EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

6 December 2016

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE (NATIONAL PARK OFFICER)

Report of the Head of Personnel and Corporate Support

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To advise Members of the recent process for the recruitment of the post of Chief Executive (National Park Officer).

RECOMMENDATION: The Authority is recommended to APPOINT Sarah Bryan as the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) with effect from a date to be agreed with the new appointee, outgoing chief executive and chairman of the Authority. Such date to be notified to all members at least two weeks in advance of it taking effect.

Legal and Equality Implications: Under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 every National Park Authority for a National Park shall secure that there is at all times an officer appointed by that authority to be responsible to the authority for the manner in which the carrying out of its different functions is co-ordinated. Before adopting an appointment, a National Park Authority is required to consult with Natural England.

The equality impact of the recommendations of this report has been assessed as follows: There are no foreseen adverse impacts on any protected groups.

Consideration has been given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and an assessment of the implications of the recommendations of this report is as follows: There are no implications for Human Rights Act.

Financial and Risk Implications: No financial or risk implications have been identified.

1. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1.1 The requirement to appoint a Chief Executive (National Park Officer) is provided by legislation and the procedure for the appointment is set out in the Authority’s Standing Orders, as appended to this report.

1.2 Following the resignation of the current Chief Executive, Dr Nigel Stone, the post was widely advertised in national and local publications.

1.3 The Authority received 70 applications for the position and six applicants were shortlisted for interview.

1.4 In line with statutory provisions, Natural England were consulted and notified of the recruitment process.

1.5 An interview procedure took place over two days (21 and 22 November 2016). This was a rigorous process comprising work-based assessment exercises and all Authority members had an opportunity to attend the presentation assessment exercise on 21 November 2016.
1.6 The process concluded with a formal interview. The interview panel comprised:
Andrea Davis (Chairman of the Authority)
Robin Milton (Deputy Chairman)
Nick Holliday (Deputy Chairman (Planning))
Steven Pugsley (Authority Member, Standards Committee Chairman and Chairman of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum)
Dr Joe Horwood (Board Member, Natural England)

1.7 I am pleased to advise that at the conclusion of the selection process the panel recommends the appointment of Sarah Bryan as Chief Executive (National Park Officer) subject to formal ratification by the Authority Committee.

1.8 Members of the Authority will be kept advised of the arrangements that will be put in place to ensure the smooth transition of responsibilities.

Rachel Oxenham
Head of Personnel and Corporate Support
December 2016

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:

Standing Orders
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(1) In this standing order the post of Chief Executive is also a reference to the holder of the post of Head of the Paid Service designated under s.41(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act, 1989 and to the post of National Park Officer as designated under the Environment Act 1995.

(2) Where the Authority proposes to appoint its Chief Executive, and it is not proposed that the appointment be made exclusively from among its existing officers, they shall

(a) draw up a statement specifying:-
   (i) the duties of the officer concerned, and
   (ii) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;

(b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it;

(c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (a) to be sent to any person on request; and

(d) consult Natural England.

(3) (1) Where a post has been advertised as provided in standing order 31(2)(b) the authority shall:

(a) interview all qualified applicants for the post, or

(b) select a short list of such qualified applicants and interview those included on the short list.

(2) Where no qualified person has applied, the Authority shall make further arrangements for advertisement in accordance with standing order 31(2)(b).

(4) Every appointment of a Chief Executive shall be made by the Authority after consultation with Natural England and in accordance with paragraph 3(14) of the Authority’s Scheme of Delegation (Personnel).