

## **12. ESTABLISHING RESOURCES COMMITTEE & MINOR ADDITIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **1. Purpose**

To consider recommendations from the Governance Review Working Group to disestablish the Programmes and Resources Committee, establish a Resources Committee and make minor amendments to Planning Committee.

### **2. Context**

**2.1** Our existing Code of Corporate Governance states that Governance is about how we ensure that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises of the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which we are directed and controlled and through which we account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead communities. Governance is more than making sure that things do not go wrong or fixing them if they do. Good governance adds value by ensuring effectiveness in ever changing circumstances.

**2.2** Although both our Internal and External Auditors have raised no issues with our current governance procedures it is expected that the Authority will periodically review its governance arrangements and it was anticipated that the Governance Review Working Group would contribute to this.

**2.3** The Programmes and Resources Committee was established at a time when it was thought that several projects and programmes would be delivered that required oversight from Members. However, now the programmes have been aligned to the four National Park Management Plan aims, there is significant benefit of all Members having this increased understanding of our work. It is clear what resourcing issues Programmes and Resources have oversight of or approve, but it would be beneficial to bring the role of the Audit, Budget and Project Risk Group into a formal Committee process, so there is a continued increased scrutiny and oversight of these issues. This has led to the proposal set out in the remainder of this paper.

### **3. Proposals**

**3.1** The proposal is to make amendments to our Member Committee structures so that the following changes and benefits are provided.

1. All Members are aware of progress in delivering the four National Park Management Plan aims, by escalating the 'projects and programmes' element of the existing Programmes and Resources to Authority.
2. The role of the existing Audit, Budget and Project Risk Group is undertaken formally in the proposed Resources Committee. This will provide clarity of what elements the Resources Committee has oversight of, is approving and where recommendations to Authority will be made. The latter ensures that a small number of Members can fully scrutinise issues in Resources Committee in advance of all Members making a decision at Authority, for example, on Audit matters.
3. We are following best practice by adding a section on Governance and Standards as part of the proposed Resources Committee Terms of Reference. This will ensure there is appropriate Member oversight of governance matters, and we are operating in accordance with our policies and procedures. This amendment also includes the establishment of a Resources (Hearing) Sub-Committee.

4. To ensure the proposed Resources Committee focuses on resources, to move matters on Rights of Way and Access to Planning Committee, as this is more aligned with planning matters.
- 3.2 To implement the four changes outlined in paragraph 3.1, Terms of Reference have been developed for the Resources Committee and Planning Committee and matters reserved to Authority have been updated. The Terms of Reference are presented in Appendices 1 to 4 of this report. Minor updates to our Standing Orders will be required to align it to the new Committee structures, and it is proposed that these are delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
- 3.3 Alongside the above proposed changes to Member Committee structures, it is proposed that the dates of Committee meetings are aligned to ensure Authority and Resources Committee meetings are when statutory reports require approving. In addition, that matters can be scrutinised by the Resources Committee, for recommendations to then be presented to the following Authority meeting. The calendar of all Member meetings will be agreed at the July 2025 Annual General Meeting for approval. However, as all Committee dates have been aligned, there are impacts on the 2025 meeting dates, so a proposed set of Member dates for the remainder of 2025 and 2026 is at Appendix 5.
- 3.4 Discussions in the Governance Review Working Group have also been about the rhythm of meetings, and ensuring that appropriate matters are discussed and Members have the ability to steer activities in the Members Forum in advance of Authority meeting decisions. To provide sufficient time for these discussions, it is proposed that additional Member Forums will be added in the year, with appropriate notice of a meeting being given. The format of the additional meeting would be online to reduce the time required by Members and travel claims to attend the additional meetings.
- 3.5 Finally, from the May 2025 Forum, Members Forum papers will be sent out in advance of the meetings, and the agenda will make it clear why items are on the agenda. – For example, for information, or for Members to steer in advance of a formal Member decision. This will help Members understand the context in which the information is being shared.

#### **4. Recommendations**

1. **That the Resources Committee Terms of Reference in Appendix 1 are approved.**
2. **That the Resources (Hearing) Sub-Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix 2 are approved.**
3. **That the Planning Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix 3 are approved.**
4. **That the matters specifically reserved to be exercised by a meeting of the full Authority at Appendix 4 are approved.**
5. **That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make the required amendments to Standing Orders to bring recommendations 1, 2 and 3 above into effect.**
6. **That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to allocate Members to the Resources (Hearing) Sub-Committee as and when required.**
7. **That dates for the Resources Committee meetings, at Appendix 5, and appointments to the Resources Committee will be made at the July 2025 Annual General Meeting are noted.**

- 8. That the proposal to convene additional Member Forum meetings to be held virtually as required throughout the year is agreed.**

**5. Corporate Implications**

a. Legal

Pursuant to section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Authority has power to appoint committees in order to discharge any of its functions, and any such committee has power to appoint a sub-committee.

b. Financial

The proposals in this report can be delivered within existing budgets. There would be savings in terms of Member claims by combining the roles of Programmes and Resources Committee and the Audit, Budget and Project Risk group into one Resources Committee. There are also associated efficiency savings in staff time, by reducing the number of meetings that require servicing.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

Ensuring that Members have the information required to make sound decisions contributes directly to our Authority Plan Objective F: Governance, to have best practice arrangements in place.

d. Risk Management

Establishing the Resources Committee reduces the risk of Members making sound decisions, as all Members will be aware of delivery to the National Park Management Plan aims. Incorporating the Audit, Budget and Project Risk role into a formal Resources Committee will ensure that activities are fully scrutinised in advance of key decisions, and the inclusion of the Governance and Standards section in the Terms of Reference ensures we are adhering to best practice in governance.

e. Net Zero

The proposal doesn't contribute to delivering net zero for the National Park or Authority. However, it ensures that all Members are aware of how we are progressing with implementing the climate change aims and our Carbon Management Plan, and annual reports will now be presented to Authority.

**6. Background papers (not previously published)**

None.

**7. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Resources Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – Resources (Hearing) Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 – Planning Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 4 – Authority Reserved Matters

Appendix 5 – Draft Calendar of Meetings 2025 and 2026

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

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