

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING: 24 APRIL 2007**

**INTERIM COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS AFTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS IN MAY 2007**

Report by: Kevin Gardner, Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Summary:

The local government elections for district and parish members will take place on 3 May 2007. Those members who are currently appointed to the Authority by virtue of their district, borough or parish appointment will cease to be members of the Authority four days after the elections, namely 7 May 2007. The positions will remain vacant until formal notification is received from the relevant Council or Secretary of State (in the case of parish members) advising of the names of those appointed. This is expected to take place during May and June 2007.

This report sets out suggestions for maintaining continuity of the Authority's business and committees during this time, in particular the Planning Development Control Committee and the Resources and Performance Committee.

Recommendations:

1. That consideration be given to the following two options and that members make a selection which they feel best suits the operating needs of the Authority during the interim period:
 - (a) That the membership of the Planning Development Control Committee be reduced from 15 members to five members comprising County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees to that Committee, with immediate effect, until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.
 - (b) That the authority currently delegated to the Planning Development Control Committee be delegated to the Chief Executive acting in conjunction with the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee with effect from 7 May 2007 until the annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.
2. That the membership of the Resources and Performance Committee be reduced from seven members to five members being the County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees to that Committee, with immediate effect, until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.

Corporate Plan: Objective A1

Resources:

None.

Papers:

NFNPA 176/07 Cover paper

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The local government elections for district, borough and parish members will take place on 3 May 2007, and district, borough and parish members will cease to be members of the Authority four days after the elections, namely 7 May 2007.
- 1.2 These positions will remain vacant until formal notification is received from the relevant Council or Secretary of State (in the case of parish members) advising of the names of those appointed.
- 1.3 Defra has advised that the New Forest Association of Local Councils will need to canvas its members to obtain agreement on the names of those appointed as parish members to the Authority. It is anticipated that four parish members will again represent the four zones of the National Park, i.e. South West, South East, North West and North East.
- 1.4 It is expected that the Authority will be advised of the names of the new appointees during May and June 2007.
- 1.5 In the interim the Authority will need to maintain the continuity of its business, in particular the Planning Development Control Committee, and the Resources and Performance Committee.

2 Interim measures for the Planning Development Control Committee

- 2.1 The appointments of members of the Planning Development Control Committee, being the County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees who have been appointed to that Committee, will be unaffected during this time.

- 2.2 Pursuant to paragraph 5.2(c) of the Authority's Standing Orders the Authority may at any time amend the membership of any of its committees. It is accordingly proposed that the size of the Planning Development Control Committee be reduced to comprise members drawn from those referred to in paragraph 2.1 above.
- 2.3 Membership of Committees is required to reflect as closely as possible the balance between local authority and Secretary of State representation on the Authority. The balance on the Planning Development Control Committee (less District and Secretary of State (parish) members) is six (three local authority and three Secretary of State members) and to comply with the above requirement, it will be necessary to reduce the membership of the new smaller committee by one Secretary of State member which would give a balance which reflects that on the Authority.
- 2.4 The quorum for meetings of the Committee (as set out in paragraph 6 of the Standing Orders) will be reduced accordingly as a quorum comprises one third of the members of the committee, of whom at least one is a local authority member and one is a Secretary of State member.
- 2.5 This amendment to the membership of the Committee will take effect until the Annual Authority meeting in June 2007, at which stage the Authority will re-appoint all of its committees.
- 2.6 These arrangements will not be necessary in future, once Defra has enacted the provisions of the NERC Act later this year, which will allow local authority and parish members to remain on the Authority for up to three months following elections.
- 2.7 As an alternative to the measures suggested above, members could resolve to delegate all of the matters that would ordinarily fall to be decided by the Planning Development Control Committee to the Chief Executive acting jointly with the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee for the period between 7 May 2007 until the annual Authority meeting on 28 June 2007.

3 Interim measures for the Resources and Performance Committee

- 3.1 Five out of the seven members of the Resources and Performance Committee (being the three County and two Secretary of State (non Parish) members on that Committee) will be unaffected by the elections during this period.
- 3.2 It is therefore proposed that, pursuant to paragraph 5.2(c) of the Authority's Standing Orders, the size of the Resources and Performance Committee be reduced to comprise only the five members referred to in paragraph 3.1 above. Again, the quorum for meetings of the Committee (as set out in paragraph 6 of the Standing Orders) will be reduced accordingly.

- 3.3 This amendment to the membership of the Committee will take effect until the Annual Authority meeting in June 2007, at which the Authority will re-appoint all of its committees.

4 Recommendations

- 1. That consideration be given to the following two options and that members make a selection which they feel best suits the operating needs of the Authority during the interim period:**
 - (a) That the membership of the Planning Development Control Committee be reduced from 15 members to five members comprising County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees to that Committee, with immediate effect, until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.**
 - (b) That the authority currently delegated to the Planning Development Control Committee be delegated to the Chief Executive acting in conjunction with the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee with effect from 7 May 2007 until the annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.**
- 2. That the membership of the Resources and Performance Committee be reduced from seven members to five members being the County and Secretary of State (non Parish) appointees to that Committee, with immediate effect, until the Annual meeting of the Authority on 28 June 2007.**