Summary of the Consultation

The consultation was conducted over a period of five months, starting on the 30th July 2008; it consisted of emails, telephone conversations, letters and a visit.

Initially the consultations concentrated on the vulnerable groups, 8 groups, detailed at Annex A, were contacted by email and/or telephone. These groups included children’s, disability and senior groups. It was explained to the groups that the PWS was carrying out various reviews and that an important part of this was consultation with stakeholders and the public. Each group was asked if they could help with this process by completing questionnaires or face-to-face meetings, also they were asked for their organisation’s views on requirements for a weather service.

Little feedback was received from this initial consultation; however there was one meeting with the Disability Action Network in Plymouth. After this meeting it was agreed that a consultation workshop should be held on the 9th December 2008. However there was little uptake for this and it was subsequently cancelled on the 2nd December 2008.

The disabilities of this group varied considerably, ranging from deaf but otherwise able bodied to very severely physically disabled. The meeting highlighted the difficulty of focusing consultation on such a diverse group, where the activity an individual might be involved in, such as sailing, is more significant in terms of their weather requirement than any disability. This helped to shape the other consultation that was carried out.

On the 18th December 2008 letters were sent to 21 vulnerable and special interest groups, detailed at Annex A; these included amateur sports bodies, tourism and outdoor activity groups, garden and horticulture groups, disability groups and groups for senior people. The letters explained the role of the PWS, asked for feedback and comments and offered to meet with them for further discussions. It was also stated that if a response was not received by the end of January 2009 then it would be assumed that they were satisfied with the current Met Office PWS. No responses were received.

From the limited consultation carried out it can be concluded the vulnerable and special interest groups approached are happy with the services provided to them.

In addition to the above consultation, thinking particularly about children on DofE and school treks, the qualifications and regulations applying to expert leaders’ was investigated. It was found that adventure activities, including the
Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, provided to young people under the age of 18 years have safety management systems inspections and require a licence. The responsibility for regulation implementation lies with the Health and Safety Executive and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority carries out inspections and issue licences on their behalf. For outdoor activities which are particularly weather sensitive expert training is provided by the national outdoor training centres such as Glenmore Lodge, Cairngorms, and Plas y Brenin, Snowdonia. As these were involved in consultation for the Mountain Weather Service Review no further contact was made.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the requirement for consultation with vulnerable and special interest groups should be reviewed every three years. The next review will be due in Financial Year 2011/12.
Annex A

Vulnerable and Special Interest Groups Consulted

Groups initially consulted:

1. The Southwest Senior Network
2. Help the Aged
3. The Scout Association
4. The Duke of Edinburgh Award
5. Royal National Institute for the Blind
6. Royal National Institute for the Deaf
7. Centrepoint (Homeless people)
8. Disability Action Network

Groups contacted by letter on the 18th December 2009:

1. Help the Aged England
2. Independent Age
3. Age Concern
4. National Care Forum
5. National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners
6. Royal Horticultural Society
7. The Football Foundation
8. British Amateur Rugby League
9. Amateur Football Alliance
10. Rugby League Supporters Association
11. Football Supporters Federation
12. Welsh Cricket Association
13. Visit Britain
14. Visit Scotland
15. Visit Wales
16. Visit Northern Ireland
17. The Camping and Caravanning Club
18. Association of Wheelchair Children
19. Action for Deafness
20. Action for Blind People
21. The Queen Elizabeth Foundation (Disabilities including rehabilitation)