

North York Moors National Park

22 March 2021

Item 10, Appointment of independent person to National Park Authority

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek Members' approval to extend the appointment term of the independent person.

2. Background

2.1 The role of the Independent Person was created under the Localism Act 2011 and requires Local Authorities to appoint an independent person to help to maintain high standards in local authorities.

2.2 Specifically, the Independent Person acts as an impartial source of guidance in the event of alleged breaches of their Member codes of conduct to ensure the process followed is fair. The Independent Person also provides guidance and advice to the Authority's Monitoring Officer and FRAS Committee in relation to ethical standards pertaining to the Authority, for instance, alleged misconduct. The role is not remunerated.

2.3 Following an open recruitment exercise, the National Park Authority appointed the current post holder to serve as its Independent Person in 2013. The term of office was not specified in the appointment letter.

3. Recommendations from the Committee on standards in public life

3.1 A review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CoSPL) into the framework of ethical standards in local government in early 2019 made a number of recommendations relating to the Independent Person role. Notably, it recommended that Government should amend the Localism Act 2011 to stipulate that the Independent Person be appointed for a fixed term of 2 years, renewable only once.

3.2 At the time of writing no changes have been made to the Localism Act that requires the National Park Authority to make changes to our appointment of an independent person. However, following discussion with the Monitoring Officer, Officers feel it would be appropriate to reconfirm and formalise the appointment by offering a two-year term to the current post holder, taking effect from the Authority AGM.

4. Financial and staffing implications

4.1 N/A

5. Contribution to National Park Management Plan

7.1 N/A

6. Legal and sustainability implications

- 6.1 As a free standing local authority, National Park Authorities are required to appoint an independent person. These recommendations have no legal implications other than formalising the current appointment and bringing into line with recommendations made by the CoSPL.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That Members approve the reappointment of the current post holder for a two-year period commencing from 21 June 2021.

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