

Amendments to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation and Adjustments to the Sign Off limits

Name of Committee	National Park Authority
Date	June 25th, 2019
Report Author	Mr Julian Atkins
Job title	Chief Executive
Contact Details	Julian.atkins@beacons-npa.gov.uk
Purpose of Report	<p>To amend to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation to take account of the new National Park Delivery Director role, changes in operational management structures, and the transition towards an Integrated Assurance Framework for Audit and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The report also requires some consequential amendments to the Authority's Financial Regulations with respect to the sign off limits proposed to ensure alignment across the two regulatory documents.</p>
Single Integrated Assessment	Proposals concern the internal administration of the Authority and are neutral in governance terms. The Changes proposed to sign off limits are likely to have a positive effect on the efficient administration of the Authority's financial affairs.
List of Enclosures	<p>Enclosure 1: Proposed changes to the Authority's Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Enclosure 2: Consequential changes to the Authority's Financial Regulations</p>
Public Interest Test	N/A
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <p>a) Approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations as set out in</p>

	<p>the report and enclosures</p> <p>b) Approve the adjustments to financial sign off limits for named Senior Officers as set out in the report</p>
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I.1 Introduction

In operating the Authority's approved Scheme of Delegation since the arrival of the Authority's new National Park Delivery Director, and following the recent operational management changes introduced at the start of March, it has become clear that there is a need to amend the Authority's Scheme of Delegation to further improve the efficiency, effectiveness and clarity of the Authority's decision-making processes.

The need to amend the Scheme of Delegation also presents an opportunity to review the financial sign off limits for key officers in light of considering what sign off limit should be appropriate for the National Park Delivery Director. This will ensure that the levels are appropriate and commensurate with the efficient and timely management of the Authority's financial affairs.

I.2 Proposals

Officers have reviewed the Scheme of Delegation currently approved and identified further improvements. It is therefore proposed that the current Scheme of Delegation (**Enclosure I**) is amended as follows:

National Park Authority

1. That Parts V, VI and VII of the Scheme (use of Authority land and property management respectively) are amended to incorporate the National Park Delivery Director and Corporate Governance Team.

Rationale: There is a need to assign clear, delegated responsibilities for the National Park Delivery Director role and the new Corporate Governance Team.

2. That the powers conferred under Part IX (submission and acceptance of grant applications) be clarified

Rationale: The work being undertaken by Policy Forum and the Leadership Group to revise the Authority's priorities requires clearer authorization arrangements in relation to grant funding applications.

3. That the Scheme of Delegation clarifies the process for considering and agreeing BBNPA involvement in and endorsement of Partnerships and Sponsorship opportunities negotiated by National Parks Partnerships LLP (NPP) on behalf of the 15 UK National Parks.

Rationale: A clear mechanism is needed to enable Chief Officers to respond to proposals from NPP quickly while also allowing Members the opportunity to call-in any proposed Partnership/Sponsorship arrangement for further discussion.

Planning Access and Rights of Way Committee

4. That the powers under Part VI of the Scheme (Definitive Map management and protection of public rights of way) be assigned to the National Park Delivery Director.

Rationale: The powers under Part VI are exercised more frequently but these are used to make decisions in relation to uncontentious Public Rights of Way matters and to discharge the Authority's obligations under the Rights of Way Delegation agreements.

Senior Officer sign off Limits

The National Park Delivery Director post does not currently have an agreed sign-off limit. The previous Chief Officer posts (Director of Countryside & Land Management and Director of Planning) had financial authority up to a limit of £50,000: half that of the Chief Executive. These limits have remained unchanged for a least the last 10 years and the need to assign a limit to the Delivery Director role presents an opportunity to review whether the limits remain appropriate and are structured accordingly. It is considered that a case also exists to increase the limits to take into account inflation in the cost of goods and services. For example, and using an average annual inflation rate of 2.5%, the purchasing power of £100,000 ten years ago is equivalent to approximately £128,000 today.

The thinking behind the governance and operational management changes introduced over the last six months is also to improve the effectiveness and focus of the Authority's delivery against its purposes and duty and ensuring that the Authority's financial sign-off arrangements are efficient and fit for purpose is an important component in order to ensure decisions and authorisations are taken at the most appropriate level.

It is therefore proposed to amend sign off limits as follows:

Job Title	Current Limit	Proposed Change
Chief Executive	£100,000 ¹	£ 125,000
National Park Delivery Director	-	£ 75,000
Finance Manager/S.151 Officer	£50,000 ^{**2}	£ 75,000
Planning Policy Manager	£10,000	£ 30,000
Natural Resources Manager	£20,000	£ 30,000
Public Engagement Manager	£10,000	£ 30,000
Sustainable Development Manager	£10,000	£ 30,000

1.3 Implications

The amendments proposed to delegated powers ensure business arrangements align with the new Chief Officer restructure.

The changes proposed to the sign off limits for Senior Officers are proposed to be permanent changes to aid the efficient operation of the Authority and the prompt payment of suppliers.

In order to effect the proposed changes to sign-off limits there is also a need to make consequential amendments to the Authority's Financial Regulations to ensure the two regulatory documents are consistent. These consequential amendments are set out in **Enclosure 2**.

1.4 Risk

Retention of the existing Scheme of Delegation will prevent timely operational decisions from being made and will restrict the ability of the Chief Executive and National Park Delivery Director to do the job and create the need to report some operational matters requiring a decision to NPA and PAROW committees unnecessarily.

The increases proposed for Senior Officer financial sign off limits take into account the impact of inflation over the last ten years and reflect the need to accommodate the new National Park

¹ Limit set for ordinary expenditure but CEO has ability to authorize larger payments previously agreed by Members (e.g. s.106 disbursements)

² Limit set at Director level to provide cover for CEO and Director posts in the event of absence/sickness etc.

Delivery Director role into the current structure. While the increases proposed are modest there is a small theoretical risk that the Authority could be exposed to officers making inappropriate purchasing decisions, however it is considered that this is unlikely. The proposed revisions in fact further empower staff, strengthen collective responsibility, and improve the efficiency of the Authority

I.5 Conclusion

The proposed amendments are considered necessary to ensure the efficient and timely operation of the Authority's business and decision-making processes.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is recommended that Members:

- b) Approve the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations as set out in the report and enclosures**
- b) Approve the adjustments to financial sign off limits for named Senior Officers as set out in the report**