

**ANNEX 2**

**CONSULTATION ON DIRECT ELECTIONS TO ENGLISH NATIONAL PARK  
AND BROADS AUTHORITY**

**Consultation responses**

English National Park Authorities Association response

1. The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) will be submitting a detailed response to the consultation paper. The main point of this are:
  - The issue of direct elections has been raised and rejected during the reviews of National Park Authorities in both England and Wales. ENPAA adopts a neutral position on the principle of direct elections. The starting point is to ensure that National Park Authorities are best able to further National Park purposes with its partners. This means working closely with local authorities, parish councils and a host of partner organisations.
  - That the current size of membership of Authorities should neither increase nor decrease. The current numbers provide the right balance for membership composition; the active involvement of members; the efficient running of a public body; whilst recognising the time commitment and availability of members.
  - ENPAA agrees that the principle of direct elections for nationally appointed members is an unrealistic proposition. It is concerned that replacing local authority members with directly elected members would have the effect of dis-enfranchising the local authorities with whom the NPAs work. In relation to parish members it needs to be established that direct elections would result in a better representation (where better means more representative, generating higher level of commitment, reducing costs and improving efficiency and improving the reputation of members) than the current arrangements.

Other responses

2. At the moment many consultees, particularly the constituent councils, have not yet agreed their formally response to the consultation paper. Any received after the publication of the report will be reported at the meeting. Responses received so far are:

Derbyshire County Council

“The council’s position is that we are opposed to the suggestion if applied to local authority members on two counts. It would break the vital link between the council/national park and it is not necessary because the council representatives are already elected.” This is subject to further consideration by elected members.

North East Derbyshire District Council

“The Planning Committee resolved that they were opposed to the principle of direct elections to National Park Authorities. They felt that both local authority and parish members who represent the District on the National Park Authority have, over the years, built up a unique and invaluable expertise of National Park affairs and have always ably represented, albeit in an indirectly elected capacity, the wishes of communities whose work and

lives impact on, and are affected by, the Peak District National Park. They, therefore, saw no purpose behind changing a system which they felt already works well in its current format.”

These views will be considered by Cabinet who will agree a formal response at their meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

#### Peak Parishes Forum

“The Forum's Management Committee has given careful consideration to your recent consultation on Direct Elections and in principle would have no objections to all members of the Park Authority being directly elected. However, we do not believe this is a realistic option that will happen and our views, using your template, are as follows:-

1. we disagree to the principle of direct elections if only applied to a proportion of members.
- 2 we do not agree that direct elections should result in larger authorities. However, the size of authority should reflect its ability to have an adequate number of members to act as its ambassadors, to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to them, and to represent the broad spectrum of interests expected of the Board within the current legislative requirements.
3. all, or none.
- 4 yes; all English National Parks should have a consistency of representation, including parish members.
5. we believe there should be an adequate and effective annual appraisal process for all Board members to ensure they are properly trained and prepared to uphold the highest standards of public office in fulfilling their remit.”

#### Friends of the Peak District

“Depending on what Defra are proposing it is likely that we would oppose plans to have elected members.”

#### English Heritage (East Midlands)

“PDNPA's success with Heritage at Risk (as witnessed by your recent prize) shows that members appointed for their expertise can make a valuable contribution to protection of heritage in the national parks. However we are confident that PDNPA will ensure that its expertise in cultural heritage will be sustained whatever the outcome of the consultation. English Heritage itself will not be making a substantive response to the national consultation.”

#### Tom Levitt MP

Opposed to the introduction of direct elections in principle and in practice for the Peak District NPA.

NB, informal discussions with the following MPs have shown little support for direct elections: Sir Nicholas Winterton, Patrick McLoughlin, Charlotte Atkins, Angela Smith.