

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

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 24 MAY 2017**

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 1:00pm.

Present:

Sebastian Anstruther    Norman Dingemans (Chair)    Gill Mattock  
Carole Nicholson

Ex Officio Members:    Margaret Paren

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Kathleen Downes (Internal Audit), Robin Parr (Head of Governance)& Catherine Sydenham (Committee Officer).

**OPENING REMARKS**

146.    The Chair informed those present that: SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regard themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and will act in the best interests of the Authority and of the Park, rather than as representatives of any interest groups.

**ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

147.    Apologies were received from: Lewis Doyle (Independent Committee Member), Jim Sheppard and Ex Officio members Neville Harrison and Alun Alesbury.

148.    The Chair reminded members that previous Committee Members Vaughan Clark and Karen Roberts were no longer members of the Authority

**ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

149.    There were none.

**ITEM 3: MINUTES**

150.    The minutes of the meeting on 21 February were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING**

151.    There were none.

**ITEM 6: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

152.    There were no requests from members of the public to address the committee.

**ITEM 7: INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

153.    The Internal Auditor presented report GOV10/17. The Committee considered the report and commented that when reviewing Planning Appeals Performance, the review should also include the host authorities

154.    In response to questions officers clarified:

- The Planning Performance recommendation (R3) in Appendix 3 had a long due date to allow the review to be completed thoroughly and also allow time for comparative work with other Local Authorities.
- OMT had approved the Procurement Guide.

155.    **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted progress against the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan (2016/17) and the implementation of recommendations previously made.

**ITEM 8: PURCHASING CARDS -UPDATE ON PROGRESS FOLLOWING AUDIT REPORT**

156.    The Head of Governance presented report GOV11/17 and it was clarified that:

- Paragraph 2.3 of the report identified significant improvements in the numbers of cardholders reviewing expenditure. In 2015/16 30% of expenditure was not reviewed by cardholder and in February 2017 97.6% of transactions were reviewed by the cardholder.
- Paragraph 2.4 of the report identified significant improvement had been made with expenditure being reviewed by the authorising officer. In 2015/16 76% of the

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expenditure had been approved and in February 2017 99.2% of all expenditure was approved by an authorising officer.

157. The Committee Considered the report and commented:
- All transactions should be approved by authorising officer before payment. The Committee requested further clarification for the 0.8% of transactions that were not approved by an authorising officer.
  - Good progress had been made with establishing controls over the use of Purchasing Cards and this should be added to the Audit Plan to review again in 1 year.
158. In response to questions officers clarified:
- It was not possible for 100% of expenditure to be reviewed or approved due to the nature of sickness and competing priorities.
159. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the progress made in establishing proper controls over the use of purchasing cards and in the compliance with those controls

**ITEM 9: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

160. The Head of Governance presented the report GOV12/17 and clarified that:
- A new risk, in relation to the Authorities' ability to identify, manage and deliver projects had been added to the risk register.
  - Risk 6 (Local Plan) has been updated to take into account the potential impacts of the quashing of elements of the Lewes Joint Core strategy.
161. The Committee considered the report and commented:
- Each risk should be looked at separately as sometimes it is better to reduce the probability rather than the impact and in other circumstances it could be better to reduce the impact not the probability.
  - A pessimistic view should be taken when assessing the risks.
162. In response to questions officers clarified:
- SDNPA are currently seeking legal advice with regards to housing in the Joint Core Strategy and have advised all Neighbourhood Plans to continue as envisaged.
  - With regards to Risk 13 'Partner Expectations' the Partnership Management Plan is currently being reviewed and it is possible that the 57 policies may remain the same but there will be a new delivery framework.
  - The loss of EU project funding has been mitigated against and BREXIT has its own risk, members asked if BREXIT risks could be referred to more within the text of Risk 12 and 13.
  - Cyber risk is a very real threat and the SDNPA IT systems are constantly reviewed and updated. The threat comes from partners whose systems maybe not be so robust. The SDNPA management team manage this risk on the corporate strategy risk register.
163. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- 1) Noted the Corporate Risk Register, with amendments to risk 12&13 identified at the meeting, as at May 2017
  - 2) Considered if any risks should be referred to the Policy & Programme Committee.

**ITEM 10: ANNUAL AUDIT FEE LETTER 2017/18**

164. The Committee considered report GOV13/17 and clarified that this was the last year under the current arrangements and a new auditor was being sought.
165. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the 2017/18 fee letter.

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**PROJECTS, PERFORMANCE, EVALUATIONS & REVIEWS**

**ITEM 11: GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

166. The Head of Governance presented report GOV14/17 and clarified that:
- An additional point set out in paragraph 2.4 relating to webcasting the meeting had been added since the Member Workshop on the 30 March 2017
  - The paper identified the proposed Standing Order changes
167. The committee considered the report and commented:
- At its first meeting the new committee, Policy and Resources, should consider whether they wish the committee to be webcast.
  - The new Committee Structure and cycle should be reviewed in 1 year to establish whether it is working
  - In its first year the new Committee should have 2 Deputy Chairs in order that Member knowledge from both current committees can be fed through into the new Policy and Resources Committee
  - This has been a quick, thorough and sensible review and Members that had been involved were thanked.
168. In response to questions Officers clarified:
- There will be 5/6 meetings a year of the new Policy and Resources Committee with Task and Finish groups will be established.
  - Traditionally Local Authorities have managed Public Speakers by allowing them to speak at the beginning of the meeting and not directly before the item they wished to speak on. There is currently nothing in Standing Orders preventing the Chair of the Committee allowing Members of the Public to speak directly ahead of the item that they were referring to. The time of this could still be limited to 3 minutes in total and not 3 minutes per item.
169. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
- 1) Noted the outcomes of the work of the Governance Review Task and Finish Group;
  - 2) Recommended to the Authority the changes to the committee structure and ways of working set out in the interim report in Appendix 1, and other changes set out in this report to take effect from the Authority's AGM in July 2017 save that it was recommended that the issue of webcasting the meetings of the new Policy and Resources Committee should be delegated to that Committee to determine;
  - 3) Delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Governance Committee to review the Authority's standing orders and make proposed changes necessary to give effect to the new committee structure, ways of working and other changes set out in the report as amended at the meeting, and submit these changes for consideration to the NPA in July 2017; and
  - 4) Recommended to the Authority that provision be made for the new Policy and Resources Committee to elect two Deputy Chairs

**ITEM 12: UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011**

170. The Head of Governance presented report GOV15/17 and clarified if Members wished to run a further round of recruitment for a second Independent Person, additional Members needed to be added to the Task and Finish Group as one member appointed to the group is no longer a member of the Authority.
171. Members considered the report and commented:
- The advertisement could be placed in different places to attract a better response.
172. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee appoint Sebastian Anstruther, Gill Mattock and Carole Nicholson to the Task and Finish Group, established by the committee at its meeting on 21 February 2017

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**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 1:47pm.