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Food & Rural Affairs

Rt Hon Desmond Swayne MP
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From Richard Benyon MP
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18/12

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Our ref: MC293909/JT

17 December 2012

Sean Desmond

Thank you for your letter of 29 November enclosing a copy of an email from your constituent, Mrs S Baillie of One Voice, about direct elections to national park authorities.

Following the Westminster Hall debate on 28 November Mrs Baillie has queried a comment that I made during the debate to the effect that primary legislation would be required to allow for direct elections to be held to the English national park authorities. I can confirm that this is correct. An order under the Public Bodies Act could not be used to allow for direct elections to national park authorities. This is because of the amount of detailed legislation required and primary legislation would be needed, as is also the case for the Broads Authority.

As I mentioned during the debate, while the majority of individuals and organisations who responded to the consultation on introducing direct elections were in favour, views were divided. Following consideration of the responses I will shortly announce our conclusions on this and on proposals to introduce pilot elections in the New Forest and Peak District National Parks.

Yours ever

Richard

RICHARD BENYON MP



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