

AUDIT AND CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

13 February 2019

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

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am-11.40am)

1. Apologies

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

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28 November 2018 were presented for confirmation and signature.

Regarding Minute (9) Members wanted to know an accurate turnover figure for The Nest Tearoom at Carew Castle. It was confirmed that there had been a surplus of just over £9,000 for the six months of trading through to September. It was noted that Carew would be closed for a few weeks during the spring of this year due to works to the walled garden which may impact on figures in the current/next financial year, although it was hoped that the site would be open over the Easter period.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2018 be confirmed and signed.

4. Health and Safety Group: report of meeting

Members considered the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 18 October 2018.

With regards to the Incident/Accident appendix, Members asked for more detail regarding the employee scalding incident at Carew (Incident 824) and the Building Fire (Incident 825). The Chief Executive explained that a lot of work had been done to encourage staff to fill in incident forms as it was believed that for every 10 incidents one accident was avoided. He confirmed that he would obtain further information on both matters and report back to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 18 October 2018 be received.



5. Performance Report for the Period ending 31 December 2018

The report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2018/19. This followed the approach of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with seven well-being objectives, with an additional section providing general governance information. The report presented the performance to date up to 31st December 2018 and included quarter 1, 2, and 3 statistics (April – December) for some data sets.

The Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator took Members through the report, and they asked for clarification regarding the Adverse Weather Plan. The Officer confirmed that it looked at the action to be taken during/following bad weather such as the safety of trees. The process was currently being digitised and would be reviewed next year.

Members were concerned about the visitor figures for Castell Henllys and asked what could be done to improve them. The Chief Executive advised that the site had been without a Manager for the past 6 months, however recruitment for this post was currently taking place. The Authority was also in the process of creating a five year plan for each of the centres. Whilst it did not look like Castell Henllys was performing well, the feedback received for the site had been extremely positive, and the Finance Manager added that staff were mindful of the decline in merchandise figures and were looking at ways to make improvements. Officers would continue to monitor the situation and the site would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Committee. One Member noted that there had been a nationwide decline in visitor numbers to museums/galleries and asked if there was a general statistic that could be inserted in the report for comparison.

Whilst planning enforcement was still a concern to Members they were reassured that the backlog of cases should be cleared by the end of March. The Officer noted that the figures would continue to be monitored. Members asked if a different set of indicators would be needed after April. The Officer noted that the current measures would have to be retained as they were Welsh Government targets, however additional indicators could be added.

Members enquired as to the future of the Stitch in Time project. The Chief Executive explained that the project was currently grant funded by the Welsh Government and was due to finish at the end of November. Another grant application had been submitted, with the decision due by the end of May, if this grant was not approved the Authority would need to look at various options.



The Officer confirmed that the technical build on the new website was ongoing and that it was going to be launched in sections. Further discussions regarding the branding would take place at a forthcoming Members' workshop.

NOTED

6. Annual Audit Letter 2017-18

The Auditor General for Wales' Annual Audit letter detailed his statutory responsibilities under the Public (Wales) Audit Act 2004 and the Code of Audit Practice. The letter, which confirmed that the Authority had complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and the use of resources, was presented to Members for information.

NOTED.

7. Budget Performance Report 9 Months to December 2018

The report presented budgetary performance information for the period to 31 December 2018. The detailed net revenue budget was provided which showed that actual and committed expenditure was £3,535k, £92k under the profiled budget, with the reasons for the variances set out in the report. It was noted that the 2018/19 Revenue Forecast was a surplus of approximately £200k against an original budget surplus/deficit of nil. This was due to a number of variances, including salary savings from unfilled vacancies and higher than expected planning fee and car park income.

The report went on to outline the position of the Capital Programme which had decreased from the original budget of £493k to a revised budget of £429k as a result of slippage of work associated with the Carew Walled Garden, Carew Causeway and Castell Henllys Roundhouses to 2019/20.

Finally the report set out the position with regard to the Authority's reserves. While General Reserves were expected to increase to £1,182k at the end of the current financial year, Earmarked Reserves were expected to fall. Capital Receipts would increase to £653k partially as a result of the sale of land held at Sageston.

NOTED

8. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest risk register.

The Finance Manager informed Members that the new format for the Risk Register would hopefully be available in the next quarter once discussions had taken place with the Authority's Internal Auditors. The expected funding cut had not happened, and therefore the Short Term Risk of significant reduction of funding (Risk 1) had reduced. There had



also been reductions in the risk of failure to allocate all SDF grants (Risk 15) due to the SLA with Planeld to support administration of the scheme and the risk of failure to maintain performance of the DM service (Risk 25) as a result of 85.4% of all planning applications being determined within time periods required in the year to date.

It was noted that the Authority was in the process of recruiting a new Business & IT Manager to replace the current joint post with Brecon Beacons NPA. The Chief Executive added that while the arrangement had been positive, systems were becoming increasingly digital and it was considered necessary to increase capacity in this area. While the risk of major IT failure (Risk 20) remained, he had total confidence in the existing IT Officers to manage that risk. One Member asked that consideration be given to updating the mitigation and control/monitoring actions in respect of this risk.

It was noted that the only increased risk was regarding the impact of Brexit (Risk 39) and it was noted that a workshop would be held after the next NPA meeting on this matter. The Chief Executive stated that the analysis of a no deal Brexit was in respect of short, medium and long term implications. He believed that there would not be much of an impact in the short term, however on a longer term timescale there could be significant impacts on the pattern of land management and agriculture as well as potential reductions in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) leading to budgetary pressures. The Finance Officer confirmed that he did not believe the Authority had any financial liabilities resulting from a no deal and that it currently had no projects that would be affected. Members felt that the impact on the general economy and tourism, due to a reduction in European visitors could potentially be damaging. It was requested that a further progress update be added to the Register for the next meeting.

NOTED

9. 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.

