2013

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

New Forest National Park

Landscape Action Plan

Contents

Bluebells in ancient woodland, Brockenhurst

Preparation of the Landscape Action Plan

This plan has been prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority with the help and assistance of the Landscape Strategy Steering Group which comprises representatives from Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Forestry Commission, Natural England, Wiltshire Council, Test Valley Borough Council and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Several meetings of the Steering Group were held in 2008/2009 to develop the Landscape Action Plan.

A joint Landscape and Wildlife Roadshow public consultation was held in June and July 2010 which included five events in and around the National Park, an open consultation with questionnaire, website information and advertisements in the local press. The events were well attended by members of the public and many useful contributions and opinions were received. Presentations were made to the New Forest Consultative Panel in January 2011 and May 2013. A 17 week public consultation was held between April and July 2013 on the draft Landscape Action Plan. In addition, meetings were held with Parish Councils and local interest groups during the same period.

September 2013

Chapter 1

Deer at Aldridge Hill

Introduction

1.1 The New Forest's landscape is unique; it is a 'living' and working landscape with a strong sense of continuity, tradition and history continually evolving to the present day. It is this landscape combined with its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage that gives the New Forest its remarkable sense of place. However, it is under pressure from a number of trends and issues that are likely to affect the National Park over the short and longer term.

1.2 This Landscape Action Plan details those issues and pressures and sets out objectives, management guidelines and actions for the next 20 years. It is a non-statutory document that has been developed in conjunction with a wide range of organisations and offers practical advice and guidance, aimed at both organisations and individuals, to help maintain the special character of the New Forest.

1.3 In addition, it may prove helpful for those authorities and agencies who operate beyond the National Park boundaries and whose activities can also affect the quality of the landscape within the National Park. This especially relates to conserving tranquillity, which is significantly affected by activities beyond the park boundary and providing recreational facilities outside the National Park to relieve pressure within it.

1.4 The format of the document is based on seven key themes looking at issues which affect, or may affect, the landscape of the New Forest as a whole, with a number of actions recommended to address these issues. Many of these actions highlight guidance already identified in existing planning documents including the Core Strategy, National Park Design Guide and other supplementary planning documents.

These themes comprise:

Theme 1: Conservation and enhancement of tranquillity and dark night skies.

Theme 2: Settlements in the landscape.

Theme 3: Integrating roads into the landscape.

Theme 4: Integrating access to recreation provision into the landscape.

Theme 5: Integrating renewable and low carbon technologies into the landscape.

Theme 6: Managing forests and woodlands in harmony with the New Forest landscape.

Theme 7: Managing the enclosed landscapes.

Theme 8: Monitoring landscape change.

1.5 A number of monitoring indicators have also been included in the document to enable officers to assess the use and effectiveness of the objectives and actions in this Plan.

Chapter 2

Buckler's Hard

Background

Pressures and trends

2.1 The landscape of the New Forest has changed and will continue to change, potentially at a significantly faster rate in the future than in the past and on a 'landscape' scale. Fundamental drivers of change will be climate change and continuing population growth within southern England, which in turn will lead to complex social, economic and environmental interactions, anticipated increases in tourism, recreational pressure and changes in Government policy, many of which are difficult to predict.

2.2 The challenge in the face of change will be to conserve the overall structure of the landscape with its medieval roots while mitigating the effects of changes in some of the individual features that make up the landscape.

2.3 Although many of the trends are difficult to predict accurately, there is sufficient evidence to indicate likely impacts in the medium term. Some of the pressures, trends and opportunities are picked up in the themes that follow.

Climate change

2.4 There is scientific consensus that the climate is changing and will continue to change significantly over the next 50 years and beyond unless there are major and continuing reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions. The potential implications for the New Forest landscape are:

- **Sea level rise;** at present sea levels are rising by an average of 4mm a year along the South Coast. This is expected to increase to 15mm per annum by 2080. One forecast is that by 2050 sea levels will have risen by 34cm in the English Channel over current levels and possibly by 50cm in some parts of the Solent. The effects of this will include increased coastal defences to protect coastal communities; and 'coastal squeeze' with coastal salt marsh and mudflats 'squeezed' out, potentially leading to more coastal erosion.

- **Increased storminess and flooding:** Marine storm surges will create an additional threat for coastal communities while the Avon, Lymington and Beaulieu Rivers will be subject to more frequent flooding. Wooded areas are likely to suffer more frequent wind throw and tree loss.

- **Periods of summer drought** will cause a decline in wetland and woodland habitats and a change in species composition – beech will be particularly susceptible to drought. Streams and rivers are likely to suffer from increased summer low flows and may dry out, especially if abstracted to augment public water supply. Storage of water will become increasingly important.

- **Spread of invasive pests and diseases** could affect the health of oak, beech, ash and other species.

- **Changes in land management** are likely with the arrival of crops currently associated with southern European countries.

Population growth

2.5 The population of the South East is predicted to grow by 12% over the next 20 years as a result of increased life expectancy and inwards migration. The majority of this growth will happen outside the National Park boundary but is likely to cause increased pressure on the National Park with:

- **New development on the immediate boundary** of the National Park with views from the National Park to urban development and industry affecting perceived levels of remoteness and tranquillity
- **Major housing growth in South Hampshire and South East Dorset** potentially bringing increased traffic and recreational pressure
- **Economic growth** around Bournemouth and Southampton, including expansion at both airports adding to air and car traffic in the vicinity
- **Presence of telecommunication masts and pylons** within the open Forest
- **Increased demand for sand and gravel**, placing increased pressure on the resources of the New Forest along the Avon Valley and the southern coastal area
- **Continued pressure for small-scale development** within and adjacent to the National Park causing gradual erosion of the distinctive character of the New Forest
- **Increased pressure for renewable energy developments** such as large scale ground mounted solar arrays and off shore wind farms.

Local distinctiveness

2.6 Local distinctiveness is the sum of all landscape features and attributes that create the particular character of the National Park and individual areas within it. Activities that detract from local distinctiveness can be:

- **Piecemeal encroachment** onto Open Forest land
- **Use of standard highways infrastructure** including the proliferation of signs
- **Changes to the landscape** with absorption of fields and small woodlands into gardens
- **Removal of trees and hedgerows** that define the traditional field pattern and boundaries and are distinctive features in their own right
- **Small scale subdivision of land**
- **Building of suburban style fences** on historic ditches and banks and property boundaries.

Traditional land management

2.7 Traditional land management has created the distinctive landscape of the New Forest over the last 1,000 years, underpinned by the continuation of commoning and burning and cutting of vegetation. Stock grazing levels and the balance with deer grazing have and continue to affect the condition of individual habitats, where heather gives way to grass on more heavily grazed areas and scrub and woodland spread out onto open habitats where lighter grazing persists.

2.8 Significant structural changes have also occurred over the last 150 years, not least the planting of conifers on areas of once open heathland, pasture woodland and within existing woodland areas, the drainage of wetland areas and straightening of streams. Here, however, policy has come full circle and under the Forest Design Plans the Forestry Commission is returning some areas of conifer plantation to their original heathland habitat and restoration is on going to reinstate wetlands and original stream courses. The National Trust at Foxbury Plantation has also restored areas of commercial conifer plantation to open heathland.

2.9 Aside from the increasing effects of climate change, the other main driver of land management is the changing fortunes of small holdings within the New Forest, which have provided the backbone to commoning. The high cost of land and property within the New Forest has resulted in many small-holdings coming out of productive use. Small holdings, which characterise the New Forest, have always been marginally economically viable and many may cease to be viable in the near future. Some of the woodlands on the enclosed lands are under productive management.

Conversely on more productive land, some of the characteristic landscapes of the New Forest have been undermined by changes in management including relatively recent changes to intensive crop production. Trends over the next 20 years are likely to include:

- Increasing pressure for more intensive food production as climate change raises concerns about food security
- A continuing niche market in high quality local produce
- Long term threats to the pastoral economy with long periods of drought and times of heavy rain and flooding leading to a loss of grass
- The transfer of small-holdings into amenity use with the sale of properties out of agriculture
- A new stimulus to woodland management with the growing market for wood fuel
- Use of agricultural fields for ground mounted solar arrays producing renewable energy.

2.10 These pressures and trends are picked up in the themes that follow; each theme is discussed and is followed by objectives and related actions.

Theme 1:

Looking towards Littelholm Hill Inclosure

Conservation and enhancement of tranquillity and dark night skies

1.1 Tranquillity and dark night skies of the New Forest are identified as one of the National Park's special qualities and their conservation and enhancement form an important part of the park Vision.

Tranquillity

1.2 There are a significant range of models that have been developed at the national and local level to assess the extent of tranquillity. In the case of the New Forest, none give an absolute picture but together they tell a clear and consistent story that reinforces an understanding of tranquillity across the National Park.

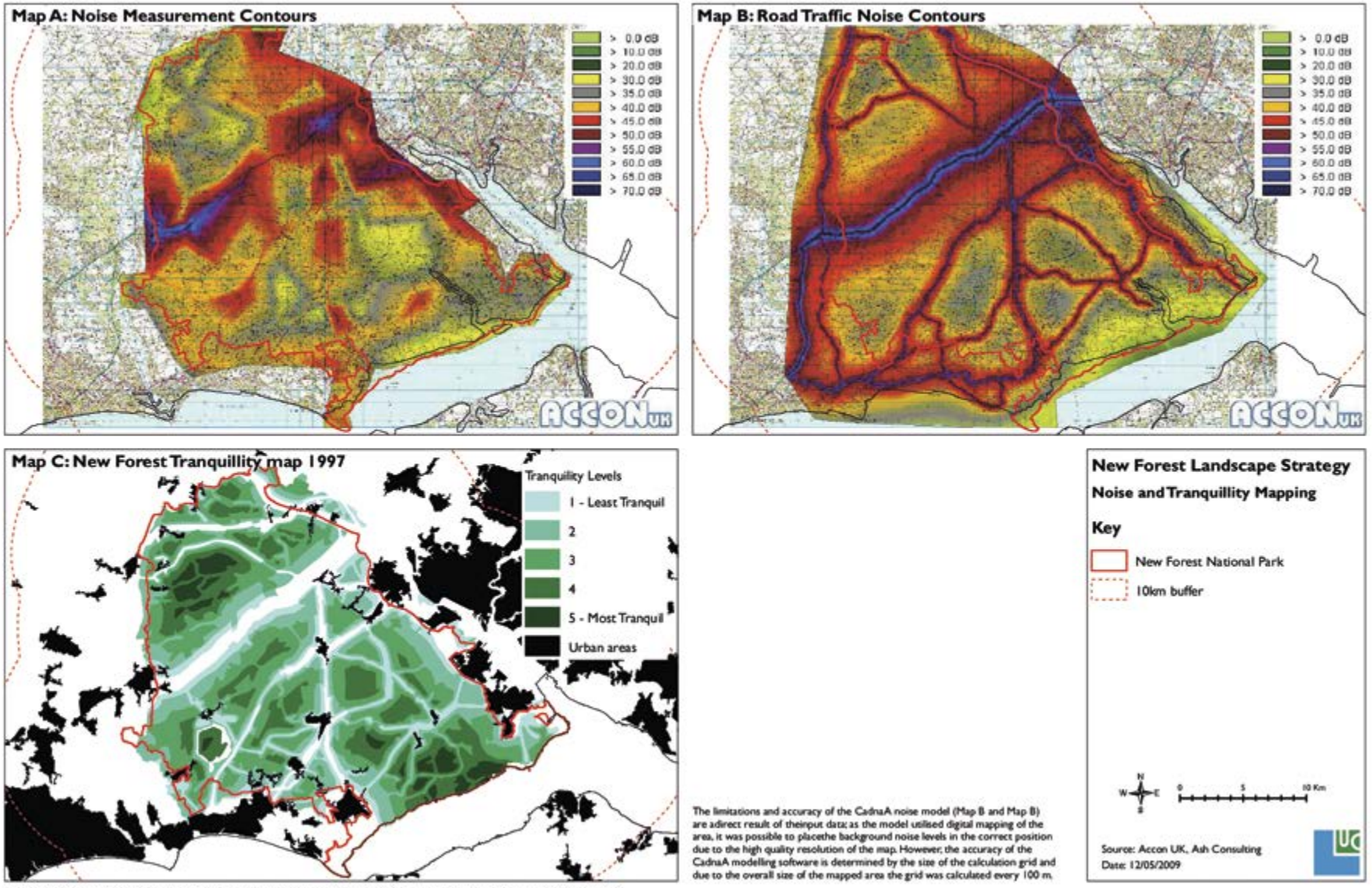
1.3 Three pieces of work identify different aspects of tranquillity within the New Forest. In **Figure 1.1**

- **Map A** reflects an extensive noise measurement exercise at 100 locations across the National Park to characterise the existing noise climate (2008), including both locations likely to be dominated by traffic noise (the main source of noise within the National Park) and locations where human activity is unlikely. Based on the results of this measurement, a fully contoured noise map was developed.

- **Map B** is taken from the same study as Map A and shows road traffic noise contours, recognising that the roads are the primary source of noise in the New Forest. Here roads have been defined by their traffic flows, width and type of road.

- **Map C** is an older map of tranquillity and is based on work undertaken in 1997 by ASH Consulting. This map reflects both sources of noise and visual intrusions such as pylons, development and radio aerials. It is not based on measurement in the field but on the application of standard buffer distances applied to different forms of intrusion and sources of noise.

Figure 1.1: Noise and Tranquillity Mapping



1.4 Although based on very different approaches, all these maps tell a similar story. All show the A31 (dual carriage trunk road) as the main detractor from tranquillity, affecting large parts of the New Forest. All identify the main areas of tranquillity as lying in the north west of the National Park and as separate blocks in the south east. Reflecting Map C, the most tranquil areas have few public roads, low levels of traffic, no settlements and no visible modern structures. In total these areas cover some 20% of the National Park. Some of these areas are small and fragmented, although as already noted, more extensive areas lie between Beaulieu and the coast and between the A31 and the B3078 in the north west of the National Park.

1.5 **Figure 1.2** provides another representation of tranquillity based on **CPRE's[1] Tranquillity Map (2006)** prepared for the whole of England. This takes a different approach to the mapping of tranquillity from that in Map C and identifies both factors that people consider contribute to a sense of relative tranquillity reflecting social research, such as broadleaf woodland, a natural environment and lack of development (map top left) and those factors that are deemed to detract from tranquillity, such as major development and roads (map top right). These positive and negative attributes, of which some 40 different positive and negative attributes were identified and then mapped using national data sets and weighted according to their relative importance to people, as identified through the social research. The mapping of positive and negative influences is combined to give an overall impression of tranquillity (bottom map). Although there has been criticism of this mapping in the New Forest as it tends to mask the strongly adverse effect of the A31 on tranquillity, it does serve to illustrate the very strong pressure on tranquillity from the immediately adjacent built up areas of Christchurch / Bournemouth to the south west and of Southampton and the Waterside immediately to the east of the National Park boundary. The reason for the masking of the A31 influence in this map is that the very strong positive visual attributes of the semi-natural landscapes of the New Forest dilute the strongly adverse effects of the noise generated by the road.

1.6 The final mapping of tranquillity is illustrated in **Figure 1.3**. This takes **CPRE's mapping of tranquillity/intrusion** at the regional level for the mid 1960s, 1990s and 2007 and looks specifically at the New Forest. The original tranquillity maps for the 1960s and 1990s were prepared in 1996 by ASH Consulting.

[1] *Campaign to Protect Rural England*

Figure 1.2: CPRE's national Tranquillity Map (2006) cut to the area of the New Forest National Park

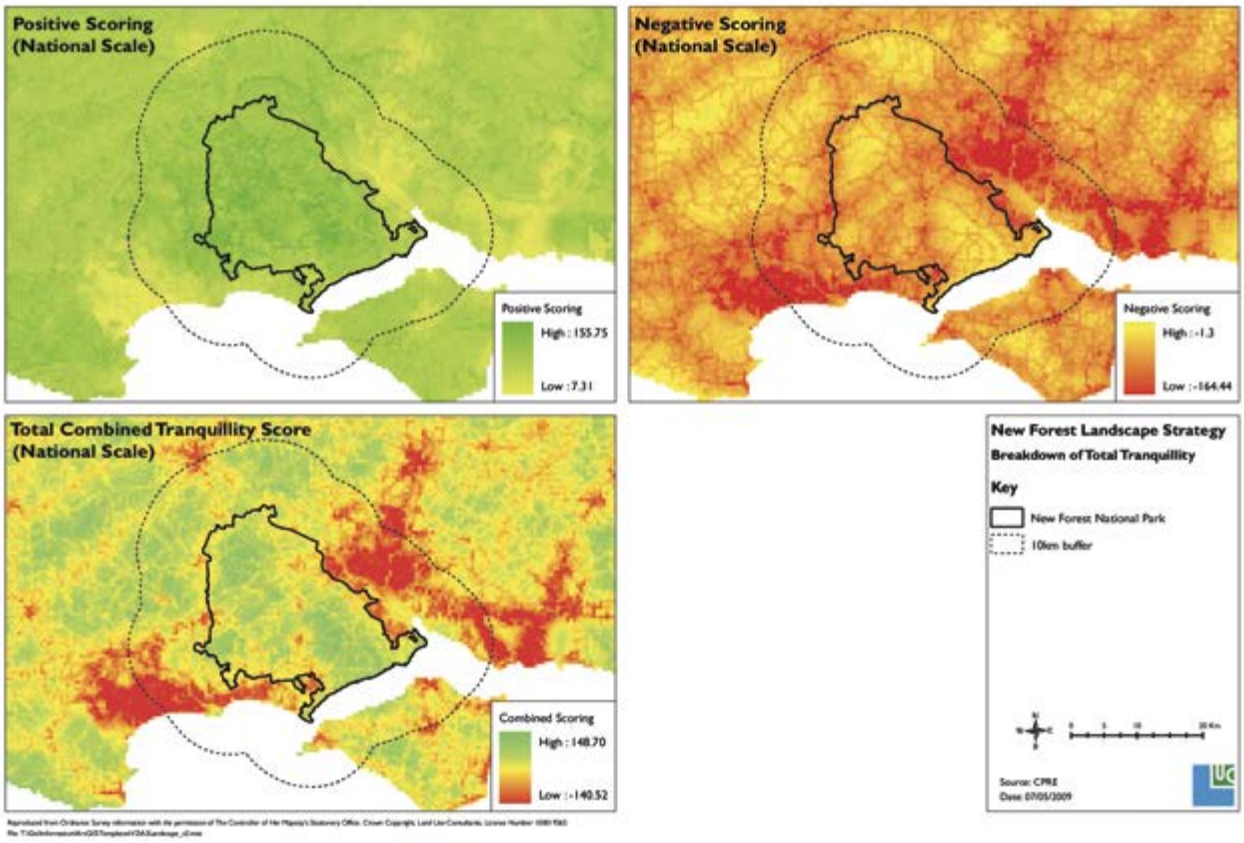
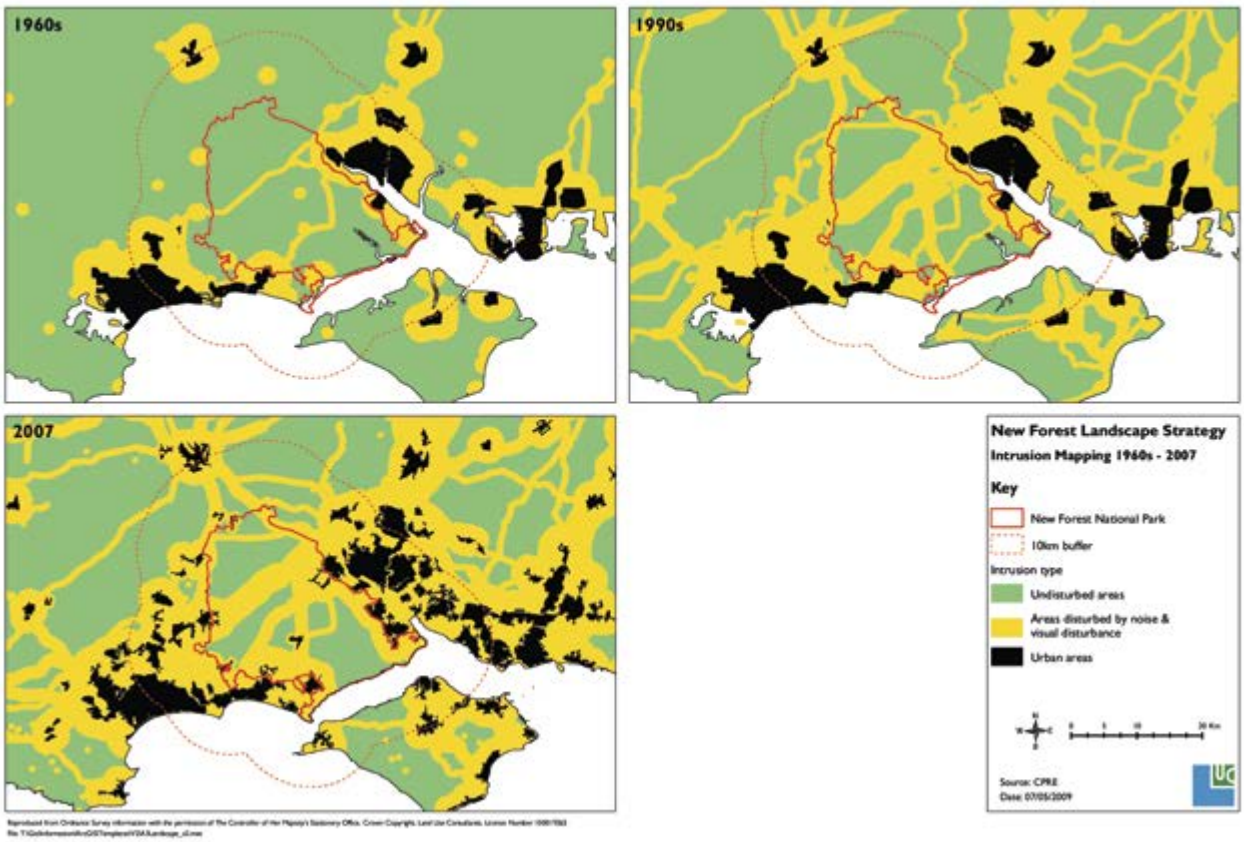


Figure 1.3: CPRE's Intrusion Mapping 1960s-2007 cut to the area of the New Forest National Park



1.7 There is partial inclusion of B roads in the 1960s and 1990s maps. In the 2007 map not all B roads have been included as no regionally consistent data sets are available on traffic flows at this level.

1.8 Settlements are only included on the maps if they exceed a certain size (population) threshold. However, how the population of small settlements is defined has changed over the years, introducing clear inconsistencies.

1.9 Despite these inconsistencies and the fact that these maps have been designed to be viewed at a national or regional and not at a local scale, they are useful in illustrating:

- The dramatic increase in noise and visual intrusion into the New Forest between the 1960s and 1990s (with disturbed areas increasing by 150% and undisturbed areas declining by 35% - Table 1.1 below). Undisturbed areas have more than halved in area between the 1960s and 2007.
- The very significant increase in pressure from surrounding areas is evident. Development now comes right up to the National Park along its south western boundary and to the east with the heavy industry along the Waterside visible from higher ground across much of the south eastern part of the National Park. As indicated in Table 1.2 that looks at changes in disturbance in a 10km buffer surrounding the National Park, there has been a halving in the area of undisturbed land between the 1960s and 2007. While in the 1960s disturbed areas made up some 33% of this buffer area, by 2007 this figure had risen to 57%.

1.10 This underlines the sensitivity of the New Forest to disturbance as a small 'island' in a rapidly developing area.

Table 1.1: Intrusion mapping – changes in disturbance within the New Forest National Park Area 1960s - 2007

New Forest	1960s (Km^2)	1990s (Km^2)	% change 1960s - 1990s	2007 (Km^2)	% change 1990s - 2007
Disturbed	105.4	263.3	149.7%	323.7	22.9%
Undisturbed	444.0	267.4	-35.3%	242.7	-15.5%

Dark night skies

1.11 A further aspect of tranquillity is that of 'night blight' or the loss of dark night skies. Information derived from satellite imagery illustrates 'skyglow' for 1993 and 2000 (see **Figure 1.4**)[3]. This can be considered as a 'night time visual intrusion map'.

1.12 These maps serve to highlight the influence of surrounding urban areas on the dark night skies of the New Forest, with light pollution spreading in from development to the east and south west of the National Park.

1.13 This maybe further exacerbated by:

- incremental road lighting on the fringes of the National Park, for example, the A326 which runs along the eastern boundary of the National Park
- the lighting of settlements within the National Park
- floodlighting of sports facilities and car parks on the edge of settlements
- external and security lighting on individual properties and outbuildings.

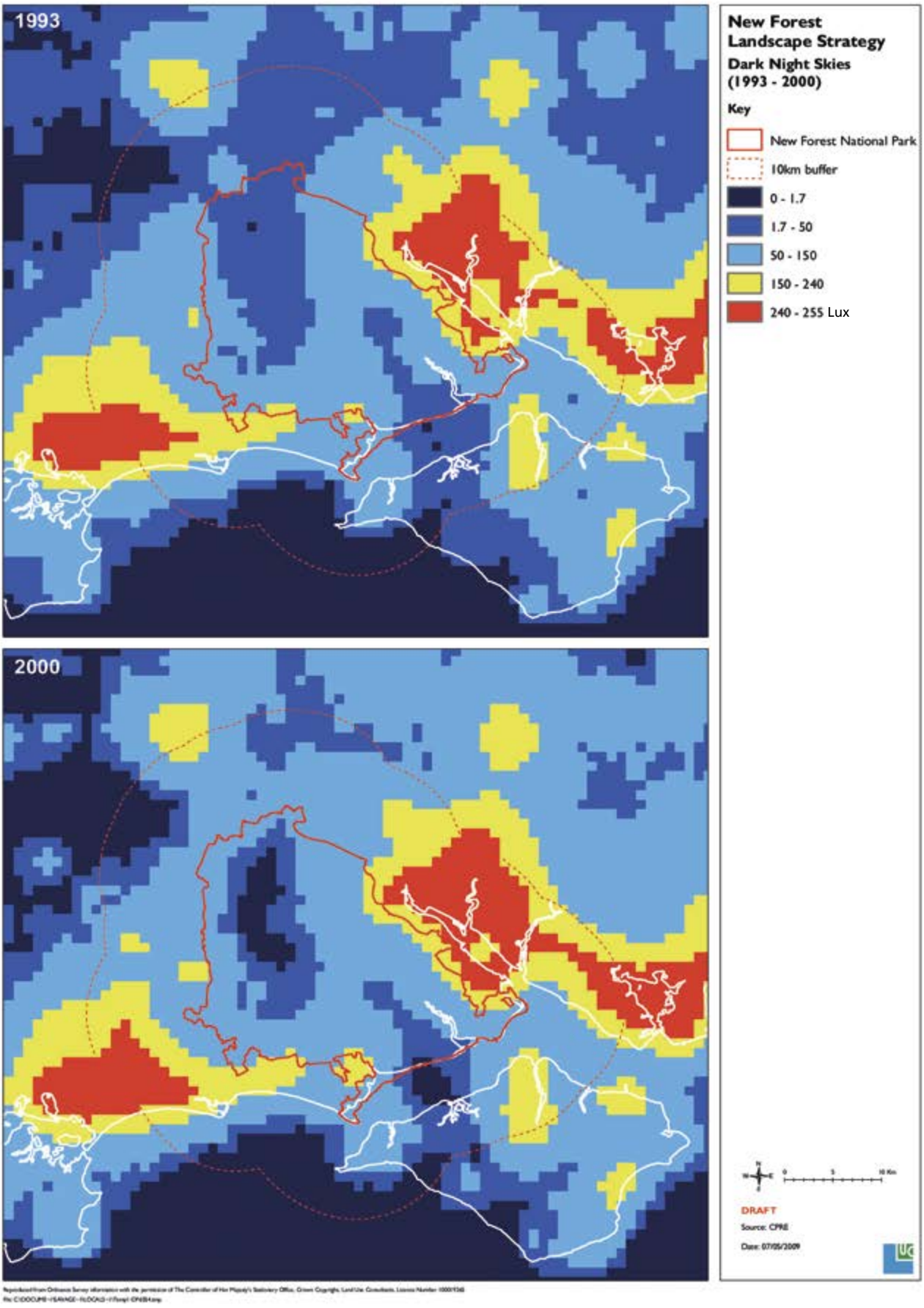
Table 1.2: Intrusion mapping – changes in disturbance within a 10km buffer zone beyond the boundary of the New Forest National Park 1960s - 2007

10 km buffer zone around theNew Forest[2]	1960s (Km^2)	1990s (Km^2)	% change 1960s - 1990s	2007 (Km^2)	% change 1990s - 2007
Disturbed	105.4	263.3	149.7%	323.7	22.9%
Undisturbed	444.0	267.4	-35.3%	242.7	-15.5%

[2] Excluding the New Forest

[3] This data was provided by the NOAA-NESDIS National Geophysical Data Centre in the USA, and processed by Land Use Consultants and Nigel Press Associates, on behalf of CPRE. The data is derived from their DMSP satellites, and provides a relative value for the amount of light reflected back to the satellite from the ground.

Figure 1.4: Dark night skies showing the National Park boundary,1993 and 2000



1.14 In summary, the key pressures on the tranquillity and dark night skies of the National Park are:

- road traffic on the main trunk roads crossing and bounding the National Park, particularly the A31(T) and increasingly the A326
- road lighting on roads bounding the National Park, especially where whole stretches of road are lit, rather than just key junctions
- the visual prominence by day and sky glow by night from expanding settlements bounding the National Park
- small-scale intrusions, such as radio masts and pylons and lighting within the National Park.

1.15 To these need to be added the effects of existing air traffic and that arising from proposals to expand the two regional airports at Bournemouth and Southampton. With combined passenger aircraft movements predicted to increase from 71,000 per annum in 2005 to 146,000 in 2030, an increase of 106%, this will have a direct impact on tranquillity.

Objectives and actions

1.16 The National Park Management Plan 2010 - 2015 has a clear objective to maintain and enhance the tranquillity of the National Park with associated Priority Actions. The focus of the Landscape Action Plan is on how joint working, design and landscape can help enhance tranquillity and reduce night time sky glow.

Objective 1.1

Measure and understand tranquillity to ensure that existing and new developments within and surrounding the National Park do not adversely affect the tranquillity and lack of disturbance within the National Park.

Actions

1. Review existing available tranquillity data to help inform where tranquillity should be preserved and where it should be increased.
2. Develop a tool to interpret tranquillity data which can be used in development control and recreation management.
3. Develop an understanding of the pattern of changes in dark night skies and opportunities for recognising their importance, e.g. application for international dark sky reserve status.

Objective 1.2

Reduce visual intrusion of manmade structures within and around the National Park.

Actions

Liaise with the relevant utility companies to develop a programme for undergrounding of prominent low voltage power lines in the National Park.

Objective 1.3

Reduce the impact of existing and potential lighting schemes on the New Forest both from sources within and outside the National Park.

Actions

1. Manage new road lighting within the National Park and on roads bounding the National Park for safety whilst minimising impact.

2. When road and street lighting comes up for renewal within and adjacent to the New Forest, assess its necessity with the relevant authorities and ensure that lights are chosen to minimise sky glow.

3. Minimise the use of security lighting especially in the open countryside and where essential using movement sensitive lighting systems pointing downwards (avoiding lighting the sky).

4. Encourage the minimal use of light at large industrial facilities outside the National Park that contribute to sky glow effects, such as Southampton's container port and terminal, which would have the added benefit of reducing carbon footprints and lowering costs.

5. Raise awareness amongst local communities, including the business community, of the effects of lighting on the character of the National Park and identify exterior lighting fitments that minimise sky glow.

Objective 1.4

Reduce visual and noise impact within and on the boundary of the National Park.

Actions

1. Work with landowners to provide intermittent native species vegetation screens to those roads with high traffic levels where they cross open areas of heathland, to reduce noise and visual intrusion.

2. Consider the use of whisper tarmac on busy roads and at major road junctions.

3. Liaise with the Ministry of Defence on impact of local military operations.

Theme 2:

View across fields to Bohemia

Settlements in the landscape

2.1 The settlements of the New Forest are an essential part of its character and landscape, making an important contribution to sense of place. The settlements of the New Forest are either nucleated as in the case of Lyndhurst or Beaulieu (**Figure 2.1**), dispersed as in the case of Frogham, Linwood and Burley (**Figure 2.2**); or linear as in the case of East Boldre (**Figure 2.3**). Whilst the nucleated and dispersed settlement patterns are clearly part of the medieval landscape, the linear settlements evolved later as land was enclosed piecemeal from the open Forest.

Figure 2.1: Settlement Structure - Nucleated Settlement

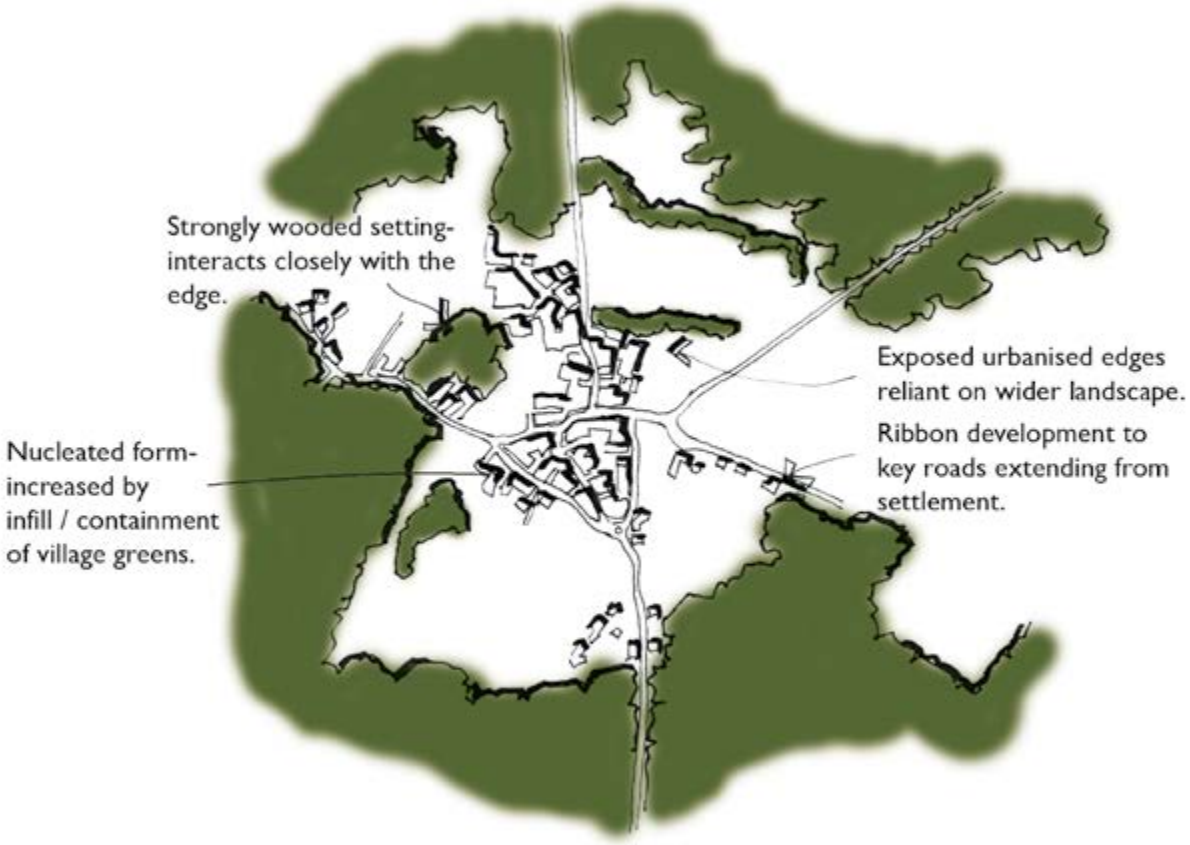


Figure 2.2: Settlement Structure - Dispersed Settlement

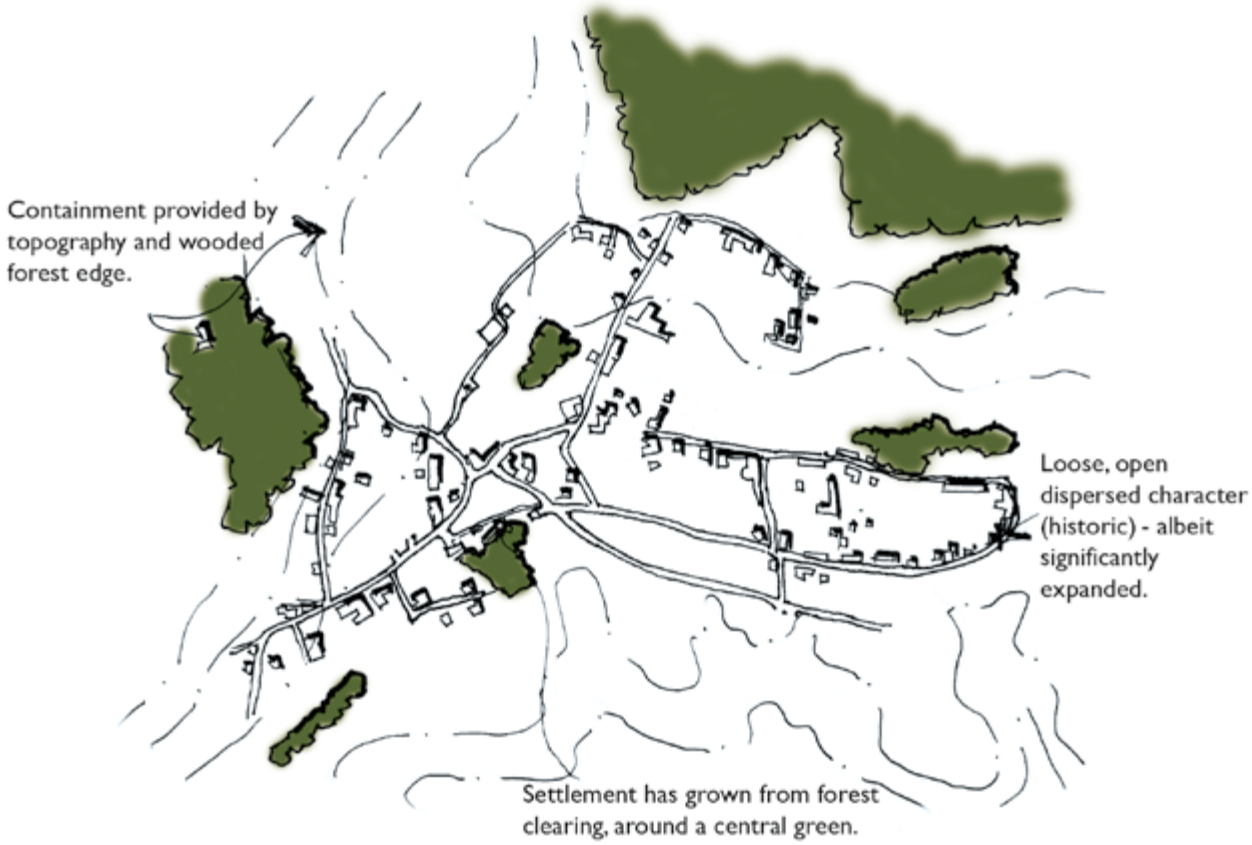


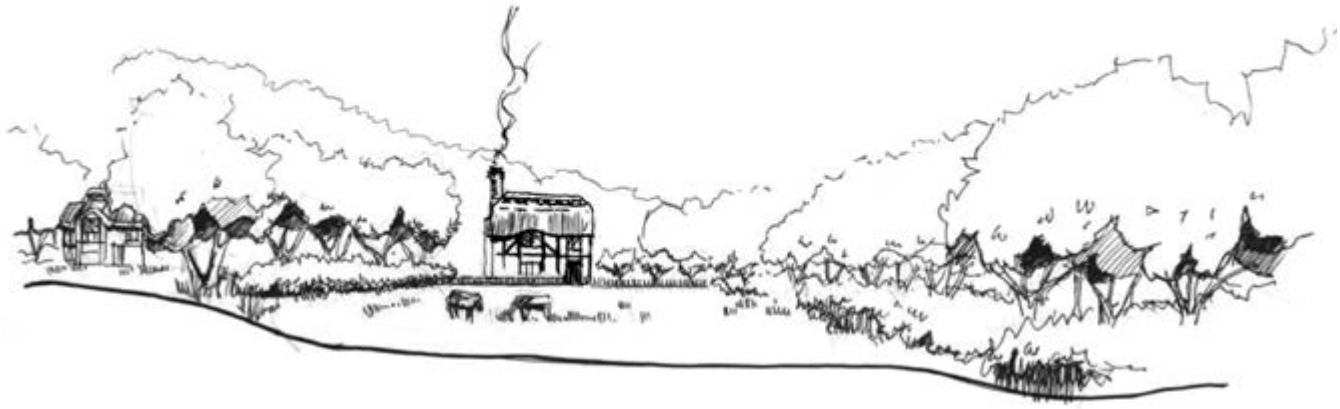
Figure 2.3: Settlement Structure - Linear Settlement

2.2 Historically the settlements were integrally linked to the Forest both functionally as the homes of commoners and smallholders and in character with no clear boundary line between where the settlement started and the Forest ended – the boundaries to plots often lacked clear demarcation and 'bled' into the surrounding Forest with Commoners' encroachment. Over time this relationship between dwellings and the Forest has changed at two levels (**Figure 2.4**):

- through settlement infill, expansion and forest clearance
- through the creation of an urbanised edge that has partially 'separated' the settlement from its surrounding Forest.

Figure 2.4: Settlement Evolution

Origins



Present Day

Figure 2.4 shows how the relationship of dwellings to the Forest has been lost at two levels – 1. through settlement expansion, infill and Forest clearance, and 2. through the creation of an 'urbanised' edge.

2.3 Erosion of settlement character has resulted from:

- infill, containment of village greens and creation of an increasingly hard urban edge
- creation of strong delineation between plot boundaries and adjacent Forest lawns, greens and open heath with the historic low, small scale plot boundaries replaced by increasingly tall close board fencing and ornamental walls (**photograph A**)
- the use of large-scale ornamental plantings of conifers and exotic species within front gardens facing onto the Open Forest out of character with the Forest. This may be accompanied by planting on road verges – many of which are highly valued for nature conservation and are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The planting of garden boundaries with non-native and exotic species can also spread into the surrounding Forest habitats, with consequential impacts on biodiversity
- linked to the above, the widening and addition of driveways which can damage road verges (again many of which are highly valued for nature conservation) and can be visually intrusive where unsympathetic hard surface materials are used, such as paving blocks rather than the natural gravels of the New Forest.

Objectives and Actions

The emphasis of the Landscape Action Plan is on improving the integration of settlements and new development into the New Forest Landscape, reinforcing the traditional character of the settlements.

Photograph A

Objective 2.1

To integrate the settlements of the New Forest and immediate surroundings into their wider Forest setting.

Actions

1. Encourage the use of garden boundary hedges or traditional fencing to integrate development into the landscape. In planting and maintaining of native species hedgerows protection from stock damage will be necessary e.g: post and wire fencing.
2. Encourage the retention of mature landscape features such as remnant hedgerow and field trees.
3. Encourage the retention of historic paths and tracks such as drove ways, within new development to maintain the established relationship between settlements and the open Forest and other commons.

4. Encourage the use of traditional methods of stock proof fencing.

5. Favour permeable buff coloured material such as gravels for driveways, especially at the edge of settlements where they cross road verges or Open Forest, to match the natural gravels of the Forest.

6. Avoid suburbanising garden features such as front garden lighting schemes, high boundary walls and fences, Leylandii or laurel hedges, suburban gates or wide paved entrances.

7. Take the opportunity to bring the biodiversity of the Forest into the garden and to conserve remnant woodlands and hedgerow trees where they fall within development plots and gardens.

8. Resist the temptation to 'tidy up' verges and woodland floors where bramble and woodland flora provide valuable biodiversity, allowing wildlife to connect with the wider Forest and domestic plot.

9. Avoid the clutter of signage and a multitude of different materials. Where litter bins, bollards, grit bins and other street furniture are needed, ensure that they are in keeping with the Forest landscape.

10. Work with local communities and Parish Councils to encourage sensitive treatment of domestic boundaries with good design to meet different requirements.

11. Ensure that the design and construction of boundaries meet the varying needs of different landowners whilst enhancing landscape character.

12. These actions are illustrated in **Figures 2.5 – 2.7** below. **Figure 2.5** looks at restoring the traditional landscape structure where development lies within the enclosed landscapes of the New Forest. **Figures 2.6 and 2.7** illustrate the planning of future development where it lies on the settlement edge.

Figure 2.5: The treatment of the settlement edge within the enclosed landscape

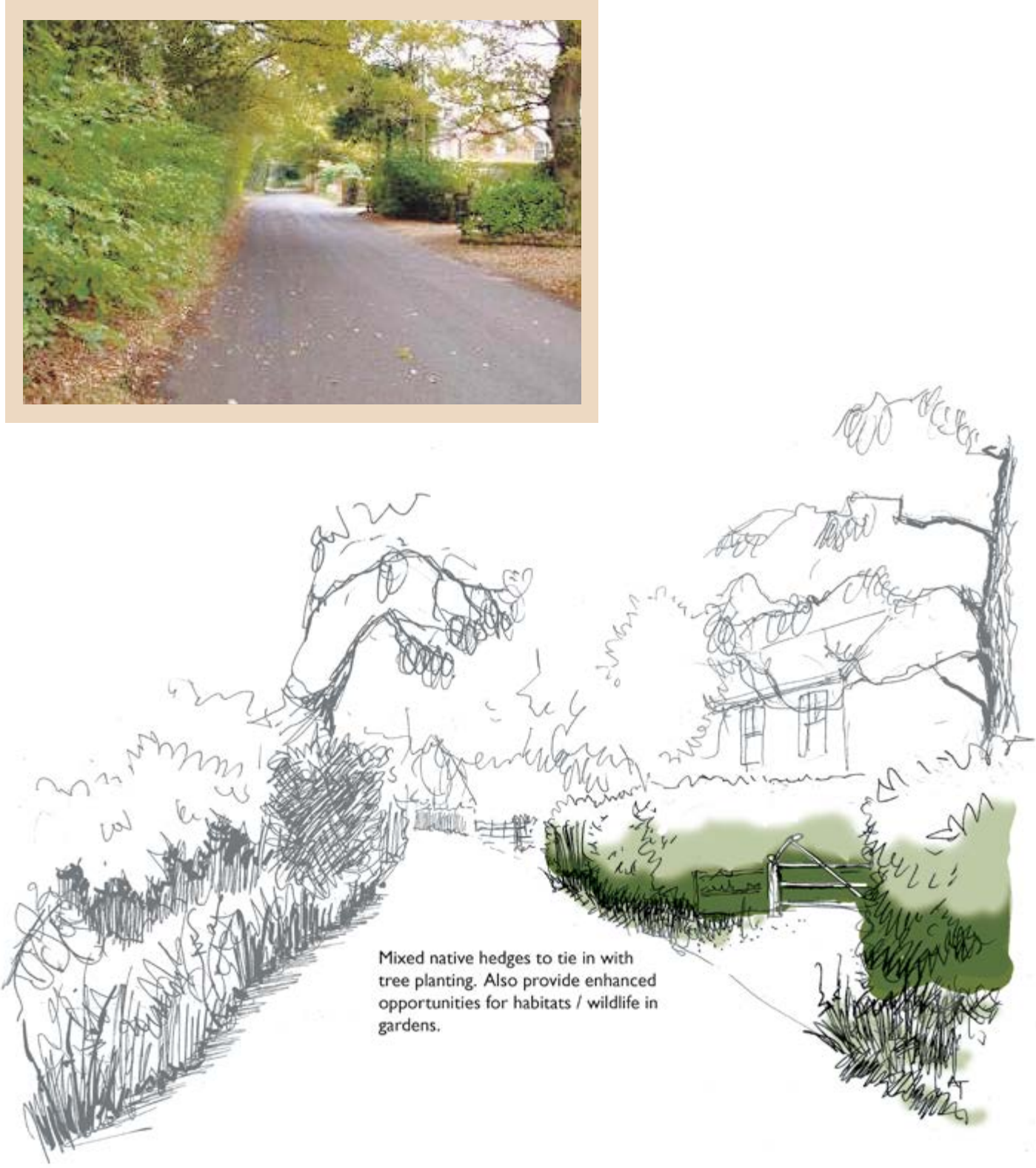
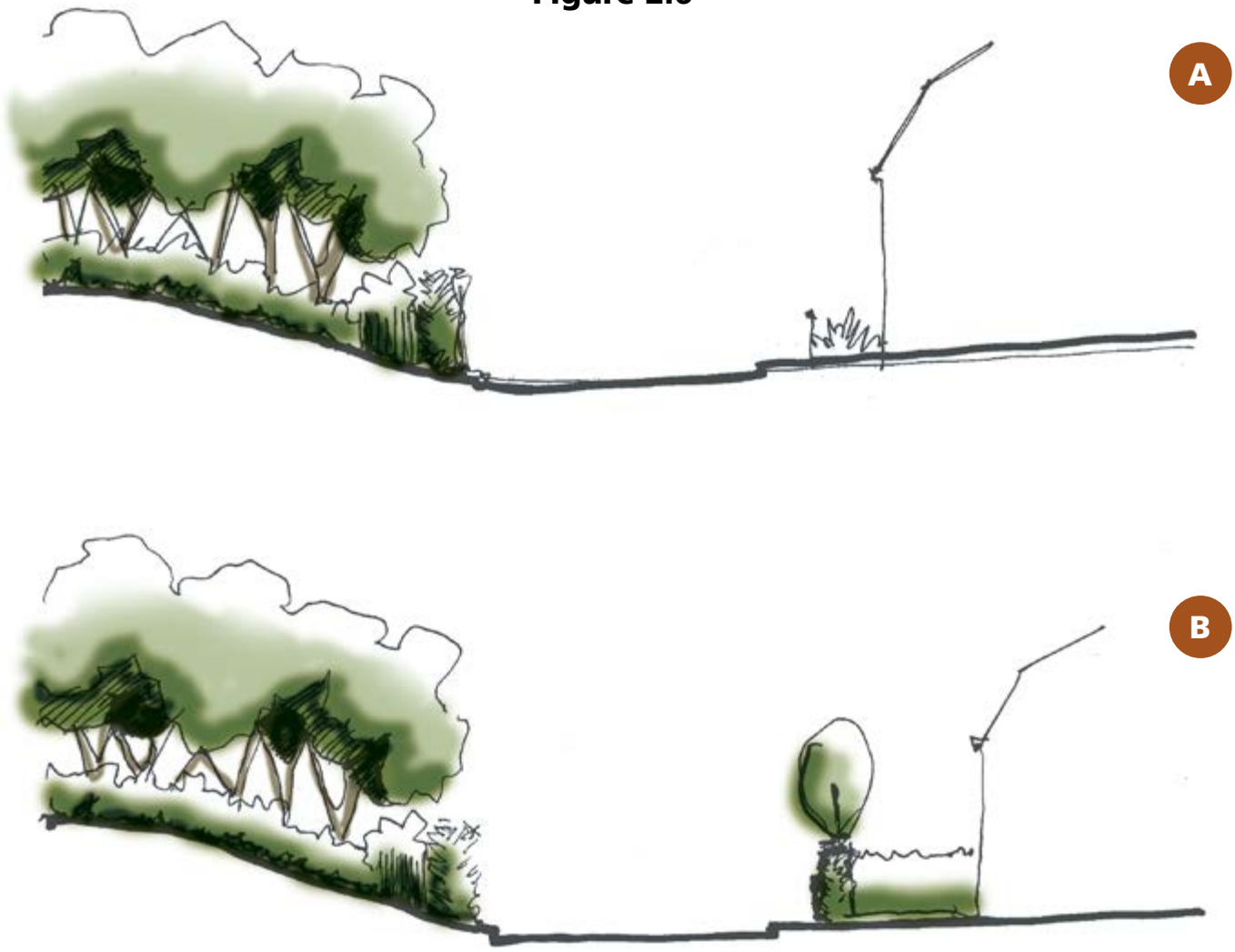


Figure 2.6



Figures 2.5 and 2.6 show

Soft garden boundaries with retained hedgerow oaks reflecting the wider landscape.

- Native hedgerow boundaries to front gardens enhance the rural character of lanes and provide opportunities for wildlife
- Use of timber post and rail fencing and gate details can be appropriate as the boundary to front gardens
- Traditional boundaries are in keeping with views from the wider landscape.

Figure 2.6 Planning future development where it lies on the settlement edge

Vary development density along settlement edges to create a porous development edge with an improved relationship with the surrounding Forest, allowing room for planting on the same side as the development (**B**) rather than just relying on maintaining woodland opposite the development (**A**).

Figure 2.7

Figure 2.7 shows other suggested elements of site layout and design for new development on the settlement edge including:

- New development that reflects the scale, design and use of materials found in traditional Forest buildings
- Retention of past field boundaries and historic tracks within the housing layout.

It also illustrates issues of lighting.

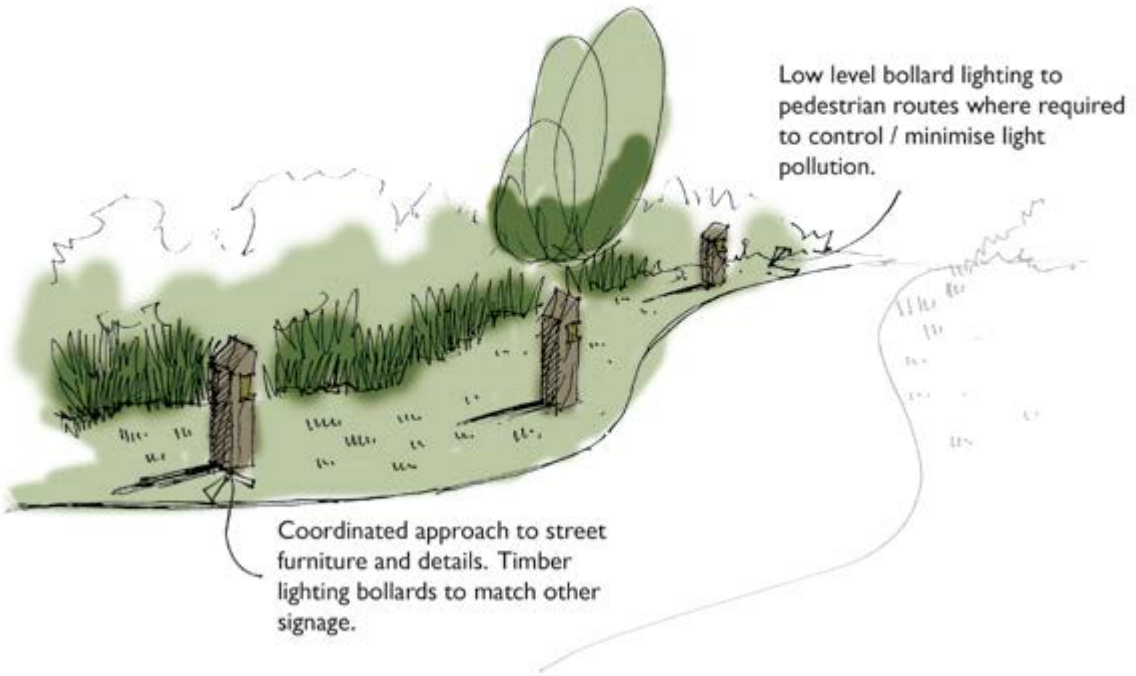
Objective 2.2

To promote the use of external lighting in a sensitive way that is not intrusive and protects tranquillity and the dark night skies of the National Park.

Actions

1. Encourage sensitive use of external lighting both on the street and around or on properties with advisory information regarding the use of floodlights, movement activated lights and lighting to drives and gates, with low lux levels and positioning under porches or eaves to avoid upward light spillage. Consideration given to safety and security issues. **Figure 2.8** below illustrates the use of low level lighting bollards.

Figure 2.8: Low level lighting bollards



Theme 3:

Road within landscape, near Burley

Integrating roads into the landscape

3.1 The road network inevitably has an impact on the landscape of the New Forest and the aim is to avoid the urbanising influence of some roads.

3.2 Issues that are particularly evident at settlement edges can be summarised as below. Some of these features are, however, introduced for safety reasons or are a design standard used throughout the highways network:

- cluttered and un-coordinated signage, especially in the approach to and within settlements
- traffic calming schemes that use strong colours on road surfaces, strong road markings, chicanes and plastic and concrete bollards designed for urban use (**photographs A and B**)
- tall lighting columns at the settlement edge out of scale with their rural setting and adding to light pollution
- general lack of shared use of rural roads by cyclists, riders and pedestrians because of the fear of traffic (**photograph A**).

3.3 By comparison, the rural B and C class roads have a well co-ordinated aesthetic of cattle grids with associated timber pedestrian gates, timber

Photograph A

Photograph B

'wings' and timber signage, road barriers and road furniture but this can become disjointed at the settlement edge.

3.4 There are opportunities in considering the character of roads where they approach settlements. The shared use of roads on certain routes through highways design and engineering, such as marked cycle lanes, can calm traffic and further improve recreational opportunities.

3.5 There is potential for using rumble strips that reflect the character of cattle grids as a means of calming traffic and creating the entrance into villages.

These can prove unpopular with drivers and nearby residents and require careful positioning and design, avoiding nuisance.

Objectives and actions

The National Park Management Plan sets the general context to the future management of roads and traffic within the New Forest. The focus of the Landscape Action Plan is on the design of roads to reduce landscape impacts.

Objective 3.1

Achieve traffic management and road design solutions that reflect their rural context and have a character led approach.

Actions

1. Use the rural aesthetic of cattle grids, associated pedestrian gates and timber bollards to calm traffic at the entrance to settlements, emphasising the rural identity of New Forest villages (**photographs C and D**).

2. Manage vegetation to open views to landscape beyond and to make animals more visible.

3. Use low key rural furniture providing the dual purpose of traffic calming and announcing an entrance into the village, reflecting traditional features such as cattle grids in the layout of rumble strips and using soft natural materials such as hoggin and gravel. Also use solid timber bollards and traditional finger post signs integrating signage into the fabric of the 'entrance'.

4. Use changes in materials and other design solutions rather than overt engineering solutions to influence driver behaviour.

5. Continue the strategy of ditch and bank works to discourage parking on verges.

6. Discourage the use of kerbs within the New Forest other than in the centre of the larger settlements, taking into account specific road drainage requirements.

Photograph C

Photograph D

7. Use 'soft' solutions in relation to surface water run-off and road drainage within new development which can reflect existing landscape patterns such as remnant field boundary ditches retained within developments. Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) and the use of swales can alleviate localised road flooding.

8. Maintain traffic calming, such as pinch points, in a trial period to avoid it looking unsightly. If subsequently made permanent choose materials sensitively with a minimum of tarmac, kerbs etc.

9. Use appropriate road edging such as cementitious gravel to stop erosion of road edges whilst avoiding widening the road. Maintain to avoid adjacent soft spots.

10. Agencies with responsibilities for highway maintenance and improvements should refer to Hampshire County Council's 'Companion Document to Manual for Streets' adopted by HCC in April 2010, which advocates sensitive highways solutions in rural areas and villages. Hampshire Highways has produced a draft document 'The New Forest Maintenance Plan and Specification for Routine Highway Operations' which provides an essential guide for sensitive approaches to highways maintenance.

11. Prioritise key roads in the open Forest to reduce urban intrusion.

Objective 3.2

A co-ordinated approach to road signage and new street lighting.

Action

1. Develop a co-ordinated approach to signage, minimising the overall number of signs and linking necessary signs to other road furniture thereby reducing clutter. Where lighting is critical for safety, ensure it is of consistent design, minimises upward spillage of light, and ideally is of human scale and does not break the tree line.

2. Use signs that have changing seasonal messages such as on the B3054, Lymington to Beaulieu road noting the foaling season and animal accident numbers.

3. Be aware of up to date guidance from the Department of Transport on various aspects of road design and safety issues, for example, regarding signage.

Theme 4:

Cars parked at Hatchet Pond

Integrating access to recreation provision into the landscape

4.1 In integrating access to recreation provision with minimal impact on the landscape, the main issues are:

- Car parking located in open situations, where surfacing and the sun glinting off car roofs may be visible over a wide area

- Conspicuous signs (sometimes with associated lighting), which may obstruct views or features of interest (**photograph B**).

4.2 The New Forest has a well-established and sensitive vernacular of timber construction used by the Forestry Commission (**photograph A**), and there is an opportunity to extend and enhance this cohesive, low key approach.

Potential opportunities

4.3 Working with those responsible for car parks, potential opportunities include:

Photograph A

Photograph B

- Using 'soft' or 'flexible' solutions for the surfacing of car parks, cycle paths and other hard surfaces. Hoggin (bound gravel) and gravel are the natural materials of the New Forest with timber edging, providing a 'light touch' on the landscape .

- Integration of car parking in the enclosed landscape using native hedging or the 'Burley Fence' (refer to Theme 7), to provide a traditional and clear boundary that stops encroachment. Hedging also has the advantage of screening cars (see **Figure 4.1**).

- Figure 4.2 illustrates how the visual impact of car parking on the Open Forest may be reduced with the selective use of heathland scrub and pioneer vegetation to provide a soft screen in keeping with the wider landscape. This can be encouraged to regenerate naturally or may already be growing and can be structured in such a way as to maintain public security.

Figure 4.1: Suggested treatment of car parking within the enclosed landscape

Figure 4.2: Suggested treatment of car parking within the open Forest

4.4 Working with landowners in respect of signage there is the opportunity to develop best practice in the following:

- Improving signage by following the style of the boundaries/way markers/fingerposts, developed by the Forestry Commission as a template for other sites
- Considering ways in which signage, interpretation, and car parking meters can be less prominent, or combined, to reduce clutter and visual obstruction, as illustrated in **Figure 4.3**.

Figure 4.3: Combining different elements and lowering the height of interpretation boards to reduce clutter and maintain views

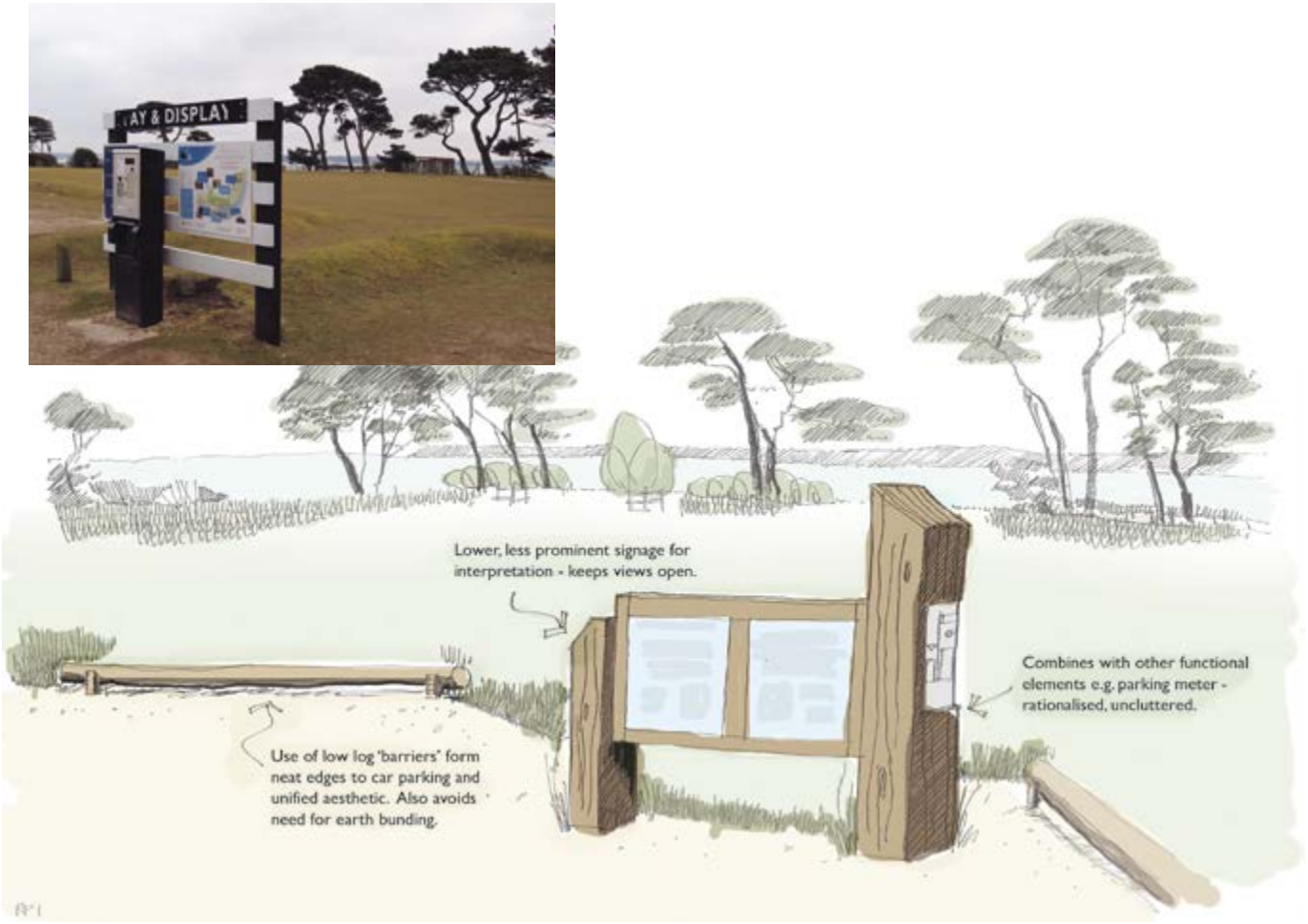


Figure 4.3 shows

Consideration of scale and materials of signs at tourist attractions and visitor accommodation, seeking opportunities to:

- Reduce visual prominence
- Avoid the need for multiple signs
- Reduce clutter
- Use appropriate colours, materials and textures.

Figure 4.5: A number of signs in close proximity with uplighting

Figure 4.6: A preferred approach with rationalisation of signs and down lighting screened by a timber canopy

4.5 An example of issues commonly encountered in the use of signs in terms of number and lighting is shown in **Figure 4.5**, with a possible solution in **Figure 4.6**.

Objectives and actions

The National Park Management Plan and the Recreation Management Strategy set the context for recreation in the National Park. Specific objectives and actions are for the integration of access to recreation provision to minimise impact on the landscape:

Objective 4.1

Promote a low key approach to signage.

Actions

1. Use natural materials for signs wherever possible.

2. Minimise clutter from signs by ensuring that one sign can fulfil a number of different tasks and locate signs and interpretation boards where they will not block views.

3. Avoid lit signs outside settlements and in all cases where lighting is used, use downlighting.

Objective 4.2

Minimise the impact of car parking on the wider landscape.

Actions

1. Outside the main settlements of the New Forest encourage all car parks to be surfaced in permeable materials such as gravel and hoggin and located to minimise visibility in long views.

2. Avoid the lighting of car parks outside main settlements and screen car parks using managed natural vegetation local to the area.

Theme 5:

Solar panels with screening

Integrating renewable and low carbon technologies into the landscape

5.1 The communities of the New Forest are leading the way in promoting more sustainable lifestyles. Through New Forest Transition (established Autumn 2008 - http://www.newforesttransition.org) and other initiatives there is a rapidly increasing interest in renewable and low carbon technologies as sources of heat and power for use within the National Park.

5.2 The New Forest National Park Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document published in December 2011 gives guidance on building sustainably using different types of renewable energy. This includes guidance on potential visual impacts on buildings and the landscape.

5.3 Renewable and low carbon technologies are a fast changing field. Those that have or are likely to come forward within the National Park are:

- Biomass boilers / wood burning stoves – wood fuel (logs, woodchip, wood pellets)
- Anaerobic digestion (AD) – organic waste
- Micro-hydro – water
- Ground source heat pumps – thermal energy
- Air source heat pumps
- Solar heated hot water – solar
- Photovoltaics – solar
- Passive solar design – solar
- Small-scale wind turbines – wind
- Marine sources – large wind turbines, tidal, current and wave energy.

5.4 A study of renewable energy potential in the New Forest in 2010 (IT Power, New Forest National Park Authority and New Forest District Council Potential Assessment Study 2010) concluded that there is capacity of about 145MW. More than 60% of this potential is derived from biomass resource, about a quarter from photovoltaics and 10% from solar water heating. There is only a very small potential for micro wind energy or hydropower generation.

5.5 These renewable and low carbon technologies divide into three broad categories in terms of their landscape implications and wider sustainability benefits.

Technologies bringing positive landscape benefits

5.6 A number of technologies have the potential to operate in symbiosis with the landscape and help support the rural economy such as the use of wood fuel, micro-hydro and anaerobic digestion.

5.7 Foremost amongst these are the use of wood stoves and biomass boilers in households, community and commercial enterprises. These boilers require little infrastructure other than space to store the wood fuel and so have minimal landscape impact.

5.8 Their wider use has the potential to stimulate the market in wood fuel, utilising forest waste and encouraging private woodland to be brought back into management, the conservation of small woodland areas within gardens (as a source of fuel) and the reintroduction of coppicing and tree pollarding in young trees as a sustainable source of fuel. It could, over time, also act as a spur to the planting of small new woodlands and reappraisal of the value of hedgerows as a source of wood fuel on the enclosed lands of the Forest, providing a further reason for reinforcing the traditional field pattern. For these landscape benefits to be achieved there is a need for:

- the development of formal and informal wood fuel supply chains
- the potential development of community woodland enterprises that share the labour equipment and drying facilities needed to ensure a consistent supply of dried logs and woodchip
- supporting guidance on maximising the supply of wood fuel in ways that enhance the Forest's landscape and biodiversity
- supporting feasibility appraisal(s) into the potential for the different wood fuels from the Forest – sawn logs, woodchip and wood pellets.

5.9 Micro-hydro provides another positive gain for the New Forest landscape where it supports the refurbishment of existing mill races for the generation of electricity. It is key that any proposed micro hydro projects are small and domestic in scale and in keeping with the local and wider landscape. Larger hydro projects are unlikely to be suitable in the landscape because of visual impact.

5.10 Anaerobic digestion could bring wider landscape and environmental benefits although its potential may be marginal in the New Forest. In rural areas, anaerobic digestion plants are most commonly located on livestock farms utilising the waste from the indoor housing of cattle in winter, supplemented by domestic and commercial food wastes (e.g. from the tourism industry) collected by local communities and businesses. These may be further supplemented with material such as cut bracken and algal blooms. Although anaerobic digestion plants require built structures, these can, with careful siting, be incorporated within existing farm complexes and settlements and bring the benefit of making positive use of waste materials that might otherwise cause damage or go to landfill sites.

Technologies with neutral landscape effects

5.11 The 'collectors' for ground source heat pumps are laid underground in trenches or boreholes, hence generally have little landscape impact (although they may disturb underground archaeology). The exceptions to this are where visually important trees are lost through trenching, or where heat is absorbed through a tar macadam surface. Air source heat pumps need not be visually intrusive so long as located on a secluded elevation of a building but care needs to be extended to Listed Buildings, those within Conservation Areas and buildings of historic interest such as 'black' buildings (buildings that are not listed but are identified as being of significance, often within a Conservation Area). It would be unlikely that planning consent would be given in this circumstance.

5.12 As a coastal National Park there is also the potential to draw on marine technologies. Offshore wind turbines are considered below. Other potential technologies are those that harness wave and tidal power at the surface or on the sea bed. However, it is anticipated that these are unlikely to be used within view of the National Park because of the heavy use of adjacent waters by shipping and recreational craft. However emerging technology that captures tidal power on the sea bed would have little impact on the landscape or seascape.

Technologies that may impact on the landscape but will bring positive energy gains

5.13 Field scale solar PV development could potentially have a large landscape impact due to its large scale and unnatural, semi industrial appearance. Any application for large scale solar PV arrays will be subject to rigorous examination and expected to clearly demonstrate that the special qualities of the National Park will not be compromised by the development and that the intrinsic value of the landscape is retained. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be essential to show a sound understanding and assessment of the impact of proposals on key views, landscape character, sensitivity of visual receptors, tranquillity and the historic environment.

5.14 Solar technologies need not be visually intrusive so long as they are carefully integrated with a building or where free standing photovoltaic arrays are used, they are small scale, sited within the domestic curtilage of a dwelling or associated with outbuildings close to the dwelling.

5.15 Micro building mounted and small free standing wind turbines are not considered further as the 2010 study showed that this is not an efficient way of generating energy in the New Forest.

5.16 Freestanding turbines have the potential to impact on the landscape as tall structures and also by introducing movement into the landscape. Most significant will be the potential impact of medium sized (25m – 65m) and large-scale (>65m height to blade tip) turbines. The former are now little used unless bought second hand from mainland Europe while the latter have grown in size (now typically 200m to blade tip) primarily reflecting development in marine technologies. Navigation lights on the top of turbines create a night time impact.

5.17 For smaller turbines (under 25m from blade tip), landscape impacts can be minimised by placing installations against landscape backdrops such as rising ground and woodland, toning units with a colour that blends into the background or mounting the turbine on an open as opposed to a solid tower. Also avoiding conspicuous skyline locations or interrupting long views over heathland for example or across the Avon Valley, will be necessary.

5.18 Wind farm developments visible from the National Park, especially off shore developments and on the Isle of Wight, could have an impact on views into and out of the National Park including impact on seascape character. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be essential to show a sound understanding and assessment of the impact of proposals on key views, landscape character, sensitivity, tranquillity and the historic environment. A Seascape Visual Impact Assessment would be essential for off shore developments.

5.19 On shore cable routes from offshore wind farms will also have the potential to impact on the landscape by either carrying of the generated power in over head or underground cables.

Objectives and actions

Objective 5.1

Promote those renewable and low carbon technologies that will bring wider benefits to the National Park or will have minimal landscape impact.

Actions

1. Undertake a feasibility appraisal of the potential for the different wood fuels from the Forest – sawn logs, woodchip and wood pellets.
2. Develop guidance on maximising the supply of wood fuel from the New Forest in ways that enhance the Forest's landscape and biodiversity.

Objective 5.2

Establish a basis for assessment of large scale renewable energy proposals.

Actions

1. Prepare guidance for the consideration of large scale solar PV arrays and large scale wind turbines, both onshore and offshore.
2. Prepare a seascape assessment for the coastal part of the National Park.

Theme 6:

Path at Rhinefield

Managing forests and woodlands in harmony with the New Forest landscape

6.1 The diverse woodlands of the New Forest National Park are symbolic of its cultural heritage, stemming back to its original establishment as a medieval hunting forest and the subsequent enclosure of open land for timber production from the early 18th century. These woodlands and forests are key to the special landscape character and as such are rooted in the National Park's special qualities.

6.2 The Crown Lands, managed by the Forestry Commission and lying at the heart of the National Park, include extensive areas of unenclosed semi-natural woodland as well as major broadleaved and coniferous woodland inclosures. The economic viability of the coniferous plantations is an integral part of the New Forest economy, providing employment for many commoners, timber supply for local sawmills and income for the Forestry Commission. There are significant areas of woodland managed by the National Trust, such as at Canada and Plaitford Commons and Foxbury Plantation in the north of the National Park, with Roydon Woods being managed by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. There is also a mosaic of small private woodlands (mainly ancient semi-natural woodland), linked to a rich hedgerow network scattered across the Enclosed Lands, as well as larger estate woodlands on the main estates in the south eastern part of the New Forest including Exbury, Cadland, Beaulieu and Pylewell.

6.3 The Forestry Commission's Management Plan for the Crown Lands (July 2008), and the 10 year Forest Design Plans for the inclosures (2000 and reviewed in 2005) include long-term strategies for the inclosures over the next 100 years. Both these sources are strongly guided and influenced by the priorities outlined in the Management Plan for the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (2001), which covers the majority of the Crown Lands. The Minister's Mandate for the New Forest (1999-2008) emphasises that the Forestry Commission's Plans need to be consistent with the needs of the SAC Management Plan.

6.4 There is less information on other public, private and charity owned woodlands outside the Crown Lands (although take-up of the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) gives a good indication of the current status of woodland management). An analysis of the current levels of take-up of EWGS against National Inventory of Woodland and Trees data shows that, of approximately 8,079 hectares of woodland found outside the Crown

Lands, 1,447 hectares (18%) is under EWGS. Of this total, just over 30% of agreements cover broadleaved woodland, 22% coniferous and 16% mixed woodlands. **Figure 6.1** shows the spatial distribution of the scheme across the National Park. Woodlands under the management of the National Trust and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust are managed in accordance with established management plans.

6.5 Key issues affecting the condition of the National Park's semi-natural woodlands, include the spread of invasive alien species including Rhododendron ponticum, the past replacement of native broadleaved woodland with conifers, and the cessation of traditional forms of management such as coppicing and pollarding; past lack of management of some woodlands leading to neglect; and varying levels of grazing within woodlands linked to fluctuating stock populations and incursion into the inclosures.

6.6 Both the Forestry Commission on the Crown Lands and some larger estates are now actively seeking to restore Ancient Woodland Sites planted with conifers (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) back to their semi-natural state. The EWGS is encouraging this activity on the private lands within the Forest.

6.7 The 'Grown in Britain' movement is aiming to create a sustainable future for forests and woodland, bringing together those who value forests, woods and trees and the products that can be made from the wood they produce.

Ongoing and future management: The Crown Land Inclosures

6.8 The Minister's Mandate (Direction from the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) for the New Forest includes specific principles for the management of the New Forest inclosures (comprising a mixture of 17th to 19th century beech/oak plantations and commercial conifer plantations). These principles guided the preparation of the Forest Design Plans for the inclosures. The principles are summarised as follows:

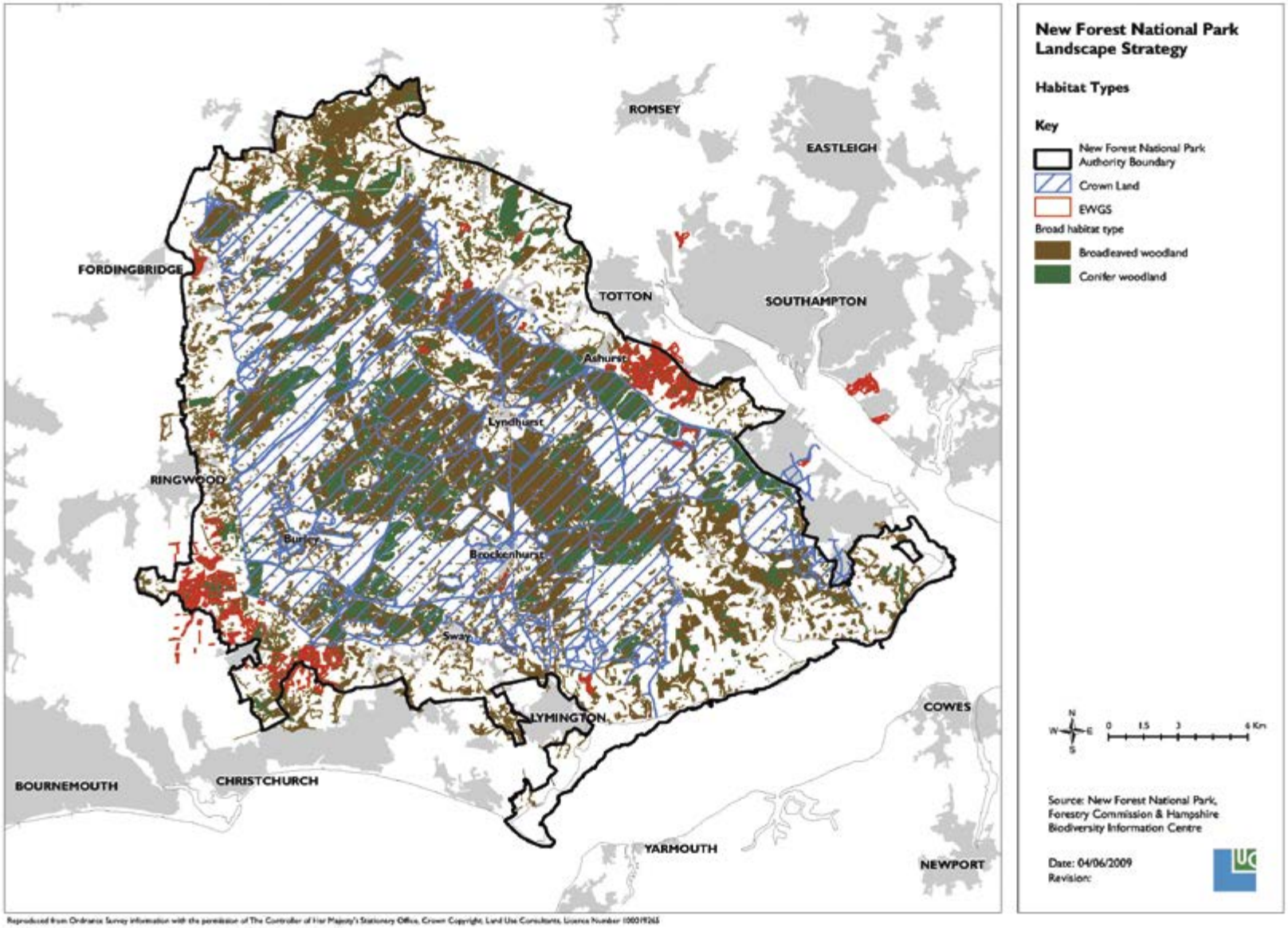
- A significant proportion of woodlands will be modified to restore pasture woodlands and ancient and semi-natural woodland where these are appropriate. A consequence of this modification will be that the present overall balance between broadleaves and conifers will be changed in favour of broadleaves. The pace of this modification will depend on markets and economic viability of felling, availability of resources and a desire to avoid unnecessary premature felling of existing growing trees, the removal of which will be necessary for restoration of habitats.
- No broadleaved woodland will be regenerated with conifers
- The regeneration of broadleaved areas will be managed with an emphasis on conservation of nature and amenity. For oaks, beech and sweet chestnut, stand rotations will be at least 200 years with cleared patches for regeneration thereafter not exceeding one acre.

6.9 The overall aim for transforming the current inclosure woodlands is to create a mosaic of:

- managed woodland
- natural or near natural woodland
- pasture woodland and associated habitats
- heathland and open forest habitats
- wetland habitats developed along river and stream corridors.

6.10 Key management methods identified to achieve the desired transformations to the inclosures are outlined in the 'Generic Management Prescriptions' contained in the Forest Design Plans. These prescriptions are aimed towards achieving the long-term 'design concept' for the next 50 years.

Figure 6.1: Levels of EWGS take-up (2008) in the New Forest National Park



Autumn woodland, New Forest © Mark Heighes

6.11 Under current Forest Design Plans, by 2025 overall management within the inclosures is aiming to achieve:

- Establishment of 214 ha of near-natural woodland
- Increase in the area of mixed broadleaf/conifer woodland from 863 ha to 1,486ha (72%)
- Increase in the area of pasture woodland from 360ha to 972ha (170%)
- Reduction in the area of conifer woodland from 3,494 ha to 1,179ha (66% decrease).

6.12 At the same time, targets for Open Forest habitats within the inclosures include[4]:

- Increase in the total area of wooded heath by 78ha (134% increase)
- Increase in the total area of Open Forest habitats and heathland within the Inclosures by 524 ha (104% increase)
- Increase in the total area of valley mire and wetland habitats from 67 to 82 ha (22% increase).

Ongoing and future management: the unenclosed Ancient and Ornamental Woodlands of the Crown Lands

6.13 The ancient beech and oak woods 'are one of the glories of the New Forest' (Forestry Commission, 2008), covering some 3,692 hectares of the Crown Lands. These woodlands also comprise emergent broadleaved woodland, riparian/riverine woodland and Scots Pine stands.

6.14 Key management aims set out in the SAC Management Plan and included in the Management Plan for the Crown Lands, include:

- Continued grazing by commoners' stock
- Continued pollarding of holly, beech and ash (as well as oak around the edge of lawns)
- Maintenance of the woodland to grazing land ratio
- Localised bracken control where this cannot be managed by grazing alone
- Promotion of woodland regeneration through the protection of seedlings and seed planting, where there is a lack of natural regeneration
- Control of invasive exotic species and inappropriate native species
- Protection of important Scots Pine stands, but removal and control of specimens within woodland and where regenerating on the edges of woodland, heathland and mires.

[4] From summary statistics provided by the Forestry Commission based on the Long Term Structure (20 years) Plan prepared as part of the Forest Design Plans, 2005.

Ongoing and future management: the private woodlands of the enclosed lands

6.15 Although not currently set out in existing plans, to maintain and enhance the Park's wooded landscape key objectives for the other public, private and charity owned woodlands of the Enclosed lands are:

- Ensuring no further loss or damage to ancient semi-natural woodland sites
- Restoring traditional management through coppicing and pollarding of ancient semi-natural woodlands and replanted woodlands on ancient semi-natural woodland sites
- Converting Planted Ancient Woodland Sites back to their former semi-natural woodland structure
- Joint participation in a management plan for each of the five deer species.

6.16 The New Forest benefits from containing large tracts of woodland which can showcase good practice examples of forestry and woodland management, including work undertaken by the Forestry Commission on the Crown Lands and the management of other woodlands owned by the National Trust and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The influence of large estates, which are also proactively addressing woodland management, is a further asset in encouraging other private woodland owners to take action.

6.17 Restoring traditional management of woodlands, including coppicing, could be spurred on by stimulating local demand for wood fuel as a source of community energy. This in turn could encourage a return to the traditional landscape of the enclosed lands, where small, well managed woodlands are linked to a strong network of thick hedgerows; providing a ready source of wood fuel to local communities through active management.

Woodlands and climate change

6.18 The woodlands of the New Forest are of particular importance because they give the landscape its overall structure; the contrast between openness and enclosure. Yet the impacts of climate change are likely to have very significant implications on the composition and species of the woodlands, particularly those which are used for timber production. Corsican pine, one of the main conifer species, is being affected by Red Band Needle Blight, and as a consequence is no longer being planted on Crown Lands. Beech is also already displaying symptoms indicative of a changing climate as it is particularly susceptible to increased incidences of drought. Phytophthora ramorum (Sudden Oak Death) has become widespread in England in recent years especially affecting larch, but could pose a significant threat to the New Forest's beech woods. The discovery of the Chalara fungus in Ash trees in Autumn 2012 also reflects the ability of pathogens to reach the UK from other parts of the world and will change the landscape of the New Forest once it takes hold and Ash is lost in great numbers.

6.19 In terms of future timber production, current scenarios suggest that non-native species such as sweet chestnut, Holm oak and Douglas fir will become more viable – none of which are native to the New Forest. At the same time productive potential of many native species is likely to decline. Therefore, to ensure the future economic viability of the timber industry in the National Park a diversity of species will need to be considered on appropriate sites.

6.20 As well as the impacts on species composition, more frequent intense storm events may increase the incidence of wind throw which may be particularly devastating for the ancient trees of the Forest. The promotion of pollarding of young trees, following old traditions, provides one means of using historically important techniques to address future problems, with pollarded trees being less susceptible to wind throw and having better drought resistance (by increasing the root to crown ratio), and in turn providing a new generation of ancient trees for the future.

6.21 There may also be a case for exploring a greater range of tree provenance and species within the semi-natural woodlands of the New Forest to help build in resilience for the future. This could be controversial and would need to be considered with extreme care and with the relevant partners.

Objectives and actions

The National Park Management Plan recognises that the diverse woodlands of the New Forest National Park are symbolic of its cultural heritage. Specific objectives and actions for the forests and woodlands of the National Park are as follows:

Objective 6.1

Encourage woodland owners to bring woodlands back into active management, including through revitalising local markets for wood products, such as wood fuel.

Actions

1. Implementation of actions 1 and 2 from Objective 5.1 of Theme 5 (Integrating renewable and low carbon technologies into the New Forest landscape).
2. Promote appropriate available grant schemes that support woodland management and Higher Level Stewardship woodland management options to ensure as wide a take-up as possible.
3. Establish an annual programme of events, open to all woodland owners and organisations such as local tree nurseries, across the National Park to showcase good practice examples of woodland management, including on the private estates. Create link with the 'Grown in Britain' movement to encourage local enthusiasm for woodland management and locally produced timber products.

Objective 6.2

Maintain the framework of woodlands, trees and hedgerows within the National Park and the overall balance with open Forest habitats whilst exploring how to help these woodlands and trees adapt to climate change.

Actions

1. Strengthen the 'skeleton' of woodlands, trees and hedgerows through new planting to close gaps in the network.
2. Encourage the pollarding of young hedgerow trees, under 20 years old approximately, where appropriate.

Objective 6.3

Encourage landowners to restore open semi-natural open habitats from forest where it is identified that this enhances wildlife and the landscape.

Action

1. Allow, where appropriate, for the removal of conifers to create/restore open Forest habitats as well as the natural expansion of semi-natural woodlands/scrub onto open Forest habitats. This should be considered as part of the process of landscape evolution and as a means to allow trees and woodlands to capitalise on climate change niches.

Crab apple in flower on Open Forest

Theme 7:

View across fields to Bank

Managing the enclosed landscapes

7.1 The National Park Authority does not own any land in the New Forest but will engage in a full dialogue with landowners to discuss ways of conserving and enhancing the landscape.

7.2 There are opportunities to conserve and enhance the character, scale, structure and pattern of the landscape of the enclosed lands with their predominant pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by thick ancient hedgerows supporting a diversity of species and linking to small ancient woodlands that are remnants of the 'wildwood' that once covered the area. Access tracks and their junctions with the road network into the traditional landscape of the enclosed lands also need careful consideration.

7.3 Key issues include:

- Field boundary subdivisions which depart from the traditional/historic field pattern, and use a variety of different fencing materials to mark field boundaries (**photographs A and B**)

- Creation of site entrances and boundaries along roads that introduce 'suburban' elements into an otherwise rural landscape such as close board fencing, ornamental walls and railings

Photograph A

Photograph B

- Creation of long access tracks across fields with hard surfacing (such as tarmacadam) that has a suburbanising influence

- Grazing pressure potentially leading to loss of soil structure.

Potential opportunities

7.4 There are opportunities in relation to the management of field boundaries:

- Retaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees and tree lines that mark past field boundaries. Replanting gaps in hedgerows or whole hedgerow lengths that follow traditional field boundaries will be particularly beneficial, reinforcing the traditional character of the landscape and enhancing wildlife corridors.

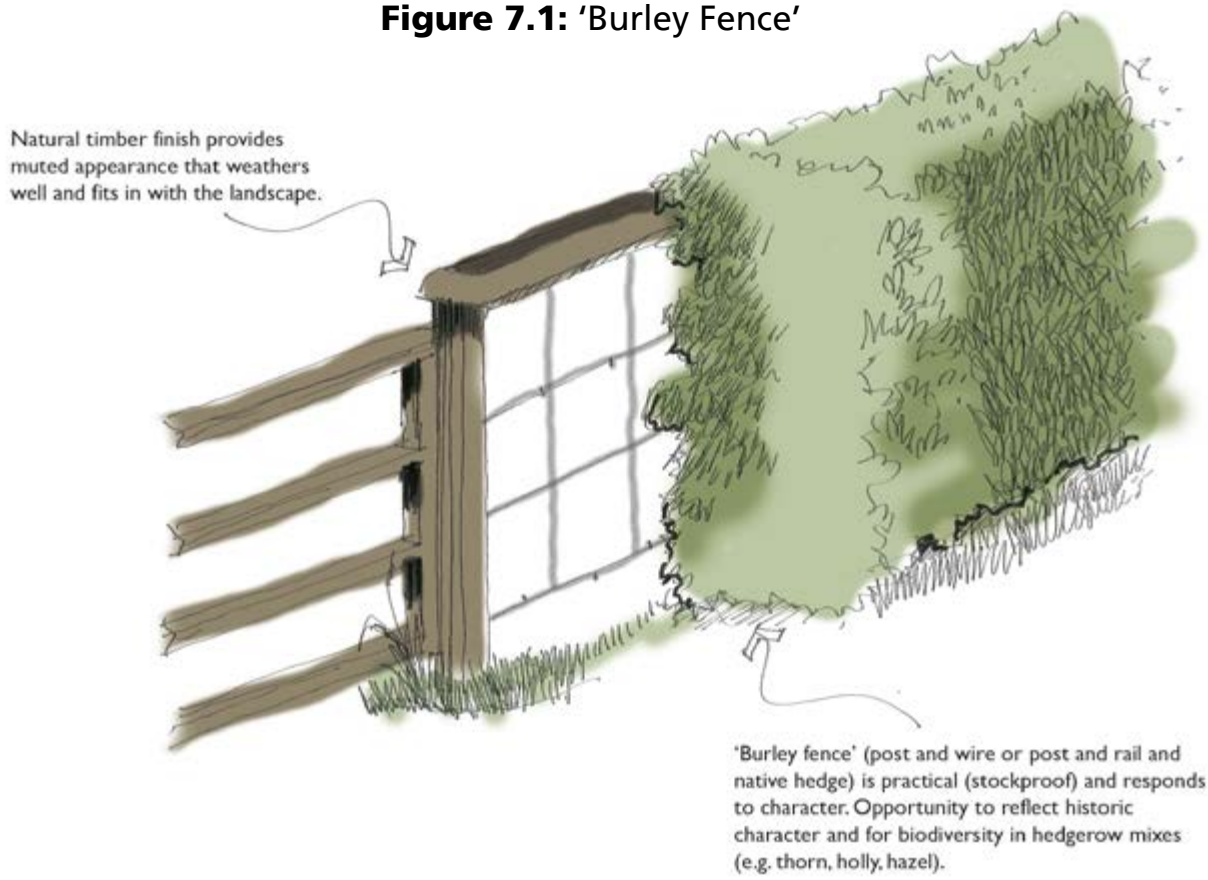
- Using hedgerows and associated hedgerow trees to mark the principal field boundaries and ideally managing hedgerows by hedge laying or rotational trimming, dependent on the age and species of the hedgerow

- The 'Burley Fence' strikes a good balance between providing a stock proof boundary and reflecting landscape character. Named after its use in the Burley area of the New Forest this combines a partial or complete hedgerow boundary with a post and wire fence which will often have a timber capping rail, ensuring that the boundary is stockproof. The Burley Fence is illustrated in **Figure 7.1** which includes a traditional gate. This would be appropriate to use in many locations across the New Forest.

- Where field boundary subdivisions are required, use of post and wire fencing blends into the landscape (**see Figure 7.2**)

- Traditional fencing such as estate fencing also forms an unobtrusive way of marking plot boundaries.

Figure 7.1: 'Burley Fence'



7.5 Avoiding over-grazing and heavy poaching of the sward is good pasture management practice. As a rule of thumb it is best to retain a sward height of 1 – 2 inches often best achieved through rotational grazing using a number of different fields in the rotation. Fuller advice on pasture management is provided in Guidelines for Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document 2011 produced by the National Park Authority, working with equine groups to promote good pasture management.

7.6 The New Forest retains many flower-rich meadows: elsewhere in the country 95% of these meadows have been lost over the last 50 years increasing the importance of those that remain. Such meadows are not only important for biodiversity but also provide mineral-rich hay and well-balanced grazing for horses and ponies. The key factor that enables a wide variety of wild flowers to thrive is the relatively low nutrient levels of the meadows which prevent vigorous grass species from out-competing more unusual flowering plants. These meadows require appropriate management and grazing. Grazing by ponies has been very important in maintaining their floristic interest in and around the Forest. Aspects that are important for maintaining these increasingly rare pastures are:

- avoiding the addition of fertilisers and lime
- avoiding over-grazing
- avoiding agricultural drainage.

7.7 Using traditional solutions for tree protection can avoid damage to field and hedgerow trees e.g. timber 'parkland' type guards (**Figure 7.3**). Field oaks are very important in retaining the well-treed character of the landscape.

7.8 Ancillary land uses such as maneges are frequently desired. These work best if sited close to outbuildings in order to contain landscape and visual impact. Such uses should also be sensitively sited in relation to landform, avoiding use of bunds and banks. Muted materials for surfacing work well in the landscape. Lighting should be avoided.

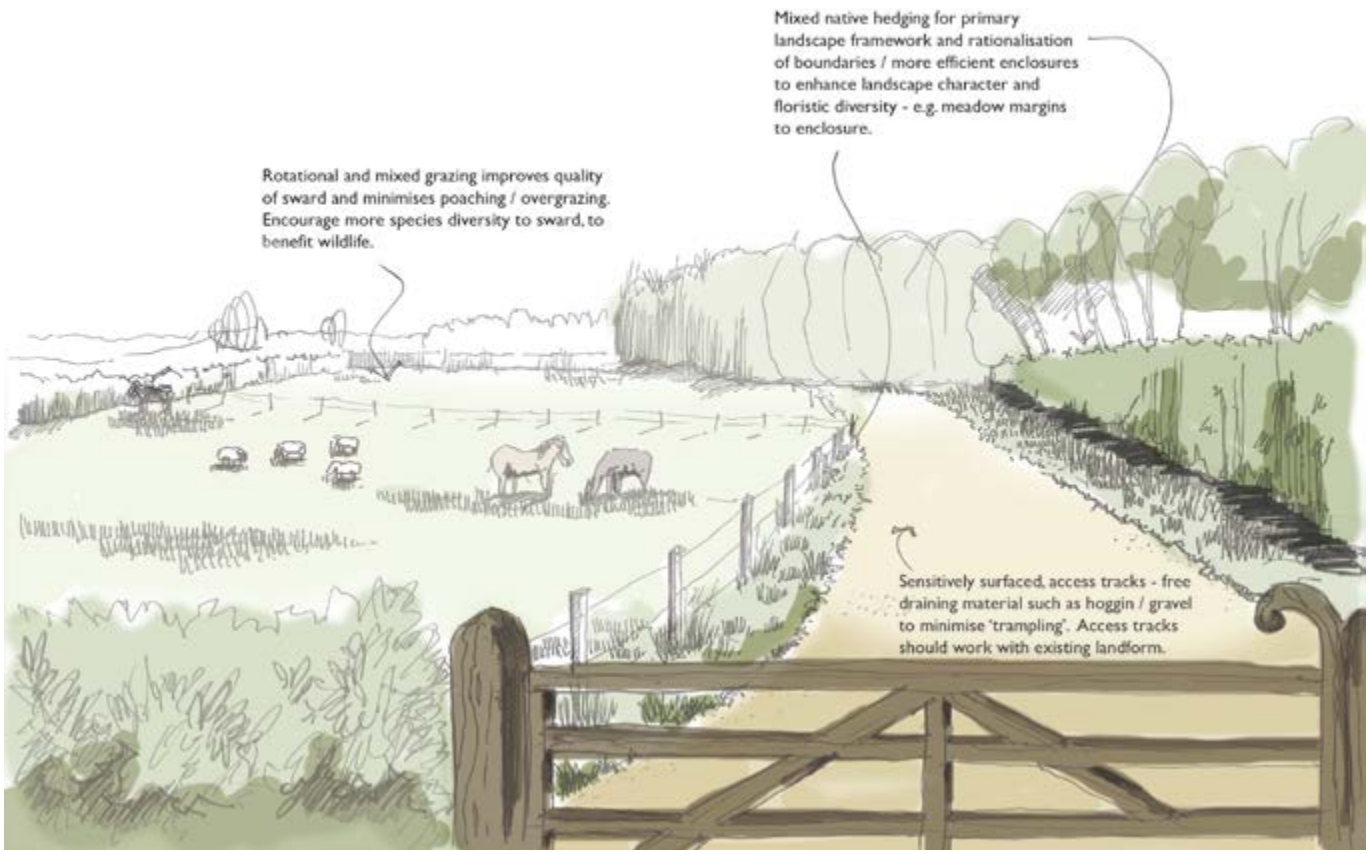
7.9 Site entrances can respond to the established vernacular using muted materials and colours which are sympathetic to the Forest landscape e.g. timber five bar gates and hoggin (bound gravel) or gravel surfaces for access tracks/driveways (**Figure 7.4**).

7.10 Tracks should ideally be of sufficient width (potentially with a central grass strip) to accommodate farm machinery in order to prevent grass verges becoming 'chewed up' from the passage of vehicles. If possible they should be accommodated within the existing pattern of hedgerows and tree lines.

Figure 7.2: Use of boundary subdivisions

Figure 7.3: Traditional field guard

Figure 7.4: Accommodating new tracks and entrances



Objectives and actions

The National Park Management Plan sets the context for the management of the enclosed landscape. Specific objectives and actions to help conserve and enhance the character, scale, structure and pattern of the enclosed landscapes of the New Forest are:

Objective 7.1

Reinforce character of the enclosed landscapes

Action

1. Use the Landscape Character Assessment to understand the character of the enclosed landscapes, to conserve and enhance their contribution to the National Park landscape.

Objective 7.2

Encourage best practice pasture management.

Actions

1. Promote the Guidelines for Horse Related Development Supplementary Planning Document 2011.

2. Provide advice and guidance to support good pasture management, especially where the pasture is of high nature conservation importance.

Objective 7.3

Create a better understanding of how to integrate ancillary land use, boundaries, entrances and tracks into the landscape of the enclosed lands.

Action

1. Develop guidance on ancillary land use and entrances and tracks, expanding on the design principles outlined above.

Gate at Norleywood

Theme 8:

View to Hurst Castle

Monitoring landscape change

8.1 Monitoring landscape change is an important aspect of implementing this action plan. It will provide:

- The evidence base which will frame future action to conserve and enhance the landscape.
- A measure of the success of implementing this Action Plan.

8.2 The following table sets out indicators for monitoring landscape change in the New Forest. This list of indicators takes account of both the themes identified in the Action Plan and the positive landscape attributes/ featured identified through the Landscape Character Assessments. In combination these should give a strong indication of whether the objectives and guidelines in this Action Plan are being implemented. The landscape character areas and landscape types can provide the framework for the measurement of these indicators.

Landscape monitoring indicators

Indicator	Landscape character areas of relevance	Why indicator is important	How to monitor	Positive outcome
Levels of tranquillity	All	Tranquillity is a strong quality associated with the National Park, particularly in the context of its position in the proximity of large urban areas.	▪ CPRE's Tranquil Areas mapping. Interpretation of the data - local perception surveys.	Maintenance or improvement in overall levels of tranquillity, avoidance of further loss of tranquillity.
Levels of intrusion	All	This gives a picture of the location of man-made intrusions within the landscape.	▪ CPRE's intrusion mapping (potentially updated approx every 10 years).	Maintenance or improvement in current absence of intrusion, avoidance of increase in intrusion.
Extent of dark night skies	All	As per tranquillity, with the additional factor of raising the awareness of the urban neighbours of their ability to contribute to the dark night skies of the National Park by switching their lights off.	▪ CPRE's Night Blight mapping (potentially updated approx every 10 years). ▪ Local star counts.	Maintenance of or an increase in the overall extent of dark night skies.
Extent of woodland and tree cover / type	All	The New Forest is strongly associated with its woodland landscapes. Woodland composition (i.e. conifers versus broadleaves) and spread of woodland onto open landscapes are key issues to be monitored.	▪ National Inventory of Woodland and Trees. ▪ Forestry Commission mapping (including Forest Design Plans). ▪ Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) mapping.	Tailored to Landscape character area or landscape type.

Landscape monitoring indicators

Indicator	Landscape character areas of relevance	Why indicator is important	How to monitor	Positive outcome
Extent of semi-natural habitats	All	Much of the National Park contains habitats of international importance. It is therefore critical to monitor their extent and the overall mosaic of different habitats.	▪ Forestry Commission information on restoration work undertaken through Forest Design Plan process or other projects. ▪ Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) mapping of broad habitats. ▪ HBIC biodiversity opportunities mapping.	Tailored to Landscape character area or landscape type.
Field patterns	Enclosed lands	The ancient field systems of the Enclosed Lands are valued features of the National Park.	▪ Aerial photographic and Lidar interpretation.	Tailored to Landscape character area or landscape type.
Agricultural land use	Enclosed lands	The continued availability of land for use as back-up grazing is essential for the continuation of the traditional commoning system of the New Forest.	▪ DEFRA Agricultural Survey information.	Tailored to Landscape character area or landscape type.

Landscape monitoring indicators

Indicator	Landscape character areas of relevance	Why indicator is important	How to monitor	Positive outcome
Field boundary condition	Enclosed lands	Hedgerow fragmentation, a loss of trees and replacement by other boundaries is affecting the structure of many forest-edge landscapes.	▪ Local field survey.	Local community engagement about planting and looking after native species hedgerows and their benefits.
Domestic boundary condition	All	Replacement of hedgerows with close boarded fencing and brick walls, replacement of traditional timber five bar gates with ornate wrought iron gates with brick pillars. Erosion of rural quality.	▪ Local surveys.	Engagement of local community in assessing what is important to conserve in their area.
Use of external lighting	All	To preserve dark night skies and rural quality.	▪ Local surveys.	Raising awareness of preservation of dark night skies in local communities.
Coastal change	Coastal	The impacts of climate change, particularly sea level rise, are a growing threat to the National Park. Coastal squeeze and the potential need to recreate areas of coastal habitat that will be lost, as well as the need for engineered flood defences around settlements, will have significant impacts on the coastal landscape.	▪ Southeast Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. ▪ Shoreline Management Plan information. ▪ HBIC biodiversity opportunities mapping.	Raising awareness of coastal change in New Forest community.

Chapter 4

Donkeys at Beaulieu

Glossary

Ancient and Ornamental (A&O) Woodlands

A local term applied to the pasture woodlands within the Crown Lands, grazed by deer and commoners' animals. They once formed the core of the medieval hunting Forest and are of very high nature conservation and cultural heritage value. They cover about 3,600 hectares (8,700 acres) of the New Forest.

Ancient Woodland

A general term used for woodlands which have been continuously wooded since at least 1600, and probably much earlier. In the New Forest this includes pasture woodlands (the Ancient and Ornamental woodlands) and ancient coppiced woodlands, which are usually in private ownership. They are both of very high nature conservation and cultural heritage value.

Back-up grazing / back-up land

Enclosed pasture land which forms an integral part of the commoning economy. Generally it is located close to a commoner's holding. It has a variety of uses including the overwintering of stock, making hay or silage, tending sick animals and young stock, finishing ponies for riding or preparing stock for market.

Biodiversity

The diversity of life in a given area.

Commoners / commoning

Those people entitled to use traditional common rights, based on the occupation of specific land to which the rights are attached. The New Forest is one of the last remaining places in the country where commoning is still widespread and where commoning traditions and culture still survive.

Common rights

Historically there were six different rights of common in the New Forest. Those still widely used today are common of pasture (the right to turn out ponies, horses, cattle and donkeys) and common of mast (the right to turn out pigs in the pannage season in autumn to feed on acorns and beech nuts).

Coppicing

A traditional woodland management technique in which trees are cut close to the ground every 15-20 years and then allowed to re-grow. It has important benefits for wildlife and the products are used for hurdles, charcoal and increasingly as wood fuel.

Crown Lands

The Crown Lands comprise about 27,000 ha (67,000 acres) of mainly open Forest land at the core of the National Park. They are managed by Forest Enterprise (part of the Forestry Commission) on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Curtilage

The enclosed land immediately surrounding a dwelling, including any associated outbuildings.

Dark night skies

Skies that are naturally dark at night, without the intrusion of various forms of light pollution.

Dispersed settlement

A village comprising a number of more or less separate hamlets or groups of houses, often with one area acting as the main centre.

Enclosed land or landscapes

Fenced land from which commoners' animals are excluded, usually in private ownership. The enclosed lands include the landed estates and other agricultural land surrounding, and within, the open Forest.

Encroachment

Common land illegally fenced and taken into private ownership.

English Woodland Grant Scheme

A funding scheme overseen by the Forestry Commission to encourage the good management of woodland by private landowners or the establishment of new woodland areas.

Estate fencing

Traditional metal fencing, usually painted black, often used for retaining stock and for delineating boundaries.

Hoggin

A natural material used for surfacing paths and drives, comprising a gravel and clay mix which binds together when compacted.

Inclosures / Inclosure woodland

Those areas of Crown Land fenced and planted with either broad-leaved trees or (later) conifers for timber production, from the 1700s onwards. The Inclosures currently cover about 8,000 ha (20,000 acres) of the New Forest.

Linear settlement

A village or town which has developed along one or two roads, with no obvious centre.

Nucleated settlement

A village or town built fairly tightly around an obvious centre.

Open Forest

The unfenced common land of woodland, heath and grassland at the heart of the New Forest which is open to grazing by commoners animals.

Pastoral landscape / farming / economy

A landscape or farming economy which is primarily based on grassland and grazing animals (as opposed to arable farming).

Pasture woodland

An alternative term for wood pasture (see below).

Pollarding

A traditional woodland management technique once widely used in areas with grazing animals. Trees are cut regularly at above head height and allowed to re-grow out of the animals reach. The cut branches were used for a variety of purposes, including food for deer and for firewood.

Semi-natural habitats / woodland

Habitats such as woodland, heathland and meadows, which are rich in wildlife and appear 'natural', but have been created to a greater or lesser extent by the influence of long-term human management. This applies to virtually all natural habitats in the UK.

Sky glow

The degree of background artificial light visible at night, usually associated with large built-up areas or major roads.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Areas of European importance for habitats and species, designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (The Habitats Directive). There are a number of SACs in the New Forest area, the largest being the New Forest SAC, covering 29,000 hectares (72,000 acres) in the core of the Forest.

Stock grazing

In the New Forest context usually referring to the grazing of commoners stock – ponies, cattle, donkeys and (occasionally) sheep.

Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions (SUDS)

Various methods of draining surface water naturally, through creating ponds, wetlands or grassy basins (swales), rather than through the normal system of underground pipes.

Undergrounding

The process of burying electricity and telecommunications cables underground in order to remove the visual impacts of over-ground lines and poles.

Vernacular

A term applied to houses, farm buildings and associated walls and gates of a simple and traditional design and construction common to the local area.

Whisper tarmac

A relatively new form of road surfacing that reduces road noise.

Wood pasture

A traditional type of woodland, usually comprising mature and veteran trees together with areas of open grassland. It developed in medieval times or earlier in woodlands which were unfenced and open to grazing by deer and commoners animals.

Ponies at Woodgreen

Pony in the early morning

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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Hurst Point lighthouse, donkeys at Beaulieu, open heathland, agricultural land use, Ponies near Pilley, woodland in Ashurst.