



31 December 2008

Dear Sir / Madam,

Draft National Park Plan and Draft Recreation Management Strategy Public Consultation

Thank you for sending us your comments on the consultation draft National Park Plan and Recreation Management Strategy. We are writing to you now to let you see the results of our initial analysis of the responses, and explain how we will be reviewing each document and who will be involved.

Draft National Park Plan

Consultation responses

The consultation closed formally on 14 November 2008 and we have now completed our logging, acknowledgement and initial analysis of the comments we received. Our analysis is summarised in the attached charts. We received a total of 9,724 responses, made up of 2,524 individual response forms, standard templates, letters or e-mails, and 7,200 signatures on a petition handed in by the Forest Uprising Group (FUG). The figures in the charts refer to the number of respondents who made comments supporting or objecting to the various policy areas identified. This reflects the fact that many respondents supported some policies but objected to others.

All the responses will be available for inspection by the public in the foyer of our offices at South Efford House during normal office hours from Monday January 19 2009. Details of our opening hours and location can be found on our website www.newforestnpa.gov.uk or from our general enquiries phone number 01590 646600. To assist examination of responses from specific organisations, an index of names and reference numbers will be available, although personal details have been removed from individual responses to comply with data protection requirements.

Next steps

We are now carrying out a more detailed analysis of the comments received which will help us in the next phase of reviewing the draft Plan. As indicated in our earlier letter and press release, we will be organising a number of

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working groups and running workshops to help us with the review. Our current intention is to set up groups covering:

- Socio-economic policies
- Housing, including affordable housing
- 'Service' villages
- Zoning policies
- Traffic, transport and car parking, and
- Recreational horse keeping.

We will also be talking to parish councils about the possibility of holding parish council-hosted events which would be open to the public.

We hope to finalise all of these arrangements early in the new year with meetings taking place probably between mid-January and the end of March. We are planning to invite representatives from local authorities, partner organisations [such as the Forestry Commission], interest groups [such as the Federation of Small Businesses], parish councils and groups of consultees who have addressed particular issues. Each working group will be led by an Authority member.

The current timetable is to take a revised National Park Plan to the full Authority for formal approval by May 2009. The part of the Plan that forms the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, i.e. the planning policies, will then be the subject of a further 6 week public consultation prior to submission to the Government for testing at examination in public later in the year. *(To provide an explanation of the Core Strategy, the process and next stages please see the Annex to this letter which also contains a flow chart.)* The report that we will be preparing for the Authority will include not only the revised Plan but a full report of the consultation process with details of all the consultation activities, a summary of the consultation responses and issues raised, and how the Authority has taken those comments into account. This report will form one of the documents submitted to the Government for the examination.

Recreation Management Strategy

The consultation on the draft Recreation Management Strategy also closed formally on 14 November 2008 and we have nearly completed the logging, acknowledgement and initial analysis of the comments we received. In total we received 459 responses (excluding the letters based on a standard template provided by the New Forest Dog Owners Group which have been included in the National Park Plan figures).

The arrangements for inspecting these responses are the same as those for the National Park Plan.

Next steps

We are now carrying out a more detailed analysis of the comments received which will help us plan the next phase of reviewing the draft Strategy. Our

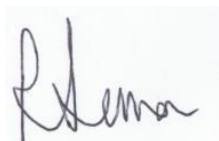
current intention is to set up a working group on recreation and dog walking issues, as well as holding meetings with the New Forest Access Forum and possibly running other workshops to provide an input to this process.

We hope to finalise all of these arrangements early in the New Year with meetings taking place between mid-January and June 2009. We are planning to invite representatives from local authorities, partner organisations [such as the Forestry Commission and the New Forest Access Forum], interest groups [such as recreational groups and NFDOG] and groups of consultees who have addressed particular issues. The working group will be led by an Authority member.

A revised Recreation Management Strategy will be taken to the full Authority for formal approval after the National Park Plan has been approved – probably in the summer 2009.

We hope this information is helpful and clarifies the next stages in the process, and if you have any comments on the content of this letter, please let us know.

Best wishes for the New Year



Richard Lemon
Director of Strategy and Planning



Stephen Trotter
Director of Conservation,
Recreation and Sustainable
Development

The 'Core Strategy' explained

The draft New Forest National Park Plan combines two documents that the Authority is required to produce – the *Management Plan* and the *Core Strategy*. The sections of the Plan that make up these two documents will be clearly identified in the final version of the Plan that the Authority will be asked to approve.

The *Core Strategy*, which is part of a something which in planning law is known as the 'Development Plan', is the policies and text in the Plan on topics relating to the Authority's responsibilities as a local planning authority. For example, there are *development control policies* which will set the framework for decisions to grant or refuse planning permission.

Once approved by the Authority the *Management Plan* sections will take effect immediately.

The *Core Strategy* section will go through an additional process after it has been approved by the Authority. In summary, the steps are:

- a **6 week public consultation period**, on the approved version, known as the *Submission* document, designed to identify matters that may require testing at the public examination
- **Authority submits Submission document and comments** to the Secretary of State who appoints a Planning Inspector.
- the **Planning Inspector decides** which matters are to be tested at the public examination, based largely on the responses to the 6 week consultation
- the Planning Inspector **invites participants** to attend and take part in the examination
- the **Planning Inspector** produces a Report with recommendations on the content of the *Core Strategy* which is binding on the Authority.

A flow chart is attached also showing this process. This is a very simplified explanation of a complex area and if you would like further information please refer to:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps12lsp> - Planning Policy Statement 12 (Local Spatial Planning, June 2008)

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/genpub/en/1115311947782.html> - Planning Portal Guide to Local Development Frameworks

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelD=11532> – Planning Advisory Service guide to Local Development Frameworks