

Navigation Committee Engagement
Report by Chief Executive

Summary: This report details the points raised during a meeting to discuss how the work of the Navigation Committee could be better managed to make sure that its guidance and advice to the Authority on strategic matters is of high quality, timely and focussed.

Recommendation: That the Authority:

- (i) notes the report;
- (ii) welcomes the enhanced responsibility of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Navigation Committee in contributing to the organisation of the Committee's business; and
- (iii) supports the provision of a briefing note to all members, providing further clarification on the Communications Strategy and the role of members with regard to communications.

1 Background

1.1 During the Navigation Committee meeting on 12 December 2013, the Chairman of the Navigation Committee advised that, following the meeting with MPs on 2 September 2013, a meeting had taken place on 29 November 2013. The meeting had been called by the Chairman of the Authority to discuss how the work of the Navigation Committee could be better managed to make sure that its guidance and advice to the Authority on strategic matters is of high quality, timely and focussed. Those present at the meeting comprised the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Navigation Committee, Mr Knight as a member of the Navigation Committee and the Chief Executive. The Chairman of the Navigation Committee reported that the discussions had covered:

- Reviewing consultation and arranging the business of the Committee;
- Communications about the work of the Committee and the role of members;
- Finance and overall governance.

1.2 It was agreed that, following further investigation and consideration by the Navigation Committee and agreement by the Authority, an Action Plan would be prepared.

2 Navigation Committee Consultation

- 2.1 Appendix 1 details the main elements identified during the meeting and provides some initial comment on how these could be enabled. The Navigation Committee was consulted on this document during its meeting on 27 February 2014.
- 2.2 When considering the issues raised under 'Improving Consultation and Arranging the Business of the Committee' the Committee welcomed the increased emphasis on the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Committee to keep informed of Authority business in order to bring relevant agenda items forward. Though some members supported the recording of Committee meetings in their entirety, the more general consensus was that this was not necessary and that the Chairman of the Committee would summarise the key discussion points and conclusions at the end of each agenda item for the minutes.
- 2.3 When considering the issues raised under 'Communications About the Work of the Committee', the Authority's policy concerning members speaking to the media on behalf of the Committee or the Authority was discussed. Some members questioned the policy and felt it needed further clarity, whilst other members saw the policy as beneficial in ensuring correct and united representation.
- 2.4 With regard to section 3 concerning 'Finance and Overall Governance' the Committee welcomed the increased involvement of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Committee and emphasised the need for members to highlight matters important to them for possible inclusion in agenda setting..
- 2.5 In conclusion, the Navigation Committee noted the report and welcomed the clarification of the responsibility of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Committee in contributing to the organisation of the Committee's business. The Chairman of the Navigation Committee also requested further clarification on the Communications Strategy to ensure members were clear about their role with regard to communications. Members noted than any changes to the Communications Strategy would need a clear rationale.

3 Way Ahead

- 3.1 The Navigation Committee noted the report and welcomed the clarification of the responsibility of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Committee in contributing to the organisation of the Committee's business. This should address most of the issues raised. The Navigation Committee has raised the need for further clarification on the Communications Strategy to ensure members are clear about their role with regard to communications. To address this matter, it is proposed that the Head of Communications generates a briefing note for all members to provide further clarification on the Communications Strategy.

Background papers: None

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Broads Plan Objectives: Nil

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Matters Raised During the Meeting on 29 November 2013.

Matters Raised During the Meeting on 29 November 2013

1 Improving Consultation and Arranging the Business of the Committee

Serial	Matter Raised	Comment
1.1	Continuing to involve Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee in agenda-setting for Committee meetings, and to focus these agendas on the new direction for the Committee as set out below	The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Navigation Committee already meet with the Chief Executive to formulate the agenda for the meeting. This process should continue.
1.2	Note and recognise the benefits of early and meaningful participation and consultation on policy matters, and develop appropriate means of addressing these	The importance for early and meaningful participation and consultation on policy matters is recognised. The agenda setting meeting with the Chief Executive does and should continue to take the opportunity to explore policy matters which may need to be addressed by the Committee.
1.3	Early consultation with all members of the Committee on strategic issues using different formats for engagement as appropriate (including workshops, closed sessions where necessary)	It will be important that consultation is undertaken under proper governance arrangements using the Navigation Committee meetings. Again the agenda setting meeting with the Chief Executive should be used to identify the need for consultation on strategic issues.
1.4	Rearranging and shortening the agenda so that it focuses on 2 or 3 key strategic issues for discussion, using BA website updates for routine information and for public record (if practicable)	The shortening of the agenda may be very difficult as there are some issues which the Navigation Committee must be consulted on. Examples of agenda items that the Navigation Committee members would not want brought to the meeting would be helpful to facilitate this approach.
1.5	More engagement with members on their views of what the key issues are and creating opportunities for these to be added to NC agendas	Members are encouraged to identify strategic items for future discussion, both for the Chairman of the Navigation Committee to represent during agenda setting meetings and during a specific item on the meeting agenda. Members are encouraged to use these options to raise key strategic issues for the agenda.

1.6	Consider the level of officer attendance at Navigation Committee meetings	Attendance by officers at the meetings allows them to hear members' views first-hand and to use this information within their future work. Much of the work in the Authority is interconnected and it is not easy to delineate an agenda item to a particular officer. Attendance of the core officers managing most of the activities therefore increases officer understanding of members views and also allows a balanced response to be provided to questions represented by members during the meeting. The Management Team will, however, continually review attendance to ensure that this is optimum.
1.7	Chairman to give clear summary of main conclusions and rationale for them at conclusion of discussions to aid in minute taking and recording of outcomes. Minutes to be shortened to focus on these outcomes	These suggestions are welcomed.
1.8	Investigation of audio recording of formal meetings to facilitate accuracy of minutes	The recording of the full meeting is not supported as the summarising of key points during a meeting should not require reference to several hours of recording. The recording of the summary main conclusions and rationale by the Chairman of the Navigation Committee would be supported (on the basis that the minutes should be shortened to focus on these outcomes as detailed in the matter above). As the recording will become part of the public record in relation to the Freedom of Information Act, it will be thoroughly important that any summary conclusion, rationale or recommendation was carefully stated.

2 Communications About the Work of the Committee

Serial	Matter Raised	Comment
2.1	Review the Communications Policy to define the role of Committee Members, and the circumstances in which they can give their personal opinions or	The existing Communications Strategy has been reviewed. It states that the "Chair of the Authority and Chief Executive should normally speak on behalf of the Authority in media communications. Committee chairs or lead members may also be asked by the Authority to speak to the media

	speak “on behalf of the Committee”	on specific issues. Members should discuss all media contacts with the Head of Communications in the first instance, to ensure that the Authority is correctly represented. This principle will also apply to any letters or other types of correspondence written for publication, including on websites,” This policy is common to the approach adopted by public and private bodies in providing an agreed, accurate organisational view and the Authority would need to have a clear rationale for making any changes to it..
2.2	Role of Lead Members (see below) to include consultation on relevant significant media releases with such members in the Communications Policy	The Chair of the Navigation Committee has historically been contacted for comments in press releases where relevant and this input is appreciated. This approach will continue and, following its review, the Communications Strategy will be updated to reflect this.
2.3	Accept and define the role of the Committee Chair/Vice Chair in explaining publicly the work of the Committee	We accept that there are occasions when it is appropriate for the Communications Team to request a comment from the Committee Chair or, in his/her absence, the Vice Chair. This will remain the case in relation to Navigation Committee decisions and related issues.

3 Finance and Overall Governance

Serial	Matter Raised	Comment
3.1	Identify and use opportunities to reconsider the governance arrangements of the Authority including the representation of navigation interests	<p>Following a meeting with the NSBA and BHBF on 28 January 2014, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would liaise with the Chairman of the NSBA to review the legal issues and options for the Broads fulfilling the Broads Plan ambition of becoming a national park and the implications that would flow for its governance structure. Since this would require primary legislation, this would also provide the opportunity to review the representation of navigation interests.</p> <p>Defra has invited views on the possibility for national park authorities to include some directly elected members, and the Government’s deliberations on this approach are still awaited. Such a move would also require primary legislation which might also provide the opportunity to</p>

		<p>review the representation of navigation interests.</p> <p>There are opportunities for stakeholders from the navigation community to apply and be appointed to the Authority through the Secretary of State appointment process. These opportunities are widely publicised and it is suggested that members of the Navigation Committee look to publicise these opportunities through their own contacts.</p>
3.2	Recommend the appointment of the Chairman of the Navigation Committee ex officio onto the Authority's Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee	This was supported and was agreed by the Authority at its meeting on 17 January 2014.
3.3	Provide training for Committee and Authority members on the Authority's budget structures and forms of management and statutory accounting	Training was offered to all members (including Co-opted members of the Navigation Committee) in 2013. Similar training events will be planned for 2014. Members are strongly encouraged to attend these events.
3.4	Involve the Chair of the Navigation Committee in induction briefings for new Authority members	This is supported and will be done for future inductions.
3.5	Bring new NC members up to speed on decisions "in the pipeline"	This is also supported. It is suggested that the Chair of the Navigation Committee liaises with the Chief Executive to identify key issues that should be included in such a brief. If necessary, these issues should be identified by an outgoing Chairman, before the end of their term, if they are not to be re-appointed.
3.6	Review the role, selection and appointment of 'Lead Members' in terms of both NC and the Authority	The role, selection and appointment of Broads Authority Lead Members are considered at the Annual Meeting. The Navigation Committee members, who are also members of the Authority are responsible for contributing to this process. The rationale for appointing Lead Members for the Navigation Committee would need to be developed.