

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING – 16 JUNE 2005

PROPOSED RECRUITMENT TO SENIOR AND OTHER KEY POSTS

Report by: Susan Carter, Interim Chief Executive/Acting National Park Officer

Summary:

1. As part of a gradual build-up of staff, the paper proposes recruitment to four senior and four other key posts.
2. The four senior posts would cover:
 - conservation and enhancement;
 - understanding and enjoyment;
 - strategy and planning; and
 - corporate services.
3. The other key posts would be:
 - Head of Communications;
 - members' services officer;
 - recreation adviser; and
 - planning adviser.
4. The grading of the posts will be decided with the help of New Forest District Council in line with their usual job evaluations. Proposals on an overall staffing structure will be put to Authority members in the autumn.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to agree the broad approach in the paper.

Resources:

The resource implications will depend on the grades decided. Total pay costs for the eight posts are likely to be of the order of £300k.

Other major considerations:

For the authority to be able to function effectively from next April, it is essential to fill senior posts as soon as possible. The postholders will then be able to engage with members in setting the strategic priorities for the Authority, which will determine the remaining staff structure and activities next year. The four other key posts are needed to undertake both current and future activities adequately.

PROPOSED RECRUITMENT TO SENIOR AND OTHER KEY POSTS

Report by: Susan Carter, Interim Chief Executive/Acting National Park Officer

1. This paper describes the posts that, subject to members agreeing the broad approach, we plan to advertise as soon as possible.

Background

2. The Authority has been running deliberately on a skeleton staff composed of the small core of permanent staff transferred from the New Forest Committee, secondees, consultants and agency staff. The plan has been to cascade decisions on staffing: first to the Authority's members to choose the permanent Chief Executive; then to the Chief Executive to decide on senior staff and other key appointments; and then to those senior and key staff to decide on further staffing. Staffing, like other aspects of day-to-day management, is largely for the Chief Executive, but members need to be content with the overall outcome.
3. After a brief discussion with Lindsay Cornish, the newly-appointed Chief Executive, this paper makes proposals for filling eight senior and key posts. Following agreement on terms and conditions at the last Authority meeting, we shall also be recruiting some junior staff. Proposals on an overall staffing structure for the Authority from 1 April 2006 will be put to Authority members in the autumn.

Senior Posts

4. It is proposed to recruit four staff at the level below Chief Executive to cover the four key areas of the Authority's work:
 - Conservation and enhancement (the first purpose of National Parks);
 - Understanding and enjoyment (the second purpose of National Parks);
 - Strategy and planning; and
 - Corporate services.
5. The precise content of the posts will vary according to the priorities decided by members, which are likely to change over time, and the details of the organisation decided by the permanent Chief Executive and her management team. Whether the planning post is needed at such a senior level will depend on the decisions taken on how the planning function should be delivered.
6. Core elements of the four posts are likely to be:
 - **Conservation and enhancement.** Natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. Responsibility for amenity trees (TPOs) and Conservation Areas. Partnerships and liaison with the Forestry Commission, English Nature, the Verderers, Wildlife Trusts, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency, Local Authorities, Rural Development Service, the New Forest Association and others.
 - **Understanding and enjoyment.** Recreation, education and interpretation, including open access. Partnerships and liaison with the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts (on rangers and information etc) the Countryside Agency, local authorities, Ramblers Association, and other user groups;

- **Strategy and planning.** Planning policy and execution, the Management Plan and other overarching strategies;
 - **Corporate services.** Finance, human resources, accommodation, IT, legal.
7. Some of the elements outlined above will involve more than one of these senior officers although one will lead. Other responsibilities, such as work on the socio-economic duty and the Sustainable Development Fund, are likely to be evenly split between those leading on each of the two purposes.
 8. The posts will not necessarily all be of equal status. We propose to decide their grading in conjunction with the New Forest District Council.

Other key posts

9. We have identified the need for the following additional key posts:
 - **Head of Communications.** To develop and implement corporate communications policy, provide corporate public relations services, manage and provide interpretative and other communication services;
 - **Members' services officer.** To make arrangements for the meetings of the Authority and working groups, be the initial point of contact for members, and arrange member induction and training;
 - **Recreation adviser.** Chris Fairbrother, a part-time secondee from the Countryside Agency, is leaving at the end of June. We need an adviser on recreation urgently in our policy team;
 - **Planning adviser.** The policy team currently depends on the advice of three part-time and temporary planning consultants. We need our own planning adviser.
10. Again, the grading of these posts will be decided in conjunction with New Forest District Council using the standard evaluation system. It will be for the Chief Executive to decide how the first two posts will fit into the staff structure.