



## **Consultation on Publicity for Planning Applications**

### **A response by the English National Park Authorities Association October 2009**

#### **Introduction**

1. The English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) exists to provide a collective voice for the nine English National Park Authorities. It is governed by the Chairs of the nine Authorities, and our response represents the collective view of the Authorities. It has been prepared by officers, working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities (NPAs). Individual NPAs may submit separate comments, which will draw on the specific issues for their particular area. Our response focuses on the specific questions raised in the consultation paper.

#### **Question 1**

**What are your views on making web publication mandatory for a period of 21 days for planning notices where there is currently a requirement to advertise in a newspaper?**

2. There are distinct benefits to making this form of publicity mandatory. The “web” clearly has potential to reach the widest audience and combining publicity requirements in the same place as the application details (now available on most Authority websites) expedites the procedure.

#### **Question 2**

**Do you think it should be mandatory for notices for all planning applications to be made available on a local authority website?**

3. No. Publicity needs to be proportionate to the type, scale and impact of development. Extending the publicity on applications which currently do not have to be advertised in a newspaper would create a misapprehension in many cases that the planning issues are wider than they actually are. In the case of householder development, for example, the issues are primarily concerned with the impact on immediate neighbours, unless the site is in a conservation area or affects the setting of a listed building.

4. Even in national parks and other designated areas, whilst there are areas outside conservation areas where strategic design issues may be pertinent these tend not to be of wider public interest. Persons who are interested in such proposals could be engaged more directly by measures such as direct e-mail alerts.

### **Question 3**

**The requirements to advertise in newspapers for certain types of planning applications and consents, and possible amendments to these, are identified in Table 1. What are your views on these possible amendments?**

5. Applications covered by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and those contrary to a development plan (which an Authority wishes to grant) should receive extensive publicity. Such cases often have local and even regional or national connotations. In these respects retaining a need for a newspaper advert has merit in terms of creating the widest possible publicity.

6. All other development does not need newspaper advertisement provided it is explicitly advertised on an Authority web site. Again this allows a system of e-mail alerts for interested parties. The web advert, site notices, consultations with parish councils and other community groups and individual neighbour notification is sufficient publicity.

7. The press adverts are inordinately expensive for many National Park Authorities who have a surfeit of listed buildings and conservation areas which currently generate high newspaper advert costs.

### **Question 4**

**Do you consider that the period for publicising site notices for listed building and conservation area consent should be increased to 21 days?**

8. Yes - in the interests of consistency.

### **Question 5**

**Do you have any comments on the impact assessment (see Annex 1), in particular the anticipated impact on small businesses and equality issues?**

9. Potential savings would provide the opportunity to reallocate resources to alternative methods of engagement. Re-allocation of resources may allow local authorities to take into account people's preferences for receiving information in different ways. In this way, it might support more effective equal opportunities.