

**MINUTES OF THE 78<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE NAAONB MANAGEMENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
HELD AT 1.30PM AT THE BVSC, BIRMINGHAM  
HELD ON THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

**Attendees - Trustees** Philip Hygate, Rose Day, Chris Woodley-Stewart, Nick Holliday, Mat Roberts, Lucy Barron, James Williamson. NB Denise Hewlett, Paul Walton joined by skype part way through the meeting.

**Invitees - Staff** Howard Davies - Chief Executive, Jill Smith - Communications & Events Manager, Richard Clarke - Policy & Development Manager, Amber Carter - Office & Membership Manager

**Invitees - Observers** Lisa Tomos - NRW, Dan Jones - Defra (by skype), John Butterfield - Natural England

**1. Apologies**

None received

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None given

**3. Minutes and matters arising**

Matters arising

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Agri-Environment offer will be covered as part of the later discussion.

There was a discussion regarding the MEOPL data, Andrew Sells has been written to, nothing has been received in response.

The minutes were agreed as accurate.

Agreed nem. con.

**4. Chairmen's Conference 2018**

The Communications and Events Manager (JS) introduced the paper.

Mat Roberts commented that he thought it was problematic that the programme showed Julian Glover not attending when the "Big Asks" speakers would be making our case. JS explained Julian had been invited for the full day and agreed to attend between 13.00 and 14.00 only. She reassured the Board that any outputs from the meeting would be fed in to the Review Panel as part of our evidence.

**5. AGM 2018 - Agenda and Papers**

It was noted that there were typos in the list of attendees.

**Action: AC to check and correct**

The Board requested that the wording on page 2 of draft company report was checked and corrected before the Papers were published.

**Action: AC to check and correct**

Signed..........14th March 2019

## 6. Business Plan 2018-20 and Budget update

The Chief Executive (HD) introduced the paper.

He informed the Board that in response to political context he had reviewed the NAAONB Business Plan and the staffs' related work programme. He added that Advocacy and Communications work will concentrate on the Review of Designated Landscapes (England).

Comments from the Board were:

Lucy Barron - Management Plans – Lucy commented that it would be useful to have standard text giving context of the Management Plan in the year of the Glover Review.

James Williamson – Strategic Corporate Partners – James queried the sense behind dropping the objective 'clear productive relationships developed with two strategic corporate partners'.

HD explained this has been subsumed by the development of the Board's resourcing strategy.

HD added that

- all of the page 28 Wales work that is red is included in the item on page 29.
- it is hoped that the HLF project will replace the national funding bids item in red on page 30.
- we are using the HLF programme to replace the red on page 31.

Nick Holliday – Workplan and Workloads - Trustees are beholden to CEO to reprogramme the workplan as Trustees don't know the day to day workloads of staff.

HD responded that the workplan is realistic but challenging.

Nick Holliday – Finances – the NAAONB remains financially stretched and vulnerable and the Trustees should remain aware of this.

Budget – HD commented that he had updated the budget to reflect change in circumstance.

### Recommendations:

It was recommended that the Board

- Note the background to this paper
- Considers the content and implications of this update
- Agrees the business plan with or without amendments (Annex 1)
- Considers the updated budget (Annex 2)
- Adopts this updated budget with or without amendments

**Recommendations accepted proposed:** Nick Holiday

**Seconded:** Rose Day

**Agreed:** Unanimously

## 7. VAT Registration

The Honorary Treasurer (JW) introduced the paper.

It was recommended that the Board

- Discussed the content of the paper
- Reviewed the pros and cons of registering for VAT
- Agreed not to register for VAT at this time but to review the proposal annually at the time of budget setting.

**Recommendations accepted proposed:** Chris Woodley-Stewart

**Seconded:** Nick Holliday

**Agreed:** Unanimously

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## 8. Glover Review of Designated Landscapes

The Chief Executive (HD) gave a verbal update of the work that the NAAONB and AONB Family had undertaken since the SoS announcement in May.

On 27th May, Secretary of State, Michael Gove, [announced the launch of the Review](#) in an exclusive in the Sunday Telegraph. The NAAONB welcomed @Julian\_Glover as Chairman of the Review Panel and published its [response](#) the same day.

On 25th June, the NAAONB (Chairman, CEO and 5 Lead Officers) met with Julian to discuss the Lead Officers' "One Asks" that had been collated via Basecamp. A note of the meeting can be read [here](#).

On 26th June, NAAONB Trustees met in Birmingham to formulate their ideas for the Review.

On 25th July, Julian attended L4L2018 and spent 90 minutes listening to and making notes on audience comments and asks.

On 26th July, the NAAONB ran a briefing as part of L4L2018 to discuss the NAAONB's advocacy and communications plans as we go into the Autumn.

The NAAONB contracted Ruth Chambers, who spoke at the L4L2018 briefing, to help develop an advocacy strategy.

Following this the NAAONB produced a document which included an advocacy framework for consideration by the Lead Officers at their September meeting. This document helped

- identify the headline NAAONB asks for the review - these came from the work already done with the Trustees, the Lead Officers, the delegates at Conference and the work done on the day with the LOs.
- articulate the above in the form of a 'golden thread' that can run through all existing and planned work and events (media, comms, political engagement etc),
- undertake mapping of key government, parliamentary and media targets,
- suggest tactics for engaging parliamentary targets, both at Westminster (for the autumn) and at constituency level (for the summer),
- suggest some targeted media interventions,
- suggest messengers for the key asks (both within and outside the Family),
- provide some analysis of the panel members and their likely interest in AONB priorities and to suggest some direct and indirect routes to panel members
- provide some advice on how to set NAAONB asks in the context of this being a joint designated landscapes review, with the inevitable focus on National Parks that this will bring.

Once the framework is in place, we will provide a linked communications action plan which will detail national work and how to engage at a local/regional level.

In the meantime LOs have been asked to start to consider who your local audiences (both parliamentary and other) and messengers will be, so we can move quickly, collectively and efficiently in the Autumn.

Concurrent with the internal work the NAAONB has been giving briefings to CPRE, Historic England, Natural England – how we strengthen Section 85, statutory consultee status – and Defra – net gain, how do AONBs profit from development, metrics for the 25 YEP.

In addition we have produced a briefing for the AONB Family on the Agriculture Bill. In the House of Commons debate there were numerous references to landscapes and 5-6 mentions of AONBs. We

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are hopeful that the written amendment we have provided for Cheryl Gillan will be discussed at Committee stage.

#### Action

Trustees agreed to have an online discussion on Basecamp once LO notes have been typed up.

### 9. HLF Resilient Heritage update

The National Policy and Development Manager (RC) introduced the item.

Following a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Resilient Heritage Programme, the NAAONB has been awarded £164,300. This has allowed the NAAONB to set up the Future Landscapes Project. The Policy and Development Manager is acting as the Future Landscapes Project Manager, on a part-time basis, and is undertaking work that will make the NAAONB Charity and the AONB Family more resilient and better prepared to address identified strategic challenges. There are two elements to the project.

1. The sustainability and governance of the NAAONB Charity will be reviewed to include a critical investigation of the remit, structures, resourcing and accountability of the organization to its members, potential members, and wider stakeholders.
2. A Professional and Personal Development Programme will be delivered to a cohort of AONB staff to help develop greater levels of collaborative working through personality profiling, coaching and constructive inquiry.

To help the delivery of the Future Landscapes and back fill some the Policy and Development Manager time two new contractors been recruited to the NAAONB Team on a part-time basis.

- Future Landscapes Project Assistant, Marie Micol, 12-month contract 3 days/week.
- National Policy Officer, Ian Marshall, 15-month contract 2days/week.

Progress on the Future Landscapes Project will be reported to the next Board meeting.

### 10. Strategic Risk

The Chief Executive (HD) introduced the paper explaining that the Board had last considered and agreed an updated risk register in June 2015 and further agreed that the ongoing process of monitoring and review should be delegated to the Chief Executive who should report on the top three risks at each Board meeting. This he had done.

However, he added that there needs to be a clear link between strategy and risk management. He underlined the recent loss of core grant aid from NRW and its associated impact on staff, budgets, ability to deliver and relationship with the membership as an opportunity for the Board to increase its engagement with strategic risk management and review.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board

- Consider the risks identified and review approaches to mitigating them
- Discuss the efficacy of existing mitigation
- Nominate one Board member to lead a review of the Board's approach to risk management and determination of risk appetite.

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### **11. Management Accounts**

Adopted nem. con.

### **12. NAAONB Staff & Trustee Activity Report**

Adopted nem. con.

### **13. Defra Report**

Dan Jones joined the meeting by skype and gave a verbal update on the Glover Review.

He reported that the Panel is still as ambitious as ever but there is more understanding of the scale of the task. They have visited most National Parks now. The Panel met for the first time last week and there is an appetite to get out and see as many AONBs as possible. Hopefully over the next couple of weeks, there will be clarity over which AONBs they will be visiting.

He reminded trustees that the Panel is more interested in fundamentals than tweaking.

Timescales – the call for evidence will come “soon” – by end of year. Louise Leighton-McTague would call Howard before it was announced.

### **14. Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru - Natural Resources Wales Report** (NB because of staff travel needs, this paper was taken after Item 7)

NRW's Liza Tomos (LT) gave a verbal report and undertook to send a written report to be added to published papers.

LT said

- The announcement of the new NRW Chair is imminent and requested that they be invited to the Chairmen's Conference.
- Area statements are being produced across Wales. They will be in place by March 2020 and landscape is included. NRW funding will in the future align with the issues coming out of the area statements.
- These are exciting times in Wales for AONBs. The Minister has sought information for creating parity between AONBs and NPs.
- Wales' post-Brexit publication has been published. AONB Partnerships are not mentioned as delivery mechanisms although NPAs are. NRW looking to address this.
- The Landscape Lead at Welsh Government, John Watkins, is moving to Sustainable Development.

The NAAONB Policy and Development Manager (RC) asked whether there would be another round of interim NRW funding. LT responded that there wouldn't be officially but that they were reviewing how the last funding was granted and recognizing the issues that unsuccessful grants brought about.

### **15. Natural England Report** (NB because of staff travel needs, this paper was taken after NRW's Report following Item 7)

Natural England's John Butterworth introduced the paper.

He said that Natural England had three priorities

- Delivery of variation of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths boundary. There had been a lot of responses and overall these were favourable. However objectors have made more detailed input. A proposed draft variation order would be put to the NE Board in December.

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- The Glover Review – NE have been asked to respond to requests from the Review Panel. These have focused on how Designated Landscapes contribute to biodiversity and on understanding how the various different designations fit together.  
HD comment that there are criteria for AONB designation and different criteria for NP designation. He urged that the creation of a hierarchy of rigour for designation should not be encouraged.

**AOB** - subjects should be submitted to and agreed by the Chairman prior to the meeting. The Chairman will advise the Board at the start of the meeting of any additional papers that are to be tabled.

Cannock Chase AONB Partnership has written to the Board seeking to apply for membership of the NAAONB.

**Approval proposed:** Nick Holiday

**Seconded:** Lucy Barron

**Approved:** Unanimously

Nick Holiday added that Neil Curwen, former Board member, had died the previous week and he had attended the funeral representing the NAAONB.

**Meeting Closed**

Signed..........14th March 2019