

New Forest National Park Authority Meeting 27 May 2010
Exhibition Room
Brockenhurst Village Hall
Brockenhurst

Statement by Sue Baillie on behalf of ONE VOICE

Good morning Chairman and Members,

No doubt you have all been keenly following the fluid political state of affairs but I would still like to remind you that the new coalition government will:

- ABOLISH a number of non-department government bodies and limit the powers of other quangos
- Review the governance arrangements of National Parks in order to increase local accountability
- Rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies

AND

- Today the House of Commons will debate the Queen's Speech on Energy & Climate Change and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Whatever our personal thoughts are on this new government we must accept that major changes will happen rapidly from the top, and will ripple downwards and outwards. There is no guarantee that **any** unelected body will remain Teflon-coated.

The NPA's Core Strategy was drawn up to dovetail the Regional Spatial Strategy and those of partner organisations. I therefore ask members to postpone endorsement of the Core Strategy documents for immediate submission to DEFRA until there is a clear indicator of what impact the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies will have on the content of the Core Strategy documents.

The upcoming review of National Parks governance arrangements may result in a significant decrease of staffing levels, which could impact on any requirement for increased accommodation. Ring fencing of grants to local government will be phased out which could mean that the expected DEFRA grant for financial support to relocate the NPA will not be forthcoming. I therefore ask members to postpone any agreement with NFDC regarding shared office accommodation until there are clear indications of what spending cuts DEFRA will be making and what changes to the structure of the NPA will come about as a result of the National Parks Review.