

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 3 September 2018.

Present:

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

Apologies:

Michael Dick, Stuart Parsons

Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Ian Nicholls (Head of Corporate Services), Tom Stephenson (External Funding Officer), Karen Iveson (NYCC, s151 Officer), Pete Williams (Head of Finance), Sandra Strickland (NYCC, Accountant), Richard Gunton (Director of Park Services), Elizabeth Clements (Head of Natural Environment), Alex Cripps (Ryevitalise Restoration Officer), Chris France (Director of Planning), Jo Swiers (Performance Officer), Richard Smith (Authority Solicitor), Anne-Louise Orange (Ryevitalise Programme Manager), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer), Ian Morton (Veritau - External Auditors), Gareth Mills & Richard Anderson (Grant Thornton – External Auditors)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

32/18 Election of Chair

Resolved:

That Jeremy Walker be elected Chair of FRASC, to take office until the first meeting of FRASC following the Annual General Meeting of the Authority.

33/18 Election of Deputy Chair

Resolved:

That Caroline Patmore be elected Deputy Chair of FRASC, to take office until the first meeting of FRASC following the Annual General Meeting of the Authority.

Jeremy Walker In The Chair

34/18 Minutes

Jeremy Walker requested a small change to minute 27/8 of the Public Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018. Change to read as follows:

The Committee agreed it would be sensible for the procedures to be revisited and updated as necessary on a regular basis.

Resolved: Members:

approved the revised Grievance Procedure and Whistleblowing policy asked officers to arrange training and dissemination as indicated in the report agreed that the Authority should revisit the policies and procedures every five years with a view to any updating that might be appropriate.

Resolved:

Members agreed to the changes to minute 27/8 of the public minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 as indicated above.

35/18 **Members Interests**

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

Jeremy Walker welcomed Ian Morton (Veritau), Gareth Mills & Richard Anderson (Grant Thornton), External Auditors to the meeting.

36/18 **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
21	1,2 & 3

37/18 **Corporate Risk Register Update**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls updated members and drew their attention to the inclusion of a more detailed commentary on the higher risk category items, which in this quarter included:

- Core Capacity
- Wildlife Corridors
- Minerals & Waste Plan/Minerals Development Pressure

A brief discussion followed regarding the current situation with the Minerals & Waste Plan, with Caroline Patmore, Minerals & Waste Joint Member Working Group Representative querying whether or not a date for sign off had been reached yet as there had been no group meetings for quite some time and she felt members should be updated on progress.

Action: Chris France to provide Minerals and Waste Joint Member Working Group Reps with an update.

Andrew Scott asked if the term 'Service Users' shown in the description at risk number 201/203 (Appendix 1) be changed.

Action: Ian Nicholls to change 'Service Users' terminology

Jeremy Walker asked for an update in relation to risk reduction action 201/1296 on page 18 of the agenda.

Ian Nicholls explained that these particular volunteer groups are independent of the Authority, but that working relationships exist in relation to Insurance, Legal, Health & Safety etc. and both the Authority and volunteering organisations are clear on responsibilities.

Action: Ian Nicholls to pull feedback together and share with members.

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive informed the meeting that core capacity risk remained at 1 as the staffing cost implications need to be dealt with via budget setting processes. Brief discussion followed in relation to core capacity, finance capacity and timetable/stages for staffing changes.

Andy Wilson informed members that the Evening Seminar on 11 Oct had been set aside for financial discussions.

<p>Resolved: Members noted the progress made on the CRR for 2018/19 and agreed the overall scores.</p>

38/18 Finance Update

Considered:

The report of the Head of Finance and the Accountant.

Pete Williams updated members on the current financial situation which was broadly in line with expectations. He drew attention to revised estimate for Planning income, the return of £110,000 to reserves as a result of not proceeding with the purchase of Grosmont Car Park, and the current situation with regard to Ryevitalise, Sutton Bank and the National Park Trust.

Jeremy Walker said he had asked that future reports follow the presentation layout members had previously agreed, including a clearer layout for the reserves table.

Action: Peter Williams to address presentation issues.

A brief discussion followed regarding the sharing of information/understanding with members regarding future Trust development/activities and any partnership responsibilities the Authority may have.

Members agreed the request from the Trust for staffing support.

Jeremy Walker asked for more detail regarding the Income figure for Corporate and Democratic Core (24%), shown at Appendix 1, page 35 of the agenda.

Action: Sandra Strickland to provide more detail on the 24% figure.

Richard Gunton gave members an update on Sutton Bank developments which included:

- Extension of car park – approx. £200,000 (NPA funding)
- New facilities/attractions and additional car parking – £780K (EU funding)
- Total cost £1.2 million.
- Commitment of a further £60k for fees, taking total to £200K
- Final phase to provide tendered price for both elements plus pre tender for bigger £2 million building redevelopment

Andy Wilson reminded the meeting that the Authority had agreed not to go ahead with the building element of the Sutton Bank project at this time principally because capacity for development and oversight was already stretched which was a recognised and significant risk for the Authority.

Resolved:

Members noted and approved: the amended budget detailed in section 3.1. the transfer of budgets as detailed in section 6, appendix 3 and appendix 4. developing proposals for Sutton Bank as outlined in 10.3 & 10.4. the request from the NYMNP Trust outlined in 11.4 & 11.5.

39/18 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Considered:

The report of the Head of Finance.

Pete Williams explained the need to update the MTFS as part of the budget process which the Authority should aim to complete earlier than in the previous year. The work so far suggested that expenditure could exceed income in each of the next three years as a result of emerging budget pressures. Members would have the opportunity for a fuller discussion at the seminar planned for 11 October, before the next meeting of FRASC. Possible approaches to manage any deficit might include:

- a review of discretionary budgets, increase income generation, generate further overhead savings, curtail grant funded projects, campaign for increased DEFRA budget.

Members asked Officers to think carefully about curtailing grant funded projects and reminded Officers that the draft strategy only gave a partial view and didn't include S106 money or the £2 million in reserves.

Resolved: Members noted the report and agreed the updated MTFS as a basis for further work.

40/18 Ryevitalise Landscape Partnership

Considered:

The report of the Acting Director of Conservation and the Project Manager - Ryevitalise.

Andy Wilson introduced the paper, also asking Members spoke on behalf of Briony Fox, who sent her apologies for the meeting as she was on annual leave to note an

error on page 49 of the agenda where the total figure in the Non HLF column of the Income Summary table should read £1,006,200. Work on the final stage 2 bid was proceeding well including efforts to ensure that a full funding package was in place. At present however this was not the case and the bid would need to make clear the Authority's willingness to underwrite the costs of any shortfall. The paper described three funding scenarios and although officers were very confident that more resources would be found from partners and other sources over the four year life of the project, at this stage it was essential to be able to underwrite the worst case scenario if the bid were to succeed.

Points to note as follows:

- Forward costs – transfer to future agri-environment scheme
- Potentially more money available – via S106 and match funding

Members thanked Officers for continuing on to get the scheme submitted. One member voiced his concerns regarding the amount of effort being concentrated in one area of the NP and the long term legacy.

Resolved: To proceed with the development and submission of the Ryevitalise stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and to underwrite the required funds up to £556,800 for the 4 years delivery phase through the budget setting process. To support the aspiration to secure a minimum of an additional £200,000 of external funding to support the delivery of the project. To recommend to the full Authority, the forward commitment of £69,500 per year from 2023/2024 until 2028/2029 for ongoing legacy costs as per point 4.6 of the report.

41/18 **Changes to Financial Regulations**

Considered:

The report of the Solicitor.

Richard Smith advised members that a waiver procedure had been included to the Systems and Procedures section of the revised Financial regulations at 4.13. All waivers will be reported to FRASC each quarter with the necessary justification.

All three documents; Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation will be presented to members at the Authority's meeting in October and if approved would come into force on 1 November 2018.

Resolved: Members agreed the proposed revisions to the Financial Regulations appended to the report, for adoption by the Authority with agreement that they come into force on the same date as the revised Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation, that being, 1 Nov 2018

42/18 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Funding Officer.

Tom Stephenson updated members. Members thanked Tom for his clear and helpful report.

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

43/18 **Audit Plan 2018/19**

Considered:

The report of the S151 Officer.

Ian Morton, Audit Manager, Veritau made the report to members. In discussion it was noted that whilst members considered that the areas to be covered by the plan were worthwhile, there had been no discussion with the Committee and no consideration of alternative options. This should not be the case in future years and there should be regular reports to the committee on the internal audit investigations.

Jeremy Walker invited Gareth Mills and Richard Anderson from Grant Thornton to briefly address the meeting as the Authority's new External Auditors. Members received for information:

- Grant Thornton Fee letter, dated 18 April 2018
- Grant Thornton Audit Progress Report & Sector Update Presentation

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report, approved the plan at **Appendix 1**, agreed to receive periodic reports on audit findings and agreed that future plans should be the subject of some consultation with them at an earlier stage before approval

44/18 **Staffing Update**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services.

Ian Nicholls updated members on the following:

- Increase in staffing numbers
- Low staff turnover
- Creative work patterns giving more opportunity for better home/work life balance
- Apprentice Forum

Members asked about:

- staff number comparisons across other National Park Authorities and levels of outsourcing and whether any lessons could be learnt
- levels of sickness absence, variances between public and private sector

Action: Ian Nicholls to further investigate staffing number comparisons and outsourcing experience elsewhere.

Resolved: Members noted and commented on the contents of the report as indicated.

45/18 **Health and Safety**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services.

Ian Nicholls updated members further on the minor fire which recently took place at the Authority's Sawmill Lane site, stating that a number of changes had been made at the site and in relation to how the disposal of commercial waste was managed.

More generally he informed members that H&S work was continuing with Volunteers in relation to lone working and other issues.

Members welcomed the comprehensive explanation of near misses in the report.

Resolved: Members noted the work undertaken since the last FRASC meeting on health and safety.

46/18 **Member Training in 2017/18 and Programme for 2018/19**

Considered:

The report of the Committees Officer.

Jeremy Walker, FRASC Chair informed the meeting that time/work pressures on both Officers and Members had led to some training/information sharing sessions being cancelled this year. All agreed there was a need for both the more formal elements of training/information sharing such as planning, health & safety and standards, plus the opportunity for more creative time together such as the forthcoming visit to the Northumberland Sill due to take place in October, and asked the Chief Executive to suggest ways in which training and information sessions might be combined with more formal meetings in an effort to make more efficient use of time and improve attendance at training events

One member commented that the recent Future Farming session at the Moors Centre, had been excellent.

Jeremy Walker thanked Alison Fisher for her report on the NPUK Conference at South Downs National Park in October 2017.

Resolved:
The proposed training programme for 2018/19 was agreed.
Members noted the review of training in 2018/19.
Members noted that the next round of the Development Discussion meetings needed to take place towards the end of 2018.

47/18 **External Scrutiny and Review of NYMNPA: A Summary of Current Practice**

Considered:

The report of the Chief Executive and Performance Officer.

Jo Swiers updated members on progress since the report was written in May. The first thematic review, which on this occasion looked at RoW work, took place at the

Scrutiny meeting in July. Alan Hume, Head of Ranger Services for the Yorkshire Dales NPA attended as an independent scrutineer.

Members noted that the Authority was awaiting the outcome of a number of award entries; Royal Town Planning Institute, Regional round for National Apprentice Awards and the Princess Royal awards.

Action: Jo Swiers to update members on awards outcome at Nov FRASC

Resolved: Members reviewed the report and agreed that external elements should be included in its thematic reviews.

48/18 **Glaisdale Ford Rock Contract Extension**

Considered:

The report of the Land of Iron Project Manager.

Resolved: Members approved the extension of the contract for the construction of Glaisdale Ford rock ramp from £28,030 construction only to £35,764 design and construction.

Copies of all presentations can be found in the relevant e-file

..... (Chair)
19 November 2018

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 3 September 2018**

Private Minutes

Jeremy Walker, FRASC Chair requested a change to minute 29/8 of the Private Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018. Members agreed to the changes. The amended minutes were then finalised and signed by the FRASC 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 1 of 2018-19.