

Written Ministerial Statement on the Royal Parks Agency

Monday 18 July 2011 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (John Penrose):

I am publishing today a statement regarding the future governance of the eight Royal Parks and the Royal Parks Agency.

In my Ministerial Written Statement to both Houses on the 18 January 2011, I outlined how the Government was committed to transferring more responsibility for the management of the eight Royal Parks to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and to ensuring that Londoners had a voice in how the Parks are managed.

I have now considered a range of options for how best to achieve our objective of greater accountability to the GLA and to Park users and local residents. I do not believe that primary legislation is necessary to transfer responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Parks. Instead, I believe that it is possible to achieve an outcome that allows the Mayor and local interests to have a significant say in how the Royal Parks are managed which is also cost effective.

Our intention is that Crown ownership of the Royal Parks will be maintained. The Royal Parks will remain an Executive Agency of DCMS and the responsibility of the Secretary of State but we will create a new Royal Parks Board to provide a voice for the Mayor and for London in how the Parks are managed. The Chair and Board will be appointed by the Mayor, with Board members including representatives of the London boroughs and the Royal Household. At the same time, we will task the Board to develop and recommend new consultation processes that will give local communities and users of the Parks a role in decision-making.

The details of these new governance arrangements will be announced in due course. Board arrangements will be kept under review by the Secretary of State.