

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 10:00 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL, AVENUE ROAD, LYMINGTON

#### **Present:**

##### *Members:*

David Harrison (Chairman)  
Marian Spain (Deputy Chairman)  
Gordon Bailey  
Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre  
Edward Heron  
Richard Frampton  
John Pemberton

##### *Officers:*

Steve Avery	Executive Director Strategy and Planning
Julia Mutlow	Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Nigel Matthews	Head of Recreation Management and Learning
Paul Walton	Head of Environment and Rural Economy
David Stone	Corporate Services Manager
Nigel Stone	Chief Finance Officer
Jo Murphy	Information and Data Protection Officer
Frances Connolly	Executive Assistant

#### **106 Apologies for absence**

106.1 Apologies for absence were received from Alison Barnes and Ken Thornber.

#### **107 Declarations of Interest**

107.1 There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### **108 Chairman's announcements**

108.1 There were no announcements.

#### **109 Minutes**

109.1 The minutes of the meeting on 21 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

**Resolved, that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.**

*Voting: none voting against*

#### **110 Public Question Time**

110.1 There were no questions or statements from the public.

## 111 Third Quarter Progress Report

- 111.1 David Stone introduced the report which covered the period up to the end of December 2016; he explained that the majority of work areas were flagged green which was encouraging. He drew Members' attention to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and confirmed that the heads of service were available to take questions or elaborate on projects undertaken within their teams.
- 111.2 Members noted that the only KPI which was red was 'Members' attendance at meetings' which had fallen in each of the reported periods. Mr Stone advised that attendance had been reduced by a small number who had been unable to attend due to ill health. Oliver Crosthwaite–Eyre, the Chairman of the Authority, told Members that he regularly reviewed the detailed attendance reports and followed up anything that gave him concern, however on this occasion he confirmed that unfortunately poor health of a few Members was the cause. Members also noted that the small number of Committee and Authority meetings exacerbated any percentage drop in member attendance. David Stone reminded Members that his team had produced a fifteen month calendar for future meetings, to end March 2018, to bring the Authority in line with other Local Authority calendars which should reduce meeting clashes.

**Action:** Member Services to investigate possibility of electronic meeting requests for Members to automatically populate their calendars.

- 111.3 Under the Protect work programme Members debated 'back-up grazing' provision, and agreed that there was a need to identify what was required and what was available. Steve Avery pointed out that he had requested that the Verderers of the New Forest provide the Authority with a list of criteria of what back-up grazing would ideally look like i.e. locality to the Crown Lands etc. Mr Avery suggested he would prepare and circulate to Members a short report that details the engagement with the Verderers to date on the matter. One Member suggested that a calculation of the number of animals multiplied by the estimated acreage required per animal would be a simple quantifiable means to identify the amount needed.

**Action:** Steve Avery to prepare and circulate a short report that details the engagement with the Verderers on 'back-up grazing' provision.

- 111.4 Under the enjoy programme Members debated the new seasonal concierge service which was planned for the New Forest Centre in response to the closure of the tourist information service there. Nigel Matthews reminded Members that by March 2018 the Authority would need to consider its support agreement with the Ninth Centenary Trust.
- 111.5 One Member asked for an update on the Recreation Management Strategy (RMS). Nigel Matthews told the Committee that the Steering group were meeting later this month and that they would make a decision on whether to undertake a public consultation soon. Members were informed that if a consultation was recommended then the resource implications would need to be considered and agreed by the Committee.
- 111.6 Under the protect programme it was noted that the acronym VGS was commonly used to denote the Verderers' Grazing Scheme and that using the same acronym for the

Visitor Gift Scheme caused confusion. It was recommended that officers consider an alternative name for the scheme.

**Action:** Officers to consider an alternative name for the Visitor Giving Scheme (VGS) to avoid confusion with the Verderers Grazing Scheme.

111.7 Members noted the report and thanked officers for the clear and effective reporting. They were pleased to note the high proportion of projects which were flagged green and therefore on target.

## **112 Third Quarter Budgetary Control Report 2016/17**

112.1 Nigel Stone drew Members' attention to paragraph 2 which detailed the income and expenditure at the end of the third quarter and stated that the Authority was where it would expect to be at this time. He explained that paragraph 4 detailed the expected savings and pressures on the budget, most notably a large planning application with a fee of £29,000 had been received in January. As a result of these items he was now projecting a final position at year end of a £30-£40,000 saving on the budget.

112.2 In response to questions Mr Stone explained that the spending on the concierge service at the New Forest Centre would be in next year's budget as it did not commence until the summer. Members also discussed the Authority's contribution to the New Forest Marque. The recently recruited Marque Operations Manager will be working to make the Marque more sustainable by increasing the number of Marque members. Paul Walton commented that it was hoped the level of financial support required would diminish over time.

112.3 Members noted the report.

## **113 Driving at Work Policy**

113.1 Paul Walton introduced the Driving at Work Policy and explained that the policy brought together two existing policies, the Driving at Work Policy and the Pool Cars Policy. He informed members that staff and the union had been consulted.

**Resolved, that the Driving at Work Policy be adopted with immediate effect.**

*Voting: none voting against*

## **114 Corporate Risk Log**

114.1 David Stone presented the Corporate Risk Log report and informed members that at the last Executive Board meeting three areas had been identified where the risks had been updated, namely:

- the loss of specialist staff within the Authority through resignation or retirement and the need to ensure a framework for succession planning was in place. He said that this would be looked at as part of the Organisational Development strand of the strategic planning initiative.

- the impact element of the Brexit risk had been increased from a four to a five rating.
- Development risks on the park boundaries, such as the Waterside, with regard to the Section 62 duty

114.2 The Chairman invited members to raise questions or challenge the ratings

114.3 One member suggested that animal accidents should be added to the risk log, as he considered that they were a potential reputational risk to the Authority. He said that the public would look to the National Park Authority to understand why they had increased and that a meeting should be convened annually at a strategic level so that funding could be prioritised to support prevention work in this area.

**Action:** Nigel Matthews to add animal accidents to the Corporate Risk Log.

114.4 Another member suggested that the reputational risk rating, in general, should be increased because of the harm which can rapidly spread via social media. It was recommended that the Executive Leadership Team should ensure that the Authority's communication strategy was well equipped to deal with any negative publicity from social media.

114.5 Members noted the report.

## **115 Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent**

115.1 Nigel Stone tabled an early draft of the Budget and Work Programme for the financial year 2017/18. He explained that the documents would be considered at the next meeting of the Resources, Audit and Performance committee, but that he would welcome early input from Members ahead of that meeting. Mr Stone reminded Members that because the Defra grant was now subject to an annual inflationary increase (1.7%), this would cover the incremental staffing increases and the budget was therefore more stable year on year.

115.2 The heads of service highlighted some areas which were new or revised within their proposed work programme, such as the work being undertaken on the development of the England Coastal Path under the enjoy section. One Member felt that the protect area seemed to have less actions than other sections, but was reassured that the work programme detailed specific projects and much of the protect work formed part of our core activity.

## **116 Date of next meeting**

116.1 Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 6 March 2017 at 10.00 hours at Lyminster Town Hall.

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**PART II ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPTED INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED**

**Resolved, that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, namely the need to avoid disclosing sensitive information relating to the Authority’s financial affairs.**

**117. Development of Two Affordable New Homes**

117.1 Members were updated on the progress on a potential scheme for two affordable new homes; this is a summary of the minute which contains exempt information.

The meeting closed at 11.20 hours

**Signed .....** **Date.....**