

RAPC 540/24

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 3 JUNE 2024

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Report by: Jim Mitchell, Access and Learning Manager (New Forest Voices' Lead)

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee members with the proposed draft of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the Authority. Following comments at the Committee meeting, Officers will make any necessary changes before seeking the approval for the final policy at the next full Authority meeting.
- 1.2 The new Policy is designed for everyone within, and interacting with, the Authority, including our Members.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Since the establishment of our core Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) workstream in 2020, under the banner of 'New Forest Voices', we have delivered actions both internally within our organisation and externally throughout the National Park. Recognition internally has increased year-on-year (as evidenced by officer feedback and through direct questions in the staff survey), and the Authority's work with under-represented groups has also grown too.
- 2.2 In early 2023, in accordance with best practice, the New Forest Voices group felt the time was right to update our suite of EDI-related policies and procedures into a clearer, singular primary document. A small subgroup set about drafting the policy, utilising documents and expertise from national guidance, other local organisations/councils and from within the wider protected landscapes family.
- 2.3 The draft policy was then refined by the whole New Forest Voices group, which contains representatives from across the Authority's teams, and ultimately sent out in early 2024 for a formal four-week staff and union consultation.

- 2.4 The consultation feedback was very positive and the vast majority of the suggestions given have now been incorporated into the document. Each person that provided a consultation response has been contacted directly about how their feedback was considered/used.
- 2.5 Officers are now seeking the input from members of the Committee on the draft policy. Any comments will be incorporated into the document over the coming weeks and a final version will be added to the agenda of the next full Authority to seek final approval for it. Prior to formal adoption, Officers will fully consider the appropriate method(s) of communicating it back to wider staff and have already approached a number of specialist training providers to run some staff/member EDI workshops later this year.

3 Recommendation

That members consider the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (attached as Annex 1) and, subject to any changes agreed, recommend it for approval at the next full Authority meeting

Papers:

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| NFNPA/RAPC 540/24 | Cover paper |
| NFNPA/RAPC 540/24 Annex 1: | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy |

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Equality and Diversity Implications:

This policy is key to our current and future EDI work. It clearly sets out how we will ensure equitable treatment for all by our Authority, how we strive to be an organisation where diversity is celebrated and inclusion/belonging is felt by everyone.