

**YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

ITEM 4

Minutes of the meeting held at West Burton Village Hall, West Burton, Leyburn on Tuesday 25 May 2021.

Members Present:

John Amsden, Nick Cotton, Kevin Frea, Julie Hutton, Carl Lis, Karin Sedgwick, Neil Swain (in the Chair) and Derek Twine.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chair welcomed Members back to the first face-to-face Committee meeting since March 2020.

11/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Richard Foster, Neil Heseltine, Ian McPherson, Stuart Parsons and Gillian Quinn.

12/21 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

13/21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS / STATEMENTS

No public questions or statements had been received.

14/21 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

There were no declarations of lobbying.

15/21 DRAFT FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

The Committee CONSIDERED the report and presentation of the Head of Finance.

Members commended the Authority's financial performance over the past year, which was particularly impressive given the challenging circumstances caused by Covid-19.

RESOLVED –

To NOTE the contents of the report and to APPROVE the carry-forward of 2020/21 budget allocations into 2021/22 totalling £390k (net) as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

17/21 ACTION PLAN 2021/22

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, which was presented to the meeting by the Chief Executive in the Deputy Chief Executive's absence.

The Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Defra's confirmation of the details of the "Farming in Protected Landscapes Scheme" was expected imminently; and
- North Yorkshire County Council had recently agreed to contribute £25k towards the repair of the flood-damaged bridge at Starbotton.

The Head of Finance clarified that "thin clients" referred to at 39.11 of the Action Plan are a type of computer.

Discussion included the following:

- Members commended the draft Action Plan, which was both aspirational and ambitious;
- The initiatives to engage young people were very much supported as providing long term benefits for the future;
- As core Defra grant decreases and external project-based income increases, it will be increasingly importance that the latter includes funding for central costs, to cover the administration of these projects;
- There was a request that an additional column be added to the Action Plan to indicate which officer is responsible for each action;
- Concern was expressed about the future of farming, particularly hill farming and the lack of young people coming into farming. New Government policies will bring about changes in the balance between potentially competing aims, including maintaining agricultural production, preserving the landscape views of the National Park, increasing nature recovery and mitigating climate change.

RESOLVED –

To approve the Action Plan as the basis for managing the Authority's day-to-day work in 2021/22.

18/21 PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

Discussion included the following:

- The Member Champion for Corporate Management commended the draft Strategy to the Committee for approval;
- Members praised the clarity of the draft Strategy and the approach using the three sections – rationale, how the aims will be achieved, and how we’ll know if they’ve been successful;
- Members requested annual information on metrics for future reports, to demonstrate progress made;
- It was suggested that the upcoming review of the Volunteer Strategy could usefully echo and reflect some of the concepts and principles of the People Strategy.

RESOLVED –

To approve the People Strategy 2021 – 2026.

19/21 INCOME GENERATION STRATEGY – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Director of Conservation and Community and had already noted the potential impact of the “Farming in Protected Landscapes” scheme, details of which were still awaited.

The Committee commended the progress made and NOTED the report.

20/21 ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT 2020-21

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

21/21 ANNUAL HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that, subject to the Government’s road-map for Covid restrictions remaining on track, blended working would be rolled out from July. The approach would be formal, focussed and flexible.

In response to member questions, the Head of Human Resources advised that the costs of recruitment per post were higher than last year, as some difficult-to-recruit roles had required additional, wider advertising to attract candidates, which had increased the cost.

The Committee NOTED the report.

22/21 STAFFING REPORT

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Head of Human Resources.

In response to questioning, the Head of Human Resources confirmed that the 11 posts advertised for last year (referred to in the previous report) had been filled; that recruitment

was currently underway for 4 apprentices with a planned August start date; and that the Authority used the Incentive Payment Programme but not the Kickstart Programme.

The Committee NOTED the report.

23/21 ANNUAL VOLUNTEER RESOURCES REPORT

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Volunteers Development Officer.

The Director of Corporate Services updated the Committee with the following additional information:

- There had been 318 Dales Volunteers during the past year, compared to 310 the year before;
- 2066 volunteer days were undertaken in the past year, compared to 7778 the previous year – Covid-19 had greatly impacted on these figures;
- The percentage of Dales Volunteers from under-represented groups had fallen – 12% this past year and 17.5% the previous year. Covid-19 had led to the cancellation of the learning and engagement (outreach) programme which is specifically focussed on under-represented groups. In addition, the College and University placement schemes and the Young Archaeology Clubs had also been cancelled, both of which normally contribute to under-represented groups' days.

The Committee NOTED the report.

24/21 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

The Head of Human Resources confirmed that none of the long-term absences were Covid-related and were for different, unrelated reasons.

The Committee NOTED the report.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:36.