

**NFNPA 571/19**

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY MEETING – 28 MARCH 2019**

**INVITATION TO TAKE UP MEMBERSHIP OF THE UK NATIONAL PARKS CHARITY FOUNDATION**

**Report by:** Alison Barnes, Chief Executive Officer

**Summary:**

This report provides an update to members on the progress made by National Parks Partnerships LLP in establishing the UK National Parks Charity Foundation. It asks members to consider whether the Authority should apply for membership of the charity.

Membership of the charity was considered and recommended for approval to the Authority by the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee at its meeting on 4 March 2019.

**Recommended, that:**

- 1. the New Forest National Park Authority submit a formal application for membership of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation;**
- 2. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take all steps as necessary to implement this decision, including entering into any agreements and signing any documentation; and**
- 3. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take any subsequent decisions on behalf of the Authority as a member of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation, including the nomination or seconding of Trustees and reporting regularly to the Authority on this matter.**

**Resources:**

As set out in the report.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.

**Papers:** **NFNPA 571/19** Cover Paper  
**NFNPA 571/19 Annex 1** NPP Partnership Policy

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 As members are aware, the Authority is a member of National Parks Partnerships LLP (NPP), which has the aim of engaging with the private sector and gaining commercial sponsorship. During NPP's engagement with other corporate bodies in the search for potential funding, it has been identified that some organisations would prefer to donate to a charitable body.

## 2 UK National Parks Charity Foundation

- 2.1 An application was submitted to the Commission on 18 December 2018 to establish the 'UK National Parks Charity Foundation'. The proposed structure of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation is to be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and following recent discussions with the Charities Commission it is hoped that it will be established very shortly. The draft constitution of the charity is based on the Charity Commission's model constitution for a CIO. It would have the following objectives, which have now been agreed in principle with the Charities Commission:

'The objects of the CIO are for the benefit of the public within the areas designated as National Parks in England, Wales and Scotland, recognising at all times the requirement to respect the special qualities of those designated areas:

1. The preservation, conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage;
2. The promotion of sustainable development by:
  - (a) the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources;
  - (b) the promotion of sustainable means of communities achieving rural economic growth and regeneration;
3. The education of the public in the physical and natural environment of the national parks and their special qualities;
4. The promotion of the national parks as facilities for appropriate recreation and enjoyment for members of the public at large in the interests of social welfare.

Sustainable development means "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".'

- 2.2 The Authority has received an invitation to apply for membership of the new charity. Members of the charity will have the right, once it is established, either to nominate or to second the nomination of a trustee of the charity. If the Authority does decide to apply for membership, it would have to ensure its

powers as such were exercised in the way most likely to further the charity's purposes. Any funding received through this route would be deployed against the Partnership Plan priorities.

- 2.3 As members of the charity the member national park authorities, including the Authority, would be able to express their views as to the way in which the charity pursued its objectives (as set out above), including compliance with the Authority's stance on ethical sponsorship and investing as outlined in its Sponsorship Policy, and the National Park Partnerships' Partnership Policy (attached as **Annex 1**).
- 2.4 The risks associated with the Authority being a member of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation seem to be low, although it will be important to maintain the charity's independence from the business of the Authority, and the trustees will be appointed by the member National Park Authorities to act as independent trustees. There are potential reputational risks if, for example, it turns out that the charity is poorly run. Members should be aware that not all National Park Authorities intend to apply to be founding members of the charity, although they may of course choose to apply for membership subsequently. It has, however, been agreed that any funds obtained through this route will be evenly distributed irrespective of membership of the charity.
- 2.5 Finally, it is worth reiterating that there will be benefits in the charity's ability to engage with the private sector. Moreover, if the charity fails to deliver the expected benefits or its incorporation has negative consequences such as the diversion of resources, it could of course be dissolved by agreement.

### **3 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The establishment of the charity is a welcome development and the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee recommended, at its meeting on 4 March 2019, that the Authority applies for membership and in due course appoints a trustee.

#### **Recommended, that:**

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- 2. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take all steps as necessary to implement this decision, including entering into any agreements and signing any documentation; and**
- 3. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, acting in consultation with the Chairman, to take any subsequent decisions on behalf of the Authority as a member of the UK National Parks Charity Foundation, including the nomination or seconding of Trustees and reporting regularly to the Authority on this matter.**