

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

No.	Respondent	Summary of main points raised
1	Mr Beaumont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Forest NPA should be closed down and finished off. • Defra and Natural England should be radically reduced.
2	Hampshire Association of Local Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting a restriction that any review must stay within the 'existing statutory purposes' reinforces current problems relating to governance, public apathy and confusion. • A four tier local government structure is neither cost nor delivery effective. A tentative suggestion might be for unitary area? • The boundaries of the 1949 Act are recognised, but law and regulation can be changed with political will. No reason why a National Park cannot co-locate with a District or similar authority. • Membership should be kept as low as is efficient and effective. • Community membership from parish councils and third sector organisations is vital (question a). • The selection of parish members should be carried out by CALCs in all Parks (question b). • Parish members should serve for so long as they are elected by their peers (question c).
3	Mr Stoner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the governance arrangements of the NPA (even to 100% directly elected) would not overcome its many failings. • The NPA is too small to be able to employ the necessary range of individuals with sufficient skills and experience. It should lose its planning responsibility and that would leave it without sufficient justification for its continued existence.
4	Mr Hart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation misses an opportunity to save significant money by stating that "...the Government wishes to retain an independent authority as currently exists..." • Not aware of a single benefit conveyed by creating a National Park. The management structure that existed prior to designation remains – some 90% of the National Park is Crown Land and the remainder is managed by local councils, land owners, with the Verderers doing an excellent job.
5	Ms Whalley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council members should be elected by residents and not simply by the Parish Council. • A regularly elected councillor may have little understanding of the conflicting needs of conservation, tourism and local communities that must be balanced in National Park policy. • Without consultation and engagement with residents being real and effective, communities will not be protected in National Park policies. This would breach the 1995 Environment Act which requires the fostering of the socio-economic well-being. This cannot be done unless residents are truly consulted in the formulation and implementation of National Park policies.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

6	Ms Truell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a resident and a commoner living in the National Park, the Verderers and the Forestry Commission are critical in protecting and managing the Forest. They should have guaranteed seats on the NPA. Their knowledge of the Forest can only benefit discussions about how the Forest should develop. Another organisation you might like to consider is Sustrans.
7	Mr Bishop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely frustrated at the lack of visionary management of the New Forest. The lack of planned development in the area includes (i) car park closures; (ii) dogs being banned from certain areas; (iii) cycling being limited; (iv) poor visitor centre facilities; (v) a lack of a clear vision that makes into account the growth of the leisure industry alongside conservation.
8	Mr Baker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a resident of the Park living within the Perambulation, it is a great privilege to live in the unenclosed Forest. In visiting other Parks, I seek to stimulate the local economy wherever I can.
9	Mr Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The membership of the NPA fails to show its regard for the 35,000 residents. All NPAs have a reputation for an indifference to the views of their local population. This alienates people and may also deprive the Authority of local knowledge. Whatever the final composition of the reformed NPA, it should include representatives of those who live outside the Park. In the case of the New Forest, this should include Southampton. 60% of the membership should be directly elected to represent an area of the Forest and serve for 3 years; 40% composed of councillors appointed by authorities whose interests may be affected by the NPA's policies (e.g. New Forest District, Southampton, Bournemouth, and Christchurch). No independent appointed members as they lack democratic legitimacy.
10	Braemore Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is only a small part of the Parish within the Park and the Parish Council would therefore be happy to accept the decision following the consultation, to be made by the end of March 2011.
11	Mr Brenan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first purpose to conserve and enhance the Park is a good thing, but where other countryside quangos fit in is unclear. The second function NPAs have is as the planning authority. As a non-elected body this is not acceptable and should come through an elected body representing local opinion as well as national needs. The NPA should lose its planning role and become a part of NFDC, able to forward views to the planning department at NFDC. This would drastically reduce costs.
12	Mr Parker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1965 the village I live in was physically separated from the New Forest by virtue of the fact that no part of Wiltshire should be included. In 2005 we officially became part of the National Park and are very pleased to be included once again. The current governance system works perfectly and I have no wish to see the system changed. If it were possible to extend the powers of the Park Authority I would substantially increase its influence over highways authorities.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

13	Mr Harding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parishes and villages in the National Park should be allowed to develop by 15% per year. Each planning application should be dealt with on its own merit, and not dismissed out of hand because it is in the National Park. A small levy on the completion of each dwelling of 1% might be imposed to be shared between the NPA and the villages and parishes.
14	Mr & Mrs Gregory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of NPAs and the selection process should not be changed. • The maximum term for 'national' appointees should remain at 10 years. These members bring invaluable expertise. Parish and local members should serve no longer than 2 terms (8 years maximum) to widen the spectrum of opinion. • The role of the Verderers in the governance of the Forest should be defined as this in itself possibly requires consultation.
15	Ms Marshallsay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve 'Big Society' benefits, the impetus for NPA membership must spring from empowering local people not by central government election. The right local people elected by local people are capable of acting in the national interest. • NPAs need to be more active within the neighbourhoods and communities in seeking out individuals who could become members who are truly in touch with local and national interests. • Statements about costly and onerous elections are denied. • Defra appointments should be made through consultation with local people, preferably through election. • Conservation and socio-economic issues are interdependent and integrated. • Those living in or near National Parks have a special responsibility to be guardians of these national assets. Local residents should choose Secretary of State Park members who are subsequently answerable to the as well as Defra and Ministers. • Members should number between 18 and 22 to spread the responsibility load. • There should be representation from NGOs, the business community, recreation, landowners and community leaders. • Secretary of State appointees should serve for a maximum of 4 years.
16	Ringwood Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the NPA to be more locally accountable the role of the Secretary of State should be reduced. • Concerned that nominations by local authorities could be dealt with on a purely political basis rather than on a basis of those best suited to the role. The absence of direct elections makes the NPA more remote from the public it serves. • All those interested in the management of the Park should be able to nominate persons for membership through direct elections. Since National Parks are governed by legislation and have specific statutory duties, there is no need for the Secretary of State to have any role. • There should be no limit on the length of membership providing there are direct elections. • The NPA has extensive arrangements for consulting with the public and other specific interest organisations (question d). The

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		NPA practices community involvement very much in line with Big Society principles. It would be very difficult for the NPA to improve its performance in this area.
17	New Milton Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned that nominations by local authorities could be dealt with on a purely political basis rather than on a basis of those best suited to the role. The absence of direct elections makes the NPA more remote from the public it serves. • With a view to improving accountability, Town and Parishes should be able to nominate persons for membership and this could be achieved through a system of direct elections. • There should be no limit on the length of membership providing there are direct elections. • It may be difficult for the NPA to improve its performance on 'Big Society' issues. Government could assist with a single 'public service website' tailored to specific parts of the country.
18	Sway Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong support for the concept of all members of the NPA being directly elected. • Can see no justification for increase in the size of the membership of the Authority. • A review of the governance of the NPA should also be conducted jointly with a review of the structure, powers and responsibilities of the Verderers of the New Forest. Such a joint review would identify areas of conflict between the aims and objectives of the two organisations. • The level of transparency of the funding decisions made by the NPA should be examined. • The extent to which commoners and their extended families (the principle beneficiaries of taxpayers' money) are represented within the Authority should be made open and transparent.
19	Mr Frost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal view is that the status quo is the best and the most cost effective way of administering the two purposes and duty. It has been tried and tested since 1949, with the addition of parish councillors after 1995. Many local councillors serve on the NPA and help to keep the NPA in contact with neighbouring authorities. • Those suggesting all members should be elected are unclear as to the electorate for the NPA. • If the Coalition wishes to make a change then I suggest the Scottish model - having four members elected directly by the public from the 37 parishes. This would degrade the position of Parish Councils by bypassing them and could encourage single issue members or political factors that don't exist at the moment. The costs of elections would be borne locally. • Not practical to reduce the number of members on the NPA because attendance at committees is already reduced by the many other commitments borne by members.
20	Mr and Mrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very concerned at the proposal to sell off Forest and Woodlands. The New Forest is a treasure that belongs to England and

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

	Douglass	God forbid they are allowed to touch that.
21	Ms Deacon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current governance model needs reform because (i) it is formulaic and insensitive to local needs; (ii) it disengages and marginalises Park residents; and (iii) it fails to adequately address the well being of local communities within the Park • The separation of planning from other responsibilities undermines the delivery of cohesive, integrated and inclusive policies. • It is unfair that National Park status deprives residents of local democracy. • The delivery of the statutory purposes is effectively carried out in the Forest by a partnership of the Verderers, landowners, commoners, charities and the District Council. The only function which the NPA has sole responsibility is planning. • The logical step is to form a democratically elected, single, integrated and unified local authority to deliver all District Council responsibilities and National Park purposes.
22	Redlynch Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an overriding need for the New Forest NPA to become established within the community and since it has only been in existence for a few years further time is necessary for this to be achieved. • The built in democratic majority of elected councillors ensures the management of the Park is open and independent. • The current arrangements of elected and non-elected members and the size of the Authority is correct and should be retained. • Value the appointment of non-elected members to the NPA because of their specialist knowledge / expertise. • Limiting the length of time that elected members can serve may be counter-productive. However, in the case of non-elected Ministerial appointees a limit of 10 years seems reasonable. • The current membership and structure of the consultative committees covers many groups and helps to promote the wider understanding of the Park in line with the 'Big Society'. Some committees, however, may involve too many interested parties. • Control of the planning process is the single most important function of the National Park Authority as it has a direct influence on meeting the requirements of the Environment Act 1995. Suggest that Parish Councils be given more time in the consultation phase to ensure all aspects of the application are considered.
23	New Forest Consultative Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel had no consensus on the composition or appointment process for NPA members. • The Panel considers it has an important role to play in the New Forest as it brings together a wide range of interests. The Panel membership is drawn from 80 organisations and each of these does or can contribute towards achieving 'Big Society' benefits. Because of its established role and the importance of a consultative panel arrangement in the New Forest National Park, it would be beneficial for it to be given some form of formal recognition or status.
24	Ms Steers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Equality Act 2010 the system to automatically re-appoint Secretary of State members without re-advertising the

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<p>position discriminates against other members of the public from applying for that position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Localism Bill and the Public Bodies Bill undermine the aims and objectives of Defra’s Review of National Park Authorities. The attitude and approach of local authority members on the NPA will be that of a ‘free for all’ approach to matters where personal and prejudicial interests will not have to be declared. NPAs and National Park purposes would then be open to excessive abuse. • National Parks are specially designated and therefore they should have higher standards requirements for all members. The accountability, transparency, standards and Code of Conduct for members needs to be better than average. There needs to be a special Code of Conduct for all NPAs. Members must declare all interests in speaking on matters. • Local authorities and the selection process for Secretary of State appointees should seriously resist re-appointing and ‘re-cycling’ the same members over and over again for years on end. • ‘National’ appointees should be advertised every 2 – 3 years, with a maximum term of 3 years. • Local authority appointees should have a maximum term of three years based by a yearly review of their conduct. Local authorities should resist re-appointing/submitting the same people. • Across National Parks there is an overwhelming majority of male members, with an average of both male and female members more than 50 years of age. If NPAs need to save money they should reduce the top heavy membership. This could be based on the South Downs NPA model of one local authority member from each constituent authority. This would then allow for a greater balance between national and local authority representation.
25	Test Valley Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not support a reduction in the size or change the composition of the NPA. If this did occur then the existing proportional balance between local authority, parish and national members should be maintained. Local authority members should continue to have a majority and each local authority should retain the right to appoint at least one member. • Would not support limiting the length of service of local authority or parish members or reducing the current maximum term for ‘national’ members. If this was to occur would support a common limit of 8 years for all categories of membership. • The New Forest Consultative Panel offers a positive model and would welcome proposals to strengthen its role and enhance its membership (question d). • The development of forum(s) with adjoining local authorities for officer and member engagement could be beneficial. • State of the Park Reports to monitor the National Park Management Plan could be further developed to focus on reporting to the wider community on wider NPA actions (question f).
26	Melchet Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the NPA has only existed for a few years it appears to be working well. The Parish Council see no reason to change

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

	and Plaitford Parish Council	<p>its present governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a suggestion that special interest groups should be able to nominate a member of the NPA, but the Parish Council considers that to be most unwise. So many special interest groups have conflicting interests that any members they nominate would probably always be in disagreement with each other and disruptive to the work of the Authority.
27	Verderers of the New Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance arrangements for all our National Parks should reflect the status of Parks as national assets. The current composition of the New Forest NPA membership already does this by allowing for six Secretary of State ‘national’ members. It is an important element of the membership to have individuals who are selected for their personal qualities, and not as representatives of specific groups or organisations in order to appreciate the national interest of the Park as a national asset. • The interests of the exercise of common rights need to be directly represented on the NPA in order to correct what is a deficiency in the current membership arrangements. This deficiency could be easily corrected by giving the Verderers the right to appoint one member of the NPA. • Simpler to add one extra NPA member to take account of the Verderers appointee, bringing the total to 23. If this was not acceptable then the number of ‘national’ members should be reduced to 5 in order to keep the total membership to 22.
28	Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local members should be directly elected by residents to ensure greater accountability. • Accept there could be benefit from a small number of members being appointed by Government because of their expertise. • Should be an overall time limit for all members, but account should be taken of the time it takes a new member to become effective in a specialist role. • To strengthen links and engagement with the public, suggest that agreements could be drawn up between the National Parks Association and local Parish Councils detailing the National Park Associations delivery plans.
29	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council welcomes the commitment of Defra to retaining independent NPAs. • The existing size of the NPA should remain and be comprised of a majority of elected councillors. • It is essential to retain Verderers and commoning representation on the NPA. • The NPA should at all times have a member representing the interest of small businesses. • Support the existing arrangements for selecting local authority and parish council members. • The ‘national’ appointments remain an issue of democratic accountability. Local authority and Parish members should vote on the specialist representatives proposed by the Secretary of State. • Local authority members should retain their seats as long as they remain elected. The 10 year appointment for national

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<p>members is supported in the interests of retaining expertise and continuity. The attendance standards for members should be monitored and reported on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of committees should remain the responsibility of the Authority. However, there should be a presumption in favour of delegation of planning back to local authorities. • The existing mechanisms for engaging local communities are generally acceptable. Recommend that the existing strategy for engaging with stakeholders is reviewed and consulting upon. • Having a ranger service in the Park is welcomed as demonstrating a commitment to outreach working with all communities. • It is important that NPA members maintain communication with their own organisations.
30	Hyde Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish councillors are happy, by and large, with the current arrangements as a means to ensuring a wide representation, but feel that there should always be a Verderer and a commoner on the NPA. This currently happens by default should be a stipulation in the governance arrangements.
31	Ms West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the National Park is governed must be radically reformed. The outcry from local residents to the Authority's draft Management Plan indicates to Defra the extent to which Authority members are removed from those they are meant to serve. • All members of the NPA should be elected, with nominees being residents of the Forest. The cost could be easily met by stopping the Park Life newsletter. • Members should not be associated with committees in a number of other organisations. • Steps should be taken to ensure that all socio-economic groups, genders and ages are represented on the Authority. • Members should be treated as professionals and should receive a salary. This would enable a wide range of people to stand. • Members must be held accountable – performance management is needed with targets set and assessed. • A fixed term office should be introduced of maybe 5 years to ensure that new blood is introduced. • The New Forest NPA should be abolished totally. The Verderers can manage the Forest and local councils can cover planning.
32	Mr Newman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The present arrangements for nominating members of the New Forest NPA are broadly correct, although recommend that 'national' members should serve for terms of 5 and not 3 years. • Do not consider that any members of the NPA should be directly elected. This would reduce accountability for ordinary people as vested interests would be likely to dominate such elections and make management of the Park more difficult. • Anyone standing for election to local Borough Councils and Parish Councils should be required to state if they wish to be considered for nomination to the NPA and their qualifications for doing so.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPA should engage with local people by holding open meetings on any major developments, consultations or proposals.
33	Ms Riddoch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governance of National Parks should be left in the hands of local people, elected by local people. Of course, the people in positions of management and decision making need to have knowledge and expertise in their particular field, but most of all they must have passion for their role in the day to day running of the area. The New Forest fared better before it was a National Park. The Verderers, the Forestry Commission, NFDC, the Commoners' Defence Association and the National Trust were doing a very good job before the NPA was put in place.
34	Mr Seddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In taking forward the two Park purposes it is vital that NPAs have a membership able to reflect the views of both local people and the national interest. As such I strongly support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continuance of the Secretary of State 'national' member arrangements to ensure a voice for people not living in or near the National Parks; and The continuance of the Secretary of State 'national' member's arrangements to allow the appointment of members with specific skills, competence and knowledge to aid the Authority in the consideration of wider issues. It is also important that local people have full involvement in the running of National Parks, and the current arrangements for appointing Parish members serves this function well. Agree that the local authority members should continue to be the majority which, along with Parish members, helps to ensure local democratic accountability. The size of the membership should remain as today or smaller. The length of time for any members should be limited to 10 years. A shorter period may not allow sufficient time for a member to be fully effective; a longer term may limit new thinking. For the Authority to be fully effective all members must dedicate significant time to Authority matters through attendance at Authority meetings and other committees. Effectiveness would be improved if all members were subject to regular published performance assessment.
35	New Forest Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for major change to the membership. The present composition provides a variety of skills and backgrounds which should be maintained. Attempts at 'democratic correctness' would not beneficially increase accountability but could reduce the range of expertise to the Authority. Would be concerned to change the membership of the Authority to favour popularise or sectional interests at the expense of the long term conservation of the Park. The current membership balance provides the best mechanism for ensuing such difficult decisions are made in a well balanced and accountable way.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proper that the majority of members are appointed by local authorities in the Park. • The 'national' appointed members are chosen in an open recruitment process for their relevant expertise. It would be unwise to dispense with such valuable expert resources that are freely offered. It is vitally important that some of the people involved in taking decisions are selected by specific criteria and have relevant qualifications for the task. • Elected members can be NPA members as long as they remain on the appointing authority; where as 'national' appointees are restricted to 10 years. This anomaly should be addressed by limiting local authority members to 10 years maximum. • The New Forest Verderers should have one seat on the Authority in line with the Ministerial Guidance of 2005. The ministerial guidance for the New Forest could be strengthened to express the Secretary of State's intention to include an elected Verderer amongst the national appointees.
36	Mr Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government should restore democracy for the governance of the Forest. The right to a democratically elected representative on the planning authority was removed by the establishment of the Park. We were not consulted and our local councillors never advised us of the implications.
37	New Forest Access Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider that the current membership to be about right. • Suggest the number of Parish Council members should be increased to between 6 and 8. To give local people who live in and use the New Forest an increased interest in, and ownership, of their environment. • Although local authority members form an important link with the District and County Councils, we think their numbers could be reduced in line with any increase in Parish Council members. • All members should live within or near to the Park and be able to demonstrate an active connection with the area. • It is the Forum's view that there is a requirement for the NPA to foster a sense of interest and ownership of the area within local communities. This can be achieved by (i) increasing the number of Parish Council members; (ii) providing active encouragement and support to local interest groups to gain their suggestion; and (iii) greater involvement in education.
38	Mr Parslow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership should be small, but large enough to represent key stakeholders such as residents and commoners. • The Authority should be an elected body and there is currently no effective democratic control. • Members should have the same time limits as normal elected councillors, and should be subjected to the same need for re-elections at reasonable time limits. • More effort should be made to include all stakeholder groups in consultative committees. • There needs to be a major attitudinal shift from the view that the Authority's members and professional staff know best, to one of

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<p>being willing and eager to learn from those who live and work in the New Forest. Parish Councils, Verderers and local business groups need to be integrated into the NPA decision making process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority members need to take tighter control over officers to ensure decisions are made in accordance with agreed policy. • It is clear that the role of Natural England and the NPA overlaps and better management between these two might improve the management of these national assets.
39	Mr Webster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request that no pressure groups should be elected to stand on the NPA. There should be more representatives from Parish Councils along with those people who work the land such as commoners, farmers and foresters.
40	Desmond Swayne MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government should legislate to give itself powers to alter National Park boundaries, governance arrangements and the existence of National Parks by secondary legislation. • There may be cases where it would be expedient and efficient for the duties of a NPA to be discharged by local authorities and statutory powers should enable this. • There is currently a democratic deficit within National Parks. It would be desirable if parish and other local representatives outnumbered the national representatives. • Doubt there is sufficient enthusiasm for directly elected local representatives to the NPA. Don't believe the public has an appetite for this on top of parish, district and county elections. • NPAs should make greater efforts to share resources with existing tiers of local Government. • NPAs should be required to consider handing the determination of planning applications over to local authorities, confining their own responsibilities to laying down policy.
41	Dr Julian Lewis MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a limited consultation as we are not given the opportunity to question the suitability of a National Park model for our area. Concern that the NPA structure would give potential for an Authority to ride roughshod over everyone else. • These fears were borne out when the NPA was established. Huge efforts have subsequently been made to reform the management style and the people running the NPA now seem genuinely concerned to work with the Forest community. • Nevertheless, the structures still have the potential to cause friction. • It was wrong for the planning powers to have been transferred to the NPA. • Fully endorse the need for direct elections to make the NPA publicly accountable. While it is true that the majority of its members are indirectly elected there should be a strong interest in direct elections to a more democratic NPA, and little risk of the Authority being captured by unrepresentative groups or individuals.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike appointed members, there should be no limit on length of service for members who the community wish to re-elect.
42	Mr and Mrs Nightingale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Forest has been very successfully run and managed by local groups such as the Verderers, agisters, commoners and the Forestry Commission – this should continue. • The majority, if not all, of the members of the NPA must be local, live locally, be locally selected and have local knowledge.
43	Ms Tubbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not believe that the membership of the New Forest NPA needs to be changed – the present system ensures there is a representative range of expertise, both locally and nationally. • Especially important to retain Secretary of State appointments – they go through a rigorous selection process and provide an expertise often not found in county and district council members. • The selection process might be improved if county and district councillors went through a similar interview process to the Secretary of State appointees and were then appointed for their expertise and not for party political allegiance. • A maximum of 10 years for all members is probably appropriate. Important to have long term continuity, but all members should have similar conditions of appointment. • The New Forest Consultative Panel, established in the 1970s, has a wide ranging membership and members have opportunities to be involved in the Authority's work. It is fulfilling 'Big Society' benefits long before the term was invented. • The New Forest NPA tries very hard to be effective and accountable and has had a difficult time since its inception because of the anti-national park movement.
44	Copythorne Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like greater parish representation on the NPA. Additional parish representation could be achieved by reducing either the Secretary of State or County Council reps. • Direct elections are not favoured. They would be costly to run and would not necessarily result in better representation. Appointment could be made on purely political grounds or places sought by unrepresentative lobby groups. • National Parks should aim to achieve greater accountability. Nevertheless, in the case of the New Forest, the NPA is already practising community engagement in line with Big Society principles.
45	Brockenhurst Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance of the New Forest NPA can be made more effective and responsive to the concerns of local communities by the introduction of directly elected representatives. • There is a democratic deficit and no real attempt by members to champion the views of local communities in the Park. • This is exacerbated by the regime imposed by the Standards Board which required members with local knowledge to declare a prejudicial interest and not involve themselves in decision making. This regime is thankfully being withdrawn.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Forest has the largest population of any National Park and we would urge that even if some NPAs are not made more representative and accountable, the case for focusing on these principles in the New Forest is clear. • All members should be directly elected with residency with the Park a criterion for election. Local members are quite capable of having regard to national policies and requirements. • Suggest that when an application is considered by the Authority's Planning Committee there should be an automatic right for a representative of the appropriate Parish Council to be co-opted on the Planning Committee to vote.
46	Mr Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why doesn't NFDC run the Park as they already have an office, staff and IT systems in place? If residents don't like the way the Park is run we vote against the councillors in the next election. • As a former parish councillor, not once did our Parish Councillor from the National Park come and visit our Parish Council.
47	Mr Waight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation paper is poorly drafted. It is confusing as to whom is consulting, how to respond, and the timetable for NPAs to respond with plans post-consultation is too ambitious. • Given the budget changes facing NPAs leave them alone to get on with the job. There is no mention of the costs that might be involved as there is no 'cost-benefit analysis' of the proposals. • No need to change the membership of the New Forest NPA (question a). • Lack of evidence of any need to change the process for selecting all categories of membership. • The current 10 year maximum term for Secretary of State appointee should remain (question c). • Question (d) is impossible to answer as the 'Big Society' is not defined. • The New Forest NPA shows that provided a suitable CEO is appointed who has the support of the board and the community, the links and engagement can be excellent (question e). • The use of modern technology should be encouraged (question f).
48	A G Jennings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Authority members should be elected so they can be held accountable for their decisions. A three year tenure would be reasonable with a maximum of three consecutive periods. This would avoid cronyism which can develop if long tenure and unlimited re-elections are allowed. It would also ensure a constant supply of new thinking. • The expertise of Defra, the Forestry Commission and the Verderers can all be obtained by sensible consultation. Their voices should not however be as voting members of the Authority. • Difficult question as to whether the CEO should be elected. This could make the role a political football to be kicked about by the major parties. On balance it may be better to have the post appointed as has been done before.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

49	Landford Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the National Park has only existed for a few years, the governance arrangements appear to be working extremely well. • The current composition of the membership gives a good balance between the local and the national perspectives. • If the aim is to have the best person for the job then a time limit is unnecessary. • There is excellent liaison with Parish Councils through group meetings on planning and training sessions run by the NPA. • The New Forest NPA has developed strong engagement via extensive open meetings with local communities during the development of the Core Strategy and this has been maintained. • The Parish Council see no reason at all to introduce changes to the governance of the New Forest National Park.
50	Ringwood and District Natural History Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of the NPA needs to reflect local needs and stakeholders. There must be an elected representative for the commoners and Verderers as well as the managers of the Crown Lands – currently the Forestry Commission (question a). • No reason to change the process for appointing local authority members. Important that agencies with an overarching remit have persons appointed by the Secretary of State and this aspect of governance should be retained (question b). • The election of members of the public to the NPA is fraught with danger. It would be an administrative nightmare and is not a practical proposition. Do not think that the current system can be improved on, subject to the comments in (a). • Local authorities should appoint the best qualified person, not necessarily those with the longest serving record. The maximum term should be reduced to 8 years and appointees changed every 4 years basis – coinciding with local elections. • The NPA's consultation and involvement of the community has been excellent. The result is a management plan and Core Strategy with strong local support. The New Forest NPA already has 'the Big Society' inbuilt (question d). • Only one National Park lies within a single administrative border (Northumberland). In the New Forest, the boundary between Wiltshire and Hampshire should be re-drawn to ensure the entire Park lies within one administrative boundary - making representation on the NPA simpler and more cost effective (question f).
51	Ms Bolton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement by the Parish Councils in the running of the New Forest National Park would be of benefit. This would seem to be in sympathy with the present Government's desire for greater accountability.
52	New Forest Business Partnership and the Federation of Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to see where business is formally represented on the NPA – there is no portfolio holder for economic development. It is also not clear whether the Defra appointees have a portfolio or are simply appointed based on their ability to usefully contribute to the NPA. Although there is local opinion against any Defra appointees, it has to be recognised that this is a <u>National Park</u> and that some national representation is appropriate. • Representation of Wiltshire (2) and Test Valley (1) appears disproportionate (question a).

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

	Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate that parishes are only represented by one member for each quadrant. Would not want to see the size of the Authority grow, or be dominated by a very parochial view, but there may be a case for greater parish representation. • Fairly widespread view that there should be direct elections for NPA members, at least for positions currently occupied by the local authorities. Local representatives should be directly elected and do not accept the quoted figure of £30,000 per election. The NPA election could be run on the back of other elections (question b). • The case for local election of the national reps is harder to justify, particularly if they only make up 6 out of 22 positions and there is formalised representation of business interests in a proportion of these members (question b). • Any limit of the time allowed to be served by local/parish members would be irrelevant if they were elected. A time limit seems unnecessary and may lead to the loss of otherwise good members. For 'national' members current 10 year limit seems right. • The NPA has a much improved consultative structure in place and is making good use of the feedback gained. It would be good if guidelines were in place to ensure this remains the case. • There should be exactly the same local community engagement processes for the NPA in respect of planning as for any other local authority. Planning decisions within the Park boundary must ensure that the statutory Park purposes are borne in mind and these purposes are likely to be less well served if planning is in the hands of a local authority (question e). • Engagement with local communities saw a transformation with a change of CEO two years ago. However, it is not clear who is responsible for maintaining this in the future – the Chair? At the moment the Chair has no great accountability to local residents and the introduction of direct elections would go some way in giving residents greater accountability.
53	New Forest Commoners Defence Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The special qualities of the New Forest derive in a large part from the grazing of commoners animals. It would therefore strengthen the links with this very important community if the commoners and/or the Verderers were represented on the NPA. Introducing directly elected members or increasing the number of other elected members would not correct this anomaly. • We propose that both the Verderers and the Commoners Defence Association should each be able to appoint a member of the Authority, on the understanding that these people have practical knowledge and experience of commoning. • The total membership could then be adapted by either increasing total numbers, or reducing the other categories.
54	Mr Tarnoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current membership is quite effective, with a good balance of parish reps and the more 'political' District and County reps. The Secretary of State appointees are key in bringing useful expertise to bear. Support the current size and membership. One of the advantages of 'national' members is that they can take a long term view without being at the mercy of the whim of the electorate. If anything I would have a few more appointees to adequately cover the areas of expertise required to fully support the Park's purposes and qualities (question a).

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reject the notion that the NPA should consist of entirely directly elected members. This is an oversimplification of how democratic representation works. Setting up an entirely elected NPA would only serve to bog the NPA down instead of allowing it to make the best decisions for the National Park to fulfil its statutory purposes. • The areas that should be covered by appointees to the NPA include ecology, forestry & land management, business and tourism, heritage, special communities (e.g. commoners), and national. This could increase the number of appointees from 4 to 8 and the involvement of appointed members freely giving their time and experience, is at the heart of the 'Big Society'. • In practice the Verderers are one of the local authorities in the New Forest. Whilst the NPA makes an appointment to the Verderers, there should be a reciprocal arrangement. The Secretary of State appointees could be increased by one – stipulated as a Verderers appointee. • The selection process could be more transparent by clearly designating the expertise for which each member is selected. • See no reason why the maximum terms of the 'elected' members and the 'appointed' members should be the same. • The New Forest Consultative Panel is a useful way for concerns to filter up to the NPA and vice versa. Believe it should be invited to take a more active role (question d). • The open application process for the Secretary of State appointees encourages interested local people with relevant skills to offer the benefits of their knowledge and experience (question d).
55	New Forest District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of direct elections makes the Authority more remote from, and less accountable to, the public it serves. The arrangements also disadvantage those groups who have a specific interest in the well being of the Park as they have no opportunity to nominate candidates. • Improvements in accountability can be best achieved by establishing a system of direct elections. Since the Park is governed by legislation and statutory duties, there is no need for the Secretary of State to have any role (question b). • There should be no limit of length of membership provided there are direct elections (question c). • The New Forest NPA has improved its consultation procedures and now undertakes involvement very much in line with 'Big Society' principles. The District Council will work with the NPA on areas where joint consultation is appropriate.
56	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the board of NPAs is broadly appropriate. A significant reduction in size would risk diminishing the technical expertise and links with local communities (question a). • It is essential to maintain the percentage of Secretary of State appointees. National Parks are national assets and the Secretary of State appointees ensure this perspective is not lost. They also bring technical expertise and are often able to take a long term view of issues free from local political considerations (question a).

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be scope for rebalancing the ratios of appointees from local authorities and parish councils to increase local accountability through Parish Council representation (question a). • A clear set of criteria should be set out for all appointees to the NPA (question b). • Do not support the introduction of direct elections – low turnouts could open the way to reps from single issue groups or vested interests being represented. Concerned that direct elections would lead to an increasingly politicised NPA. • All members of the NPA should serve for a similar maximum term (e.g. 10 years) (question c). • The NPA hosts or attends a very wide range of consultative fora and has made huge strides in engaging groups previously disaffected with the NPA. The NPA should formally agree to attend all New Forest Consultative Panel meetings. • The New Forest NPA has the balance about right between consulting, engagement and delivery. • The NPA should examine ways in which it can proactively engage with under-represented groups.
57	Mr Bowles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPA is a waste of taxpayers' money. Most of the staff come from outside the area and those who do live within the area were NFDC employees before so are merely doing the same job for a different master. The two MPs covering the Forest have also been vocal in opposing the NPA. • The New Forest NPA should be disbanded forthwith and the savings made put towards the Government's budget deficit. Suggest holding a referendum to find the views of the local residents as to whether the NPA is of any value.
58	Cllr E Heron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPA has encountered a number of difficulties and the greatest obstacle is the perceived lack of legitimacy and accountability of NPA members. Whilst the majority are elected in some way, none are directly accountable. Making some members directly elected appears to be the simplest solution, but this would lead to a 'two tier' membership. It is therefore necessary that, although not a cheap option, all members should be directly elected. • To ensure directly elected members represent geographical areas it is suggested that the electoral areas are based on the current 'quadrants', with the number of members from each 'quadrant' adjusted to equalise representation by population. • The current membership of 22 should be retained. • Voter eligibility should be based on the electoral register for dwellings in the Park. Candidates should be expanded to include all those who reside, own a property or place of business is within a Parish which part or all falls within the Park. The term of members should be four years and elections held on the same date as quadrennial District elections.
59	Milford-on-Sea Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parish Council, as a member of the New Forest Consultative Panel, is informed and consulted on a wide range of issues relating to the New Forest NPA.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method of selecting NPA members from already elected County, District and Parish councils is the right economic and efficient choice. Agree that their membership should remain only as long as they remain serving as elected councillors. Agree that 'national' members should remain for a maximum of 10 years. • The expertise members offer should be highlighted when they join the NPA.
60	Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not yet sufficient evidence to point to any radical changes needed to improve the governance arrangements. As experience is gained, however, there may be future cause to refine its governance, perhaps through a review every 10 years. • There is a majority of locally appointed members which gives the right balance. • Would like to see those standing for election to local authority councils publicise whether they would also be willing to serve on the NPA, and what they would offer. Local authorities should make available the criteria and justification for their selection(s). • The disparity in terms could be partly redressed by limiting local authority members to a maximum of three consecutive terms, and being ineligible to stand again for at least one term. • With the creation of the unitary authority in south Wiltshire, there is no longer a case for 2 NPA members from Wiltshire Council. • No major issues with the current arrangements for selecting parish councils. • The role of the Parish members is yet to be completely understood or used to full advantage to represent the views of local communities to the NPA. This could be assisted by a clear job description for Parish members. Parish members should be restricted to a maximum of three consecutive terms, with a break of one term before being eligible to stand again. • The 'national' members bring invaluable experience to the NPA and there would be no benefit in replacing the current appointment process with a system of direct elections which could become hostage to single issue pressure groups. Their period of appointment should be brought more into line with the other membership categories. • To replace one of the Wiltshire appointees, would like to see an additional national appointee filled by an elected Verderer. • Welcome the more formal recognition of the New Forest Consultative Panel by the Authority that is being recommended. • There are currently no specific meetings targeted towards the general public. The Parish Quadrant meetings could be made flexible enough to also accommodate a public forum element for questions/feedback to the NPA. • The Council welcomes the greater importance the NPA is beginning to place on the role of Parish Councils in the planning process and the NPA should hold seminars on planning matters on a regular basis.
61	One Voice New Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Voice has conducted a more in-depth survey than the Defra consultation document. Although One Voice is based in the New Forest, the One Voice Survey was open to residents and visitors of all English National Parks to respond to. In total 191 people responded to the national One Voice survey, with the headlines below.

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% felt that NPAs were not good value for taxpayers money. • 61% agreed there was no need for a single authority to administer National Parks. • 61% would prefer to retain Park status without a single administrative authority having control. • 85% felt that planning powers should be transferred to existing local authorities to save money. • 77% supported transferring the two statutory purposes to existing local authorities. • 64% felt that the NPA's socio-economic duty should be made a statutory purpose. • 71% felt that conservation bodies could be given responsibility for SSSIs and AONBs if the NPA's administrative powers were removed. • 88% felt that NPA members should be directly elected by residents who live in the Park. • 81% felt that prospective candidates should live and work within the National Park boundaries. • 40% agreed that NPA membership should include Defra appointees. • The majority (57%) felt that there should be no Defra appointees, with 36% supporting 1-2. • Range of views expressed on the size of the membership, with general support for a smaller size. • 40% felt that NPA members should wear no more than 1 'hat' outside their NPA role. • Range of views expressed on the maximum 'term' of members, majority supporting up to 3 years. • 56% consider the NPA's attendance at Parish Council meetings to be a robust mechanism for engaging the general public. • 98% agree there should be more visibility in the public domain on how NPAs use their budgets.
62	New Forest History and Archaeology Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'National' appointees are very much the core of the NPA's membership. They represent the national interest and are less likely to be swayed by local politics in their decision making. • The influence of 'national' members should not be weakened by the introduction of an elected membership. Elected members may gain seats based on single issues or due to party politics. • The protection of the National Park has recently been over ridden by a vocal local attack (much of it based on poorly informed rumour and the protection of self-interest) on the NPA which was forced to back down on policies for the protection of the Forest. An elected NPA would leave itself open to infiltration by those who wish to hinder the work of the NPA rather than help it. • Would wish to see national members chosen more rigorously in regard to the Park's two statutory purposes. They should be able to demonstrate expertise, knowledge and experiences of aspects of the two purposes. Would hope to see steps taken to preserve and enhance the expert knowledge present amongst the NPA members.
63	Burley Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the true accountability of the New Forest National Park. The make –up of the Authority derogates from true local

Summary of governance consultation responses relating specifically to the New Forest National Park – April 2011

	Council	<p>accountability by reason of the absence of local elections to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Forest District Council appoints 4 members and of the 5 posts appointed by Hampshire County Council, 4 are also members of NFDC. The latter Council in reality has 8 representatives. The effect is that the NPA is effectively run by the local authority. The nature of the NPA is that it should be apolitical and under present arrangements it cannot be.• The number of local authority nominated places should be drastically cut to be replaced with directly elected members, who should not be allowed to stand on behalf of a political party.• The ability of the Secretary of State to appoint members seems to have validity in that it allows a balancing effect to ensure representation of a cross section of interests. If however elections were held for the whole Authority, then they could all stand to represent sectional interests.
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