

# Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

10am, Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013

## Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum and Joint Committee Membership

Item number

Report number

Wards

Pentland Hills, Colinton/Fairmilehead

### Links

Coalition pledges

P33

Council outcomes

CO10

Single Outcome Agreement

**David Jamieson**

Parks & Greenspace Manager

Contact: Keith Logie, Parks Development Manager

E-mail: [keith.logie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:keith.logie@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7916

# Executive summary

## Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum and Joint Committee Membership

### Summary

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This report makes recommendations for revised representation and membership of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum and Joint Committee.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that:

1. All community councils on the periphery of the Regional Park expressing an interest are invited to join the Consultative Forum;
2. The Regional Park Manager amends membership of the Consultative Forum as outlined in this paper to improve representation; and
3. The National Farmers Union (Scotland) and Scottish Land & Estates be invited to provide one non-voting representative each on the Joint Committee.

### Measures of success

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Success will be measured through the achievement of wider and more representative membership of the Consultative Forum. Feedback from both Community Councils and farming and landowning interest will be sought after the changes have been implemented to assess whether representation and engagement has improved.

### Financial impact

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By reducing the number of Joint Committee and Consultative Forum meetings to two each, efficiency savings will be realised through more efficient use of officer time, administration resources and booking of facilities. There is no other financial impact.

### Equalities impact

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The contents and recommendations of this report do not detract from the delivery of the general public sector equality duties or infringe upon the ten areas of rights. The review of the Consultative Forum provides the opportunity to advance equality of opportunity for disability. Visitor facilities provided in the Regional Park are designed to be

accessible for people of all abilities. By securing representation at the Consultative Forum the interests of visitors with disabilities will be advanced.

## **Sustainability impact**

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The Pentland Hills Regional Park supports sustainability objectives by: 1) providing a managed resource for non-motorised recreation and physical activity; 2) acting as a carbon sink through the protection and enhancement of woodland, wetland and moorland; 3) enhancing the biodiversity of Edinburgh and the Lothians; 4) protecting the landscape and environmental quality of the Pentland Hills; and 5) supporting sustainable economic development of the rural economy.

## **Consultation and engagement**

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The Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum's role is primarily one of providing an effective consultative mechanism to advise and guide the Joint Committee. The proposals regarding membership and representation were referred to the Consultative Forum and are informed by input from its members.

## **Background reading / external references**

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*'Pentland Hills Regional Park – Review of Governance and Consultative Mechanisms'*  
– Report to the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012

*'Pentland Hills Regional Park - Review of Consultative Forum Representation'* –  
Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum 24<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

Further background information about the Regional Park is available at  
[www.pentlandhills.org](http://www.pentlandhills.org)

## Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum and Joint Committee Membership

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 This report invites the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee to consider amendments to the membership of the Consultative Forum and non-voting membership of the Joint Committee.

### 2. Main report

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#### Consultative Forum Membership

- 2.1 At its meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the Joint Committee considered a number of proposals for amending the governance and consultative mechanisms for the Regional Park (see background reading). The Joint Committee agreed that:
- the Joint Committee and Consultative Forum should remain as currently constituted and should continue to meet separately, but at a reduced frequency of twice a year;
  - all Joint Committee Members should attend the Consultative Forum where possible;
  - following the next meeting cycle, the Consultative Forum should meet in advance of the Joint Committee to provide Committee members with the opportunity to seek advice from the Forum on matters that they may be required to vote on subsequently;
  - The question of membership of the Consultative Forum be referred to the next meeting of the Consultative Forum and the Regional Park Manager be authorised to implement proposed changes.
- 2.2 Membership was discussed by the Consultative Forum at its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Following this discussion, the following amendments are now proposed :

- Community Councils on the periphery of the Park expressing an interest should be invited to join the Consultative Forum. This replaces the previous situation where membership was limited to one community council per local authority area. Having previously expressed an interest, Balerno Community Council addressed the Consultative Forum and restated their request to join. It is proposed therefore that Balerno Community Council be invited to join as of the next meeting.
- Representation from the following interests / organisations should be reviewed and the Regional Park Manager authorised to amend membership accordingly: cycling (membership to better represent mountain biking interests); angling (secure representation of angling interests); farmers and land managers (identify opportunities to strengthen representation); dog walking (currently un-represented) and recreational visitors with disability (currently un-represented).
- Where possible user group representation should be secured locally to better reflect the actual activities and interests in the Park.

### **Joint Committee Non Voting Membership**

- 2.3 Farmers and landowners have since the early days of the Regional Park expressed an interest in having a stronger 'voice' within the decision making process for the park. This was reiterated at the Consultative Forum on 24th August 2012 when views were expressed that the proposed changes to membership do not fully reflect land manager's interests in the land.
- 2.4 Voting members of the Joint Committee are limited to elected members from the three local authority funding partners. There are three additional non-voting members: Scottish Water; Scottish Natural Heritage and East Lothian Council. East Lothian Council has in practice been a corresponding member and is not generally represented at meetings. The principle of non-voting members is therefore established. It is important for good governance and effective decision making that the Joint Committee does not become too large and that there continues to be a clear distinction between it and the Consultative Forum.
- 2.5 However, given that the majority of land in the Regional Park is in private ownership and the land owning and managing community have a core interest in land and visitor management, there is a case for representation at the Joint Committee. It is proposed therefore that the National Farmers Union Scotland and Scottish Land & Estates are offered non-voting membership.

### **Minute of Agreement**

- 2.6 The Minute of Agreement (MOA) for the Regional Park states that it is for the Joint Committee to appoint non local authority members to the Consultative Forum (referred to in the MOA as the 'Advisory Group'). The MOA also states that the Consultative Forum and Joint Committee meet no less than twice yearly.

The MOA allows for the invitation by agreement to the Joint Committee, other individuals or bodies considered appropriate for the furtherance of the aims of the Regional Park. The proposed changes to Consultative Forum and Joint Committee membership and meeting frequencies are therefore consistent with the terms of the existing Minute of Agreement.

### 3. Recommendations

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee:
- 3.2 agrees that any Community Council adjoining the Regional park boundary expressing an interest in doing so be invited to join the Consultative Forum;
  - 3.3 requests that the Regional Park Manager reviews and implements amendments to the Consultative Forum membership as described in 2.2 above; and
  - 3.4 agrees to invite the National Farmers Union Scotland, and Scottish Land and Estates to represent farming and land managing interests as non-voting members of the Joint Committee.

#### David Jamieson

Parks & Greenspace Manager

### Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	<b>P33</b> - Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions about how Council resources are used.
<b>Council outcomes</b>	<b>CO10</b> - Improved health and reduced inequalities
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	None