

Report to **National Park Authority**
Date **27 March 2025**
By **Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer**
Title of Report **Scheme of Members' Allowances**
Decision

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1. Receive and consider the outcomes of the independent review of the Scheme of Allowances set out at Appendix 2;**
 - 2. Agree the independent review recommendations set out in section 4; and,**
 - 3. Adopt the Scheme of Members' Allowances set out at Appendix 1 to take effect from 1 April 2025 noting that subsequent increases will take place, without reference back to the NPA, each year until 2029 in line with the indexation provisions set out in the scheme.**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority is required to have in place a scheme for the payment of Members' allowances, the last such scheme being adopted at the NPA AGM in July 2024. At that meeting the Authority noted that a review of Members' allowances would be undertaken, reporting back to the Authority no later than March 2025.
- 1.2 This report presents the Scheme of Members' Allowances (**Appendix 1**) for adoption alongside the independent review which has been undertaken. A four-year scheme is proposed for adoption which includes indexation of the allowances over that period.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The adoption of a scheme of Members' allowances by the Authority is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) (The Regulations). The Regulations require the Authority to have in place a scheme of allowances and where indexation is in place as part of this scheme, this be reviewed at least every four years. This review has been undertaken to ensure the Authority is compliant with this requirement.

3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 There is no requirement for the Authority to commission an independent review of Members' allowances, however, it is widely held to be good practice to do so.
- 3.2 Dr Declan Hall has undertaken an independent review for the Authority a number of times and was appointed to undertake this review and formulate recommendations to the Authority. His review is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.3 The review explains the rationale and methodology that was applied. Regard has been had to other National Park Authority schemes, and the report analyses these. The SDNPA is also required to have regard to the recommendations to local authorities in the National Park

area by their Independent Remuneration Panels (“IRP recommendations”). This information was supplied to Dr Hall and was taken into account in the review.

- 3.4 In order to ensure the review was as well informed about local circumstances as possible, the reviewer carried out a number of interviews with Members and Officers.
- 3.5 A number of recommendations have been made in the review and these are set out in section 3 of this report.
- 3.6 The Regulations also provide that a scheme can make provision for annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index specified in the scheme, should one be agreed. Where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that of an annual adjustment in accordance with an agreed index, this is not classed as an amendment of the scheme for the purposes of the Regulations and a further decision is not required by the Authority. An index can be relied upon for a period of up to four years and it is proposed that indexing be applied as set out in the independent review.

4. Recommendations from the independent review

- 4.1 The following recommendations were made in the review.
1. That the Basic Allowance is maintained at £3,990, subject to indexation going forward.
 2. That the current methodology utilised in arriving at the Chair’s Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), i.e. based on a multiplier of the recommended Basic Allowance, is maintained and that the multiplier utilised in arriving at the recommended SRA for the Authority Chair is maintained at 1.8 times the recommended Basic Allowance (£3,990), which equates to £7,216, subject to indexation going forward.
 3. That the SRA for Deputy Chair of the South Downs NPA is reset at 65 per cent of the Chair’s SRA (£7,216) and paid an SRA of £4,690, subject to indexation going forward.
 4. That the SRA for the Chair of the Planning Committee is maintained at £4,310, subject to indexation going forward.
 5. That the SRA for Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee is reset at 30 per cent of the Chair of the Planning Committee’s SRA (£4,310) and paid an SRA of £1,293, subject to indexation going forward.
 6. That the ordinary Members of the Planning Committee are not paid a SRA.
 7. That the SRA for Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee is reset at 40 per cent of the Chair of the Authority’s SRA (£7,216) and paid an SRA of £2,886, subject to indexation going forward.
 8. That the two Deputy Chairs of the Policy and Resources Committee are each paid an SRA of £433, subject to indexation going forward.
 9. That the South Downs NPA maintain the I-SRA only rule.
 10. That provision is included in the allowances scheme to enable Members using hybrid/electric vehicles when attending approved duties are able to claim at the same rates for petrol/diesel vehicles. It is further recommended that the current Travel and Subsistence Allowances rates and conditions be maintained.
 11. That there is no change to the current definition of approved duties for which Members can claim travel and subsistence allowances.
 12. That both the CIPFA and other (Independent) Co-optees are paid a Co-optees’ Allowance of £3,225, subject to indexation going forward.
 13. That the following indices are applied to the following allowances:
 - Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees’ Allowances:
 - Indexed to the annual percentage increase in salary for the South Downs NPA staff, where such a cost of living increase is implemented in a particular year, and applied to the same year that staff salary increases also apply

- Subsistence Allowances:
- Indexed to the same rates applicable to Officers of the South Downs NPA
- Mileage Allowances:
- Indexed to the HMRC approved mileage rates

14. That the proposals contained in the independent review report are implemented no later than Authority's Annual General Meeting on 8th July 2025, or any date before then as agreed by the Authority.

4.2 All recommendations have been incorporated into the Scheme of Members' Allowances proposed for adoption. An uplift to Members' allowances of 3%, in line with the average cost of living pay award to staff, is proposed as part of the scheme at **Appendix I**

5. Options and cost implications

5.1 The Authority could choose not to adopt the recommendation of the independent review and is free to adopt any allowances rate it wishes.

5.2 If the Authority accepts all the recommendations in the report, the allowances would change as set out below and the total annual cost of Member's allowances, based on 2024/25 costs, would increase by £2309. Subsequent indexed increases would also take place, without reference back to the NPA, each year until 2029.

Allowance	Current	Proposed*
Basic allowance	£3,990.45	£3,990
Chairman of the Authority	£7,215.70	£7,216
Deputy Chairman of the Authority	£5,386.84	£4,690
Chairman of Planning Committee	£4,309.69	£4,310
Deputy Chairman of Planning Committee	£1,077.15	£1,293
Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee	£2,394.27	£2,886
Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee	£359.40	£433
CIPFA Co-opted Members	£2,149.96	£3,225
Other Co-opted Members	£3,224.94	£3,225

* Subject to indexation if agreed.

5.3 This increase has been factored into the Authority's budget for 2025-26. Funding for further increases will be considered as part of the Authority's budget setting process in future years.

6. Next steps

6.1 Once adopted, Officers will take the necessary steps to implement the scheme and publish it in line with the requirements of regulation 16 of the Regulations, including updating the Authority's website.

7. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No

Implication	Yes*/No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The resource implication of the recommended scheme has been factored into the Authority's budget. If the authority adopts a scheme different to that recommended there may be further implications.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The level of allowances is independently recommended and takes into account the levels of allowances at other NPAs and appointing Authorities. By commissioning an independent and external review, based on objective data and benchmarking against other similar schemes, the Authority has taken steps to ensure a reasoned, well founded and transparent remuneration scheme is adopted.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	The role of Members in setting the strategic direction of the Authority and effective decision-making contributes to the delivery of all PMP Outcomes and Corporate Plan objectives.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	Regard is had to the recommendations to all 15 local authorities in the SDNP area by their IRPs.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The role of Members in setting the strategic direction of the Authority and effective decision-making contributes to the delivery of its climate change objectives.
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?	The scheme of allowances helps to enable representation from all sectors of society by addressing, in part, financial barriers to participation.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	The provision of allowances to Members recognises the principle that Members are expected to give part of their time voluntarily, whilst also trying to ensure that they are not financially disadvantaged.
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?	Some personal details will be collected in order to pay the allowances. Any personal data handled by the Authority will be managed in line with the Authority's GDPR and Data Protection Compliance Policy.

8. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 8.1 The undertaking of an independent review of allowances helps the Authority to mitigate against the risk that the scheme is not fit for purpose or is not achieving the removal of barriers to participation in the work of the Authority.

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South Downs National Park Authority

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Appendix	1. Scheme of Members' Allowances 2. Independent Review of Members' Allowances
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Landscape and Strategy, Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer, Head of Finance and Corporate Services, Legal Services.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	Scheme of Allowances 2024/25 2020 NPA Report and Fifth Independent Review of Allowances

SDNPA Scheme of Members' Allowances

To be approved 27 March 2025 with effect from 1 April 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- South Downs National Park Authority's scheme provides for payment of:
 - **Basic Allowance** which is a flat rate payable to each member, excluding co-opted members.
 - **Special Responsibility Allowance** for members undertaking additional roles as defined by the Authority.

2. GENERAL POINTS

- The term "member" means a member of the South Downs National Park Authority.
- Members have the option of not claiming all or part of any allowance. The Chief Executive must be notified in writing by the Member if they wish to choose this option.
- All enquiries relating to Members' Allowances should be made to the Head of Governance.

3. BASIC ALLOWANCE

- Is payable to all members, excluding Co-opted Members.
- Where the member's term of office begins or ends at any time other than the start of the financial year, they are entitled to the appropriate proportion of the annual allowance.
- **The basic allowance is £4,110 per annum.**

4. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (SRA)

- Is payable in addition to the Basic Allowance.
- Is payable to members who have been given significant additional responsibilities e.g. Chairman, Deputy Chairman.
- Where a member does not have throughout the whole of a year any such special responsibilities as entitled him/her to a special responsibility allowance, he/she is entitled to the appropriate proportion of the annual allowance.
- Does not include any element for travel expenses, which are claimable in the normal way for any Special Responsibility Allowance duty.
- **Special responsibility allowance rates are set out below:**

ALLOWANCE	RATE
Chairman of the Authority	£7,398
Deputy Chairman of the Authority	£4,809
Chairman of Planning Committee	£4,439
Deputy Chairman of Planning Committee	£1,332
Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee	£2,959
Deputy Chairman of Policy and Resources	£444

5. CO-OPTED MEMBER ALLOWANCE

- Is payable to Co-opted Members.
- Where the Co-opted Member's term of office begins or ends at any time other than the start of the financial year, they are entitled to the appropriate proportion of the annual allowance.
- **The co-opted member allowance for both Independent (CIPFA) co-optees and other co-optees is £3,322 per annum.**

6. TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

- Is claimed in accordance with the SDNPA Travel and Subsistence policy.
- Can only be claimed for an approved duty (as set out in section 10).
- Can be claimed by Co-opted Members and Independent Persons.
- Should be claimed promptly (within two months of expenditure being incurred) on the members' claim form.
- Expenditure on tolls, parking fees etc. may be claimed for re-imbursment on production of receipts.
- Members using electric/hybrid vehicles shall be entitled to claim travel expenses at the same rates as petrol/diesel vehicles.

7. SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

- Is claimed in accordance with the SDNPA Travel and Subsistence policy.
- Can only be claimed for an approved duty (as set out in section 10).
- Can be claimed by Co-opted Members and the Independent Person.
- Is claimable for the actual cost of the meal or overnight expenses up to the same maximum set out for staff which is updated annually.
- Should be claimed promptly (within two months of expenditure being incurred) on the members' claim form. Receipts must be attached to the claim whenever possible to support the claim.
- Is not claimable in respect of alcoholic drinks.

8. PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES

- Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance are paid automatically monthly.
- Travel and subsistence Allowances should be claimed within two months on the members' claim form.
- Allowances must not be claimed where the member is entitled to receive payment from another public body in respect of the same duties.

9. WITHHOLDING ALLOWANCES

Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the Member concerned:

- (a) ceases to be a Member or
- (b) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period

the Appointments, Management and Standards Committee may require that such part of the allowance that relates to any such period be repaid to the South Downs NPA.

10. DEFINITION OF APPROVED DUTIES

- (a) The attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;
- (b) The attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and one or more local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee provided that -
 - (i) Where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which Members of at least two such groups have been invited, or
 - (ii) If the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two Members of the authority have been invited;
- (c) The attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a Member;
- (d) The attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;
- (e) The performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a Member or Members to be present while tender documents are opened;
- (f) The performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises; and
- (g) The carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or of any of its committees or sub-committees

The Sixth Independent Review of Members' Allowances

For the

**South Downs
National Park Authority**

The Sixth Report

By

Dr Declan Hall

March 2025

Introduction

1. This report arises out of the sixth independent review of Members' Allowances for the South Downs National Park Authority (South Downs NPA). This full review of allowances follows the requirements in principal authorities in that they are required to review their allowances at least every four years if they wish to continue indexing allowances (known as the 4-year rule). It is the mechanism by which Members Allowances schemes in principal councils are subject to period scrutiny. While the South Downs NPA is not required to commission an independent review of allowances, it has done so to conform to good practice followed by similar public bodies (including a number of NPAs) when considering and determining their allowances.

The Regulatory Context and Paying Regard to Nominating Districts

2. The relevant legislation enabling the South Downs NPA to establish a Members' Allowances scheme is Schedule 7, paragraph 5 of the Environment Act 1995. This has the effect of deeming national park authorities to be one of the types of local authority that can be required by Regulations to prepare a Members' Allowances scheme.
3. In addition, the *Local Authorities (Members' Allowance) (England) Regulations 2003*¹ and subsequent amendments and the 2006 Statutory Guidance, set the legislative framework for all local authorities when determining and amending their Members' Allowances schemes. Most of the 2003 Regulations, notably Parts 1, 2, and 3, are applicable to all English NPAs.
4. The main aspects of the 2003 Regulations that apply to the South Downs NPA permit the Authority to determine its own scheme of allowances. Moreover, all national park authorities that make or amends an allowances scheme shall have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to any authority of a description referred to in regulations 3(1)(a), (b) or (c) by which any of its members are nominated.²
5. In other words, there is no statutory requirement to for the South Downs NPA to have its own independent remuneration panel or independent review before setting or amending its Members' Allowances scheme as it can be reviewed internally. Regardless, it is required to pay regard to the recommendations of the independent remuneration panels (IRPs) in the nominating authorities. These are Hampshire, East and West Sussex County Councils, Brighton and Hove City Council, and Adur, Arun, Chichester, East Hampshire, Eastbourne, Horsham, Lewes, Mid-Sussex, Wealden, Winchester (City), and Worthing District Councils.
6. As part of the review, the most recent IRP reports from all the nominating authorities (see appendix two for further details) have been taken into account to fulfil the statutory requirements of the 2003 Regulations as they apply to the

¹ See Statutory Instruments 2003 Nos. 1021, 1022 and 1692 for further details.

² Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 102, *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*, 19. (2)

South Downs NPA. Furthermore, the review has also paid regard to allowances payable in other English and other UK NPAs where applicable.

7. **The reviewer has fulfilled the regulatory requirement to pay regard to the recommendations of the IRPs in the nominating authorities of the South Downs NPA in arriving at the recommendations contained in this report.**

The Reviewer

8. The South Downs NPA appointed Dr Declan Hall to undertake the review of its allowances scheme. Dr Hall is a former academic at the Institute of Local Government, the University of Birmingham, who specialises in Members' allowances and support.
9. The review was supported and serviced throughout by the following Officer:
- Richard Sandiford, Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer
10. The reviewer would like to record his gratitude to the Members and Officers of South Downs National Park Authority for ensuring the work of the review was adequately supported and conducted in an efficient and effective fashion by facilitating requests for information and ensuring that the whole process operated smoothly.

Terms of Reference

11. The terms of reference are to undertake an independent review of the South Downs National Park Authority's Scheme for Members' Allowances. In particular the review in accordance with the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations as they apply to National Park Authorities will make recommendations on:
- i. The amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its members
 - ii. The responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and the amount of such an allowance.
 - iii. The duties for which travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid and the amount of these allowances.
 - iv. Whether annual adjustments of allowance levels should be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run

Scope

12. In arriving at recommendations the review will:
- Refer to allowances schemes in the other National Parks;

- Review the current scheme to assess whether it is still fit for purpose;
- Identify, in the light of actual experience, any areas or anomalies which require changes to the scheme; and
- Any matters that are brought to the attention of Dr Hall by Members in their consultation with Members and factual briefings from Officers.

Aim

13. Insofar as practically possible the review will aim to recommend a scheme that provides the necessary support for Members in carrying out their roles on the South Downs NPA and seek to need only limited revision over the next four years.

Approach and Methodology

14. The reviewer visited the South Downs Centre, Midhurst, West Sussex, on 11th February 2025 to meet with Members and relevant Officers and to review all the relevant information for consideration in arriving at recommendations. All Members of the South Downs NPA were emailed informing them of the review, and invited to submit any views they may have on the review to Dr Hall, of which two were received. A range of Members were invited to meet with Dr Hall and any Member requesting an interview was accommodated. The prime function of the meetings with Officers was to receive factual briefings and clarifications. All Members (including the two Members who made written submissions) and Officers who met with Dr Hall are listed in appendix one.
15. A tiered approach was adopted in considering the evidence. The review is required to operate within the broad statutory framework laid down by the 2006 Statutory Guidance and 2003 Regulations. The 2003 Members' Allowances (England) Regulations establishes the boundaries for the review, i.e., attendance allowances cannot be paid, all Members must receive a Basic Allowance that is equal in value and express authority is granted to vary the terms and conditions for the payment of for instance Travel and Subsistence Allowances, indeed whether to pay Travel or Subsistence Allowances. Furthermore, while not all of the guidance applies specifically to NPAs the review has followed the guidance particularly in relation to methodology so that the review maintains similar standards of transparency and practice as should be expected from statutory IRPs in the nominating councils.
16. The next level of evidence considered were the representations made by the Members of the Authority. The interviews and written submissions obtained the views of the Members that raised a number of specific issues. The interviews were also utilised to challenge statements and to act as a 'sounding board' to suggestions and ideas from the reviewer. Finally, all the evidence and representations have been reviewed and evaluated within the comparative context. All the information and representations and Officer factual briefings received including comparative summary data, are set out in the following Appendices:

- Appendix 1: NPA Members who were interviewed for the review, those who made written submissions and the Officers who provided a factual briefing on the nature of the South Downs NPA and governance arrangements
- Appendix 2: List of written information considered for the review
- Appendix 3: Benchmarking data, namely comparative allowances paid in English and other UK NPAs

Key Messages and Observations

The South Downs NPA – A case can be made to revise current Allowances

17. Based on the representation received it was generally felt that the work of all South Downs NPA Members continues to grow as the Authority evolves as an organisation. As all Members get involved in more partnership working, engage more with communities and constituencies within the Park and grapple with a tricky financial context more demands are being made on Authority Members across the board. It is noted here that the South Downs NPA is one of the top 10% largest planning authorities in England, contains the largest market towns of any UK National Park and a substantial urban fringe with a diverse economic profile, and has the largest NPA grant in England (at £10.5 million per year in 2023/24), accounting for around 21 per cent of the total grant to English NPAs
18. The South Downs NPA is also the largest NPA in terms of population, one of the largest in terms of geographic size, the most parishes, and the highest number of businesses. As such, the demands on Members will always be of a high order. It is the nature of the South Downs NPA, not least in having to deal with a wide range of stakeholders requiring a lot of partnership working. The upshot is that this demand on Members is not necessarily recognised by the current levels of allowances.
19. As such, while it is not overwhelming, a case can be made to revisit the current level of allowances.

Now not the time to revise Allowances

20. A concomitant strong theme that emerged from the interviews and written submissions was while a case can be made to revisit the scope and level of allowance now was not the time. One reason given was the current financial context. The Authority's, as are all NPAs, finances are under pressure, with the grant actually being cut in recent years. Moreover, it is likely that the on-going Devolution and local government reorganisation agenda in English local government that looks like it will result in significant reorganisation of the number and scope of councils
21. There is a strong possibility that Devolution and local government reorganisation will impact on the governance arrangements for the Authority. The general view in the representation received considered that when the Authority does redefine its governance arrangements then it would be the appropriate time to fundamentally revisit the scope and level of allowances.

Function and Purpose of Allowances – an enabler not attractor

22. One theme that came through the representation received was the level of allowances was not sufficient to attract a wide range of candidates to become Authority Members. In previous reviews a guiding principle was that Members should not be and not be seen to be seeking financial gain by serving on the South Downs NPA. An element of their work on the Authority should be given as public service and the level of allowances paid should reflect this by not being deemed excessive. On the other hand, there was a strong message that the level of allowances should reflect the need to ensure Members were not being financially disadvantaged by serving on the Authority.
23. Therefore, the scope and levels of remuneration recommended should seek to reduce barriers to recruitment and retention of Members by recognising the demands required of them balanced against being seen as reasonable and being an enabler for public service.

Attendance and Remuneration

24. Once again the issue of non-attendance was raised. In particular, it was felt that there is an inequity as the Basic Allowance is paid equally to all Members regardless of whether they attend a handful of meetings or 35-40 meetings a year. It was not a major issue but was raised nonetheless. The gist of the argument was that somehow the payment of allowances should be related the number of meetings attended.
25. On one level it is not an issue it has been in the past as there are now fewer formal meetings to attend, although there is more demands in informal arenas. It could be argued that while a Member does not attend a large number of formal meetings they are engaging more widely with Park communities, stakeholders and partners. Furthermore, there is little scope to vary the Basic Allowance in accordance with the number of formal meetings attended. The 2003 Regulations 4. 1 (a) specifies that the Authority is required to provide for a Basic Allowance “to each member of an authority, and the amount of such an allowance shall be the same for each such member (“basic allowance”).
26. Thus, despite the concerns raised in the representation received and the thorough consideration given by this review to the issue it is felt that no recommendation can be made in this regard. The regulatory framework requires an equal Basic Allowance to be paid to all Members, it cannot be varied.

The Evidence Considered and Recommendations

The Basic Allowance – Current Framework

27. In the previous review (2020) the recommended Basic Allowance was arrived at by following the approach taken by IRPs in principal councils, as directed in

the 2006 Statutory Guidance (also applicable to NPAs - paragraphs 67-69). This approach uses three variables in arriving at the Basic Allowance, namely:

- **Input**: the time required to undertake the various roles associated with the Basic Allowance, which was assessed at and has remained at a minimum of 48 days per year, which in turn was derived from the guidance set out by the Authority which states that NPA Members could expect to put in between 36 – 48 days per year. The figure of 48 days was chosen in 2020 as being at the upper end of the recommended spectrum on the basis of the representation from Members.
 - **Recognising the voluntary principle**: often expressed as the public service discount (PSD), that element of input or workload that is given as public service and therefore not remunerated. For the purposes of the South Downs NPA the public service discount was set at 35 per cent in 2020, the proportion of the assessed time deemed to be given voluntary. Thus out of the 48 days per year expected input, 35 per cent (16.8 days rounded up to 17 days) was discounted for public service. This is in line with what is expected in principal councils as the proportion of time to be given as public service. Thus, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance in 2020 out of the 48 days input, 31 days was deemed the remunerated time, with 17 days being the voluntary element.
 - **A rate for remuneration**: the worth of remunerated time required for the roles associated with the Basic Allowance, which historically is based on the median gross daily salary for all full time employees resident in the South East, which for 2018 (the latest date available during the 2020 review) was £118.56 per day.
28. Consequently, the Basic Allowance in 2020 was arrived at by assessing the time commitment at 48 days per year, then discounting 17 day for the voluntary element, leaving 31 paid days per year and then multiplying 31 days remunerated input by £118.56 per day, which equated to £3,675. The Basic Allowance has subsequently been indexed to the annual cost of living percentage increase in staff salaries, except this year, arriving at the 2024/25 Basic Allowance of £3,990.

Recalibrating the Basic Allowance

29. To test out the robustness of the current Basic Allowance (£3,990) it has been recalibrated in accordance with the methodology laid out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance, with updated variables where required.

Maintaining the assessed Time Input – Keep at 48 days per year

30. In the representation received there was a view that the current time commitment of 48 days per year upon which the Basic Allowance is based was somewhat on the low side. Interestingly, there has been a reduction in formal meetings since the last review, with the National Park Authority and Policy and Resources Committee having at least one less meeting per year and the

Planning Committee having two less meetings per year. Yet, it was argued that this has freed Members up to do wider more informal duties. One example quoted was the advocate (for the Authority) role of Member which has developed. Members are now more active in their respective districts, where applicable, in promoting the Park. Secretary of State Appointees are engaged more in their areas of expertise and support Officers in that topic area.

31. Furthermore, the Authority has produced a "Member Role Description and Person Specification" that backs up the view that the demands on Members time have not decreased since the last full review. It points out that Members will be appointed to relevant outside bodies (typically those that are located in a council appointees' council area.) as part of their wider duty to engage with relevant stakeholders. The Authority regularly receives requests for Members to give talks to partners and organisations on the South Downs National Park in general to provide updates on what the Authority is doing.
32. Outside the formal meetings and partner engagement and stakeholder meetings Members are also expected to read their relevant briefing papers provided for meetings in order to be properly prepared for any debate on issues across the full range of the Authority's responsibilities, and where required, to take personal responsibility for seeking appropriate clarification from Lead Officers. This requirement is expected to enable all Members to represent and be an advocate for the Authority at national and local events and enable them to fulfil the Authority's general duty to foster the economic and social well-being of communities in the Park in the pursuit of its statutory purposes. Thus, while there are fewer formal meetings Members are certainly not expected to put in less time as there are corresponding wider roles that they now undertake.
33. However, the argument that an assessed time input should now be greater than the current 48 days per year has not been accepted. Indeed the Authority itself recognises the same through its own guidance to potential Members in the following statement:

Members are expected to commit a minimum of three to four days per month to the work of the Park Authority³

34. It would be somewhat contrary to go against the advice provided by the Authority itself. As such, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance the upper end (or four days per month) of the Authority's own guidance on the time commitment required from backbench Members has been maintained as the appropriate assessment of time required to fulfil all duties associated with the backbench role. This equates to 48 days per year.

The Public Service Principle (PSD) – A Public Service Discount of 35 per cent

35. The 2006 Statutory Guidance advises

It is important that some element of the work of members continues to be voluntary – that some hours are not remunerated.⁴

³ southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-people/members/

⁴ 2006 Statutory Guidance paragraph 68

36. This is often known as the “Public Service Discount” and builds into the Basic Allowance the voluntary principle in that not all the time put in by Members on their backbench role should be remunerated.
37. In arriving at the size of the PSD a figure of 35 per cent has historically been adopted. Thus out of the 48 days per year expected input 35 per cent (16.8 days rounded up to 17 days) is discounted for public service. This is in line with what is expected in principal councils as the proportion of time to be given as public service. No evidence was received to revise the public service discount. Thus, for the purposes of recalibrating the Basic Allowance out of the 48 days input, 31 days continues to be the remunerated time, with 17 days being the voluntary element.

Rate of Remuneration

38. Following on the Statutory Guidance advises that in setting a Basic Allowance an appropriate rate of remuneration should be adopted to apply to the number of remunerated days.⁵ Historically the rate of remuneration utilised in setting the recommended Basic Allowance has been based on the gross median daily salary for all full time employees in the South East as published by the Office for National Statistics in its Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). Again basing the rate of remuneration that is linked to “local or regional wage rates” is one rate of remuneration advised in the Statutory Guidance (paragraph 69) and such a locally based rate is commonly utilised by statutory remuneration panels in the nominating councils as it links Members remuneration to that of their constituents.
39. As the South Downs NPA crosses the boundaries of 14 county, unitary and district councils in the South East – it is the most appropriate regional wage for which to arrive at the rate of remuneration. In 2024, the median daily pay (gross) for all full time employee jobs in the South East was £150.⁶
40. Consequently the values arrived at for the 3 variables have been applied in the following formula:
- Time for Basic Allowance roles 48 days per year
 - Public Service Discount 35 per cent (17 days)
 - Remunerated days 31 per year
 - Rate of Remuneration £150 per day
 - 31 days X £118.56 = £4,650
41. Clearly, the recalibrated Basic Allowance shows that there is a case to increase the Basic Allowance. The current Basic Allowance now at £3,990 shows that indexation has not kept up with the growth in regional earnings since 2018 when the rate of remuneration was £118.56 per day. It has also partly lagged

⁵ 2006 Statutory Guidance paragraph 69

⁶ Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE), Median Annual pay – Gross (£) – for all time employees in the South East 2024 Table 7.7a = £39,038 per year, divided by 260 working days per year equates to £150.14, which has been rounded down to £150 per day (Office of National Statistics)

behind wage growth as the no indexation was applied to the Basic Allowance for 2024/25.

Benchmarking the Basic Allowance – UK NPAs

42. Benchmarking against the UK NPAs shows the current Basic Allowance is already at the upper end of the comparative spectrum although by no means the highest which is the Cairngorms NPA at £8,460⁷. In fact it would not be as high as any of the Scottish or Welsh NPAs. It would be the highest of the English NPAs; currently the next highest is Yorkshire Dales at £3,757 with the English NPA mean Basic Allowance at £2,658 and UK NPA Mean Basic Allowance at £3,753.
43. A higher than average English NPA Basic Allowance for the South Downs NPA is not a cause for concern in itself. The South Downs NPA Basic Allowance has always been above the mean partly, as mentioned above, as a function of the nature of the Authority, thus a higher than average Basic Allowance is appropriate.
44. Moreover, the English NPA that pays the lowest Basic Allowance (the Broads at £1,046) also pays more SRAs. In particular, it also remunerates its Planning and 'Lead' Members an SRA of £523. This makes the Broads low Basic Allowance somewhat misleading for comparative purposes as the majority of the Broads Members are paid an SRA.
45. Nonetheless, benchmarking does not provide a compelling a case to alter the current Basic Allowance at this juncture.

The Recommended Basic Allowance – Maintain at £3,990

46. Despite the recalibrated Basic Allowance of £4,650 that is based on the methodology as set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance and a sense in the representation received that the role of an Authority Member has grown in recent years there is also a countervailing case not to increase the current Basic Allowance (£3,990). This case largely rests on benchmarking, the perception that now is not the right time to revise the Basic Allowance due to the wider economic context and it may be more appropriate to do so when the impact of local government Devolution has on the Authority's governance structures is known. Consequently, the review concluded that there is not a compelling case to revise the current Basic Allowance at this juncture
47. **It is recommended that the Basic Allowance is maintained at £3,990, subject to indexation going forward.**

Special Responsibility Allowances – Maintaining current Methodology

⁷ CNPA Members are paid a day rate of £240 for 36 days per year – the high number of days is due to fact that all Members serve on CNPA Planning Committee

48. As per the 2006 Statutory Guidance the SRA (currently £7,216) for the Authority Chair has always been in set by reference to the South Downs NPA Basic Allowance and then the other SRAs arrived at by the pro rata approach, i.e., set as a percentage of the Chair's SRA.
49. This approach to setting the recommended SRAs has been maintained. However, where there is a clear and obvious case to do so, which occurs in a handful of cases, these ratios has been adjusted as the current ratios are evident anomalies.

The SRA for South Downs NPA Chair

50. South Downs NPA Chair's SRA (£7,216) is currently set at a ratio of 1.8 times the Basic Allowance. This is known as the 'factor' approach and is one methodologies suggested in the 2006 Statutory Guidance (Paragraph 76) to arrive at a Leaders' or Chair's SRA. It is an approach followed in at least seven other English NPAs although in Dartmoor and Northumberland the Chair's SRA is three times the Basic Allowance. It is also the most common approach to arrive at Leaders SRAs in the nominating Councils. It is noted that the English average ratio (mean Chair's SRA as a multiple of the mean Basic Allowance) is 2.25. Thus methodologically the current Basic Allowance/Chair's SRA is on the low side.
51. Benchmarking against the actual level of SRA paid to UK NPA Chairs however, does not point to a low SRA for the Chair of the South Downs NAP *per se*. The mean SRA paid to English NPA Chairs is 5,993) while the mean SRA paid to English and Welsh NPA Chairs is £6,763.⁸
52. The Chairs' role remains substantial one, particularly regarding the ambassadorial role on behalf of the Authority through taking a lead in partnership working, liaison and leadership required to engage partners and stakeholders. Moreover, the Chair is appointed to the Appointments, Management and Standards as an *ex officio* Member (as is the Deputy Chair. The Chair will also, in addition to chairing Authority meetings, will chair many of the workshops, chair the monthly meetings with other Committee Chairs and Senior Leadership Team, meet and be in contact with the Chief Executive on a regular basis, attend many Authority events with stakeholders and partners, including awards and launches, meet with local MPs and council Leaders to build networks and carry out annual appraisements of all Authority Members. The Chair is consulted by the Chief Executive in the case of an urgent action decision being required. The Chair also serves as Chair of National Parks England – although this role is not inherent to being Chair of the South Downs NPA.
53. Clearly, the Chair's role is substantial and the current SRA as 1.8 times the Basic Allowance probably underestimates the size of the role, particularly with an eye to succession planning. Nonetheless, in the representation received it was agreed that as with the current Basic Allowance now was not the time to revise the Chair's SRA for reasons mentioned above.

⁸ Due to the way the figures are published in Scotland it is impossible to ascertain with certainty the remuneration of Chairs of the Scottish NPAs which will vary from year to year in any case as they are paid a daily rate

54. **Consequently, it is recommended that the current methodology utilised in arriving at the Chair's SRA, i.e. based on a multiplier of the recommended Basic Allowance is maintained.**
55. **It is further recommended that the multiplier utilised in arriving at the recommended SRA for the Authority Chair is maintained at 1.8 times the recommended Basic Allowance (£3,990), which equates to £7,216, subject to indexation going forward⁹.**

The Deputy Chair's SRA

56. As per the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 76), the SRA for the Deputy Chair, (and other recommended SRAs) has been arrived at by pro rating it against the SRA for the Chair. Historically it has been set by sizing the Deputy Chair's roles and responsibilities at 75% of the Chairs' SRA, thus arriving at a current SRA of £5,387 (75% X £7,216).
57. Benchmarking shows that the Deputy Chair's SRA is the highest in England and Wales. From the published figures it cannot be ascertained with certainty the remuneration of the Deputy Chairs of the Scottish NPAs. The mean SRA paid to English NPA Deputy Chairs is £3,023 and for English and Welsh NPA Deputy Chairs the mean SRA is £3,188. The mean English NPA Deputy Chairs SRAs is 53.2 per cent. Thus, in both the level paid and methodology the SRA for the South Downs NPA Deputy Chair is significantly above that paid to peers. In fact, the current SRA paid to the Deputy Chair is the highest in the benchmarking group.
58. It has always been the case that the SRA for the Deputy Chair of the South Downs has been relatively high. The South Downs Deputy Chair works closely with the Chair such as attending the monthly meetings of the Senior Management Team. The Deputy Chair also takes on discrete tasks when required, which include chairing task and finish groups and working with the Chair to develop the National Park Management Plan. The Deputy Chair also has to stand in for the Chair when required, not just only in the Chair's absence when the Chair has to attend external meetings but in place of the Chair at some of those external meetings when Chair is also unable attend. The Deputy Chair is also appointed to a number of external bodies such as Transport for the South East, an observer to the Campaign for National Parks, as well as being a Trustee of the South Downs National Park Trust.
59. Nonetheless, the review concluded that a ratio of 75 per in setting the SRA for the Deputy Chair was excessive. It dates back to when the working model of the Chair and Deputy Chair was different to that of today. Finally, it is the SRA that is currently most out of synch with that paid to peers in other NPAs. Consequently, the review has concluded that a more apt ratio would be 65 per cent of the Chair's SRA (£7,216), which equates to £4,690. This still would

⁹ The multiplier of 1.8 times the Basic Allowance does not work out to exactly £7,216 (in fact the exact figure is £7,182) due to differential rounding up/down of the application of the indexation over the years. The same minor difference applies to most other SRAs.

leave the South Downs NPA the highest paid NPA Deputy Chair in England and Wales.

60. **It is recommended that the SRA for Deputy Chair of the South Downs NPA is reset at 65 per cent of the Chair's SRA (£7,216) and paid an SRA of £4,690, subject to indexation going forward.**

The Chair of the Planning Committee

61. The Authority is the responsible planning body for the area covered by the National Park (one where planning pressures are very intense). Normally it operates in partnership with the nominating council and the majority of decisions on local planning applications are delegated to local councils. Yet South Downs NPA through the Planning Committee retains ultimate responsibility for all planning decisions. The Authority has responsibility for determining major planning applications as well as setting planning policy - a policy that the nominating councils have to operate within when deciding on local planning applications.
62. The Chair also attends a large number of external meetings to consult, inform and engage with local partners and stakeholders regarding planning issues in the park as it is a high profile topic that attracts a great deal of public and media attention. This is particularly the case with a number of large scale developments in the Park area.
63. The SRA (currently £4,310) for the Chair of the Planning Committee has been set at 60 per cent of the Authority Chair's SRA. Although not the highest paid Chair of Planning in England (which is £4,643 in Exmoor) the current SRA is at the higher end of the comparative spectrum. It is also above the mean SRA paid to Planning Chairs in English NNPAs which is £2,705, with mean SRA for this role in English and Welsh SRAs being £2,943. The mean ratio for the SRA for Chairs of Planning in English NPAs is 49.1 per cent, thus methodologically it is somewhat above that paid to peers.
64. Nonetheless, this comparatively high SRA has been set at this level to reflect the size of the Authority and the complexity of planning issues in a disparate Authority such as the South Downs and the need to work in partnership with 15 nominating councils. The representation received also supported the current situation whereby the Planning Chair is paid more than the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee due to complexity and number of meetings. As such the current ratio of 60 per cent of the Authority Chair's recommended SRA (£7,216) has been maintained, which equates to £4,310.
65. **It is recommended that the SRA for the Chair of the Planning Committee is maintained at £4,310, subject to indexation going forward.**

The Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee

66. The SRA (£1,077) for the Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee has been set as is typical with reference to the Planning Chairs' SRA, in this case 25 per

cent of the Planning Chair's SRA. The only relevant benchmarking is in the English context which shows that the mean SRA of £1,224 for Deputy Chairs of Planning. The mean ratio for this SRA in English NPAs is 45.3 per cent. Thus, the current SRA paid to the Planning Deputy Chair is noticeably low methodologically and somewhat low in the level actually paid. But it is noted that this benchmarking group is somewhat small as the equivalent post are paid in only six out of the ten English NPAs

67. The SRA for the Deputy Chair of Planning is paid to recognise the risk associated with the role in that the risk in getting it wrong on a planning decision will be much higher than on other committees. The statutory framework for planning means it has to meet more often than other committees to ensure planning decisions are decided in defined limits. This means that if the Chair is unable to chair a Planning Committee meeting, which does occur mostly when the Chair has to declare an interest, the meeting cannot be postponed and the Deputy Chair has to step in. In turn this requires the Planning Deputy Chair to keep up to speed with the agenda of each meeting that includes attending pre-meeting briefings along with the Chair and Lead Officer as well attend the Local Plan Member Working Group. The Deputy Chair of Planning also attends the joint Committee Chairs/Senior Management Team meetings scheduled 10 times per year. The purpose of these meetings is to co-ordinate the work of the Authority and enables senior Members and Officers to raise upcoming issues in a confidential setting.
68. Limited representation was received to alter the current ratio in setting the SRA for the Deputy Chair of Planning or the level currently payable. Nonetheless, because it is comparatively low (the only SRA paid at the Authority which is comparatively low) the review concluded that it should be reset at 30 per cent of the Planning Chair's SRA (£4,310), which is £1,293. This places on a par with other NPA Deputy Chairs of Planning, and closer to the methodological mean.
69. As such the current ratio (25 per cent of the Planning Chair's SRA) is now on the low side. Thus the ratio utilised in arriving at the SRA for the Deputy Chair of Planning has been increased from 25 per cent to 30 per cent of the recommended SRA (£4,310) for the Chair of Planning, which equals £1,293.
70. **It is recommended that the SRA for Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee is reset at 30 per cent of the Chair of the Planning Committee's SRA (£4,310) and paid an SRA of £1,293, subject to indexation going forward.**

The Ordinary Members of Planning Committee

71. Once again there was some, albeit limited, representation that argued the case to pay a small SRA to the Planning Committee members on the grounds that they have to attend more meetings than members appointed to Policy and Resources Committee, as well as undertake relevant site visits. However an SRA is not being recommended for Members of Planning Committee on a number of grounds:

- Comparative practice: While not unknown it is not standard practice to remunerate Planning Committee members either in principal or joint authorities. Out of the 10 English NPAs only the Broads pay their planning members an SRA (£523) and it is not common practice in the 15 nominating councils.
- Undue emphasis: from the representation not supporting an SRA for the members of the Planning Committee it was argued that to do so may put an undue emphasis on planning to the detriment of the Authority in a context where it is required to deliver on its wider brief.
- Attracting Members to planning: There are no reported problems in getting Members to sit on the Planning Committee - although it is recognised that the remuneration across the board can hardly be seen as an incentive to recruitment generally.

72. It is not recommended that the ordinary Members of the Planning Committee are paid a SRA.

The Chair of Policy & Resources Committee

73. The Policy and Resources Committee was established in 2017 by the amalgamation of the Policy and Programme and Governance Committees. The current SRA (£2,394) was set at one third of the Authority Chair's SRA. It is difficult to benchmark this SRA as only 3 other English NPAs have a similar committee (Lake District - £2,000, New Forest - £2,049 and the Peak District - £2,353). On this limited benchmarking group, it shows a mean SRA of 2,353, with a mean ratio 39.3 per cent of the mean SRA. Thus, while the SRA for the Authority's Chair of Policy & Resources Committee is on a par with (the limited number of peers) in terms of level paid, it is low methodologically. Although it must be noted that the Lake District NPA while paying their equivalent Chair an SRA of £2,000 also pay an SRA of £2,000 to their Chair of a separate Audit Committee, a function that is included in the South Downs NPA Policy & Resources Committee.

74. The role of the Policy and Resources Committee has now matured and it is the committee that discusses the Authority's budget, business plan, approves appropriate resource plans, agrees the submissions of bids for grant funding, and the arrangements for application of grant funds received, monitoring and review of the delivery of the Management Plan, ensuring good governance of the Authority by overseeing and reviewing its arrangements for audit, financial control and risk management and promoting high standards of conduct. In effect it is the committee where most of the other business of the Authority is conducted. Since the previous review the audit aspect of the work of the Policy and Resources Committee has become larger and much more important, as it has in English local government generally. The audit function has matured in general. In the representation received it was generally agreed that the SRA for the Chair of the Policy & Resources was somewhat on the low side and the differential in the SRA paid to this Chair and the Chair of Planning was too great.

75. The issue was raised with interviewees whether there a case to pay the Chair of Policy and Resources on a par with the Chair of Planning but the general view was it was appropriate to have a differential. Consequently, the ratio utilised in arriving at the SRA for the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee has been raised from one third to 40 per cent of the Chair's SRA due the increased work carried out around the Audit function and is in line with the methodological mean ratios, which equates to £2,886.
76. **It is recommended that the SRA for Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee is reset at 40 per cent of the Chair of the Authority's SRA (£7,216) and paid an SRA of £2,886, subject to indexation going forward.**

The Deputy Chairs of the Policy and Resources Committee (x 2)

77. The Policy and Resources Committee was set up with two Deputy Chairs as a transitional arrangement. However, due to the breadth of the work undertaken by the Policy and Resources Committee the two Deputy Chairmen have been retained both of whom now the monthly meetings of Authority Chairs/Deputy Chairs and the Senior Management Team.
78. Currently, they each receive an SRA of £359, which was set 15 per cent of the Chair's SRA. The ratio would have been higher but for the fact that there are two Deputy Chairs of the Policy & Resources Committee. No evidence or representation was received to alter this ratio.
79. Thus, in setting the appropriate level each Deputy Chair's SRA has been maintained at 15 per cent of the recommended SRA (£2,886) of the Chair of the Policy and Resources, which equates to £433 apiece.
80. **It is recommended that the two Deputy Chairs of the Policy and Resources Committee are each paid an SRA of £433, subject to indexation going forward.**

Maintaining the 1-SRA only rule

81. The South Downs NPA has adopted a 1-SRA only rule in the unlikely event a Member holds more than one remunerated post then they can only be paid one SRA. This is a common practice in other NPAs and nominating councils. This is regarded as good practice; it makes the allowances scheme more transparent and does not lead to a situation where a Member is remunerated more than the Chair or Leader. Indeed some principal councils prohibit Members receiving SRAs any other joint body/other authority they may appoint to.¹⁰
82. **It is recommended that the South Downs NPA maintain the 1-SRA only rule.**

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

¹⁰ Members of NPAs in Wales who also receive an Executive SRA at their nominating Council are unable to receive any SRA they may be entitled to at their NPA.

83. Currently Members of the South Downs NPA are able to claim Subsistence Allowances at the same rates and under the same conditions that apply to Officers. No evidence was received to indicate that these rates and conditions are inappropriate.
84. Members are able to claim mileage allowances for attending approved duties at HMRC rates, also known as Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAP), which normally do not attract a tax or national insurance liability. In the representation received it was pointed out that for Members of NPAs these rates are subject to tax and national insurance. This is not an issue the review can address, it is an oversight in the legislation that means these rates are taxable and where relevant subject to national insurance. Although it is pointed out that this does not preclude individual Members from claiming deductions where they make personal tax returns.
85. Nonetheless, in accordance with the terms of reference and to future proof the allowances scheme a recommendation is being made for mileage allowances when a Member uses an electric/hybrid vehicle to attend an approved duty. The advice from the Office of Low Emission Vehicles is that “electric and hybrid vans are treated the same way as petrol and diesel cars for the purposes of AMAP.s.”¹¹ While this does not solve the tax/national insurance issue the logic of this recommendation is that where a Member claims mileage for attending an approved duty when traveling in a hybrid/electric vehicle then the applicable mileage rates should be the same that apply to petrol/diesel vehicles, namely 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter and 5p per mile for each passenger carried.
86. Other travel is claimable under the same terms and conditions that apply to Officers. No evidence was received to indicate that these rates and conditions are inappropriate.
87. **It is recommended that provision is included in the allowances scheme to enable Members using hybrid/electric vehicles when attending approved duties are able to claim at the same rates for petrol/diesel vehicles. It is further recommended that the current Travel and Subsistence Allowances rates and conditions be maintained.**

Definition of Approved Duties

88. **It is recommended that there is no change to the current definition of approved duties for which Members can claim travel and subsistence allowances.**

The Dependants' Carers Allowance

89. The issue was raised whether a Member with Dependant[s] should be able to claim an allowance to assist with the care of a dependant[s] when on approved

¹¹ Office for Low Emission Vehicles, Tax Benefits for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, 14 May 2018, paragraph 12.2

duties for the Authority, similar to the Dependants' Carers' Allowance that can be claimed in the nominating councils. The 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations provide no express powers for a National Park Authority to pay a carers' allowance. Only the nominating councils have the right to make available a Dependants' Carers Allowance. It is pointed out that if Members wish to claim for the cost of care of any dependants they may be able to do so from their nominating authority (if applicable) – but only at the nominating authority's discretion.

90. Consequently, **no recommendation is being made regarding a Dependants' Carers' Allowance.**

The Co-optees' Allowance

91. Currently, the Authority appoints two categories of Co-optees to the Policy & Resources Committee. The first category is what is termed the two CIPFA Co-optees who are paid a Co-optees' Allowance of £2,149 and the three other (Independent) Co-optees who are paid a Co-optees' Allowance of £3,225.
92. Usually, Co-optees are non-elected and non-voting independent persons appointed to Committees for their specialist knowledge and expertise. This is the case for the two CIPFA Co-optees at the Authority. The model adopted by the Authority is an additional three other Co-optees are appointed, whose role is to bring in those who represent underrepresented groups. Their role is to reach out to new demographics that are currently underrepresented on the Authority. In the original model, the other Co-optees were expected to be involved the more informal structures of the Authority, such as attending away days and workshops. They are also invited to make presentations to such events and are invited to attend South Downs NPA meetings as observers and invited to speak in relation to topics where they have a particular interest or expertise. Originally, the CIPFA Co-optees role was restricted to the work of the Policy & Resources Committee, thus the differential level of Co-optees' Allowance.
93. However, this model has changed in recent years. In particular the CIPFA Co-optees now get involved in a similar range of work that the other (Independent) Co-optees undertake. Both sets are invited to a similar range of events and meetings and engage more widely on a similar basis. Moreover, representation was received that suggests recruiting suitably qualified CIPFA Co-optees was somewhat difficult. Consequently, while the review concluded that there was no case to change the Co-optees' Allowance (£3,225) there was a case to reset the Co-optees' Allowance for the CIPFA Co-optees on a par with that paid to the other (Independent) Co-optees.
94. **It is recommended that both the CIPFA and other (Independent) Co-optees are paid a Co-optees' Allowance of £3,225, subject to indexation going forward.**

Indexing Allowances

95. The 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations permit authorities, including NPAs, to apply an index to their allowances for up to a period of four years before authorisation is required again – in the case of the South Downs NPA, this authorisation could come from the Authority itself as it is not required to seek independent advice, but only after paying regard to the recommendations of the statutory IRPs from the nominating councils.
96. The most common index applied to Members' Allowances in the nominating authorities is the same one that is applied to Officers, namely, annual percentage salary increase as agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services (linked to spinal column point 43) as implemented on 1 April of each year.
97. The South Downs NPA determines locally staff remuneration and any annual cost of living increases. Bearing in mind the terms of reference regarding the future proofing of the allowances scheme it is appropriate that the allowances in South Downs NPA are indexed on the same basis that Officers salary is indexed. It also ensures that Members and Officers are treated equally in this respect.
98. **It is recommended that the following indices are applied to the following allowances:**
- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees' Allowances:**
 - Indexed to the annual percentage increase in salary for the South Downs NPA staff, where such a cost of living increase is implemented in a particular year, and applied to the same year that staff salary increases also apply
 - **Subsistence Allowances:**
 - Indexed to the same rates applicable to Officers of the South Downs NPA
 - **Mileage Allowances:**
 - Indexed to the HMRC approved mileage rates

Implementation

99. **It is further recommended that the proposals contained in this report are implemented no later than Authority's Annual General Meeting on 8th July 2025, or any date before then as agreed by the Authority.**

APPENDIX 1: Members and Officers who met with Declan Hall

Members:

Heather Baker	Chair of Planning Committee (National appointment)
Tim Burr	Deputy Chair of SD NPA (National appointment)
Tom Fourcade	Independent (CIPFA) Co-opted Member of Policy & Resources Committee
John Hyland	Vice Chair of Planning Committee (Parish appointment – Soberton)
Cllr Stephan McAuliffe	Member of Planning Committee (Arun District Council appointment)
Cllr Vanessa Rowlands	Chair of SD NPA (Parish appointment – Cuckmere Valley)
Cllr Vicki Wells	Vice Chair Policy & Resources Committee (Worthing Borough Council appointment)

Written Representations Received:

Cllr Mark Fairweather	Member of the Policy & Resources Committee (Wealdon District Council appointment)
Andrew Shaxson	Member of the Planning Committee (West Sussex Parishes appointment)

Officers:

Siôn McGeever	Chief Executive
Tim Slaney	Director of Planning
Richard Sandiford	Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer

APPENDIX 2: Further information Considered

1. Terms of Reference for review in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations (10 (1))
2. South Downs NPA, Members' Allowances scheme 2024/25, including all reimbursements paid to Members
3. South Downs NPA, Travel and Subsistence Policy Version 2, 19th February 2024
4. The Fifth Independent Review of Members' Allowances for South Downs NPA, The Fifth Report, February 2020
5. Report to the South Downs NPA, Independent Review of Members' Allowances, including Authority Decision, 7th July 2020
6. A Supplementary Independent Review of Co-optees' Allowances for South Downs NPA, Report November 2020
7. Report to the South Downs NPA, Supplementary Review of Co-optees' Allowances, 17th December 2020
8. South Downs NPA, Standing Orders sections 1-12 and Appendix 4 – Committee Terms of Reference and membership
9. <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-people/members/>, including expected time commitment for Members
10. South Downs NPA, Member, Authority Chair and Deputy Chair Role Description and Person Specification
11. South Downs NPA, full authority, committee and other meetings/events schedule of meetings 2024/25
12. South Downs NPA, Economic Profile of the South Downs, National Park, August 2020
13. South Downs NPA, Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations
14. Hard copies of written submissions by Members
15. South Downs National Park, Corporate Plan, 2020-25, Year 4 & 5 Action Plan 2023-25
16. South Downs NPA, Annual Review 2023/24
17. South Downs NPA, Terms of Reference for the new South Downs Partnership

18. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Table 7.7a, South East – Annual Pay – Gross – for all full employee jobs in the South East, Office of National Statistics, 2018
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofworkbylocalauthorityashetable7>
19. SI 2003 No. 1021, *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*, 7 April 2003.
20. DCLG and HMRC: *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, May 2006
21. The most recent IRP reports from the nominating councils, including current allowances schemes as published, which are
 - I. Adur November 2022
 - II. Arun March 2024
 - III. Brighton & Hove March 2024
 - IV. Chichester December 2019
 - V. East Hampshire November 2023
 - VI. East Sussex March 2022
 - VII. Eastbourne November 2022
 - VIII. Hampshire September 2023
 - IX. Horsham 2025
 - X. Lewes November 2023
 - XI. Mid Sussex December 2022
 - XII. Wealdon February 2025
 - XIII. West Sussex November 2024
 - XIV. Winchester October 2022
 - XV. Worthing March 2022
22. Benchmarking data – Allowances Schemes from all other English and other UK NPAs
23. DEFRA, Landscapes Review, Final Report, September 2019
24. Report to the South Downs NPA, Adoption of scheme of allowances 2024/25, 9th July 2024
25. Office for Low Emission Vehicles, Tax Benefits for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, 14 May 2018

Appendix 3 - Benchmarking - Allowances Paid in all UK National Park/Broads Authorities 2024/25											
Authority	Basic Allowance	Chair's SRA	Chair's Total (BA+SRA)	Deputy Chair	Chair Planning	V/Chair Planning	Chair Policy & Resources	V/Chair Policy & Resources	Co-optee	Index	Other & Comments
Broads Authority	£1,046	£3,925	£4,971	£1,963	£1,963	£523			£349	no index	Chair & V/Chair Navigation £1,963 & £523, Chair Audit £523, Members Planning £523
Dartmoor	£1,980	£5,906	£7,886	£1,980	£1,980	£990			£231	NJC	Chair Audit £1,980, Chairs Panels & V/Chair Audit £990
Exmoor	£3,095	£6,191	£9,286	£4,643	£4,643					Staff	Chair Consultative Forum £1,370, Chair Standards £774
Lake District	£3,000	£6,000	£9,000	£4,500	£2,000		£2,000			NA	Chairs Audit + Park Strategy & Vision + Rights of Way £2,000 ea., IT Allowance £237 p/yr
New Forest	£2,049	£4,098	£6,147	£2,049	£2,049	£1,025	£2,049	£1,025	£142	Staff	Chair Standards £512
Northumberland	£2,038	£6,116	£8,154	£2,038	£1,019				£318	Staff	
N. Yorkshire Moors	£2,769	£5,537	£8,306	£2,076	£2,551					Staff	
Peak District	£2,855	£7,423	£10,278	£3,712	£3,712	£2,227	£2,969	£1,485	£714	NJC	
Yorkshire Dales	£3,757	£7,513	£11,270	£1,878	£2,818	£1,503				NJC	
South Downs	£3,990	£7,216	£11,206	£5,387	£4,310	£1,077	£2,394	£359	£3,225	Staff	2 V/Chairs of P&R
*Cairngorms	£8,640		£20,000								
*Loch Lomond & Trossachs	£5,280		£20,000							Set by Scot Govt	Other Chairs are paid but unknown based on published figures
Brecon Beacons	£5,265	£9,333	£14,598	£3,740	£3,740						All Other Chairs £3,740
Pembrokeshire Coastal	£5,265	£9,333	£14,598	£3,740	£3,740				£134 < 4 hours £268 > 4 hours per day	Set by IRP for Wales	All Other Chairs £3,740
Snowdonia	£5,265	£9,333	£14,598	£3,740	£3,740						All Other Chairs £3,740
UK Mean	£3,753	£6,763	£11,353	£3,188	£2,943	NA	£2,353				
England Mean	£2,658	£5,993	£8,650	£3,023	£2,705	£1,224	£2,353				
Lowest	£1,046	£3,925	£4,971	£1,878	£1,019	£523	£2,000				
Highest	£8,640	£9,333	£20,000	£5,387	£4,643	£2,227	£2,969				
English Ratios		2.25 X BA		53.2%	49.1%	45.3%	39.3%				
SD NPA Ratios		1.8 X BA		74.7%	59.7%	25.0%	33.2%	15.0%			

*CNPA Members are paid £240 p/day & LL&T NPA Members about £220 p/day. BA based on 36 days per year for CNPA as all are on Planning and on 24 days per year for LL&T although 2/3s of members are on Planning. Total remuneration or Authority Chairs are extrapolated from Annual Accounts Reports. Deputy and Committee chairs not included as can't identify from figures published

