

National Parks Strategic Review Consultation

Response from Biodiversity Officer, Policy Unit, West Dunbartonshire Council

Questions:

1. What are your views on the recommendation that the present arrangement of free-standing NDPBs for each National Park Authority should continue in the medium term?

We agree with the findings that a free-standing NDPB appears to have been successful to date. Continuation of this type of model in the medium term will allow the Park Authorities to further strengthen any issues or projects in each local community area, tailored to their specific needs. This will also enable actions from the Statutory National Park Plans to be implemented and tested, and contribute to National Outcomes. Developing the local and national profile of the National Parks will be key to their success, and therefore if the free-standing model has been shown to be successful in the medium-term it would seem illogical to alter the current set-up, until required.

2. What are your views on:

- a) the recommendation that a ministerially chaired National Strategy Group should be re-established?

We agree to this recommendation

- b) The proposed remit of the group?

National Park Authority Conveners and other key interests. It would be helpful to have a representative of the Biodiversity Officers for all Local Authorities found within each Park boundary.

3. Taking account of the above recommendations, what further steps (if any) would you like to see the National Park Authorities making towards working together?

We agree that a scoping exercise on service sharing should be carried out to review sharing of Corporate Services.

4. a) Do you agree that the size of National Park Authority Boards should be reduced? Yes or No.

Yes

- b) If yes, what size do you think the Board should be?

From experience, generally a Board should contain no more than 10 individuals.

5. a) Do you agree that the National Park Authority Boards should continue to contain a mix of 3 types of member (directly appointed, nominated by councils and directly elected)? Yes/No

Yes

- b) If yes, what would the appropriate balance of the three types of membership?

The Board should have aim to have a balanced mix.

6. What are your views on the recommendation that having Ministers appoint Conveners and Deputy Conveners from among Board Members would help to strengthen the Park's accountability for public funding?

We would agree with this, following agreement with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland (OCPAS).