

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 5 June 2017.

Present:

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

Apologies:

David Jeffels

Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Irene Brannon (Director of Corporate Services), David Shaw (Director of Conservation), Chris France (Director of Planning), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Rebecca Thompson (Natural Environment Team Leader), Jo Swiers (Performance Consultant), Simon Baum (ICT Manager), Tom Stephenson (External Funding Officer), Karen Iveson (NYCC, s151 Officer), Sandra Strickland (NYCC, Accountant), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

Jeremy Walker, FRASC Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially David Shaw, newly appointed Director of Conservation.

20/17 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

21/17 Members Interests

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

22/17 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
20	1,2,3,4

21	10
22	10
23	1,2

Jeremy Walker informed members that there would also be an additional private item for consideration under A.O.B

23/17 **Draft Financial Outturn**

Considered:

The report of the Accountant

Sandra Strickland updated members on the main areas of underspend for the year and advised that the Authority's closing reserve balance was £2,087K.

One member commented on planning fees and planning applications levels

Irene Brannon advised that Urgency committee members had agreed to accept a CLG proposal of a 20% increase in planning fees from July 2017, however due to the General Election, this increase would be delayed until later in the financial year.

Regarding number of planning applications, Chris France reminded members that changes to permitted development conditions had kept applications numbers down, however on the whole the economy was doing well, house building continued to increase and generally overall there had been a slight increase in the numbers of applications received.

One member commented on car parking charges, stating that it was important that the Authority didn't overcharge. The Chief Executive informed committee that there were currently no plans to increase car parking charges.

The Chair asked the Accountant if at future meetings she could include in her report a footnote giving more explanation in relation to Creditor/Debtor amounts.

Action: SS to include Creditor/Debtor footnote

<p>Resolved: Members noted the content of the report, and Approved the reserves detailed in paragraph 4. Members' request for greater explanation of creditor/debtor information in future Financial reports was noted by the Accountant</p>

24/17 **Update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in the Business Plan 2017 – 2020**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services.

Irene Brannon updated members on the MTFS, reflecting on issues relating to extra income received, expenditure and reserves including:

- Car Park – budget increase by £20K to allow for additional income

- Reduced Apprenticeship funding from Forestry Commission and Prior Pursglove College. The Authority is looking for new partners to help with funding
- Reduced target for rental income, as now need office space for own staff
- Propose to allocate £45K to fund the purchase of 2 new minibuses for the Volunteer Team
- HQ maintenance – new fire doors to be fitted
- IT – £20K to be spent on improving finance systems
- Extra match funding for tourism
- Development Management – advertising costs and legal advice

Irene Brannon informed members of a proposed change to 11.2 of the report's recommendation, to read:

Members **confirm** the donation in staff time and cash of up to £25,000 from the Authority to the North York Moors National Park Trust as outlined in this paper and agreed within the Business Plan.

Discussion followed concerning the donation and the general 'independence' of the NYM NP Trust. Whilst all agreed the Trust needed to be legally independent, the The Chief Executive, Andy Wilson reiterated that the £25,000 was a donation, the bulk of which was made up of staff time helping to achieve 'Park purposes' by providing initial resources to support the Trust in its infancy. Members commented further on the need for 'Trust independence' and for 'safe guarding'

Action: AMW to look at processes moving forward

One member queried the relatively small amount on money in reserves and future levels of reserves.

Action: IB agreed to circulate information to members regarding the future outlook on reserves.

Several members voiced their disappointment regarding the reduction in Apprenticeship funding. Ian Nicholls informed members that external funding for outdoor apprenticeships had varied significantly over the years, but, the TELoI project had provided some additional new funding. It was noted that the Forestry Commission had decided to invest in their own Apprenticeship programme, which will hopefully mean more apprenticeship opportunities locally.

Resolved: Members approved expenditure of up to £45k on two volunteer minibuses.
Members confirmed the donation in staff time and cash of up to £25,000 from the Authority to the North York Moors National Park Trust as outlined in the paper and agreed within the Business Plan. The Chief Executive to look at processes going forward

25/17 Treasury Management

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer to the North York Moors National Park Authority

Irene Brannon informed members that the Authority had earned an average 0.58% interest on £2.5 million.

Resolved: Members noted the performance of the Treasury Management operation during 2016/17 and the outturn position on Prudential Indicators.

26/17 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Funding Officer

Tom Stephenson updated members on secured external funding to date.

Re: North Yorkshire Cliffs Partnership - update:

- HLF landscape partnership led by Groundwork NE on behalf of R&C BC. 40% of the area falls within the NYMNP, Officers voiced concerns about the development of the application and the overlap with our own NP work, suggesting the partnership bid be delayed until 2018. However, HLF North were urging the partnership to go ahead with the bid this year. Therefore NYMNPA now acting as Tourism & Access lead on the bid, with Stage 1 being submitted on 1 June 2017. Stage 2 due for submission in Oct.

Members commented on the following:

- NYMNPA match funding, how much?
- If Stage 1 of the bid is successful, give additional thought to Branding/objectives prior to Stage 2 submission.

Tom Stephenson informed members that the Authority would be allocating £30K from existing core budget towards this work, with the possibility of additional funding from S106 money for the tourism element of the bid. Tom advised members that Officers had voiced their concerns about elements of the bid prior to the Stage 1 application.

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

27/17 **S106 – Opportunity for Members Questions – Verbal**

The Chief Executive informed members that Briony Fox; Director of Polyhalite Projects was preparing a report to go to June NPA.

Malcolm Bowes commented that the recent members evening seminar on the subject of possible S106 spend had been excellent.

28/17 **Fees and Charges for Staff Time**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Irene Brannon informed members that the starting point for calculating staff charges was based on the methodology agreed for Enforcement charging.

Action: IB to provide members with a list of staff hourly rate charges

Resolved: Members confirmed the principles for charging in section 3 of the report and that such charges should be reviewed regularly in line with paragraph 13.3 of the Financial Regulations.

29/17 **Annual Governance Statement**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Resolved: Members reviewed the Draft Annual Governance Statement attached at **Appendix A**. No amendments were suggested for incorporation into the accounts due to be approved in July.

30/17 **Fraud Risk Review**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Members were happy for Officers to simply link current policies and practices in order to develop a 'Fraud Strategy'.

Resolved: Members Considered it appropriate to develop a 'Fraud Strategy' by identifying the linkage with the other policies and practices and make recommendations. Approved the continuation of the use of independent outside investigators to work on the counter fraud activity. Agreed that the Fraud and Corruption Risk should be reinstated to the Corporate Risk Register at the next review.

31/17 **Risk Management Strategy Update**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services.

Action: IN to reinstate the Fraud and Corruption Risk as part of the Corporate Risk Register at next FRASC.

Resolved: Members noted the progress made on the CRR for 2017/18.

32/17 **Monitoring the Authority's Performance 2016/17, Achievements against Key Indicators**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive and the Performance Officer

Members were appreciative of the work undertaken so far and requested that a little more detail be included in the report, adding context.

Action: Jo Swiers to add more detail to the report including a breakdown of grants information by main categories

Resolved: Members reviewed and commented on the documents, as indicated above, which provided information on progress against 12 key indicators, and an overview of the Authority's performance.

33/17 Health & Wellbeing – feedback from ARB Meeting – Verbal

Richard Gunton (RHG) updated members:

- Full report, including proposals to go to June NPA
- Workshop held in April to discuss
- RHG and Sarah Oswald, Authority Members now developing a framework – Health & social impact of our programmes
- Suggestions from Workshop included – better communication between groups, Newsletter, Video monitoring

Committee went into brief private session to discuss a point raised by one member regarding Grosmont Car Park.

After a brief discussion Committee returned to public session

34/17 Health & Safety Update

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls updated members on the following:

- 4 accidents involving volunteers – no suggestion that these were caused by lack of training or supervision, but simply the nature of tasks involved in.
- Surveying volunteers later in the year re: H&S
- One or two issues highlighted in Audit report – now being worked on
- Following up on some of the H&S survey responses received from staff
- Progressing Health promotion work with NYCC

One member asked if there had been any follow up regarding one recent near miss

IN informed members that the issue had been raised with the individual concerned and discussed further at a recent Ranger team meeting.

Resolved: Members;
Noted the work undertaken since the last FRASC meeting on health and safety

35/17 Property – Plans for HQ Properties, Helmsley - Verbal

IN updated members on proposed HQ works/spend. IN informed members that he is currently working through estimates/costings for the proposed work.

Christopher Massey left the meeting at 12.05pm

36/17 **Information Communications Technology Update**

Considered:

The report of the ICT Manager

Simon Baum, ICT Manager advised members of recent investment in IT security in relation to Ransome Ware, Phishing and Whaling issues.

One member asked if the Authority was insured for theft of data.

Action: IN to check situation with Insurers re: finance fraud online

Simon Baum gave members a brief presentation on the new K-Mobile application for RoW work

Resolved: Members noted the work being carried out to support and develop the Authority’s ICT.

A copy of all presentations can be found in the appropriate e-file

..... (Chair)
4 September 2017

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit & Standards Committee
on Monday 5 June 2017**

Under Item 16 of the public agenda – Health & Wellbeing – feedback from the ARB Meeting, committee went briefly into private session to discuss a point raised by one member concerning the purchase of Grosmont Car Park.

The Director of Park Services updated members.

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Gateway Report – Back Office Costs

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services updated members, giving comparisons of back office costs across the National Park family.

Recovery of Costs incurred in Formal Enforcement Action

The Director of Planning updated members on progress with the implementation of the scheme since its introduction in December 2015.

Complaints and Compliments Update

Members were updated on the details of the complaints and compliments received by the Authority in Quarter 4 of 2016/17.

Staffing Issue

Members were briefed about a confidential staffing matter and actions agreed.