

## NFNPA SC 48/17

### NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING – 2 OCTOBER 2017

### REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Report by David Stone, Corporate Services Manager

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The NPA must adopt a new Scheme of Members' Allowances to run from 1 April 2018 onwards. As Members may recall, the adoption of a scheme of allowances is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations). The NPA is required to adopt a Scheme annually, but may set allowances for up to four years if linked to a suitable index. Under the Regulations the NPA may, but need not, appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to assist it with arriving at a Scheme of Allowances, but in any event the NPA must have regard to the findings of any IRP convened by any of the local authorities that appoint members to the NPA. Although the Regulations do not specifically require Members to have regard to whether or not those authorities adopted their IRP's recommendations in full, this is also of interest and relevance in considering the NPA's Scheme.
- 1.2 The NPA last adopted a Scheme of Allowances with effect from 1 April 2014 for four years, which will accordingly expire on 31 March 2018 (attached as **Annex 1**). The annual Basic Allowance at the time of the adoption of the existing Scheme was £1,824.96 and this figure has increased to £1,883.69 in line with periodic staff cost of living pay awards, as provided in the Scheme. This report proposes that a Scheme of Allowances be adopted that retains the existing allowance of £1,883.69 indexed to any NFNPA staff cost of living pay awards applied from April 2018.
- 1.3 Little has changed over the last few years in terms of the work required of Members, and the NPA lacks the resources to convene an IRP. On these grounds it is suggested that it would not be appropriate or necessary to convene a panel but that the Committee considers the recommendations of neighbouring authorities and in turn makes a recommendation on a new allowance scheme to the March 2018 Authority meeting. Accordingly, Members are now asked to consider the attached recommendations of the IRP convened by the following local authorities that appoint members to the NPA: Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Wiltshire Council, and Test Valley Borough Council. Where these authorities have not recently appointed an IRP the recommendations of the last IRP convened by that authority are attached for reference.

## **2 Recommendations of IRPs convened by local authorities with Members appointed to the NPA**

### **2.1 Hampshire County Council**

Hampshire County Council's Scheme of Allowances was approved in February 2014, revised in 2015, and runs until the end of March 2018. The recommendations of the most recent IRP held in 2015, which set out minor amendments to the existing scheme (which are mostly not relevant to the NPA's structure), are attached as **Annex 2**. The recommendations of the fuller consideration by an IRP which took place in 2013 (and which were made available to the NPA's Standards Committee and the full Authority in 2014 at that time) are also attached for ease of reference as **Annex 3**. Hampshire County Council's current scheme of allowances is attached as **Annex 4**, with a basic allowance of £12,003, which is not index linked. It is anticipated that the IRP will meet again in mid-October 2017 and therefore any resulting recommendations will be available for the full Authority to consider when it adopts its own Scheme.

### **2.2 New Forest District Council**

NFDC's most recent IRP met in early 2014, and the NPA considered the recommendations of this panel at the time of adopting its existing scheme; no further IRP has been convened by NFDC subsequently. The recommendations of NFDC's IRP are attached as **Annex 5**, and NFDC's most recent scheme of allowances is attached as **Annex 6**. Note that these allowances have been indexed and hence the basic allowance for NFDC members in 2017 is £6,150.

### **2.3 Wiltshire Council**

Similarly, Wiltshire Council has not held an IRP since the NPA adopted its existing scheme. The report of Wiltshire's last IRP, held in November 2013, is attached as **Annex 7** and Wiltshire's current Scheme is attached as **Annex 8**. As at 2016/17 the basic allowance was £12,811.80.

### **2.4 Test Valley Borough Council**

Test Valley convened an IRP to consider allowances in October 2014 and its report is attached as **Annex 9**, together with the current Scheme of Allowances as **Annex 10**. The annual amount payable from March 2017 is £6,581, and it is indexed to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, as recommended by the IRP, until May 2019 to coincide with the elections. The next IRP will be held in late 2018, in order to produce recommendations for a Scheme to be adopted from 2019 onwards.

### **2.5 Other NPAs**

Whilst there is no requirement to have regard to allowances paid by other National Park Authorities nor to any IRPs convened by them, this information may be of interest to the Committee, particularly in respect of the English National Parks, and officers have accordingly canvassed the other NPAs. Of the English NPAs (different rules apply in Wales), none have recently appointed their own IRPs. The basic allowances currently payable are as set out below:

National Park	Basic Annual Allowance (£)	Date of Scheme adoption
Broads	1,046	2017
Dartmoor	1,644	2016
Exmoor	2,632.80	2017
Lake District	3,000	2017
Northumberland	1,734	2017
North York Moors	2,255.52	2017
Peak District	1,789	2016
South Downs	2,950	2015
Yorkshire Dales	3,058	2017

### 3. NPA Scheme of Allowances

- 3.1 The Committee is now asked to consider allowances in the light of the various IRPs' recommendations as annexed to this report, and to recommend a Scheme to the full Authority for adoption from 1 April 2018.
- 3.2 A draft Scheme of Allowances is attached as **Annex 11**, which is based on the basic allowance as currently payable (£1,883.69). Minor updating amendments have been made to the draft Scheme and these are shown in track changes. Members are asked to recommend this Scheme or another Scheme of their choosing for adoption at the full Authority meeting on 23 March 2018. It is suggested that Members may wish to adopt a Scheme for a period of four years from April 2018, to be indexed to any increases in staff pay if applicable.

### 4. Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the draft Scheme of Allowances attached as Annex 11 to this report (and the recommendations of the IRPs convened by its appointing local authorities), and either:

1. Recommend to the full Authority that it adopt the draft Scheme attached as Annex 11 in full for four years with effect from 1 April 2018, as increased in line with any annual NFNPA staff cost of living pay award applied from April 2018; or
2. agree any such amendments to the draft Scheme as appropriate and recommend it to the full Authority for adoption with effect from 1 April 2018 for such period (up to four years if incorporating indexing) as appropriate.