

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 23 November 2015.

Present:

Malcolm Bowes, Ena Dent, Michael Dick, David Jeffels, Christopher Massey, Caroline Patmore, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott

Apologies:

Jim Bailey, Jeremy Walker

Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), David Renwick (Director of Conservation), Ian Nicholls (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Richard Smith (Authority Solicitor), Tom Stephenson (External Funding Officer), Amy Thomas (LEADER Project Officer), Simon Baum (ICT Manager), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer), Karen Iveson (NYCC, s151 Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

In the absence of the Chair, Jeremy Walker, Caroline Patmore, Deputy, chaired the meeting.

Caroline Patmore welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Karen Iveson, NYCC s151 Officer who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting to offer support to the Authority in Irene Brannon's absence.

49/15 Minutes

Karen Iveson alerted members to a couple of drafting errors in the FRASC minutes of 7 September 2015. On page 5 of the agenda, under point 37/15 entitled Internal Audit Plan 2015/16, the last sentence of paragraph 2, was to be deleted as was the very last sentence at the bottom of the page.

Resolved:

The public minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2015, having been printed, circulated and the drafting errors noted, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

50/15 Members Interests

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

51/15 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

The public were 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 involved 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
15	1,2,3,4
16	1,2,3,4

52/15 Annual Audit Letter

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services.

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive advised Members that with Irene Brannon, Director of Corporate Services being absent due to illness and with an existing vacancy in the finance dept., Karen Iveson would be supporting the Authority in the short term.

Caroline Patmore, asked Officers to pass the Members best wishes on to Irene.

Karen Iveson informed members that the Annual Audit had now been concluded and there were no significant issues, which was good news for the Authority. The accounts were signed off at the end of September 2015.

Malcolm Bowes commented on the good news.

Resolved: Members accepted the content of the report and the **Appendix**.

53/15 Finance Update

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

Karen Iveson gave members a presentation, including an update on the financial situation for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015; including a request to transfer £178k underspend to reserves.

Members commented on the following:

- Car parking – 15% up on target, compared to the previous year, was the increase due to increased car park charges or increased usage of car parks?
- Likely underspend and any concerns associated with it?
- TEL project

Andy Wilson informed members that the increased car park income was due to increased usage and better enforcement. Cycling at Sutton Bank was helping with the increase along with more visits to the Park.

Regarding the underspend, the Chief Executive informed members that the figure could be as high as £300k as the budget update didn't include the £150k recently received from York Potash. Andy Wilson informed members that the Authority was continuing with the previously agreed programme of Officers spending more of their time on income generation this year, especially in relation to external funding.

Members agreed that the Authority was right to concentrate on income.

One Member asked about the Authority's Pension situation, given that returns were currently performing poorly.

Karen Iveson advised members that it was too soon to be concerned about the current pension situation. Pensions were a long term issue and that the Authority should have a better idea about how its pensions were progressing after the next valuation which was due to take place in autumn 2016.

Andy Wilson advised members that there were some work elements which Officers currently hadn't had the internal capacity to do, such as developing further investment in Sutton Bank. A brief discussion on income verses spend then followed with members agreeing that the Authority should continue to focus its efforts on income generation as this would bring long term benefits.

Resolved: Members approve the virements at **Appendix 4**, commented on the report and agreed to allow the Chief Executive and the s151 Officer, Karen Iveson to handle the transfer of monies into reserves.

54/15 **Update on Health & Safety Actions**

Considered:

The report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls updated members on a recent H&S incident involving one of the Authority's car park wardens who slipped off a step ladder and broke his arm whilst applying bitumen paint to the roof of the car park warden's hut. Key points:

- The warden is likely to be off work for a couple of months
- The incident has been reported to the H&S Executive
- The injured warden hadn't told his manager that he was going to undertake the task
- The injured warden had used his own ladder, paint etc.
- Authority Officers will discuss with car park wardens, at their end of season meeting, the range of tasks they should do. They should speak to their managers before undertaking any additional tasks. It was noted that all the Car Park Wardens will be written to regarding this.

Caroline Patmore, Chair, asked the Authority to pass on the best wishes of all the members to the injured car park warden.

Members asked about the following:

- How accident happened, was surface unstable?
- If the task had been mentioned to management, would the work still have been undertaken?
- Was management aware that the roof needed repairing?
- Possible compensation claim?

Ian Nicholls, Assistant Director of Corporate Services informed members that:

- Management would have supplied suitable equipment and risk assessed the task had they known the car park warden wished to undertake the work
- No mention had been made by the member of staff regarding a possible compensation claim; the Authority cannot mitigate against people providing their own equipment to complete tasks without informing their manager of their intentions.
- A claim for compensation had been received for a previous injury case (An ATV accident in October 2014) and the Authority, together with their insurers, was vigorously contesting the claim

One member voiced his concerns about governance of safety issues, saying that he thought the FRAS Committee should have a regular role in H&S and that matters of H&S should be brought to the committee in a more structured way.

Ian Nicholls informed members that two formal H&S reports go to committee each year, February FRASC and December NPA, and this has been the case for the last few years. This approach had also been agreed by members, but he said that he would be very happy to increase the level of reporting as required by members.

Ian Nicholls reminded members of the recent presentation by Dominic Passman, NYCC H&S Manager, regarding Authority Members health and safety responsibilities and agreed to summarise the slides/questions members should be aware of as part of the H&S report at December NPA.

Action: Ian Nicholls to include H&S presentation information in his December NPA H&S update.

<p>Resolved: Members noted the content of the report. Members agreed that H&S should be listed as a standing item on every FRASC agenda, to be used as and when the Authority had a H&S matter to bring to members attention.</p>
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55/15 **Budget Estimate**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

In the absence of Irene Brannon, Andy Wilson, Chief Executive, updated members on proposals for the 2016/17 budget, advising that the Authority was still waiting for its settlement information from Defra, but that it may not be received until January 2016. He went on to say that much of Defra's money was tied to EU and Flood Defence work whilst the remaining money could see further cuts of up to 30%. However the Secretary of State had given positive feedback regarding National Parks, especially with the recent announcement that the areas of the Lakes and Dales National Parks were to be extended.

Andy Wilson informed members that whilst the Authority was working on ideas for next year's budget, the budget setting process was difficult with the current shortage of staffing in the Authority's finance department and the lack of grant settlement information. Andy advised that these two factors may lead to more changes to the budget in Feb/Mar 2016, but that any changes would be brought to March NPA for consideration once Directors and staff had been consulted.

Officers and Members await further information

Resolved: Members noted the proposals for the budget 2016/17 and the contents of the report, and approved the work to date including the allocation of reserves in section 5.

56/10 Mid-Year Treasury Management Review

Considered:

The report of the Treasurer

Karen Iveson, s151 Officer, updated members on the Authority's 2015/16 Treasury management activities up to 30 September 2015. Karen asked members to note two amendments on page 53 of the agenda under points 3 and 4 as follows:

At the bottom of the table under point 3 – 2017/18 (update 23 November 2015) the Borrowing figure should read 281.0, not 300.0 as shown and the Total figure should read 459.2, not 478.2 as shown.

At the bottom of the table under point 3 - 2017/18 (update 23 November 2015) the Borrowing figure should read 300.0, not 175.1 as shown and the Total figure should read 478.2, not 353.3 as shown.

Karen Iveson advised members of the pressures on investments due to current interest rates, but advised that the Authority's reserves were keeping the organisation buoyant.

One member asked whether a rate rise would be of benefit to us.

Karen Iveson advised members that a rate rise would result in higher investment income and the Authority did not currently borrow any money, so would not have to worry about higher interest payments..

Resolved: The Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee:

- (i) noted the position on the Authority's 2015/16 Treasury Management activities up to 30 September 2015
- (ii) approved the revised Prudential Indicators for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18, as set out in **Appendix B** including the revised Prudential Indicator 4 – Authorised Limit for External Debt for 2015/16 of £428.4k.
- (iii) noted the amendments to the figures at points 3 and 4 of the agenda

57/10 **Monitoring of Performance Indicators**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

The Chief Executive informed members that the Authority was suffering from a lack of capacity to produce the PI information and was considering how best to manage and report PI's in the future. Two possible options might be to either contract the work out each year for a small fee or ask a volunteer to undertake the work. The Authority is planning to consider the options as part of the business plan over the next 12 months.

Members made the following comments:

- Using an outside contractor might be a better way to obtain a realistic view
- Consider changing the measures and how they are presented. Percentage of audience reached
- Important to get the figures right

Resolved: Members noted the contents of the report.

58/10 **Risk Management Update**

Considered:

The report of the Director of Corporate Services

In the absence of the Director of Corporate Services, Karen Iveson, s151 Officer, informed members that good progress had been made to date, but the Authority was mindful of a number of outstanding actions to be sorted by year end.

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

59/15 **External Funding**

Considered:

The report of the External Funding Officer.

Tom Stephenson, External Funding Officer, updated members on the current funding work taking place.

Members commented on:

- TEL – Decision on 2nd stage of bid is due Feb-Mar 2016. If successful there will be a need to provide matched funding. Some money has already been raised or is being bid for to support this work, but will the Authority be able to raise the remaining money required?
- LEADER programme – progressing. Hoping to be in a position to progress further by end of January 2016.

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive informed Members that the Authority should be able to find the necessary funds to support the TEL project.

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

Andrew Scott left the meeting at 11.40am

60/15 GIS Update and Engaging the Public, Verbal Presentation by Simon Baum, ICT Manager

Simon Baum gave members a brief presentation on the new Earth Light GIS system which the Authority has purchased, explaining the significant benefits the system offers: Full site licence so the whole Authority can access, ease of use, Desktop to Server application, can be used as an information tool with members of the public, especially Planning related enquiries plus the system can publish maps easier to website.

Members were impressed by the system and thought it would be beneficial to promote widely via parish forums, newsletters etc.

Simon Baum also briefly showed members how the Authority had been making use of Go Pro technology, to film meadow clearing at Sutton Bank and how the technology can be used as a training tool with Apprentices/Volunteers with practical skills such as bridge building.

Simon Baum gave members a short refresher session on how to access the members extranet and navigate to the committee calendar area to view agenda papers. He advised members that if any of them were still experiencing difficulties in accessing reports, then they should seek further guidance/support from the IT team.

..... (Chair)
1 February 2016

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 23 November 2015**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 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.