

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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Dear Member

A meeting of the **AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in **CONFERENCE ROOM I, PLAS Y FFYNNON, CAMBRIAN WAY, BRECON ON FRIDAY 20th June 2014 AT 10.00AM** when your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely

John Cook

Chief Executive

Fire Evacuation Advice

**In the event of a fire, please exit the building via the main staircase,
and assemble in the car park at Assembly Point 3**

1.0 CORRESPONDENCE

To receive and consider the attached Schedule of Correspondence and any recommendations thereon (below).

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from members relating to items on the agenda. Members' attention is drawn to the sheet attached to the attendance sheet and the need to record their declarations verbally and in writing, specifying the nature of the interest.

If Members have declared an interest in an item please ensure that you inform the Chair when you are leaving the room, so that this can be recorded in the minutes

3.0 MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd May 2014 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a correct record

[Enclosure 1](#)

3.1 DECISIONS AND ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Julia Gruffydd

Members are asked to review the actions that have not yet been completed from previous meetings of the Authority and its committees. [Enclosure 2](#)

3.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

To note the Equality Impact Assessments completed for decision reports.

[Enclosure 3](#)

4.0 PUBLIC SPEAKING

To give the public an opportunity to address the committee in line with the notice required under the Authority's Public Speaking Scheme.

BUDGET MONITORING

5.0 Outturn Report and Reserves position for 2013/14

Elaine Standen

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Committee Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Outturn Report and Reserves position for 2013/14
Report Author:	Elaine Standen Finance Manager 01874 620467 elaine.standen@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report:	To inform Members of the final outturn for 2013/14 and the reserves position.
Enclosures	Enclosure 4 - Revenue Outturn 2013/14 Enclosure 5 - Budget carry-forward requests approved by CMT Enclosure 6 - Reserves Summary and projection

	Enclosure 7 - Capital Outturn 2013/14
Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	N/A
Recommendation	That Members note the report.

5.1 Revenue

The financial accounts for 2013/14 have now been closed and production of the draft annual Statement of Accounts, which will be signed by the Finance Manager as S151 Officer by 30th June, is nearing completion. This will be presented to Members for information at the next meeting of the Committee. After review by the Wales Audit Office, the final accounts and audit report will be brought to the Authority for approval in September. The outturn as reported here may be amended if the need for further adjustments comes to light during the preparation of the Statement or the subsequent audit.

Overall, the Authority has made a 1% under-spend of £125,063 against the estimate. In [Enclosure 4](#), revenue performance against budget is broken down by budget head and comments on budget variances are provided.

Approximately half of the total underspend arises from delays in planned work and a total of £65,940 has been added to the estimates for 2014/15 to fund work streams/commitments carried over into the new financial year. [Enclosure 5](#) contains a breakdown of this figure.

Results for each department are summarised below:

Department	Budget 2013/14 £000	Actual 2013/14 £000	Variance (budget less actual) £000
Chief Executive's Office	1,685	1,636	49
Countryside	2,174	2,099	75
Planning	1,087	1,023	64
Other (including transfers to and from earmarked reserves)	(147)	(84)	(63)
Total	4,799	4,674	125
Revenue Grant and Levies	(4,517)	(4,517)	0

Transfer from General Reserve	(282)	(157)	(125)
Balance on General Reserve at 1/4/2013			799
Transfer from Reserve 2013/14			(157)
Balance on General Reserve at 31/3/14			642
Transfer from General Reserve in 2014/15 to fund commitments carried forward		(66)	
Plus planned transfer from General Reserve in 2014/15 to fund net estimate		(135)	
Projected balance on General Reserve 31/3/15			441

Further detail of the reserves position is provided in [Enclosure 6](#). The transfer from the General Reserve in 2013/14 includes £46,000 to temporarily fund the second year of a specific post, £42,000 to fund termination costs, £29,000 of the approved funding for ongoing litigation and £19,500 to fund the continuation of a specific post in 13/14, plus other smaller adjustments.

The planned transfer from the Reserve in 2014/15 of £135,000 included £109,000 relating to the allocation approved for ongoing litigation, £23,000 to cover the costs of a specific post which was extended to 30 September 2014, plus a number of minor items.

Work is currently progressing on identifying alternatives for further budget reductions in 2015/16 and the following year so that planned spend is balanced to available funding. Given the increased risk of failing to meet budget targets as these are progressively tightened, it would be advisable to consider increasing the recommended minimum, level of reserves to ensure that the Authority can absorb some overspends, meet unforeseen costs and provide some cover for potential termination costs.

5.2 Principal Budget Variances

Chief Executive's Office

The Legal Services budget included planned expenditure relating to legal expenses which have been deferred, into 2014/15 leading to an underspend of some £36,000 in 2013/14. This has been the subject of carry-forward requests for a total of £24,000. The Communications budget is underspent by £8,000 due to delays in the implementation of the new website.

Countryside and Community

Wardens budgets are overspent by £20,000 overall. Some works projects overspent and costs were transferred from capital because payments missed Welsh Government deadlines. Some budgeted income was not receivable. A new code structure has been set up for 2014/15 to help improve budget management.

Budget variances in Tourism's EU-funded projects have arisen because matching funds and agreed project partner contributions have been provided in advance of expenditure. For Rural Alliances, any surplus/deficit in 2012/13 and 2013/14 has been earmarked for use later in the project and will be drawn from earmarked reserves at that stage, as has been the case for the Collabor8 project. The partner income to the shared costs budget head is lagging slightly behind the profile of expenditure but will be balanced by the end of the project.

Additional funding was received for a continuation of the Collabor8 project which has contributed towards the 2013 Welcome Guide plus staffing costs in Tourism and other departments. This released a budget of some £13,000 which has been carried forward into 2014/15, mainly to help fund the Branding Website development. Underspends in the Sustainable Tourism and Tourism Projects budget heads have been set aside as match funding for Rural Alliances and have been added to the project's earmarked reserve. The net income generated in the final year of the Beacons Bus project has been set aside to help fund a continuation of Visitor Transport work into 2014/15.

Planned expenditure by the Sustainable Communities section on a hydro power feasibility study was delayed into 2014/15 due to technical issues and this has been the subject of a carry-forward request of £11,000.

The National Park Visitor Centre and Tea Room continue to be over-spent, by a total of £25,000. Income has been close to target for the non-Tea Room side and above, target for the Tea Room but costs, such as staffing and premises maintenance continue to be an issue and gross profit margins for the shop are below estimate. Expenditure on astronomical equipment purchased for the Centre but not yet installed (partly funded by grants and donations) has been included in costs. These were not allowed for in the budget and have contributed towards the overspend.

The interpretation budget underspent by £12,000 due to staff absence which also caused delays in some planned work as this could not be covered fully by the remaining staff.

Planning and Development Control

Building Conservation underspent due to an over-budget for staff pension costs and unbudgeted income relating to employment of a student. Take-up of Town Scheme grants was lower than expected and in 2014/15 and resources have been moved to other Heritage priorities in to reflect this.

In Development Control, planning fee income has fallen and was below the estimate, while income from pre-application advice continues to grow.

Anticipated income from Powys Council in relation to planning application processing was not received. These changes were not fully reflected in the budget, which overspent by some £7000 overall.

There was a significant underspend in Enforcement; professional and other fees were underspent by some £22,000. A saving also arose from staff absence due to maternity leave but not replaced.

Other

This section of the budget includes filming fees received, interest income and transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves. Earmarked reserves have been set up to help the Authority set aside contingency funds to meet future commitments, for example for the LDP enquiry, tourism and transport projects where external funding is expected to decline due to public sector funding cuts, and multi-year EU funded projects where funding surpluses early in the life of the projects are needed to fund expected shortfalls and the potential risk of currency losses at the end of the projects. The final transfers to/from individual reserves and the total balances on these at 31 March are detailed in [Enclosure 6](#). Overall, less was withdrawn from earmarked reserves.

5.2 Capital

The Welsh Government capital grant of £117,000 and the Rights of Way Improvement funding of £50,000 were applied to fund the 2013/14 capital projects programme and also contributed to some projects managed within the revenue budget. A total of £167,000 (net of a £13,000 revenue contribution) was spent, of which some £28,000 was applied to revenue projects. [Enclosure 7](#) shows the final expenditure and income of the individual capital projects. Projects allocated to revenue are included in the revenue report.

Only the highlighted projects on the enclosure (with a total value of £97,000) have been treated as capital for accounting purposes as they exceed the de-minimis threshold of £10,000 and will appear as assets in the Authority's Balance Sheet.

5.3 Conclusion

The Authority has been able to both set aside earmarked funds to support future work and remain within 1% of its overall budget limit. Of the 1% net revenue underspend, half will be applied, through the General Reserve, to fund the completion of current projects in 2014/15. The Authority will need to maintain reserve balances in the face of increasing budget pressures over the medium term by managing revenue budgets carefully and having regard to financial risks.

Corporate Implications	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	Effective budget management will help to foster improvements in the governance of the Authority.
b) Equality	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions to promote equality. An Equality Act screening form has not been completed for this report as it does not require policy or resource allocation decisions to be made by the Authority.
c) Human Rights	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions to promote human rights.
d) Sustainability Appraisal	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions to promote sustainability.
e) Biodiversity Impact	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions to promote biodiversity.
f) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
g) National Park Management Plan Actions	Efficient and effective budget management will facilitate implementation of the Authority's priority actions set out in the National Park Management Plan.
h) Background Papers	None
i) Which Corporate Goal(s) does the recommendation support?	Improved trust and confidence in the Authority

RECOMMENDATION: That Members note the report.

6.0 Draft Annual Governance Statement

Julia Gruffydd

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Annual Governance Statement 2013/14
Report Author:	Julia Gruffydd (Democratic Services Manager) julia.gruffydd@beacons-npa.gov.uk 01874 620400
Purpose of Report:	To approve the action plan arising from the Authority's approval of recommendations within the Scrutiny Report on

	Archaeology
Enclosures	Enclosure 8 : Draft Annual Governance Statement
Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	Not applicable
Recommendation	That the draft Annual Governance Statement be recommended to the Authority for inclusion with the Annual Statement of Accounts.

6.1 Introduction

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS), along with the Business Improvement Plan, is a key document which the Authority is required to produce each year to comply with the Local Government Measure 2011. It forms part of the Annual Statement of Accounts which the Authority will be asked to approve at the Annual General Meeting on 27 June 2014.

The purpose of the AGS is to

- Provide assurance that the Authority has a good governance framework in place
- Show how governance is monitored in order to know when governance is working/not working
- Show how this information is used to improve performance

It is supported by evidence from the Internal Auditors annual report (which the Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered at its last meeting on 2 May) and the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report which will be presented to the Authority on 27 June 2014.

Paragraph 4 highlights issues raised by internal and external audit in 2012-13 and reports on actions taken to address these. At the end of the AGS the final section highlights issues raised through the 2013-14 audits and outlines intended actions. These will then be reported against next year, thus creating a continuous cycle.

In recent years the Authority has been criticised for not making this document a self-evaluation, and both members and officers have been requesting a three Park workshop for some time in order to discuss how this might be achieved. The Chairman of this Committee, the CEO and the Democratic Services Manager attended a workshop last summer which was helpful, and officers from the three Parks have subsequently worked on a common format for the AGS. They have all continued to use the CIPFA principles of good governance as a framework for the report.

6.2 Proposals

The AGS has been reviewed and amended by the Joint and Corporate Management Teams and the Corporate Governance Working Group. It has proved challenging to document the extent of the governance in place in this Authority. Members are aware of the improvements that have been made during the last five years and while it is impossible to list everything it is expedient to highlight areas of particularly good practice or where a review has led to significant improvements.

Members are asked to look critically at the draft AGS and make any amendments or suggestions before the document goes to the Authority with the Annual Statement of Accounts.

6.3 Implications

The Authority is required to submit its Annual Statement of Accounts by 30 June 2014 and the AGS needs to be included. Given the fact that the Annual General Meeting follows only a week after this Audit and Scrutiny Committee any changes will need to be reported verbally or through a tabled version.

6.4 Risk

The three Parks have been criticised for not using the AGS as an opportunity to evaluate and improve and this version seeks to address this.

6.5 Conclusion

Members are asked to consider the AGS and make any amendments prior to the Authority meeting on 27 June 2004.

Corporate Implications	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	The recommendation supports evaluation of governance and its improvement
b) The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012: Procurement of services over £172,514	Not applicable
c) Equality	Equality screening completed
d) Human Rights	No adverse effect under Human Rights
e) Sustainability Appraisal	The recommendations support sustainable governance
f) Biodiversity Impact	Good governance facilitates service delivery across all areas of the Authority's work
g) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of	Good governance facilitates service delivery across all areas of the

climate change	Authority's work
h) Background Papers	None
i) Which National Park Management theme does the recommendation support?	Underpins all themes

RECOMMENDATION: That the draft Annual Governance Statement be recommended to the Authority for inclusion with the Annual Statement of Accounts.

SCRUTINY

7.0 Scrutiny Archaeology Action Plan

Julia Gruffydd

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Scrutiny Action Plan - Archaeology
Report Author:	Julia Gruffydd (Democratic Services Manager) julia.gruffydd@beacons-npa.gov.uk 01874 620400
Purpose of Report:	To approve the action plan arising from the Authority's approval of recommendations within the Scrutiny Report on Archaeology
Enclosures	Enclosure 9 : Draft Action Plan
Background Papers	Scrutiny Report on Archaeology
Public Interest Test	Not applicable
Recommendation	To approve the action plan to implement recommendations from the Scrutiny Review on Archaeology.

7.1 Introduction

The second scrutiny review of 2013/14 was completed and presented to the Authority for approval on 9th May 2014. Since that meeting officers have met to agree how these recommendations will be implemented.

7.2 Proposals

The recommendations made by the Panel cover a range of improvements to the archaeological work of the Authority in relation to:

- Access to data
- Partnership working to further the Authority's objectives (and clarification of roles and responsibilities to support this)
- Improving communication between the Authority's directorates to better focus and record work in support of heritage
- Ensuring that archaeology is included in consideration of any future applications for grant aid or research (for example through the Research Prospectus)
- Communication/training of other staff across the Authority to increase awareness of archaeology

They include work that can be carried out not only by the Heritage Officer (Archaeology) but by the Warden Service, Conservation team and Education team. By improving communication and working across sections, the Authority has the potential to increase its own effect and work more effectively with partners.

7.3 Implications

The recommendations have the potential to improve the Authority's archaeological service and strengthen joint working with partner organizations but given that there is only one officer to co-ordinate this work, the action plan reflects this in the timescales it proposes. The action plan, if approved, will then be monitored by Audit and Scrutiny Committee in line with the scrutiny process.

7.4 Risk

Given the resources allocated to this study and the enthusiasm and commitment of the Panel members, not to implement the action plan would waste a valuable opportunity to make service improvements and could have a negative impact on the public perception of our scrutiny process.

7.5 Conclusion

Members are asked to consider the action plan, the prioritization of tasks and the realistic timescales set for actions and approve it for implementation.

Corporate Implications	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	The recommendations support service improvement and highlight the need to be aware of funding opportunities
b) The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012: Procurement of services over £172,514	Not applicable

c) Equality	Equality screening completed
d) Human Rights	No adverse effect under Human Rights
e) Sustainability Appraisal	The recommendations support the sustainable management of heritage sites
f) Biodiversity Impact	Maintaining heritage sites can have a positive effect on biodiversity
g) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change	Heritage work may involve maintenance to mitigate the effects of extreme weather conditions
h) Background Papers	None
i) Which National Park Management theme does the recommendation support?	<p><u>Theme 1</u>: Managing Park Landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits</p> <p><u>Theme 2</u>: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity</p> <p><u>Theme 3</u>: Providing everyone with opportunities for outdoor access and recreation</p> <p><u>Theme 4</u>: Raising awareness and understanding of the Park</p> <p><u>Theme 5</u>: Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages</p> <p><u>Theme 6</u>: Sustainable Economic Development</p>

RECOMMENDATION: That the Archaeology Scrutiny Action Plan be approved for implementation and monitored by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

PERFORMANCE AND RISK

8.0 Performance Exceptions

Paul Funnell

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Performance exceptions

Report Author:	Paul Funnell IT Manager 01874 620459 paul.funnell@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report:	To update members on performance exceptions for the period
Enclosures	None
Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	n/a
Recommendations	That members note the report That members agree to receive enforcement performance reports as part of performance exceptions reporting henceforth

8.1 Performance exceptions

This is an interim report for quarter one 2014/15. As usual some reports for planning will be given under different agenda items. However, given the situation with Enforcement performance it is recommended that the separate report for that service is discontinued from the next meeting and that it becomes part of the main performance exceptions reporting process.

8.2 Countryside and Land Management Directorate

Interpretation

There is a slight delay with National Trust/Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) consent because of the order in which Cadw (the European Funding Lead) have to give consent as both project funder and statutory body:

- We are waiting for the National Trust to be given consent (through Cadw) for the exact wording on the stone seating and associated plaque for Garn Goch
- Once National Trust have approval we can then progress the SAM consent from Cadw's statutory arm

Lucy Newton (Interpretation Officer), with Toby Small (Warden) and Natalie Ward (Archaeology Officer) have done as much as they can do in advance including meeting the Cadw SAM officer out on site etc. to prepare for the formal SAM consent.

Information

Information is behind schedule due to the recent departure of a member of staff. The recruitment of a replacement Information Officer is presently on hold pending a budget review exercise being undertaken by the CEO and Directors. In the meantime:

- The Education Manager and DCLM have identified those work areas which need to be put on hold in the short term, these include: the guided walks programme for summer 2014, large quantities of website work (destination and authority sites), revisions to the core national park map (used in publications and with partners), use of social media to highlight events/activities.
- SW and RJT have contracted out work on the walking portion of the destination website (See fuller amplification in PR and Communications report below)
- Work on the Waterfalls Pack (retail publication) will be delayed until such time as a new officer is in post
- We do not have a partner for Open Farm Sunday in 2014 but plans are in hand for 2015
- Additional hours payments have been made to the Interpretation Officer and Education Officer(s) to cover some of the work (at no additional cost to the budget)

Visitor Centres

Please see separate report

No other performance exceptions to report for Countryside and Land Management Directorate. Nil reports from: **Sustainable Tourism, Rights of Way, Ecology, and Sustainable Communities.**

8.3 CEO Corporate Services Directorate

PR and Communications

Websites

The National Park Authority is now represented on two websites – www.beacons-npa.gov.uk and www.breconbeacons.org. As you will remember, the Authority decided to split its site in order to produce a strong destination site at www.breconbeacons.org (via a partnership arrangement with Brecon Beacons Tourism (BBT), the local tourism organisation and other local Authorities) and to refocus the information remaining in the Authority site after

the visitor facing information was removed. Both websites were then to be translated into Welsh.

www.breconbeacons.org has been live since July last year however it has seen substantial re-programming and editing work since that time. A travel journalist/web editor was hired in Autumn last year to look at re-working the site contents to make it user friendly and to present the destination in the best light. They finished their work in early December 2013. In Spring this year with the lack of an Information Officer in post, consultants were hired to work on developing the walking section of the site – this work is nearly complete. The Information Officer traditionally looked after the events section of the Authority site but in their absence this work has gone to BBT and to the National Park Visitor Centre at the moment.

The company who developed the site repurposed some elements of it to meet our joint expectations (us and the partners) but there were considerable delays and outstanding issues not completed and in the end the project management board lost confidence in the relationship. The site has been bought in house to sit on the Authority's server and the relationship with that supplier ended in April 2014. Since that time the Authority's Communications Manager has been looking for a new supplier to finish the development work required on the site. We have been working with our web developers from the original site on developing the mapping work for the destination site.

www.beacons-npa.gov.uk We moved this site to a new content management system- and did some limited re-design on it – it went live on Tuesday 3 June 2014.

This site will link to modern.gov – the new software the Authority will use to manage the paperwork for committees. The administrative system in the background is substantially easier to use and as such will allow departments to edit their pages more regularly and easily.

Translation for site

Both sites need to be translated but we have been waiting until they are both fully functioning and mostly edited. —The original Authority website was translated in 2012. The Authority had intended to have both websites translated during 2013/14 and indeed had discussed a timetable with the Welsh Language Commissioner's office which was to have resulted in completion by the end of May. We will not be meeting this timetable owing to a series of issues: initially we decided to wait to translate www.breconbeacons.org until some substantial editing work was finished in November 2013 – this ran into December 2013. Around December 2013 it was also agreed that the www.beacons-npa.gov.uk site would be migrated to a different content management system and that the

translation work required for this site would be undertaken when the migration was complete. We intended to put together a tender for a framework agreement in January in order to allow the translation work to be done. The framework was to ensure that all future translation work would be undertaken more easily in order to ensure that the substantial resource required to keep this up to date would be used effectively and we would not repeat the problem that happened last time when that the website was fully translated but not updated. A redundancy in the Communications team and responding to the heavy workload meant that writing the framework was pushed back and then the Welsh Government announced that its framework agreement for translation – which we had agreed to sign up to, but which had been on hold owing to not having enough applicants – had now been awarded and would be available shortly – it then seemed like a waste of resource to let our own contract separately – the framework went live on Monday. Accordingly we intend to let the contract for the translation of the website in the next month or so.

No other performance exceptions to report for CEO Corporate Services.

Nil reports received from **HR, Democratic Services, Finance, IT**

8.4 Planning Directorate

Enforcement

Nil report

Strategy Policy and Heritage

Nil report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) **That members note the report**
- b) **That members agree to receive enforcement performance reports as part of performance exceptions reporting henceforth**

9.0 Risk Register Review

Paul Funnell

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Risk Register Review
Report Author:	Paul Funnell IT and Systems Manager 01874 620459 paul.funnell@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report:	Full review of full risk register
Enclosures	Enclosure 10 – Risk Register Report Jun 2014
Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	
Recommendation	That members approve the changes to the register recommended by CMT That members agree to the new risk review processes proposals

9.1 Introduction

This is the report following the full review of the risk register carried out at CMT on 24 April 2014. A summary of the register as at that meeting including commentary from the meeting is included at [Enclosure 10](#). In addition, following discussion at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 2 May additional information is reported in the form of commentary from each full review over the previous year and where appropriate mitigating and contingency actions have been highlighted.

9.2 Archived Risks

No changes

9.3 Conservation Risks

No changes

9.4 Corporate Governance Risks

No changes

9.5 Health and Safety Risks

No changes

9.6 Information and IT Risks

03.Iiii Spatial data RM - *Poor decision making due to lack of ownership and upkeep of spatial data*

Recommendation: change in probability from “possible” to “unlikely”

Rationale: introduction of new spatial database, desktop GIS and accompanying training programme by the GIS Analyst has seen significant improvements in this area

9.7 Planning Risks

No changes

9.8 Reduced Risks

No changes

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) To approve the above recommendations from CMT in respect of Risk Register amendments.
- b) To agree that the risk register is brought before the committee on an annual basis with the format seen in the enclosure, in addition to the current quarterly full reviews and interim ad hoc reviews
- c) To agree that a full review of the risk register is conducted annually by the Joint Management Team in order to agree target (residual) risk scores for all live risks with accompanying action plans where appropriate

10.0 HR Annual Report 2013-14 and Health & Safety Update

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Committee Date of meeting: 20 June 2014
Report Title:	Annual Human Resources & Health & Safety Report
Report Author:	Richard Mears, HR Manager, 01874 620425, richard.mears@beacons-npa.gov.org
Purpose of Report:	An annual summary of the Authority’s HR and Health & Safety information and trends
Enclosures	Enclosure 11 - HR Annual Review 2013/14

Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	No.
Recommendation	Members are asked to note the contents of the report for information purposes.

10.1 Introduction

The attached report at [Enclosure 11](#) provides an overview of the Authority's turnover, sickness, recruitment, learning & development trends for 2013/14 and an overview of Health & Safety information.

Corporate Implications	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	Turnover increased from 12.21% to 14.73% whilst headcount reduced from 134 to 124. Sickness absence decreased from 3.3% to 2.26% against an annual target of 3%.
b) Equality	None
c) Human Rights	None
d) Sustainability Appraisal	By offering and a range of flexible work options the Authority has supported a reduction in employee travel which reduces the Authority's carbon footprint
e) Biodiversity Impact	None
f) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change	None
g) National Park Management Plan Actions	None
h) Background Papers	None
i) Which Corporate Goal(s) does the recommendation support?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION: Members to note the content of the annual report.

11.0 Report on the Personal Use by Staff of Authority Vehicles

Julian Atkins

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny
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	Date of meeting: 20 th June, 2014
Report Title:	Report on the Personal Use of Authority Vehicles
Report Author:	Julian Atkins, Director of Countryside & Land Management 01874 620457 julian.atkins@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report:	To update Members on the Authority's existing policies regarding the personal use by staff of Authority vehicles.
Enclosures	None
Background Papers	1. BBNPA, Drivers Handbook, 3 rd Edition: 2. Use of Authority Vehicles:
Public Interest Test	N/A
Recommendation	Members are asked to note the report.

11.1 Introduction

Members will recall that at a previous meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, a Member requested clarification of the Authority's policies regarding the personal use by staff of Authority vehicles and also assurances that the policies were being applied.

11.2 Current Policy Position

The Authority has a well developed suite of HR and related policies. In the context of the use of Authority vehicles and members of staff driving either Authority vehicles or their own vehicle while on work duties, the relevant policies are the:

BBNPA, Drivers Handbook, 3rd Edition
Use of Authority Vehicles Policy

In essence the Use of Authority Vehicles Policy establishes that Members of staff are not normally permitted to use Authority vehicles for personal or private use. The policy recognises however, that in some limited instances private use may be permissible, where for example sustainability impacts might have a bearing on use, and the following examples are cited:

What is permissible?

1. If you are engaged in a work related journey and call at a garage for a snack/use the rest room etc and have not deviated from your route to do so.
2. If you take a liveried fleet vehicle home at night as part of your agreed working arrangements and stop as for 1. Above
3. Transporting family members e.g. to school **provided you are engaged in a work related journey and the destination is on your route**

Not permissible

1. If you are engaged in a work related journey and decide to drive to a supermarket located off your route, to do some shopping.
2. If you take a liveried fleet vehicle home at night as part of your agreed working arrangements and decide to drive to a destination **located off your route**, to do some shopping, transport children to or from school, visit family or carry out private errands.
3. Use of the vehicle for any other private reason inside or outside working hours.

In addition, the Driver's Handbook provided to members of staff in the Wardens' Teams reinforces the Policy and also clarifies how Authority vehicles can and cannot be used as summarised in the following extract:

“Use of vehicles

Other than were authorised, private use of an Authority vehicle is strictly forbidden. No unauthorised passengers or pets may be carried unless with prior permission from your Line Manager or Volunteer Co-Ordinator where appropriate. If the Authority vehicle sustains any damage from your pet then the cost of repair will be your liability. You are not allowed, under any circumstances, to carry any pets in any Authority Pool vehicles.”

11.3 Risk

In the event that a member of staff fails to comply with the policy and/or driver's manual, they are potentially at risk of disciplinary action. Should the worst occur and they are involved in an accident then the Authority's insurers may declare the individual member of staff and/or the Authority uninsured. The individual concerned might then become personally liable and/or open to prosecution by the police.

For this reason staff have been reminded of the requirements within both documents and the need to comply with Authority policy. Should members have any further specific concerns then these should be brought to the attention of the relevant Director for further action as appropriate.

11.4 Conclusion

The Authority has a clear policy framework in place regarding the use of Authority vehicles by members of staff. The limitations regarding that use are clear as is the need to obtain prior approval from line managers regarding agreed working arrangements and use of Authority vehicles in specific instances.

Corporate Implications)	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	The report provides a further means of reminding staff that use of Authority vehicles is subject to scrutiny
b) The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012: Procurement of services over £173,934	Not applicable
c) Equality	The report is neutral with regard to protected characteristics
d) Human Rights	The report is neutral with regard to Human Rights
e) Sustainability Appraisal	Completed
f) Biodiversity Impact	The report is neutral with regard to biodiversity
g) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change	The report is neutral with regard to climate change
h) National Park Management Plan Actions	Not applicable
i) Background Papers	BBNPA, Drivers Handbook, 3 rd Edition: Use of Authority Vehicles:
j) Which National Park Management theme does the recommendation support?	None

RECOMMENDATION: Members are asked to note the report

12.0 Q4 Trading Report

Wayne Lewis

Report to:	Audit and Scrutiny Committee Date of meeting: 20 th June 2014
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Report Title:	2013/14 Quarter 4 Trading Report
Report Author:	Wayne Lewis Commercial Manager 01874 620492 Wayne.lewis@breconbeacons.org
Purpose of Report:	To provide a quarterly review of the trading performance of the visitor and information centres.
Enclosures	Enclosure 12 – Q4 Trading Figures
Background Papers	None
Public Interest Test	None
Recommendation	Members are asked to note the report.

12.1 Introduction

This report has been prepared to provide Members with a quarterly update on the trading performance of the National Park Visitor Centre, and the Tourist Information Centres. Details with regard to the online shop and Waterfalls car parks are also included.

12.2 Strategy for 2013/14

Members will recall that 2012/13 was a challenging year for our Centres, with visitor numbers to our Tourist Information Centres down by 4.6% and TIC income down by 5.2%, while Visitor numbers to the National Park Visitor Centre were down by 4.2% NPVC and income down was down by 8.6%. There was evidence that this declining trend started in 2008, and an analysis of the annual figures showed that visitor numbers and income had fallen year on year, reaching their lowest levels ever in 12/13.

To combat this worrying trend, we put in place a four pronged strategy for 13/14 to stabilise the performance of our Centres:

- Halt the decline in visitor numbers.
- Increase the number of visitors who spend in our centres.
- Increase the transaction spend per visitor.
- Increase the gross profit margin on the products that we sell.

Halt the decline in visitor numbers – Visitor numbers were clearly affected by the poor weather that we experienced over the preceding two years. In 2013/14 the weather was more favourable to us resulting in a more positive outcome in terms of visitor numbers. At the same time we have taken a number

of practical steps to make our centres a more attractive and give a clearer proposition. We have ensured that our centres are open when visitors need them, and that we look like we are open when we are. Simple measures like pinning the doors open, and using clearer signage and flags has proved to be successful. External signage informing passers-by of what we have to offer is also being produced to really tell people what we do.

Increase the number of visitors who spend money in our centres – We have conducted a detailed analysis of the items that we have traditionally stocked, and identified what sells and what does not. The analysis has shown that there were many items for which we were not selling a single unit during the year. These are being phased out, and the space is being filled with more in demand products.

In addition the introduction of more locally produced goods and crafts has been well received by visitors and locals alike, and we now have some great relationships with many local businesses. We continue to speak to visitors to get a better understanding of their needs, and our product ranges continue to evolve.

Increase the transaction spend per visitor – We have been a lot braver this year in the price points of the items that we have for sale. A great example of this is the Welsh Gold that we have for sale in the Visitor Centre and Llandovery Tourist Information Centre, delivering sales of £5,200 in the first year of stocking. It shows that as long as we have quality products combined with great service, people are willing to purchase higher ticket items from us.

We have also completed an audit on our selling prices for existing items, and found that we were significantly below the market average on a number of products. The audit has enabled us to raise our prices, while still being competitive and sympathetic to the current financial environment.

Increase the gross profit margin on the products that we sell – For many of the same reasons that have been identified in increasing the average transaction spend, the ability to sell higher priced items, and targeted price increases has enabled us to improve the gross profit we achieve on our sales. We have also been able to negotiate better deals with new suppliers, and the result has been an average gross profit of 41.75% and increase of 2.1% on the previous financial year.

As indicated when I presented the Q4 trading report for 2012/13, I have been using the quarterly trading reports throughout this year to not only give you the income performance, but also give you extra financial information that demonstrates how we are performing against our strategy. To that end I have attached [Enclosure 12](#) with this report which gives you the following information.

- Total Income for each Centre
- Number of items sold
- Average transaction value

- Average spend per visitor through the door.
- Average gross profit percentage per centre.

All the above provide you as Members with a clear indication of how the strategy is working, and will enable more informed debate going forward.

Following debate in ASC meetings Members have requested that an indication of the profitability of the centres is included in the reports. At the time of writing this report the final out turn figures are still being finalised, so I have not included these figures in this quarterly report. Once I have the final out-turn figures, a profitability analysis will be presented in the year-end report which will be presented to the full National Park Authority committee later in the year.

12.3 National Park Visitor Centre and Tea Rooms

See [Enclosure 12](#), Tables Four, Five & Six

While the prolonged spell of poor weather we had at the start of the new year affected the Tea Rooms income in February, the quarter was yet another successful one for the Visitor Centre overall. The increase in income at the Tea Rooms of 9.8% and an increase of 20.2% at the Visitor Centre were well beyond our expectations.

Credit must be given to the Centre and Tearoom Managers and their teams in the way they have embraced the changes that have been made to deliver such a fantastic performance. As well as the financial performance, the appearance of the site is much improved and the positive atmosphere and buzz at the Centre is tangible.

The addition of the new play area, wildlife garden and forthcoming observatory, as part of 14/15 developments, will help strengthen the Centre's position still further as a destination in its own right. The refurbishment of the shop and introduction of themed interpretation/retail areas has received positive comment from both locals and visitors, and we have led the way in combining retail product and interpretive messages together to deliver a strong offer to our visitors.

I believe the centre will continue to grow its visitor numbers and income this forthcoming year, and will be well worthy of its status as our flagship visitor centre

12.4 Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre

See [Enclosure 12](#), Table One

A good final quarter from Abergavenny, which has been trading under difficult and uncertain circumstances. I am particularly proud of the team at Abergavenny who have continued to provide an excellent and professional service during this

period despite the decision to cease the operation in its previous form. Fortunately, we have been able to negotiate a new partnership arrangement for the forthcoming year with Monmouthshire County Council, Abergavenny Town Council and the St Mary's Priory Development Trust and a new TIC service is now operating from the Tithe Barn next to St Mary's church, in town. It is hoped that this arrangement will prove to be a successful venture.

With the move to the Tithe Barn now secure for coming financial year, our focus will be on making this a success in its new home and securing the future of the service for years to come

12.5 Llandovery Tourist Information Centre

See [Enclosure 12](#), Table Two

Llandovery Tourist Information Centre was closed for entire quarter four period.

12.6 Waterfalls Information Centre

See [Enclosure 12](#), Table Three

A slight drop in income and visitor numbers in quarter four, which I believe is due to the prolonged spell of poor weather and the early Easter in 2013.

Nevertheless, the retail offer at the Waterfalls Centre continues to develop, with a greater emphasis on drinks and snacks which have proven to be great additions to the Centre's offer. We will continue to increase the range of drinks, snacks and ice creams as we move into the summer trading period. We have also rationalized some of the other ranges in the Centre, removing the poor selling items, and utilizing the space for better sellers.

12.7 Car Parks (Cwm Porth)

See [Enclosure 12](#), Table Eight

Quarter Four saw a 26.8% increase in car park income from the Waterfalls Car Parks. The site now has its own dedicated page on the destination website, which seems to be driving more visitors to these car parks. Our policy of polite enforcement of visitors who park without payment also continues to be a success.

The retail income also continues to rise despite a drop in visitor numbers, with a 17.9% increase in Quarter Four, and we feel this can be considerably improved on if we can find a way of increasing the electricity capacity of the wardens building. We are currently working on a business plan to evaluate the benefits of

investing in either a mains connection or increasing the capacity of the solar panels that are currently in use but providing insufficient power.

See [Enclosure 12, Table Eight](#)

12.8 Online Shop

See [Enclosure 12, Table Seven](#)

The online shop continues to trade down as we still battle to bring the destination website up to standard. There are signs of an increase in visitors to the online shop in Quarter Four in comparison to Q3, but it is still some way off the visitor numbers we were attracting before the launch of the destination website.

I am working on an online shop action plan which will be rolled out in quarter one of the current financial year. This action plan will focus on presenting targeted links to the shop via specific pages of the website, and will review our postage and handling fees which I believe are prohibiting to potential buyers, given the volumes and order values involved, and are out of line with current online consumer expectations.

12.9 Craig-y-nos Country Park

Our income generation at Craig-y-nos has continued to improve with the café, craft shop and flat all having tenants. In addition our car park fees achieved an income level of just over £1k above our target figure. At the same time we have also generated over £1.2k in the sale of fire wood and almost £900 in the sale of duck food.

We are confident we will be able to build on these income streams in the coming financial year because we have a good volume of timber available following wind blow damage to some of the trees in the park and this is available for fire wood, and as timber blanks for specialist wood turners. Identifying such opportunities is an example of turning a negative into positive after losing so many trees during the winter months.

In terms of our forward plans, we are also planning a number of events this year including the Adelina Patti exhibition being held in the previously unused game room, a children's activity day and an exciting Halloween event in the autumn.

12.10 Conclusion

Quarter Four has again been an extremely successful quarter for the Visitor and Information Centres and their commercial performance. While the weather tried its best to spoil the party, the changes that we have made over the past twelve months and the enthusiastic way the teams have embraced them have

demonstrated that we can have successful businesses even when the weather is poor.

I am particularly pleased at the progress of the Visitor Centre. The changes and additions to its appearance and the new management structure have proven to be extremely successful. There is a real buzz and excitement at the centre, and I am looking forward to seeing how that develops in the coming financial year.

Quarter four has been a challenging one as we implement change and plan for future changes, and I am really pleased and proud to have contributed to the new tourist information service that will open at the Tithe Barn in Abergavenny. While partnership working has its challenges, it demonstrates that with will and tenacity we can continue to deliver services in a difficult financial environment.

Corporate Implications	
a) Financial, Staffing and Improvement	This report is for information only
b) The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012: Procurement of services over £173,934	Not applicable
c) Equality	This report is for information only, no decision to be made
d) Human Rights	This report is neutral with regards to Human Rights
e) Sustainability Appraisal	This report is for information only, no decision to be made.
f) Biodiversity Impact	This report is neutral with regards to biodiversity.
g) Contribution towards mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change	This report is neutral with regards to climate change.
h) National Park Management Plan Actions	Promoting understanding and awareness “promoting opportunities to connect people to the National Park information” “Provide a first class visitor experience and welcome to anyone interacting with and enjoying the National Park and its special qualities.”
i) Background Papers	List any sources you have used to write this report – this may be an internal memorandum, letter from a consultee, or even a telephone note. Only include documents that do not contain exempt information
j) Which National Park	<u>Theme 3</u> : Providing everyone with

Management theme does the recommendation support?	opportunities for outdoor access and recreation <u>Theme 4</u> : Raising awareness and understanding of the Park <u>Theme 6</u> : Sustainable Economic Development
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RECOMMENDATION: Members are asked to note this report.

13.0 Complaints, Compliments And Freedom Of Information

Vickie Page

Members are asked to consider the following reports:

- [Enclosure 13](#) - Summary of Complaints
- [Enclosure 14](#) - Complaints for 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015
- [Enclosure 15](#) - Summary of Freedom of Information Requests - 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015
- [Enclosure 16](#) – Freedom of Information for - 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015
- [Enclosure 17](#) - Compliments

14.0 ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT

To note receipt of the Annual Improvement Report from the Wales Audit Office ([Enclosure 18](#)) and to agree any questions to put to the WAO Officer when he presents the report to the National Park Authority on 27 June 2014.

15.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Such other business as is, in the opinion of the Chairman, of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

SCHEDULE OF CORRESPONDENCE

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Such other correspondence as, in the opinion of the Chairman, is of such urgency as to warrant consideration.