

# New Forest National Park Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

Non-Technical Summary  
January 2010



# 1 Summary and Outcomes

## 1.1 Non-technical Summary

### About Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and this Report

Scott Wilson was commissioned by New Forest National Park Authority to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy. SA seeks to identify the economic, social and environmental impacts of a plan and suggests ways to avoid or minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

This Non-Technical Summary gives an overview of the main findings of the SA. It discusses the significant effects only. If you want to find out more details please see the main report.

### About the New Forest National Park Core Strategy

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out planning policies and detailed development management policies for the New Forest National Park. It will be implemented primarily by the National Park Authority as the local planning authority.

The New Forest National Park Management Plan is also being produced by the National Park authority. The plan sets the broad strategic approach and its purpose is to guide the long-term management of the National Park. It will be implemented through partnership working by those with responsibility or influence over the area.

### SA Framework

At the Scoping Stage of the SA process a set of SA Objectives are developed. These are statements about what the plan should be trying to achieve in order to deliver sustainable development in the New Forest National Park.

The 'SA Framework' is the name given to this set of objectives. A SA Framework is developed out of:

- The key messages and objectives of other strategies, plans and programmes;
- Key sustainability and environmental protection objectives established at the international level (e.g. by European law);
- Research into the current social, economic and environmental issues in the New Forest; and
- Sustainability issues identified as a result of consultation with stakeholders and the public

During the scoping stage a SA Framework was developed for the New Forest National Park and New Forest District Council and this is this SA Framework that was used in the appraisal of the plan.

## About the SA Appraisal

The potential effects of the plan have been identified by comparing the Policies contained in the New Forest National Park Core Strategy against the objectives within the SA Framework. **Overall, the Policies appraised were found to have no adverse effects on the SA objectives.** The effects under each of the policy areas are summarised below.

### Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

When appraised against the SA objectives, the policies relating to protecting and enhancing the New Forest's environment were found to have an overall beneficial effect on sustainability. Significant beneficial effects were identified against SA objectives related to maintenance and enhancement of the natural and built environment as well as on mitigating against climate change. There were also some significant beneficial effects identified against objectives related to health and well being of the New Forest's residents, safety and pollution control.

No adverse effects were identified. However, some recommendations on enhancing some of the policies were identified and are summarised below:

*Policy CP4 and DP4 – These policies touch on adaptation to climate change and are judged to have positive effects. The SA objective they are assessed against however only relates to climate change mitigation and it is recommended that when revising the SA objectives in the future, this objective is enhanced by incorporating adaptation to climate change to this objective*

#### Cumulative effects

Policies CP1, DP1 and CP2 in combination present significant positive cumulative effects for nature conservation, landscape conservation and protection of cultural heritage. This is further enhanced by Development management policies that seek to ensure that development in the National Park does not lead to detrimental effects on the Park's natural and built environment.

### Protecting and Enhancing the Built Environment

When appraised against the SA Objectives, the policies relating to protecting and enhancing the New Forest's built environment were found to have an overall beneficial effect on sustainability. No adverse effects were noted.

### Vibrant Communities

The policies in this chapter seek to support the well-being of the New Forest rural communities and especially promotion of affordable housing which is a key issue for the area. Overall the policies support sustainable development. There are some significant beneficial effects on SA objectives related to housing provision, meeting educational, leisure and cultural needs as well as meeting essential utilities and infrastructure needs having regard to environmental constraints. Further beneficial effects are identified with regard to mitigating against climate change as making provision locally is likely to reduce the distance people travel to access goods and services especially by car. The local economy would also benefit from the support given to small scale development proposals and provision of housing especially

specifically for agricultural and forestry workers. No adverse effects were identified and no mitigation measures are proposed.

#### Cumulative effects

Policies CP11, DP13 and DP14 all touch on making provision for affordable housing. Together these policies can have a beneficial cumulative effect on the SA objective on housing as more affordable housing is likely to be delivered through these policies. The majority of policies in this chapter indirectly support economic wellbeing and taken together with those in the Sustainable Local economy chapter, they contribute to an overall beneficial cumulative effect on the economic growth through job creation, provision of housing, infrastructure, services and local facilities.

### **A Sustainable Local Economy**

None of the proposed policies was judged to have an adverse effect on any of the SA objectives. The policies have an overall positive effect on sustainable development with significant benefits for the New Forest economy and especially with regard to promotion of land based businesses (agriculture and forestry) that help maintain the overall character and identity of the National Park.

### **Transport and Accessibility**

Transport and accessibility policies are judged to have an overall beneficial effect especially on promoting safety, improvements to existing paths, tracks and roads as well as promoting non-motorised transport which has a positive effect on mitigating against climate change. The New Forest is well connected to the railway network and this provides opportunities for visitors to access the Park via rail. Transport initiatives promoting better links between the rail network and the National Park will facilitate an increase in the number of people accessing the Park via more sustainable modes.

Restricting development of further transport infrastructure unless the conditions set out in policy 18 are met will ensure that inappropriate development does not take place, reducing associated adverse environmental effects including habitat loss, fragmentation, noise pollution etc.

No adverse effects are identified and no further mitigation measures are required.

#### Cumulative effects

Policy CP19 in combination with other policies in the Core Strategy especially those aimed at providing housing in the National Park and local facilities closer to where people live can have a significant positive effect on minimising overall green house gas emissions and mitigating against climate change by reducing the distances travelled especially by car.

## **1.2 A Statement on the Difference the Process has made to Date**

The SA process has made an important contribution to the preparation of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy. The results of an initial appraisal of the draft policies were used to inform the development of the final policies. The initial appraisal highlighted the effects likely to arise from the draft policies and made recommendations on how beneficial effects could be maximised and adverse effects

minimised where this was appropriate. Once the preferred approaches had been finalised these were subject to a further sustainability appraisal. Where necessary recommendations were made as to how the effects of the preferred policies could be further enhanced.

### 1.3 How to Comment

If you would like to comment on the SA please contact:

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