

## NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### AUTHORITY MEETING – 22 MARCH 2018

#### REQUESTS FOR JOINT WORKING

**Report by:** Alison Barnes, Chief Executive

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that we have received a request from the New Forest District Council about increased strategic engagement between members of the Council and the Authority and the potential to improve working arrangements not only around shared services but other opportunities where there are common interests. This paper asks the Authority to consider the procedures and criteria by which this and any other new shared services, collaborative work or joint engagement opportunities should be assessed.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Decisions to offer to or share services with other organisations need to be made jointly by Members and the executive. Officers therefore would like to clarify firstly how Members would wish to be consulted on such matters, and secondly, the criteria by which this and future opportunities would be assessed and judged.
- 2.2 The request from New Forest District Council received on 23 February is attached as **Annex 1**.

#### **3 Draft Procedures and terms of reference**

- 3.1 The Resources, Audit and Performance Committee meeting on 5 March 2018 considered a proposal to establish a Joint Working Scrutiny Group for Members to discuss and evaluate any significant joint working requests that are referred to it by the Chief Executive and Authority Chairman. The Committee resolved to recommend to the Authority meeting on 22 March that a Group be set up by the Authority to consider relevant proposals and requests received and present options and recommendations to the Authority. Officers were also asked to work up terms of reference for the Group to be considered at the Authority meeting.
- 3.2 In terms of Section 5.6 of the Authority's Standing Orders, the Authority may appoint working groups or other informal groups on such terms as the Authority may decide. As the proposed Group is not intended to be a decision-making body but rather a forum for generating options and proposals, the Authority may wish to consider setting up an informal working group under this provision of the Standing Orders as it offers a less restrictive mode of operation allowing a greater degree of flexibility around membership, public access, agenda deadlines, etc. Attached as **Annex 2** are

the suggested set up and terms of reference of the Group if members support this approach.

- 3.3 The Group would only meet as and when required, and there would be no minimum number of meetings per year. Options and recommendations of the Panel will be shared within the Members' Bulletin and reported back for any decisions required to the Authority via the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee.

### **Panel membership**

- 3.4 It is suggested that the membership of the Group comprise the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority and RAPC Committee with executive support from the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and HR (as required) with technical advice, as appropriate, being provided by relevant officers or external expertise. Other members of the Authority can be included as *ad hoc* members of the Group at the discretion of the Group Chairman – these members will be able to participate fully in the debate and vote on the proposals and options for the duration of their appointment on the Group. The Chairman will be appointed by the members of the Group at its first meeting.

### **Assessment criteria**

- 3.5 The Group would also require criteria by which joint working proposals could be assessed. Below are some suggested criteria and key questions which would provide a business case and framework for assessing proposals, albeit that these are not intended to be exhaustive:
1. Is it legally within our remit?
  2. Is it good for the New Forest National Park?
    - a) What outcomes would be supported?
    - b) What instigated the proposal and why?
    - c) What are the benefits or otherwise of the proposed joined-up working?  
Are there other options?
  3. Does it support our Purposes and Duty as an organisation?
    - a) Does it further our Purposes and/or Duty?
    - b) Does it conflict with any legislation or any of our policies?
    - c) Does it affect just the NFNPA or is there a wider national impact or precedent?
  4. Is it good for the Authority?
    - a) Does it support our strategic direction and culture as an Authority and will it improve our performance
    - b) Are there any other comparative options/opportunities which may be more beneficial to the Authority?
    - c) How well understood and what are the risks and opportunities e.g. to members and staff, reputational risk
    - d) What are the operational implications – conflict of interest; resource allocation; clarity of remits; timescale and exit strategy?

#### **4.0 Recommendation:**

**It is recommended that a Joint Working Scrutiny Group be established, as set out in Annex 2, to scrutinise arrangements for any joint working proposals and report back to the Resources Audit and Performance Committee for consideration and onward recommendation to the Authority.**

#### **Papers:**

NFNPA 546/18                      Cover paper  
NFNPA 546/18 Annex 1: Letter from Bob Jackson, NFDC Chief Executive  
NFNPA 546/18 Annex 2: Proposed set up and terms of reference of the Group

#### **Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising out of this report.

#### **Contact:**

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