



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

To Chief Executives of all principal local authorities
in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, as extended,
and the Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Dales
National Park Authority

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24th February 2016

**Consultation on the future composition of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
in light of the extensions taking effect on 1st August 2016**

Further to the confirmation by the Secretary of State on 23rd October 2015 of the Orders extending the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, I am writing to invite your views on the membership of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority when the Orders come into effect on 1st August 2016.

Defra proposes that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority should increase in size from 22 to 25 members to accommodate one new member from each of the newly constituent local authorities, i.e. Eden District Council, Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council. The number of "national" members (appointed by the Secretary of State) and parish members (chosen by the parish councils collectively and appointed by the Secretary of State) would remain the same.

We welcome your views and comments on this proposal, which should be received by midnight on 24th March 2016. Please send responses to nationalparks.aonbs@defra.gsi.gov.uk or in writing to: Protected Landscapes Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 1/09 Temple Quay House, Bristol BS1 6EB.

To ensure transparency and inform our decision making, this consultation is not restricted to the principal authorities to whom we are writing (as required in the Act) but also invites comments from any organisation or individual who wishes to respond.

Detail of the legal framework for membership of National Park authorities is set out at Annex 1.

If you have any queries about this letter please email nationalparks.aonbs@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

Tom Surrey, Deputy Director, Land Use, for and on behalf of Defra

Annex 1: Legal framework for National Park authority membership

The membership framework of a National Park authority, as set out in Schedule 7 to the Environment Act 1995, comprises:

- members appointed by constituent local authorities (“local authority members”);
- parish councillors nominated by the parish councils, but appointed by the Secretary of State (“parish members”); and
- other members appointed by the Secretary of State (“Secretary of State so-called “*national*” members”).

All principal local authorities whose administrative area includes land within the boundary of a National Park must have at least one member unless they indicate they do not wish to appoint members to an Authority. Where possible, local authority membership allocations also loosely reflect the proportion of land and population that each local authority has within a Park. Parish members are chosen by the parishes collectively although formally appointed by the Secretary of State. Secretary of State “national” appointees are selected through an open recruitment process which is regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and having regard to representing the “national” interest in the Parks.

The sum of the local authority and parish members must always exceed the number of Secretary of State “national” members. Membership numbers allocated to each category and to each local authority, for each National Park authority, are specified in the relevant statutory instrument.

It is a statutory requirement under paragraph 2(3) of Schedule 7 to the Environment Act 1995 for the Secretary of State to consult all principal local authorities with an area wholly or partly within the relevant Park about any proposals with regard to:

- the number of local authority members of a National Park authority;
- the councils by whom local authority members are appointed;
- the number of members to be appointed by each council.