

**NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**  
**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Friday 3 February 2017**

**Present:**     Members:  
K Ball (Chairman), A Cooper, P W Hitchins, D Lloyd, J McInnes, C Pannell  
(Deputy Chairman), P Sanders, D Webber, M Retallick.

Officers:  
A Kohler (Director of Conservation and Communities)  
D Healy (Head of Business Support)  
S Belli (Head of Planning)  
N White (Head of Organisational Development)  
A Shaw – Grant Thornton

**Apologies:** S Hill

**451     Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016 were signed as a correct record.

**452     Declarations of Interest**

None

**453     Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

None

**454     Public Participation**

None

**455     Audit Plan for Dartmoor National Park Authority**

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Shaw, Grant Thornton.

Mr Shaw presented the Audit Plan to Members and highlighted the planned scope and timing of the audit focusing on areas of significant risk and value for money. He highlighted the materiality levels set for the Authority's audit and brought any new risks to Members attention. The main change highlighted was the financial reporting presentation of accounts early close down and sign off by 31 July 2018 which given the success of the trial run last year, Mr Shaw believes to be achievable in 2017.

Mr Shaw confirmed the recently undertaken value for money initial risk assessment, did not identify any significant risks from those in the original risk assessment.

Signed.....

Date.....3/11/17.....

**456 Financial Management 1 April to 30 December 2016 and Forecast of Financial Outturn 2016/17**

Members received the report of the Head of Business Support (NPA/AG/17/001), covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2016, quarters 1 to 3.

The Head of Business Support advised that, based on current projections a budget surplus of £26,274 is predicted. Members' attention was drawn to the main variations set out in section 2.3 of the report and detailed analysis at appendix 2.

The Head of Business Support took Members through the tables showing the majority of projects and work programme overspends and demonstrated how these are matched with income.

The only overspend not matched is the planning related professional fees but Members were advised that there is provision in reserves to cover this, if it can't be met from in year underspends.

The Authority has also outperformed expectation in other income generating areas, for example:

- Payments for support and assistance from companies filming on the Moor
- Visitor Centre Sales up by over £20k
- Treasury deposit interest up by £7.5k

And for voluntary fundraising activity:

- £ for the Park £8,987
- Mend our Mountains Crowd Funding campaign £8,497
- And Donate for Dartmoor - in its inaugural year - £10,766

Of the £216,526 Project Fund budget - £207,204 has been allocated by Leadership Team for a variety of purposes as set out at 2.4 of the report. Some balances will be carried forward at year-end for projects and posts that span more than one financial year.

The final forecast year-end Reserve Balances will be determined between now and 31 March and is also dependent on the outcome of a report being presented to the Authority later today in respect of pensions.

The Head of Business Support concluded that it has been another year of good financial performance, expenditure continues to be well managed and the income generated to date has again exceeded expectation.

Signed.....

Date.....3/10/17.....

A Member commented that it is good to see the increase in Visitor Centre sales and asked whether this is being looked into to be increased further. In response, the Head of Business Support advised that a new Retail Officer commences in post next week with the intention to drive sales forward.

In response to a Member query relating to overspend on Development Management, the Head of Planning advised that planning fees are on target and that Planning are closely monitoring these. He also confirmed that it has been necessary to buy in some expert advice around some of the bigger planning issues which were unforeseen.

In response to a Member query relating to the deficit in the Communication budget, the Head of Business Support confirmed this is in relation to the Public Arts Project which is being funded from Reserves. A full report on the project will be provided at the next meeting in May.

A Member questioned the Visitor Management and Visitor Centres surplus which the Head of Business Support explained may have been partly due to a budget error and that the Key Campaigns Work has been deferred in Visitor Management, and with regard to Visitor Centres, sales income of £23,000 and vacancy savings.

Members commended the Head of Business Support and her team for their hard work.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Ball.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the content of the report.

**457 Business Plan Monitoring and Performance Indicators Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 3**

Members received the report of the Head of Organisational Development (NPA/AG/17/002).

This report sets out how the Authority has performed in delivering the key actions identified in the Business Plan, as well as Performance Indicator data to Quarter 3.

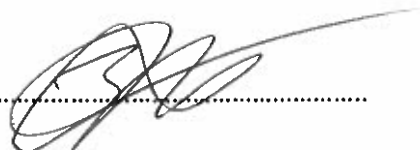
Leadership Team has reviewed progress against the 26 key actions.

The Head of Organisational Development highlighted to Members the table at 2.3 showing a summary of progress and to note that 3 actions have been identified that are unlikely to be completed this year.

He also highlighted the Business Plan monitoring spreadsheet shown at Appendix 1 providing the detail of progress against the 26 key actions including updates from lead officers.

Members were invited to comment on the Authority's performance to date in delivering the current Business Plan.

Signed.....



Date.....

3/11/17

The Director of Conservation and Communities responded to a Member query relating to the delivery of Moor than Meets the Eye projects where the Authority is the lead partner, reporting good progress with the Heritage Trail and Bellever and Postbridge Trails, but Postbridge Visitor Centre is delayed. An agreed way forward is required by autumn 2017.

The Head of Planning discussed with Members the change to red of Action 17 'planned delivery of key development sites' stating that the Authority has progressed matters as we are awaiting applications for these sites.

The Head of Organisational Development confirmed that a consultant will be assisting with the Local Plan work to help move it forward.

A Member commented on the spending targets of the Moor than Meets the Eye projects (Action 9) raising a concern about progress and financial liability. The Director of Conservation and Communities stated that given their concerns it would be opportune to bring a report to Audit and Governance meeting in May showing full details of the current position.

The Head of Organisational Development highlighted to Members the performance indicators set out in Appendix 2 setting out performance to Q3 against 40 indicators and Members were invited to comment on progress against the performance indicator targets.

The Head of Organisational Development reported that the performance indicator S12, sickness absence, remains a concern and a high risk to performance. Sickness absence has an impact financially and operationally and the Authority is not going to meet the target of 7 days in 2016/17. The Head of Organisational Development advised that he had met with managers in January to discuss how the issue of sickness might be addressed and actions were agreed to take forward now as priority.

These actions include a need to better understand the data, explore best practice in other National Parks and organisations, including benchmarking data from other NPAs. A Member asked whether the age profile had any influence and the reasons for sickness, for instance whether sickness due to stress is rising.

The Head of Organisational Development suggested that it would be useful to bring a report to the next meeting in May, including the benchmarking data and an update on progress with identified actions. He confirmed a number of measures are already in place to promote health and wellbeing including; flexible working practices and an employee assistance programme. The Head of Organisational Development also highlighted the Organisational Development Strategy, Developing Team Dartmoor which in part aims to improve organisational culture and morale which have an impact on sickness absence.

The performance indicators P1 & P2 show performance in Development Management has remained on target to Quarter 3; however, there are currently two vacancies in Planning (Head of Planning and Planning Officer (Development Management & Enforcement)) that may impact on performance.

Signed.....

Date.....3/11/17.....

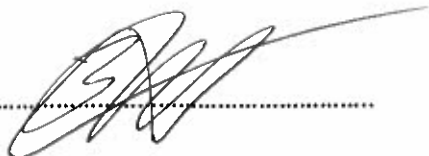
Leadership Team recognise that the performance indicator E11, relating to number of events organised by DNPA, does not reflect the good work across Authority and in effect is under-reporting therefore the methodology is being revised for 2017/18 to capture all events organised by Dartmoor National Park Authority (previously only Education).

In response to a Member question about the reporting of performance indicator P3 relating to number of volunteer days, the Director of Conservation and Communities confirmed that the Voluntary Wardens hours only get reported at year end and therefore are not included to date; however, it is considered that we are under-reporting our Volunteer numbers and this is being reviewed.

Mr Sanders proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Mr Retallick

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the content of the report.

Signed.....



Date.....

3/11/17