

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 July 2011

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

Report of the Chief Executive

Purpose of Report: To seek the views of Members on proposals for an Annual Open Meeting (ie AGM) of the Authority.

Legal and Equality Implications: The proposed meeting is consultative in nature and fall outside the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation surrounding formal meetings of the Authority and its sub-committees.

The equality and human rights impact of the recommendations of this report have been assessed as having no adverse impact on any particular group or individual.

Financial and Risk Implications: The resources associated with holding an Annual Open meeting are covered in the Core Budget.

Business Plan action:

B. Support to the Community - Increased engagement with the resident community

D. Support Services – CS02 - Holding an open meeting so that any member of the public can raise any matter relating to the National Park Authority.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Authority ADOPTS the proposals for an Annual Open Meeting of the Authority.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Members will recall that the coalition government's review of governance arrangements for National Park Authorities asked whether the current membership and structure of consultative committees, groups and forums could be strengthened so as to better achieve 'Big Society' benefits. Having considered consultation responses on ways in which the consultative committees and other mechanisms might be improved, the Authority's response to the review included the following proposal:

- *To hold an Annual Open Meeting to which all members of the public are invited and to provide an opportunity to raise any matter relating to the business of the National Park Authority. This meeting would be attended by members who hold positions as chairman or deputy-chairman of the Authority and main committees, and by senior officers. The venue was likely to move around the National Park from year to year and would be away from the Authority's offices at Exmoor House.*

1.2 At the time of printing this report, the government's announcement of the outcome of the review National Park Authorities' governance arrangements is still awaited. However, the proposed Annual Open Meeting has been agreed by Members as a

preferred outcome, accords with the Authority's priority to increase engagement with the resident community and is included in the Business Plan Work Programme for 2011/12.

2. PROPOSALS FOR AN ANNUAL OPEN MEETING

2.1 Members are therefore asked to consider and approve the following proposals for an Annual Open Meeting:

- To hold an Annual Open Meeting in late September / early October of each year to be attended by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority, the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the main committees, and by senior officers. The meeting will be open to all members of the public and will provide an opportunity to ask questions about any matter relating to the business of the Authority.
- To hold the Open Meeting at Porlock Village Hall, Lynton Town Hall or Dulverton Town Hall (the venue to rotate on a triennial basis), with a start time of 7pm. By holding the meeting in the evening and at one of the three larger population centres, it is hoped it will be accessible to as many people as possible and will ensure the availability of adequate facilities such as car parking.
- To send notice of the meeting to all Parish Councils and all members of the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum who will be invited to submit questions in advance of the meeting. A press release will also be issued.
- To precede the meeting with a 'drop-in session' from 4pm to 7pm. This will provide an opportunity for members of the public to call in to meet informally with Members and Officers. Display stands and information boards will be erected to provide details of the Authority's purposes, its achievements and priorities, and its current projects.

Nigel Stone
Chief Executive
June 2011

Background papers:

Authority response to Defra's Review of Governance Arrangements for National Park Authorities.

Exmoor National Park Authority Business Plan 2011/12