

Resources Committee Self-Assessment for 2024/25

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Resources Committee self-assessment of effectiveness for 2024/25. An annual self-assessment is considered best practice and was agreed to be implemented following Value for Money assessments by external audit.

Recommendation a Members review the draft self-assessment presented that: at Annex 1 and endorse this, subject to any proposed amendments.

2 Background

- 2.1 Good governance is the means by which local authorities ensure that they are providing the right services to the right people in a timely, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 2.2 The Resources Committee forms a key part the Authority's governance framework. It is considered best practice for the Resources Committee to perform an annual self assessment of its effectiveness. This was recommended by external audit in their Value for Money review and was accepted as an action to be implemented for 2023/24 onwards.
- 2.3 There is no defined method to self-assess effectiveness of the Resources Committee. The committee acts in line with some elements of a "scrutiny committee" at a Local Authority, particularly with reference to oversight of delivery of the business plan and financial budget monitoring. The Local Government Association's Councillors workbook on scrutiny sets out the core elements of effective scrutiny as:
- effective work programming
 - positive and constructive relationships
 - involvement
 - effective research and analysis
 - effective meetings
 - specific recommendations
 - good monitoring and evaluation
- 2.4 Although Resources Committee is not a local authority "scrutiny" committee, these headings can provide a useful framework to assess the committee's effectiveness when used in conjunction with Resources Committee's specific terms of reference (see Annex 2).
- 2.5 A proposed self assessment has been drafted and is presented at Annex 1. This includes responses received from Members up to the 9th May. The responses as drafted have not produced anything indicating significant weaknesses in the scope, methods or outcomes of the committee. The feedback has raised some thought provoking points about
- how budgets may be presented to better support Members' and the public's understanding of the cost of services.
 - some further training or use of away hours to ensure Members feel confident scrutinising the wide range of matters brought before the committee.
- 2.6 If agreed, the following improvement actions will be added to the final Annual Governance Statement action plan, for implementation during 2025/26:

- Further use of away hours to support Resources Committee Members in their scrutiny of upcoming agenda items and to discuss options around presentation of financial information.

3 Policy Context

3.1 The Authority is committed to high standards of corporate governance.

4 Options

4.1 Members may amend the draft responses or accept them as set out at Annex 1.

5 Proposals

5.1 Members are asked to review the draft responses to the self assessment and either propose amendments or accept the responses and actions as set out.

6 Best Value Implications

6.1 All authorities are required to undertake a review of their governance arrangements each year. Annual self assessment of effectiveness of Resources Committee will provide further evidence to support the Annual Governance Statement and may flag areas of improvement.

7 Financial Considerations

7.1 There are no direct financial implications.

8 Risk

8.1 The annual review of governance supports the Authority's risk management processes by identifying weaknesses in our governance arrangements and putting in place an action plan for their improvement. This self assessment forms part of that process.

9 Legal Considerations

9.1 The annual review of governance and the publication of an Annual Governance Statement is a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and is based on "proper practice" set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework. This forms part of that process.

10 Human Resources

10.1 There are no direct HR implications.

11 Diversity Implications

11.1 There are no direct diversity implications.

12 Sustainability

12.1 There are no direct sustainability implications.

Background Papers	N/A
Author/Post	Peter Notley, Head of Resources
Responsible Officer	Gavin Capstick, CEO
Date Written	10 May 2025

Resources Committee Self-Assessment of Effectiveness 2024/25

1. Background

- 1.1. Good governance is the means by which local authorities ensure that they are providing the right services to the right people in a timely, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 1.2. There is no defined method to self-assess effectiveness of the Resources Committee. The committee acts in line with some elements of a “scrutiny committee” at a Local Authority, particularly with reference to oversight of delivery of the business plan and financial budget monitoring. The Local Government Association’s Councillors workbook on scrutiny sets out the core elements of effective scrutiny as:
 - **effective work programming** – planning ahead, selecting appropriate topics, allocating time and resources, scoping, and planning activities
 - **positive and constructive relationships** – fostered through effective communication with the council’s executive, officers, partners, and other scrutineers
 - **involvement** – ensuring that residents and local businesses participate in the wider process of scrutiny to ensure that both council decisions are informed by local needs and the transparency of scrutiny
 - **effective research and analysis** – examining raw data and prepared reports, using appropriate questioning techniques, and selecting appropriate witnesses
 - **effective meetings** – preparing the meeting and the invitees, communicating in advance and afterwards, staying on topic, summarising, and confirming decisions
 - **specific recommendations** – stating what needs to change, associated time scales, who needs to be involved and how it should be implemented
 - **good monitoring and evaluation** – ensuring that recommendations are being implemented and measuring success in terms of outcomes.
- 1.3. National Park Authorities (NPA) don’t recognise political affiliations in terms of committee structures or membership, there are no portfolio holders or executive committee structure, so some of these elements may not have direct relevance to an NPA. The following self assessment reviews the work of the committee for the year against these headings where they fit the National Park Authority governance context.

2. Proposed self-assessment

Provision	Full	Partial	Non	Comments	Action
Effective work programming					
Planning ahead	X			Committee agenda planner is maintained by relevant officers and reviewed regularly by SLT and Committee Chair. An action log is also maintained to capture and monitor implementation of Member requests. Key items such as business plan and MTFS form part of recurring annual cycle.	None
Selecting appropriate topics	X			Review of agendas from the past 12 months (see annex 3) shows that activity is in line with the terms of reference for the committee (see annex 2) and that the core functions of the committee have been fulfilled. In addition to formal agenda items, away hours have been used to brief members informally on specific topics.	None
Allocating time and resources	X			Agendas are largely made up of regular standing items, in an annual cycle to monitor budgets/business plan and support Authority in setting budgets/business plan. Meeting timings and agenda items are pro-actively managed to ensure important items (eg review of draft business plan/MTFS) have adequate time for review and discussion. Resources Chair reviews the papers prior to committee and where necessary has emailed Members in advance of the meetings to direct attention to most important items, and also manages this pro-actively at the meetings.	None
Scoping and planning activities	X			The scope of resources committee is clearly set out in the ToR (annex 2) and review of the agenda (annex 3) items supports the assertion that time is planned to ensure the right reports are considered in the right level of detail. The chair is pro-active in directing attention to the most important items. To facilitate efficient discussion during later formal sessions (or of items that are to be escalated to Authority for decision) away hours have been used for an informal discussion of drafts of future reports.	None.
Positive and constructive relationships fostered through effective communication with:					
Officers	X			The relevant Officers report into the Committee and attend meetings to present reports and answer questions. There are also informal 'away hours' and annual member/officer conferences that all help to build effective relationships between committee members and officers.	None
Partners	X (not fully applicable)			Due to the nature of the NPA and the statutory management plan, there is significant resource put into partner relationships but this is more the focus of other sub committees; the Park's elements of the partnership plan are built into the Business Plan, which is monitored by	None

Provision	Full	Partial	Non	Comments	Action
				Resources Committee. The membership of Resources Committee also overlaps significantly with other sub committees.	
Other scrutineers		X		Key factors in enabling scrutiny of public bodies is transparency and disclosure. The majority of Resources Committee reports are in the public domain, published well in advance of the meetings. Part of the feedback from the prior year self assessment was around the use of part II reporting and this has been considered for 2025/26 with the conclusion that the majority of the visitor services information reported could be presented within Part I.	Going forward the Visitor Service trading report will be within the main budget report
Involvement					
Ensuring that residents and local businesses participate in the wider process of scrutiny to ensure that both council decisions are informed by local needs and the transparency of scrutiny	X (not fully applicable)			The Park's governance, funding and scope of services is different to a Council. However, there is the same ethos of transparency of decision making within the Authority. The partnership plan is very widely consulted on and specific issues, for example planning decisions and planning policies, may generate significant participation from residents and businesses.	None
Effective research and analysis					
Examining raw data and prepared reports	X			Reports are prepared and distributed well in advance of meetings. These aim to contain an appropriate level of detail to allow effective scrutiny by the committee. Members have asked for additional information in some circumstances which has been provided (eg Planning casework performance updates)	None
Using appropriate questioning techniques	X			Reports are prepared and published well in advance of meetings allowing Members to digest the key issues and raise queries at, or prior to, the meeting. There is pro-active management of questions during the meeting by the Chair to ensure lines of enquiry are relevant and proportionate.	None
Selecting appropriate witnesses	X			The relevant Officers report into the Committee and attend meetings to present reports and answer questions.	None
Effective meetings					
Preparing the meeting and the invitees	X			Agendas are prepared and distributed well in advance of meetings, with support from the Member Service Coordinator to ensure meetings are timetabled appropriately and quorate.	None
Communicating in advance and afterwards	X			Minutes are prepared and signed off at subsequent meetings giving a full record of decisions made. As part of the Governance Committee self assessment, it was suggested that it may be useful for all formal Member meetings to include a 'meeting feedback' item as the last agenda item to prompt any comments on how the meeting. Although this has not been	None

Provision	Full	Partial	Non	Comments	Action
				formally introduced, there is now an annual self assessment which provides a prompt for Member feedback.	
Staying on topic, summarising and confirming decisions	X			Meetings are chaired effectively with reports following templates to ensure it is clear why reports are being presented and what the recommendations are.	None
Specific recommendations					
Stating what needs to change	X			A recent example of significant performance issues addressed by the Committee related to processing of planning casework. A special report was taken to Resources Committee in May 2022 which set out resources required and timescales to address this. The regular performance and risk monitoring reports through Resources Committee ensure Members are fully sighted on the progress; updates have been provided by the Head of Development Management.	None
Associated time scales	X				None
Who needs to be involved and how it should be implemented	X				None
Good monitoring and evaluation					
Ensuring that recommendations are being implemented and measuring success in terms of outcomes.	X			The business plan is reviewed in detail including the metrics used to measure performance. This helps to ensure that the milestones are specific and meaningful. These milestones are then used for the subsequent monitoring of outcomes.	None

RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1 To be responsible for:
 - the authority's capital and revenue budgets and all matters relating to the planning and monitoring of the Authority's finances
 - the control and management of assets and resources – including property, finance, staff and volunteers
 - Business Plan performance management and risk
 - Procurement
 - Health, Safety and Wellbeing of the Authority's staff and volunteers
 - and for the formulation, review and amendment of policies relating to such matters, save as for those expressly delegated to Officers under this Scheme of Delegation.
- 2 To make minor amendments to the contract standing orders and financial regulations to ensure that they remain up-to-date.
- 3 To consider and determine individual staffing matters as set out in the Authority's Human Resources policies from time to time and in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations.
- 4 To consider as required and determine where necessary matters concerning relations with staff including terms of employment and the Officer Code of Conduct.
- 5 To consider and adopt of employment related policies including those relating to diversity and equality of opportunity.
- 6 To approve changes to the terms and conditions of the Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum.

DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Except for matters where one third or more of the members attending any meeting of the Committee request that the matter be referred to the Authority for decision or where one third or more of the members of the Authority have given a written request (setting out the reasons for such request) to the Chief Executive before the commencement of the relevant meeting that the matter should be referred to the Authority for decision

- 1 To carry out all the functions allocated to the committee by the Authority's Financial Regulations.
- 2 To adopt policies relating to the work of the committee except for policies reserved to the full Membership of Authority.
- 3 To respond to relevant consultation documents published by government or by non-departmental public bodies relating to the work of the Authority or pertaining to the Lake District National Park and coming within the terms of reference of the committee.

- 4 Sitting as a panel, to determine relevant staffing appeals in accordance with the Human Resources policies agreed by the Authority from time to time.
- 5 To make minor amendments to the Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations except for any provision which has the effect of increasing the extent of delegation to this committee.
- 6 To make in year adjustments to revenue and capital budgets in accordance with the provisions of financial regulations.

MEMBERSHIP

Secretary of State 5

Local Authority 5

10

Agenda items from 2024/25

Resources Committee - 7 March 2025

Business Part One

1. Apologies
2. Minutes - To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024.
3. Chair's Announcements
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions
6. Public Participation
7. Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: Quarter Three 2024/25
8. Draft 2025-2028 Business Plan
9. Finance Report: Quarter 3 2024/25 (to December 2024, Period 9 2024/25)
10. Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2029/30
11. Staff Engagement Report 2025

Business Part Two

Commercial In Confidence

12. Disposals and Exemptions 2024/5 - Quarter 3 Update

Commercial & Staff in Confidence

13. Visitor Services 2024/25 Quarter 3 Trading Update and Budget Progress

Resources Committee - 20 November 2024

Business Part One

1. Apologies .
2. Minutes
3. Chairman's Announcements
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions
6. Public Participation
7. Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: Quarter Two 2024/25
8. Performance Management Strategy
9. Finance Report: Quarter 2 2024/25
10. Financial Resilience Assessment 2024/25
11. Staff Turnover Report 2023/24

Business Part Two

Commercial In Confidence

12. Disposals and Exemptions 2024/5 - Quarter 2 Update

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13. Visitor Services 2024/25 Quarter 2 Trading and Budget Progress

Resources Committee - 3 September 2024

Business Part One

1. Appointment of Chairman
2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman
3. Apologies
4. Minutes
5. Chairman's Announcements
6. Declarations of Interest
7. Questions - To answer any questions raised under Standing Order 16(2) relating to the business of the Committee.
8. Public Participation - There are no public questions, petitions or deputations relating to the business of the Committee for this meeting.
9. Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: Quarter One 2024/25
10. Finance Report: Quarter 1 2024/25
11. Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24
12. Wellbeing Annual Report 2023/24

Business Part Two

Commercial In Confidence

13. Disposals and Exemptions 2024/25 - Quarter 1 Update

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14. Visitor Services 2024/25 Quarter 1 Trading Update and Budget Progress

Resources Committee - 6 June 2024

Business Part One

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

3. The Chairmans announcements

4. Declarations of Interest

5. Questions

6. Public Participation

7. Performance and Risk Monitoring Report: End of 2023/24

8. Finance Report: Quarter 4 Provisional Out-turn 2023/24

9. Resources Committee Self Assessment for 2023/24

Business Part Two

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10. Disposals and Exemptions 2023/24 - Quarter 4 Update

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11. Visitor Services 2023/24 Quarter 4 and Year End Trading Update and Budget Progress

12. Brockhole Space and Usage Option