

Review of Call-In  
Directions Consultation  
PCC Division  
Communities and Local Government  
Zone 1/J1  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London, SW1E 5DU



03 April 2008

Dear PCC Division

Review of 'Call-in' Directions

Thank you for providing the opportunity for ENPAA to respond to the above consultation. The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) provides a single collective voice for the nine English National Park Authorities (NPAs). It is governed by the Chairs of the nine Authorities. Our response represents the collective view of officers who are working within the policies established by the NPAs – and was recently considered and approved by the Heads of Planning of the nine NPAs.

NPAs are local and strategic planning authorities and therefore take a particular interest in ensuring that the planning process can promote sustainable development and that the special qualities of the National Parks are protected and enhanced.

#### Support for amalgamation

Overall, ENPAA supports the idea of amalgamating the different orders for 'Call-Ins' for the reasons given in the consultation paper.

#### Protection for National Park special qualities

National Parks are protected for the nation, and frequently are of international significance in terms of the combination of landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage that they contain. We believe, therefore, that should a National Park Authority object to a development proposal on the grounds that it will undermine the special qualities of the National Park – that this should be treated in the same way as that proposed for World Heritage Sites. NPAs make considerable efforts in seeking to address objections through pre-application discussions with developers. If following discussions with the applicant and local planning authority (if the proposal is outside the National Park boundary but nevertheless will affect the special qualities found within it) the NPA feels it needs to retain its objection, we believe this should lead to an application being called in. This would seem to be entirely in keeping with the duty upon public bodies to have regard to National Park purposes under S.65 of the Environment Act 1995.

English National Park Authorities Association

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## Reinforcing the plan-led system

ENPAA objects to the proposal that a departure from an agreed plan should not be considered for a call in. While we recognise the desire to increase local autonomy and decision making, we believe that the current proposal could well undermine the plan-led system. For continued public participation in local decision making processes it is important that people have confidence in the processes which are established. Having been through a structured process in order to arrive at an adopted plan – it seems unreasonable that an application that then departs from that plan should be determined without even consideration of the need for a call in. The risk is that the overall effect would be to reduce confidence in the plan led system and the very participation by local communities in planning that the Government is seeking to encourage. We would urge the Government to re-consider this particular proposal.

We are happy for this response to be made publicly available and would be happy to discuss any of the points we make further with officials if that would be of help.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hamblin  
ENPAA Director