

## REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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### **SUBJECT: TO AGREE THE DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL PARKS UK LTD**

#### Purpose of Report

To seek the approval of Members for the Dissolution of National Parks UK Ltd.

#### Introduction/Background

Since its formation the Authority has worked in partnership with other National Park Authorities in Wales, England and Scotland. Prior to devolution the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA) provided the focus for this partnership working and was an effective means of lobbying on issues such as the Environment Act, 1995. Since the setting up of the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Parliament in 1999, most of the issues that National Park Authorities engage with have been devolved with National Parks Wales becoming the main focus of our work. In England a similar change has occurred with their main focus being on working together as National Parks England.

Since devolution ANPA, or National Parks UK as it was re-named in 2014, has struggled to find a role and focused most of its time on communication, training of members and events such as the National Parks Conference (which is organised by an individual National Park Authority by rotation).

In 2015, the 15 National Park Authorities set up a new venture called National Parks Partnership to seek to generate commercial sponsorship to support our work. Last year we also set by the UK National Parks Foundation to support our fundraising work.

The Chairs of the National Park Authorities have each been Directors of National Parks UK however, over the past five years there has been a recognition that the partnership was not working effectively, which led to a long process of re-assessing the work of National Parks UK. This process identified some of the key issues as:

- A lack of clarity regarding the work of National Parks UK;
- Ineffective decision making and implementation, with a number of decisions being deferred to future meetings;
- A lack of skills base within the organisation;
- A recognition that some of the most effective partnership work was undertaken by individual authorities on behalf of others such as the model for organising the bi-annual Conference;
- An excessive focus on the process of running the company rather than on focusing on the outcomes.

## **Changes to How National Park Authorities work in Partnership**

In March 2018, the Directors of National Parks UK took a series of decisions to change how National Park Authorities work in partnership.

These included moving away from a model of partnership focused on one central organisation to one that focuses on delivering a limited range of services delivered by individual National Park Authorities on behalf of all Authorities via an “internal commissioning” process.

Over the past 18 months, the 15 National Park Authorities have agreed a process that has seen:

- The formation of a UK National Parks Communications Unit hosted by the Broads Authority;
- The Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority undertake a three year contract to deliver member training for the 13 Welsh and English National Park Authorities;
- A review and revision to how the IT portal is managed;
- The establishment of an annual Chairs Forum to provide the 15 Chairs of UK National Park Authorities with an opportunity to discuss key strategic issues relevant to National Parks.

In addition, the Directors of National Parks UK have agreed to dissolve the company structure for National Parks UK. While the decision to dissolve the company is ultimately one for the Directors, it is considered good practice to get the consent of the Members of National Parks UK, i.e. the Members of the 15 National Park Authorities.

While the actual process of dissolving the company has not been undertaken, the other decisions taken and implemented over the past 18 months make the company structure of National Parks UK Ltd redundant.

### Financial considerations

The cost of Dissolving National Parks UK is in the region of £5,000. This money will be taken from National Parks UK Ltd funds. Any remaining funding following the dissolution of the company will be distributed amongst the 15 National Park Authorities.

### Risk considerations

There are minimal risks to dissolving National Parks UK.

### **Recommendation**

***Members are asked to approve the Dissolution of National Parks UK Ltd and to delegate to the Chairman any action required to implement this recommendation.***

*Consultee: Cllr Paul Harries, Chair of the Authority*