

AM 605/21

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 19 AUGUST 2021

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS

Report by: Rosalind Alderman, Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

1 Summary:

- 1.1 Officers have conducted a review of the Authority's Standing Orders to ensure their consistency and fitness for purpose. Changes are recommended to the voting procedures for electing Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees and appointing representatives of the Authority to available positions.

2 Summary of changes

- 2.1 References to the Regulations made under the Coronavirus Act (namely, the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020), have been deleted as those Regulations expired on 7 May 2021. Similarly, the provisions for remote/ virtual meetings that those Regulations allowed have also been deleted.
- 2.2 Standing Order 4.10 clarifies that statutory meetings that are open to the press and public will now routinely be recorded and live streamed on the NPA's website, where practicable to do so.
- 2.3 The rules currently set out in the Standing Orders for the annual appointment of Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs contain an anomaly and need to be amended. There are three options open to the NPA in making these appointments:
- A. All Members of the Authority have a vote in electing the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Committees, meaning that each Member would have a vote on every Committee Chair and Deputy Chair appointment irrespective of whether or not that Member is actually on the Committee in question (the Dartmoor, North York Moors, Peak District and South Downs NPAs all follow this procedure, as does Hampshire County Council);
 - B. The elections of Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs are deferred to the first meeting of the relevant Committee following the annual meeting (the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland NPAs follow this procedure, as does New Forest District Council); or
 - C. The annual Authority meeting is adjourned and brief meetings of each Committee would be convened in turn to make these appointments, after

which the annual Authority meeting would resume (Exmoor NPA follows this procedure).

- 2.4 The Standing Orders at Annex 1 have been drafted in line with option A, which is recommended in view of its simplicity. Option B would leave each Committee without appointees in place until the next meeting of that Committee, which would not be advisable because decisions might be needed regarding Code of Conduct complaints or urgent planning enforcement matters, for example, and option C would be time consuming and complicated procedurally, so these options are not considered appropriate. However, Members may of course prefer a different approach on this issue.
- 2.5 Where two or more Members have indicated their interest in a position that falls to be filled at an Authority meeting (for example, the appointment of a representative to an outside body or the appointment of the Chair), the vote will automatically proceed by way of a secret ballot, as has been the case in practice for many years.
- 2.6 In the event that there are two or more candidates for any position and no one candidate receives a clear majority of the vote in the ballot, the person with the fewest votes will be eliminated and further rounds of voting will take place until the majority of the vote is given in favour of one candidate. The process itself, which takes place in line with the existing process used for the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair, has been amended to remove the reference to a 'majority' in view of the ambiguity of that word (it could be taken to mean either over 50% of the available vote or more votes than any other candidate), in order to clarify that it simply means one candidate achieving a greater number of votes than any other candidate.

In conclusion, Members are asked to consider and if thought appropriate to approve the proposed changes to the Standing Orders.

Recommendation:

That, subject to any further amendments as discussed and agreed, the revised Standing Orders (Annex 1), be approved with immediate effect.

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Papers:

AM 605/21 Annex 1 Standing Orders