

AUDIT AND CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

6 November 2019

Present: Councillor D Clements (Chair)
Mr A Archer, Dr R Heath Davies, Mr G A Jones, Councillor R Owens
and Councillor M Williams.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 12.15pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Baker, Councillor M James and Councillor P Kidney.

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 July 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Matters Arising

a) Draft Statement of Accounts 2018/19 (Minute 5)

One Member asked whether it had been possible to change the title of 'Locally Generated Income' to 'Park Generated Income'. The Finance Manager advised that he thought it had been amended but he would check and revert back to the Member.

NOTED.

5. Health and Safety Group: report of meeting

Members considered the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 11 July 2019.

Members asked for details about a number of the accidents/incidents noted in the minutes and information was provided.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 11 July 2019 be received.

6. Internal Audit Report 2019/20

The Finance Manager informed the Committee that the report was the outcome of work completed against Block 1 of the 2019/20 operational audit plan. The work had been undertaken by Gateway Assure as



Internal Auditors, however that company had now ceased trading and had transferred their remaining work commitments to TIAA. Whilst officers were happy to work with the new company, it did mean that there had been limited opportunity to discuss the report prepared by Gateway Assure with them before it was issued.

Car Parks, Grants, Business Continuity and Information Governance had been reviewed, and, taking into account the relative risk of the business areas, the internal audit services had formed generally very positive conclusions regarding the policies, procedures and operations in place.

Substantial opinions had been given for Car Parks, Grants and Information Governance, however Business Continuity had been given a limited opinion as the Business Continuity Plan was outdated and in need of review. It was reported that work on this was underway and would be brought to the Authority in due course.

With regard to car parking, a number of Members agreed with the Auditor's recommendation that a car park policy would be helpful and ensure consistency, and could also be used to explain to users how any income over and above that required to run and maintain the car park would be used. Other Members felt that there were other ways to publicise the message that car park income was used to maintain the beauty of the National Park, such as a statement on the back of the ticket itself. One Member requested that the Committee's support for this Internal Audit recommendation be raised at the Authority meeting. The Chief Executive advised that, as in previous years, a report on Car Parking would be brought to the December meeting of the Authority.

NOTED.

7. Improvement Plan Certificate

It was reported that the Authority had received the Improvement Plan Certificate from the Wales Audit Office. This confirmed that the Authority had discharged its duties in accordance with the requirements of Section 15(6) to (9) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and a copy of the Certificate was appended to the Report.

NOTED.

8. Well Being Objectives 2017/18 Self Reflection Feedback for PCNPA from Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

It was reported that in 2019/18 the Authority had completed the Future Generations Commissioners' Self Reflection Toolkit on its Well-being Objectives 2017/18. This involved assessing performance against the Well-being objectives and the five ways of working identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Authority had now received



feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner on its submission and this was appended to the report.

The Performance and Compliance Coordinator noted that due to the timing of when the feedback had been received, it had not been able to inform the Authority's Annual Report on Meeting its Well-being Objectives for 2018/19, however the findings would be used to inform the development of the Corporate Plan 2020/21 and future annual reports.

While some Members felt that the feedback provided was quite generalised and would have preferred more specific advice on progress and future actions that were more relevant to Park Purposes, others felt that the lack of recommendations was a positive sign that the Authority was doing a good job.

NOTED.

9. Performance Report for the period ending 30 September 2019.

The Performance Report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2019/20; this followed the approach of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with seven well-being objectives. The Report presented the performance to date up to the 30 September 2019 and included quarter 1 and 2 statistics (April – September) for some data sets.

The Officer went on to highlight to Members sections of the report including planning performance, education and visitor numbers at the Centres. With regard to the latter, some Members suggested that a visit to Castell Henllys might help them to understand its performance figures better. The Chief Executive advised that this could certainly be arranged, however he noted that the new Manager had presented her vision for the site to the Operational Review Committee in June of this year and a copy of the papers for that meeting had been circulated to Members of this Committee for information. He added that lower visitor numbers were believed to be due to the weather being too nice for visiting such attractions. Clarification was provided on the percentage of planning appeals dismissed; 2 out of 3 appeals had been dismissed and the percentage on the report should have read 66.67% bringing it within target.

Members thanked the officer for providing information linking web walk downloads and path counter figures which was appended to the report as this was both interesting and useful. Officer also advised, in response to a question, that the timing for the launch of the new website was uncertain, but that it would be live in time for the new season 2020.

NOTED.



10. Budget Performance Report for the 6 months to September 2019

The report presented budgetary performance information for the six months to 30 September 2019. The detailed net revenue budget was provided which showed that actual and committed expenditure was £2,080k, £72k under the profiled budget, with the reasons for the variances set out in the report. It was noted that the 2019/20 Revenue Forecast was a surplus of approximately £10k against an original budget surplus/deficit of nil. This was due to a number of variances, including additional car park income and higher than expected receipts at Carew Tea Room.

The Chief Executive went on to report that since preparing the report the Authority had been in receipt of £850,000 capital funding from Welsh Government, following a request from them for the Authority's unfunded budgetary pressures received at the end of August. This was in respect of various capital projects outlined to the Committee which officers were initially told had to be completed by the end of March 2020, although they now understood that project had at least to be started by that date.

While pleased with the funding, Members felt it would be beneficial to compile a list of potential projects earlier in the year and the Chief Executive advised that this process could be started at the Authority's December Budget Workshop.

The report went on to outline the position of the Capital Programme and the position with regard to the Authority's reserves, however the Finance Manager advised that these would both be impacted by the additional funding.

NOTED.

11. Adopting Visitor Safety Principles at PCNPA

It was reported that in recent years, Authority staff had started to adopt Visitor Safety principles when assessing risk on the Authority owned estate; these principles had been developed by the Visitor Safety Group (VSG), a nationwide body. In 2017, a Visitor Safety Strategy had been commissioned and a draft of this document was appended for the Committee.

Following advice given by the VSG, the Authority had embedded the main principles of Visitor Safety into all relevant current policy. In order to incorporate these principles, which provided a pragmatic approach to safety, into site risk assessments, a new Visitor Safety Risk Assessment had been developed, and it was intended create such assessments for the main sites owned by the Authority.



The Operations Manager reported that the Authority's staff were active members of VSG and took part in regular workshops with similar organisations across the UK and Ireland which had improved the knowledge and expertise of staff when managing Visitor Safety.

In terms of raising awareness of hazards in the natural environment, Members suggested that a proactive approach could be taken with a variety of external bodies. The Operational Manager advised that there were many ways to get the messages across to the public, involving various parts of the organisation. To date the work had focussed on internal processes, however going forward, the Strategy would be embedded in the plans of all relevant teams across the Authority. This work would be led by the Health and Safety Group, under the direction of the new Personnel Manager.

Finally Members asked whether the Visitor Safety Strategy would be adopted as it contained a 'Draft' watermark and were advised that it had been agreed by the Authority's Leadership Team in June 2018 and the inclusion of the watermark was an error.

NOTED.

12. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest Risk Register. The Finance Manager advised that there had been no changes to the register since the previous meeting of the Committee, however he noted that since the report had been produced, an additional risk regarding Ash Die Back had been added to the Register. He also noted that the Register had been reviewed by the new Internal Auditors and their recommendations would be reported to a future meeting.

Members asked whether Risk 1, a short term risk of reduced funding needed to be updated in the light of the recent announcement of capital funding. The Chief Executive replied that until next year's budget had been received he felt it would be premature to alter the Register. They also asked whether the risks related to business continuity (such as Risks 18, 21 and 22) had been updated in the light of the Internal Audit Report discussed earlier in the meeting (Minute 6 refers). Officers replied that measures were already in place to manage those risks, and work on the Business Continuity Plan was underway; therefore no updates were felt necessary at the present time. Finally Members asked that the mitigation and monitoring actions around the General Data Protection Regulations (Risk 40) be updated in light of the work that had been undertaken in recent months.

NOTED.



13. Delegation of any issues for consideration by the Continuous Improvement Group

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues of concern that the Committee wished to delegate to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

14. Thanks

As this was the last meeting of the Committee to be attended by Mr A Archer, whose term of office with the Authority came to an end on 30 November, the Chair thanked him, saying it had been a pleasure to work with him and that she would miss his wise counsel. She wished him well for the future.

