

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 21 SEPTEMBER 2006

OUTDOORS FOR ALL? DRAFT DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN – AUTHORITY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Report by: Nigel Matthews, Head of Visitor Services

Summary

This report sets out the proposed Authority response to the Government's consultation document 'Outdoors for All? Draft Diversity Action Plan'. The draft incorporates where appropriate comments received from members informally on an earlier draft. The report:

- summarises the background to the consultation;
- provides proposed answers to each of the questions in the consultation;
- seeks Members' comments and agreement to respond to the consultation with these answers.

Recommendation:

That subject to any final comments from members, the Director of Understanding and Enjoyment is authorised to submit the proposed response to the Outdoors for All? Draft Diversity Action Plan to Defra.

Resources and Corporate Plan:

Routine.

Corporate Plan Objective U3: Improve everyone's understanding and awareness of the New Forest National Park, in particular hard to reach groups.

Papers:

NFNPA 130/06:	Cover paper
NFNPA 130/06 Annex 1:	Draft response to the Diversity Action Plan
NFNPA 130/06 Annex 2:	Draft response on Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority's Corporate Plan Objective U3 is to 'improve everyone's understanding and awareness of the New Forest National Park, in particular hard to reach groups'.
- 1.2 We aim to "prepare an 'outreach strategy' to improve opportunities for hard to reach groups e.g. people with disabilities, from ethnic minorities and from inner cities, and young people to enjoy the New Forest:
- identify 'hard to reach' audiences; assess the nature of barriers to participation and identify ways to reduce them
 - work with partner organisations to promote visits by hard to reach groups particularly from within local communities".
- 1.3 One of Defra's priorities is to encourage more people with disabilities, more people from ethnic minorities, more people from the inner cities, and more young people to visit the countryside and participate in country activities.

2 Countryside Agency Diversity Review

- 2.1 Between September 2002 and December 2005 the Countryside Agency carried out a review of the diversity of people who take part in outdoor recreation in the countryside.
- 2.2 The review included:
- research with under-represented groups to establish their needs and perceptions of what is available for them;
 - research with providers of outdoor recreation experiences assessing their awareness of the needs of the under-represented groups.
- 2.3 The research concluded that:

- all the groups researched clearly expressed a desire to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation;
 - a lack of information and concern about not being made welcome will undermine people's confidence to access outdoor recreation and those without access to a car found transport a major barrier;
 - a lack of confidence in engaging with diverse groups is also apparent amongst recreation providers.
- 2.4 As a result of the research undertaken during the review the draft Diversity Action Plan has been drawn up. It is aimed at enabling those under-represented groups identified in the Diversity Review to make informed decisions about visiting the countryside and taking advantage of outdoor recreational opportunities. The draft Action Plan sets out Defra's overall vision, the outcomes to be achieved, the objectives, the actions that are required and the activities that Defra is proposing.
- 2.5 The purpose of the consultation is to assist Defra in filling in any gaps in the draft Action Plan and ensuring that the final Action Plan which is to be published early next year is comprehensive and effective.

3 New Forest National Park Authority response

- 3.1 The consultation requires responses to specific questions. The proposed New Forest National Park Authority response, together with some background to give context to the questions, is contained in **Annex 1 and Annex 2.**

Recommendation:

That subject to any final comments from members, the Director of Understanding and Enjoyment is authorised to submit the proposed response to the Outdoors for All? Draft Diversity Action Plan to Defra.