

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Agenda Item 5

RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 8 FEBRUARY 2012

Held at Capron House, Midhurst at 2pm

Present:

Sebastian Anstruther

Jeremy Leggett

Deborah Urquhart (Chair)

Pete West

Keith Wood

Margaret Paren (ex officio
Member)

Charles Peck (ex officio
Member)

Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer) Helene Rossiter (Director of Corporate Services), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning) Phil Belden (Head of Operations) Sue Chapman (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Anne Rehill (Performance and Business Planning Manager), Jan Conway (Estates Manager) and Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager)

APOLOGIES

58. Apologies were received from Jo Carr, Mark Kemp-Gee and Tom Tupper.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

59. None.

MINUTES

60. The minutes of the Resources and Performance Committee meeting held on 24 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

61. With reference to minute 30, Pete West had sent late apologies.

URGENT MATTERS

62. None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

63. There were no members of the public present wishing to speak.

BUSINESS PLAN 2012/13

64. The Committee considered a report introduced by the Director of Corporate Services (Report RPC 01/12) that presented the draft Business Plan setting out the objectives and priorities proposed for the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) for the next year. The Business Plan would be presented to the Authority meeting on 13 March 2012 for approval.

65. The Director of Corporate Services drew the Committee's attention to the date of next the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) which is on 13 March 2012.

66. During discussion, officers clarified the following in response to Members' questions:

- the Purposes and Duty of National parks in England would be represented in a different format in the Business Plan after it had been designed for publication
- the wording in para 3.1 of Objective 2 would be revised
- any additional minor changes from Members should be fed back to the Director of Corporate Services in time for changes to be considered before the next Authority meeting

67. **Resolved:** that, subject to amendments,

- 1) the Business Plan 2012/13 is presented to the South Downs National Park Authority for approval on 13 March 2012

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR QUARTER 3 2011/12

68. The Committee considered a report introduced by the Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Report RPC 02/12) advising the Committee of the overall financial position of the Authority for 2011/12 as at Quarter 3.
69. The Committee's attention was drawn to the ring fencing of both the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) and Major Partnership Fund from Quarter 3. In addition it was noted that paragraph 3.18 of the report regarding planning delegation referred to the period 2011/12, not 2012/13.
70. In response to questions regarding the introduction of the vehicle fleet, the Director of Corporate Services explained since the report had been written, leasing arrangements were being explored. This would result in a change to the level of contributions to the earmarked reserves for vehicle replacements and the requirement for a leasing budget. In addition the current capital budget for vehicles would no longer be required but be replaced with leasing costs which will be included in the revenue budget. A report on the vehicle procurement would be brought to the Resources and Performance Committee once the procurement process was complete.
71. **Resolved:** that the Committee
- 1) notes the overall financial position as at Quarter 3 2011/12

QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING INFORMATION

72. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (Report RPC 03/12) and introduced by the Performance and Business Planning Manager. The report provided performance monitoring information for Quarter 3 (July to September 2011).
73. Members' attention was drawn to the Milestone Reporting at Appendix 1 to the report with the following updates:
- Objective 1.1 – the delay in the signing of the Protocol with Natural England had been due to a restructure, and the Protocol was with Natural England for signing
 - Objective 4.4 – the majority of the HR policies had been reviewed and all HR policies are included in the People Strategy that is currently being prepared
 - Objective 4.5 – the internal Sustainable Development Action Plan Group had held its first meeting
74. The presentation of the Milestone Reporting would be modified to clearly show progress against planned achievement dates as well as RAG status.
75. The Performance and Business Planning Manager explained that a section on Planning had not yet been included in the Impact Measures at Appendix 2 to the report due to the ongoing negotiations with the local planning authorities.
76. The capacity to measure impact over short timescales would be limited. It was proposed to report at 6 monthly intervals, and focused both outcomes and impacts and further consideration would be given to refining outcome indicators relating to the funding impact of the SCF.
77. **Resolved:** that the Committee
- 1) notes the Quarter 3 monitoring against the 2011/12 Business Plan; and
 - 2) agrees the revised impact measures in paragraph 2.4 and Appendix 2 to the report

WESTERN AREA BARN

78. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (Report RPC 04/12) and introduced by the Chief Executive Officer, that sought an 'in principle' agreement

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to pursue approval for the provision of capital sums in 2012/13 for improvements in the facilities within Western Area Office.

79. The Head of Operations provided the background that the Members had decided in June 2010 to establish 4 countryside management Area offices. The priority was the need for a suitable building for the Western Area, fit for purpose for staff and volunteers and use by partners, the design of which would need to be good enough to be approved by the Authority. Alternative places had been investigated, but nothing suitable had been found and were not so well-suited, not least because the Queen Elizabeth Country Park location was an accessible well-developed volunteer base, with partners based there and a public face too.
80. The Committee expressed the view that a strategy needed to be in place for the NPA offices before the Western Area was specifically considered. .
81. In response, officers explained that the Western Area was a priority, but as an Estates Strategy and associated Business Case could take 6 months to complete, there was a need for provision in the 2012-13 budget. It also enabled the officers to negotiate with potential landowners, consider a design/building fit for purpose, in the right location and on a long lease, as appropriate..
82. A new officer focussing on the Estates Strategy would be in post at the end of February 2012.
83. The Committee agreed to the deletion of 'Barn' from the recommendation and specific reference to the word 'Barn' in the budget reporting.
84. **Resolved:** that the Committee
- 1) approves the Western Area scheme for inclusion in the proposed 2012/13 capital programme, which will be reported as part of the 2012/13 budget for approval by the Authority on 13 March 2012

BUDGET 2012/13 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

85. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report RPC 05/12) to recommend the 2012/13 Budget to the Authority and note the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
86. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that the MTFS focussed on reducing core recurring costs to create flexibility in the future to fund new priorities identified in the Management Plan or support any further reduction in Defra grant. The MTFS is shown in Appendix 4 of the report and it is assumed that flexibility will be fully spent on new priorities and is therefore included in the table within 'other costs'. A note of clarification would be added to Appendix 2 the Analysis by CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice (SERCOP) and the Defra Grant Memorandum Functions for future reporting.
87. The Budget for 2012/13 assumes no price increase in planning fees.
88. Members made the following comments
- the health & safety issues identified in Report RPC 04/12 regarding the Western Area Office should be addressed as a priority rather than wait for the completion of the Estates Strategy
 - there was a need to be involved in partnerships to influence faster broadband connections in rural areas of the Park,
 - reference to the Barn should be deleted where necessary and replaced with Western Area Scheme
89. **Resolved :** that, subject to the changes agreed regarding the wording of the Western Area scheme, the Committee,

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- 1) approves the revenue 2012/13 Budget as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, and
- 2) approves the use of revenue reserves as set out in section 4 of the report, and
- 3) approves the capital programme as set out in section 5 of the report, and
- 4) notes the Medium Term Financial Strategy and resources projections

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT & ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2012/13

90. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report RPC 06/12) that detailed the Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS), Treasury Management Practices (TMP) and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) to be adopted by the Authority for 2012/13.
91. **Resolved:** that the Committee recommends that the Authority
- 1) approves the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2012/13 and Treasury Management Practices 2012/13 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report, and
 - 2) approves the Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13, including the ethical investment statement and benchmark risk factor of 0.05%, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report

REPORT ON MAJOR PROCUREMENT TENDERS

92. The Committee considered a report (Report RPC 07/12) introduced by the Director of Corporate Services which highlighted the progress on major procurement tenders.
93. The Committee were updated on the following procurements
- ICT – the closing date for receipt of Invitations to Tender (ITT) was 15 February 2012, followed by Panel review in March. The Committee Chair would be advised of the number of tenders received
 - Corporate Financial Services – a presentation had been received from one tender organisation, with another tenderer presentation expected. The results of the tender were due at the end of February 2012
 - Refurbishment of Capron House – interviews for the cost consultants and project manager/employer's agent would take place on 9 February 2012.
94. In response to a question, the Director of Corporate Services clarified that the ICT specification had been written in such a way as to allow innovation in responses and flexibility of service provision. Cost was a major factor of the scoring process of shortlisted candidates.
95. **Resolved:** that the Committee
- 5) notes the updated progress on major procurements in the following areas : ICT, Legal Services, Financial Services, and refurbishment of Capron House

REPORT ON IDOX IMPLEMENTATION

96. The Committee considered a report from the Director of Planning (Report RPC 08/12) informing the Committee of progress in relation to the implementation of the proposed IDOX planning administration project.
97. The IDOX Project Manager role had been extended to the end of May 2012 and the Director of Planning was confident that the IDOX system would be live on 2 April 2012.
98. Members' attention was drawn to the Project Update section of the report and in particular the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping element of the project and population of planning history data. The Director of Planning explained that only data from 2011/12 would

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be retrospectively populated on IDOX and historic data prior to that would remain with the legacy local planning authority.

99. **Resolved:** that the Committee

- 1) notes the progress in relation to the implementation of the IDOX planning administration project, which is on target to go live on 1 April 2012

CAPRON HOUSE UPDATE

100. The Committee received a verbal report from the Estates Manager on the progress made regarding the purchase and refurbishment of Capron House, Midhurst.
101. Project Governance arrangements were in place and the Programme Board, Project Team including staff representatives, and Member Advisory Steering Group had met and toured Capron House. Arrangements were being made for staff tours.
102. Multidiscipline technical consultants (comprising architects, mechanical, electrical & structural engineering consultants) had been appointed to review existing information, undertake necessary specialist surveys and produce feasibility and design options by the end of March 2012.
103. Interviews for cost consultants and project manager/employer's agent (as noted in minute 93) would take place on 9 February.
104. The various surveys and Feasibility Study, including sustainability elements, would identify if the timetable was achievable. Contingency plans for slippage post December 2012 included the extension of existing leases and alternative accommodation. It would be appropriate for a summary of the Feasibility output to be reported at a future committee meeting.

Chair

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm