

Date: 31 January, 2011  
My Ref: E/V/EAD/PM  
Your Ref:  
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Dear Sir/Madam

## **COUNTRY PARKS SERVICE**

As you will no doubt be aware, the current and predicted state of public sector finances means that the County Council, along with other public sector bodies, is having to look closely at all the services it provides. As you would expect, no service is immune to the need to find efficiency savings and service reductions, and one of the purposes of this letter is to inform you that the County Council is currently reviewing how Country Parks are provided, with the intention of reducing costs by a reduction in staffing, which forms the majority of the costs of providing the service, and by identifying opportunities to reduce operational budgets.

Prior to making a decision on the future of the Country Parks Service we want to consult key stakeholders such as yourselves' on the proposals to ensure that appropriate regard is taken of all views on what is a very successful and well respected service.

### **Key Proposals**

Consideration is being given to outsourcing the routine grass-cutting and building cleaning works to more cost effective LCC Facilities Management arranged contracts. Specialist areas of work, e.g. maintenance of SSSI's, will continue to be under the allocated appropriate resources directly managed by Country Parks Management.

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As a consequence of the paragraph above, less directly employed staff will be available to provide public events. This means that activities involving the public will be fewer than has been the practice in recent years, and efforts will be concentrated on a smaller number of 'high quality' major events that attract larger numbers and cover their costs of provision in full.

Public engagement through volunteering is seen as very important by the County Council and therefore there is an additional proposal to provide a dedicated Volunteer Engagement Officer to assist with the co-ordination of current volunteers, and to lead on other public engagement activities, such as the work undertaken with Forest Schools.

I would like to give you the opportunity to comment on the above, if you have any comments to make, could you please respond by **28 February, 2011**, your thoughts would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**Elaine Derrick**  
**Estates Practice Manager**

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