

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

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 20 JUNE 2013

Held at Cowdray Hall, Midhurst at 2pm

Present:

Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	Vaughan Clarke
Barry Lipscomb	Deborah Urquhart	Pete West
Margaret Paren (ex officio Member)	Norman Dingemans (ex officio Member)	

Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Helene Rossiter (Director of Corporate Services), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy & Partnerships), Phil Belden (Director of Operations), Sue Chapman (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Anne Rehill (Performance and Business Planning Manager) and Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager).

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chief Executive Officer welcomed Ken Bodfish and Vaughan Clarke to the Committee.

APOLOGIES

2. Apologies were received from Jo Carr and Jeremy Leggett.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

3. Deborah Urquhart confirmed that she would step down after three years as Committee Chair, and thanked Committee members and officers for their support during this time.
4. Nominations were received from Barry Lipscomb and Ken Bodfish. Following a ballot, the voting was tied.

The meeting was adjourned from 2.05pm to 2.10pm

5. A second ballot was held and the voting remained tied. In accordance with Standing Orders, following the toss of a coin, Ken Bodfish was elected as Chair of the Resources and Performance Committee for the ensuing year and presided over the rest of the meeting.
6. The Chief Executive Officer thanked Deborah Urquhart, outgoing Chair, for her work on the Committee.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

7. Pete West as the only nomination was duly elected as Deputy Chair of the Resources and Performance Committee for the ensuing year.

Kevin Gardner left the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

8. Sebastian Anstruther declared a public service interest in Agenda item 10 (Transforming Cycling in the South Downs) as a landowner with land that may come into the bid at a later stage.

MINUTES

9. Subject to minute 191 bullet point amended to read £100,000, the minutes of the Resources and Performance Committee meeting held on 9 April 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

URGENT MATTERS

10. None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

11. There were no members of the public present.

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YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

12. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services (Report RPC 15/13) providing an overview of performance for 2012-13 together with proposals on how to monitor performance in the future. The National Park Indicators 2012-13 were tabled at the meeting.
13. The Director of Strategy and Partnerships provided background on the ongoing development of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) brand/identity, and the formation of the Communications and Engagement External Working Group for the benefit of the new members of the Committee.
14. In response to questions regarding Objective 2 Action 3.1 on the Exception Report for 2012-13 Business Plan milestones, the Director of Strategy and Partnerships clarified:
 - Two mechanisms had been agreed by which Members will be kept involved as the work programme is developed. The first was via reports from the Member Chair of the External Group to each Authority meeting. The second was by the use of up to two existing Member workshops per year to give updates on progress and secure Member input as we develop the brand and identity;
 - The Terms of Reference for the Communications and External Engagement Working Group, along with a high level timetable for the work programme, would be taken to the 25 July Authority meeting for final approval;
 - The use of the term 'rollout date' for December 2013 was misleading, since the work programme contains many elements, each of which had different timescales;
 - A licensed South Downs kite mark was developed by the South Downs Joint Committee and was already registered for firewood, venison and lamb. However, an Authority review showed very questionable benefits so any further development of accreditation would need careful thought as part of the overall work on brand and identity for the National Park.
15. Members and officers made the following comments:
 - A Working Group had been set up and an initial meeting taken place for the development of an IT Strategy;
 - Consultants had been engaged to assist with the review of the information governance arrangements as the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) did not have the expertise or capacity in house. Provision had been made in the budget, and assistance from other national park authorities and public bodies had been investigated;
 - Some key data can only be monitored annually;
 - The Corporate Plan measures feed into the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) indicators;
 - the standard National Park Indicators (NPI) were a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) requirement and some of the detail was not relevant to the Authority.
16. Discussion took place on the missing information on the Development Control NPI and the Committee was advised that provision of the data was work in progress. Concerns were raised that this information was a statutory reporting requirement using the IDOX planning system but was not yet available. The Acting Director of Planning confirmed that the matter would be investigated as a matter of urgency.
17. Quarterly Planning Performance would be reported to the Resources and Performance Committee from September 2013.
18. **Resolved:** that the Committee:
 - 1) Notes year end performance;
 - 2) Agrees the external reporting schedule in Appendix 4 to Report RPC 15/13; and

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- 3) Agrees the proposed changes to how and when performance is reported as set out in Section 5 to Report RPC 15/13

PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2013/13

19. The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report RPC 16/13) advising the Committee of the 2012/13 provisional outturn for both capital and revenue budget.
20. Members and officers made the following comments:
 - The net underspend shown on 3rd party payments was due to timing issues and where projects had slipped;
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule would be taken for approval by the full Authority;
 - Section 106 Agreements would be monitored by the Resources and Performance Committee;
 - The cash flow forecasts for investments during the year had been based on the assumption that the South Downs Centre capital funds of £2m would have been spent during 2012/13 and therefore not available for longer term investments. Subsequent to the decision on the South Downs Centre, £4.5 million has been invested during Quarter 1 of 2013/14. However, the Authority's investment returns had all overachieved against the benchmark investment rate;
 - Although reasonable for such a young organisation to have higher carry forward amounts, it was fully expected that this level of carry forward would reduce in future years;
 - The tightening of budgetary controls was welcomed.
21. **Resolved:** that the Committee:
 - 1) Notes the provisional outturn position for both revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2012/13; and
 - 2) Approves the carry forwards as detailed in Section 3.14 to 3.15 of Report RPC 16/13.

TRANSFORMING CYCLING IN THE SOUTH DOWNS; DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DfT) LINKING COMMUNITIES BID, SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY DELIVERY

22. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Strategy and Partnerships (Report RPC 17/13) seeking formal approval for the bid and, subject to its success, to approve the Authority's planned expenditure of £691,000 under the programme.
23. The Committee was advised that, although the Authority had received very encouraging feedback from the DfT about the bid, no formal announcement of the winners had yet been made.
24. The Committee's attention was drawn to the two projects on which the Authority itself would lead if the bid succeeds – the extension of the Centurion Way and provision of bespoke cycle parking in towns and villages. Members felt that electric bike hire (on which a Campaign for the Protection of Rural England trail already existed funded by the Authority), cycling to and from the SDNP, and bicycle hire pick up and drop off points should also be considered.
25. Members and officers made the following comments:
 - The strategic vision for cycling should be further developed as part of the Authority's Accord between the Authority and the four Highways Authorities;
 - There is strong support for the approach which seeks to link areas within the National Park to the communities around it;
 - The bid should be extensively publicised, in particular to Local Authorities who may not yet be aware, and linked into the NPMP consultation;

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- There was a correlation with CityDeals funding;
- Opportunities could arise for further joint bids with partners at hubs and gateways.

26. Resolved: that the Committee

- 1) Approves the South Downs National Park Authority's (the Authority) participation in *Transforming Cycling in the South Downs*, a bid to the department for Transport (DfT) Linking Communities fund;
- 2) Approves the Authority element of the proposed budget as outlined in Appendix 1 to Report 17/13; and
- 3) Agrees that the Authority as lead authority will, if the bid is successful, become the accountable body to DfT for this programme of works.

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

27. The Committee considered a report introduced by the Performance and Business Planning Manager (Report RPC 18/13) informing the Committee about the number of complaints, comments and compliments the Authority had received, and the lessons learnt
28. The Performance and Business Manager explained that currently if a complaint is received by the Authority relating to an outsourced service or host authority service provider, it is logged as a comment and signposted to the service provided for action. It was suggested that a robust Customer Relationship Management system be implemented.
29. A more detailed breakdown of complaints would be available in the next annual report, with comparative data from wider local authorities and in particular about planning monitoring with SDNP host authorities.
30. **Resolved:** that, the Committee:
 - 1) Notes the Report RPC 18/13 and the learning points identified; and
 - 2) Considers no further action or response is required as a result of the information in the report.

ESTATES AREA OFFICES UPDATE

31. The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Operations.
32. East Area Office (Stanmer) and Stanmer Park
 - All light fittings had been replaced in the portacabin;
 - Internal and external decoration and refurbishment started in June 2013;
 - Consultants had produced a draft report into the business use feasibility of the traditional farm buildings complex at Stanmer Park and a progress report would be taken to a future Committee meeting.
33. West Area Office (Queen Elizabeth Country Park)
 - A second container had been installed and kitted out for the tool store and workshop;
 - A tripartite vision and masterplan document, between Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council and the NPA was under development for the future of the Country Park, however any definitive plans were unlikely to impact the Authority until the 2014/15 financial year.
34. Central Area Office
 - Design and specification of a new lighting system was being progressed;
 - Agreement reached to expand storage facilities for rangers and volunteers using the second bay of the existing barn.
35. Wealden Heath
 - Fascias and gutters to be replaced or repaired;
 - Light fittings to be replaced;

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- Internal and external redecoration underway and a small meeting room would be provided for staff use.
36. South Downs Centre
- Programme of work by W Stirland commenced on 17 June 2013 with completion due end of March 2014;
 - Trustees were proceeding with listed building consent regarding the prior removal of the memorial from the Memorial Hall.

VOLUNTEER RANGER SERVICE (VRS)

37. The Committee received a presentation by the Director of Operations on the inputs and outputs of the South Downs VRS (copy available on the Intranet or by request to Member Services).
38. Members and officers made the following comments:
- The VRS attend many events and could sign up more volunteers for the SDNP;
 - When working with volunteers from other organisations, it should be about “mutual support”, to avoid perceptions of “poaching” for the VRS;
 - There were resource (staff and budget) implications in increasing volunteering (training and supervising etc);
 - The importance of the positive relationship between the VRS and NPA.
39. A proposal on the balance between the interaction of VRS Action Plan and the Authority would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee by the Director of Operations.

Chair

The meeting closed at 4.34pm