

NFNPA 545/18

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING – 22 MARCH 2018

REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Report by Julia Mutlow, Monitoring Officer and David Stone, Corporate Services Manager

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The NPA must adopt a new Scheme of Members' Allowances to run from 1 April 2018 onwards. As Members may recall, the adoption of a scheme of allowances is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations). The NPA is required to adopt a Scheme annually, but may set allowances for up to four years if linked to a suitable index. Under the Regulations the NPA may, but need not, appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to assist it with arriving at a Scheme of Allowances, but in any event the NPA must have regard to the findings of any IRP convened by any of the local authorities that appoint members to the NPA. Although the Regulations do not specifically require Members to have regard to whether or not those authorities adopted their IRP's recommendations in full, this is also of interest and relevance in considering the NPA's Scheme.
- 1.2 The NPA last adopted a Scheme of Allowances with effect from 1 April 2014 for four years, which will accordingly expire on 31 March 2018. The annual Basic Allowance at the time of the adoption of the existing Scheme was £1,824.96 and this figure has increased to £1,883.69 in line with periodic staff cost of living pay awards, as provided in the Scheme. This report proposes that a Scheme of Allowances be adopted that retains the existing allowance of £1,883.69 indexed to any NFNPA staff cost of living pay awards applied over the four years of the scheme from April 2018.

2. Recommendation of the Standards Committee with regard to a new scheme of allowances

- 2.1 At its meeting on 2 October 2017, the Standards Committee formed the view that, as little has changed over the last few years in terms of the work required of Members, and the NPA lacks the resources to convene an IRP, it would not be appropriate or necessary to convene a panel. The Committee considered the recommendations of the IRPs convened by the following local authorities that appoint members to the NPA: Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Wiltshire Council, and Test Valley Borough Council. Where these authorities have not recently appointed an IRP the recommendations of the last IRP convened by that authority were attached for reference by the Committee. The report considered by the Standards Committee containing the above information can be found on the Authority's website on the link below.

http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/438/standards_committee

2.2 Annual allowances paid by local authorities which appoint members to the Authority

The current annual allowances paid by those local authorities which have members appointed to the Authority are set out in the table below:

| Local Authority | Basic Annual Allowance (£) |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Hampshire County Council | £12,003 |
| New Forest District Council | £6,150 |
| Wiltshire Council | £12,940 |
| Test Valley Borough Council | £6,581 |

2.3 Other NPAs annual allowances

Whilst there is no requirement to have regard to allowances paid by other National Park Authorities nor to any IRPs convened by them, this information may be of interest, particularly in respect of the English National Parks, and officers have accordingly canvassed the other NPAs. Of the English NPAs (different rules apply in Wales), none have recently appointed their own IRPs. The basic allowances currently payable are as set out below:

| National Park | Basic Annual Allowance (£) |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Broads | 1,046 |
| Dartmoor | 1,644 |
| Exmoor | 2,632.80 |
| Lake District | 3,000 |
| Northumberland | 1,734 |
| North York Moors | 2,255.52 |
| Peak District | 1,789 |
| South Downs | 2,950 |
| Yorkshire Dales | 3,058 |

3. NPA Scheme of Allowances

- 3.1 Having considered all relevant matters including the recommendations of the appointing authorities' IRPs, the Standards Committee arrived at a draft Scheme which it has recommended to the full Authority for adoption from 1 April 2018. The draft Scheme is attached as **Annex 1**, and is based on the basic allowance as currently payable (£1,883.69). The Committee recommends that Members adopt the Scheme for a period of four years (the maximum allowable under the Regulations) from April 2018, to be indexed to any increases in staff pay if applicable. If Members decide to choose this option, it should be noted that, if for any reason it becomes necessary to do so, the Scheme may be amended at any time or revoked in full (with effect from the beginning of a financial year), so a four year Scheme does not tie the Authority to these allowances if financial circumstances should change during the relevant period.

4. Recommendation

That, as per the Standards Committee recommendation to the Authority, the draft scheme of allowances attached as Annex 1 to the report be adopted for four years with effect from 1 April 2018 and that the allowances be increased in line with any annual NFNPA staff cost of living pay award applied from that date.