

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

ITEM 2

Minutes of the meeting held at Skipton Town Hall, High Street, Skipton BD23 1AH, on Tuesday, 28 September 2021.

Members Present:

John Amsden, Nick Cotton, Richard Foster, Kevin Frea, Neil Heseltine, Julie Hutton, Carl Lis, Stuart Parsons, Gillian Quinn, Karin Sedgwick, Neil Swain and Derek Twine (in the Chair following his election).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

25/21 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Derek Twine was nominated for the position of Chair of the Committee. Following his election address to Members,

RESOLVED –

By unanimous vote, that Derek Twine be elected Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, to hold office until the first committee meeting following the annual meeting of the Authority in 2022.

DEREK TWINE IN THE CHAIR

26/21 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Nick Cotton was nominated for the position of Deputy Chair of the Committee. Following his election address to Members,

RESOLVED –

By unanimous vote, that Nick Cotton be elected Deputy Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, to hold office until the first committee meeting following the annual meeting of the Authority in 2022.

27/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ian McPherson.

28/21 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2021, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

29/21 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS / STATEMENTS**

No public questions or statements had been received.

30/21 **DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING**

There were no declarations of lobbying.

31/21 **STATEMENT OF FINAL ACCOUNTS 2020/21**

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Head of Finance, who advised the Committee that, due to staffing issues faced by the external auditors and pension issues, the deadline of 30 November 2021 for publication of the final audited accounts will be missed.

In response to questioning by Members, the Director of Corporate Services and Chief Executive advised that:

- the increase in net liability in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme is largely the result of changes in pension fund asset values over the past year in response to financial markets. Annual fluctuations are to be expected, particularly given the way that the assets and liabilities of the fund are valued ahead of their inclusion in the annual accounts. Longer term, the Authority's net pension liability will be managed out, by adjusting contribution rates as necessary and through growth in the value of assets over time: the long-term position is examined every three years by the Pension Fund's actuaries, and future contribution rates will be set to ensure liabilities are covered by assets;
- current indications are that a flat rate settlement for three years is expected from DEFRA. Because of inflation, increases in salary costs and the higher national insurance contributions, this will amount to a significant cut in real terms. The Authority will need to respond to these challenges, which will start to have a significant effect from 2022/23 onwards. A financial resilience assessment is underway and a report will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee, setting out the challenges we face in terms of future budgets; and
- although carbon reduction projects on Authority properties have resulted in financial savings, the motive for these investments is now primarily to reduce the Authority's own carbon emissions in line with the ambitious target set by Members.

RESOLVED –

- a) to APPROVE the Statement of Final Accounts for the Financial Year ended 31 March 2021 (SOFA), and the associated Annual Governance Statement (AGS); and
- b) to NOTE that the approved SOFA and associated AGS will be signed by the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and the Chief Executive, once the external audit of the SOFA has been completed, provided that the overall opinion in the audit report is unqualified.

32/21 **FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee CONSIDERED the report of the Head of Finance, who advised the Committee that the Woodlands Nature for Climate contract has not yet been finalised and hence the income received in the first year will be a proportion of the annual amount shown in paragraph 5.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Finance:

- confirmed that maintenance referred to in paragraph 8 of the report is still going ahead, just at a later stage than profiled in the budget;
- advised that budget for a family friendly cycling project which was no longer proceeding would instead be invested in a different cycling project being led by Sustrans, subject to formal agreement;
- confirmed that the net income for some externally funded projects is £0 (i.e. with expenditure matching income; for example, some of the projects referred to in Appendix 2). The income from increasingly project-based grant funding pays for projects which contribute to the Authority's objectives and hence a cost-neutral position is acceptable, although it was noted that grant funding ideally should also cover a proportion of central core costs such as overheads; and
- noted a couple of typographical errors – paragraph 1 should read 2021 not 2020; and paragraph 10 should read "ahead of" rather than "behind".

The Committee NOTED the report.

33/21 **INCOME GENERATION STRATEGY – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Director of Conservation and Community.

The Chief Executive advised that a report on Net Zero with Nature and the relationship with Palladium (and National Parks Partnerships) would be brought to a future Authority meeting.

34/21 **STAFFING REPORT**

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Head of Human Resources, noting in particular the increase in recruitment activity this year.

35/21 **SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT**

The Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:25.