

THE PENTLAND HILLS REGIONAL PARK JOINT COMMITTEE

Pentland Hills Regional Park Changes to Advisory Group

Purpose of report

- 1. To seek the approval of the Joint Committee to the changes proposed by the management group to the Pentland Hills Advisory Group**

Main report

- 1. The joint committee on its meeting of March 29th 2004 asked the officers' management group to consider the future of the Regional Park Advisory group.**
- 2. The officers' management group researched examples of similar advisory and consultative groups and deliberated on a model that could operate effectively in the Pentland Hills Regional Park. The details are contained in the appended paper.**

Recommendations

- 1. That the advisory group be reconstituted as the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum.**
- 2. That such a consultative forum would be available to offer views in relation to the achievement of Regional Park aims and offer matters for consideration to the Joint Committee.**
- 3. That the current distinction between "members" and "observers" as described in the minute of agreement be removed.**
- 4. That all three local authorities would remain eligible to nominate one elected members to stand on the consultative forum.**
- 5. That the Managing Authority continue to service this new forum**

- 6. That the consultative forum would continue to be chaired by the chair of the joint committee**
- 7. That the joint committee would continue to invite members to the consultative forum as described in the current minute of agreement.**
- 8. That any such consultative forum, include representatives from predominately local interest which would include, landowning/farming, communities, recreation, biodiveristy, cultural heritage, tourism and economic/rural development . A list of proposed representation is included in the appended paper.**
- 9. That new standing orders for the roles and procedures of the consultative forum should be drafted and appended to the minute of agreement if required.**
- 10. That the Regional Park facilitate greater liaison with consultative forum members and engage them in park issues through better use of electronic communications and hold formal meetings only as required. At least one full meeting of the Forum should be planned annually.**
- 11. That the consultative forum meetings should be issue- focused, with opportunities for solution-driven discussion.**
- 12. That the changes proposed by the officers' management group, continue for the duration of the current minute of agreement . Consultative forum members should have an opportunity to contribute to the forum's operational processes and procedures at an early stage of its development.**
- 13. The Regional Park monitor how the consultative forum is working and report back to the joint committee at a future date.**

Signed: Carol Huston Acting Park Manager Date: 16 Nov 2004

Appendices Appendix 1 Pentland Hills Regional Park. Changes to Advisory group Paper

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Wards affected City-wide

Background Papers

Pentland Hills Regional Park

Advisory Group - Proposed Changes

Report prepared by the Acting Park Manger on behalf of the Officers Management Group

Minute of Agreement

The new minute of agreement between the three local authorities was adopted by the joint committee at its meeting in March 2004. It was amended to include the clause 9© of the minute of agreement that *"the joint committee will have the power to alter the structure of the Advisory Group..."*

In clause 17 (vii) the joint committee can " terminate the advisory group and re-establish another advisory group or any other such working group as it considers necessary to assist it to carry out its functions."

Current definition and membership of the Advisory Group

The Regional Park Advisory Group is defined in clause 17 of the minute of agreement. It was set up to provide a forum, representative of all interests in the Regional Park, which could provide technical and specialist knowledge to support the management and development of the park. One elected member from each local authority would be elected to sit on the advisory group.

Non local authority members invited to sit on the advisory group are to be in office for a period not exceeding 4 years.

The joint committee chair also chairs the advisory group, but the vice chair should be elected from the non-local authority members.

Advisory Group should meet twice a year

Sub groups could be convened as required.

The current membership of the Regional Park Advisory Group is:

Local authorities - 3 members
Landowning - 4 members, SLF, MOD, SW, SAC
Farming - 2members NFU
Heritage - 2 members SWT, NTS
Rereation - 2 members SCAC, Scotways
Community Councils - 1 member, CCF

Observers/Advisors

Natural Heritage - 1 member, SNH
Recreation (Formal) - I member, SSC
Economic Development - I members, LEC
Woodlands/Forestry - 1 member FA
Scottish Executive(Environment) - 1 member SE
Archaeology - 1 member HS
Rural Development - 1 member SAC Advisory Services.

Current status and requirements

The Advisory group of the Regional Park has been static for several years. With the recent changes that have occurred within the Regional Park and against the backdrop of, new policies, guidelines, developments and statutory duties from the Scottish Executive, national agencies and local authorities an opportunity to revise, re-focus and re-invigorate the role of the advisory group has arisen.

This matter was discussed at the joint committee meeting of March 2004 and further discussed with management group following. It was agreed that the Park Manager would undertake some research of similar arrangements across the country and prepare recommendations. These would then be discussed further by the management group before submitting to the joint committee for approval and then to the advisory group to adopt. These meetings are scheduled for late Nov/ early Dec 2004.

The Park Manager approached both Regional Parks and National Parks in Scotland as well as 3 trusts and National Parks in England to compare their management structures and representation. Some are guided by legislation (National Parks) others by their own guidelines and interpretation of best practise (trusts).

Need for Change

In order for any "advisory" group to be effective, its role in relation to the stated aims and policies of the regional park, its *modus operandi*, decision making process and lines of communication with other park bodies needs to be clear. As this current advisory group has now not met for over 2 years, it would appear that these requirements have broken down. The current group was set up at a time where the regional park was not well established and difficulties with the landowning and farming communities were present.

The park has now been established for 20 years and relations with farmers and landowners more co-operative. With many more additional recreational activities taking place and a need to ensure, as a public body, an open and consultative management approach, the ability provided in the minute of agreement to change the format of the advisory group should be taken.

Proposals

The current membership of the advisory group reflects a previous era and representation. 6 of the places on the group are given to landowning/ managing interest, only 1 to community representation and 2 to recreation. Of the latter two these take the form of large organisations rather than local interest. Additionally there is no identified formal professional planning support from any of the three local authorities.

The following proposals are recommended by the PHRP Management group for consideration by the Joint Committee

- : that the advisory group as it currently stands be reconstituted as the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum.
- : such a consultative forum would be available to offer views in relation to the achievement of regional park aims and offer matters for consideration to the joint committee
- : that the distinction between members and observer be removed
- : local authorities would remain eligible to nominate elected members to stand
- : that CEC continue to service this new forum
- : the consultative forum would continue to be chaired by the chair of the joint committee
- : the joint committee would continue to invite members to the consultative forum as per the current minute of agreement
- : that any such consultative forum, include representatives from predominately local interest, although some bodies reflecting a national interest could also be invited . 25-30 places would seem to be a workable and manageable membership. These would include, * landowning/farming, communities, recreation, biodiversity, cultural heritage, tourism and economic/rural development .
- : new standing orders for the roles and procedures for the consultative forum would need to be drafted and appended to the minute of agreement if required.

- : the use of electronic communication should be explored as a means of engaging the consultative forum in issues pertinent to the regional park e.g. discussion for a, chat rooms, newsgroups. To reduce the need for numerous and lengthy meetings.
- :the Regional Park aims to facilitate greater liaison with advisory group members and engage them in park issues through better use of electronic communications and hold formal meetings only as required. At least one full meeting of the Forum should be planned annually.
- :Consultative forum meetings should be issue focused, with opportunities for solution-driven discussion.
- :the changes proposed by the management group and (if) approved by the joint committee will continue for the duration of the current minute of agreement This will enable advisory group members to contribute to the consultative forum's operational processes and procedures. The Regional Park will monitor how the consultative forum is working and report back to the joint committee at a future date.

***possible invitees would include - provisional list only**

- Local NFU member in regional park - 1
- MOD - 1
- SRPBA - 1
- Local SWT representative - 1
- Friend of the Pentlands - 1
- Community Council Chairs - 3 (1 per local authority. Park Manger to propose initial invitations)
- Local management groups representative - 1
- Walkers representatives - 1. Ramblers
- Horse representative - 1 British Horse Society proposed
- Hill Runners representative - 1 Scottish Hill Runners proposed
- Mountain Biking representative - 1 Go Bike to be approached to identify suitable Mountain biking rep.
- Disabled Users representative - 1 CEC disabled forum to be approached to identify rep
- Fishing representative - 1 Scottish Angling Society proposed
- Water Sports representative - 1 to be identified and proposed
- Orienteers -1 Edinburgh Southern Orienteering Club proposed
- SW -1
- SNH - 1
- Historic Scotland (Archaeology) - 1
- Economic/Rural Development (Scottish Executive - 1 to be identified and proposed
- Visit Scotland (or equivalent) - 1 to be identified and proposed
- Local authority elected members- 3
- Local authority officers - 3 including Chair.
- Park Manager - 1

Carol Huston
Acting Regional Park Manager

Oct 2004