

## **Report 6 : Taking Forward Governance Changes**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to agree plans for taking forward the agreed recommendations of the 2022 Members Task and Finish Group on Governance.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Authority is recommended to:

- a. Establish an Appointments Committee in order to take forward the agreed recommendations of the 2022 Task and Finish Group on Governance.
- b. Agree the membership of the newly created Appointments Committee.

### **3. Implications**

- a. Financial: None
- b. Equalities: Some of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which the proposed Appointments Committee will carry forward aim to enhance opportunities for wider and more diverse involvement in the governance of the Authority.
- c. Link to Business Plan: The recommendations in this report aim to address Aim 6 of the Business Plan – An Organisation Fit for the Future.

### **4. Background**

- a. At its meeting on 16 March 2022 the Authority appointed a Task and Finish Group to review the number and make up of membership of Northumberland National Park Authority. The aim was to seek a locally appropriate response to the findings set out in the Defra response to the Landscapes Review which was published on 15 January 2022.
- b. The Governance Task and Finish (T&F) Group met as a Working Group six times between April and July 2022 and at the Full Authority Meeting held on 23 September 2022, they presented their findings and recommendations. At this meeting members resolved:
  - (i) To embed Member recruitment, development, and progression opportunities within the Business Plan and integrated within overall cultural and organisational learning commitments and ambitions for a more diverse and inclusive Park.
  - (ii) To agree the development of a skills matrix for the Authority Board based on the needs identified by the Business Plan, to keep this skills matrix updated as required and to undertake regular skills audits of members to identify the need for skills in new members or co-opted members.
  - (iii) To have a specific focus between 2023 and 2025 of involving younger people under the age of 30 in governance progression opportunities, including co-

option of younger people interested in gaining skills and knowledge of Governance processes.

- (iv) To develop opportunities within current Northumberland County Council (NCC) and Authority processes to meet the necessary skills sets, knowledge and experience required by the Park in active recruitment of NCC Members.
- (v) To encourage a better understanding of the Park and the role of the Authority for Parish Councils within its boundaries so that the Authority may gain the participation of Parish representatives with the necessary skills sets, knowledge and experience required of its Members.

#### **5. The proposed establishment of an Appointments Committee**

- a. Members agreed to keep the number of members of the Authority at 18, however in doing so sought to match the skills and experience of members with the needs of the Board and agreed to provide opportunities to enhance the skills and representation of the Board through co-option.
- b. In order to move forward the agreed proposals ongoing judgements and decisions will be required on an agreed skills matrix, on requesting specific skills from appointing bodies and in agreeing the nature and timing of secondments to the Board. It is proposed that an Appointments Committee could undertake this work on behalf of the Board and prepare decisions for Board approval.
- c. The appointments committee would:
  - (i) Undertake a skills audit.
  - (ii) Map findings from the skills audit and undertake a skills gap analysis.
  - (iii) Work with the CEO to communicate with Defra, NCC and Parish councils regarding the recruitment of skills.
  - (iv) Oversee the appraisal of members and identify development and progression.
  - (v) Oversee the provision of wider secondment or shadow opportunities.
  - (vi) Work with the Engagement and Education team to design youth development opportunities for those under the age of 30.
- d. If acceptable the above list would form the initial terms of reference of the appointments committee.

#### **6. The membership and representation on the Appointments Committee**

- a. Proposed membership of the Appointments Committee is proposed as three members plus the Chair of the Authority. Members may want to consider if representation on the Committee should be one from each of the appointing groups of Council, Parish and Secretary of State.
- b. Members are asked to consider prior to the meeting their interest in serving on the Appointments Committee and if the establishment of a committee is

endorsed, nominations and appointments to the committee will be considered at the meeting.

## **7. Conclusions**

- a. Members are asked to agree to consider the recommendation to establish an Appointments Committee in order to take forward the recommendations agreed at the meeting on 23 September 2022.
- b. Members are asked to agree the membership and representation of the Appointments Committee and appoint members to the Committee.

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Background papers: None