



NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK PLAN

South-East Parishes Meeting

30 April 2009

This paper provides a summary of the main points made at the meeting of the Parish and Town Councils in the south east of the National Park, held at Fountain Court Hotel, Hythe on Thursday 30 April 2009.

The event was attended by 10 councillors representing 6 parishes, as listed in Annex 1.

The session was introduced and chaired by Clive Maton, member of the New Forest National Park Authority and Denny Lodge parish councillor.

The Chairman explained that the purpose of the meeting was for those present to emphasise any major points they wished the National Park Authority to take into account, and to make suggestions for changes to the National Park Plan on some of the key issues raised by their councils. He noted that all the comments made during the consultation had been looked at carefully.

Sarah Applegate of the National Park Authority summarised the major topics of concern or interest arising from the consultation, with particular reference to the comments made by the local councils in the south east of the Park, together with suggestions made by the topic working groups where relevant. The meeting discussion was broadly structured around these topics. A summary of the main points made during the discussion is given below.

Zoning

- The majority of parishes were concerned about the concept of zoning and there was a consensus that the National Park should be treated as a whole, and not create artificial boundaries. Applications should be considered on their individual merits. To split it up into zones could create long term problems as per Green Belts.
- There was a query over whether the zoning approach can take account of the impact of large-scale housing growth in districts bordering the Forest, which will create recreational pressures and cross/park commuting.
- There was a view that the Conservation Areas are inconsistent with zoning policies.
- A zoning policy would need more background information to make it clearer.

Service villages and affordable housing

- There was a consensus that although houses will only be built at the rate of 11 per annum there is a strong need for housing for low paid workers and affordable housing.
- It was felt that social housing should be spread out between villages to the level of 10% in each settlement. There were some concerns that too much affordable housing is being built in some areas eg the Waterside area, whilst conversely there are 4 Parishes in the National Park that have no social housing.
- There should be more Housing Needs surveys – especially at the Parish level.
- There was a need identified for joint working between the National Park Authority and the parishes on affordable housing issues.
- Services villages such as Lyndhurst should not receive 100% affordable housing but 50%. Concern that developers' contributions in lieu of affordable housing would end up in a 'central pot', not available locally and would be of no benefit to a village.
- Need for people to be able to change their size of social housing unit as the size of their families increase and decrease.
- Provision should be made for young people in villages who want to buy market housing. There is currently no choice.
- There was a general consensus that there should be no service villages. The National Park should be treated as one area, with every application assessed on its own merits. Many villages are not big enough to sustain themselves and should be allowed the necessary growth.
- Service villages could become sinks for development not wanted elsewhere.
- There is a need to provide enough housing to counter the loss of stock to second homes. Second homes should be subject to higher local financial contributions but it is recognised that second homers contribute towards the local economy.

Traffic and transport

- Policies and proposals need a reality check against the real world in which there is no subsidised public transport. They are not viable. They need funding - which is not in place.
- There was no support for the closure of car parks, especially in sensitive areas and the effects on dog owners. The policy and approach needs to be more subtle, and should be supported by scientific evidence. It was felt that road closures would lead to congestion on other roads and parking on roadside verges. There was also little support for road closures just on Bank Holidays.
- Concerns were also raised about traffic speed in village centres. Many 30mph speed limits should be reduced to 20mph.
- The Traffic and Transport policies are 'all stick and no carrot'. There is not enough encouragement for people to leave their cars and use alternative forms of transport. Need more proactive policies / initiatives.
- The housing growth outside the Park means that public transport in the Park should be improved to offset the impact of car commuting.

Socio-economic issues

- Concern that the policies will result in a National Park set in a 'time-warp'. It has adapted, survived and been successfully managed for 900 years.

- It was felt that rural crafts alone will not support local economies. Low impact/hi tech enterprises are needed to give young people opportunities, and the infrastructure should be put in place to encourage such uses. Lyndhurst has tourist industries but lacks the necessary infrastructure. The centres are more intensive than other places and more suitable for industry.
- Need to protect local businesses

Recreational horse keeping

- What is the evidence base behind the policies? It was felt that every field / every case should be taken on its own merits – cannot predetermine acreage needed per horse, as it varies depending on the size of the horse / pony.
- There is a need to clarify the criteria used for recreational horsekeeping uses.
- Many riding stables have disappeared due to reasons of cost, viability and regulatory impacts – these should be actively encouraged especially where offering riding horses for hire. This may mean that fewer people are required to keep their own horse.
- Concerns were raised that the horsekeeping policy will be applied retrospectively.
- The policy needs to ensure that horsekeeping reflects the character of the local area.
- There were some concerns over temporary field shelters that are not really mobile and are effectively permanent.

Other issues

- The Draft Plan is biased. The emphasis is on visitors and Commoners – no-one else e.g. working families, the retired, farmers. Policies should be devised which protect local communities.
- It was felt that there is a need to work with and listen to Parishes - involve the communities and do not ignore them, especially in Planning issues.
- It was also the view that the National Park Authority should work more closely with the New Forest District Council Planning Officers.
- The Plan makes too many generalisations about the villages.
- There were concerns over the issue of potential future sites for gypsies and travellers.

Annex 1 Parish and Town Councils meeting – south east area, 30 April 2009

Participants:

Organisation	Representative
Boldre Parish Council	Arthur French
Boldre Parish Council	Tony Broomfield
Denny Lodge Parish Council	David Banks
Exbury and Lepe Parish Council	Alison Tilbury
Exbury and Lepe Parish Council	Giles Verdon
Fawley Parish Council	Malcolm Fidler
Fawley Parish Council	Mr E Holtham
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	Stan Wade
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	Alex Wade
Lyndhurst Parish Council	George Bisson
National Park Authority Member	Clive Maton (Chairman)
National Park Authority Officer	Stephen Trotter
National Park Authority Officer	Sarah Applegate
National Park Authority Officer	Jeff Clarke