

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at the Yoredale, Bainbridge on Friday, 17th March 2006.

Present:

J Blackie, WH Brown, SHK Butcher, SR Macaré, Mrs S Marshall, Mrs Y Peacock (in the Chair), JJ Pearlman, Dr KM Petyt and Ms N Stedman.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

1/06 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2005, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2/06 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

3/06 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Item No 12 on the agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

4/06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs Dalton and Lancaster.

5/06 DECLARATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

None.

6/06 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

None.

7/06 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – MAIN ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETARY CONTROL

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Finance and Resources.

Members noted the 'good' overall opinion and that there were no recommendations for further improvement.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted and the staff involved be commended.

8/06 REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIPS

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Chief Executive.

Members, in considering the report, expressed disappointment that while 23 new partnerships had been added, only 9 were being recommended for deletion.

A member commented that he believed that the Moorland Access Advisory Group, which was one of the partnerships recommended for deletion, was still operating and should be retained. The Head of Park Management stated that he believed that the Group was winding up, but he would make enquiries and advise members accordingly.

Comment was made about the level of officer commitment needed to service the various partnerships. It was suggested that in the event that the Authority adopted changes to the size of the Planning Committee and bearing in mind some of the recommendations that emerged in the Peer Review Improvement Plan, it may be possible for some members to take a more active role in representing the Authority on some of the partnerships.

Whilst there was some disappointment at the increase in the number of partnership, it was pointed out that, particularly when the Authority's finances were stretched, partnerships could be provide a cost-effective method of achieving the Authority's purposes. In response to a member's question, the Chief Executive stated that the merits of different partnerships with the same partners would be reviewed to ensure that, where possible, any unnecessary duplication could be rationalised. It was also accepted that officers' initials be included in the document.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to member comments being taken into account,

(a) the report be noted; and

- (b) following consideration by the Authority of the post-Peer Review Improvement Plan, a further report be prepared for the Audit and Review Committee to consider in greater detail the Authority's representation on the partnership bodies listed in the Appendix to the Chief Executive's report.

9/06 REPORT OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

CONSIDERED –

The report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Working Group held on 25th January 2006.

RESOLVED –

That the report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Working Group held on 25th January 2006 and the terms of reference for the Group be noted.

10/06 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL: 2005/06

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Senior Finance Officer.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the Statement of Internal Control be approved for inclusion within the 2005/06 Financial Accounts; and
- (b) the Audit Commission recommendation that the Chairman of the Authority signs the Statement of Internal Control prior to incorporation into the Financial Accounts be noted.

11/06 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN (BVPP) 2005/2006: ACTIONS AT END OF QUARTER 3

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Conservation and Policy.

The Chief Executive stated that the Authority would shortly be considering a report that would recommend that the work of the Audit and Review Committee be 'beefed-up'. In order for that to be done more effectively it would be necessary to review the timetable of meetings for the Committee.

In response to some concerns from members about the timetabling of the Committee's and the Authority's consideration of the BVPP progress reports, the Chief Executive stated that the Committee may well be given a remit to look more closely at projects and programmes, and

the 'Public Spaces, Private Places' programme and BVPP progress reports might form early topics for such consideration.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to the further comments of members and officers being taken into account, the report and progress towards achieving the actions set out in the Best Value Performance Plan 2005/06 be noted.

The remainder of business was considered in private.

12/06 AUDIT COSTS

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Finance and Resources that informed members of further increases in the volume of audit work and consequential increase in audit costs.

Members expressed concern at what they considered to be a disproportionate level of, and increase in fees for an authority of the size of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted and the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee, write to the Minister with responsibility for National Parks to express the concerns of the Authority at the increase in the costs to the Authority of the District Audit service.