

29 September 2026

Co-opted Young Members

Purpose of the Report

1. To extend the term of office of Katie Norgate, co-opted young Member and to commence recruitment to co-opt another young person to the Authority's Finance and Resources Committee.

Recommendations

2. That Members resolve to:
 - (i) extend the term of office of Katie Norgate, co-opted young Member until 31 December 2028; and
 - (ii) commence the recruitment to appoint another co-opted young Member to the Authority's Finance and Resources Committee;

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 Report.

Background

4. In December 2024, the Authority appointed two young people (Katie Norgate and Zac Anderson) to its Finance and Resources Committee to bring the voices of young people into our discussions. The introduction of these 'co-opted' Members was part of a wider programme of activity to give effect to the Europarc Youth Manifesto. It was subsequently embedded in the Authority's Statement on Youth Participation, which was agreed by Members in December 2025.
5. Both Katie and Zac have enjoyed their time at the Authority and have been actively involved in the following meetings and events since their appointment:
 - Finance and Resources Committee meetings and policy development forums
 - Authority meetings
 - Stakeholder engagement session for new CEO recruitment

- Member training and development programme including staff development day
- Ranger day in National Park
- Consultees on Youth Participation Statement
- Volunteering with the Learning and Education Team
- CEO webinar presentation
- Annual review meeting with the Chair of the Authority and Director of Corporate Services
- Youth conference hosted by NYM NPA
- Europarc Youth Soil Camp in Reims, France
- NPUK Conference

Proposal for extension of term of office

6. Both Katie and Zac have been provisionally invited to extend their terms of office for a further two-years (subject to Member approval). Unfortunately, Zac is unable to commit to an extension due to work commitments but Katie is keen to continue her role.
7. There are significant benefits in retaining Katie's experience and knowledge as a co-opted young Member for a further two-year period to ensure continuity in the role and to enable additional support for a new co-opted young Member.

Proposals for further co-option

8. Members will recall that co-optees may not be appointed to a Committee whose function is to regulate or control the finances of the Authority. The s151 Officer, 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.
9. Consideration has also been given to the appointment of a co-opted young Member to Audit and Review Committee. After much consideration, this option is not considered appropriate because co-opting an additional Member to Audit and Review Committee would increase its size. This would be contrary to CIPFA good practice guidance which recommends a maximum of eight Members to help ensure that Audit Committees remains effective. In addition, pending new regulations will require Local Authorities to appoint at least one independent Member to their Audit Committee to bring additional knowledge and expertise to support the Committee. The primary role of Audit and Review Committee is to scrutinise and provide assurance that the Authority is delivering its objectives and meeting governance, financial and risk management responsibilities. There is generally less opportunity for Members to influence the Authority's strategic direction and policy development.
10. 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.

11. Given the success with Katie and Zac it is proposed to recruit a further young person to Finance and Resources Committee for a two-year term when Zac's term of office ends in December 2026. The role description is attached as **Annex**.

Next steps

12. The opportunity will be widely advertised including on Handshake which promotes the opportunity to current students and graduates. Local employers will also be contacted and asked to advertise the opportunity. The Authority's Learning and Engagement Team will circulate details through their contacts and channels. The Communications Team will also assist to attract the target audience through social media channels. If successful, Members will be asked to approve the appointment of a recommended candidate at the December Authority meeting.

Financial Implications

13. Co-opted members are paid the same basic allowance as Members and are able to claim travel and other reasonable expenses. There is provision within the existing budget for two co-opted young Members.

Legal Implications

14. None, co-option to the Committee proposed is lawful.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

15. The co-option of young Members strengthens the Authority's EDI position and demonstrates the Authority's commitment in this area. The equality impact assessment completed for the recruitment and appointment process has identified no specific positive or negative impacts.

Conclusion

16. The Authority aims to co-opt a new young Member to increase the diversity of perspective on the Finance and Resources Committee. The 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 decision-making structures.

Clare Burrows
Director of Corporate Services

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