

APPENDIX 5: The Role of the Authority (meaning members acting collectively in this context)

Introduction: The role of the membership is described in the new Defra circular as follows: 'The earlier Authorities have developed significantly since they were established as independent bodies in 1988 and 1996, and their effective governance is regarded by the Government as of high importance. It is vital that the Authorities are well led and are accountable to both local and wider communities for their policies and performance. The Authorities need to adopt governance arrangements that reflect both best practice amongst public authorities and the particular circumstances which they face. There should be a clear distinction, but also close and effective working, between the officers and the members of the Authority. This should include a clear, shared understanding of the distinctive role that members and the executive play and efficient, proportionate and accountable governance structures. There should be clarity over schemes of delegation and, generally, members should devote their time to setting and monitoring performance against policies and strategies; decisions of major significance to the Parks; and representing the Authority in the community and with partner bodies'.

Aspects considered:

- a) Size and make up of the Authority
- b) Committee structures
- c) Size of committees
- d) Delegation to officers

Why we want to change:

We want to:

- Ensure the Authority has what it needs in terms of numbers and experience/backgrounds to do the job we need to do. Any changes to the size of the Authority to retain roughly the current proportions between the different categories of members.
- Ensure decision making processes are efficient and effective, with a clearer remit for the Authority and main committees and extend delegations to remove the need for special meetings other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Reduce the costs of governance at a time of likely large cuts to our budgets.
- Release time for members to focus on their external facing / representative role in the community.
- Release staff time so that they can support members in their external facing role.
- Increase member participation and satisfaction by being on committees they want to be on/have skills and experience to contribute to, rather than by default due to formulaic representation.
- Ensure there are sufficient members on Planning Committee to fulfil its responsibilities including appropriate geographical and community knowledge to help our understanding of local issues and the public's perceptions of balance
- Emphasise the role of Planning Committee as Development Management which is a specialist and skilled role
- Ensure there are an appropriate number of members on the proposed new committee to ensure a knowledgeable, motivated, efficient, effective and possibly smaller committee

Proposals:

a) Size and make up of the Authority

Proposal 1: Consider results of external consultation on the numbers on the Authority and make recommendations on size and make up of the Authority to February 2011 Authority meeting. This timing will allow us to take into account the national review and our local work will contribute to our response to any national proposals (see Appendix 4 for consultations received so far. An update on consultations will be given at the Authority meeting).

b) Committee structures and delegation

Proposal 2: Disestablish the current Committees of Audit and Performance Committee and Services Committee and agree, at the December 2010 Authority meeting, the brief and title for a new committee to be established from 1 January 2011 which combines and reviews the responsibilities of these two committees. All current Audit and Performance and Services Committees members to be appointed to the new committee from 1 January 2011.

Proposal 3: In doing the above increase the delegation to officers on HR and finance issues in line with ideas already discussed by Management Team, Head of Finance and the task team which includes greater consultation with Chairs in some areas. Make recommendations for changes to Standing Orders to December Authority meeting to be effective from 1 January 2011.

c) Size and make up of Committees

Proposal 4: Consider the options for the size of the new Committee and whether all Members need to be allocated to one committee and make recommendation to February 2011 Authority meeting

Proposal 5: Keep the principles of a) Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority and committee chairs to remain on all committees (and vice chairs can substitute for chairs) b) current balance on committees between different categories of members c) Other members cannot be on more than one committee

Proposal 6: Keep Planning Committee at current size of half the membership and consider the options for the make up of the committee and make recommendation to February 2011 Authority meeting

APPENDIX 6: The role of members

Introduction: The role of the member is described in the new Defra circular (and also supplemented by a national job description) as follows: 'All Authority members, no matter how they are appointed, have a primary responsibility to seek to ensure that the Authority furthers the statutory Park purposes, as set out in the respective Acts. In doing so, they should remember their wider duties such as the socio-economic duty. They should regard themselves first and foremost as members of the Authority, with a duty to act in the best interests of the Authority and of the Park, rather than as representatives of any interest group. Of course, all members will bring different perspectives to their work on the Authority, and ensuring that there is a diverse range of knowledge and outlook is the main reason for having the different types of appointments. Where any member has special knowledge of the views or needs of local people, it is important that they draw attention to those matters when relevant decisions are being taken. However, all members should also acknowledge a corporate responsibility, as a part of the Authority, to explain its purposes, procedures and policies. Each Authority should agree the mechanisms by which its members are to speak for it, locally, regionally and nationally.'

Aspects considered:

- a) external role of members
- b) appointments to specific roles and to outside bodies

Why we want to change:

We want to:

- Increase the number of opportunities for members to engage in dialogue with communities
- Develop the skills of members in engaging externally
- Respond to feedback and work with others
- Make the best possible use of the considerable experience and skills represented by our Members
- Appoint people to those roles where they can best contribute to the Authority's work through a more rational and planned appointment process which is transparent, fair and fosters unity
- Draw on the different kinds of experience [political, professional and community] available to us and enable members to indicate their interest in specific roles. Many Members have experience in a number of different areas

Proposals:

a) external role of members

Proposal 7: Assuming sufficient changes (as reflected in Appendix 5) are made to reduce the need for officer support to members and formal committees, consider ideas from member workshop and results of external consultation and make recommendations on options for increasing the number of opportunities for members to engage in dialogue with communities to February 2011 Authority meeting

Proposal 8: Ensure member development programme for 2010-11 includes opportunities to help members develop confidence and skills for their external role

b) appointments to specific roles and to outside bodies

Proposal 9: the following principles should apply for any appointments made:

- democratic process remains essential
- any Member should continue to be eligible to stand for election for any post, and all Members should continue to have the opportunity to vote for their preferred candidates
- the chosen system should foster confidence, unity and trust within the Authority

- all Members should be assumed to be equally committed to the objectives of the National Park, and to have a contribution to make across the full range of the Authority's work.
- all Members should be considered equally for all appointments but need to maintain the overall balance between different categories of members
- anyone holding office should be seen to act on behalf of all Members in the interests of the Authority, and not be allied with one particular group or interest
- all appointments should be time limited with a stipulated maximum continuous period of holding any one office e.g. to 4 continuous terms
- responsibility of nominated members to demonstrate to colleagues their interest and potential
- responsibility of nominated members to show that they understand what will be required of them

Proposal 10: All appointments for chairs and vice chairs to be made at annual general meeting (AGM) as now but review how nominations are made and make recommendation to a future Authority meeting before the next AGM. Task team is keen to maintain overall balance between different categories of members but is still considering whether it is necessary to keep the principle that if a secretary of state appointment is made to chair then the vice chair is a councillor (and vice versa).

Proposal 11: Review appointment process to outside bodies and make recommendation to a future Authority meeting before the next AGM.

Proposal 12: Review outside bodies to ensure any appointment is effective use of member time

Proposal 13: Member Representative appointments to be made at AGM (and not later as now)

APPENDIX 7: The conduct of authority business

Introduction: Formal decision making processes need to be efficient, proportionate and effective resulting in increased satisfaction for members, staff and the public. Members also have individual responsibility for ensuring that, at all times, they demonstrate commitment to the work of the authority through their actions, uphold high standards of conduct and are mindful of the need to conserve the reducing resources(financial and human) of the authority.

Aspects considered:

- a) expectations of the chair of Authority and chairs of committees
- b) member engagement and conduct
- c) reports
- d) electronic v paper communication

Why we want to change:

We want to:

- Respond to member survey feedback on making reports shorter
- Ensure our chairs and vice chairs have appropriate skills to chair meetings to ensure that they are conducted efficiently and effectively
- Ensure all members feel able to participate and contribute to the Authority's work
- Use electronic means of communication where we can

Proposals:

Proposal 14: Ways of making all committee reports shorter to be examined

Proposal 15: All Chairs and Vice Chairs to be offered the opportunity to participate in chairing skills workshop

Proposal 16: Review the requirements of Member attendance and the format of reporting to the Authority and make recommendations to a future Authority meeting before the next AGM

Proposal 17: Consider in the future opportunities for more electronic working by members as a result of implementing the new ICT infrastructure which will provide a better platform for this

APPENDIX 8: The scale and level of officer support provided to members and costs

Introduction: The overall level of support to members by staff needs to be effective in helping members to fulfil their role and needs to decrease over time. Appropriate development opportunities are provided so that Members are supported to fulfill their general responsibilities and any specialist roles they take on to their full potential.

Aspects considered:

- a) Member annual events and development programme
- b) Member briefings
- c) Member external facing role (see proposal 7 above)

Why we want to change:

We want to:

- Reduce the amount of officer and member time supporting formal workshop events
- Reduce the officer resource supporting members recognising that this is already partly planned into the budget
- Introduce more short, sharp briefings and events led by members
- Release time for officer support to providing more opportunities for members to fulfil their external role (see proposal 7 above)
- Reduce the number of special/extra meetings called

Proposals:

Proposal 18: member development programme to include essential business events, development to meet needs identified through member development plans/self assessment process, and one or two key focused, essential events each year. All other topics to be covered through briefings at the end of the Authority meeting.

Proposal 19: By February 2011 or earlier if possible task team to make proposals on how the £25k can be saved considering:

- Reduction of half time democratic services manager post, on retirement of current post holder, making £7k savings already in planned reductions and an extra £6000 as part of £25k above
- For every one member less on the Authority approx direct saving of £2098 accrues
- One less chair and vice chair results in saving of £2547

Proposal 20: Implement as soon as possible a reduction in member refreshments costs from £4k to £2k through more basic provision and reduction in special meetings called