YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY **ITEM 4**
AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at the YDNPA offices, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL on Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 10:30am.

Members Present:

Mark Corner (in the Chair), Liz Hall, Robert Heseltine, David Ireton, Sandy Lancaster, Yvonne Peacock and Cosima Towneley.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

01/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Richard Good, Allen Kirkbride, Ian Mitchell and Jim Munday.

02/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

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

03/22 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS

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

04/22 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

No declarations of lobbying were made at the meeting.

05/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22

CONSIDERED – the report of the Monitoring Officer and Director of Corporate Services. The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the draft Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 should be amended to replace the words "…and leads its stakeholders…" in paragraph 1.1 with the words "…and works alongside with its stakeholders…", as recommended by the Committee last year.

The Committee noted that the Authority was still waiting to learn of the government's proposals for Authority membership, in response to the Authority's own proposal to reduce

the total number of members from 25 to 16. The way in which this might be implemented would now be affected by the local government re-organisation from April 2023.

RESOLVED –

a) To APPROVE the Annual Governance Statement (as amended), to accompany the 2021-22 Statement of Final Accounts; and
b) To CONFIRM that, subject to matters identified in Table B which are to be addressed in 2022-23, the Authority's internal control systems and governance arrangements are considered to be adequate and effective.

06/22 PROGRAMME OF REVIEWS FOR 2022-23

CONSIDERED – the report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

In response to Member queries, the Director of Corporate Services advised that office requirements would be reviewed once the impact of blended working and hot-desking on office use was clearer – the recently agreed Property Strategy 2022 - 27 included this as a future action. Superfluous office space may create the potential for external income generation.

RESOLVED -

a) The performance review for 2022-23 to be the postponed performance review of the Development Management service; and
b) The other reviews for 2022 – 23 would be the lessons learned from the current Income Generation Strategy; and blended working.

07/22 REVIEW OF THE GOVERNANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Monitoring Officer and Committees Officer.

Discussion included the following:

- Many partnerships would be affected by the changes arising as a result of local government re-organisation. Members were keen to ensure that the new unitary authorities be encouraged to view the Authority as a key partner, emphasising its strong position in terms of providing health, wellbeing and climate benefits;
- Members requested that the more detailed partnership reviews be reported to Committee in due course.

The Committee NOTED the report.

08/22 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021-22

CONSIDERED – the annual internal audit report prepared by the Authority's internal auditor, Veritau Ltd, for the year 2021–22.

In response to Member queries, Ian Morton, attending on behalf of Veritau Ltd, confirmed that, although the internal auditor's opinion on the procurement and installation of the new planning software system (Agile) was only 'limited assurance', the overall opinion on the

Authority's controls was that of 'substantial assurance'. Regarding the purchase and introduction of the Agile system, the Authority's procurement process had been followed, however having a more detailed and tailored specification would have yielded better results. Introducing the new system during Covid, when staff were working from home, had exacerbated difficulties in overcoming snagging issues with the new system.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that actions had been agreed to remedy the procurement issues raised by this particular audit, and a timetable had been agreed with the contractor to address remaining matters.

Members acknowledged the challenges faced by planning departments regionally and wished to put on record their appreciation for the flexibility and dedication of the Authority's development management staff in such trying times over the past two years.

The Committee NOTED the report.

09/22 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 2021-22

CONSIDERED and NOTED - the report of the Corporate Services Officer.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:15am