

SC 51-21

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING – 8 MARCH 2021

#### REVIEW OF THE ‘ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS’ BROUGHT UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

**Report by** Jo Murphy, Information & Data Protection Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members will recall that the constitutional documents were reviewed in order to ensure their consistency and fitness for purpose and were adopted at the Authority meeting held on 9 July 2020. Since that time, officers have conducted a further review of the arrangements for dealing with allegations that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct and are now proposing some further amendments (**Annex 1**).
- 1.2 Members are asked to review the recommended amendments (as shown with tracked changes), and, subject to your approval, recommend that they are adopted by the full Authority at the meeting on the 25 March 2021. The Code of Conduct (**Annex 2**) is attached for ease of reference, but no amendments are proposed at this time.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, we are required to adopt a Code of Conduct and must have in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made.
- 2.2 It is important that the public have confidence in the Authority’s decision-making process and can raise any concerns that they may have, and for those concerns to be investigated in a fair and transparent manner. However, the Authority has limited resources and has a duty to ensure that public funds are used properly. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to further clarify the circumstances under which a complaint could be discontinued after the initial assessment stage without requiring further investigation (paragraph 2.1 to **Annex 1**).
- 2.3 As members will know, the Monitoring Officer (MO) has appointed a Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO). For the avoidance of doubt, a clause has been included in the document that enables the MO to ask the DMO to investigate a matter for any reason, rather than it being limited to when he or she considers he or she has had previous involvement in the subject to be considered.

- 2.4 A small number of other minor amendments and reordering of clauses are suggested for clarity.

## RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that, subject to any further amendments discussed and agreed by the Committee, the revisions to the Arrangements for dealing with allegations (Annex 1) be recommended to the full Authority for approval.**

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### Papers:

NFNPA SC 51-21 Annex 1 Arrangements for dealing with allegations  
NFNPA SC 51-21 Annex 2 Code of Conduct