

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 APRIL 2003****REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES****Report of the Head of the Business Management****Purpose of Report:**

To inform members of the issue of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998:

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England Regulations 2003 [S1.2003 No 1021])

Financial Implications:

None at this stage

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are asked to NOTE the Regulations that have been issued.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will recall the detailed discussion at the last meeting on the draft regulations and guidance that had been issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 contained in Statutory Instrument 2003 No 1021 was made and laid before Parliament on 7 April 2003 and comes into force on 1 May 2003. The Regulations provide for a transitional period until 30 September 2003 during which new schemes of allowances may be established. From 30 September 2003 all schemes as provided for by the Regulations, need to be in place. There is therefore no need for an interim scheme as discussed at the last meeting and the allowances of the existing scheme have been updated for the effects of inflation.

2. THE EXMOOR SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE

- 2.1 Whilst the Regulations have confirmed that it is not a requirement for the Authority to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel it has already been decided on grounds of transparency and public accountability that such a Panel would be set up and this is underway. As before the Authority will decide the levels of allowances for members and in doing so will have to have regard to the recommendations of the local independent panel it has set up.

2.2 In summary the Authority is able to determine the allowances it pays to members as follows:

- annual basic allowance for each member
- annual special responsibility allowance to such members as have special responsibilities in relation to the Authority
- dependants' carer's allowance in respect of such expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants
- travelling and subsistence allowances
- annual co-optees allowance to a member in respect of attendance at conferences and meetings

It will be noted that there is no provision for the payment of an attendance allowance.

2.3 Before the beginning of each year, the Authority has to make the scheme required for the payment of the allowances set out in 2.2 above. A scheme may make provision for annual adjustment by reference to an index although the Authority must not rely on that index for longer than four years before review. The scheme also has to provide that a member, by notice in writing, can elect to forego any entitlement or part entitlement to allowances.

2.4 The Regulations provide that before the Authority makes or amends a scheme it should have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to any authorities by which any of its members are nominated. The Authority will therefore have to have regard to the review of the schemes of the four constituent local authorities which may impact or the date by which a scheme can be brought forward for consideration by the Authority.

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15 April 2003