NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MINUTES OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9 JANUARY 2023 AT 2:00 PM

IN THE IBSLEY ROOM, LYMINGTON TOWN HALL OFFICES, AVENUE ROAD, LYMINGTON (the change of venue was necessitated by building work taking place in the Council Chamber, Officers ascertained that there were no members of the public wishing to attend the meeting)

Attending:

Committee: George Bisson (Chair)

Diane Andrews (Deputy Chair)

Ann Sevier

Officers: Nigel Stone Chief Finance Officer

David Stone Corporate Services Manager

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Zoe Clewer. It was noted that Steve Trow was unable to attend the meeting due to an unavoidable commitment made prior to his membership of the Committee and the setting of the date for the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 It was noted that a dispensation issued under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 allowed members to discuss members' allowances.

3 Minutes

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

4 Public Question Time

4.1 There were no public questions on this occasion.

5 Review of Members Scheme of Allowances (SC 53/23)

- Members noted that, in March 2022, the Authority resolved to adopt a Scheme of Allowances for one year with effect from 1 April 2022 pending a review of the Scheme by an informal members' working group. The conclusions of the informal members' working group were attached to the report to the Committee.
- A full discussion followed with members concluding that the current basic allowance be retained and linked to increases at the lowest percentage rate of any future staff pay awards. The Committee also considered the current schedule of Special Responsibility Allowances and agreed that these payments should also remain unchanged.
- 5.3 The Committee then considered the schedule of subsistence allowances within Section 6 of the Scheme and agreed that these should be brought into line with current costs. Increases were agreed and are set out in the recommendations below. Members further agreed that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to monitor subsistence allowances and make periodic adjustments to the amounts to cater for inflation increases as necessary.

- In discussing the duration of the Scheme if adopted, members considered that a period of 4 years should be applicable and supported the recommendation of the informal members' working group that the Standards Committee be authorised to monitor any unexpected economic or political impacts which may affect the duration of the Scheme and report accordingly to the Authority via the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee
- In concluding the debate on this item, members noted that the recommendations of the Standards Committee would be referred to the RAPC meeting on 6 February 2023 for debate and onward recommendation to the Authority meeting on 23 March 2023 for a final decision.

Resolved, that

- 1. the draft Scheme of Allowances as set out in Annex 2 to the report be adopted from 1 April 2023, subject to the amendments set out below:
- (a) The schedule of subsistence allowances as set out in Section 6 of the Scheme be brought into line with current costs and amended as follows:

Breakfast – change from £5.20 to £7.00

Lunch – change from £7.20 to £10.00

Tea – change from £2.85 to £4.00

Dinner – change from £9.00 to £15.00

Overnight stay – change from £90.00 to £120.00 per night

Incidental expenses – change from £4.20 per night, £16.80 per week to £5.00 per night, £20.00 per week

- (b) The Chief Finance Officer to be authorised to monitor subsistence allowances and make periodic adjustments to the amounts to cater for inflation increases as necessary.
- 2. The current basic allowance of £2,132 pa be retained and linked to increases at the lowest percentage rate of any future staff pay awards
- 3. The duration of the Scheme, if adopted, be for a period of 4 years with the Standards Committee being authorised to monitor any unexpected economic or political impacts which may affect the duration of the Scheme and report accordingly to the Authority via the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee

Voting: Unanimous

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The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.	
Chairman	Date