

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 31 JULY 2019

Held at Capron House, Midhurst at 11am

Present: Sebastian Anstruther, Ken Bodfish (Chair), Helen Jackson, Doug Jones, Henry Potter, Andrew Shaxson, Isabel Thurston and Richard Waring.

Independent Members of the Committee: Carole Nicholson, Tom Fourcade.

Ex-officio Members: Margaret Paren.

SDNPA Officers: Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy & Management), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Steven Bedford (Principal Accountant), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services) and Robin Parr (Head of Governance).

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed all those present and stated that:
 - SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded 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, Chris Henry, Russell Oppenheimer, Helen Burton, Michael Lunn and Vanessa Rowlands

ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. There were none.

ITEM 3: URGENT MATTERS

4. There were none

ITEM 4: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

5. There were no public speakers

AUDIT

ITEM 5: AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

6. The Principal Accountant introduced report PR19-20-08 and reminded Members of the report content.
7. The Committee commented that:
 - For future years it would be in the Authority's interest to broaden out the accounts to demonstrate the wider impact the Authority makes in the National Park, including additional money levered in through the work of the Authority. This should also include Natural capital accounts.
 - An integrated approach to reporting the accounts, taking a "triple bottom line" approach would better demonstrate the impact of the National Park Authority and help demonstrate the value the National Park Authority adds to the National Park.
8. In response to questions officers clarified that:
 - Mortality assumption figures were provided by the actuary and were based on national workforce trends.

- There was no historic risk arising from staff who had transferred into the Authority, although staff who joined the Authority from the Joint Committee would have joined with previous pension rights.
- The McCloud judgement had identified a number of historical equalities issues that related to age discrimination, but the impact of this ruling for the Authority was not fully known as legislation to correct the issues identified was still awaited. It was expected that the risk to the Authority was very low.
- It was noted that the general reserves were held at the CIPFA recommended level of 5%, although the Authority did have other allocated reserves such as for planning and estates. There was a risk that the Authority was seen to be holding too much in reserve and this needed to be kept under review.
- Scenario planning for different financial positions had been undertaken in previous years but not since the fixed grant arrangement had been introduced. There was currently no indication that National Park Authority grants would be subject to cuts.
- Officers undertook to look into how integrated reporting could be developed and a report would be brought to the next meeting of the committee to outline how this may be delivered.

9. **RESOLVED:** The Committee:

- 1) **Noted the Commentary on the Statement of Accounts set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2) **Approved the audited Statement of Accounts 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 2;**
- 3) **Approved the Letter of Representation as set out in Appendix 3.1**

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 11.45