

11. BOARDROOM APPRENTICE PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

For Members to consider the opportunity for the Authority to become a Host Board as part of the Boardroom Apprentice programme. Becoming part of the programme may help the Authority to increase diversity of its membership.

2. Context

2.1 The Boardroom Apprentice scheme is a 12 month board learning, development and placement programme which aims to give interested persons practical experience of what being a member of a board involves. Host Boards are from various organisations including public sector arms length bodies, Government departmental boards, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. The host board provides the practical experience of taking part in meetings whilst the programme operators support this with 8 learning days to increase knowledge and understanding of relevant topics including governance, communications and partnerships.

2.2 The host board is expected to provide a Board Buddy as a mentor for the apprentice and to provide additional support beyond the meetings to help the apprentice grow and develop in their role. The payment of travel expenses for the apprentice is encouraged.

2.3 Apprentices have to apply for places and then a selection panel of former Boardroom Apprentices undertake the selection process to match them with host boards. Host boards are not involved in the selection process. There are opportunities throughout the programme where current host boards are invited to contribute to other panel discussions and share their experiences

2.4 Defra has recently been promoting this programme and encouraging National Park Authorities (NPA) to take part. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs NPA have been a host board during 2024 and other NPAs are also considering taking part. However, some NPAs have considered this programme and decided co-option of Members would work better for them. For example, Yorkshire Dales NPA has currently decided to recruit 2 co-opted Young Members instead of joining the Boardroom Apprentice programme for 2025 but may reassess this in the future. The co-option of Members to this Authority is also being investigated at present as another possible way of adding diversity to the membership.

2.5 There would be a time commitment for the Authority Member who is appointed as a Board Buddy to support the apprentice as they would be expected to meet regularly to discuss meeting papers before meetings and afterwards to consider their participation in and experience of the meeting, together with regular reviews of how the placement is working for both the apprentice and the host.

2.6 Due to the timescales of the programme for prospective hosts to apply to take part during 2025 an application has already been made for the Peak District NPA subject to confirmation by the Authority. As part of the Host application we have stated that we are looking to have an increased diversity and inclusivity of Members and to have a wider diversity of skills and knowledge available to us. If the Authority decides not to support the application it will be withdrawn.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Authority supports the application to become a host board for a Board Room Apprentice for 2025. If the Authority is matched with a suitable apprentice the Authority would also need to agree to support the apprentice by inviting them to attend all Authority and Programmes and Resources Committee

meetings as a non-voting Member, by providing a Boardroom Buddy (mentor) and by paying travel expenses incurred by the Apprentice for attending the meetings.

3.2 It is not proposed to invite the Apprentice to Planning Committee meetings, even without voting rights, as they would not be a Member appointed by official process and would not have taken part in our Planning training for Members so there could be more risk relating to decisions made by the Planning Committee.

4. Recommendations

- 1. That the application to become a Host Board for a Boardroom Apprentice for 2025 is agreed.**
- 2. That it is agreed to support any matched Apprentice by inviting them to attend meetings of the Authority and the Programmes and Resources Committee as a non-voting member. This is subject to satisfactory completion of a Memorandum of Understanding, signing up to the Members Code of Conduct, compliance with Standing Orders and completion of a register of interests.**
- 3. That a Member is selected as a Boardroom Buddy to mentor any matched Apprentice.**
- 4. That any matched Apprentice would be eligible to claim for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances as set out in Schedule 2 of the Members' Allowances Scheme when attending meetings of the Authority, Programmes and Resources Committee and any training or other events as necessary is agreed.**

5. Corporate Implications

a. Legal

A detailed memorandum of understanding (MOU) would be signed between the Host Board and the Boardroom Apprentice. This would be sent to the Host Board in advance of the Boardroom Apprentice commencing. The MOU includes an information sharing agreement, confidentiality and reflects directly back to the host board's code of practice and standard operating procedures. The Authority may also ask the Apprentice to sign a non-disclosure agreement as they would have access to some Authority confidential information as part of their role. The Apprentice would be under the same obligations as Members of the Authority and would be expected to sign up to the Authority's Member Code of Conduct, comply with Standing Orders and complete a register of interests.

b. Financial

There is no fee for the Authority to become a Host Board however, the Apprentice programme encourages the payment of travel expenses for Apprentices so the cost of this would vary based on where an Apprentice needed to travel from. Other costs would include provision of an iPad and costs of any extra training or events which the Authority may identify as being appropriate for the Apprentice to attend. Members' costs are usually covered by the Customer and Democratic Support budget so any expected increase in costs would need to be considered in budget setting.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

The proposal fits with Objective 8 of the National Park Management plan as a possible way for young people and underserved communities to be involved in shaping policies. It also fits with the Authority Plan Objective F to have best practice

governance arrangements in place as a possible way to aid diversity of the membership.

d. Risk Management

There is a risk having a Member not appointed by the usual mechanisms, however this is mitigated by the Apprentice not having voting rights at meetings and having a Member appointed as a Board Buddy to mentor them. Also, the Apprentice will be required to sign up to the Member Code of Conduct and complete a register of interests.

e. Net Zero

This does not contribute to net zero but may enable wider provision of views on net zero proposals by the Authority.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

7. Appendices

None.

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