

Forestry England's Consultation Proposal

In response to a request from the council to suggest alternative methods for consultation, Forestry England responded in an email of 22nd July.

The Request: "Consultation method - Following on from the presentation on 14th April, we are still being asked what alternative suggestions that you may have for a consultation process. Bearing in mind a lot of people may struggle with internet connections, what suggestions could you offer? If you can put some suggestions forward, we can try to get some feedback for you."

The Response: "It was clear that attendees of the public meeting did not feel that our previous consultation methods were sufficient and we were asked to clarify the next steps in the process and consider how further engagement and consultation could be arranged locally to ensure the views of residents are considered in the development of the beaver project and in the decision of Natural England. The licensing process for the species reintroduction is managed by Natural England on behalf of Government, they expect that the community is consulted on plans by the applicant.

There will be a further opportunity for the public to formally comment on the plans, via a consultation that will be hosted on the Citizenspace portal online, with printed versions provided in key community locations. All these responses will be passed to Natural England as part of the licence application. Following formal consultation a response to the comments will be published. It will be for Natural England as the licencing body to make a final decision on a beaver release. We anticipate that the formal consultation process will take place in the late autumn of 2022, and we will ensure this is publicised widely.

In essence we are proposing an online consultation process with a parallel paper based process available in key community locations. Please feel free to suggest where you feel these key community locations should be, in support of making printed versions widely available, alongside an online approach."

Recommendation: To accept this dual approach and recommend where the printed versions should be left. Council can assist in publicising their location and distributing to the elderly.