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**UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES FOR JOINT WORKING BETWEEN
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S TOURISM SERVICE AND THE
NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 New Forest District Council's tourism service and the New Forest National Park Authority are committed to working together to deliver the highest possible standards in tourism, interpretation and information service provision. This paper sets out key principles and arrangements which form the basis of developing a close working partnership in this area.
- 1.2 The District Council has a long and successful track record of operating visitor information services, sustainable tourism management and marketing the New Forest, working closely with the New Forest Tourism Association, Tourism South East, Hampshire County Council, Forestry Commission and a range of other partners. The Council's brief is District wide, but its work recognises the close associations with Dorset, South Wiltshire and the rest of Hampshire, to facilitate management. It is a member of the Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership and the Hampshire Tourism Partnership.
- 1.3 The National Park Authority covers the whole of the New Forest National Park which includes areas beyond New Forest District. Tourism is not a specific purpose or duty for the Authority, but there are important links and connections with the National Park's purposes and its duty to foster the socio-economic well being of local communities. The Authority is required to prepare a National Park Management Plan which will develop and bring together policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park, and the promotion of understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. It will seek to influence recreation, tourism and visitor management by working with and through existing providers to support and enhance the provision of information and interpretation about the New Forest. So that although the Authority does not have a remit for tourism or marketing, it enthusiastically supports the development of sustainable tourism in the New Forest.

2 Principles for joint working

- New Forest District Council's tourism service and the New Forest National Park Authority are committed to working together to deliver the highest possible standards in tourism, interpretation and information service provision.

- New Forest District Council will be the lead authority for the provision of tourism-related services for the District and that area of the National Park within the New Forest District Council area.
- New Forest National Park Authority will provide support for a range of tourism-related activities by agreement with New Forest District Council subject to the availability of resources.
- Both organisations are committed to reviewing the existing tourism destination strategy, *Our Future Together*, and preparing a new Sustainable Tourism Strategy under the leadership of New Forest District Council and in close partnership with other key stakeholders such as the Tourism Community Action Network and the New Forest Tourism Association. This strategy will include an action plan for the development and management of tourism in the New Forest and will clearly identify who is responsible for implementing projects and the allocation of resources.
- The revised document will be the 'sustainable tourism strategy' for the whole National Park. This would probably satisfy the requirements of the EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Authority is also preparing a Recreation Management Strategy for the National Park to support the National Park Management Plan and in parallel with the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.
- The policy framework which will guide both the Authority and New Forest District Council tourism and visitor management activities will therefore be provided by the National Park Management Plan, the Recreation Management Strategy, New Forest District Council's Tourism Service Plan, the New Forest Community Strategy and the Core Strategies of both authorities.
- The New Forest is an established destination covering a wider 'product' than either the District or the National Park. Wherever possible all service delivery activities by the Authority and Council should be integrated rather than provided in parallel and it should not normally be necessary to distinguish prominently between the service providers.
- Regular joint working liaison meetings are held quarterly between relevant officers of each authority to discuss strategic issues.
- Ongoing daily communication between officers will take place at an informal level as and when necessary.

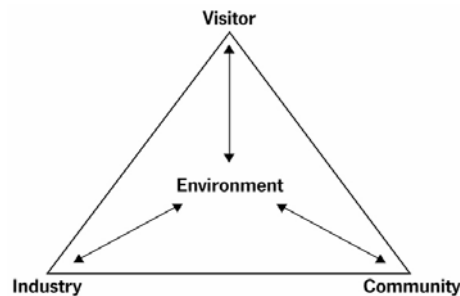
3 Sustainable Tourism Policy

- 3.1 The shared policy aim is for the New Forest to become a destination where the visitor, tourism industry, community and environment are better integrated and make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for both local people and visitors.
- 3.2 The sustainable Tourism Strategy has two main themes:
 - a) continuing to develop a responsible and sustainable approach to tourism; and

b) management through partnership.

3.3 The Strategy seeks to maximise local income and employment from tourism by providing a warm welcome and a high quality of planned facility and service for visitors. A key objective is to adopt a sustainable approach to tourism in the New Forest. This involves promoting a better understanding by visitors and the tourism industry of the unique landscapes and the special way of life of the New Forest and its local communities and to encourage a sense of stewardship and an even more responsible approach to the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

3.4 New Forest District Council has developed the 'VICE' Model. This aims to develop an integrated tourism management plan which identifies responsible management as balancing the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community that hosts them and their collective impact on, and response to, the Environment. There are four main elements to the approach, it:



- welcomes, involves and satisfies Visitors
- achieves a profitable and prosperous Industry
- engages and benefits host Communities
- protects reflects and enhances the local Environment

4 Sustainable tourism management – current projects

4.1 Sustainable tourism management has two basic components: stewardship and marketing.

Stewardship

4.2 This is the process of engaging and working in partnership with all stakeholders in the sustainable management and development of all tourism related activities.

There are four key stewardship programmes:

Visitor Stewardship Programme – (New Forest Friends)

4.2.1 A programme of activities communicating key messages to visitors which are designed to involve them in the day to day stewardship of the destination. This includes key messages in all New Forest District Council and Authority visitor information, visitor centres, publishing and electronic

media, and the distribution of the joint (produced by New Forest District Council, the Forestry Commission and the National Park Authority) Visitor Stewardship Pack via accommodation providers and tourism businesses.

Visitor Information Centres	Lead NFDC	Support NPA
Visitor Stewardship Pack	Lead NFDC	Support FC/NPA/NFTA

Industry Stewardship Programme – Green Leaf Tourism Scheme

4.2.2 A programme of activities to engage all tourism and visitor businesses in the day to day stewardship of the destination. This includes supporting and promoting the visitor stewardship (New Forest Friends) programme, improving their own operational stewardship (energy, waste and recycling), support of and involvement with their local community and environment.

Green Leaf Tourism Scheme	Lead NFDC	Support NPA/NFTA/FC
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Community Stewardship Programme – Community Tourism Groups

4.2.3 A programme to create and support Community Tourism Groups in each community area of the New Forest establishing links where relevant with neighbouring communities.

Each Community Tourism Group would undertake an audit, engagement and action planning programme and participate in the Community Action Network for tourism.

Community Tourism Groups	Lead NFDC/TSE	Support NPA / NFTA
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Environmental Stewardship Programme

4.2.4 A programme of planned activities to help landowners and managers to reduce the negative impacts of tourism and where possible enhance the environment. These include developing car free tourism, sustainable visitor access and recreation management, the development of local produce and the control of tourism related development. (The National Park Authority's *Recreation Management Strategy* will identify new initiatives in this field.)

Visitor access and transport	Lead FC/NPA/HCC	Support NFDC/NFTA
Recreation management	Lead NPA/FC	Support NFDC
Local produce / New Forest Marque	Lead NFDC	Support NFTA/NPA
Tourism planning applications: ▪ National Park ▪ Outside National Park	Lead NPA Lead NFDC	Support NFDC Support NPA

5 Marketing

- 5.1 This is the collective process of creating appropriate tourism and visitor products and effectively communicating them to appropriate audiences throughout the year, thereby ensuring the sustainability (social, economic and environmental) of the unique quality of the New Forest area both now and in the future.
- 5.2 *Destination Marketing Programme – ‘Little Acorns’*
- 5.2.1 Promotion and selling is implemented by the tourism industry. However New Forest District Council and National Park Authority engage with these activities to further the wider objectives of the sustainable tourism strategy.
- 5.2.2 Within marketing this involves the development of a comprehensive framework for marketing and communications within which local businesses, community tourism groups and environmental interests can present the New Forest area as a leading “green” destination to appropriate local, national and international audiences. It is important that marketing benefits businesses, the environment and the future of the destination and its stakeholders as a whole.
- 5.2.3 Delivered through a joint New Forest District Council / New Forest Tourist Association / National Park Authority marketing committee (‘Little Acorns’), it will use the Tourism Community Action Network to create greater involvement and buy in from all other stakeholders. It is important for future social, economic and environmental sustainability that everyone works together to ensure the destination leads the market and not the other way around.
- 5.2.4 To support the Little Acorns programme, New Forest District Council publishes the Official New Forest Where to Stay Guide, Visitor Guide, Map, www.thenewforest.co.uk and operates Visitor Information Centres.
- 5.2.5 In terms of activity, the primary lead on selling and public relations will be New Forest Tourist Association, within the context of a marketing programme devised through the ‘Little Acorns’ process.

Tourism Website	Lead NFDC	Support NFTA/NPA
Marketing Programme	Lead NFDC	Support NFTA/NPA

5.3 *Visitor Information Centres*

- 5.3.1 New Forest District Council operates three Visitor Information Centres in Lyndhurst, Lymington and Ringwood. The National Park Authority will create a greater public awareness of the National Park and add value to current Visitor Information Centre provision.
- 5.3.2 The National Park Authority is currently producing a series of information / interpretation panels about the New Forest National Park. These will be installed at sites such as Lepe Country Park, Village Halls, campsites, Local Information Points and Visitor Information Centres. They include a general panel with information about why the New Forest is a National Park, the wider family of

National Parks and protected landscapes; and three further panels describing the National Park's 'special qualities', embracing landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Visitor Information Centres	Lead NFDC
Pilot Local Information Points	Lead NPA

5.4 *Britain's Breathing Spaces*

- 5.4.1 In 2005, the Association of National Park Authorities commissioned consultants to identify an effective brand which could be used for corporate promotion of sustainable tourism within the National Park family and by partners without duplicating or over-riding existing initiatives.
- 5.4.2 The recommended brand positioning: **National Parks: Britain's Breathing Spaces** is designed to establish the National Parks as a concept and describe how they are different to other visitor experiences.
- 5.4.3 This brand positioning is designed to establish the concept of National Parks at a national (rather than just individual local) level. It also describes how they are different from other visitor experiences, i.e. physically they are 'energising' unspoilt landscapes, but they also provide a sense of sanctuary and recovery.
- 5.4.4 The brand positioning is supported by a new visual style incorporating commissioned photography and an overarching visitor segmentation model, designed to be used as a tool to help with message targeting.
- 5.4.5 It is available for use across all collective National Parks communications, for example as a sign-off on brochures, strap line on advertising and in written communications pieces such as editorial copy. It has clear meaning but is also flexible in use and is broad enough to be nonthreatening to other stakeholder brands.
- 5.4.6 New Forest District Council and the National Park Authority will remain aware of the Britain's Breathing Spaces brand, and the potential opportunities arising from it.

Britain's Breathing Spaces	Lead NPA	Support NFDC
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