

North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on 4 February 2019.

Present:

Jim Bailey, Malcolm Bowes, Guy Coulson, David Jeffels, Clive Pearson, Ted Sanderson, Andrew Scott, Jeremy Walker.

Apologies:

Michael Dick, Christopher Massey, Stuart Parsons, Caroline Patmore,

Officers in Attendance:

Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Ian Nicholls (Head of Corporate Services), Pete Williams (Head of Finance), Sandra Strickland (NYCC, Accountant), Chris France (Director of Planning), Mark Hill (Head of Development Management), Vanessa Burgess (Committees Officer), Gareth Mills & Richard Anderson (Grant Thornton – External Auditors)

Copies of All Documents Considered Are In The Minute Book

01/19 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

02/19 Members Interests

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

03/19 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
15	1 & 2

04/19 Corporate Risk Register Update

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls updated members on the main changes to the Corporate Risk Register (CRR):

- Proposal that the risks in relation to Profile of the Park and Young People should be removed from the register as work had progressed strongly in those two areas.
- Fraud and corruption, risk withdrawn as a separate item as well covered and supported by a recently approved policy. Reference to Fraud and corruption included within the Financial Strategy Risk.
- Category 1 and 2 risks remain the same as 2018/19 – Capacity and Skills, Wildlife Corridors and Minerals Development Pressure on the Park

Andy Wilson commented that the overall awareness of risk should influence all that the Authority does. The Senior Leadership Team having met with NYCC, consider that the Authority now have the balance right and that the CRR process was now adding value.

Members commented on the following:

- Need for dialogue regarding the bigger picture – possible risks for the Authority, for example the lack of capability to protect wildlife.
- Capacity and Skills still at category 1, but hopefully an improving picture with recent staff changes
- What should the Authority be looking at in Strategic aims
- Managing risk associated with higher category items which remain high
- What was the External Auditors view on the Authority's risks

Regarding risks to the Authority and the NYMNP, Andy Wilson informed members that a SWOT analysis was carried out as part of the Business Plan and wildlife was included under weaknesses and threats. Departmental restructuring was helping ease the Capacity risk, although the Authority chose not to lower or remove categories quickly from the CRR.

Gareth Mills from External Auditors, Grant Thornton informed members that the Auditors considered the CRR to be a helpful as living document giving rise to robust discussion. The External Auditors were mindful of the CRR when producing their own External Audit Plan.

Action: Jo Swiers to include, as part of the March NPA Business Plan report, some assessment of the wider external risks facing the Authority.

<p>Resolved: Members noted the contents of the report, discussed the proposed Register and commented as above prior to submission to the Authority in March.</p>

05/19 2018/19 Finance Update

Considered:

The report of the Head of Finance

Pete Williams updated members on the Quarter 3 figures, reporting that the forecast outturn figure had improved by £21K since Quarter 2. There were no material changes to the reserves, with the closing balance expected to be £1.849m by the end of the financial year.

Members commented on:

- Excellent performance by the Inspired by Gallery
- The new job vacancy for a Car Parking Manager. The post holder will carry out a review of current sites and look at options for generating more income, more cost effectively. Main focus will be to generate a new sustainable income stream.
- Income figures seemed to be fairly even – good expenditure, better planned/managed

Resolved: Members noted the content of the report

06/19 **Budget Estimate 2019/20**

Considered:

The report of the Head of Finance

Before Pete Williams shared his presentation with members, Andy Wilson explained to members that monies for Stage 2 of the Ryevitalise project had been included in the budget estimate, due to the size of the project and the fact that stage 1 of the project had already been completed. The Authority may still not receive the Stage 2 funding, but the Authority felt it prudent to include in the Budget Estimate for now.

David Jeffels arrived at 10.40am

Pete Williams informed members that the Authority was delivery a lot of activity from its core grant. Changes to the budget since December NPA included; Legal and Professional Fees, Fuel Costs and Website Development Project. Income for 20/21 will include an increase in car parking tariffs.

Members commented on:

- Concerns re: reduction in grants, including community grants. Community grant take up needs monitoring, if funding is used up early on in the application window, could additional funding be allocated?
- Concerns re: increase in car parking charges – beyond current Business Plan for 4 years
- Pre-application planning charge increase, 15% (£10K) – how increase broken down?

Andy Wilson informed members that there had been no increase in car parking fees for the last four years and that an increase would keep the Authority on a par with other National Parks.

Resolved: Members approved the proposals for the budget 2019/20 to take forward to Full Authority in March 2019. Members requested that their comments, in relation to Car Parking, Community Grants and Planning fee increases as indicated in the minutes be noted/actioned by Officers

07/19 Treasury Management and Prudential Code

Considered:

The report of the Chief Finance Officer

Pete Williams, Head of Finance gave members a summary of the report and informed them there were no major changes regarding investments.

Resolved: Members agreed to recommend to the Authority at its meeting on 19 March 2019:

- (i) approval of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 as detailed in **Appendix B**, including the Prudential Indicators set out in Section 3, and the Minimum Revenue Provision policy set out in Section 9 of that Strategy;
- (ii) adoption of the Annual Investment Strategy agreed by the County Council for 2019/20;
- (iii) approval of the authorised borrowing limit of £427.9k for 2019/20, under section 3(i) of the Local Government Act 2003 as set out in **Appendix B**; confirmation of the delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as agreed in previous years, for the following matters:-
 - (a) any need to effect changes between the separate agreed limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities (such as finance leases) in accordance with option appraisal, value for money or other relevant factors. This applies to the Prudential Indicators in **Appendix B**;
 - (b) decisions to borrow from the PWLB and money markets at the most advantageous rate, as set out in **Appendix B**.
- (v) approval of the Capital Strategy as set out in **Appendix C**.

08/19 External Funding – Verbal Update

Andy Wilson informed Members that the Authority's External Funding Officer Tom Stephenson would be re-joining the organisation at the end of February 2019.

He updated members on the following:

- Water Environment Grant – still waiting
- Ryevitalise – HLF site visit taking place on 5 February 2019
- Forge Valley – issues over timing with contractors, NPA assisting
- Sutton Bank – Due to be submitted within next 6-8 weeks
- HLF – Education bid, looking for additional funds from other sources
- Coastal projects – revisit as part of next Business Plan

Members commented on the following:

- HLF recently published a new strategy
- Members welcomed back Tom Stephenson
- The possibility that the Authority may be able to offer help to others in and around the NYMNP to obtain grants which then go on to benefit the NP community/area.

09/19 External Audit

Considered:

The report of the External Auditor

Gareth Mills updated Members and also took the opportunity to remind them of the forthcoming Audit Event being held in Leeds on Tuesday 26 February, to which they were all invited.

Brief discussion took place on the following:

The External Audit Plan was developed in consultation with NYCC and Authority Officers, but was there also a need for FRASC Members to be involved in the process? Gareth Mills informed members that Grant Thornton's External Audit Plan was only shared with NYCC and relevant Authority Officers in relation to factual accuracy.

Valuation of Land and Buildings – was a key area of focus for the external auditors, due to the need for materially accurate valuation at each balance sheet date. There was a need to provide assurance of accurate valuations.

Members noted the report of the External Auditors.

10/19 Benchmarking and Scoping Review of the Development Management

Considered:

The report of the Director of Planning.

Chris France gave members a brief summary of the report.

Brief discussion followed around the two different reports, the POS Enterprises – Development Management Scoping Review and the Value Adding - Development Management Value for Money Review.

Members welcomed the review and the opportunity for better integration, more joined up thinking between the Planning Department and other departments across the Authority.

<p>Resolved: Members noted the report, endorsed the changes which had been made to improve performance in value for money and agreed that the Senior Leadership Team should agree suitable targets for a) invalid application numbers and b) approvals within six weeks and agree the best use of the time saved from the reduction in committee frequency.</p>
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11/19 Health and Safety

Considered:

The report of the Head of Corporate Services

Ian Nicholls informed Members:

- that the Authority continued to work hard to encourage staff to report accidents and near misses.

- One of the NP's volunteers had agreed to sit on the Health and Safety Group
- Health and Safety refresher training for Members would be scheduled in for later in the year.
- about the care that needed to be exercised in taking photos during the course of their work as an NPA member

Action: On a request from members, a note to be prepared for inclusion in the next Members bulletin re: the taking of Photographs.

Resolved: Members; made no further comments on the proposed Health and Safety action Plan for 2019/20; and noted the work undertaken since the last FRASC meeting.

..... (Chair)
28 May 2019

**Public Summary of Items considered "in private"
at the meeting of the Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee
on 4 February 2019**

Private Minutes

Members agreed that the private minutes of the meeting held on 19 November, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Complaints and Compliments Review

Members were updated on the details of the complaints and compliments received by the Authority in Quarter 3 of 2018-19.