

North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on Monday 3 February 2014.

Present: David Jeffels, Christopher Massey, Caroline Patmore, John Ritchie, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott, Richard Thompson, Jeremy Walker.

Apologies: Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Bill Suthers

Officers in Attendance: Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), David Renwick (Director of Conservation), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), Peter Yates (Section 151 Officer), Catherine Raistrick (Finance and Performance Officer), Simon Baum (ICT Manager), Stephen Croft (External Fundraising Officer), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer)

01/14 **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2013, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

02/14 **Members Interests**

Members were reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interests relating to any agenda item prior to its consideration.

03/14 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of each of the items of business shown in column 1 of the following table on the grounds that each involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 specified in column 2:-

Item No on the Agenda	Paragraph No
14	1,2,3,4
15	1,2

04/14 **Annual Standards and Ethical Review**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Chair congratulated the Authority on receiving over 1000 compliments during the period.

Members asked about the following:

- the historic planning appeal rate where Members had refused an application contrary to the recommendation and the matter had gone to appeal.
- Mission statement to cover governance of National Park
- Sharp rise in Planning appeals over last two years
- How long had 'Whistleblowing Policy' been in place

Action: Director of Planning to provide Members with further information on historic appeals member overturns etc.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Authority had a values statement and a code of conduct, but no specific mission statement in relation to Governance.

Action: Officers to report back to Members on volunteers and values in a year's time

Director of Planning advised Members that the draft NPPF was the main reason for a rise in planning appeals and said the Authority had made it a priority to get appeals back on track

Director of Corporate Services informed Members that the 'Whistleblowing Policy' hadn't been reviewed since 2009, and this would be included in the future work programme for Corporate Services.

Resolved:

Members endorsed the suggested areas for further development at 7.5 of the report

05/14 **3rd Quarter Finance Update**

Considered:

The report of the Finance Officer

Members commented on the following areas:

- Car parking
- Costs for ANPA Conference
- Forecast Outturn
- Year-on-year comparative information

The Director of Corporate Services informed Members that car parking income had been underachieving on the budget target fees had been static for several years. Car parking figures were now increasing, a good measure of activity.

Cost of ANPA Conference was 40K plus staffing. Taking into account extra income left 1.5K as the cost to the Authority.

Director of Corporate Services suggested that a Forecast Outturn column and a summary Income and Expenditure account be included in the finance report for future November FRASC meetings. It was agreed that August would be too early in the Financial Year to make this information useful. Comparative annual information would also be included.

Action: Finance and Performance Officer to include changes to the report for the November Finance Update

Resolved:

Members noted the report and approved the virements

06/14 **Treasury Management**

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer

Members commented on investment rates, length of investment terms and the banks used for the investments.

The Treasurer informed Members that the Authority tries to tie up as much investment as it can for as long as it can and at the best rate of return, but keep a pool of funds for day to day cash flow. The Treasurer also advised Members that UK Nationalised banks were the preferred choice and seen as a safer option for investment as they were guaranteed by Government.

The Chair thanked the Treasurer for his comprehensive report.

Resolved:

Members agreed the recommendations

07/14 **Revised Draft Budget**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Director advised Members that as a result of reductions in National Park Grant, the budget had been amended to include one-off cuts in 2014/15 to help rebalance the Authority's finances.

The Director of Corporate Services also advised Members of the decisions taken relating to the Pension Fund Triennial Valuation by the s151 Officer and the Chief Executive under the delegated authority.

Members asked about the following:

- Reductions in grants and the possibility for more matched funding from beneficiaries
- Opportunities for more income generation
- Use of Reserves

The Director of Conservation advised Members that a meeting was due to take place to revisit the current grant schemes with a view to making funds work as hard as possible and to discuss possible further joint working with grant providers.

Members were informed that, the lower limit for a completely unallocated 'emergency' reserve as recommended by Auditors was £220K.

Members supported the Officers in their recommendations and also agreed that, while flexibility was needed, use of reserves in 2014/15 should not cover any revenue spend beyond that already in the draft budget.

Resolved:

Members noted the report and the decision taken by the Chief Executive regarding the Pensions Fund

08/14 **Forward Financial Planning (verbal)**

Considered:

The presentation of the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services

Members were shown a power point presentation and commented on the following:

- Possibilities for commercial sponsorship
- Charging for pre-application advice
- Need for a longer term plan beyond 3 years
- Charitable Trust/Foundation

Officers informed Members that

- National Parks had achieved sponsorship from Airwick.
- There was potential to generate more money from Pre-application advice, but the Authority would not want this to discourage applications.
- The Authority had had some success in bringing in funding, but the current market was extremely competitive.
- Regarding Charitable status, the Authority was concerned about possible duplication between organisations.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services introduced Members to the idea of Intrapreneurship as a way of releasing creativity in Staff.

Action: Members to receive copy of power point presentation prior to the Evening Seminar on 24 February 2014.

Resolved:

Members noted the presentation and agreed to discuss further at the Evening Seminar on 24 February 2014.

Mr J Walker left the meeting at midday

09/14 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Fundraising Officer

Members were informed of funding available via the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Joint funding bid between NYMNPA and Yorkshire Dales NP, 50K each. Bid due in by end of March 2014. County Council to administer the process.

A Member asked about Coastal Community Funding. The External Fundraising Officer confirmed that this funding should benefit Coastal Communities and Ports, not inland communities.

Resolved:

Members approved the work currently being undertaken. The External Fundraising Officer agreed to attend the Members Evening Seminar on 24 February 2014

10/14 **ICT Update**

Considered:

The report of the ICT Manager

The ICT Manager showed Members a sample of the new-look device responsive Authority Website.

Members agreed the new website was excellent, but suggested that one or two of the top line key words needed changing as they were felt to be misleading.

Action: ICT Manager to request keyword changes

The ICT Manager asked Members for their views on electronic delivery of agenda papers.

Members made the following comments:

- Digital inclusion, IT/Internet access is still an issue for some, the Authority must remain inclusive.
- Possible opt-in system for hard copies
- Planned cut-off /switch over date to move to electronic delivery
- Build IT requirement into future Member recruitment
- Talk to other Authorities, regarding possible shared IT strategy, system compatibility

Action: ICT Manager to speak to Local Authority IT departments, plus discuss issue at next North Yorks IT Officers group meeting

Resolved:

Members noted ICT work. ICT Manager to take forward electronic agenda production issues with other Authorities/and IT groups.

11/14 **Risk Register Update**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Resolved:

Members noted and approved the report

12/14 **Health and Safety**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Resolved:

Members noted the content of the plan and requested that, in future, the Authority provide a comparative set of statistics

.....(Chair)
19 May 2014

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards
On, Monday 3 February 2014**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2013, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Complaints and Compliments Update

Members considered the report of the Committees Officer which set out the details of the complaints and compliments received since the last report. Members noted the report.