

**MINUTES** of a meeting of **CABINET** held on 29 May 2012 at County Hall, Matlock

**PRESENT**

Councillor A I Lower (in the Chair)

Councillors J A Allsop, J P Harrison, Mrs C A Hart, C W Jones, B Lewis and M V Longden.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors K L Parkinson and S A Spencer.

**158/12      LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW - RESPONSE TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS** Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive which sought approval to the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England draft recommendations for the Further Electoral Review of Derbyshire.

In April 2012, the Commission published draft recommendations for Derbyshire having considered all the submissions received on division arrangements for the County. The Commission's proposals were broadly in line with those of the Council with the exceptions of Bolsover and North East Derbyshire districts where the Commission had proposed significant modifications to the Council's proposals. The draft recommendations were subject to a period of public consultation and all responses to the recommendations needed to be submitted by 8 June 2012. Maps detailing the Commission's draft recommendations for each District/Borough are included at Appendix A to the report and maps showing the Council's proposals were included at Appendix B to the report. Details of the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations and the response of the Council were presented in respect of each district area. Particular reference was made to the introduction of two member divisions in some areas which it was felt would lead to confused lines of responsibility for residents and parish councils in what was already perceived to be a complex system of local government and this proposal would not make local politics and representation more accessible.

The Commission would consider other responses to the draft recommendations before preparing final recommendations for Derbyshire. The Commission retained the right to undertake further information gathering

and/or consultation, if responses did not lead to a clear picture of the degree to which the draft recommendations were acceptable to local people.

Final recommendations would be prepared and published by the Commission for a period of eight to ten weeks before laying down the Order in the Houses of Parliament in mid-October 2012. Revised electoral divisions would be implemented in time for the next County Council elections in May 2013.

Cabinet noted that the decision was not a Key Decision as stated in the report.

**RESOLVED** that (1) the response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England Draft Recommendations as the first stage of the Further Electoral Review of Derbyshire be approved as detailed in the report; and

(2) further reports on the progress of the Further Electoral Review of Derbyshire be received as appropriate.

**159/12      CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO NATIONAL PARK GOVERNANCE** Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive on consultation being undertaken by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on proposed changes to primary legislation to facilitate changes to the governance arrangements of National Parks and the Broads Authorities, and to seek approval for the submission of the County Council's response to the consultation.

DEFRA with the support of National Park Authorities, undertook public consultation between November 2010 and February 2011. Over 360 responses were received, 55 of which related specifically to the Peak District National Park with the key themes being:

- Pressure for a smaller authority alongside some preference for a greater local bias;
- Calls for better communication or greater engagement with communities;
- Improvements in relation to the Authority's role as a planning authority.

In response to the consultation, the Government concluded that the Peak National Park Authority's current membership, size and structure was not necessarily best suited to meet local needs and it also noted the relatively high number of responses that called for directly elected members. The

Government subsequently proposed that the two Park Authorities be selected to trial directly elected seats.

Following the initial consultation, the Government was now inviting comments on proposed changes to current legislation which was likely to be enacted through a Public Bodies Act Order. The proposed changes of specific relevance to the Peak District National Park Authority were:

- Making it possible for National Park Authorities to include some directly elected members;
- Removing the need for the Secretary of State to appoint Parish Members;
- Relaxing the political balance requirement on local authorities when appointing their members to a National Park Authority;
- Making it possible to allow parishes in subsequently specified National Parks to choose non-councillors for their seats (so that anyone who lived within a National Park would be eligible);
- Applying a maximum length of service of 8 years;

The consultation closed 31 May 2012 and it was recommended that the comments on the proposals put forward by the Government outlined at Appendix 1 form the basis of the County Council's response to the consultation. The Government had indicated that they would give all responses received, including those which proposed an alternative to their preferred options, due consideration. It was envisaged that the introduction of directly elected members would be trialled in the Peak District in May 2013 and as such the proposals would have implications for the County Council in the short and medium term. It was recommended that further reports relating to the governance of the Peak District National Park Authority be brought to future meetings of Cabinet as and when details of confirmed arrangements became available.

**RESOLVED** that (1) the current consultation being undertaken by the DEFRA on proposed changes to primary legislation to facilitate changes to the governance arrangements of the National Parks and the Broads Authorities be noted;

(2) the comments outlined at Appendix 1 of the report on the governance proposals as the basis for the County Council's response to the consultation be approved; and

(3) further reports on the governance of the Peak District National Park Authority and the implications for the County Council be presented to Cabinet as necessary.