



NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK PLAN

Report of the Ward Councillor Meeting, held on 22 April 2009

This paper provides a summary of the Ward Councillor meeting, held on Wednesday 22 April 2009 at Beaulieu Hotel.

Attendance and participation

The event was attended by 17 people (excluding staff) representing New Forest District Council and Christchurch Borough Council (including four National Park Authority members).

The Authority Chairman Clive Chatters welcomed attendees and set out the purposes and structure of the afternoon's meeting. Chief Executive Lindsay Cornish introduced the session with a summary of the initial analysis of responses to the consultation draft National Park Plan. Members of the Policy and Plans team summarised the outcomes of the five topic Working Groups that had taken place in the previous four weeks.

General comments:

- Several Councillors emphasised the need to engage with ordinary members of the public, in addition to meetings with parish councils

Working Group Topics

Zoning

- The whole National Park is special and has been given protection so there is no need for zoning
- Is there any added value in the principle of zoning?
- Have other National Parks used zoning? *Officers identified similar concept used in Peak District National Park, but related more to recreation*
- Potential for a fourth zone for more development e.g. tourism
- Suggestion that the term 'zoning' should not be used and the idea applied subtly
- Query on how zoning would be enforced with regard to recreation management – would be more subtle than 'policing' – *officers confirmed that this issue is covered in the Recreation Management Strategy*

- Need to make sure there is a need for zoning
- Zoning applied to visitor management could be essential for environmental sustainability if pressure from rising visitor numbers continues to increase
- Verderers and Forestry Commission already manage the Open Forest well - the NPA could not add much to this.

Service Villages and Housing

- The concept of 'service villages' and all that goes with it regarding development and restrictions is no different to the policies in the New Forest District Council Local Plan (2005), other than the terminology used;
- The approach to housing and affordable housing in the Park Plan is not very different from that in the submitted New Forest District Core Strategy, particularly proportions of affordable housing type and 100% 'exceptions' sites policy;
- The term 'defined villages' is preferred to 'service villages', and designation should use the current criteria based on the level of existing community facilities rather than on potential capacity for future development given potential problems with further intensification of development and limitations in capacity of infrastructure
- Accept that there is a need for some development within the National Park – otherwise there will be more pressure put on the surrounding areas
- Need a balance of housing types, particularly different types of affordable housing e.g. shared ownership schemes and/or market housing
- The affordable housing rural exceptions policy needs to be higher profile / more proactive due to the high level of housing need in the Forest outside the four defined villages
- The North York Moors National Park are actively involved in securing affordable housing – there is a need to be more proactive here
- Consider the transport implications of additional housing
- There is a need for tied accommodation
- There is no commercial interest in developing sites for individual affordable houses
- How can the NPA meet the level of housing need with just the 11 houses a year proposed in the draft South East Plan
- Concern over the apparent lack of planning control on converting houses to residential institutions
- View that the policies should have exceptions for house extensions relating to caring for elderly relatives

Traffic and Transport

- Protecting the Forest's animals and stock should be a priority
- NPA should seek additional funding for animal welfare e.g. to fence the Forest
- Traffic pressures are increasing with an increase in animal accidents which needs to be addressed by the NPA
- Joint work needed on education on speed reduction
- Most accidents caused by speeding. There is a need to work with others e.g. trial average speed cameras
- Committees are looking at signage and other traffic reduction techniques e.g. SIDs
- Some opposition to fencing to other roads in the Forest
- No need for major traffic management across the National Park – speed enforcement is the key
- Working with parish and town councils outside the Park boundary is also important – need to take people with you.
- The NPA and other local authorities need to seek funding from Central Government and a commitment to helping solve the problem

Socio-Economic Issues

- Encourage businesses that are low impact but are not detrimental to the Park, even if they do not have a direct connection to the Park purposes, especially where they reuse redundant buildings
- Support the reuse of redundant buildings where they are genuinely redundant
- Emphasise that it is a living and working Forest – need a balance between no or limited development and the need for jobs. Need to look at proposals on their own merits.
- Need to retain small local community-based businesses e.g. pubs
- Emphasise the national context of the National Park. The surrounding areas (and future proposed growth) have a big influence on the Park.

Recreational Horse Keeping

- Need to emphasise the links between horse keeping and commoning. Concern expressed that the draft Plan has, perhaps inadvertently, caused conflicts between the commoning community and recreational horse keepers
- Recognition that both the Park Plan and the horse keepers have valid views on impacts which need to be addressed

Other Issues

- The residents of the New Forest should not be unduly constrained by policies
- Central Government pressures for minerals – need to be vigilant
- Timescales? *Officers stated this is under review, assessing what needs to be done to review the Plan following the completion of the Working Group and Parish Quadrant meeting*

Annex 1 Ward Councillors Meeting

Participants

Attendees		
Name	Ward	Authority
F Carpenter	Becton	New Forest District Council
C Chatters		New Forest National Park Authority
G Dart	Totton North	New Forest District Council
B Dow	Forest North West	New Forest District Council
C Ford	Ringwood North	New Forest District Council
N Geary	North Highcliffe and Walkford	Christchurch Borough Council
E Heron	Downlands and Forest	New Forest District Council
M Holding	Brockenhurst and Forest South East	New Forest District Council
P Jackman	Pennington	New Forest District Council
E Johnson		New Forest National Park Authority
E Lewis	Lymington Town	New Forest District Council
P Lovelace	Hordle	New Forest District Council
M Pemberton	Milford	New Forest District Council
A Shotter	Marchwood	New Forest District Council
B Smith	Butts Ash and Dibden Purlieu	New Forest District Council
A Tinsley	Hordle	New Forest District Council
C Treleaven	Ringwood East and Sopley	New Forest District Council
P Vickers	Brockenhurst and Forest South East	New Forest District Council
P Wyeth	Lyndhurst	New Forest District Council