

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 6 June 2016.

Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Ena Dent, Christopher Massey, Caroline Patmore, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott, Jeremy Walker,

Apologies:

Michael Dick, David Jeffels

Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), David Renwick (Director of Conservation), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Richard Smith (Authority Solicitor), Mark Hill (Head of Development Management), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer), Karen Iveson (NYCC, s151 Officer), Sandra Langthorne (NYCC, Finance), Rob Walker (Auditor, KPMG)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

Jeremy Walker, Chair of FRASC, welcomed everyone to the meeting

17/16 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1 February 2016, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

18/16 Members Interests

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

19/16 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
16	1,2,3,4
17	1,2,3,4

20/16 Draft Financial Outturn

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Sandra Langthorne, Finance NYCC updated Members.

Jeremy Walker, FRASC Chair acknowledged the helpful changes made to the presentation of financial information in the report and thanked all concerned for their efforts.

Members commented on the following:

- Good, clear presentation of report
- Concerns regarding the size of the underspend
- Provision should have been made for two Easters falling in the same financial year
- More could have been made of the Tour de Yorkshire event at Sutton Bank to generate more income
- Will all TEL (£250K) and S106 (£148K) monies be used this financial year?

Officers advised Members are follows:

- Better planning of income in future, better forecasting “getting confidence back”
- Agreed with Members comments that the two Easter issue should have been picked up, new financial workings with NYCC had meant a learning curve for NYCC finance team.
- Unlikely to use all £250K on TEL this year and the Authority should be able to generate income from the project. Usage of the £148K S106 money will depend on the success of York Potash in raising funds
- The Chief Executive shared a good initiative story with Members concerning the Flying Scotsman visit and car parking for the event.
- Rob Walker, Auditor, advised Members that KPMG were very happy with the way in which the Authority organised and ran its finances; he said that the key areas were overall control and the focussing on the wider issues to maximise income.

The Chair told Officers and Members that he considered the Authority was in a good position, showing how well the Authority had tried to generate income and had held down expenditure, without any significant impact on services.

<p>Resolved: Members noted the content of the report, and</p> <p>Approve the carry forward of budgets detailed in paragraph 3.6.</p> <p>Approve the reserves detailed in paragraph 4.</p>
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21/16 Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators Outturn Report 2015/16

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer.

Karen Iveson updated Members advising that Bank rates remained low and there was still uncertainty ahead but that NYCC was continuing to pursue other investment opportunities on behalf of the Authority.

Karen Iveson informed Members that NYCC were also considering paying the pension fund early to secure a discount.

Members voiced their concerns at the lack of investment income being generated. Members understood the constraints but still asked that NYCC look for investment opportunities and ways in which the Authority could usefully invest resources to support others in the NP area.

Karen Iveson assured Members that NYCC was actively pursuing other investment opportunities.

Members commented further on:

- Loans to third parties
- Possibility of lending funds for mortgages
- Buying items such as vans as opposed to leasing them

The Chief Executive informed members about a loan to Esk Energy, saying that it was working well, the debt was being repaid regularly and the interest earned was relatively high and could give rise to more loans being offered to others wanting to pursue NP purposes. He also informed members that the Authority was considering paying off some of the pension debt entirely. With regard to leasing the Chief Executive informed members that the Authority now tends to purchase, rather than lease vehicles.

Resolved: Members noted the performance of the Treasury Management operation during 2015/16 and the outturn position on Prudential Indicators.

22/16 **External Audit Fee 2016/17 and External Audit Plan 2015/16**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Rob Walker (KPMG) updated Members.

One member commented on balances. Rob Walker advised that KPMG would question the holding of very large balances in reserve, but this was not the case at the Authority and having sufficient reserves as a back-up was a good position to be in.

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report and appendices.

23/16 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Funding Officer.

David Renwick, Director of Conservation, updated members on behalf of Tom Stephenson the External Funding Officer.

Discussions took place mainly around the following two pieces of project work:

- The development of the River Rye project
- LEADER

Jeremy Walker declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the Rye project

Malcolm Bowes declared an interest as a resident of the area and as Chair of LEADER

The Director of Conservation informed Members that a lot of work already taken place to meet the 1 June 2016 application deadline and that the Rye project would be a c.£3 million project with c.£900K match funding. The Authority was due to hear back regarding the project in Oct 2016. If successful, there would be a 2 year development phase followed by a 4 year delivery phase looking at PAWS, Water Quality, Rye Landscape, Connectivity etc.

The Authority had already committed £20K of matched funding with a further amount to be confirmed later. Other key partners were also being asked to contribute matched funding.

Member discussions followed regarding the Legal framework and matched funding contributions from Partners in connection to the Rye project.

David Renwick informed members that he had included in risk to cover a proportion of the legal costs and that the Authority was in discussions with key partners regarding the matched funding.

Members voiced the need for committed partnership from Ryedale if the project was to progress to the next stage. Members congratulated Officers on the work achieved thus far.

Regarding LEADER, David Renwick informed Members that some projects had been difficult to progress due to the complexities of the new scheme, which had caused much frustration. It was still unclear yet regarding project numbers as issues still surrounded eligibility, it was proving to be a long process. Issues were being fed back to the RPA.

LEADER Chair, Malcolm Bowes told Members how very difficult the LEADER process had been and there were concerns that the project would be underspent. Applicants were to be encouraged.

David Renwick said that all Partner and Officers had put a lot of effort into the Programme thus far and were doing a great job in challenging circumstances.

Resolved: Members approved the contents of the report, and agree the current work being done to secure external funding.

24/16 **Health and Safety**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls, Assistant Director of Corporate Services, updated members on accidents and near misses within the Authority.

Members welcomed the report, saying it was reassuring to see that any concerns/issues were being addressed. Members asked about our Authority figures in comparison to other NP's and also whether the Authority had experienced any issues regarding injuries to volunteers, keeping them away from their own paid employment?

Ian Nicholls said he would be happy to obtain comparative data from other NPs and that to his knowledge there had never been an instance of an injured volunteer losing time from paid employment. Ian informed Members that the Authority never put Volunteers or Apprentices in charge of tasks for which they are not adequately trained and they always have the same level of H&S training as staff in relation to the task being carried out.

Action: Ian Nicholls to seek comparative data from other NP's and report back to members

Resolved: Members noted the detail regarding the reported accidents and near misses and commented on the observations on the actions taken by Officers.

25/16 **Draft Annual Governance Statement**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive updated members on behalf of the Director of Corporate Services.

Members requested that future reports contain more narrative, less dry/factual.

Action: Director of Corporate Services to change future report content, to offer greater narrative, greater positivity.

Resolved: Members reviewed the Draft Annual Governance Statement attached at Appendix A and made suggestions for amendment to be incorporated into the accounts for approval in September.

Members provided views on how to progress the work detailed in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7.

26/16 **Monitoring of Performance Indicators**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive updated members on behalf of the Director of Corporate Services. Two additional slides of PI information were presented to members at the meeting.

The Chief Executive informed members that:

- A new set of PI's were to be agreed as part of the Business Plan
- PI work was to be undertaken by J Swiers on a limited, short term contract.

Members commented as follows:

- Excellent results, well done to all
- Members queried PI – F1 RM1 – Footpaths, survey work only every other year, figure remains the same, even though experienced cutbacks?

Richard Gunton informed members that the Authority had agreed to survey the routes every other year, focussing only on the routes which were used the most, however the Authority will be undertaking an improved User Survey in future.

Andrew Scott, SoS Member asked that a footnote about this be included in future PI tables.

Action: Officers to include Footnote

Jeremy Walker, SoS Member commented on two low figures in relation to engagement of young people and number of training days for staff/members

The Chief Executive suggested that these points could be addressed at the Scrutiny meeting in July

Action: Officers to address as part of Scrutiny report

Richard Gunton, Director of Park Services advised members that young people numbers had been affected by an element of long term staff sickness

Resolved: Members; commented on the provisional year end performance figures for 2015/16, and made recommendations for action. They also, approved the performance targets for 2016/17.

27/16 **Planning Service Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Development Management

Members congratulated the Planning team on their excellent survey results.

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report.

28/16 **Staffing Update**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls updated members, saying that staff numbers had decreased from 142-107 in the last 5 years. Sickness absence compared favourably with other similar organisations standing at 4 days per full-time equivalent.

One member asked if there was any correlation between stress absence and increased workload or disciplinary issues.

Ian Nicholls advised that the Authority's starting point was always to support staff and stress difficulties were often a combination of work and home life issues. The Authority did encourage any staff with stress related issues to make use of the external counselling services.

Members were encouraged by the very low rates for sickness, commenting that staff seemed to have adapted well with the changes which had taken place across the organisation.

Ian Nicholls also updated members on the changes to the staff appraisal scheme.

Members agreed to the recalibration of the 'successful' performance rating and requested that officers pursue the idea of one-off payments and/or non-financial rewards and feedback ideas to members at a future meeting. One member also suggested a change of wording in relation to a 'High Quality' performance to 'Exceeds Expectations'

Action: IN to pursue ideas for one off payments and suitable re- wording for 'High Quality performance rating.

Jim Bailey left the meeting at 12.20pm

Resolved: Members noted the contents of the report, commented on the actions proposed in Paragraphs 4.12, 4.13, 5.6 and 5.7 and approved the actions in 5.6 and 5.7 with respect to recalibration and those on the top of their upper band.

29/16 Risk Management Strategy Update

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Members commented on the report and agreed to the reduction of the risk category in relation to the development of the Local Plan and also agreed to keep the health and safety risk category unchanged.

Resolved: Members considered and made changes to the Risk Register in the light of the contents of paragraph 3.2 and noted the rest of the report.

..... (Chair)
5 September 2016

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 6 June 2016**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2016, 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 were updated on the details of the complaints and compliments received by the Authority in Quarter 4 of 2015/16. Andy Wilson, Chief Executive then updated members on two specific complaints, following which members agreed:

- To authorised a one off grant payment be paid in relation to a community development in Goathland.
- That the Development Plan Working Group would look at a variety of developments, as part of their local plan work.