

AGENDA ITEM No. 8

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING

26 MARCH 2010

CORPORATE RESOURCES

PART A

8. PROPOSED SCRUTINY PROJECT BRIEF AND SCRUTINY TEAM (A11412 /RMM)

Purpose of the report

1. This report asks Members to approve a proposed brief for a scrutiny project and appoint members to a scrutiny team.

Recommendations

2.
 1. **That the proposed project brief and focus for a scrutiny project on an aspect of 'understanding of the National Park' as given in Appendix 1 be approved**
 2. **That a scrutiny team of 4 Members be appointed**
 3. **That this be an approved duty for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence allowances**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The review of scrutiny in 2009 confirmed that scrutiny is central to our governance and commitment to performance improvement contributing in this way to our corporate objective 11 (1) 'ensure continuous improvement, value for money, sustainability and high standards of corporate governance'.
4. Scrutiny also contributes to action under the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance which is developed around the principles of good governance as recommended by the CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) framework 'delivering good governance in local government'.

Background

5. Members approved the original Scrutiny Guidelines in April 2006 (minute ref: 16/06) and then the review of scrutiny recommendations and changes in March 2009 (minute ref: 07/09). The scrutiny process for a formal topic, reflecting the changes made in 2009, is given at Appendix 2. It was also agreed at this time that:
 - a) only one scrutiny topic would be examined at any one time and
 - b) proposals for a scrutiny topic would be tested against the agreed questions of: does the issue relate to a significant corporate area; is there a significant performance issue evidenced by data, auditor's report or customer feedback;

does that performance issue relate to poor performance or risks related to high achievement; is there a need for the voice of the communities to be heard.

6. A workshop to identify an appropriate topic for scrutiny was held in July 2009 for members of the Audit and Performance Committee. There has been a delay in bringing a report to the Authority on the topic identified as the recreational strategy scrutiny team was in progress until presenting their final report to Audit and Performance Committee in January 2010 and the Director of Corporate Resources was unable to bring a report to the February Authority meeting due to other work pressures.
7. Appendix 1 gives the record of the discussion at the workshop under the section titled 'range of suggestions for focus from member workshop'. As the suggestions made at the workshop were wide the Director of Corporate Resources has discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit and Performance Committee and Management Team options for the focus of the scrutiny work. The proposal below is in line with the broad suggestions made at the Member workshop, would add value to the Authority progressing action against its Performance Improvement Plan and is timely.

Proposals

8. It is proposed that the focus for the next scrutiny project should be:

How are constituent authorities engaging with communities and how best can we be involved in order to increase the understanding of National Park purposes?
9. Subject to Members agreeing this as the focus for scrutiny it is proposed that 4 Members are appointed to a scrutiny team to progress the scrutiny work. The guidelines agreed in 2009 suggest that:

'Scrutiny groups should reflect the breadth of member backgrounds and skills and all members of the Authority should be considered and not just members of Audit and Performance Committee. Care should be taken to ensure that skills reflect the topics chosen. Co-opted members can be added to supplement skills and bring an external and/or expert perspective'

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

10. **Financial:**
The scrutiny guidelines explain that Resource Management Team will consider a proposal from the relevant Director on officer support and project management arrangements in parallel with agreeing these with the Chair of the scrutiny team. It will be necessary to plan the commitment of such resources within current budgets and to fit with planned work programmes.
11. **Risk Management:**
This will be the first scrutiny review under the revised arrangements and there is the risk that the changes made to the process do not result in any perceivable difference to the way scrutiny works within the Authority. This will be addressed by a briefing of the scrutiny team when established on the detail of the revised arrangements. The scrutiny team will identify any risks to the work of the team at their first meeting.
12. **Sustainability:**
There are no issues to identify at present.

13. **Background papers** (not previously published) – None

Appendices –

Appendix 1: Proposed Scrutiny project brief

Appendix 2: Agreed scrutiny process for a formal topic

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Ruth Marchington, Director of Corporate Resources, 18 March 2010