

A.2.4 Standards and Appeals Committee Terms of Reference

The Localism Act 2011 requires Northumberland National Park Authority to make local arrangements for setting a member Code of Conduct and for dealing with any complaints made regarding this code. In addition, the Authority requires a process, separate from the Executive (i.e. the staff and management), for resolving staff complaints. Northumberland National Park Authority has determined that both these needs are best delivered through a combined member Standards and staffing Appeals Committee.

An “independent person”*, who is neither a member nor co-opted member of the Authority, will be appointed to provide advice to both the Standards and Appeals Committee and Monitoring Officer. The tenure of this appointment will be three years.

The Standards and Appeals Committee is delegated to:

- Promote and proactively maintain high standards of conduct for members;
- Help members follow the Authority’s Code of Conduct;
- Advise the Authority on the adoption or revision of the Authority’s Code of Conduct;
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Authority’s Code of Conduct;
- Arrange to train members on matters relating to the Authority’s Code of Conduct;
- Receive complaints about members at the appropriate stage;
- Conduct hearings into complaints about members;
- Investigate or comment on any matters relating to ethical standards referred to it by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer;
- Undertake its own communication activity; and
- Carry out such other functions as the Authority considers appropriate which will include hearing appeals regarding Monitoring Officer decisions on granting member dispensations from the operation of the Code of Conduct.

In relation to staffing appeals the Standards and Appeals Committee is delegated to:

- Hear and decide upon any issue relating to discipline, capability or redundancy of staff, any grievance issue and any other issue relating to a dispute over conditions of service;
- Hear and decide upon any appeal by a member of staff (except the Chief Executive) against a decision by an officer to discipline the member of staff including any decision to give a formal warning or to dismiss the staff member for any reason;
- Hear and make decisions upon any appeal by a member of staff (except the Chief Executive) against a decision made by the Authority or an officer as to his or her selection for redundancy;
- Hear and decide upon any grievance which a member of staff holds and which has not been settled to the satisfaction of the member of staff at officer level; and
- Carry out such other functions as the Authority considers appropriate which will include hearing appeals regarding politically restricted posts.

The Standards and Appeals Committee will undertake its functions where specified in the appropriate policies and procedures produced or adopted by the Authority for the purposes of resolving disputes or grievances. In the absence of any such procedures the Committee will ensure the procedures it does adopt are fair between the parties to the dispute or grievance and are consistent with any legal requirements.

Membership

Total membership	5
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Secretary of State appointees (National and Parish)	3
Local Authority appointees (Northumberland County Council)	2

Quorum	3
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(*The independent person is able to attend all meetings and hearings dealing with the member code of conduct as an observer).

Term of Appointment	Annually
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Where appropriate the Authority's human resources advisers, monitoring officer and legal advisers shall provide support to the Committee.

Meetings will normally be held in public, as required on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with Section 100E(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. In the case of complaints made against members of the National Park Authority and staff hearings, the Committee will meet in private and in public as stipulated by national guidance, statute and best practice. Agenda and reports will be made available in accordance with Section 100E(1) of the Local Government Act 1972

Meetings to be held as required

Note:

- i. The Committee will appoint a Chairman and Deputy Chairman from its membership.
- ii. No member who has previously been actively involved in the consideration of a particular case shall sit on a hearing which considers that case.
- iii. Members of the Authority holding senior office (i.e. Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Review Group Chairman and Development Management Chairman) are excluded from being members of the Standards and Appeals Committee as they are likely to be conflicted-out on a high proportion of the hearings.