Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Item 6

1 October 2024

Co-option of young Members

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the co-option of young people to the Authority's Finance and Resources Committee, approve a role description and agree the level of remuneration.

Recommendations

2. That Members

   (i) agree to appoint two co-opted young members to the Authority's Finance and Resources Committee;
   (ii) approve the role description at the **Appendix**; and
   (iii) agree that the level of remuneration be set at the basic rate of allowance for Members.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

   - Corporate Plan Objective 32:

   Operate Governance arrangements that are fit for purpose, as reported through the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report.

Background

4. The Europarc Youth manifesto was adopted by the Authority in December 2018. It committed the Authority to a number of actions that were relevant to our work/objectives. In the last few months, a re-fresh of the manifesto has been undertaken which has involved the Senior Managers of the Authority and both the former and current Chair of the Authority. The Authority is keen to increase its diversity of Members where possible and listen to what young people have to say on the big issues facing the Authority.

5. To include a younger perspective in decision-making, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) undertook a targeted recruitment of younger people as co-opted Members of their Policy and Resources Committee. Initially recruited for one year, this was extended to 4 year terms in line with their other co-opted Members. Co-opted Members are paid a basic allowance and can claim travel and other reasonable expenses.

6. It is therefore proposed that the Authority follow the tried and tested approach which has proved successful at SDNPA and co-opt two young members to the Finance and Resources Committee for an initial two-year period.

Proposals for co-option

7. Co-optees may not be appointed to a Committee whose function is to regulate or control the finances of the Authority. Clarification has been sought from the s151 Officer, who has confirmed that, in their opinion, the Finance and Resources Committee is not the ultimate authority for the regulation and control of the Authority's finances, which rests with the Authority.

8. Individuals considered for co-option must not be disqualified from membership and co-opted members would be expected to abide by the Authority's Member Code of Conduct. A Member co-opted to a NPA has no right to vote.

9. In addition to participating in meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee, co-optees will be expected to be involved in the more informal, structures of the Authority. For example, they will be invited to attend policy development forums. Co-opted members will make presentations and will be invited to attend Authority meetings as observers and invited to speak in relation to topics where they have a particular interest or expertise.

10. Co-optees will also play an important role in advocating and championing the National Park, helping us to reach audiences that we currently find it difficult to address. Such an approach will run alongside existing consultative and engagement methods. A role description has been developed to reflect the requirements of the role which can be found in the **Appendix**.

11. On a related matter, during the writing of this paper, the Chair and Deputy received notification from Government about a Boardroom Apprentice Scheme that is being promoted across public sector bodies. This is something officers examined a few months ago as part of the consideration of this issue. Our conclusion at that time was that it was not the best vehicle to deliver our ambitions. However, in light of the change of Government, we will take the opportunity to re-examine the scheme.

Remuneration

12. It is proposed that the co-opted members are paid the same basic allowance as Members to reflect not only parity with Members but also to reflect the expectations and requirements of the role.

Next steps

13. The Director of Corporate Services has liaised with a number of local universities which will advertise the opportunity to current students and their alumni. Local employers will also be contacted and asked to advertise the opportunity. The Authority's Learning and Engagement Team will circulate details of the opportunity through their contacts and channels. The Communications Team will also assist to attract the target audience through social media channels.

14. The recruitment process will take place over the coming months with Members then asked to approve the appointment of recommended candidates at a future Authority meeting.

Financial Implications

15. Co-opted members will be paid an annual allowance and be able to claim travel and other reasonable expenses.

Legal Implications

16. None.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

17. An equality impact assessment has been completed.

Conclusion

18. The Authority is aiming to co-opt two young Members to increase the diversity of voices on the Finance and Resources Committee and who can influence our decision making. Our objective is to bring views from communities, sectors or groups whose voices are not often heard in our discussions. These include but are not limited to young people and people from under represented communities who are often users of the National Park but are not well represented in our formal structures.

David Butterworth	**Clare Burrows**
Chief Executive	**Director of Corporate Services**

Appendix - Co-opted young Members – role description

Purpose of the role

- Complement, inform and challenge - rather than replace - the role of appointed Members, who remain accountable to the Authority and are ultimately responsible for decision-making.
- Support good governance and broadening the range of voices involved in the debate about key issues.
- Co-optees may play specific roles and may be appointed because they have particular expertise or experience that is not well represented on the Authority by other means.
- Co-optees would also play an important role in advocating and championing the National Park, helping us to reach new, wider, and diverse audiences. Such an approach would run alongside existing consultative and engagement methods.

Key expectations of co-opted Members

Co-opted members are expected to:

- participate in meetings of the Finance & Resources Committee and policy development forums
- attend National Park Authority meetings and other member events
- give presentations or specific inputs as requested to meetings, working groups or workshops
- provide input and expertise to assist the Finance & Resources Committee in its work
- adhere to and promote the Members' Code of Conduct to encourage the highest standards of behaviour in public office
- represent and act in the best interests of the Authority and in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders and other protocols
- attend an annual meeting with the Chair of the Authority and Chief Executive to discuss their experience and performance
- connect and champion the Authority and National Park in the wider community within and beyond the National Park's boundaries
- champion diversity and inclusion
- provide occasional updates on their experiences in the staff newsletter