

**MINUTES OF BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY NATIONAL  
PARK AUTHORITY HELD AT CONFERENCE ROOM, PLAS Y FFYNNON,  
CAMBRIAN WAY, BRECON LD3 7HP ON TUESDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2019**

**PRESENT:**

**Powys**

Cllr Ratcliffe (Deputy Chair), Cllr M Jones, Cllr K Laurie-Parry, Cllr E Roderick, Cllr McIntosh and Cllr McNicholas

**Monmouthshire**

Cllr A Webb

**Carmarthenshire**

Cllr A James and Cllr Madge

**Merthyr Tydfil**

Cllr M Colbran

**Rhondda Cynon Taff**

Cllr G Thomas

**Torfaen**

**Blaenau Gwent**

**Members appointed by the Welsh Government**

Mr Edward Evans (Chair), Mr Ian Rowat, Mr James Marsden, Ms Deborah Perkin, Mr Julian Stedman and Mr Christopher Coppock

**In Attendance**

Mr Sean O'Connor, Monitoring Officer

Mr Julian Atkins, Chief Executive

Mrs Julia Gruffydd, Democratic Services Manager

Mr Paul Funnell, IT and Systems Manager

## **Apologies**

Cllr Phil Pritchard, Cllr E Durrant, Cllr M Feakins, Cllr J Hill, Grenville Ham, Mrs S Holden and Cllr S Evans

### **51/19 Correspondence**

The Chair welcomed Cllr Malcolm Colbran to his first Authority meeting following his appointment by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. He advised that Cllr Steve Evans, appointed by Torfaen County Borough Council, had been unable to attend the meeting.

He also advised that the Minister had officially approved the extension of the term of office for himself and Ian Rowat, pending the legislation to reduce the size of the Authority. They would stand down when the legislation took effect and the reduction in local authority appointed members would take place simultaneously to maintain the balance required. Members welcomed these reappointments.

### **52/19 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **53/19 Minutes**

Some errors were noted in the attendance list for the Authority meeting on 9 April 2019 which would be rectified before the minutes were published.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- a) **To approve the minutes of the EGM held on 22 March 2019 and authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record;**
- b) **To approve the minutes of the NPA held on 9 April 2019 and authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.**

### **54/19 Public Speaking**

There were no requests to speak.

### **55/19 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair referred to his briefing note circulated recently and highlighted the meetings with stakeholders, partners and businesses. He had attended the Gurkha Parade for the first time and had been impressed by the ceremony and level of support.

Cllr K Laurie-Parry joined the meeting and confirmed she did not have any declarations of interest.

#### **56/19 Chief Executive's Announcements**

The Chief Executive had circulated his announcements and advised that an information paper had been published in a new folder on the Modern.gov library which officers would use in future for all information reports rather than putting such items on the Authority agenda.

In response to a question he confirmed that he was working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Natural Resources Wales. He reported on a very positive meeting with the Park Society where potential initiatives had been discussed. The Society will be celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 with a walk on 18 December 2019 and all members would be welcome. A member had attended a recent meeting of the Society and highlighted the opportunities to communicate with a large membership through their newsletter.

#### **57/19 Annual Governance Statement 2018-19**

Members considered the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 which had been reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and had benefited from some helpful comments from the Wales Audit Office.

**RESOLVED: That the draft Annual Governance Statement be approved for publication with the Annual Statement of Accounts.**

#### **58/19 Establishment of a Welsh Language Officer Post (Part-Time)**

The Chief Executive presented a proposal to establish a part time officer role to support the Authority's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language Member Champion supported this and highlighted the importance of encouraging Welsh culture. In response to questions the Democratic Services Manager advised that the Public Speaking Scheme offered the opportunity to speak in Welsh, with a three day deadline giving time for officers to procure a simultaneous translation service. A member offered his help with translation in this regard.

The Chair advised that he would be forwarding emails to members about the meaning and pronunciation of Welsh place names, which were currently circulated weekly to staff.

**RESOLVED: That Members approve the Establishment of a dedicated Welsh Language Officer post (0.2FTE) as set out in the report.**

## **59/19 Officers Code of Conduct**

Members considered an updated officer code of conduct and noted changes in relation to media and sensitive posts. A member suggested that the Authority might consider a code of conduct for the public, in line with some organisations. The Chief Executive suggested that the other National Parks be contacted about this.

It was felt that the Delivery Director should be given authority to sign off press releases as well as the Chief Executive and officers would ensure this was aligned to other policies.

Some amendments were needed in relation to officer nomenclature, which would be implemented before publication.

**RESOLVED: To agree inclusions and amendments to the revised Officer Code of Conduct.**

## **60/19 Secondment Policy**

Members were advised that the Authority was making increasing use of secondments across departments and that guidance would be useful both for staff and managers. This was welcomed as an opportunity to develop skills within the organisation.

**RESOLVED: To agree the Secondment Policy.**

## **61/19 Amendments to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation and Adjustments to the Sign Off limits**

Members considered proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation to reflect changes to staff structures and to align with the Financial Regulations. The Chief Executive advised that the changes would increase efficiency.

A member suggested that this document was becoming unwieldy and would benefit from a more accessible tabular version. He also felt that the Governance and Member Development Working Group should review the Scheme of Delegation annually to ensure that it was kept updated.

Some errors in nomenclature were noted and would be rectified before publication.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) **To approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations as set out in the report and enclosures;**

- b) Approve the adjustments to financial sign off limits for named Senior Officers as set out in the report;**
- c) That the Governance and Member Development Working Group review the Scheme of Delegation annually and bring any recommendation to the Authority;**

## **62/19 Local Development Plan 2: Consultation draft Preferred Strategy**

The Planning Policy Manager presented the draft Preferred Strategy for the Local Development Plan (LDP). She thanked the team for all their hard work and members for their input via the Key Work Area Groups and the Policy Forum. She had noted the typographical and format errors which would be amended prior to consultation. She highlighted the consultation process and advised that the results would be brought to the Authority in September.

The Chair emphasised the amount of work carried out by members and officers and felt that the working groups and Policy Forum were beginning to bear fruit. He welcomed the fact that the Authority intended to go beyond the statutory consultation requirements, particularly with the farming community, and commented that the Powys Liaison meetings were useful. A member suggested that the Authority would need to open minded to farm diversification in future.

The Landscape and Biodiversity Champion paid tribute to the policy team, congratulating them on the quality of work and the pace and efficiency. He stressed the importance of discussing farm diversification with the farming community to inform potential Supplementary Planning Guidance. He also reminded the meeting of a discussion in Policy Forum about the need to adopt a proper assessment of plans and policies and the need to increase monitoring. Officers requested that this be picked up separate to this meeting.

A member welcomed the opportunity to contribute via the Policy Forum and noted that the input from members was reflected in the document before them which he felt was a brilliant piece of work. It was bold and addressed the climate change emergency and the state of the landscape, and also encouraged the Authority to think radically.

The Chief Executive commented that the preferred strategy took account of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and put work with communities, through place plans, at the heart of the emerging Plan. He was proud of the policy team and appreciated the comments of members.

In relation to consultation it was noted that this would be sent to all town and community councils in the Park and it was noted that the consultation period spanned the school holidays. The Authority would need to consider this when consultation deadlines were set. The point was also made that the intention to review the National Park Management Plan at the same time could cause confusion with the public, and consultation would need to be carefully considered. Officers advised that an updated timetable for a co-ordinated consultation of these key documents had been produced, and that members and officers had a role in clarifying the process with the public.

**RESOLVED:**

**a) To approve the Preferred Strategy for a period of 8 weeks public consultation;**

**b) To approve the publication of the following documents for observation:**

**i. Initial Consultation Report**

**ii. Initial Sustainability Appraisal**

**iii. Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Preferred Strategy**

**63/19 Local Development Plan 2: Candidate Site Registers**

Members considered the candidate sites that had both passed and failed the first stage of assessment. The officer advised that a more detailed review against the Preferred Strategy would take place at the second phase, and confirmed that landowners would have the opportunity to submit further sites if they felt they met the Preferred Strategy. In response to a question it was confirmed that the validity of all site ownership would be verified.

**RESOLVED:**

**a) To approve the findings of the first phase assessment (Enclosures 1 & 2)**

**b) To agree that Candidate Site Registers are published for the purpose of public consultation.**

Cllr G Thomas left the meeting.

**64/19 Enabling Appropriate Development in the Countryside: Addendum**

Credit was given to the Policy Officer who was unable to be at the meeting but who had prepared this report and addendum to the policy. It was noted that no responses had been received during the consultation period.

Members welcomed the focus on the vernacular style of buildings and recognised the need for Supplementary Planning Guidance to aid decision making at Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee. A member hoped that planning officers would remind members of the need to ensure good design when making planning decisions. The Authority had heritage officer expertise. It was noted that the recent RTPI Conference had highlighted the need for good design.

A member referred to the section on 'raising the roof' and highlighted an apparent conflict of statements. Officers would review this.

**RESOLVED: That Members endorse the Addendum to Enabling Appropriate Development in the Countryside Supplementary Planning Guidance (NPA, March 2015) for the use in the determination of planning applications.**

#### **65/19 Affordable Housing Commuted Sum Process and Procedure**

Members considered a recommendation from the Affordable Housing Working Group in relation to commuted sums. It was noted that extensive consultation had taken place with the housing associations, but that Authority members had expressed some concern about losing a degree of control on housing allocation but that delivery could be achieved in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Working Group would continue to monitor processes through the Local Development Plan.

**RESOLVED: That Members agree to principle of transferring monies collected by the NPA for the provision of Affordable Housing to the constituent Housing Authorities for allocation and spend in accordance with the Service Level Agreement as set out in Enclosure I.**

#### **66/19 Member Champion Reports**

The Chair advised that champions had been asked to prepare their reports for the Annual General Meeting on 28 June 2019.

#### **67/19 Member Reports**

Two members had attended the RTPI conference recently and had reported back to the Planning, Access and Rights of Way Committee. There had been a contribution from the Design Commission and it was noted that development of brown field sites must have design at its heart.

#### **68/19 Gifts & Hospitality**

No declarations were made.

#### **69/19 Access to Information**

**RESOLVED:** To exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of item 20 in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 12 and 13 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chair advised that this concluded the public part of the meeting and that there was no further business at item 21.

**70/19 Update on Foel Deg boundary management**

Members received a progress report on works being carried out on Foel Deg Common.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the progress being made in implementing the five measures.
- b) To note that planning permission and consent under Section 38 of the Commons (Wales) Act are required.

**71/19 Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

Signed as a correct record  
Chairman of the National Park Authority