

Minutes of the meeting held at Yoredale, Bainbridge on Friday, 15 February 2008.

Present:

WH Brown, W Fenten, D Heather, KJ Lancaster, SR Macaré (in the Chair), Mrs Y Peacock, Dr KM Petyt and Ms N Stedman.

1/08 PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2007, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2/08 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No notifications of public questions or of the intention to make a statement had been received.

3/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were presented from Mrs S Marshall, A Osborne and S Shaw-Wright.

4/08 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

No declarations of lobbying were made at the meeting.

5/08 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE AND PLANNING PORTAL PROJECT

CONSIDERED – the report of the Communications Manager.

A demonstration was given of the work undertaken in developing the Authority's website and it was reported that future development work would include an on-line shop, links to the peregrine watch at Malham, weather information, 'e-cards' and enhanced mapping information. Members were advised that certain external groups, including Dales Volunteers were able to access an 'extranet' and were informed that this facility could also be made available to members. Some members suggested that members should have access to the full Authority intranet and it was pointed out that as staff were able to obtain remote access to the intranet such a facility for members should be available. It was pointed out that much of members' information requirements were likely to be available via the website and that in other authorities the provision of full remote access for members was very little used.

The Chief Executive stated that the logistics of access was unlikely to be an issue. However, there were other factors that would need to be considered, including, IT support and security. He stated that, at some stage, Authority members may be expected or required to make greater use of IT, although some members urged caution, based on their experiences as District and County Councillors where each Authority provided IT equipment to its members at great expense with, in a number of cases, the equipment remaining unused.

The Sustainable Tourism Manager stated that IT and the website was now a fundamental part of the Authority's communications strategy. A member endorsed the progress made with development of the website and stated that the national parks 'Electronic Government' group was an excellent example of joint working amongst national parks where experience and expertise were shared.

A member referred to the process of project management and the Head of Park Management drew members' attention the work undertaken by the Access and Recreation Manager and stated that a presentation could be made to the next meeting of the Committee on that work.

Some discussion took place on the "Recommendations for the Future", in particular the means by which a project manager should be supported.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report and further comments be noted;
- (b) a presentation be made to the next meeting of the Committee on the work undertaken by the Access and Recreation Manager on project management;
- (c) the Corporate Management Member Champion and W Fenten, together with appropriate officers meet to consider and report to a future meeting on the issues and options involved in providing access by members to either an 'extranet' or the Authority's full 'intranet';
- (d) the following 'recommendations for the future' be endorsed:
 - Major corporate projects which involve input from officers across the Authority and involve some critical deadlines must be clearly identified as a project, with a detailed project plan with clear and realistic estimates of the time and resources involved. This must include a budget (even if this subsequently changes) and a plan for dealing with staff changes should this occur. Regular formal progress reports should be made to the Senior Management Team (SMT) as a matter of course and SMT should ensure that the necessary resources are made available to Lead Project Officers to ensure that projects are delivered.
 - Good communication is critical to good project management. Even if the links between departments are not immediately obvious, they can in fact be significant in major corporate projects.
 - The Authority should recognise that with major corporate projects where the technology involved is changing on an almost constant basis, it will be necessary either (a) to pay the market rate (likely to be higher than the YDNPA salary scale) to employ an expert with the necessary technological expertise, or (b) to be prepared to access this expertise externally through contractors.
 - Full account needs to be taken of the necessary IT facilities that officers require to do their jobs both before and during a project. It should also be recognised that these requirements will not always be 'standard issue'.

6/08 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2007/08

CONSIDERED – the report of the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED -

That:

(a) the Annual Governance Statement be approved for inclusion within the 2007/08 Statement of Final Accounts; and

(b) the External Auditor's recommendation that the Chairman of the Authority signs the Annual Governance Statement prior to incorporation into the 2007/08 Statement of Final Accounts be noted.

7/08 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

CONSIDERED – the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to adopt the revised governance principles set out the Appendix to the report of the Solicitor/Monitoring Officer.

**8/08 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2007/08
PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AT END OF QUARTER 3**

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

RESOLVED –

That the progress made towards achieving the actions set out in the Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08 be noted.

9/09 STANDING ORDERS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to approve the proposed changes to Standing Orders set out in the Appendix to the report of the Chief Executive.