

**Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee**

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Agenda Item 5**

**MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2012**

Held at Capron House, Midhurst, at 2.00pm

Present:

Norman Dingemans (Chair)	Lewis Doyle (independent Member)	Ken Hunt (independent Member)
Sue Saville	Sue Seward	Margaret Paren (ex-officio)
Charles Peck (ex-officio)		

Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer), Helene Rossiter (Director of Corporate Services), Anne Rehill (Performance and Business Planning Manager), Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager), Louise Read (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mark Dallen (Audit Manager))

**APOLOGIES**

I03. Apologies were received from Sebastian Anstruther and Mark Kemp-Gee.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

I04. None.

**MINUTES**

I05. The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 17 April 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

**URGENT MATTERS**

I06. None.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

I07. There were no members of the public present.

**CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

I08. The Committee considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services (Report AC 12/12) presenting the SDNPA Corporate Risk Register as at May 2012.

I09. During discussion, officers clarified the following in response to Members' questions:

- risk 37 (Health and Safety of staff) – the Health and Safety Policy was now complete and had been circulated to all staff for signature. Further training/guidance would be developed to cover specific areas of the policy e.g. lone working;
- risk 57 (failure to take effective action on the staff survey/Members awayday) – this risk would be considered by the Resources and Performance Committee
- risk 58 (IDOX not delivering service improvements) – the ongoing resolution of small technical issues was expected to take several months;

## **Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee**

- dialogue was ongoing with the relevant local authorities to minimise the potential for reputational risk;
- risk 60 (failure of partnership working on The Vision) – ‘pillars’ had been developed as part of the structure for the South Downs National Park Management Plan and early indications were that they had been positively received by partners.

**110. Resolved:** that the Committee:

1. approves the Corporate Risk Register as at May 2012; and
2. refers risk 57 (failure to take effective action on the staff survey/Members awayday) for consideration by the Resources & Performance Committee

## **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION 2011-12**

- 111.** The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report AC 13/12) which was introduced by the Audit Manager.
- 112.** The Audit Manager drew Members’ attention to the overall opinion of Reasonable Assurance. This result indicated a level of consistency with the 2010/11 opinion.
- 113.** The Director of Corporate Services reported that robust systems had been implemented for procurement and a dedicated Finance & Procurement Manager would be in post in early August. The Audit Manager felt confident that all issues had been addressed regarding existing procurement activities.
- 114. Resolved:** that the Committee:
1. notes the content of the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2011-12, and specifically the Audit opinion for 2011-12 and Internal Audit coverage and issues emerging.

## **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2011-12**

- 115.** The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer (Report AC 14/12) informing Members of the provisional outturn for 2011-12, prior to consideration by the Resources and Performance Committee on 21 June 2012. The report was for noting only, as the Financial Statement would be brought for approval in September 2012.
- 116.** During discussion, officers clarified the following in response to Members’ questions:
- Carry Forward items were reported to recognise the artificial annual cut off date of 31 March under the Financial Regulations and were a proper financial mechanism as funding could otherwise be lost;
  - it was good practice to be transparent regarding Carried Forward items and staff needed to be confident that they would be able to carry on with work on projects;
  - the Committee was reminded that the previous budget had been set in the first operational year of the Authority, and with the challenge of setting realistic timescales for such a new organisation;
  - the Director of Corporate Services did not envisage future large Carried Forward figures for Corporate Services as contracts for services such as IT would have been completed.
- 117. Resolved:** that the Committee:

## **Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee**

- I. notes the provisional outturn position for both revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2011-12 and approves the Carry Forwards listed in paragraph 3.16 of report AC14/2.

## **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2011- 12**

- I18. The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer outlining the relevant framework, technical update and risk assessment (copy available on request).
- I19. The Chief Finance Officer clarified that formal approval of the Financial Statement would be sought in September 2012, preceded by more detailed training.

Lewis Doyle left the meeting at 2.58pm

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2011-12**

- I20. The Committee considered a report by the Monitoring Officer (Report AC 15/12), seeking approval of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2011-12 to accompany the Authority's Statement of Accounts.
- I21. The Chief Finance Officer reminded the Committee that the AGS was a legal requirement and had been developed based on Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) guidance.
- I22. In response to a comment from a Member, the Chief Finance Officer agreed that the Internal Audit Opinion needed to be taken into account for the AGS and the Monitoring Officer would include reference to it in the text.
- I23. **Resolved:** that the Committee:
  - I. approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2011-12 to accompany the Authority's Statement of Accounts.

## **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

- I24. The Director of Corporate Services reported that specialist advice for an Equalities and Diversity policy and framework was being procured, and the successful tender would be determined at the end of June 2012. A Steering Group, to include Authority Members, was being set up.

## **ITEMS FOR NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- I25. The following item would be considered for the next Audit Committee meeting. The Committee Chair confirmed that the date of the meeting had been changed to 13 September 2012 and the meeting would be held at 2pm.
  - Role of proposed new Standards and Audit Committee

## **CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 3.11pm