

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2008

**NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL REPORT
SUMMARY OF THE MEETING ON THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2008**

Report by: Stephen Trotter, Director of Conservation, Recreation and Sustainable Development

Summary:

This report outlines the main issues discussed by the Consultative Panel on 6 November 2008.

Recommendations:

To note:

- 1. issues of interest at the meeting of the New Forest Consultative Panel on 6 November 2008**
- 2. the date of the next Panel meeting is Thursday 8 January 2008.**

Paper:

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1. Flytipping and littering

1.1 Dave Robinson of the Environment Agency made a presentation on flytipping and littering. He explained that as available landfill space had decreased the Government had levied a Landfill Tax, which led to an increase in the cost of legitimate disposal and a corresponding increase in the illegal disposal of waste. Mr Robinson emphasised that the occupiers of property should take responsibility for the disposal of waste produced on the property, referring to the Waste (Household Waste Duty of Care) (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 which provided that waste producers should ensure that any transfer of household waste was to an authorised person. Measures that could be taken in respect of those illegally disposing of waste included sending warning letters, full prosecution or the imposition of fixed penalty notices. At present this was not a route favoured by the Environment Agency as it was often perceived as a revenue raising exercise.

2. New Forest National Park Plan consultation

2.1 Richard Lemon introduced himself as the new Director of Strategy and Planning at the Authority and stressed to members of the Panel that during the consultation stage the Authority is listening to comments on the draft Plan. He explained the requirements on the Authority to produce both a Management Plan, and a Core Strategy under planning legislation, and the decision taken to incorporate both into one document and the advantages of doing so. Based on an initial analysis of comments he presented an overview of the response to the consultation process so far. On the whole the vision and objectives of the Plan had received a positive response, with most criticisms relating to a small number of specific policy issues. He welcomed further responses to the consultation.

2.2 Once the consultation ended on 14 November, the Authority would engage in further discussions with partners and key stakeholders to discuss the results of consultation and the way forward. The Plan would be adopted by the Authority in spring 2009, and the Core Strategy elements of it submitted to the Secretary of State. This would

then be examined at an independent local inquiry by a Planning Inspector, who would issue a binding report.

- 2.3 Panel members then raised various questions and comments. The National Park Authority was asked to consult with youth groups in the Forest, and to consider the Sustainable Communities Strategy, which would be distributed shortly.
- 2.4 Tina Cant of Forest Uprising Group then gave a presentation on the draft Plan, explaining that she was particularly interested in the draft as a recreational horse keeper. She said that a petition had been circulated and had collected 9,000 signatures and would be presented to Westminster. Although they were in agreement with some aspects of the Plan, the Forest Uprising Group had been dismayed by the consultation process and felt the consultation should have been better publicised from the start. The Group felt that the Authority should take a more democratic and accountable approach in future.
- 2.5 Peter Roberts (New Forest Association) said that most people who were interested in caring for the Forest had taken part in the 'New Forest, New Chapter' stakeholder workshops where there had been an opportunity to input into this process. Peter Sopowski (Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council) said that recreational horse keeping was a planning issue. Chris Aldhous (New Forest Equestrian Association) said he felt the Authority had not sufficiently engaged with the Association prior to the issue of the draft Plan and he did not wish to work with the Authority further.
- 2.6 In response to a query from Peter Sopowski (Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council), Richard Lemon and Peter Frost clarified that the Authority had incurred no expenditure on the advice of the SEEDA equestrian champion, who had been commissioned by SEEDA to undertake research work for the South East region. A Bristol-based consultancy 'Land Use Consultants' had been commissioned by the Authority to facilitate stakeholder workshops and draft the Recreation Management Strategy at a cost of £65,000. Stewart Hall (Woodgreen Parish Council) drew Panel members' attention to the fact that the draft Plan took 1974 (rather than 1982) as the date on which to take the existing size of a property, when calculating the permissible size of an extension. Panel members also asked the Authority to bear in mind gypsies and travellers in the revised draft of the Plan.

3. Any other business

- 3.1 Panel members paid tribute to Authority member Diana Halford who had passed away recently, and who had been a valuable and long term member of the Panel.
- 3.2 Other matters discussed under this item included the rapidly rising unemployment in the area and the current Government consultation on possible direct elections to national park authorities.

- 3.3 Panel members criticised the size of new speed limit signs that had been put in place in areas where the speed limit had recently been reduced to 30 mph; Kevin Fuller explained that there was a minimum statutory size for such signs.

Recommendations:

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