

**AGENDA ITEM No. 3**

**MINUTES**

<b><u>Meeting:</u></b>	<b>National Park Authority Special Meeting</b>
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	21 January 2011
<b><u>Venue:</u></b>	Aldern House Baslow Road Bakewell Derbyshire
<b><u>Chair:</u></b>	Mr N Bajaria
<b><u>Present:</u></b>	Mr P Ancell, Clr Mrs B Beeley, Miss P Beswick, Clr Mrs J Bevan, Mr C Carr, Mr R Clarke, Clr A Favell, Clr Mrs H M Gaddum, Clr Mrs N Hawkins, Prof J Herbert, Mr G Nickolds, Mr C Pennell, Mrs K M Potter, Clr R Priestley, Clr G Purdy, Mr B Rayner, Mrs L C Roberts, Clr Mrs M Stockdale, Clr Mrs J A Twigg, Clr Mrs D Ward, Clr Mrs J Wharmby.
<b>Apologies for absence:</b>	Clr T Bagshaw, Ms P Coleman, Clr Mrs T Critchlow, Clr Mrs C G Heath, Ms S Leckie, Clr Mrs D Wilde, Clr D Woodhead.

**CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair reported that former member and Chair Clr Norman Wilson, Derbyshire County Council and former member Clr Lionel Richardson, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, had both recently died. Members and officers stood in silence as a mark of their respect.

**CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**1/11 GOVERNANCE REVIEW (A.11/RMM)**

This report asks Members to consider and agree the Authority's response to the questions raised through the national 'consultation on the governance arrangements for the National Parks and the Broads' and in doing so decide its response to the local review on the size and make up of the Authority.

At the Authority meeting in December 2010 Members agreed a set of recommendations to progress our local governance review including a proposal that a report would be submitted to this meeting on 'options for the size and make up of the Authority, reporting on any further/updated external consultations, in order to feed into the national review and the Chairs' meeting with the Minister on 27 January 2011'.

The national review sought responses on six key questions as follows:

- a) whether the membership of NPAs (National Park Authorities), both the size and composition, should be changed
- b) whether the selection process for all categories of members of NPAs can be improved
- c) whether there should be a limit on the length of time which local authority and parish members can serve, and a reduction in the maximum term for the Secretary of State 'national' members (currently 10 years)

- d) whether the current membership and structure of consultative committees, groups and forums can be strengthened so as to better achieve 'Big Society' benefits
- e) what additional measure NPAs can take to strengthen the links and engagement with their local communities on a variety of issues including planning
- f) whether there are any other ways in which the NPAs can improve their effectiveness and accountability

Appendices 3 & 4 of the report set out a summary of the consultation responses received by both the Authority and Defra.

The Director summarised at the meeting the additional consultation responses that had been received after the report had been finalised.

As there were several models to consider for the size and make up of the Authority the voting procedure as outlined in paragraph 10 of the report was agreed with the proviso that if over 50% of the members present voted in favour of one of the models in any one round then no further voting on the remaining models would be necessary.

On being proposed and seconded and supported by the required number of members it was agreed that a recorded vote would be taken on the votes for the future size and make up of the Authority.

Appendix 2 of the report detailed the proposed responses to the questions (b)-(f) raised in the national governance review consultation. In considering each of these responses the meeting debated, amended and agreed the final responses to be made on behalf of the Authority.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the status quo on the current membership number and composition of the Authority remain.**

**For the Motion** Mr P Ancell, Mr N Bajaria, Clr Mrs B Beeley, Miss P Beswick, Clr Mrs J Bevan, Mr C Carr, Clr A Favell, Clr Mrs H M Gaddum, Clr Mrs N Hawkins, Prof J Herbert, Mr G Nickolds, Mrs K M Potter, Clr R Priestley, Clr G Purdy, Mr B Rayner, Clr Mrs M Stockdale, Clr Mrs J A Twigg, Clr Mrs D Ward, Clr Mrs J Wharmby.

**Against the Motion:** Mr R Clarke.

**Abstention:** Mr C Pennell, Mrs L C Roberts.

**Note:** A majority of members present voted in favour of this model so no further votes on the other models were necessary.

- 2. That the response to questions (b) – (f) of the national governance review consultation as set out in the attached Appendix be agreed.**
- 3. That the Director of Corporate Resources reviews any consultation replies received with the Chair of the Authority and agrees any amendments to the responses to questions (b) – (f) in light of any significant issues raised, with the Chair of the Authority prior to the Authority's response to the national governance review being finalised and submitted.**

The meeting finished at 12.40pm.

## APPENDIX

### **Authority response to questions (b) – (f) of the national governance review consultation**

#### **National governance review questions:**

#### **b) whether the selection process for all categories of members of NPAs (National Park Authorities) can be improved**

Response:

General point:

- Whatever the appointment process all members are equal once they are appointed. All need to serve interests of the National Park first and foremost

Specific points for improvement:

- Emphasise common job description for all Members whatever background
- Draw attention to time commitment required
- Information needs to go to potential candidates/nominees as well as appointing bodies
- Should be equal effort invested across all categories of appointment
- More publicity needed about Parish elections and what is involved in the role
- National Park Authority and all appointing bodies should continue to constructively discuss the quality of the process of selection of representatives
- Chair of Authority should report back to the appointing body on performance of each Member having discussed performance with that Member

#### **c) whether there should be a limit on the length of time which local authority and parish members can serve, and a reduction in the maximum term for the Secretary of State 'national' members (currently 10 years)**

Response:

- There should be a limit on the length of time which local authority and parish members can serve
- There should not be a reduction in the maximum term (10 years) for Secretary of State 'national' members
- Same limit should apply to all categories of members
- Appointments of Secretary of State members should be made from 1 June in a year to match as far as possible with the start date of appointments of local authority members following elections

**d) whether the current membership and structure of consultative committees, groups and forums can be strengthened so as to better achieve 'Big Society' benefits**

Proposed response:

The PDNPA (Peak District National Park Authority) is currently reviewing the membership and structure of some of its consultative arrangements as part of the review of the National Park Management Plan (NPMP). For example we are reviewing the membership of the external monitoring group for the NPMP, there is a new forum for working with businesses and we are working with voluntary sector representatives on what are appropriate consultative structures for working with that sector in achieving NPMP outcomes. Ensuring any structures and membership of consultative committees, groups and forums add value to achieving NPMP outcomes and actions seems to be the appropriate way to strengthen arrangements and is a matter for the local National Park Authority. We will be responding to the consultation submission of the Peak District Local Access Forum with this in mind.

**e) what additional measure NPAs can take to strengthen the links and engagement with their local communities on a variety of issues including planning**

Response:

PDNPA members believe that accountability to the local population is achieved *both* by formal representation by people who are appointed to the Authority and also by all members playing a wide range of formal and informal roles in the community, such as sitting on other bodies, representing the Authority in communities, working in partnerships and also ensuring that community views are taken into account across the Authority's work. Our recent (2009) survey of residents identified a relatively poor understanding of who our members are amongst residents and the resulting Residents Action Plan includes a specific action to create more opportunities for all members to engage with communities.

In order that such opportunities are made for more members and more communities, members are aware that we need to reduce the resource (members and staff) to supporting formal committees in order to support more community dialogue and engagement. Under our current budget settlement it will be impossible to transfer resources for this from other parts of the Authority's work.

Some of the suggestions for strengthening the links and engagement with local communities to be considered if resources are released are:

- Area/local Forums
- Community visits led by more Members in addition to Chair and Deputy Chair
- National Park to be split into areas and allocated to 2 members working together to 'look after' that 'community'
- Involving ward members who are not on the Authority informally in key issues, such as large planning cases or estate management.

**f) whether there are any other ways in which the NPAs can improve their effectiveness and accountability**

Response:

The PDNPA has recently been through the National Park Authorities Performance Assessment (NPAPA) process. The overall feedback was very positive with the assessors reporting that we are performing excellently for our conservation work and performing well in five out of the remaining six areas of focus. In order to continue to improve effectiveness and accountability we are currently developing an improvement plan around the key areas suggested for performance improvement including:

- Continuing to build on recent improvements in community engagement
- Improving the use of planning powers to deliver wider social and economic benefits and communicating this effectively to the public
- Getting greater buy-in from partners to help deliver improvements for the area
- Providing visual leadership to guide the organization and partners through challenging financial times

In addition we are taking structured action in response to the results of a recent residents' survey.