

Eden District Council

**Planning Applications Committee
15th September 2005**

Consultation on National Park Applications

Report of the Director of Technical Services

1 Purpose of Report

The National Park Authority has recently written to all Authorities within whose boundaries they operate, seeking an agreement to a proposed change in the way in which applications are considered. They wish to streamline procedures in an attempt to raise the number of applications they are able to deal with by delegation, and through this initiative improve their overall performance in terms of the speed at which they deal with applications. This report responds to this request.

2 Report Details

- 2.1 The National Park Authority is currently a 'Standards Authority', which means that they have been identified by the ODPM as failing to meet the required standard in terms of the efficiency of their Development Control function. One measure they hope to introduce is to amend the consultation arrangements with the District Councils involved in the process, these being South Lakeland, Copeland, Allerdale and Eden. Currently the District Councils reply to every application that is received within the National Park boundary. The proposal is for the District Councils to only respond to those applications that are either major or significant or where the District Council specifically wishes to comment. This will then enable the Park Authority to determine minor applications in a more timely fashion and so improve upon efficiency.
- 2.2 Within the last three months a total of 46 responses were made. The overwhelming majority of these (approximately 95%) relate to minor forms of development, typically being house extensions, agricultural buildings and some tourism development. Only one response to the National Park Authority in the last three months was to recommend that consent be refused. This was for an advance directional road sign, on the Bampton to Haweswater Road.
- 2.3 It has to be remembered that the National Park Authority has its own staff who undertake a site visit and appraisal of these applications, against their own planning policies. A second appraisal is very much a duplication of effort. However the proposed arrangement would not preclude the Council from commenting upon a particular application, for it will allow any major or significant application to be singled out for more detailed consideration and response. The local Parish Council is always consulted, in the same way as within Eden.

2.4 The National Park Authority will continue to send the Council a copy of every application they receive, and their 'Weekly List' of applications received will continue to be circulated to Members. In this way Members and Officers can alert the National Park Authority to any application that is considered to be 'significant', and hence warrant a more detailed assessment and response before the application is determined.

2.5 These revised arrangements will enhance the quality of consultation responses provided to the National Park Authority, yield some Officer time that can be used to deal with the Councils own caseload, and assist the National Park in improving its performance.

3 Policy Framework

3.1 There are no relevant Council policies. Applications for development fall to be considered within the context of the national Parks own policy framework.

4 The Legal Implications

4.1 The Council will continue to hold applications that fall within the National park boundary for public inspection and for the purpose of maintaining the planning register. Therefore the change to the consultation procedure will not have legal implications.

5 The Financial Implications

5.1 There will be some saving of officer time that can be redirected to deal with the Councils own workload.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 *None*

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- a) the Council cease to provide consultation responses to the National Park Authority in relation to minor development
- b) the Council provides a detailed response in respect of any major or significant applications
- c) the arrangements be reviewed in 12 months.

S Huddart
Director of Technical Services

Background Papers: letter received from the Lake district National park Authority dated 6th July 2005

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