

## 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 2 February 2015.

### Present:

Andy Breckon (Independent Member), David Jeffels, Caroline Patmore, Andrew Scott, Richard Thompson, Jeremy Walker.

### Apologies:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Christopher Massey, Ted Sanderson, Bill Suthers

### Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), David Renwick (Director of Conservation), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Chris France (Director of Planning), Simon Baum (ICT Manager), Lisa Dixon (Monitoring Officer), John Raine (Principal Accountant NYCC), Tom Stephenson (External Funding Officer), Ricki-Leigh Bell (Customer Services Business Apprentice), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer)

### 01/15 Minutes

#### **Resolved:**

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 02/15 Members Interests

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

### 03/15 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**

17

1,2,3,4

18

1,2,3,4

The Chair welcomed Andy Breckon (Independent Member).

## 04/15 **Annual Standards and Ethical Review**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon advised Members of a change to the report at point 2.7. Sentence should read Sections 3 to 7 and not 3 to 6 as shown in the report.

Members commented on the following:

- Comprehensive report, good progress, pleasing to see so few complaints
- Consistent number of compliments very encouraging
- Well done re: low levels of sickness and high morale across the Authority
- Section 6 – Planning performance, difficulty understanding target/graph shown, a 5 year rolling figure would be a better way to present the information.
- Welcomed work towards Volunteer Strategy

Officers agreed that the presentation of information in Section 6 could be clearer. A dip in the figures in 2011/12 was mainly due to significant changes in Government thinking. Figures have though continued to recover since 2011/12. Additional information on page 53 of the agenda showed a 4 year rolling average.

Regarding point 8.11 of the report, the Chief Executive advised that with regard to future work the Authority was carrying a slightly higher risk, there was now less resource to spend on detail of process/system. More radical change was likely.

Andrew Scott commented that there was no mention of the Trust in the report, but felt it should be included.

**Action:** Officers to add a paragraph to the report about the Trust

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| <b>Resolved:</b> |
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| Members made appropriate comments and suggestions and noted the report |
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## 05/15 **Ethical Framework and Employee Code of Conduct**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls advised Members that this was an initial draft for comment prior to the March NPA paper and that views would be sought from Volunteers by Richard Gunton, Director of Park Services.

Caroline Patmore made the following comments regarding page 22, 23 and 26 of the report:

- Papers should be dated
- Code of Conduct was yet to be approved
- The use of the term “come alive” in the Equalities and Diversity section
- “Your responsibility”, paragraph 3 of Section 1 of the Code of Conduct document.

**Action:** Ian Nicholls to amend wording and proceed as previously agreed in seeking views from Mr Breckon and Mr Thompson.

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| <b>Resolved:</b><br>Members noted the report |
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#### 06/15 **Risk Management Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon advised Members that Health and Safety had been elevated from 4 to 5 on the Risk Register and that the report to NPA in March would also mention Departmental Risk Registers as well.

Members asked for clarification regarding the different categories and what their impact might be. Members also raised concerns about the low category for Health and Safety and agreed that the impact of Health and Safety could be huge and therefore should be marked higher.

Officers agreed to look closer at how the categories are defined, especially in relation to high reputation risk and bring back to NPA in March.

**Action:** IB to incorporate information in relevant report for March NPA

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| <b>Resolved:</b><br>Members noted the report. Officers to look to higher marking for H&S |
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#### 07/15 **Forward Financial Planning Verbal Update**

The Chief Executive gave Members a verbal update on future financial planning. The Chief Executive informed Members that Defra had now confirmed the settlement for next year. Although the settlement meant another small cut in funding, the Authority had already factored this in to next year's budget, so it was relatively good news in the short term.

One Member commented that it would be difficult to firm up plans too much for future years at the moment and in the medium term the situation still looked quite worrying. There was a need for more radical thinking and perhaps it might be helpful to undertake some scenario planning.

#### 08/15 **Business Plan 2015 – 16**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon updated Members on the Authority's current position.

Members commented on the following with regard to priorities for the year ahead:

- New LEADER project
- The new External Fundraising Officer
- Coastal Communities
- The need to include a paragraph about TEL in the report

- The need to plan ahead, follow on projects

The Chair introduced Tom Stephenson, New External Fundraising Officer, to Members. The Chair and Members wished Tom every success in his new role.

**Action:** IB to add LEADER information to Business Plan, prior to March NPA

Members asked further about the following:

- Cost to the Authority in relation to Minerals and Waste work and Helmsley Local Plan

The Director of Planning informed Members that the costs for minerals and waste work were being shared with 2 other Authorities and that the cost for the Helmsley Local Plan would be minimal as the enquiry would only last one day. 2 area plans had also been budgeted for.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Authority hadn't filled the Senior Policy Officer post, so there was additional resource available. The Authority was currently in discussion with other National Park Authorities to come up with a forward plan regarding a possible shared service. The Director of Corporate Services went on to inform Members that the Authority had received an approach from Defra in 2010 regarding shared service arrangements, but that Defra didn't have understanding of pensions etc. and our framework was very different to Defra's. Perhaps there was now a need to revisit ideas with Defra.

**Resolved:**

Members noted the report and approved the proposals

**09/15 Performance Management Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon asked Members to note point 3.4 of the report. All agreed that Family indicators were a good benchmarking tool and useful for our own planning. A significant gap in promoting and understanding Visitor Centres was highlighted.

**Resolved:**

Members agreed to the changes

**10/15 Finance Update**

Considered:

The report of the Finance Officer.

Catherine Raistrick, Finance and Performance Officer was attending VAT training in London, so Irene Brannon, Director of Corporate Services, updated Members in Catherine's absence.

Members commented on the following:

- Car parking and retail figures good
- Income and Expenditure figures

- 117K will all of it be needed to manage the Potash application

The Director of Corporate Services advised Members that the timing of income received was slightly ahead of profile and with regard to expenditure, creditor elements can be a significant issue, but do tend to catch up this quarter. There may be a need for Officers to discuss the Potash funds with Members at a later date as significant amounts would be offset by costs.

The Chief Executive informed Members that the three main things to consider were the settlement funds from Defra, Potash costs and preparing for TEL. The Chief Executive went on to say that Defra had now asked National Parks about their reserves and the NYMNP has the lowest of all the National Parks. Also, as yet full costs from Potash were still unknown.

With regard to Potash the Chief Executive informed Members that with the Elections coming up in May this year the Transitional Membership period of up to 3 months would be helpful when considering Potash.

2 Members suggested that it would be helpful if the Authority could issue a statement to all Members regarding the Transition period.

**Action:** Andy Wilson to inform all Members about the Transitional Membership Period

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| <p><b>Resolved:</b><br/>Members noted the report and virements</p> |
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**11/15 Treasury Management and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance Report of the Treasurer**

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer. John Raine (Principal Accountant NYCC) was in attendance in case any questions were raised.

The Director of Corporate Services updated Members and advised them that Section 10 of the report had been included in direct response to Members questions. Members agreed that the feedback provided in Section 10 was helpful.

**Action:** IB to give further feedback at the next appropriate meeting.

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| <p><b>Resolved:</b><br/>Members agreed to recommend the report to full Authority in March</p> |
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**12/15 Health and Safety**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Members commented on the following:

- Better reporting of 'near misses'
- Mobile coverage, especially for field staff
- Importance of Volunteers being kept up to date with H&S
- The use of ATV's in certain work situations

Ian Nicholls informed Members that:

- Re: mobile coverage - the Authority was currently trialling new software
- Code of Conduct for Volunteers will include elements relating to H&S
- The Authority has the same duty of care to Volunteers as it does to paid staff
- Re: ATV's – the Authority's current risk assessments have been reviewed and found to be satisfactory; staff have been reminded about their responsibility to be familiar with them. As a precaution, all staff that use ATVs have had further training.

**Resolved:**

Members noted progress and approved the proposed plan for 2015/16

### 13/15 External Funding

Considered:

The report of the Director of Conservation

David Renwick, Director of Conservation updated Members on the following points from Table 1 of the External Funding report:

- Monument Management Scheme – things looking more positive for possible new scheme
- YERT – 10K bid to fund projects such as Salmon in the Classroom
- Sea Life, See Life – excellent news that funding for this project has been secured
- New LEADER project though no contract or final allocation of funding has been received yet. Amy Thomas has been appointed to run the project. Concentrating on Tourism and Farm Business Support. Delivery will start after the May elections. The NYMNPA is the only National Park acting as a lead Authority.
- No contract yet for Pearl Mussel project, but the Authority has secured an additional 3 years of funding from Biffa
- Environment Agency Tree Fund – 24K was secured at the end of the year to fund tree planting and habitat connectivity work
- TEL – Productive Executive meeting. The project is moving into a phase of negotiation with landowners. 2nd stage of bid due in Oct 2015.

David Renwick mentioned Tom Stephenson, new External Funding Officer again and advised Members that Tom would be working for the Authority 3 days per week.

Members commented on the following:

- Congratulations to all involved in Coastal Communities Fund. An example of good partnership working
- Forthcoming Tour de Yorkshire, might the Authority be able to secure any funding for this
- Encouraging report. LEADER – what proportion of the £2.5 million will come into the NP area? Possibility of mapping what might be supported via LEADER and what supports the Management Plan

David Renwick informed Members that geography in relation to LEADER was difficult and it would be better to look at the 6 priorities set by Defra. The main NP related areas of work would be Forestry and Farm Business.

**Resolved:**  
Members approved the report and the current work being done

14/15 **ICT Update**

Considered:

The report of the ICT Manager

The ICT Manger updated Members on recent ICT work, notably Officers trialling the use of electronic devices at meetings to access agenda papers. The ICT Manager reminded Members that similar IT training for Members would take place after February Planning Committee.

**Resolved:**  
Members noted the report

..... (Chair)  
1 June 2015

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"  
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee  
on 2 February 2015**

**Private Minutes**

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 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.