



**South Downs**

National Park Authority

**Agenda Item 18**  
**Report NPA20/21-33**

Report to	<b>South Downs National Park Authority</b>
Date	<b>25 March 2021</b>
By	<b>Head of Governance and Support Services</b>
Title of Report <b>Decision</b>	<b>Appointment of Co-opted Members to the Policy and Resources Committee</b>

**Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to appoint the named individual(s) set out in the exempt Appendix 2 to serve as non-voting Co-opted Members on the Policy and Resources Committee, to serve for a period of up to 1 year**

## **I. Introduction**

- I.1 At its meetings in October and December 2020, the NPA agreed to appoint up to three additional Co-opted Members to the Policy and Resources Committee, and agreed a role description (**Appendix 1**) to outline the roles that co-opted members would be expected to undertake. Co-option is the phrase used for the inclusion of individuals who are not members of the Authority in the membership of a committee. Subject to some limitations the Authority has a general power to co-opt individuals to its committees.
- I.2 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.
- I.3 Individuals considered for co-option must not be disqualified from membership, any co-opted member would be expected to abide by the Member 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).
- I.4 In addition to participating in meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee Co-optees will be expected to be involved in the more informal, structures of the Authority. For example, they will be invited to attend member days (where policy is developed as seen at climate change/ rewilding events). Co-opted Members will make presentations Policy and resources Committee and other events and will be invited to attend NPA meetings as observers and invited to speak in relation to topics where they have a particular interest or expertise.
- I.5 Co-optees will 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, for example, working with the Comms team in the delivery of the social media objectives of the comms strategy. Such an approach will run alongside existing consultative and engagement methods.

- 1.6 At its meeting in December 2020 the Authority agreed an amendment to the Member's Allowances Scheme to include a payment of an allowance to Co-opted members.
- 1.7 In line with the delegations previously agreed, the Chief Executive in consultation with the eth chair of the authority and char of the Policy and resources committee developed and undertook a process for selecting individuals to be recommended to the authority, which focussed on targeting student populations around the National Park through contact with Student Unions at a range of universities. At the time of writing interviews are still under way the outcomes of which will be included in the exempt appendix 2.
- 1.8 It should be noted that P&R Committee already has 2 Co-opted Members (referred to as Independent (CIPFA) co-optees) for governance purposes (in line with CIPFA guidance).
- 2. Policy Context.**
- 2.1 The appointment of additional co-optees is intended to enhance 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**
- 3.1 The recommendation set out in this paper gives effect to previous decisions taken by the Authority.
- 3.2 The power to appoint individuals to a committee is a matter reserved for the NPA. Details of the individual(s) recommended for appointment are set out in the exempt appendix to this report.
- 4. Options & cost implications**
- 4.1 The Authority has previously agreed to amend the Members' Allowance Scheme to include a payment to co-optees, and this additional cost has been factored into the Authority's budget.
- 5. Next steps**
- 5.1 If, after this round of appointments is complete, there are still vacancies a further recruitment exercise will be undertaken and further recommendations brought to the NPA in due course.
- 5.2 Appointed individuals will undertake an induction into the work of the NPA and join the Policy & Resources Committee with immediate effect

**6. Other Implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	A further decision of future appointments may be required to be taken by the NPA
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The resource implications have been previously considered by the NPA and factored into the Authority's budget
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	The operation of Committees meets the obligations of the Equalities Act and reasonable adjustments will be made to support Members. The process undertaken to recruit co-opted members

Equality Act 2010?	was in line with 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 SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	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

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#### Appendices

1. Co-optee role description

2. Nominated individual(s) (to be tabled at the meeting).

This appendix is not for publication as it contains exempt information within Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to an individual, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the appendix (as applicable).

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



## **Role Description for Co-opted Members of the SDNPA Policy and Resources Committee**

The South Downs National Park Authority appoints co-opted members to its Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee, in order to strengthen the breadth of experience and skills available to the Committee and the wider work of the Authority. The role of co-opted members is wide ranging and whilst co-opted members will only be appointed to the P&R committee, it is expected that they will participate in the full range of meetings and activities attended by Members of the Authority.

### **Purpose of the Role**

The co-optee role is to complement, inform and challenge, rather than replace, the role of appointed Members who remain accountable to the Authority and are ultimately responsible for decision making.

Whilst all co-optees are non-voting, the Authority recognises the valuable contribution that co-opted members make to the work of the Authority in supporting good governance and broadening the range of voices involved in the debate about key issues. thereby helping better, more inclusive decisions to be made.

Co-optees may play specific roles, such as those appointed to contribute to effective arrangements for audit, financial control and risk management they may be appointed because they have particular expertise or experience that is not well represented on the NPA by other means. Co-optees would also play an important role in advocating and championing the National Park, helping us to reach new, wider and diverse audiences. Such an approach would run alongside existing consultative and engagement methods.

Co-opted members will have access to all of the services, support and information available to voting members.

Co-opted members will be appointed initially for a one-year term, at the end of which they may be considered for reappointment

Co-opted members are not eligible to vote on matters at meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee or other meetings that they may be invited to attend but will be able to fully participate in any debate or discussions held at such meetings or events.

### **Key Expectations of co-opted members**

It is expected that all co-opted members will:

- Participate in meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee and other member events/meetings;
- Give presentations or specific inputs as requested to meetings or workshops;
- Provide input and expertise to assist the Committee in its work;
- Adhere to and promote the Members' Code of Conduct to encourage the highest standards of behaviour in public office;
- Represent and act in the best interests of the Authority and in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders and other protocols;
- Attend an annual meeting with the Chair of the Committee and relevant Director to discuss their experience and performance.

Co-opted members **who have not been** appointed to comply with the CIPFA guidance will also be expected to:

- Make presentations to the P&R Committee on an area in which they have particular expertise, as agreed with the Chair of that Committee;
- Make similar presentations at an all staff meeting, where appropriate in association with the other non CIPFA co-optees;
- Connect and champion the Authority and National Park in the wider community inside and beyond the Parks Boundaries;
- Provide occasional updates on their experiences in the newsletter that is sent to all staff and members;
- Support the communications team in the delivery of the social media objectives of the Communications Strategy.

### **Remuneration and time commitment**

Co-opted members may claim travel and subsistence and receive the payment of an allowance as defined in the SDNPA members allowance Scheme.

Time commitment is expected to be approx. 3 days per month.

