

## NFNPA RAPC 279/15

### NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 7 DECEMBER 2015

#### TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

**Report by:** Nigel Stone, Finance and Performance Manager

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2013 the Authority established a Task and Finish Group with the remit to “look at the future financial implications for the Authority”. It was established until March 2016 and, as well as looking in detail at the 2014/15 and 2015/16 budgets, it was tasked with looking at future finances and financial efficiency more generally. All members have been informed and invited to meetings of the Group and there were six standing members of it (including the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the full Authority and the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee).
- 1.2 Since 2010 the Authority has successfully dealt with significant reductions in its grant of over 40% in real terms. As part of this process the Authority has moved to shared accommodation, enacted numerous shared services (either by outsourcing services or by selling our specialisms to other organisations) and reduced its back-office costs.

#### 2 Updates

- 2.1 Income generation will now be taken forward as a separate issue through the External Funding Strategy introduced at the last meeting of this Committee and for which there will be an update in the members’ bulletin.
- 2.2 The outcome of the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review (and Autumn Statement) will be known by the time of the meeting and can be further discussed then. The Authority may know more at this time about any potential reductions in funding for Defra but it is possible we may have to wait until December to hear directly from Defra about our specific future grant determination(s).

### **3 Proposed Future Tasks / Way Forward**

- 3.1 The core principles for the way forward, as discussed and agreed previously by members, will be:
- Achieve Business Plan objectives
  - Reduce reliance on Defra grant
  - Cross-sectional working and support
  - Support entrepreneurial thinking
- 3.2 Given the late notice of the grant determination, just three months before the start of the next financial year, it is likely that the Authority will have to first focus on setting a budget for 2016/17 and then move on during the 2016 calendar year to look at the long-term implications and possible solutions to any grant cuts ahead - we would invite discussion on this point at the meeting.
- 3.3 You will note from the draft 2016/17 budget timetable (**Annex 1**) that, even for this coming financial year, it is not considered feasible to have all changes enacted for 1<sup>st</sup> April (given the likely discussions and engagement required) and therefore alterations are likely to be implemented into summer 2016.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December there will be a member' day dedicated to financial planning for the Authority. Officers would urge members of the Committee to provide suggestions how this session could be run and the key outcomes we need from it. An initial draft agenda is shown as **Annex 2**.
- 3.5 It is further proposed to diarise meetings of the existing Task and Finish Group in January and February to discuss issues relating to the 2016/17 budget alongside officers. This would also give time for the Group to consider the outstanding items from previous meetings which included an updated look at the costs and efficiency of key services.

### **4. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and, following discussion, agree any necessary management action.**

**Papers:**

NFNPA/RAPC 279/15

NFNPA/RAPC 279/15 – Annex 1

NFNPA/RAPC 279/15 – Annex 2

Cover Paper

Draft Budget Timetable 2016/17

Draft Members Day Agenda (10<sup>th</sup> December)

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this update report.

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