

**EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY****4 FEBRUARY 2003****REVIEW OF RURAL DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS CHAIRED BY LORD HASKINS****Report of the National Park Officer****Purpose of Report:**

To update members on the programme and for the recently announced Review of Rural Delivery Arrangements, to be carried out by Lord Haskins.

**Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998:**

S61 and s62 Environment Act 1995

**Financial Implications:**

No immediate implications although the outcome of the Review may have implications for the future role and resources of the Authority.

**National Park Purposes:**

The arrangements by which DEFRA delivers its rural programmes has a significant impact on the furtherance of National Park purposes and social and economic well-being of the National Park community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:****Members are recommended:**

- to NOTE progress and future timetable for implementation of the Haskins Review.
- to CONSIDER any input from the review from this Authority.

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Minister of State of Rural Affairs, Alun Michael announced, at the Rural Affairs Forum in November 2002, that he was to appoint Lord Haskins to review the way in which the Government's rural policies are delivered. There is a view in central government, and amongst many other deliverers and recipients, that the present rural delivery arrangements are too complex and would benefit from improvement. In short the people to whom the government's rural policies are directed are not being served as effectively as they could be.
- 1.2 Government also believes that the policy and organisational background to rural delivery has changed. In particular the relationship of central departments with the agencies that carry out rural delivery on their behalf. This change has arisen with the establishment of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which was established in May 2001 with the lead responsibility on rural affairs. A responsibility that was previously shared between MAFF, the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and a range of national bodies. The government believes that this new relationship needs to be clarified and developed into a more efficient, effective model that takes account of new responsibilities and delivers more effectively on rural priorities.

## 2. **DELIVERY BODIES COVERED BY THE REVIEW**

- 2.1 The Review will concentrate primarily on the delivery arrangements, both in DEFRA and the work agencies and organisations that report to it. It will examine the way in which these bodies work with other organisations, for example the Government Offices for the Regions, the Regional Development Agencies and local authorities, in delivering rural policies for which DEFRA is responsible. The review will also examine how the rural dimension is taken into account in the delivery of wider government policy.
- 2.2 The delivery of rural policies encompasses a wide range of products and services and the Review will include an examination, but will not be confined to, advice, grants and regulatory activities. The detailed terms of reference, which were published on 6 December 2002, are included at Appendix 1. The groups and organisations that will be contacted by the Review Team are listed at Appendix 2.

## 3. **THE REVIEW APPROACH**

- 3.1 The Review seeks to test the perceptions of policy makers and deliverers against what is actually being received by rural communities, businesses and the environment. The perspective of people at the receiving end will be the cornerstone of this analysis. The Review will be based on 3 fundamental lines of enquiry, which can be summarised as follows:-

- What do recipients believe is happening and what do they think of it?
- What do deliverers think is happening?
- What do policy makers think is happening?

## 4. **REVIEW OUTPUTS**

- 4.1 The Review is expected to report to Ministers in the summer of 2003. The aim is to produce the following main outputs:-
- An account of the current arrangements, including identification of their main strengths and weaknesses.
  - An assessment of where change is needed with an indication of relative priorities.
  - Recommendations for solutions to inefficiencies in the current system, including suggestions for further review where necessary.
  - The business cases for these recommendations and a timetable for their implementation.

## 5. **REVIEW PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 As a first step the Haskins team intends to visit regional and local bodies in 3 parts of the country that represent a broad range of rural characteristics. These are:-
- The North West
  - The South West
  - The East Midlands

Lord Haskins has already visited the South West and the National Park Officer was invited to an evening meal with the review team and senior officials from DEFRA and its Agencies. Although the terms of reference for the review mention National Park Authorities, no specific invitation to contribute to the review has yet been received.

- 5.2 These visits will take place in January 2003 and will be used to gain an overview of how delivery is organised at the regional and local levels and how its effectiveness is perceived by the people concerned. Drawing on the themes that emerge from this initial work, a second, more intensive phase of fact finding that will target organisations, schemes and projects across the country will be undertaken. Rural delivery arrangements in England will be

compared with elsewhere including Scotland, Wales and EU member states and other countries.

- 5.3 In view of the short timescale the Review Team will use as, much as possible, existing studies to form its analysis. The timetable for the work is included at Appendix 3.

## 6. **LINKS WITH PARALLEL REVIEWS**

- 6.1 The Review is being conducted at a time when a number of other related initiatives are in progress, including:-
- Response to Sir Donald Curry's implementation group in sustainable farming and food including the work on the regional delivery plans.
  - The regional governance white paper.
  - DEFRA's Rural White Paper review to establish and refresh the priorities for the rural policy.
  - DEFRA's Skills Learning and Knowledge Review.
  - DEFRA's Review of Forestry Policy.
  - DEFRA's Review of Agri-Environment Schemes.
  - DEFRA's Landscape Review (an audit descriptions of the major activities and relationships of the Department and its agencies and non-departmental public bodies).
  - The findings and implementation of the Better Regulation Task Force reports on environmental regulation and farming and on local delivery of central policy.
  - The Countryside Agency's Rural Proofing Report.
  - The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee report on DEFRA's role in rural education.

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**26 January 2003**