

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 19 JULY 2018

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 10am.

Present: Sebastian Anstruther, Ken Bodfish (Chair), Tim Burr, Jo Carr, Janet Duncton, Philip Ede, Daniel Humphreys, Helen Jackson, Russell Oppenheimer and Pete West.

Ex-officio Members: Margaret Paren and Norman Dingemans.

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Karen Everett (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Anne Rehill (Performance and Projects Manager), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Robin Parr (Head of Governance) and Catherine Sydenham (Committee Officer).

Also Attended by: Mike Hughes (Performance and Project Manager), Liz Gent (Project Management Officer), Allison Thorpe (Access and Recreation Lead) Tom Wilkins (Ernst Young – External Auditor) and Paul King (Ernst Young – External Auditor)

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chief Executive welcomed all those present and stated that:
 - The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.
 - SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility to ensure that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regards themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. Apologies were received from Chris Dowling, Tom Fourcade and Carole Nicholson.

ITEM 2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

3. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that nominations for the position of Chair closed 5 working days before the meeting and as Ken Bodfish was the only nomination, Ken Bodfish was duly elected as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee until the end of his term of office in March 2019.

ITEM 3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

4. The Chair informed the Committee that 2 nominations for the positions of the Deputy Chair had been received. Standing orders stated that only 1 Deputy Chair could be appointed unless the Authority had expressly determined otherwise.
5. It was proposed and seconded to defer the appointment of a Deputy Chair until the November 2018 meeting as the current practice of having two deputy chairs was felt to have been beneficial to the running of the Committee.
6. **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed that the appointment of Deputy Chair be deferred until the November 2018 meeting of the Committee and that the Committee recommend that the Full Authority determine that 2 deputy Chairs may be appointed to the Policy and Resources Committee.

ITEM 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

7. Sebastian Anstruther declared a Personal Interest in Item 14 as landowner on which LiDAR data had been collected as part of the Secrets of the High Woods project.

ITEM 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 MAY 2018

8. The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 24 May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:
- Change the spelling of 'Arrising' to 'Arising' in Item 4.
 - Amend the title of Item 10 from '201/18' to '2017/18'.
 - Minute 330 bullet 4 amend the word 'adverse' to 'averse'.

ITEM 6. MATTERS ARISING

9. There were none.

ITEM 7. URGENT MATTERS

10. There were none.

ITEM 8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

11. There were no public speakers.

AUDIT

ITEM 9. ANNUAL AUDIT FEE LETTER 2018/19

12. The Chief Finance Officer presented report (PR28/18) and reminded members of the report content. The new Auditors, Grant Thornton, would start in January 2019 and would be the Authority's external auditor for the next 5 years.
13. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the 2018/19 fee letter.

ITEM 10. AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2017/18 AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

14. The Chief Finance Officer presented report (PR29/18) and reminded members of its content.
15. The Committee commented that:
- It would be useful for Members to have more information and clarification around related party transactions.
16. In response to questions officers clarified that:
- SDNPA held section 106 funds in its reserves. The creditors were the applicants that applied for the funds. The Planning department kept a close eye on the reserves to ensure that the time period within which the funds must be used did not lapse.
 - It was normal that short term debtors were classified as those debts due within 12 months. The majority of the short term debtors were connected to grant income due.
 - The Letter of Representation should be amended to reflect that the Policy and Resources Committee was responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the accounts and not the management. The amendments were as follows:
 - A2 and A4 would be amended to read 'as members of management and governance of the Authority....'
 - B1 would be amended to read 'we acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and oversight of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud'.
 - National discussions were happening with regards to the administration of the Local Government pensions schemes to make the administration more efficient.
17. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee

1. Noted the Commentary on the Statement of Accounts set out in Appendix 1;
2. Approved the audited Statement of Accounts 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 2;
3. Approved the Letter of Representation as set out in Appendix 3 along with the amendments made by the Committee;
4. Noted the finding of the external auditor in their Audit Results Reported elsewhere on this agenda.

ITEM 11. AUDIT RESULTS REPORT 2017/18

18. The External Auditor presented report (PR30/18) and reminded members of the report content.
19. The Committee commented that:
 - It would be helpful for Members to have guidance on declarations of interest with regard to grants being allocated within their local areas.
20. In response to questions officers clarified that:
 - The “other information” referred to on page 41 of the report related to narrative statements provided alongside the financial statements by the Chief Financial Officer.
21. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee considered the findings as set out in the 2017/18 Audit Results Report.

PERFORMANCE AND PROCEDURES

ITEM 12. QUARTER FOUR AND YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18

22. The Performance and Projects Manager and Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager introduced report (PR31/18) and gave a presentation.
23. The Committee commented that:
 - The new Partnership Management Plan (PMP) would be clearer and simpler, identify what the targets were and who was the lead partner
 - No RAG score was identified with regard to day visits to Museums.
 - Concerned about the slow transition from ELS/HLS to countryside stewardship schemes. It would be helpful for members to have comparison data to areas that were not designated National Parks.
 - Information with regard to greenhouse gas emission needed further clarity around the figures stated.
 - Cultural Heritage should form a part of Whole Estate Plans, Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans.
 - Useful to report which businesses were using the shared identity
 - Some people found the planning website difficult to use and therefore gave up before making their objection.
 - It would be useful to have a sentence in the Annual Report explaining what the Heathlands Reunited project was.
24. In response to questions officers clarified that:
 - Partnerships could be challenging as things affected partners beyond SDNPA control which had a direct effect on project delivery.
 - SSSI was currently the only way that SDNPA was able to measure landscape change. Innovative ways to measure landscape change were being researched such as satellite imaging.
 - The measuring of day visits to museums and heritage sites had been deprioritised due to it being a complex way of collecting the information and not all organisations had the

data that was being asked for.

- Routes promoted as accessible would be reported as case studies to the committee in future.
- The Lawton Group of Non-Government Organisations (NGO) had indicated that they could work with the SDNPA on elements of the Future of Farming Pilot if the scheme did not go ahead with Defra.
- A specific item with regard to volunteering and engagement, including youth volunteering, would be brought to a future committee.
- Measuring within the new PMP would be refined so that fewer things are measured better.
- A successful Apprenticeship open day had been held on the 4 July and it was hoped that 7 apprentice posts would be filled by the end of the year.
- The Trust and the Authority are separate bodies and the Chair of the Trust would attend NPA to report on their activity.
- Connection with the West Sussex Youth Council and work with SDNPA would be considered further.
- A shared identity toolkit was available for business to use, but Officer time limited uptake due to most businesses needing assistance.
- Green Infrastructure work would be incorporated as part of the Health and Wellbeing work and the timescale for delivery was yet to be determined
- Communication was identified as important factor within the Planning Survey.
- Much of the communication the Authority receives was now by email or was via social media.

25. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

1. Received and approved the year end performance report
2. Received and approved the Annual Review

ITEM 13. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

26. The Head of Governance introduced report PR32/18.

27. The Committee commented that:

- Members should be reminded about the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) workshop on the 9 August 2018 and the title should be clearer.
- Risk 9 and 13 should be combined as they were similar.
- It was encouraging that none of the risks had increased and were either static or decreasing.

28. In response to questions officers clarified that:

- The Authority had previously decided that Planning Committee was the committee that would decide how CIL payments would be used.
- A CIL workshop would be held for all members on 9 August 2018 and for those that could not attend notes would be distributed.
- All CIL funds would be used for projects, apart from an agreed proportion for running costs, and no funds would be absorbed into general budgets.
- All 'New Homes Bonus' funds went to Local Authorities and not to National Park Authorities.

29. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the corporate risk register as at July 2018.

ITEM 14. ANNUAL REVIEW OF STRATEGIC FUND, AND THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND AND LOCAL PROJECT SUPPORT

30. The Project Management Officer introduced report PR33/18 and gave a presentation.
31. The Committee commented that:
- It would be useful for members to know at an early stage what was happening within their local areas.
 - Green Infrastructure was a major project that was currently under budget. The outputs should be incorporated into the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) and therefore it was urgent that they were completed.
 - The funds received for the Fittleworth shop had been gratefully received within the local community.
 - It would be useful for Members to have information of the overall picture of the Strategic and the Sustainable Communities Funds, what funds were available, what had been spent where and what the output was.
 - In future the Strategic and the Sustainable Communities funds should be presented as 2 separate items.
32. In response to questions officers clarified that:
- Each Ranger Team received the same amount of money to spend in order that projects were equally spread across the whole of the National Park. It was down to the individual Ranger Team whether they choose to support 1 large project or lots of smaller projects.
 - LiDAR data collected as part of the Secrets High Woods Project should be available to all landowners on which data was collected.
33. **RESOLVED** That the Committee:
1. Received the overview of major project delivery and the year-end budget position of the Strategic Fund.
 2. Received the year-end position of the Sustainable Communities Fund and Local Project support.

STRATEGY & POLICY

ITEM 15. ENTERPRISE & INVESTMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP (EITFG) TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FORWARD PROGRAMME

34. The Head of Business Services introduced report PR34/18 and stated a Member Workshop with regard to the Seven Sisters Country Park would be held on 16 October 2018.
35. The Committee commented that:
- There was no reason not to extend the duration of the EITFG.
 - The EITFG would welcome additional members.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Agreed the updated terms of reference set out at appendix I.
2. Delegated Authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Authority to appoint additional members to the Task and Finish Group as set out at paras 3.3-3.5.
3. Noted the forward programme of activity for the Task and Finish Group.

GRANTS & PROJECTS

ITEM 16. PROJECT APPROVAL – EGRETS WAY

36. The Access and Recreation Lead introduced report PR35/18.

37. The Committee commented that:
- They welcomed and supported the completion of the next 2 phases of the Egrets Way which would connect Lewes to Newhaven and provide a safe cycle way for families.
 - It was helpful to have maps circulated prior to the Committee and information regarding who was responsible for ongoing capital works, maintenance and public liability within the report.
 - The route would need good publicity so that people knew it was there and therefore could use it.
38. In response to questions officers clarified that:
- The landowners that Phase 4 and 5 would go through had given their permission.
 - Future maintenance of the Egrets Way would be with the Egrets Way Committee, not the SDNPA.
 - The route would not currently be adopted as a Right of Way by East Sussex District Council and the Chief Executive would continue to raise this in future meetings with East Sussex District Council.
39. Members debated the type of surface to be used and whether it was suitable for road or leisure bikers.
40. Russell Oppenheimer left the meeting.
41. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed the release of £60,000 from the Strategic Fund for the Egrets Way Shared Use Path Phase 4 and 5.
42. The Chair closed the meeting at 1pm.

CHAIR