



South Downs
National Park Authority

Agenda Item 12
Report NPA20/21-12

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| Report to | South Downs National Park Authority |
| Date | 15 October 2020 |
| By | Head of Governance & Support Services |
| Title of Report | Member Representation and Engagement |
| Decision | |

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1. Endorse the principle of a small number of Members not being appointed to committees in order to undertake, within the parameters of the member role description, other roles to support the work of the Authority as set out at paragraph 3.3.**
- 2. Agree to appoint Authority Members Angus Dunn and Martin Osborne to the Policy and Resources Committee.**
- 3. Note the appointment of Authority member Richard Waring as an SDNPA Trustee on the South Downs National Park Trust.**
- 4. Approve the creation of an “Alumni” group of former Authority Members based on the principles set out at Appendix I.**
- 5. Agree the principle of appointing up to 3 additional Co-opted Members to the Policy and Resources Committee and delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, to develop and undertake a process for selecting individuals to be recommended to the Authority for appointment as Co-opted Members to the Policy & Resources Committee.**
- 6. Agree to commission a single-issue review of the Members’ Allowances Scheme to consider the payment of an allowance at the same rate as the current member basic allowance to Co-opted Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, with the outcome of this review reported back to the NPA for a final decision on the adoption of a Co-optees’ allowance.**

I. Introduction

- 1.1** Appointments to committees is a matter reserved to the National Park Authority. This paper sets at a change to Committee appointments previously agreed by the Authority at its AGM in 2020 .and endorse the principle that, in future not all members need be appointed to a committee, subject to ensuring compliance with requirements of the environment act set out at para 1.2.
- 1.2** Under Schedule 7 Para 13 of the Environment Act 1995, the Authority has a duty to secure that the division of local authority appointed Members and Secretary of State appointed Members on any Committee is (as nearly as possible using whole numbers) in the same proportion as required in the case of the Authority itself. For these purposes, parish

Members are counted as Secretary of State appointees.

- 1.3 In addition, the paper outlines proposals to appoint additional Co-opted Members to the Policy and Resources Committee to increase the level of challenge and improve the diversity of voices within the Authority's formal decision making processes. As these are formal appointments to a committee, the decision on co-optees rests with the full Authority. This paper seeks approval to the principle and a delegation to enable the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, to develop and undertake the process of identifying suitable individuals for recommendation for these positions. The final decision on any appointment rests with the NPA.
- 1.4 The existing Members' Allowances Scheme will be reviewed to consider the payment of an allowance to all co-optees, including those who are already members of P&R Committee, to be paid at the same rate as other Members. Finally, the paper seeks to establish a grouping for former members of the Authority to continue to contribute, albeit informally, to the ongoing work of the Authority.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 All of the above recommendations are intended to improve the Authority's decision making, extend the range of available expertise and contribute to the effective delivery of the Authority's agreed outcomes and objectives.

3. Issues for consideration

Committee appointments and Members not appointed to committees

- 3.1 The appointment of Members to committees is a matter reserved to the NPA and cannot be delegated to an officer.
- 3.2 The Authority is asked to approve the appointment of Authority Members Angus Dunn and Martin Osborne to the Policy and Resources Committee (as set out in **appendix 2**).
- 3.3 There is a standing delegation to the chief executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to appoint members to outside bodies where such appointments cannot wait until the next AGM and in accordance with the outside bodies protocol. This power was exercised to appoint Richard Waring as a SDNPA representative to the South Downs National park trust and is reported for member's information, as required by standing orders.
- 3.4 The Authority is also asked to endorse the principle that all Members need not serve on a committee, and that in limited circumstances, and by agreement, there may be other ways that Members can play an active role in the work of the Authority outside the existing committee structure. Such roles are defined by the functions of Members set out in the Member role description but could include advocacy, engagement or representation on other bodies. Members will be considered for such roles at an appropriate NPA meeting and it will be at the discretion of the Chair that such roles shall be recommended to the NPA for approval. It is proposed that such Members provide a report back, at least annually, on activities they have undertaken through this new role.

Co-optees

- 3.5 Co-option is the phrase used for the inclusion of individuals who are not members of the Authority to be included in the membership of a committee. Subject to some limitations the Authority has a general power to co-opt individuals to its committees.
- 3.6 Co-optees may not be appointed to a Committee whose function is to regulate or control the finances of the Authority. Clarification has been sought from the s151 officer, who has confirmed that, in his opinion, the Policy and Resources Committee is not a committee for the regulation and control of the Authority's finances, as its powers to affect the budget of the Authority are limited to a de Minimis level. These are matters which are properly for the NPA and currently exercised by the NPA. This does not, of course, represent a significant change for the Authority since the same judgment was made in relation to the appointment of the existing P&R co-optees, who were recruited in the early days of the

Authority in line with CIPFA best practice.

- 3.7 It is important to note that individuals can only be co-opted to committees and not the full Authority. Whilst there is no apparent prohibition on appointing co-optees to the planning committee consideration would need to be given to the nature of the business being carried out by the committee and potential increase in the risk of challenge to the committee's decisions. The Authority would need to be very clear about its reasons for co-option, the process for selecting and appointing co-optees as any decision by a co-optee would likely be subject to enhanced scrutiny. We do not therefore propose any co-option to the Planning Committee.
- 3.8 Individuals considered for co-option must not be disqualified from membership, Any co-opted member would be expected to abide by the Members' Code of Conduct and be subject to the requirements thereof. In general, a Co-opted Member has no right to vote (other than in certain circumstances which are not applicable to the NPA, but do apply in some Local Authorities).
- 3.9 Co-optees would be sought from a range of groups or sectors of society which we feel are currently under-represented. We could, using the example of young people, approach individuals or existing groups (such as young people forums run by councils, or university /college groups) who could be asked to nominate individuals and appointment would be subject to NPA decision. It is proposed that up to three additional non-voting co-optees be appointed to P&R Committee.
- 3.10 Co-optees would also have the opportunity to be involved in the more informal, structures of the Authority. For example, they could be invited to attend member days (where policy is developed- as seen at climate change/ rewilding events). Co-opted Members could make presentations to such events and could be invited to attend NPA meetings as observers and invited to speak in relation to topics where they have a particular interest or expertise.
- 3.11 Co-optees would also play an important role in advocating and championing the National Park, helping us to reach audiences that we currently find it difficult to address. Such an approach could run alongside existing consultative and engagement methods.
- 3.12 It should be noted that P&R Committee already has 2 Co-opted Members for governance purposes (in line with CIPFA guidance). If agreed, this proposal would create a maximum of 5 co-optees on the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.13 Before the NPA may amend the Members' Allowances Scheme, legislation requires it to have regard to the recommendations made by the independent remuneration panels in relation to the district and county councils by which any of the NPA's Members are appointed. It is proposed that a single-issue review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be commissioned to consider the payment of an allowance at the same rate as the current member basic allowance to Co-opted Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, including those who are already appointed to the Committee, with the outcome of this review being reported back to the NPA for a final decision."

Alumni

- 3.14 The SDNPA has now been in existence for over 10 years, and during that time it has built up a large number of former members, many of whom still wish to play a role in the future of the national park and who actively advocate on behalf of the National Park and the National Park Authority.
- 3.15 In order to make the most of this experience and skills, it is proposed that an alumni scheme be created, as set out at **Appendix I**. This group will have no role in the decision-making processes of the Authority, but will provide a wealth of experience and networks that the can be used to support the delivery for the Authority's outcomes and objectives.
- 3.16 It is acknowledged that there will be a small resource implication due to the creation of this group however this can be met from within existing resources of the Governance Team.

4. Options & cost implications

- 4.1 There will be an additional cost if an allowance for co-opted members is agreed. This will be

considered by the NPA when taking its final decision on the appointments.

4.2 The costs of the alumni scheme and other issues raised within this report will be met from within existing resources.

5. Next steps

5.1 If agreed, work will commence to establish the alumni scheme and to develop a process for the recruitment of co-opted members. The single-issue review of allowances will also commence.

6. Other Implications

| Implication | Yes*/No |
|---|--|
| Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority? | A further decision on the appointment of Co-opted Members and in relation to the Member Allowances Scheme will be required to be taken by the NPA |
| Does the proposal raise any Resource implications? | The review of the Members' Allowances Scheme may incur an additional cost if an allowance for co-opted members is recommended. This will be considered by the NPA when taking its final decision on this matter. The costs of the alumni scheme and other issues raised within this report will be met from within existing resources |
| How does the proposal represent Value for Money? | Effective decision making contributes to the efficient running of the Authority. |
| Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal? | None |
| Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010? | All Members are eligible to be considered for Committee places and outside bodies. The operation of Committees meets the obligations of the Equalities Act and reasonable adjustments will be made to support Members. Any process undertaken to recruit co-opted members will meet the necessary equalities requirements |
| Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal? | None |
| Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal? | None |
| Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal? | None |
| Are there any Data Protection implications? | Personal data relating to this decision will be managed in accordance with the Authority information security policy and in compliance with Data Protection legislation. The proposal does not require any additional processing. |
| Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the | The report adheres to the principle of Promoting Good Governance as set out in the Authority's Sustainability Strategy. |

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 7.1 Members, including Co-opted Members who have been newly appointed to Committees may be required to undertake training in the role and responsibilities of such Committee.
- 7.2 The recommendations are intended to help reduce risks associated with the governance of the organisation and improve its decision-making functions.

ROBIN PARR

Head of Governance and Support Services South Downs National Park Authority

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| Appendices | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Principles for the establishment of an SDNPA alumni scheme2. Appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies and Internal Groups (for information) |
| SDNPA Consultees | Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, |
| External Consultees | None |
| Background Documents | None |

South Downs National Park Authority

Principles for “Alumni “group

1. All ex members will be entitled to join the alumni group by application.
2. An honorary president of the Alumni group may be nominated and appointed by the members of the alumni group, using a method to be agreed upon by the Alumni Group. The role of the honorary president will be to liaise with the Authority chair on issues relating to management and development of the alumni group, and to chair any alumni meetings or events.
3. The purpose of the Alumni group is to enable former members of the Authority to be kept in touch with the work of the Authority and advocate on behalf of the National Park, within their local and national networks, and to enable a platform for the sharing of information and briefing by Alumni members to inform the work of members and officers of the NPA.
4. Members of the group will be notified when the Authority undertakes a significant consultation or stakeholder engagement so they have the opportunity to participate.
5. Members of the Group will be informed when any member level roles or positions associated with the NPA are advertised that they might like to apply for or promulgate amongst their associates.
6. The Chair may also approach alumni members to contribute to organisational training/workshops or other opportunities on an individual and ad hoc basis.
7. Alumni members will be sent, via e-mail, the regular staff & member communication, SDNPA e-newsletters and blogs produced by senior management and other communications as appropriate.
8. The Chair of the Authority may invite members of the alumni group to meet with current Members of the Authority once a year.
9. A Member of the alumni group may stand down from the group at any point by notifying the Chair of the Authority.
10. Members of the alumni group do not formally represent the National Park Authority.
11. Alumni will be eligible to claim expenses for any approved activities related to the alumni group, in line with the volunteers’ expenses scheme (such approved activities to be agreed in advance by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair).
12. The alumni group will play no role in the decision-making structures of the Authority, or have any role in any processes of the Authority beyond that of a consultee.

Updated Committee Appointments 2020/21

| Planning Committee (11) | Policy and Resources Committee (15) | Appointments management and Standards Committee (3) |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Robert Mocatta (LA) | Chris Dowling (LA) | Chair of the Authority |
| Therese Evans (LA) | Russell Oppenheimer (LA) | Deputy Chair of the Authority |
| William Meyer (LA) | Henry Potter (LA) | Russell Oppenheimer (LA) |
| Alun Alesbury (SoS) | Martin Osborne (LA) (subject to appointment at NPA meeting 15 October 2020) | |
| Diana van der Klugt (LA) | Helen Burton (LA) | <i>Substitute members:</i> |
| Gary Marsh (LA) | Isabel Thurston (LA) | Chair of Planning Committee |
| Barbara Holyome (SoS) | Michael Lunn (LA) | Chair of P&R Committee |
| Heather Baker (SoS) | Angus Dunn (LA) (subject to appointment at NPA meeting 15 October 2020) | Janet Duncton |
| Vanessa Rowlands (SoS) | Richard Waring (SoS) | Gary Marsh |
| Janet Duncton (LA) | Doug Jones (SoS) | |
| Andrew Shaxson (SoS) | Annie Brown (SoS) | |
| | Tim Burr (SoS) | |
| | Melanie Hunt | |
| | Maggie Jones (SoS) | |
| | Stephen Whale (SoS) | |
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| | + independent members (non-voting) | |
| +ex officio members | +ex officio members | |

Outside Bodies Appointments until the AGM in 2021

| Proposed appointee | External Body | Representation only or decision making |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Janet Duncton | South Downs National Park Trust | Decision making |
| Richard Waring | South Downs National Park Trust | Decision making |
| Isabel Thurston | West Sussex Rural Partnership | Representation |
| Doug Jones | South Downs Local Access Forum | Representation |
| Richard Waring | South Downs Local Access Forum | Representation |
| Barbara Holyome | Hampshire Rural Forum | Representation |
| Therese Evans | Campaign for National Parks | Representation |
| Robert Mocatta | Petersfield Town Council Development Committee | Representation |
| Heather Baker | Coast to Capital (C2C) LEP | Representation |
| Doug Jones | Sustainable Communities Fund | Decision making |
| Isabel Thurston | Sustainable Communities Fund | Decision making |
| Chair of Planning Committee | Coastal West Sussex Forum | Representation |
| Chair of Planning Committee | East Sussex Strategic Planning Group | Representation |
| Authority Chair | Coast to Capital Joint Committee | Decision making |
| Authority Chair | National Parks England | Decision making partner |
| Authority Chair | National Parks UK | Decision making |
| Authority Chair | Sub Regional Transport Board | Representation |

All members appointed to outside bodies are required to provide feedback to the NPA on any meetings attended and any relevant issues discussed. A template is available from Member Services to assist members in this reporting.

Internal SDNPA Groups

| Design SPD Task & Finish Group | Seven Sisters Project Board |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Alun Alesbury | Vanessa Rowlands |
| Barbara Holyome | Russell Oppenheimer |
| Doug Jones | Ian Phillips |
| Ian Phillips | Gary Marsh |
| Vanessa Rowlands | |
| Andrew Shaxson | |
| Isabel Thurston | |

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