

MEETING OF
THE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM MEETINGS

MONDAY 30 AUGUST 2022

Members

Ed Macalister-Smith (EMS) - Chair
Brendan McCarthy (BM)
Paul Crossley (PC)

Independent Member

David Powell (DP)

Officers

Andy Parsons (AP) - Chief Executive
Diane Bassett (DB) - Head of Finance (Maternity Cover)
Ann Wyatt (AW) – Head of Finance

1. INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

- Apologies – received from David Powell (DP provided comments on the papers ahead of the meeting).
- Introductions and announcements – none.
- Declarations of interest – no interests were declared.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING – 23 MAY 2022

- Decision – Minutes approved as a correct record.
- Actions Arising – the actions arising had been completed or in-hand.

3. Q1 REPORTS 2022/23

- Comments – DB introduced the papers, stating that there were no financial concerns during Q1 but did inform the Committee that the current local government pay discussions may have a significant impact on this year's budget. There was also a discussion on local authority contributions (especially in light of the 14.7% increase in Defra funding) and it was agreed that BM and AP will liaise with local authority members to put in place a clear and supported strategy. The F&G Committee will be kept informed of progress. Mileage allowances were also discussed.
- Decision – the report and appendices were noted.
- Actions Arising – *continue to present the 'core costs' and 'projects' breakdowns but ensure any matters needing discussion are made clear in the cover paper.*

4. CASH-FLOW FORECASTING

- Comments – DB introduced the item and informed the Committee that the paper wasn't circulated in advance of the meeting as she hadn't had the opportunity to discuss it with AW. It was agreed that the summary cash-flow (12-months rolling)

was a very useful step forward and would certainly help to inform the future investment strategy.

- Decision – all agreed that the introduction of cash-flow forecasting was needed.
- Actions Arising – none.

5. BUSINESS PLANNING AND FINANCIAL FORECASTING

- Comments – AP introduced the item, informing the Committee that the Business Plan Framework (plan on a page) for the period 2023-26 was drafted (following a successful team workshop) and that it would be presented to the Executive Committee in September, ahead of seeking Board feedback and adoption in October. A 3-year financial forecast should be developed to support the plan. The F&G Sub-Committee agreed that this was essential and, whilst acknowledging that change will happen, it was important to have a longer term financial overview which can be periodically updated. As noted by DP, inflation and local authority budgets will both be significant challenges.
- Decision – it was agreed that the F&G Sub-Committee meeting in November will be ‘in-person’ so that this matter can be discussed in detail. Following that, the full Board meeting in February 2023 will be presented with a detailed budget for 2023/24 and a 2-year forecast for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
- Actions Arising – *arrange a meeting venue for the November meeting.*

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT – ETHICAL BANKING AND INVESTMENTS

- Comments – DB introduced the papers and this led to a detailed discussion. All agreed that the New Forest NPA strategy was a very useful document, although too detailed for this organisation. The Committee agreed to use some of it as a reference when updating the current Treasury Management Strategy. It was broadly agreed that banking and investing with institutions that share our values should be a mid-long term goal of the organisation. It was clearly noted, however, that this will not come without its own challenges, e.g. potentially lower rates of return. It was also agreed that our strategy should continue to be ‘low risk’.
- Decision – it was agreed that, in the short-term, the Head of Finance should look to move existing funds into 32 or 95 day notice accounts with our existing bank, to realise the benefit of higher interest rates (especially with rates currently increasing).
- Actions Arising – *(1) be more proactive with moving funds between accounts, (2) ensure ‘future investments’ and ‘ethical banking review’ are included in the Business Plan Framework 2023-26.*

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- Comments – AP introduced the item, informing the Committee that the policy is supported by a more detailed ‘processes’ document that focuses on how the policy is implemented. Following DP’s comments, AP also explained that there are monthly H&S meetings which involve discussions on accidents, incidents and near misses, as well as training and risk assessments.
- Decision – the policy was recommended for Board adoption.

- Actions Arising – *when the policy is presented to the Board in October it will be supported by the process document and an annual summary of H&S related activity.*

8. SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Comments – the Terms of Reference (ToR) were reviewed against the Committee's current (and future activity) to ensure that the two remain closely aligned.
- Decision – it was agreed that the activity of the Committee is in line with the ToR.
- Actions Arising – *continue to periodically review the ToR.*

9. AGREE NEXT STEPS

- The Committee agreed the next steps from the meeting (shown in red)

10. FORWARD PLAN

- Dates of upcoming meetings:
 - ~~Monday 14 November 2022~~ / changed to Tuesday 8 November 2022
 - Monday 13 February 2023

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Member's 'register of interests' – EMS asked whether all Members had now submitted the required forms. *AP will check the current status with Della Morris and report back.*
- Internal Audit – the internal auditor will be invited to attend the February meeting of the F&G Sub-Committee. *AP to notify David Shelmerdine.*
- Property Matters - EMS confirmed that the F&G Sub-Committee supported AP's request to contract Kinsman Construction to complete the roof works at the Old Prison (identified in the dilapidations survey), without the requirement to obtain two further tenders (as specified in the Constitution), as this would lead to significant delays and jeopardise landlord negotiations.
- Access Funding – AP informed the Committee that significant capital funds will be made available from Defra over the next three years, with a focus on improving access for all to the Cotswolds National Landscape. More details will follow once the official Ministerial announcement has been made.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Tuesday 8 November 2022, 10am-1pm, venue to the agreed.

Ed Macalister-Smith, Chair