

## 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 June 2015.

### Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Christopher Massey, Caroline Patmore, Andrew Scott, Richard Thompson,

### Apologies:

David Jeffels, Ted Sanderson, Bill Suthers, Jeremy Walker

### Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Catherine Raistrick (Finance and Performance Officer), Tom Stephenson (External Funding Officer), Callum Hymas (Finance Apprentice), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer), Alistair Lince (Deloitte), Laura Scrafton (Deloitte)

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**Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book**

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### 17/15 Minutes

#### **Resolved:**

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015 , having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 18/15 Members Interests

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

### 19/15 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
14	1,2,3,4
15	1,2,3,4

20/15 **External Audit Fee 2015/16 and External Audit Plan 2014/15**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Alistair Lince, Deloitte briefly talked through the Plan for the benefit of Members. At the end of the update Alistair asked Members if they were aware of any issues relating to fraud. No issues were highlighted by Members. Alistair advised Members that Deloitte had recently started using a new type of software to assist with fraud checks.

**Resolved:** Members note the content of this report and appendices.

21/15 **Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators Outturn Report 2014/15**

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer.

John Raine sent his apologies and in his absence Irene Brannon updated Members on the report.

Before taking questions from Members, Andy Wilson advised Members that at a national level, National Parks were pressing Defra for 'power of competence'.. The Chief Executive felt this situation was worth mentioning as the idea of buying assets which in turn could generate income was one which had previously been discussed by Authority Members/Officers.

Members agreed that the Authority should keep an open mind to income generation and consider more radical ways to bring in additional income.

Irene Brannon informed Members that the Authority could use Public Works Loans Board to borrow funds.

One Member asked about the long term liability of the Moors Centre and the length of the current lease on the property.

Andy Wilson explained the lease situation to Members, advising them that the terms of the long lease were renegotiated approx. 5 years ago and that the lease contains a clause, regarding lease surrender and the need for the tenant to return the property to the owner in its original condition.

Irene Brannon asked Members to note that the figure relating to the Moors Centre lease in the report is a technical accounting adjustment, the calculated amount being recognised each year. The current Moors Centre lease is approximately 35 years.

**Resolved:** Members noted the performance of the Treasury Management operation during 2014/15 and the outturn position on Prudential Indicators.

22/15 **Annual Governance Statement**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Irene Brannon talked Members through the report. With regard to the Significant Governance issues on page 72 of the agenda, Irene informed Members that other items could have been included in the list but these were prioritised being mindful of what could be delivered in the timescale given other competing priorities. . The Director of Corporate Services also advised Members that Andy Breckon, the Authority's Independent Member, had reviewed the report and his comments had been included.

**Resolved:** Members reviewed the Draft Annual Governance Statement attached at **Appendix A**. No amendments were put forward to be incorporated into the accounts for approval in September.

## 23/15 **Draft Financial Outturn**

Considered:

The report of the Finance and Performance Officer.

Irene Brannon, Director of Corporate Services updated Members on the Draft Financial Outturn report. Irene asked Members to note changes: Stock adjustment 6K and Coastal Forum 1K resulting in a net £5k change in the outturn position. Irene informed Members that the money would be transferred into reserves some of which related to items of underspend on on-going projects not yet completed and these would be transferred out of reserves in the 15/16 financial year. The updated version of the income table showed a good performance. A significant difference in what the projected outturn was in February compared to the actual for a number of reasons:

- Some areas where further reduced expenditure budgets can be achieved
- capacity issues/staff resources, may mean an inability to finalise projects
- need to review the arrangements for reporting variances
- fees and charges (car parking and planning) exceeded all expectations

One Member queried the increase in car parking income

Irene Brannon advised that car parking fees hadn't been raised. The increase was down to more cars visiting the park, especially Sutton Bank. The cycle hire at Sutton Bank had made a huge difference.

Irene informed Members that the Reserves would be closer to £1.2 million once carry forward budget had been taken into account, the lowest reserves of any NPA. The Authority was looking to increase the Reserve contingency from £220K to £320K.

Members considered the news to be good and commended the NP on its work. Members also queried the issue of the staff's ability to spend their budgets and whether this was due to recent organisational change.

The Director of Corporate Services informed Members that the Authority did need to monitor budgets more closely and many budgets which weren't fully spent in the current year have been reduced for the coming year.

The Chief Executive told Members he considered the outturn to be poor and that Senior Officers had been held to account and needed to take a firmer control over departmental spend.. Senior staff are to discuss this matter further.

Members agreed that the Authority shouldn't spend for the sake of it. It should be more about getting the balance right. One Member also queried the Reserves.

Irene Brannon informed Members that the level of reserves had been set as part of Members decision making on the Medium Term Financial Strategy several years ago recognised that the Authority did have risks which may need to make use of Reserve funds.

**Resolved:** Members note the content of this report, and approve the carry forward of budgets detailed in paragraph 3.6.

Members approve the reserves detailed in paragraph 4.4

#### 24/15 **Financial Planning Update – Verbal**

The Director of Corporate Services, Irene Brannon updated Members, advising them that changes to the levels of planning fees could raise quite a significant sum and worth investing staff time to pursue.

The Chief Executive informed Members that as yet no information had been received from Defra regarding further budget cuts, but that an in-year cut may happen in 2015/16.

Officer and Members discussed the need for a further meeting to talk about possible longer term scenarios in relation to additional budget cuts. It was agreed that this issue should be discussed after the next NPA Scrutiny meeting.

#### 25/15 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Funding Officer

Tom Stephenson, External Funding Officer updated Members on table 1 of his report.

- Project 1 - Consultant Workshops had now taken place
- Project 2 – NYMNPA is one of 26 National Parks and AONBs identified as eligible for Visual Impact Provision (VIP) funding.
- Project 3 – Monument Management Scheme 3 has now been signed off
- Project 8 – Health & Wellbeing, Redcar & Cleveland BC now 50% funded and moving forward

Tom Stephenson informed members that since his appointment in February he had been getting to know the Authority/Work Colleagues, meeting key partners, and building knowledge on specific projects.

One Member asked if the Health & Wellbeing project included Mental Health partners, another Member suggested that the work was probably being channelled through Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Malcolm Bowes, NPA Deputy Chair advised members that the new LEADER project was very different to the previous project. The programme was a nationally developed programme so as yet it was unclear how this would be delivered locally. A

series of training events are planned, the project launch is due to take place in the Autumn.

The Chief Executive informed members that with regard to the Health & Wellbeing project, it was just the Authority working with Redcar & Cleveland BC, NYCC had declined.

One member suggested re: Health & Wellbeing, that the Authority should consider contacting the Wellcome Foundation for advise/information.

**Action:** Tom Stephenson to contact Wellcome Foundation.

**Resolved:** Members approved the contents of the report, the current work being done to secure external funding and the future approach outlined.

Before moving on to the Risk Management item Jim Bailey, NPA Chair briefly updated members on the National Parks Partnership. The partnership now had a good group of people set up as a Company Board. A meeting would be taking place in a week's time at the New Forest NP. There was a good level of interest in the partnership and potential for funding.

#### 26/15 **Risk Management Strategy Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Irene Brannon advised Members that the report was just for noting. So far Corporate Services and Park Services had completed their strategy update, the work would be continuing with other departments. A further report would be given to Members at September FRASC.

Members commented that the way in which the report was set out was really helpful.

**Resolved:** Members noted the contents of this report.

#### 27/15 **Monitoring of Performance Indicators**

Considered:

The report of the Finance and Performance Officer

**Resolved:** That Members;  
comment on the provisional year end performance figures for 2014/15, making recommendations for action as appropriate,  
approve the performance targets for 2015/16.

**28/15 Callum Hymas to give Verbal Report on his Apprenticeship**

Callum Hymas, Finance Apprentice gave Members a 10 minute presentation on his apprenticeship with the Authority, which is due to end in August.

Members asked Callum about his plans for the future. Callum informed Members that he was hoping to go on to do an additional apprenticeship with another organisation to further enhance his finance skills.

Members congratulated Callum on an excellent presentation and asked if the Authority could offer him any additional support. Callum informed Members that he would be making use of Renovo to assist him with CV preparation.

.....(Chair)  
7 September 2015

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"  
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee  
on 1 June 2015**

**Private Minutes**

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015, 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.