

## **9. APPOINTMENTS PROCESS PANEL (A.111/JRS)**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. This report considers proposals to establish a panel of members to facilitate appointments to Committee Membership and various positions considered at the Authority's Annual Meeting. The report has been initiated by members and Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

### **Key Issues**

- A number of Authority Members have identified a need to change the current arrangements for making appointments at the Annual meeting.
- Although the Authority did not endorse the approach, a Member working group has previously suggested that the appointment of a Panel of Members would be an effective and efficient way of preparing draft proposals for approval by the Authority.
- The final decision on these appointments remains with the Authority and cannot be delegated. A Panel would therefore be helping to draw up a list of candidates for consideration by Members at the Annual Meeting.

### **Recommendations**

2.
  1. **That an Appointments Process Panel be established on the terms and with the functions set out in the report.**
  2. **To appoint individual members to the Appointments Process Panel at the meeting of the Authority to be held on 24 May 2013.**
  3. **To confirm the appointment principles as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.**

### **How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. In the 2012-15 PDNPA Corporate objectives objective 11 is to be a well-run public body with proportionate and effective ways of working, delivering excellent customer service and living our values.

This report contributes to this as it contains proposals which seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements relating to meetings of the Authority and its Committees.

### **Background**

4. At the Authority Meeting on 4 February 2011 the Authority considered recommendations from the Governance Review Task Team which proposed that the Authority set up a panel of Members to facilitate appointments made at the Annual meeting, including appointments to the positions of Authority Chair and Deputy Chair; Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees, Membership of Committees and the appointment of Member Representatives.
5. At the time the Authority decided not to pursue this option and appointments at the 2011 and 2012 Annual Meeting were made at the meeting in the usual manner. A number of Members have expressed dissatisfaction about the current arrangements and have

suggested that the lengthy discussions at these meetings is not a good use of Member time and gives a poor impression of the Authority to new Members and observers. The Authority is therefore asked to revisit these proposals.

## **Proposals**

### **Appointments Process Panel**

6. It is proposed that an Appointments Process Panel of four members be established. Its purpose would be to facilitate decision-making at the AGM, so that Members can offer service in the areas of most interest to them, and the Authority can make best use of Members' skills and experience.
7. The Panel would be established on the following terms:
  - membership to be two councillors, one Secretary of State member and one Parish member (Members seeking appointment to leadership roles Chairs, Deputy and Vice Chairs are excluded)
  - membership to be chosen by the respective groups when required and any vacancies filled without the need for a decision of an Authority meeting.
  - the panel to appoint its own Chair
  - officer support will only be provided for the initial setting up of the process but after that the panel will be responsible for administering its own meetings and work
8. The Panel will:
  - invite, receive and consider expressions of interests from members in the annual appointments
  - apply the principles to identify any issues that conflict with the agreed principles
  - contact relevant members to discuss and resolve issues if possible
  - compile a list of candidates for the appointments for consideration at the Annual meeting.
9. The Strategic Advisory Group have considered and endorsed these proposals but wanted to make it clear that the Panel would add value by proactively speaking to Members, seeking expressions of interest and compiling a list of those members who have expressed an interest in a particular position. The Panel would not be making a recommendation or putting forward a preferred option. Compiling a list of candidates would not prevent further nominations being received on the day at the annual meeting.
10. It is expected that the process will start early in the year with any adjustment made to the timetable as a result of any consequences following any local council elections in May. It is proposed that the process be piloted for the appointments to be considered at the Annual meeting in July 2013 after which the Panel can review the process and make any necessary improvements.

## **Principles**

11. In developing proposals for consideration at the Annual Meeting the Panel will be asked to have regard to the following principles previously agreed by the Authority (Principles 1 to 9 were agreed by Authority on 17 December 2010 and 10 and 11 on 4 February 2011):
  1. Democratic process remains essential

2. Any Member should continue to be eligible to stand for election for any post, and all Members should continue to have the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidates
  3. The chosen system should foster confidence, unity and trust within the Authority
  4. All Members should be assumed to be equally committed to the objectives of the National Park, and to have a contribution to make across the full range of the Authority's work.
  5. All Members should be considered equally for all appointments but need to maintain the overall balance between different categories of members.
  6. Anyone holding office should be seen to act on behalf of all Members in the interests of the Authority, and not be allied with one particular group or interest.
  7. All appointments should be time limited with a stipulated maximum continuous period of holding any one office to 4 continuous terms.
  8. Responsibility of nominated members to demonstrate to colleagues their interest and potential.
  9. Responsibility of nominated members to show that they understand what will be required of them.
  10. That we should strive to achieve a similar balance across Member Representatives and outside body appointments if possible although it is recognised this may not always be achievable and the main aim is to appoint members who have demonstrated interest and potential.
  11. That newly appointed members will not be considered for a Chair or Deputy/Vice Chair position in their first year of office'.
12. Below is an extract from Part 1 of the Authority's Standing Orders which refers to the process for appointing the Chair and Deputy Chair. The Panel should also have regard to this when considering appointments.

#### **ELECTION OF CHAIR & DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE AUTHORITY**

- 1.4
- (1) The Authority shall at its Annual meeting elect a Chair and a Deputy Chair who shall continue in office until immediately after the election of the Chair and Deputy Chair at the next Annual Meeting unless they resign their respective office, or resign their membership of the Authority.
  - (2) The election to the offices of Chair and Deputy Chair shall normally be such that one of the offices shall be held by a Council Member and the other office held by a Secretary of State Member.
  - (3) On a casual vacancy occurring in the office of Chair or Deputy Chair of the Authority the vacancy shall be filled by the appointment by the Authority of one of its Members at their next meeting and the person so appointed shall hold office until the date upon which the person in

whose place he is appointed would regularly have retired.

13. Although these principles and Standing Order 1.4 have been previously agreed and are on the whole followed by the Authority in making appointments at the annual meeting, they do not prevent the Authority from subsequently consciously deciding to make an appointment contrary to them. This has occurred in the past where because of the skills and experience of potential candidates the Authority chose to select Members appointed by the Secretary of State as Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee.

### **Appointment to Committees**

14. During the past year Members have expressed some concern that at the 2012 Annual Meeting the Authority appointed fewer Members on Audit Resources and Performance Committee than on Planning Committee. At the time the difference was needed to make sure that the Local Authority and Secretary of State balance was maintained, following the appointment of Chairs and Deputy/Vice Chairs and the allocation of seats to constituent councils.
15. To resolve this it is proposed that at the 2013 Annual Meeting, if the Member appointed by a local authority is appointed to the role of Chair of the Authority, Deputy Chair, Chair of Audit Resources and Performance Committee or Chair or Vice Chair of Planning Committee, it will be assumed that they have taken up the place on Planning Committee allocated to their appointing authority.
16. This approach will make sure that we maintain the principle that half the membership sits on one committee and half the membership on the other while maintain the provisions of the Environment Act which requires that the allocation of places on Committees to Local Authority and Secretary of State Members are in the same proportions as the membership of the full Authority. The preparatory work carried out by the Panel proposed in this report will support this process.

### **Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

17. **Financial:**  
The process will be led and administered by members at no additional staffing cost to the Authority. A member of the Democratic Services Team will be available to attend any meetings and provide advice and guidance to the Panel.
18. **Risk Management:**  
There are no apparent risks. All members will have the opportunity to seek appointments to all available positions.
19. **Sustainability:**  
There are no issues to highlight.
20. **Consultation**  
The management team's previous response to this proposal is that appointments are a matter for members and any process cannot be an extra burden on staff when resources and staffing levels in this area have been reduced. The principle of a newly appointed member not assuming a leadership role in their first year may bar experienced skilled members.
21. **Background papers** (not previously published) – None

**Appendices** - None

**Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

Jason Spencer, Democratic Services Manager, 7 March 2013