

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 1 September 2014.

Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, David Jeffels, Caroline Patmore, Andrew Scott, Richard Thompson, Jeremy Walker.

Apologies:

Christopher Massey, Ted Sanderson, Bill Suthers

Officers in Attendance: Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Ian Morton (Auditor), Catherine Raistrick (Finance and Performance Officer), David Kitson (Solicitor/Deputy Monitoring Officer, Scarborough BC), Suzanne Truman (NYCC Accountant), Simon Baum (ICT Manager), Rachel Pickering (Conservation Officer), David Renwick (Director of Conservation), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), David Smith (Senior Ranger), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

30/14 Election of Chair

Resolved:

That Mr D Jeffels be elected Chair of Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee, to take office until the first meeting of Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee following the Annual General Meeting of the Authority.

31/14 Election of Deputy Chair

Resolved:

That Mrs C Patmore be elected Deputy Chair of Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee to take office until the first meeting of Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee following the Annual General Meeting of the Authority.

David Jeffels In The Chair

32/14 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

33/14 **Members Interests**

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

34/14 **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
19	1,2,3,4
20	10
21	10
22	1,2,3,4

35/14 **Internal Audit Report (Veritau)**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Ian Morton (Auditor) updated Members.

Members commented on the following:

- ICT policies need to be updated
- Members brief private session with the Auditor before the start of the meeting had been useful
- Audit assignments for coming 12 months, process used to determine what areas are looked at, plus risk register

Ian Morton advised Members that Audit had been working with ICT and a new policy would soon be approved. With regard to the process for audit assignments, Ian Morton informed Members that the audit plan was approved in May, discussions took place with Peter Yates and Irene Brannon. The risk register will be one specific aspect to be looked at. The audit should take place in a couple of months, with a report back to Members later in the year.

The Chair of FRASC thanked Ian Morton for his work.

Resolved:

Members commented on and noted the report

36/14 **Draft Statement of Accounts**

Considered:

The report of the Accountant.

Suzanne Truman gave Members a presentation on the draft accounts, followed by An update on the Annual Governance Statement by Irene Brannon

Jeremy Walker declared an interest in this item as a Member of NYCC Pensions Group

Members commented on the following:

- Pension liability figure, £4 million sounds very substantial
- Stock market – improved position, plus changes in governance arrangements, have these changes been discussed?
- Footnote in accounts would be helpful to explain the 274K net interest figure.
- Discrepancy between figures on summary Expenditure/Income table and May appendix on page 96 of report, totals differ.
- Recharge
- Authority should be involved in discussion on NYPF governance.

Action: Suzanne Truman to add a suitable footnote to the accounts to explain the 274K net figure

Irene Brannon informed Members that the Pension figure is a snapshot and that it does fluctuate throughout the year, but that the figure will not impact on the budget.

The figures in the Appendix are presented net whereas income and expenditure is presented separately in the table.

Irene Brannon informed Members that recharge had been left as per the budget, but since May FRASC Suzanne Truman had been looking at the recharge model and recharges were now much more accurate.

The Chair of FRASC thanked Suzanne and Irene for their reports.

Resolved: Members commented on and noted the reports
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37/14 **3rd Quarter Finance Update**

Considered:

The report of the Performance and Finance Officer

Catherine Raistrick updated Members

Irene Brannon informed Members that following the request by Members at May FRASC to review the layout of the finance report, Catherine Raistrick was arranging to meet with a number of Members to seek their advice about changes/improvements which might be made to report layouts.

Action: Catherine Raistrick to arrange meeting with Members

Members commented on the following:

- Increase in car parking income
- New contract with AMEC, for Potash consultancy services

Catherine Raistrick informed Members that the rise in car parking income was due to increased use of car parking across the National Park and not because the Authority had increased car parking charges. The budget for 14/15 was also increased on the 13/14 target.

Irene Brannon gave Members more detail regarding the new contract with AMEC, but advised Members that AMEC were unable to commit beyond August next year, so if the Potash situation isn't finalised by then the Authority will need to consider tendering for a new consultancy contract with another company.

Resolved:

Members noted the report and approved the virements

38/14 Budget 2015/16 (Verbal)

The Director of Corporate Services, Irene Brannon updated members on the Budget for 2015/16 as follows:

- Currently projecting very small transfer into reserves for 2015/16
- Funding deficit going forward, an informal meeting to discuss this with Members to be arranged later in the year
- Work to be undertaken around managing change re: income generation

Members raised two points, one regarding setting targets in relation to income generation from sources as yet to be identified and ongoing uncertainties around the Defra funding

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Authority would be speaking to Defra concerning the Pension deficit issue. The Chief Executive also informed Members that he would be discussing Potash costs with the Chief Planner and Defra Civil Servant at a meeting later in the week.

The Chair thanked Irene Brannon for her update.

Action: Irene Brannon to arrange an informal meeting with Members later in the year to further discuss funding deficit issues.

39/14 Standards Paper

Considered:

The report of the Monitoring Officer

David Kitson, Solicitor/Deputy Monitoring Officer, Scarborough BC explained the recent decision notices issued by the Monitoring Officer, Lisa Dixon in relation to three former Members of the NYMNPA.

Members raised three main issues from the decision notices:

- that the former Members had been publically named
- that the report wasn't being discussed in greater detail at the meeting via a private paper
- the need to simplify/clarify the declaration of interest issue, plus the need for more training

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Members that, although unusual to publically name it was considered to be in the public interest to do so and the former Members concerned had been contacted prior to publication.

The Chief Executive informed Members that he had discussed the situation with Lisa Dixon and her view had been that there were likely to be no firm grounds for treating the information as confidential and that it was better for the information to be in the public domain. Regarding the declaration of interest issue, the Chief Executive suggested that a short clause be added to paragraph 10 of the Members Code of Conduct to read "solely, membership of an Authority is not an interest". Change to code to be discussed at Sept NPA.

Action: Chief Executive - note in go in Members Bulletin, plus item to be taken to Sept NPA

Resolved:

Members noted the report and made comment

40/14 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of Director of Conservation

David Renwick updated Members on the following items from his report:

Item 2 – LEP to procure work

Item 3 – Pearl Mussel Project - New bid for further 3 year project. 10K matched funding from Natural England, plus additional small amounts of funding for other sources

Item 6 – Sea Life, See Life - Invited to submit a second stage bid, to be developed by C.McLees

Item 7 – Sustainable Transport Promotion – bid not successful so now looking at how to progress by other means

Item 9 – TEL :

- 2 Executive group meetings
- HLF happy with project and have now given formal permission to start
- TEL information has been shared via local events, encouraging feedback received
- Logo and branding from project/website
- Members September bulletin to include more detail on TEL
- Three contracts have been tendered for: Archiological Survey, Fish Barrier Survey, User/Visitor Survey
- Key visits with land owners
- Stage 2 application in October 2014.

External funding officer post – to be recruited in October, part-time post 3 days per week.

Resolved:

Members approved the report

41/14 **Performance Management Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon informed Members that the National Park Authority Performance indicators would, in future, be known as 'Family Indicators'

Members commented on the following from the Director's report:

- Welcomed the relatively small number of output related measures
- Possible introduction of a performance 'dash board' – one A4 summary sheet
- Include a measure relating to the performance of the budget
- Volunteer days measured, but not visitor days
- Considered that the principles set out in the report were comprehensive

The Director of Corporate Services advised Members that visitor information was very difficult to collect as the methodology was difficult, it was the one area from the old set of indicators that was discussed the most. The information in future would be contextual, about improvements made.

Members expressed concern that the indicators no longer included measures in relation to value for money and organisational health and instructed Officers to do further work at a national level to ensure that the Family Indicators are fit for purpose.

Resolved: Members commented on the report

42/14 Risk Management Update

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

One Member voiced concerns about the categorisation of Health and Safety (Category 5), especially in relation to volunteers.

Irene Brannon explained to Members that the Authority did have sufficient controls in place, but that this type of risk could never be entirely eliminated and that this would be reviewed closely over the next few months.

Ian Morton, the Auditor informed Members that Audit would be looking at the controls in place for Health and Safety this year to make sure the Authority was compliant.

Resolved: Members noted the report
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43/14 ICT Update

Considered:

The report of the ICT Manager

Members congratulated the Authority on its new website. One Member requested that the Authority investigate website links for the NYMNPA website on the Visit England website.

Simon Baum informed Members that he would be pulling together a survey to share with Members to look at their current IT provision in readiness for future E-agenda work.

Action: ICT Manager to produce Members IT Survey, plus speak to C.McLees regarding possible links to Visit England website

Resolved:
Members noted the ICT report

44/14 **Members Training Programme**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer

Chair of NPA to send e-mail to Members regarding possible informal Members Training day get together on 15 Oct 2014.

Members agreed that the annual Members discussions, which form part of the Member Development Scheme, should remain mandatory. NPA Chair/NPA Deputy Chair, Planning Chair/Deputy Planning Chair to be allocated a number of Members each to meet with annually to talk through training/development needs. Committees Officer to offer light support to establishment/administration of this process.

Action: Jim Bailey to e-mail Members re: 15 Oct informal training day

Action: NPA Chair/NPA Deputy Chair, Planning Chair/Deputy Planning Chair to make arrangements to meet annually with their allocated Members to discuss individual Member’s training and development needs.

Action: Committees Officer to help establish/support process.

Resolved:
Members agreed to keep the annual Member discussions mandatory.

45/14 **Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations**

Jeremy Walker declared an interest in this item as a Member of NYCC Pensions Group

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls advised Members on the Authority’s updated policy regarding pensions.

Resolved:
Members approved the updated policy

..... (Chair)
24 November 2014

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 1 September 2014**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Levisham Estate Review

Members views were sought on the options considered for the future management of Levisham Estate. Members requested Officers investigate further options for increased income generation from the estate.

Property Review

Members noted the report on Property from the Director of Corporate Services. Follow up report to go to NPA in December 2014.

Complaints and Compliments Update

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