

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **AUTHORITY MEETING**

Held at 1.00pm on 9 July 2024 in the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH.

Present:

Vanessa Rowlands (Chair), Alun Alesbury, Heather Baker, Tim Burr, Antonia Cox, Debbie Curnow-Ford, Peter Diplock, Chris Dowling, Mark Fairweather, Joan Grech, John Hyland, Gary Marsh, Robert Mocatta, Jerry Pett, Steven Ridgeon, Andrew Shaxson, Daniel Stewart-Roberts and Stephen Whale.

South Downs National Park Authority Officers:

Tim Slaney (Chief Executive (Interim)), Mike Hughes (Director of Planning (Interim)), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Mark Alden (Nature Based Solutions Manager), Lewis Ford (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Richard Fryer (Senior Governance Officer), Nick Heasman (Countryside and Policy Manager), Ruth James (Communications and Engagement Manager), Claire Onslow (Commercial and Strategic Manager) Richard Sandiford (Head of Governance), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager) and Victoria Turner (Head of Finance and Corporate Services).

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVES'S OPENING REMARKS**

1. The Chief Executive Officer welcomed all present and informed them of general housekeeping matters.

### **ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. Apologies were received from John Cross, Janet Duncton, Theresa Fowler, Melanie Hunt, Maggie Jones, Stephen McAuliffe and Mark Potter.

### **ITEM 2. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

3. Vanessa Rowlands, as the sole nominee, was duly elected Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority until the Authority AGM in 2025.

### **ITEM 3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

4. The election process was presided over by the Chair of the Authority. Members were informed that nominations closed at 12noon on 24 June and there were two nominations.
5. The Monitoring Officer acted as the returning officer and informed the Authority that the valid nominations received were Tim Burr and Gary Marsh.
6. Tim Burr and Gary Marsh made brief statements to the Authority.
7. The election proceeded by means of secret ballot.
8. The Chair informed the Authority that Tim Burr was elected as Deputy Chair of the Authority until the Authority AGM in 2025.

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

9. Members and members of the public were reminded that South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

10. The Chair informed Members that Agenda Items 19, 20, 21, 25 and 26 were to note and these items were taken as noted as no Member indicated that they had any matters related to these items that they wished to discuss.

**ITEM 4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

11. The following declarations were made:

- Chris Dowling declared both a public service and a personal interest in Agenda Item 14 as he was an East Sussex County Councillor and his partner was the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Lead Member for Transport and the Environment so he would not participate in the debate or vote. He also declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 23 and 24 as a Director of South Downs Commercial Operations Limited. He would withdraw from the meeting for Agenda Items 23 and 24.
- Stephen Whale declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 23 and 24 as a Director of South Downs Commercial Operations Limited. He would withdraw from the meeting for those items.
- Gary Marsh declared a public service interest in Agenda Items 23 and 24 as he had a previous professional relationship with the Commercial and Strategic Manager.

**ITEM 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 28 MARCH 2024**

12. The minutes of the Authority meeting held on 28 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

**ITEM 6. URGENT MATTERS**

13. There were none.

**ITEM 7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

14. There was none.

**ITEM 8. NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

15. Members were asked to consider the exclusion of the public, including the press, from the meeting for Appendix 5 of Agenda Item 11, and Items 22, 23 and 24.
16. The Monitoring Officer outlined the reasons for the consideration of this exclusion under paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to an individual (Appendix 5 to Agenda Item 11) and information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person including the Authority (Agenda Items 22, 23 and 24), and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Agenda Item 23) and explained that the Authority must decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. The public interest in maintaining the transparency of Authority proceedings in the appointment of Co-opted Members (Appendix 5 of Agenda Item 11), the delivery of its planning service (Agenda Item 22) and its day-to-day running and the governance of a local authority trading company (Agenda Items 23 and 24), were identified. It was proposed that on balance this was outweighed by the public interest in protecting an individual's right to privacy, including when this is prior to their appointment, (Appendix 5 of Agenda Item 11); the public interest in ensuring that the Authority was able to consider matters in relation to its business and fully consider the implications of its proposed actions which would have implications for the agreements regarding the ongoing delivery of its planning service and the day-to-day running of the Authority without the disclosure of information that could undermine its position or its ability to deliver value for money through these arrangements or that could adversely impact the day-to-day running of the Authority and its ability to deliver its services (Agenda Item 22); and the public interest in

ensuring that the Authority was able to fully consider matters concerning its Teckal company's business and the implications of its actions or proposed actions, with the benefit of specialist advice where appropriate, without the disclosure of information that could undermine its position and/or the position of its Teckal company, or its ability to deliver its services and value for money (Agenda Items 23 and 24).

17. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to move into private session to consider Appendix 5 of Agenda Item 11, and Items 22, 23 and 24 and that the public, including the press, would be excluded from the meeting at the appropriate time.

#### **ITEM 9. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE**

18. The Authority Chair introduced the report (NPA24/25-01) and informed Members that she had been elected as Chair of National Parks England.
19. Members made the following comments:
- Expressed their thanks to Annie Brown for her contributions to the Authority whilst serving as a Member and wished her well in her upcoming role.
  - Noted the upcoming South Downs Society celebrations as part of the 75 anniversary of the 1949 Act and asked if the SDNPA would be taking part in those celebrations.
20. Members were advised:
- The Authority had been invited by the South Downs Society and would be attending the event and providing input.
21. **RESOLVED:** The Authority noted the update from the Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority.

#### **ITEM 10. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT**

22. The Chief Executive introduced the report (NPA24/25-02) and provided the following updates:
- The Local Plan consultation was now live and would feed into the Partnership Management Plan review.
  - Defra had provided a £100,000 grant as part of the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund to help pump prime the voluntary credit scheme for Green Finance.
23. Members made the following comments:
- Congratulations to Officers on obtaining the Green Finance funding from Defra. Had any other National Park Authorities obtained the grant?
  - Was the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) comment on a negative portrayal of progress on Nature Recovery relating to a general perception or specific to the SDNPA?
  - Could it be confirmed that there had been no legal implications of the backdating of the appointment of the director to South Downs Commercial Operations Limited?
  - Why was Horsham District Council (HDC) ending its provision of Section 101 planning services?
  - What would be the impact on the Authority of recovering the Section 101 planning services from HDC?
24. Members were advised:
- Other National Parks were able apply for the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund but the SDNPA was uniquely positioned on Green Finance.

- There had been some concern that the recent CNP progress report might be considered overtly negative on the progress made by National Parks for Nature Recovery, but it did make clear that the Parks did not own most of the land and lacked direct powers to control it and so it had five recommendations to improve that situation.
- There were no legal implications of the backdating of the appointment of the director to South Downs Commercial Operations Limited.
- Whilst the Authority was keen to continue the arrangements with HDC to serve as a delegated host authority for planning services, HDC chose to end the arrangement in order to enable them to focus on their own planning provision. The Authority would recover those services on 1 October 2024.
- HDC was the smallest host authority and took about 3% of the Authority's planning decisions. The Authority was well placed to recover the service.

25. **RESOLVED:** The Authority noted the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) since the last report.

#### **ITEM 11. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

26. The Head of Governance introduced and Members considered the report (NPA24/25-03).

27. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:

1. Appointed the Planning Committee, Policy and Resources Committee and Appointments, Management & Standards Committee, with the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 1, as the committees necessary to discharge the functions of the Authority.
2. Appointed the Membership of Committees until the Authority AGM in 2025 as set out in Appendix 3 (tabled at the meeting) to this report.
3. Appointed the Chair and Deputy Chair of Planning Committee until the Authority AGM in 2025 as set out in Appendix 4 (tabled at the meeting) of this report.
4. Appointed the Chair and Deputy Chairs of Policy & Resources Committee until the Authority AGM in 2025 as set out in Appendix 4 (tabled at the meeting) of this report.
5. Appointed Morris Findley to serve as a non-voting co-opted member on the Policy and Resources Committee until the Authority AGM in 2025.
6. Appointed the named individual set out in the exempt Appendix 5 to serve as non-voting co-opted member on the Policy and Resources Committee until the Authority AGM in 2028.
7. Appointed the Members to outside bodies and panels; the NPA-appointed Trustees of the South Downs National Park Trust; and the NPA-appointed Directors of South Downs Commercial Operations Limited, including the Chairperson of the Board, until the Authority AGM in 2025 as set out in Appendix 7 (tabled at the meeting) of this report.
8. Agreed, for the purposes of Standing order 8.1(f), that, in line with the Authority's established practice, the Committees appointed by the Authority may not arrange for the discharge of the Authority's functions by a sub-committee. All Committees retain powers under Standing Order 27 to establish Member Task and Finish Groups.

#### **ITEM 12. GREEN FINANCE SUMMIT UPDATE**

28. The Chief Executive (Interim) introduced the video presentation which was followed by a verbal update from the Countryside and Policy Manager and the Nature Based Solutions Manager.

29. Members made the following comments:
- The carbon credit market had been subject to greenwashing which hadn't always benefitted nature. Was this being addressed?
  - What was meant by voluntary credits?
  - Was the Authority intending to reinstate Farmers Breakfasts, and if so, when?
  - Onsite BNG had a worse return than offsite BNG which was able to benefit from economies of scale. It was important to follow the evidence.
30. Members were advised:
- Only 30% of international carbon credits were actually delivered according to a report from last year, and a backlash had been seen against the coniferization of upland.
  - Voluntary credits referred to a voluntary financial investment in nature rather than investment driven by compliance, such as with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
  - Farmers Breakfasts were being reinstated from December at the request of the farmers.

**ITEM 13. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

31. The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report (NPA24/25-04).
32. Members made the following comments:
- Supported the investment in capital projects.
  - Noted that the size of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reserve could attract attention. What reassurance could be provided that it was being actively managed?
  - What was the cause of the variance in the Planning Service Outturn actual against budget for 2023/24?
  - It was good to see that the funds in the affordable housing reserve were being used.
33. Members were advised:
- The CIL reserve was a large figure on the balance sheet, but all monies had been allocated each year. Funds were only released once the project was ready and implementation was often subject to delay. Recipients had up to 3 years to spend the funds once allocated.
  - The reason for the variance in the Planning Service figures was that planning applications were down so the Authority was paying host authorities less. Applications were down across England, but down less in the South Downs National Park (SDNP) than the national average. Likely cost of living a factor rather than BNG.
34. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
1. Noted the provisional revenue outturn position of a net £377,000 below budget variance for the 2023/24 financial year.
  2. Approved the revenue budget carry forward requests from 2023/24 to 2024/25 of £912,000 as set out in Appendix 2.
  3. Approved the Capital variations as detailed in Appendix 3.
  4. Approve the proposed use (£345,000) of the below budget variance as detailed in paragraph 4.1, and that the balance of (£32,000) be allocated to the Strategic Fund.
  5. Noted the Treasury Management overview and position as at financial year-end 2023/24

**ITEM 14. ADOPTION OF THE EAST SUSSEX, SOUTH DOWNS AND BRIGHTON & HOVE WASTE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN (WMLP) REVISED POLICIES DOCUMENT (RPD) AND REVISED POLICIES MAP**

35. The Senior Planning Policy Officer introduced the report (NPA24/25-05).
36. The Chair of the Planning Committee commented that the report had been scrutinised by the Planning Committee and recommended it for approval.
37. Members made the following comment:
- Was it correct that as soon as this review was completed another review would begin?
38. Members were advised:
- Once the partial review was completed a full review would begin.
39. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
1. Noted the content of the Inspectors' Report and their conclusion that the East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste & Minerals Local Plan (WMLP) Revised Policies Document (RPD) is legally compliant and sound subject to main modifications; and
  2. Noted the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environment Assessment) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment on the main modifications of the East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste & Minerals Local Plan (WMLP) Revised Policies Document (RPD); and
  3. Delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make any inconsequential changes to the text required prior to the publication of the East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste & Minerals Local Plan (WMLP) Revised Policies Document (RPD); and
  4. Adopted and published the East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste & Minerals Local Plan (WMLP) Revised Policies Document (RPD) and Revised Policies Map, as amended by the Inspectors' main modifications and the authorities' additional and further (non-material) modifications, to form part of the development plan for the South Downs National Park.

**ITEM 15. WEST SUSSEX JOINT WASTE LOCAL PLAN (WLP) – A FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS**

40. The Senior Planning Policy Officer introduced the report (NPA24/25-06).
41. The Chair of the Planning Committee commented that this report had been scrutinised by the Planning Committee and was delighted that a formal review was not required at this time.
42. Members were advised:
- There were no hazardous or low-level radioactive waste sites within the SDNP but there were some waste transfer stations which accepted hazardous waste for transfer or export to other waste facilities in the south-east region and wider UK.
43. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
1. Noted the findings and conclusion of the second five-year assessment on the relevance and effectiveness of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (WLP); and
  2. Approved the findings and conclusion of the second five-year assessment on the relevance and effectiveness of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (WLP) in that the WLP is still relevant and effective and a formal review (in whole or in part) is not required.

44. The meeting adjourned for a short comfort break.

**ITEM 16. MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

45. The Head of Governance introduced the report (NPA24/25-07).

46. Members made the following comment:

- How best to deal with the fact that all Members have a pecuniary interest in this report?

47. Members were advised:

- This report looked at the practice across authorities in this area and Member Allowances would be independently reviewed when the next report came before the Authority in March 2025.

48. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:

1. Noted the recommendations to local authorities in the South Downs National Park area by their Independent Remuneration Panels, as set out in Appendix 2;
2. Adopted the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2024-25, as set out at Appendix 1, to be backdated to take effect from 1 April 2024; and
3. Noted that a review of Members' allowances will be undertaken and will report back to the National Park Authority no later than March 2025.

**ITEM 17. UPDATES TO STANDING ORDERS**

49. The Head of Governance introduced the report (NPA24/25-08).

50. Members made the following comments:

- Could 'Chair of the Authority' be added to 3.16 of Appendix 7 of the Standing Orders to reflect current practice.
- Could Director of Countryside Policy and Management be changed to Director of Landscape and Strategy for section of Appendix 7 of the Standing Orders.

51. The recommendation was amended to include the suggested changes.

52. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:

1. Agreed the revised Standing Orders for Regulation of Authority Proceedings and Business ("Standing Orders") as set out at Appendix 1 subject to the following amendments:
  - Appendix 7, paragraph 3.16, second line: add the words "the Chair of the Authority and" after "in consultation with";
  - Throughout Standing Orders, the title of "Director of Landscape and Strategy" be inserted in place of the former title of the role.
2. Instructed the Chief Executive to publish the updated Standing Orders on the Authority's website.

**ITEM 18. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER**

53. The Head of Governance and the Monitoring Officer left the meeting.

54. The Chief Executive Officer (Interim) introduced the report (NPA24/25-09).

55. Members made the following comments:

- Did the Monitoring Officer need to be legally qualified?
- Would Committees still be provided with specialist legal advice? It was important that the Authority and Chairs would have legal protection.

- Would this lead to an increase in workload for the Head of Governance? Did he have the capacity to take this role on?
- Would there be legal training available for the proposed candidate?
- Could the recommendation be amended to stipulate that a legal officer would be present at every meeting and could the Monitoring Officer Protocol at 2.2 be amended to add (g) legally qualified advisor.
- Would a deferment allow time for the language in the protocol to be fine-tuned?

56. Members were advised:

- It was not a requirement that the Monitoring Officer be a legally qualified officer, but it was important they were able to obtain legal advice on decisions.
- The Authority would continue to benefit from specialist legal advice at all meetings of the Authority and the Planning and Policy & Resources Committees.
- Should the Authority reject the candidate for Monitoring Officer, a new Monitoring Officer would still need to be appointed.
- The Head of Governance was already doing much of the work involved in the role and would be stepping down as Company Secretary for the South Downs Trust and South Downs Commercial Operations Limited, which was currently 15-20% of his workload.
- Training for this role was available and had been scheduled for the candidate, subject to the decision of this meeting.
- The appointment could be deferred for 3 months to allow time for training to be completed.
- Any changes to the protocol could be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the Authority.

57. It was agreed that the recommendation be amended:

1. To take effect from the next NPA meeting in October.
2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the Authority to make any changes to the Protocol.

58. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:

1. Appointed Richard Sandiford, Head of Governance, as Monitoring Officer for the South Downs National Park Authority with effect from the next meeting of the Authority on 17 October 2024 thereby terminating the current appointment of Louise Read to this role.
2. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, to approve, subject to the amendment of paragraph 2.2 to clarify that the role of the Monitoring Officer will include ensuring that meetings of the Authority and its committees are supported by a legally qualified person, the Monitoring Officer Protocol at Appendix I which sets out the role and statutory responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer.

#### **ITEM 19. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

59. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 9 March and 13 April 2024.

#### **ITEM 20. POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

60. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 29 February 2024.



**ITEM 21. APPOINTMENT, MANAGEMENT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

61. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Appointment, Management and Standards Committee meetings held on 14 February 2024.

**PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

62. The meeting was closed to the public, including the press, and moved into private session at 3.23pm.

**ITEM 22. PART II MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2024**

63. The Part II minutes of the Authority meeting held on 28 March 2024 were approved as a correct record with one amendment.

**ITEM 23. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF SEVEN SISTERS COUNTRY PARK**

64. The Chief Executive Officer (Interim) and Head of Governance introduced the report (NPA24/25-10).
65. Members considered the report.
66. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
1. Noted the outcomes of the review into the operating arrangements at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) as set out in section 3 of this report;
  2. Agreed that the future operations at SSCP be managed by the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) and that the Authority seek to agree early termination of the Operating Agreement with South Downs Commercial Operations Limited (the Company) and associated licence with effect from 9 October 2024;
  3. Agreed the proposed operating model for managing SSCP within the Authority, as set out in section 5 of this report; and
  4. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree transition arrangements with the Company to bring the management of operations at SSCP within the Authority within the next 3 months.

In its role as Shareholder of the Company, the Authority is recommended to:

5. Formally recorded its thanks to the Board of Directors for their work in the management of SSCP.
6. Agreed that the Operating Agreement with the Authority and associated licence be terminated with effect from 9 October 2024;
7. Delegated authority to the Board of Directors to agree transition arrangements with the Authority to move the management of operations at SSCP to the Authority within the next 3 months; and,
8. Agreed that the Company would be made dormant and recommendations to facilitate this would be brought to a future meeting of the Authority.

**ITEM 24. SOUTH DOWNS COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS LTD BUSINESS PLAN**

67. The Chief Executive Officer (Interim) and Head of Governance introduced the report (NPA24/25-11).
68. Members considered the report.
69. **RESOLVED:** In its role as Shareholder of South Downs Commercial Operations Limited, the Authority:

- I. Approved the Company's Annual Business Plan for 2024-25 set out in Appendix I, until the termination of the Operating Agreement on 9 October 2024.

The Authority:

2. Approved the Annual Business Plan, set out at Appendix I, as the operational plan for the Authority's management of Seven Sisters Country Park for the remainder of the 2024/25 financial year.

**ITEM 25      POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES**

70. Authority Members noted the Part II minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 29 February 2024.

**ITEM 26      APPOINTMENT, MANAGEMENT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

71. Authority Members noted the Part II minutes of the Appointment, Management and Standards Committee meeting held on 14 February 2024.
72. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.20pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **AUTHORITY MEETING**

Held at 10.30am on 22 August 2024 in the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH.

Present:

Tim Burr (Chair), Alun Alesbury, Heather Baker, Janet Duncton, Theresa Fowler, Joan Grech, Melanie Hunt, John Hyland, Jerry Pett, Steven Ridgeon, Andrew Shaxson, Daniel Stewart-Roberts and Vicki Wells.

South Downs National Park Authority Officers:

Mike Hughes (Director of Planning (Interim)), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Richard Sandiford (Head of Governance), Nicola Stoddart (HR Advisor) and Richard Fryer (Senior Governance Officer).

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

107. The Chair welcomed all present and informed them of general housekeeping matters.

#### **ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

108. Apologies were received from Antonia Cox, John Cross, Debbie Curnow-Ford, Peter Diplock, Chris Dowling, Mark Fairweather, Gary Marsh, Stephen McAuliffe, Robert Mocatta, Mark Potter, Vanessa Rowlands and Stephen Whale.

#### **ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

109. There were none.

#### **ITEM 3. URGENT MATTERS**

110. There were none.

#### **ITEM 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

111. There was none.

#### **ITEM 5. NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

112. Members were asked to consider the exclusion of the public, including the press, from the meeting for Appendix I of Agenda Item 6.

113. The Monitoring Officer outlined the reasons for the consideration of this exclusion under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any individual, and proposed that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. It was proposed that whilst there was a public interest in maintaining the transparency of Authority proceedings in the appointment of a new Chief Executive, in the circumstances of this case this was outweighed by the public interest in the Authority protecting the individual's right to privacy in being considered for appointment as Chief Executive Officer.

114. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to move into private session to consider Appendix I of Agenda Item 6 and that the public, including the press, would be excluded from the meeting at the appropriate time.

#### **ITEM 6. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

115. The Head of Governance and the HR Advisor introduced the report (NPA24/25-12).

116. Members made the following comments:

- Was it possible to say how many of the 66 applications were applicants suitable for the position?
  - It was encouraging to see so many high calibre candidates apply for the position and that the panel had a broad choice of candidates.
  - Was there a probation period for the role, and if so, for how long?
  - The process included engagement with stakeholders and the panel received a comprehensive report from the recruitment consultant GatenbySanderson from their consultation with stakeholders and staff. This gave clear indications on what stakeholders were looking for which helped guide shortlisting and assessment.
  - Would it be possible for Members to see an edited version of the stakeholder consultation report?
  - Did all candidates for interview undergo the engagement session or just the successful candidate?
117. Members were advised:
- The Appointment, Management & Standards (AMS) Committee reviewed details of all 66 applications alongside GatenbySanderson's assessment and focused on those applicants who best fitted the role, the person specification and the candidates experience. The candidates had a wide array of qualifications, backgrounds and abilities all of whom would have brought different skills to the Authority.
  - There was a 6-month probation period for the role. The successful candidate would be monitored during that period by their line manager, the AMS Committee.
  - Officers would consider what could be shared with Members from the stakeholder consultation report.
  - A group comprising 10 members of staff had a 30-minute session with each of the shortlisted candidates. Those sessions fed back into the interview panel's assessment of the candidates.
118. The meeting was closed to the public, including the press, and moved into private session at 10.52pm.
119. The meeting returned to public session at 11.08am.
120. As satisfactory references had been received, it was proposed, seconded and resolved that recommendation 1 be amended to read:
1. Agree that the person named at Appendix 1 is appointed as SDNPA's Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and National Park Officer, with effect from a date to be agreed.
121. **RESOLVED:** The Authority:
1. Agreed that the person named at Appendix 1 was appointed as SDNPA's Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and National Park Officer, with effect from a date to be agreed;
  2. Noted that the determination of the terms and conditions, including remuneration, and all other contractual arrangements relating to the employment of the Chief Executive were delegated to the Appointments, Management and Standards Committee as set out in the Authority's Standing Orders; and,
  3. Noted that the Interim Chief Executive arrangements, agreed by the Authority on 12 December 2023, would cease at the beginning of the first working day of the permanent Chief Executive.
122. The Chair closed the meeting at 11.10am.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

