

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 19 May 2014.

Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Christopher Massey, Caroline Patmore, Andrew Scott, Bill Suthers, Richard Thompson, Jeremy Walker.

Apologies: David Jeffels, Ted Sanderson

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), Catherine Raistrick (Finance and Performance Officer), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Ian Morton (Auditor, Veritau), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

In David Jeffels absence, Caroline Patmore as Deputy Chair of FRASC chaired the meeting.

15/14 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

16/14 Members Interests

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

17/14 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
15	1,2,3,4
16	1,2

18/14 Annual Governance Statement

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

To note: typo to numbering on Appendix A of Annual Governance Statement, Paragraph headed 'Significant Governance Issues', should be point 5 and not point 1 as indicated in the paper.

The Director of Corporate Services advised Members that the final draft of the Annual Governance Statement would be submitted for approval in September.

Members commented on the following points:

- Welcomed draft statement but requested that a paragraph be included to explain FRASC Committee structure, plus that the National Park Management Plan Review Group had been established.
- Reduction in volunteers could Moorswork help to increase numbers. Perhaps other volunteering campaigns (Prince Charles – young volunteers) could be approached to help fill the gap.
- Numerous references to Audit within the report, perhaps it would be better to have one single section to cover Audit framework

Resolved:

Members reviewed and commented on the Annual Governance Statement

19/14 Draft Financial Outturn

Considered:

The report of the Finance and Performance Officer.

The Finance and Performance Officer

The Finance and Performance Officer advised Members of a £178K underspend. £70K previously reported to Members. £25K from projects carried forward and monies recovered from legal costs, plus other minor variations.

Two items to be carried forward, £14.5K for Aerial Photography and £10K Redcar & Cleveland Health/Transport Initiative.

Action: Director of Park Services to send Christopher Massey and Bill Suthers information on the Redcar & Cleveland Health/Transport Initiative.

Members commented on:

- More information regarding £141K income
- Confusion regarding use of brackets in financial columns plus the need for supporting narrative to accompany the table at 3.3 in the report.
- Investment income return currently at 0.79%. The Authority needs to look at other ways to gain better return on investment.
- The need for more risk in relation to Income Generation.
- Future use of Reserves.
- Member's seminar to discuss Income Generation ideas more fully.

Officers informed Members that some of the £141 income was a result of ANPA Conference, legal costs of £22K which had been awarded to the Authority, plus costs being reimbursed for a seconded member of staff. Officers agreed to remove the brackets from the Actual column and just use + and – instead.

Action: Director of Corporate Services to ask Peter Yates, Treasurer to investigate further options for gaining a better return.

Action: Finance and Performance Officer to note change of bracket use in FRASC report tables.

Action: Director of Corporate Services to agree Autumn Seminar date with FRASC Chair And Deputy Chair.

Resolved:

Members noted the report, agreed to the carry forward of budget and agreed to attending a Seminar in the Autumn

20/14 Financial Planning

Amended version of this report with changes to the issues section was given to Members at the meeting along with an additional appendix, a letter from Defra dated 7 April 2014 concerning 2014-15 Budgets. Copies of all these items can be found in the minute book.

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services gave Members a brief recap on items discussed at the Members pre-meeting on Thursday 15 May 2014. The Chief Executive advised Members that the worse-case future budget deficit scenario would be £800,000K, but a more realistic deficit figure would be £600,000K. Members were also advised that income generation ideas were speculative at present and needed future discussion.

Some Members expressed concerns at the Authority's possible dependency on income areas such as Car Parking and Planning fees. Members also expressed a need for an action plan to pursue additional external grant funding and funding from personal legacies.

Members also commented on:

- Whether there was a need for a new staff member, dedicated to External fundraising or whether the Authority should rely on current operational teams to source additional funding.
- A two strand approach - continue with existing income generation areas such as car parking and planning fees, whilst at the same time consider new elements such as sponsorship and new enterprise.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Authority was as yet unsure on which course of action to take, whether they should employ a dedicated External Funding Officer, use existing in-house expertise or buy in external consultants for assist with one off bids. The Authority still needs to think of better ways to generate income. The Chief Executive also advised Members that more information regarding the possible establishment of a Trust would be reported back to Members at September FRASC.

Action: Chief Executive to discuss Trust status further with Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority.

Resolved: Members noted the report
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21/14 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Conservation

The Director of Conservation informed Members that good progress had been made on elements of the Business Plan. A new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be rolled out in 2016; the Authority will be discussing this with Natural England in due course. Members were also informed of a possible additional three years funding for the Esk Pearl Mussel project.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work being undertaken and special mention went to LEADER project staff.

Members commented on:

- Table 1, item 2 – £850K under Protected Landscapes Apprentice and Skills Programme.
- Opportunity for greater working between Tees Valley LEP and the NYMNPA.
- LEP infrastructure funding for Esk Valley Railway.
- The need for an External Funding Officer and Authority staff awareness of fund raising needs.
- Income gap – personal giving/legacies

Officers informed Members that Tees Valley LEP was funded differently and tourism did not form a significant part of their plan, however, Officers were supportive of Redcar and Cleveland Members lobbying their LEP on this issue.

The Director of Park Services informed Members of a joint transport funding bid between the NYMNPA and the Yorkshire Dales NP. The bid, to be headed up by NYCC, with support from Redcar and Cleveland BC, would encourage people out of their cars and into the National Parks via other modes of transport such as bicycles.

Resolved: Members approved the report. The issue of the possible appointment of an External Funding Officer to be revisited at a later date.
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22/14 **Draft Performance Indicator Outturn**

Considered:

The report of the Finance and Performance Officer

The Finance and Performance Officer advised Members that final year end performance figures would be provided at the Scrutiny meeting in July.

Members were advised of a correction to two figures in Appendix 1, under Recreation and Park Management. With regard to footpaths, the Actual figures column for 13/14 should have read 81% and 91%.

Members considered the report overall to be a good one, well done to all Staff, performance remains good even under current difficult budgetary situation. Under the Promoting Understanding section, members queried the low performance figure for the Authority's website. The Director of Corporate Services informed Members that the low figure may be due to the fact that it was often quite challenging to obtain on line responses from customers.

Action: Director of Park Services to give a more comprehensive reply to this website query at the next FRASC meeting.

Regarding PI targets, Members asked if the Authority was targeting the right things, and queried the unchanged target between years for the natural environment.

Officers informed Members that some targets, such as Planning, were set and could not be changed, but agreed that others such as natural environment did need to be revisited.

Resolved: That PI's be reviewed when appropriate
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23/14 **Treasury Management**

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Director of Corporate Services gave the report.

Resolved: Members noted the report
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24/14 **Internal Audit Plan**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Ian Morton, Auditor with Veritau, spoke to Members regarding the Internal Audit Plan and advised them that the number of days in the Plan had been reduced to 23.

Members expressed concerns that only half a day would be spent on Risk Management.

Ian Morton informed Members that half a day was the minimum Audit requirement for Risk Management. The Director of Corporate Services advised Members that there was an element of flexibility and the Authority could add in more days if required.

Members requested the following:

- An additional half day per year for Risk Management
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment at February FRASC and then a further statistical update and report on performance at December NPA.

Resolved:

Members noted the report. Health and Safety Risk Assessment to be reported twice annually. An extra half day per year to be allocated for Risk Management

25/14 External Audit Plan

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to Members on behalf of Deloitte and advised Members that the Auditors would be changing to either KPMG or Ernst Young in 2015 but that this would be confirmed at a later date.

Resolved:

Members noted the report

26/14 People Management Strategy

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services updated Members on progress made against the current People Management Strategy

Resolved:

Members noted the report

27/14 Risk Update

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Action: Director of Corporate Services to forward a copy of the Risk Register to Mr Bill Suthers and Mr Jeremy Walker

Resolved:

Members noted the report

.....(Chair)
1 September 2014

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 19 May 2014**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair 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.