

## **Annex A**

### **Procedures for meetings where the Board acts in a quasi-judicial role i.e. considering whether to confirm the notification of SSSIs**

- A.1 The Board has a duty to consider any objections to the SSSI confirmation made by owners or occupiers of the land which is being considered for designation; and any representations made by members of the public or interested parties.
- A.2 The meeting at which the confirmation is to be considered must be held in public.
- A.3 Those who wish to do so must be given an opportunity to make oral representations to the Board if they have given notice that they wish to do so.
- A.4 It is normal practice for representations to the Board to last for no more than 10 minutes. Parties may be given slightly longer at the Chair's discretion.
- A.5 Those presenting to the Board may use audio-visual aids however the presentation must be visible to the whole meeting.
- A.6 The Board may question both Natural England officers and any person who has made representations to them before making its decision. The decision-making process shall conform to that described in Section 7 of these Standing Orders.
- A.7 The Board will be joined for the discussions by an appropriately qualified lawyer, who provides legal advice as required, but who takes no part in the formal decision-making.
- A.8 A stenographer will be present to take a verbatim note of the discussions.
- A.9 Board Members must satisfy themselves that the procedural safeguards have been properly carried out i.e.
  - (i) that there has been appropriate consultation with owners/ occupiers and that they have been given at least 3 months to make their objections;
  - (ii) that the owners/occupiers have been given sufficient scientific evidence to inform them of the reasons the site is being considered for designation as a SSSI; and
  - (iii) that objectors and interested parties have been given the opportunity to present their case at the Board.
- A.10 In reaching its decision, any judgement made by the Board must be a scientific one based on the evidence presented. The question the Board should ask itself is: is it of the opinion that the site is of special scientific interest?