

**New Forest National Park Authority  
Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD**

**The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004  
Post – Adoption Sustainability Statement**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Following the Examination in Public hearing sessions in September 2010, the Authority's Core Strategy DPD was found sound by an independent Planning Inspector with some changes. The final Core Strategy was adopted by the Authority on 9 December 2010.
- 1.2 In accordance with Regulations 16 (3) and (4) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations the Authority has produced this sustainability statement which sets out:
- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy
  - how the environmental report has been taken into account
  - how consultation responses have been taken into account
  - the reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives
  - the measures that are to be taken to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy

**2. How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy**

- 2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal has been an integral part of the process of preparing the Core Strategy to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of the Core Strategy and sustainable development is promoted. This process has incorporated the requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) commenced during the pre-production and evidence gathering stage, with the Scoping Report published in May 2006, and then an initial SA report published alongside the Consultation Draft National Park Plan in August 2008. At each stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy options have been evaluated against the SA framework to predict and evaluate the effects of the Core Strategy, ways of mitigating adverse effects and measures proposed to improve the sustainability of options as the Core Strategy evolved. This process culminated in the final SA report submitted alongside the Core Strategy, together with a short additional appraisal of those limited changes to the Core Strategy proposed by the Authority in May 2010.

### **3. How the environmental report has been taken into account**

#### ***Scoping Report***

- 3.1 The integrated SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment process was initiated with the preparation of a Scoping Report in May 2006 with the assistance of Land Use Consultants, covering both New Forest National Park and New Forest District. Consultation was undertaken with the four statutory consultees of English Heritage, English Nature (now Natural England), the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency (now incorporated within Natural England).
- 3.2 The Scoping Report set out the context of the sustainability appraisal, established the baseline, identified key sustainability issues and developed relevant objectives against which to assess the emerging Core Strategy.

#### ***National Park Plan***

- 3.3 An interim SA was published for consultation alongside the Consultation Draft National Park Plan between August and November 2008. The Park Plan was a combined Core Strategy and National Park Management Plan. The draft policies had been assessed against the 15 sustainability objectives. The effects of the options were predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective) and assessed (i.e. how significant that effect will be). This SA determined whether the impact of the policy was likely to be positive or negative, and differentiated between minor and significant impacts. A set of final draft Plan policies was developed from the 'outline' policy options, informed by the initial sustainability appraisal of the policy options and the results of the various workshop consultations. Appendix 3 of the SA published in August 2008 sets out more detail on the assessment and scores of each policy, and recommendations for potential mitigation measures.

#### ***Pre-Submission***

- 3.4 Additional consultation and stakeholder events were undertaken between the publication of the National Park Plan in August 2008 and the Submission Core Strategy in February 2010, and this involved additional assessment of revised policies and options. The Final SA report was then published alongside the Submission Draft Core Strategy for consultation between February and April 2010.
- 3.5 Following the end of the consultation period in April 2010, and prior to submission, the Authority considered the responses received and identified a number of changes to improve the clarity of the Core Strategy. The resulting 'Schedule of Proposed Amendments' was then subject to a short additional Sustainability Appraisal.

#### **4. How consultation responses have been taken into account**

- 4.1 A Sustainability Appraisal report was consulted on alongside the Core Strategy throughout the process and was sent to a range of national, regional and local organisations. It was produced in consultation with stakeholders and the statutory environmental consultees including English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England, as required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Comments received helped to inform the methodology and scope for the SA.

##### ***Scoping Report Consultation***

- 4.2 The Scoping Report was published for consultation in May 2006. Appendix 9 of the SA report August 2008 summarises the 22 consultation responses received on the Scoping Report and the resulting changes to the SA framework and subsequent SA reports.

##### ***National Park Plan Consultation***

- 4.3 An interim SA was published for consultation alongside the Consultation Draft National Park Plan between August and November 2008. A total of 28 separate comments were received on the SA report.

##### ***Pre-Submission Consultation***

- 4.4 The final SA report was published for consultation alongside the Submission Core Strategy in February 2010. No comments were received on the SA report.

#### **5. The reasons for choosing the Core Strategy as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives**

- 5.1 In preparing the Core Strategy a range of options were considered, which were informed by a range of factors including national planning policies, stakeholder workshops and sustainable community strategies covering the National Park. Given the designation of the area as a National Park and the fact that over 50% of the Park is designated of national and international importance for nature conservation there was a limited range of realistic alternative policy options.
- 5.2 Once different policy options had been produced, the sustainability appraisal process was used to assess the environmental, social and economic effects of the different options. Annex 1 of the National Park Plan Consultation Draft and Appendix 5 of the SA report both published together in August 2008 clearly set out the various policy options considered, the key sustainability appraisal conclusions and the justification for the preferred policy option.

**6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Core Strategy**

- 6.1 Chapter 10 of the Core Strategy sets out information on the implementation and monitoring of the Core Strategy policies. It includes a series of monitoring indicators and targets to assess the effectiveness of the policies and whether they are achieving the objectives of the Core Strategy. The main mechanism for monitoring these policies is through the Annual Monitoring Report, produced by the Authority each year. That report will also indicate where a policy is not working or targets are not being met, and will identify what remedial action may be needed.