

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 22 NOVEMBER 2010

Held at Capron House, Midhurst

Present:

Sebastian Anstruther	Sue Saville
Susanna Kemp	Geoffrey Theobald
Deborah Urquhart (Chair)	Keith Wood
Margaret Paren (ex officio Member)	

Officers: John Beckerleg (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Sue Chapman (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Rebecca Haynes (Interim Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

25. Apologies were received from Ken Bodfish, Felicity Hindson, Jeremy Leggett, Tom Tupper and Charles Peck (ex-officio member).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

26. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

27. The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.
28. With reference to Minute 24 Resources & Performance workshops would be arranged for 9 December 2010, 25 January 2011 and 17 February 2011 to which all Authority Members would be invited.

URGENT MATTERS

29. There were no urgent matters raised.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

30. There was one member of public present and no requests from the public to participate at the meeting had been received.

BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER 2, 2010/11

31. Report RPC 05/10 advising the Committee of the overall financial position of the Authority for 2011/11 as at Quarter 2 was introduced by the Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer, who explained in more depth section 4 of the Report. The Report did not include a Capital Programme.
32. Following discussion, the Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained there was a slight underspend on employees' costs because of the recruitment timetable and delays in start dates. Savings had been made in staffing grades that had been

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee

previously assumed to be higher and the cost of transferring staff had also been lower than anticipated.

33. Treasury Management was discussed The sum of £2.5 million invested with Lloyds TSB had received a higher rate of interest than predicted.
34. Further discussion and questions from the Committee took place regarding the level of information provided in the tables. Members anticipated that the forthcoming workshops would provide them with an opportunity to understand in greater detail the analysis of the headings and budget share.
35. The Interim Director of Corporate Services said the Committee would have an opportunity to decide on the level of information provided in the tables for future reporting purposes.
36. Officers would continue to investigate bringing expenditure forward to utilise the underspend available, as was the case with the vehicle procurement.
37. There was a concern that unspent funds could be withdrawn. The Committee was assured that this was unlikely to happen once funds had been identified and as the Authority was in a transitional year fluctuations were to be expected.
38. **Resolved:** that the Committee:
 1. notes the overall financial position as at Quarter 2.

BUDGET FRAMEWORK AND UPDATE 2011/12

39. Members considered and discussed the role of the Resources & Performance Committee in making recommendations to the National Park Authority on a budget plan for 2011/12, taking into account the report on a budget framework submitted to the National Park Authority at its meeting on 17 November and the decisions of the Authority at that meeting.
40. The Committee discussed the topics they wished to be covered in the planned workshops in January and February 2011 including key performance indicators and statutory services in order to agree a business plan and budget that work together. The core costs were to be made available to the members first. This would then determine the funding which remained for other projects and programmes, The Committee would consider for which areas it would be appropriate to set performance indicators.
41. The Treasury Management arrangements would be included on the agenda for the 9 December 2010 workshop.
42. Although the grant from the Department for environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) had not yet been announced, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) would have an impact on the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). There may also be an indirect effect as partners such as Local Authorities (LAs) reduce their budgets. The SDNPA would need to consider whether it could help with services that would otherwise be reduced / withdrawn.
43. **Resolved:** that the Committee
 1. Notes the decisions of the National Park Authority at its meeting of 17 November.
 2. Holds a special meeting of the Resources and Performance Committee on 8 March 2011 in order to consider proposals for the core and non-core budget for 2011/12 and make recommendations to the National Park Authority at its meeting of 29 March 2011.

PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLES

44. The Committee considered report RPC 07/ to recommend to the Authority that it established a Capital Programme and agreed to the purchase and (where necessary) refurbishment of vehicles to support the front line operations of the rangers within the Park.
45. The Committee discussed the proposal that the Authority purchased a range of vehicles in order to ensure that it can become fully operational in its ranger service by 31 March 2011. The vehicles would be procured from a mixture of existing vehicles owned or leased by the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) and the purchase of new vehicles.
46. Discussions had taken place to ensure that a basic fleet would consist of 20 vehicles with running costs to be included in the Budget Plan. Value for money was discussed with the possibility of SDNPA exploring joint procurement across other National Parks. Cost analysis had shown that capital purchase was more cost effective at this time
47. The vehicles would be branded with the new SDNPA logo in due course. They would primarily be for use by the Ranger Service although Officers would explore the possibility of other Park staff using the vehicles as pool cars for Park business.
48. Geoffrey Theobald joined the meeting at 3pm
49. The Committee discussed and agreed to add a 3rd recommendation to review the fleet size in a year's time.
50. Advanced driver training was discussed and although off road driver training was already part of the Rangers training programme ,officers could explore the possibility of advanced driver training.
51. **Resolved:** that the Committee recommends the National Park Authority :
 - (i) Approves a capital programme for 2010/11 of £0.276 million for the purchase of vehicles to support the operation of the Park.
 - (ii) Notes that these purchases will be funded from the underspend in the 2010/11 Revised Budget.And that the Committee resolves to:
 - (iii) Reviews vehicle fleet in the Autumn 2011 as part of preparing the 2012-13 Budget Plan including reviewing the size of the fleet, the use of vehicles by staff across the Authority and the provision of training for drivers

PROCUREMENT OF SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE SDNPA PLANNING SERVICE FROM 1 APRIL 2011 – PART I

52. The Committee considered report RPC 08/10 from the Interim Head of Planning to obtain authority to begin procurement of software and related information technology implementation to support the SDNPA Planning Service from 1 April 2011. The Authority needed to consider whether it should procure a dedicated planning administration system and if so, what system it should use.
53. The Interim Head of Planning explained to the Committee how the IDOX Uniform planning support system would operate, including provision for public and historic record access Many of the constituent Local Authorities within the Park already used the IDOX system.

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54. The Committee discussed the possibility of creating a sub group to explore the IT system, costs and risks.
55. The Authority had used the Government arrangements (GCAT) to procure the planning system using the Sprint organisation.. Sprint was managed by Computer Sciences Corporation. No further competitive process was required to be compliant with EU procurement regulation because the Sprint contract was awarded as a result of an extensive competitive process run under EU procurement rules. Given that the Authority had elected to use a single tender action for reasons of business risk, the Sprint contract gave the flexibility required to enable this.
56. **Resolved:** that under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting on the following grounds of the exemption relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority at 3:30pm
57. The Committee considered report RPC 09/10 recommending approval of ICT expenditure for planning and document management systems.
58. **Resolved:** that members of the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting which continued in public session at 3:40pm
59. **Resolved:** that the Committee;
 - (i) Agrees the commencement of the procurement of the IDOX Group Uniform planning administration system and the related corporate Electronic Document management system, on the general terms set out in the confidential report relating to this item and in accordance with Contract Standing Order 3;
 - (ii) Agrees that as the South Downs National Park Authority planning administration system cannot realistically be operational by 1 April 2011, the administration of the Planning Service should be carried out in partnership with the 15 Local Planning Authorities, using their existing planning administration systems, until the SDNPA planning administration system becomes operational by 1 April 2012.

Chair

Meeting closed at 3.45pm