

NFNPA RAPC 394/19

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 4 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, and to make a recommendation to the full Authority meeting on 28 March 2019 accordingly.

Recommendations:

To consider and if thought appropriate recommend to the full Authority 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 394/19 Cover Paper

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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 it is hoped that it will be established by the end of March 2019. The draft constitution of the charity is based on the Charity Commission's model constitution for a CIO. It would have the following objectives:

- conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage;
- promotion of sustainable use of the natural resources of the national parks;
- promotion of understanding and enjoyment, including recreation, of the special qualities of the national parks by the public;
- promotion of the sustainable development of the communities within the national parks; and
- promoting knowledge transfer and sharing best practice in the delivery of sustainable rural development projects.

- 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 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. There are potential reputational risks if, for example, it turned out that the charity was 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.

- 2.4 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. It is suggested that the Committee recommends to the Authority that it applies for membership and in due course appoints a trustee.

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