

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 15 JUNE 2006

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME
NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Report by: David Illsley, Policy Advisor (Planning)

Summary

This paper sets out the Local Development Scheme for the New Forest National Park, identifying which documents will be produced as part of the Authority's Local Development Framework. It takes into account the conclusions of the members spatial planning workshop held in May and discussions with New Forest District Council over joint working.

The Scheme at, **Annex A**, describes the requirements for preparing local development documents under the new planning procedures introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The draft Scheme, once approved, will be formally submitted to the Government Office for the South East.

Recommendations:

- 1 That subject to comments made at the meeting members approve the Local Development Scheme (Annex A) for submission to the Government Office for the South East.**
- 2 That the Director of Strategy and Planning is authorised to make any subsequent minor amendments that may be required following the response from the Government Office.**

Resources:

Routine

Other major considerations

None

Papers:

NFNPA 103/06 : Cover paper

NFNPA 103/06 : Annex A: Local Development Scheme

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) introduced a new spatial planning system based on a portfolio of planning documents known collectively as the Local Development Framework. The Act requires local planning authorities to prepare a Local Development Scheme. This is a publicly available outline project plan identifying which local development documents will be produced, in what order and when. The Scheme sets out the Authority's planning policy development and review priorities for a three year period, and is rolled forward annually.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Statement 12 (*Local Development Frameworks*, ODPM, 2004), states that joint working on local development documents is "...*particularly encouraged.*" (paragraph 2.34). Joint working allows resources to be pooled and expertise to be shared. The draft Local Development Scheme for the Authority proposes the preparation of a number of joint development documents with New Forest District Council and members will wish to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of this approach in considering the Scheme.
- 1.3 Under the Act, all local planning authorities were required to submit their Local Development Schemes for approval to the Secretary of State by spring 2005. As the New Forest National Park Authority only received its full planning powers in April 2006, it is important that the Authority now submits a Local Development Scheme for approval to guide the production of its local development documents.

2 Local Development Scheme requirements

- 2.1 The Authority must prepare a **Core Strategy**, which establishes the strategic, Park-wide planning policy framework. The Authority has resolved in principle to prepare this as a joint Core Strategy with New Forest District Council last September (NFNPA 30/05).

2.2 The Authority must also prepare a **Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework** covering the New Forest National Park; and is doing so jointly with Hampshire County Council, Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils. Three documents are involved:

- **Minerals and Waste Core Strategy**
- **Waste Management Sites Development Plan Document**
- **Minerals Sites Development Plan Document.**

2.3 In addition PPG17 (*Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, ODPM, 2002) requires all local planning authorities to audit existing open space provision and set local provision standards. This requirement is focused on open spaces and recreation *facilities* including sports pitches, children's play areas, allotments and other open spaces of public value, and not the opportunities mainly for informal recreation, available in the National Park. The scope of the study will therefore be limited to those forms of open space required in association with new development, and will not look at recreational visitor management for example. While it is not a requirement to prepare a Development Plan Document covering this subject, a consultant's survey and review has been jointly commissioned with New Forest District Council, who intend to prepare an **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Development Plan Document**. Extending this to become a **joint document** also covering the larger settlements of the National Park would be an efficient and timely way of meeting this Government policy (see paragraph 4.1).

2.4 The National Park Authority has discretion to decide which other documents it includes. The timetable and targets set out in the Authority's Scheme must be realistic and achievable. There are significant resource implications because each document must go through a lengthy process, including public examination, before it can be adopted. Government Best Value Performance Indicators include a measure of the Authority's performance against the Local Development Scheme and so it is important that the timetable is achievable without slippage. Additional documents may be added at each annual roll forward of the Scheme, but the Government strongly advises against the deletion or re-phasing of documents already included in the Scheme, which is considered to be poor performance.

3 Members Spatial Planning Workshop and discussion – May 2006

3.1 Some members attended a workshop in mid May focusing on the spatial planning framework for the New Forest National Park. Details of the existing planning policy coverage in the New Forest contained within the 'saved' policies and plans were circulated prior to the meeting. Members' views on topic areas in most urgent need of consideration were discussed, with the following main topics raised:

Transport:

- HGV use of the minor roads in the National Park
- impact of the A31 on the National Park
- roadside appearance (clutter of signs, urbanisation)
- need for rail infrastructure to be used more positively.

Commoning issues:

- the need to provide housing for commoners
- issues beyond the National Park boundary involving the loss of back-up grazing land
- drift of land use from agriculture to housing and other inappropriate uses.

Visitor facilities:

- concern over intensification of use at existing campsites
- hotel development / expansion.

Design issues:

- density, design and mix of new development
- concern over telecommunications masts
- need for safer and more attractive public spaces within the Park's built up areas
- concern over increasing light pollution.

Housing

- need for local affordable and key worker housing
- need to reconsider the scale and appropriateness of high density redevelopment in the larger settlements.

3.2 Through discussion of these topics, including consideration of alternative or more effective ways of progressing the issues (for example, through the review of the Management Plan and the Recreation Strategy), three additional priority topics have emerged for inclusion in the Authority's first Local Development Scheme. These are **transport and traffic** issues, a **housing policy** review and a review of general **development control criteria-based policies**.

3.3 The transport and housing issues are both wide ranging in scope and warrant separate Development Plan Documents. Transport issues extend across the National Park boundary and would be best addressed through a **co-ordinated joint study** with New Forest District Council. Likewise future housing sites requirements arising from the South East Plan are made at a sub-regional or district level and so any further allocation decisions will need to be **considered in conjunction** with New Forest District Council.

3.4 A review and reformulation of generic development control policies across the whole Park could most efficiently be undertaken as a high priority by incorporating this work into the preparation of the Core Strategy.

4 Proposed Development Plan Documents

4.1 The preparation of joint documents by adjacent authorities is permitted under the Act and joint working between authorities is encouraged in *Planning Policy Statement 12* (paragraph 1.2). There are advantages and disadvantages to the Authority producing joint or stand alone documents which can be summarised as follows :

- **joint documents** enable cross boundary issues to be addressed consistently and in a complementary manner (albeit there can be different policies either side of the boundary), their preparation can produce efficiencies and consultation can be co-ordinated;
but close integration with the Management Plan process may prove difficult, it may be difficult to resolve strategic and policy differences without compromising or diluting the policies of one or both organisations, and the National Park's policies (and identify) may not be clearly identifiable;
- preparation of **stand alone** documents would avoid the problems of potential confusion of policies and identity (for the National Park) and the risk of 'dilution' of policies and ensure coherent alignment with the developing National Park Management Plan, with linked consultation;
but it risks problems of coherence and compatibility of cross-boundary policies and issues and some loss of opportunity to influence policies beyond the Park boundary, potentially resulting in less 'sympathetic' external policies, and potential efficiencies might be lost.

4.2 Some of these problems would be overcome by a clear programme of joint working which did not extend to the production of joint documents. Alternatively 'joint' documents can be structured in separate parts which makes the identity of policies unambiguous. The table after paragraph 4.3 suggests that, in addition to the Core Strategy (which the Authority has resolved to prepare jointly with New Forest District Council) and the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework (being prepared jointly with Hampshire County and partners) the following Development Plan Documents should also be produced jointly with New Forest District Council :

- Transport Development Plan Document
- Housing Development Plan Document
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Development Plan Document.

4.3 Taking account of the considerations set out in Section 3 and paragraphs 4.1 - 4.2 the scope and timetable implications of joint work

have been discussed with officers of New Forest District Council. The Government Office has also been consulted on a draft Scheme. Any comments received from the latter will be updated at the Authority meeting. As a result it is suggested that the Authority's first Local Development Scheme should include the following documents:

<p>Core Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To cover strategic spatial policies both within the Park and those impacting upon it from nearby adjacent areas. It will include generic criteria-based development control policies covering the whole Park. ▪ Strategy to be prepared jointly with New Forest District Council. Where possible it will be integrated with the reviews and consultation for the National Park Management Plan and New Forest Sustainable Community Strategy.
<p>Transport Development Plan Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be prepared jointly with New Forest District Council given the extensive cross-boundary transport issues. ▪ The review of the New Forest Transport Strategy by Hampshire County Council to be undertaken concurrently.
<p>Housing Development Plan Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To include a review of affordable housing policies and rural exceptions policies (including Commoners); and infill policy in New Forest villages. ▪ To deal with the distribution of future housing allocations. ▪ To be prepared jointly with New Forest District Council.
<p>Open Space, Sport and Recreation Development Plan Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To review recreation and open space provision and set planning policies and proposals to provide for future needs, including contributions towards open space from new development. ▪ Will meet PPG17 (<i>Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation</i>) requirement to audit existing open space provision and set local provision standards. ▪ Joint document with New Forest District Council.
<p>Minerals and Waste Core Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document submitted jointly with Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council.

Minerals Sites Development Plan Document
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To be prepared jointly with Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council.
Waste Management Sites Development Plan Document
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To be prepared jointly with Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council.

- 4.4 When each Development Plan Document is submitted it will include a submission Proposals Map to identify how the adopted Proposals Map will be amended or added to.

5 Future Local Development Documents

- 5.1 A further policy area of key concern to members is the long term protection of grazing land within and beyond the Park boundary. Allied to this is the impact of other changes in agricultural land use, and specifically the loss of grazing land to paddocks for recreational horse keeping. Following consultation and dialogue with the South East England Regional Assembly these concerns have been reflected in the South East Plan, which states at policy C1a:

“...the local planning authority and other partners should also develop supportive, sustainable land management policies, both inside the National Park and within the zone of ‘New Forest commoning activity’, including protection of grazing land outside the National Park which is needed to support National Park purposes.”

- 5.2 Any spatial planning policy review of this issue should be extended to cover land beyond the National Park within adjacent boroughs and districts. It is suggested that discussions with neighbouring authorities should be carried out during 2006/7, with a view to including this work as soon as possible as a joint spatial planning document within each authorities’ Local Development Scheme, when they are next rolled forward.
- 5.3 In terms of the other issues raised at the workshop, New Forest District Council is planning to review its Tourism Strategy shortly. The National Park Authority Corporate Plan (Objective U1) includes the preparation of a Recreation and Visitor Management Strategy. These will provide the overview and policy context within which related planning policies could subsequently be revised in future spatial planning documents. Following the adoption of the above strategies, it may be beneficial for the National Park Authority to take the lead in preparing a joint spatial planning document.

6 Next steps

- 6.1 Once submitted to the Government Office, the Local Development Scheme will be assessed to see whether the proposed timetables are appropriate and achievable. Schemes come into effect four weeks after being submitted to the Government Office unless the Secretary of State intervenes in this period or requests more time. There is no requirement for the National Park Authority to consult on the Local Development Scheme.

Recommendations:

- 1 That subject to comments made at the meeting members approve the Local Development Scheme (Annex A) for submission to the Government Office for the South East.**
- 2 That the Director of Strategy and Planning is authorised to make any subsequent *minor* amendments that may be required following the response from the Government Office.**