



Resources Committee

MINUTES of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at the National Park Office, Wayfaring House, Murley Moss Business Park, Kendal at 10.00 am on 19 November 2025.

Present

Mr P Walter (Dep Chair)	Ms J A Drake
Ms J Boak	Mr M Hatton
Mr M P Brereton	
Mr W Clark	2 vacancies

Apologies

Mr Jackson	Ms S Mosner
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43/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Jackson and Ms Mosner.

44/25 Minutes

Decided: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

45/25 Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced to the Committee and members of the public that the meeting was being livestreamed and that a digital recording of the meeting would be made.

The Chair invited the Head of Resources to introduce Serena Armstrong, Financial Services Manager, to the Committee. It was explained that Serena would be taking on more of a budget monitoring and reporting role and thus be more involved in the MTFS and FRA going forward.

46/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of a registrable interest or disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any of the business of the Committee.

47/25 Questions

There were no questions relating to the business of the Committee.

48/25 Public Participation

There were no questions, petitions or deputations of a general nature relating to the business of the Committee.

49/25 Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: Q2 2025/26

The Performance Management Adviser presented a report updating Members on progress in delivering the 2025-2028 Business Plan, including the management of key corporate and Business Plan risks.

The Business Plan had been updated in September to reflect the new Rangers' service structure and Member feedback from Resources Committee in September 2025.

The Performance Management Adviser briefly summarised the 19 key actions, where 17 (89%) had a green status and where Action 8 – Sustainable Travel and Transport along with Action 3 – Carbon Reduction & Sequestration had an amber status due to challenges with integrated transport strategy, the replacement of gas boilers, and a vacancy in Property Asset Manager role. It was noted that there is a risk to delivering the work planned for 2025/26 in the case of these two actions.

In terms of the 21 Additional Service Actions, 17 (81%) had a green status and 4 (19%) were amber (one due to planning casework and the other three impacted by staff vacancies).

It was explained that none of the 15 Business Plan and corporate risks were at a critical or high level - all scoring below 10.

Members queried if carbon targets are at risk. The Head of Resources confirmed overall progress but noted delays in replacing gas boilers due to property complications and lease issues. Solar panel benefits are expected this year, but replacement of the four-by-four fleet was proving problematic as no real solutions exist. However, two plug-in hybrid trucks had been purchased as a trial.

Members sought clarity on purpose and investment in green SPV. The Head of Resources advised of ongoing development with involvement of the Member working group and that briefings for Members by the Associate Director of Sustainable Development would be ongoing.

Planning & Enforcement: Members noted improvement in previous years and queried enforcement issues. Officers confirmed that the team is now at full strength.

Financial Risk – Quarrying Permissions: Members asked about SAC planning review and financial risk. Officers explained that it was a legacy issue under discussion with Defra and that full disclosure was included in the accounts.

Property Asset Manager Vacancy: Members queried the impact of this vacancy. Officers acknowledged risk but confirmed that recruitment was underway, with the revised role focused on green estate management.

Members welcomed the strong performance but urged continued improvement in areas like visitor management and sustainable travel.

Decided:

- a Members reviewed progress in delivering the 2025-2028 Business Plan as summarised in Annex 1 and detailed in Annexes 2, 3 and 4; and

- b Members reviewed the management of corporate risks and Business Plan risks as summarised in Annex 1 and detailed in Annex 5.

50/25 Performance Management Strategy

The Performance Management Adviser presented a report showing our refreshed Performance Management Strategy, which includes the Performance Management Framework.

It was explained that the strategy is reviewed annually, with the last review presented to the Resources Committee in November 2024. This year's changes had been minimal, with the main update being the ability to make mid-year adjustments to business plan actions at the end of quarters one and two.

Additionally, the Performance Management Adviser advised that, following discussions last year, performance indicator data would no longer be included in the statement of accounts although internal monitoring would continue. Instead, the statement will focus on business plan delivery, overall service performance, and management of key risks.

The CEO reminded Members of previous discussions regarding the ability to remove objectives mid-year when it had been agreed that objectives should remain even if delivery is unlikely, to maintain transparency. Removal would only be considered if an objective becomes unachievable due to external factors (e.g., withdrawal of government funding).

The flexibility to add actions during the year was noted as beneficial, provided resource implications are considered.

A point raised by a Member (via email), concerned linking performance management more explicitly to outcomes rather than outputs. The CEO acknowledged this as an important consideration for future development of the framework, though no immediate changes were proposed.

Decided:

- a Members reviewed and approved the Performance Management Strategy, and Performance Management Framework, as shown in Annex 1.

51/25 Financial Resilience Assessment 2025-26

The Head of Resources presented a paper setting out an assessment of the Authority's financial resilience as part of the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27. The paper also outlined the key assumptions which will underpin the development of the 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Financial Resilience Assessment was introduced as part of good financial management practice and the CIPFA Financial Management Code providing an annual review of reserves, future pressures, and the likelihood of setting a balanced budget. Key points as set out in the report were presented.

Members thanked the Head of Resources for the clarity and coherence of the report. Members queried the assumption of no further revenue cuts and discussed worst-case scenarios. Officers confirmed that even an 8% cut could be managed for next year, though it would impact the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Concerns were raised about whether healthy reserves could lead to disproportionate cuts for the Authority. Officers reiterated the position as set out in the report, that the reserve levels were adequate to provide a degree of resilience given uncertainties e.g. around the grant settlement. They will only provide short term, one-off funding e.g. to allow planned and coordinated service changes in the event of resource reductions. It was also noted that Defra has historically varied the grant on the same basis across all National Parks, though Officers acknowledged that the funding formula could be reviewed.

Questions on inflation assumptions were addressed, with clarification that wage inflation adjustments align with other National Parks and non-wage inflation is managed through cash limits. It was confirmed that the finance team reviews inflation assumptions and updates the MTFS as required.

A further question raised in the Member's email highlighted whether the savings programme should consider whether the business plan outputs are well aligned to the financial resources, or if this could be improved, for example by focussing our Rights of Way work differently. The Head of Resources noted that this would be a significant project but, if judged to be a priority for members, could be initiated to potentially feed into subsequent a years' budget setting.

Decided:

- a Members considered and gave feedback on the Financial Resilience Assessment 2025/26 and key assumptions underpinning the development of the 2026/27 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

52/25 Finance Report: P6 2025/26

The Head of Resources presented a report updating the Resources Committee on revenue and capital budget performance up to **P6 2025/26**. This provided assurance that the Authority is operating within the approved budget envelope, highlighted any proposed budget amendments that may require subsequent Member approval, and flagged significant financial risks. The key points were presented as set out in the report.

Members queried the status of the Waterhead toilets refurbishment scheme. Officers confirmed it will not proceed this year and requires a broader review of site configuration and opportunities.

Members praised the comprehensive nature of the report but noted the absence of certain financial indicators (cash flow forecast, balance sheet, statutory accounts comparison). Officers explained statutory accounts are published and audited, and

cash flow risks are minimal given strong reserves and borrowing options. In response, one Member suggested developing a simplified financial dashboard to provide clearer, quicker insight into organisational health. Officers welcomed this and agreed to collaborate on options.

The Chair acknowledged the complexity of financial reports and supported efforts to make information more accessible for Members without reducing necessary detail.

Decided:

- a Members noted the report

(The meeting concluded at 10:58)