
- 8.9 All payments shall be made as close as possible to the due date after taking into account the normal terms of trade with respect to promptness of payment, bearing in mind the need to be exemplary in the support of local traders and payees.
- 8.10 The Head of Enterprise and Operations may provide credit cards and account cards for purchases and approve a transaction limit at his/her discretion. The nominated card holder is responsible for the security of the card and for providing supporting documentation for each transaction made.
- 8.11 The Head of Enterprise and Operations may provide cash floats or establish imprest accounts of either cash or a bank account to enable nominated officers to become imprest holders for local purchases not exceeding £25 per transaction unless such higher limit is agreed by the Head of Enterprise and Operations. The imprest holder is accountable for

the full amount of the imprest holding and is responsible for any deficiency.

- 8.12 Imprests cannot be used to pay salaries, wages (including payments for casual work) or expenses. Claims for reimbursement of imprest accounts should be submitted regularly.

## **SECTION 9 – PAYMENTS TO EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS**

- 9.1 The Head of Enterprise and Operations is responsible for determining and controlling the arrangements for the secure, accurate and complete payment of salaries, wages, benefits and allowances, reimbursements for travel, subsistence and other expenses, redundancy, compensation or other emoluments to existing and former employees.
- 9.2 Remuneration of employees, including pay, allowances, reimbursement of expenses, benefits in kind, redundancy and any other emoluments shall be made under arrangements approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations who shall satisfy himself as to their security, soundness and reliability.
- 9.3 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall be responsible for ensuring that remuneration of any kind to employees is in accordance with all statutory requirements as well as within the regulations and directions of the Authority.
- 9.4 All variations to scheme of remuneration of employees must be approved by the Authority and variations to the scheme of Members allowances approved by the Authority.
- 9.5 The Head of Enterprise and Operations must ensure that only appropriate officers have delegated power to certify payroll expenditure. The Head of Enterprise and Operations will maintain a record of such officers.
- 9.6 No officer shall certify expenditure for payment from which they might personally benefit.
- 9.7 The Head of Enterprise and Operations shall be responsible for the proper administration of the participation by the Authority in the Local Government Pensions Scheme as an admitted body to the Somerset County Council Pension Fund.

## **SECTION 10 – SAFEGUARDING ASSETS**

- 10.1 Quantities of stock shall not be in excess of normal requirements unless there are sound financial or other reasons. The Head of Enterprise and Operations should be notified of any cases where quantities of stock have been, are, or are expected to be in excess of normal requirements.
- 10.2 Where the total value or estimated total value of stock in one or more stores exceeds £10,000 the Section Head in consultation with the Head of Enterprise and Operations shall maintain suitable and reliable records of items in store.
- 10.3 For all stocks meeting the criteria in 10.2 above, each Section Head shall ensure that independent and adequate periodic comparisons of physical stock against records takes place. Any discrepancies should be properly investigated and reported to the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 10.4 Each Section Head shall furnish such information as the Head of Enterprise and Operations requires in relation to stores and other assets for financial accounting purposes.
- 10.5 Surplus materials, stores, plant, vehicles and equipment shall be disposed of by competitive tender or public auction unless the market value of the items including related transactions, is not significant (below £2,500), or the Head of Enterprise and Operations agrees to alternative arrangements.
- 10.6 Each Section Head shall maintain a record of all disposals of materials, stores, plant, land, vehicles and equipment including proceeds and destination.
- 10.7 Each Section Head is responsible for maintaining a proper record and the security at all times for all land, buildings, plant, vehicles, equipment, furniture, stock, stores, cash and other assets under his control.
- 10.8 Each Section Head shall maintain an inventory of each item of:
  - attractive equipment with a value in excess of £100 (mobile phones, cameras etc)
  - equipment with a value in excess of £1,000
  - plant and machinery with a value in excess of £1,000
  - vehicles
- 10.9 All staff must take all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate loss or damage to all Authority assets - equipment, plant, machinery, vehicles, furniture and fittings.
- 10.10 Each Section Head shall ensure that all inventories are examined against equipment etc. at least once per year, ensure items are in good condition, investigate any discrepancies and report the findings to the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

- 10.11 The Estates Manager shall make arrangements for the secure storage of title deeds and other legal documentation relating to land and property assets held by the Authority.
- 10.12 Officers responsible for any property (including monetary assets) not belonging to the Authority must:
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate loss or damage to that property; and
  - In any case of loss or damage or diminution in value, notify without delay their Section Head who shall forthwith notify the Head of Enterprise and Operations.
- 10.13 Each Section Head is responsible for ensuring that an up-to-date, complete and accurate record is maintained of all assets held by officers of his or her department on behalf of third parties. The Head of Enterprise and Operations has the same rights in respect of assets held on behalf of third parties as those detailed in Section 6 of these Financial Regulations - Internal Audit.





**STANDING ORDERS FOR THE REGULATION OF CONTRACTS**

## **PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES**

### **1 General**

- 1.1 These procedures apply to all orders and contracts issued by the Authority for the carrying out of works, the supply of goods and services and the acquisition and disposal of assets. These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Sustainable Procurement Policy, Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, the Scheme of Delegation, the Minimum Standards for Tenders and Contracts and any other procurement guidance notes issued by the Chief Financial Officer (referred to in this document as Head of Enterprise and Operations).
- 1.2 The procedures are in place to ensure the best use of resources in support of the Authority's vision set out in the National Park Partnership Plan.
- 1.3 "Officer" means any person holding office under the Authority, employed or seconded by the Authority, working under a Service Level Agreement or contract, or working for the Authority in any paid or unpaid capacity.
- 1.4 The Procurement Act 2023 came into effect on 24 February 2025 and was put in place to regulate public procurement by contracting authorities. It aims to create a simpler and more flexible commercial system, open public procurement to new entrants like small businesses and social enterprises and embed transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle.

### **2 Approach to procurement**

- 2.1 We Will:
- apply a consistent, corporate and collaborative approach across the Authority;
  - encourage joint procurement initiatives with other public bodies where feasible, to achieve value for money and secure economies of scale;
  - support environmentally sound and sustainable provision;
  - provide a sound approach to competition, which will achieve best value and quality.

### **3 Procurement Aims**

- 3.1 When conducting procurement, the Authority aims to:
- purchase goods and services from suppliers who will provide best value for money; achieving best value includes the potential to identify and make savings, but this will be balanced against the quality and appropriateness of the particular supply;
  - purchase goods and services which enhance the sustainability of the Authority's operations, and from suppliers whose environmental practices and products are sound;

- encourage local, small and medium size enterprises to bid for the Authority's contracts;
- advance equality of opportunity, both in the procurement process and in ensuring that goods and services procured help all people to understand and enjoy the National Park;
- secure the purchase of goods and services as quickly and efficiently as possible;
- comply with legal requirements and relevant government guidelines.

### 3.2 The Authority will achieve these aims by:

- ensuring that appropriate training on procurement is available to all with purchasing responsibility;
- aggregating related spending across the Authority, to maximise procurement efficiencies;
- ensuring that order and contract documentation is available for audit and review purposes;
- using appropriate external advisors where in-house expertise is not available;
- making use of relevant framework agreements and other select lists that have been established by other public bodies after following good practice for public sector procurement;
- actively promoting collaboration, including partnerships and shared services, with other public bodies;
- clearly specifying its requirements, encouraging competition, and awarding contracts based on clear criteria which are specified in advance;
- requiring contractors to take all reasonable steps to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010;
- maintaining the currency of procurement practices in the light of changes to best practice and the law;
- as part of regular service reviews, examine the value for money of procurement activity relating to that project or service.

## 4. Good Practice

### 4.1 The Authority subscribes to the following principles of good procurement:

- the procurement process should give the Authority sufficient information to form a view of potential service providers' competence but without placing undue burden on them. The cost of tendering for work will be kept to a minimum for suppliers, relative to the value of the contract;
- potential suppliers/service providers should understand clearly from the outset what service standards are expected. They will be provided with adequate, accurate and timely information at all the relevant stages of the procurement process;
- all potential suppliers/service providers will be subject to the same requirements to ensure fair competition and will be treated equally throughout the procurement process;
- care will be exercised to avoid taking too narrow a view of how services might be delivered, as this may limit the options and deter potential providers;

- in order to be able to demonstrate that procurement has been undertaken in an open and transparent manner, the Authority will ensure that all bidders are fully aware of the basis for bid evaluation and that all stages of the procurement process can be audited satisfactorily. Unsuccessful bidders will be told the outcome of the contracting exercise, and on what grounds their bid was unsuccessful;
- when publicising contracting opportunities, we must comply with the law but will otherwise take the approach that is deemed to be in the best interests of the Authority. This may involve publishing opportunities on our website, or in another media, or inviting known contractors to apply. The results of all formal quotation and tendering exercises are also published on our website.

4.2 We are required to use the Central Digital Platform (CDP) to publish contract opportunities which exceed £30,000 (inclusive of VAT) where the opportunity is to be advertised in another way, for example, on our website, in a trade publication or newspaper. We are also required to publish contracting opportunities on CPD in all cases where a procurement exceeds the financial threshold set out in the Procurement Act 2023.

4.3 Local authorities are required to publish items of spending over £500 on a monthly basis. The Authority's published information can be found on our website.

## 5 Quotation and Tendering Procedures

- 5.1 The minimum required numbers of tenders or quotations to be invited from appropriate contractors for a given estimated value of contract (net of VAT) are:
- Up to £10,000, Officers are not obliged to seek more than one quotation but staff may still choose to seek the most competitive price and demonstrate best value;
  - Above £10,000 and up to £25,000, Invite multiple organisations (minimum three) to submit written quotations;
  - Above £25,000 and up to £50,000, Invite multiple organisations (minimum three) to submit written formal quotations submitted by a specified date and time and based on a written specification and evaluation criteria (referred hereafter as "formal quotation"); Contracts are obligatory as well as the requirement to obtain authorisation by the Head of Enterprise and Operations or Chief Executive. Above £30,000 including VAT, a Notice (publication of contract opportunity and award) is required to be published on the Central Digital Platform.
  - Above £50,000, and up to Public Procurement thresholds (currently £214,904 inclusive of VAT for goods and services, £5,372,609 for construction works), a full tender process is required; Contracts are obligatory as well as the requirement to obtain authorisation by the Head of Enterprise and Operations or Chief Executive. A Notice (publication of contract opportunity and award) is required to be published on the Central Digital Platform.

- Over Public Procurement thresholds, (currently £214,904 inclusive of VAT for goods and services, £5,372,609 for construction works), invite organisations to submit tenders in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations. Contracts are obligatory as well as the requirement to obtain authorisation from the Head of Enterprise and Operations or Chief Executive. A Notice (publication of contract opportunity and award) is required to be published on the Central Digital Platform.

The values are for single items or groups of items, which must not be disaggregated artificially. The Head of Enterprise and Operations will advise Leadership Team and Delivery Team of these changes.

- 5.2 Where quotations apply, they should be sought from suitable contractors through open competition or can be selected from a standing list if one exists.
- 5.3 Where formal quotations are required, and if there is no standing list, formal quotations may be sent directly to a minimum of three organisations who have been selectively invited to bid, without recourse to open advertisement of the opportunity, or they may be selected through open competition.
- 5.4 Where tenders are required, Officers have a choice of tendering procedures. For contracts up to Public Procurement thresholds, organisations may be selected from a standing list. Where there is no standing list, and for contracts over Public Procurement thresholds, appropriate advertisement must be undertaken inviting suitable organisations to express an interest in tendering. Alternatively, a suitable Framework Agreement can be used (see para 6.2 below). Tenders may be received from either all who respond to an advertisement (open competitive tendering) and, for contracts over Public Procurement thresholds, from a selection of suitable contractors who have expressed an interest and who are invited by the Authority to tender (selective tendering). The number of tenderers to be invited to tender will depend on the particular market and the individual project procurement strategy.
- 5.5 If selection is to be from standing lists, arrangements for standing list compilation, maintenance, review and use must be approved in advance by the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

#### **Procurement Notification Process**

- 5.6 Officers planning to carry out any procurement exercise with a value of £20,000 or more must submit an electronic procurement notification form to the Devon Procurement Service (DPS). This will be used to create an initial entry on the PNF Register held on the Sharepoint site.

#### **Appropriate Advertising**

- 5.7 Tenders up to the Public Procurement thresholds where there have been no selective invitations to quote or tender, and all tenders above the Public Procurement thresholds, will be advertised on the Authority's e-tendering system. Any opportunities that are advertised on the Authority's e-tendering system must also be advertised on the government's Contract Finder website (if they are over a value of £30,000 including VAT).

- 5.8 For services, supplies and works where the total contract value, including any options to extend the initial term of the contract are expected to exceed Public Procurement thresholds, a Find a Tender Service (FTS) notice must also be placed and must follow Public Procurement requirements with particular regard to be given to the timescale for such tenders.
- 5.9 Any formal quotation (i.e. over £20k up to £100k) following the open competition procedure will be advertised on the Authority's e-tendering system. Any opportunities that are advertised on the Authority's e-tendering system must also be advertised on the government's Contract Finder website (if over £25k). Officers will consult with the Head of Enterprise and Operations and or Devon Procurement Services to determine if further advertising in relevant local newspapers and trade publications is also required.
- 5.10 Officers will ensure that the e-tendering system website address is publicised appropriately within the quotation/tender documentation.  
[\[www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk\]](http://www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk)

**Invitation to Tender (i.e, above £50k)**

- 5.11 Following advertisement of tenders up to the Public Procurement thresholds for goods and services (whether in relation to goods, services or works), invitations shall be sent to the prospective tenderers who are best qualified to bid.
- 5.12 Every invitation to tender must specify that the Authority's e-tendering system will be used to issue and receive tender documentation. The invitation must state the date and time by which the tender must be received by the e-tendering system and that the tender will be held in the secure area of the e-tendering system and cannot be accessed until after the deadline. Adequate time must be allowed for the preparation and return of tenders ensuring compliance where appropriate with Public Procurement requirements. Any exceptions to using the Authority's e-tendering system must be approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations and/or Chief Executive.

**Invitation to Quote (i.e. up to £100k)**

- 5.13 The Authority's e-tendering system must be used for a formal quotation (i.e. over £20k & up to £100k), save for any exceptions approved by the Head of Enterprise and Operations and/or Chief Executive.

For quotations below £20,000 the e-tendering system may be used but in either case the invitation must state the place, date and time by which the quotation must be returned. Adequate time must be allowed for their preparation and return.

**Certification notice by Tenderers**

- 5.14 Tenderers shall certify and give undertakings that:
- the tender is genuine and intended to be competitive;
  - they have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender by or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person\*;
  - they have not done and will not do, at any time before the time and date specified for the return of the tender, any of the following:

- inform any person\* the amount or approximate amount of the proposed tender, except where the confidential disclosure of the approximate amount of the tender was necessary to obtain insurance premium or other quotations necessary for tender preparation;
- enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other person\* with the aim of preventing tenders being made or as to the amount of another tender or the conditions on which the tender is made;
- offer to pay or give or agree to pay or give any sum of money or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other tender or proposed tender for the Authority any of the actions specified and described in this section;
- cause or induce any person to do any of these things.

\* outside the consortium if a consortium tender

### **Receipt, Custody and Opening of Tenders and Formal Quotations**

- 5.15 The Authority's e-tendering system will record the date and time of receipt of all tenders and formal quotations.

Quotations below the £50k threshold may be received and opened by the Project Officer/Team.

Formal quotations between £10-£50k (received via the e-tendering system) may be received and opened by the Project Officer/Team, once the closing date has passed.

Tenders over £50k (received via the e-tendering system) will require the opening and verification an officer who must be independent to the procurement taking place. All the submissions will then be released to the Project Officer/Team to continue with the process. The verifier will enter information about the submissions received into the tender register.

- 5.16 Tenders (over £50k) and any formal quotation (over £25k up to £100k) not received via the Authority's e-tendering system (as a result of an exception approved under paragraphs 2.12 or 2.13 or 2.21) shall be opened at one time and in the presence of at least two officers who shall be independent from the procurement. A record will be made of all tenders or formal quotations received, showing the date and time of opening and the bidder's name and the value in the tenders register. Any tender or formal quotation received after the specified time shall be recorded as such but must not be considered.

### **Contractor Vetting**

- 5.17 Officers who procure the service of a contractor are responsible for checking the competency of that contractor to undertake the work. This may include evidence of relevant qualifications, financial stability, their Health & Safety policy, risk assessments and method statements, data protection and security arrangements, for example.

All such assessments must be made before any commitment is made or contract awarded and shall be in conformity with the Authority's Contractor Vetting Policy.

### **Acceptance of Single Quotation or Tender Received**

- 5.18 This section deals with situations where either a single quotation or tender is received. For contracts up to £25,000, the appropriate Head of Service will determine whether or not to accept the quotation.

For contracts over £25,000, the Head of Enterprise and Operations and the Head of Service shall jointly consider whether or not, in their professional judgement, best value would be obtained. The following provisions shall then apply: -

- (a) where the estimated value of the contract is between £25,000 and £214,904, if in their view best value would be obtained then the Head of Service will consult with the Head of Enterprise and Operations and Chief Executive (the latter being able to accept the formal quotation). If in the view of the Head of Enterprise and Operations and Chief Executive, value for money would not be obtained, or if there is any doubt, the procurement exercise should either be repeated or the matter referred to the Authority for consideration and decision.
- (b) where the estimated value of the contract is over £214,904 the matter must be referred to the Authority for consideration and decision, taking into account the views of the Head of Enterprise and Operations, Chief Executive and Head of Service as to whether to accept the tender or repeat the procurement exercise.

### **Financial Provision for Contracts**

- 5.19 Where tenders or quotations received vary from the approved estimate, the procuring officer must identify the funding for any increase. Where the increase is up to £30,000, the funding must be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Enterprise and Operations before awarding the contract. Approval of the Authority must be obtained, before awarding the contract, where the variation exceeds £30,000.

### **Maintaining the Contracts Register**

- 5.20 Upon the award of a contract with a value of £30,000 (£25,000+VAT) or more, the Officer will update and complete the entry in the Contracts Register in the e-tendering system. If the e-tendering system not used for the procurement, a record of the award will still be made in the contracts register on the e-tendering system. For contracts awarded over £30,000 (£25,000+VAT), a record will also be entered on Contracts Finder (via the e-tendering system).

### **Exemption from the Tendering and Formal Quotation Process**

- 5.21 Where the subject matter of a contract is of a specialised nature with only one or a limited number of possible contractors or where exceptional circumstances have arisen, the Officer shall submit a written report requesting an exemption from normal tendering or formal quotation rules to the Chief Executive/Head of Enterprise and Operations/Leadership Team for authorisation for the exemption.
- Tenders subject to Public Procurement Regulations shall be subject to exemptions contained within those Regulations.



## **6 Particular Types of Contract**

### **Acquisition (and Leasing) of Land, Buildings, Vehicles, Plant and Equipment**

- 6.1 In order to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations and capital rules, all acquisitions made shall be in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. Officers must consult with the Head of Enterprise and Operations in the first instance; Authority approval may be required before embarking on this type of procurement.

### **Framework and Joint Procurement Arrangements**

- 6.2 Framework Agreements set up by government offices or other public bodies may be used after consultation with the Head of Enterprise and Operations/DPS. Call off contracts under a Framework Agreement will be governed by the terms of the Framework Agreement. Framework Agreements may also be established by Officers, in accordance with these Procedures (however prior advice must be sought from DPS).
- 6.3 Joint procurement arrangements with other local authorities or public bodies may take place where they represent best value. The Head of Enterprise and Operations and DPS must be consulted before the start of the procurement of all such proposed arrangements especially if the Authority intends to act as the lead authority.

### **Disposal of Assets**

- 6.4 All vehicles, plant, furniture, equipment or other goods shall be disposed of in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and Disposals Policy. Officers should consult with the Head of Enterprise and Operations in the first instance.

## **7 Contracts**

### **Contents of Contract**

- 7.1 Officers shall obtain the advice of the Authority's Legal Service on the contract terms to be agreed, including the Authority's terms and conditions of contract.
- 7.2 Every contract shall be in writing or confirmed in writing and shall specify:
- (a) the work, materials, supplies or services to be provided;
  - (b) the quality standards and or service specification to be adhered to;
  - (c) the price to be paid, with a statement of discounts or other deductions;
  - (d) the time or times within which the contract is to be performed;
  - (e) the procedures for variations, termination, or penalties for non-compliance, or security for the due performance of any contract including liquidated damages where works are not completed in the time specified;
  - (f) invoicing and payment arrangements as specified by the Head of Enterprise and Operations;
  - (g) that the Authority shall pay valid and undisputed invoices within a 30 day period, consider and verify invoices in a timely fashion and impose a contractual obligation on the contractor to ensure that they abide by these conditions in relation to their own sub-contractors; and

(h) such other terms and conditions as are deemed necessary after having taken advice from the Authority's legal service provider.

7.3 Contracts (with Terms and Conditions) shall be signed (except where the seal of the Authority is to be applied) in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation.

#### **Cancellation of Contracts**

7.4 All written contracts shall contain a clause enabling the Authority to cancel the contract and recover from the contractor the amount of any resulting loss if:

- (a) the contractor has offered or given or agreed to give to any person any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for:
  - (i) doing or not doing, or for having done or not done, any action in relation to the obtaining or execution of the contract or any other contract with the Authority;
  - (ii) showing or not showing favour or disfavour to any person in relation to the contract or any other contract with the Authority.
- (b) the same things have been done by any person employed by the contractor or acting on his behalf (whether with or without the knowledge of the contractor);
- (c) in relation to any contract with the Authority the contractor or any person employed by him or acting on his behalf has:
  - (i) given any fee or reward the receipt of which is an offence under Section 117(2) of the Local Government Act 1972;
  - (ii) committed an offence under the Bribery Act 2010.

7.5 Every contract that has been tendered via the Find a Tender Service must also contain the right for the Authority to terminate the contract where:

- (a) there has been a modification of the contract which falls outside one of the permitted categories specified in Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and which are summarised at paragraph 4.6 below;
- (b) the contractor should have been excluded on mandatory grounds under Regulations 57(1) and /or 57(2) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015;
- (c) the contract should not have been awarded in view of a serious infringement under public procurement law which has been declared as such by a court of competent jurisdiction.

#### **Variation of Contracts**

7.6 All orders given to a contractor directing them to vary, in any respect, the subject of the contract must be in writing, signed by the authorised officer (in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation).

For variations of contracts Officers must first seek advice from the Authority's Legal Service. Written agreement must be obtained, before variation orders are issued, from the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Head of Enterprise and Operations) if the total value of the (originally) accepted tender will be exceeded by more than £1,000 and up to £30,000 and by the Authority for any amounts exceeding £30,000.

In addition to the above requirements, where a contract has been tendered via the Find a Tender Service (i.e. a contract above the relevant value threshold), a variation to the original contract terms will trigger a new procurement process unless it falls within one of the following permitted changes:-

- Modifications that are clearly provided for in the original procurement and contract documents; or
- Necessary modifications where a change of contractor cannot be made due to economic or technical reasons and would cause significant inconvenience or substantial duplication of cost and does not result in an increase in price of more than 50% of the original contract value; or
- Modifications to deal with unforeseen circumstances where the modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract and does not result in an increase in price of more than 50% of the original contract value; or
- Modifications to deal with a new contractor replacing the original contractor where the replacement is due to corporate restructuring and the new contractor meets the pre-qualification criteria and there are no other substantial amendments to the contract; or
- Modifications that are not substantial. The following will be considered substantial modifications:
  - modifications that render the contract materially different in character;
  - modifications that could have resulted in a different outcome in the procurement;
  - modifications which shift the economic balance in favour of the contractor;
  - modifications which extend the scope of the contract considerably; and
  - where a new contractor replaces the old contractor other than in the circumstances permitted above.
  - Low value modifications where the value attributable to the modification falls below the relevant Public Procurement threshold **and** is less than 10% of the initial contract value for supplies and services or 15% for a works contract.

Heads of Service must seek the approval of the Authority's Legal Service in relation to any proposed variation of a contract which has been tendered via the Find a Tender Service.

### **Payment for Contracts for Building or Civil Engineering Work**

7.7 Each certificate for payment must show:

- (a) contract sum (usually tender total);
- (b) value of work to date;
- (c) total amount of certificates previously paid;
- (d) amount of the certificate;
- (e) retention amount (if any);
- (f) value of price fluctuations;
- (g) Value Added Tax (if any).

## **Monitoring of Contracts**

- 7.8 Officers must monitor all contracts and report any significant exceptions to normal progress and cost variations to the Head of Enterprise and Operations and Leadership Team. Significant exceptions include delay or advance in expenditure by more than £1,000 compared with expectations within a financial year and any critical delay in meeting target completion dates.

## **Relationships with Contractors**

- 7.9 Officers who undertake procurement, engage, supervise or have an official relationship with contractors and have had, or currently have, a private or domestic relationship should declare it to their Line Manager, the Head of Enterprise and Operations and the Monitoring Officer. An assessment will be made to ascertain the nature of the relationship and whether that Officer can continue to have any further involvement in the procurement or contract. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit by fair completion and no favour will be shown to any person or businesses, especially those run by or employing relatives, partners or friends.

## **8 Competitive Policy**

- 8.1 The Authority makes no assumption on the best method for supply/service provision, and will consider different options for such provision. Our policy is to procure contracts through open competition based on our stated procurement objectives. Existing partnerships and/or contracts are not exempt from the competition requirement and will be reviewed regularly (at least every 3 years) to assess whether they deliver value for money or whether changes should be made.
- 8.2 Where a procurement decision is to be made other than solely on price, any additional criteria will be explained clearly in the request or offer to quote or tender. Such criteria may, for example, include quality or environmental factors, financial stability or prior experience of providing similar services.
- 8.3 Procurement exercises which meet the financial threshold must comply with the Procurement Act 2023, and are subject to a mandatory standstill period between the decision to award a contract and contract conclusion. Contracts of this size are also subject to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which requires the Authority to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Authority's area and how the Authority might act in securing that improvement where it is proportionate to take those matters into account.

## **9 Risk Management**

- 9.1 Risk management is an integral part of the procurement process and should be considered at the planning stage of any procurement. Management of risk involves having processes in place to monitor risks, access to reliable current information about risks and appropriate levels of control within a framework of risk identification and analysis,
- 9.2 In addition to the generic risks associated with procurement activity, there are a small number of specific risks that require management:

- In the event that an officer managing an ongoing contract or service leaves the Authority, there is a significant risk of loss of continuity. Heads of Service will ensure that there is a thorough hand-over process in such instances.
- All officers are required to declare any personal interests that they or members of their close family may have in any organisation which has or may seek to have a contractual relationship with the Authority. Managers will ensure that persons with such interests will not take any part in relevant procurement exercises.
- As part of the contracting process, the financial viability of potential contractors may be assessed based on their last three years of published accounts. Because this procedure risks excluding any newer suppliers, in instances where a supplier without long term experience is likely to be able to demonstrate capability, consideration will be given to waiving the requirement.
- Procurement activity takes place within a framework defined by a range of legislation, which continues to evolve. We will ensure that managers responsible for procurement are made aware of any new changes that affect the Authority's processes.

## **10. Contract Management**

- 10.1 The Authority takes a proportionate approach to contract management. Where appropriate, contracts will include quality and performance standards which are monitored and reviewed. We will manage contracts to ensure that any performance issues are addressed and that opportunities to obtain additional value during the term of the contract are identified and acted upon.
- 10.2 Plans should be made well in advance of the expiry of a contract for re-letting it based on a review of previous and current arrangements and performance.

## SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT CHECKLIST

1. Sustainability is about adapting the way we live and work to minimise negative impacts on other people and on the natural environment on which we depend.

The Authority is committed to minimising its negative environmental impacts and the manner in which the Authority procures goods and services has a central role to play in ensuring that the Authority meets its commitments.

The best environmental option is to procure and use less. This will conserve resources and reduce pollution, as well as significantly reducing the amount of waste produced. Before buying any goods, officers should consider whether consumption can be reduced by reusing or repairing existing materials and goods. Consideration should also be given to whether alternative procedures can be put in place to remove the need to buy goods. Can goods be shared, borrowed or loaned rather than purchased?

The Authority aims to minimise the environmental impact of its procurement through rigorous application of the following principles:

- **Reduce** – by only purchasing new goods that are absolutely necessary (i.e. when it isn't possible or viable to re-use or repair goods already purchased) and to reduce over-ordering.
- **Re-use** – by purchasing products, wherever possible, that can be re-used many times, rather than disposable ones.
- **Repair** – by purchasing, wherever possible, products that have been designed and manufactured to allow for their repair or for the replacement of individual parts.
- **Recycle** – by purchasing, wherever possible, products that are made from recycled materials, and/or that may be recycled themselves with minimal environmental damage, or that are biodegradable.

Wherever practicable, 'whole life' costs (and not just the initial price) and environmental responsibility will be considered when assessing value for money. These include:

- purchase, packaging, transportation, installation and commissioning costs;
- operating costs, including labour, maintenance, re-processing, recurring license charges, energy and energy efficiency; carbon, water and consumables usage;

- Purchasing products and services that use fewer natural resources in production and distribution and promote Fairtrade products;
- management costs, including staff training, insurance, health and safety and environmental costs;
- life expectancy whilst remaining fit for purpose;
- Purchasing products that can be recycled or disposed of with minimal environmental damage;
- Buy the most energy-efficient products where they give value for money, taking account of whole-life costs, using the UK's mandatory energy-labelling scheme;
- disposal costs.
- Purchasing locally where possible, to reduce the impact of transport, as long as the criteria above are met; and
- Promote equality and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, disability and race.

Sustainability will be incorporated as a central component in any architectural, engineering, design or construction contracts.

The Authority recognises the advantages of sourcing local goods and services where possible for the Authority and the local economy.

2. Procurement decisions are to be based on environmental criteria along with other major factors such as value for money, quality and whole life costs. The Authority will assess whether goods and services:
  - Are durable, reusable, refillable or recyclable;
  - Contain reused, recycled or renewable raw materials;
  - Are energy and resource efficient;
  - Use minimum packaging and encourage waste reduction;
  - Are non (or minimum) polluting;
  - Are locally produced;
  - Are free from ozone depleting substances, solvents, volatile organic compounds and other substances damaging to health and the environment;
  - Are from certified sustainable sources;
  - Cause minimal damage to the environment in their production, distribution, use and disposal; and
  - Are on the most competitive terms having regard for Best Value.
3. The criteria by which environmental impact can be taken into account during tender evaluation is to be included in tender documentation.

## SUSTAINABLE BUILDING CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Sustainable**
- ✗ **Less desirable**
- **Neutral**

### General

Repair or recycle if possible rather than buying new, but if you do have to buy something please check the list.

Other guides, such as the ENPA Design Guide give specific detailed advice for design aspects of building works.

#### 1. **Timber**

- ✓ Forest Stewardship Council Certified Timber or equivalent
- ✓ Recycled
- ✓ Known local source (check with Woodland Team)
- ✗ Tropical hardwoods
- ✗ Unknown source/non FSC

If possible use UK hardwoods rather than softwoods – this encourages planting and management of broadleaved woodland. Many hardwoods (notably oak and chestnut) do not need paints and stains to preserve them when used externally. *Most* softwoods do.

#### 2. **Roofing**

##### Slate

- ✓ - Recycled and local
- ✓ - Delabole
- ✓ - Welsh
- ✗ - Chinese / Brazilian / other non UK sources
- ✓ Thatch (also turf / bracken / heather)
- ✓ Timber shingles (FSC)
- ✓ Clay tiles
- ✗ Artificial tiles / concrete

#### 3. **Walls / Structure**

- ✓ Local stone, cob, brick (preferably recycled / local)
- ✓ Lime mortar and plaster
- ✓ Timber cladding (FSC)
- ✓ Green oak framing
- ✓ Straw (bales)
- Concrete blocks

#### 4. **Windows**

- ✓ FSC Timber
- ✗ UPVC



5. **Paint / Finishes**
  - ✓ Lime wash
  - ✓ Lime plaster
  - ✓ Lime mortar
  - ✓ Natural/environmentally friendly paints (eg some of Farrow and Ball range)
  - ✓ Distemper (internal)
  - ✓ Natural oils / waxes such as linseed
  - ✗ Varnishes / chemical stains
  
6. **Gutters / downpipes**

Direct rainwater into ground rather than drains if possible. Salvage and repair cast iron, copper or lead
  
7. **Flooring**
  - ✓ Local / recycled / FSC timber
  - ✓ Wool carpet
  - ▣ Concrete
  
8. **Insulation**
  - ✓ Wool
  - ✓ Recycled paper
  - ✓ Double / triple glazing
  - ✓ Shutters
  - ✓ Thick curtains
  
9. **Energy Efficiency / Renewables**
  - ✓ Lights – LED/low energy bulbs
  - Heating systems
    - ✓ Solar
    - ✓ Wood fuel
    - ✓ Hydropower
    - ✓ Windpower
    - ✓ Combined heat and power
    - ✓ Photo-voltaics
    - ✓ Condensing boilers
    - ✗ Electric (unless supplied by renewables)
    - ✗ Oil
    - ✗ Gas
  
10. **Electrical / Plumbing**
  - ✗ PVC
  - ▣ Non PVC wire, copper or PE piping
  - ✓ Water saving taps / flush systems
  
11. **Landscape Works**

Paving

  - ✓ FSC Timber
  - ✓ Local stone
  - ✓ Woodchip bark
  - ✓ Local river aggregate/cobbles (if approved source)
  
  - ✓ Hoggin
  - ✓ Grass

- Concrete, tarmac, block paving

External Structures (as above)

Soft landscape

- ✓ Locally sourced
- ✓ Natives
- ✓ Edible fruits

Weed Control

- ✗ Herbicides
- ✓ Biodegradable mulch mats
- ✓ Organic mulches

Soil Ameliorants

- ✗ Peat
- ✓ Farmyard manure
- ✓ Compost

Fencing

- ✓ FSC hardwood timber

## ITEM 9

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at 3.00pm on Tuesday, 4 March 2025 in the Committee Room at Exmoor House, Dulverton.

#### **PRESENT**

Mr S J Pugsley (Chairperson)  
Mr M Ellicott  
Mr W Geen

- 15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies for absence was received from Mr J Patrinos and Miss E Stacey.
- 16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.
- 17. MINUTES:**
- i. **Confirmation:** The **Minutes** of the Standards Committee's meeting held on 5 November 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
  - ii. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from those Minutes.
- 18. BUSINESS OF URGENCY:** There was none.
- 19. PUBLIC SPEAKING:** There were no public speakers.
- 20. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2024-25:** The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer and the Solicitor & Monitoring Officer.

#### **The Committee's Consideration**

In relation to the good practice questions set out in the governance self-assessment, it was suggested and agreed that the response to question 16, "Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?" be amended from "no" to "partly".

The importance of consultative committees and engagement with parishes to ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement was emphasised, and it was hoped the Exmoor National Park Forum would play an improved role.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Annual Governance Review.
2. To note the results of the Governance self-assessment at Section 9 subject to amendment to the response to question 16 from "no" to "partly".
3. To approve the Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Appendix for inclusion with the Annual Accounts for 2024-25.

## 21. OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Enterprise and Operations.

### **The Committee's Consideration**

While agreeing there was no room for complacency, Members congratulated Officers on the relatively small number of complaints received by the Authority (six) between 1 April 2024 and 17 February 2025 and were pleased to note the 48 compliments received during the same period.

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|--|
| <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To note the overview report of general complaints and compliments received by the Authority.</p> |
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(The meeting closed at 3.20pm)

Chairperson