



Introduction

What is the New Forest National Park Plan?

This draft National Park Plan sets out the long-term Vision and objectives for the National Park, together with the policies and actions for the next 5 years and beyond. It combines two important statutory documents into a single integrated plan. These are the National Park Management Plan and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy including Development Control policies. It is hoped that this will make the overall approach proposed for the Park clearer for interested organisations and individuals.

The national park purposes and duty (see paragraph 1.39) are the starting point for the Plan. The policies and actions are designed to deliver these purposes and achieve the Vision for the National Park. The Plan is necessarily selective and focuses on addressing some of the major issues, current or foreseen, which affect the area. It does not attempt to describe all the work that is taking place, much of which is already helping to conserve those qualities which make the New Forest special.

Please note that throughout the Plan the terms 'National Park', 'the Park' and 'the New Forest' are used interchangeably to mean the land within the National Park boundary. Other technical terms and definitions are included in the glossary (Annex 3).

More detailed policies and actions for recreation will be published separately in the Recreation Management Strategy for the National Park. Other specific plans will be produced over the next few years, including a Biodiversity Action Plan, Landscape Strategy, Cultural Heritage Strategy, Minerals Plan and Waste Management Plan.



Who is it for?

The National Park Plan is for everyone interested or involved in the New Forest, including the statutory organisations and agencies, environmental interests, land managers, local communities and the many groups and individuals who enjoy and feel passionately about the Forest.

It is a plan for the National Park as a place and a community, and not for the National Park Authority or any particular organisation. As such it is essential that the Vision is shared by a wide cross-section of interest groups and statutory bodies. The success of the final Plan will depend on the commitment and action of all those who manage, use or live in the National Park, as well as the nearby authorities and regional decision-makers.

How have we arrived at the draft Plan?

All aspects of the Plan, from the Vision to the policies, actions and targets, have been produced by the joint effort of a great many people. More than 115 individuals from 71 local and regional organisations worked together to develop ideas for the Plan through the New Forest, New Chapter stakeholder events. In addition the statutory bodies, specialist officers and members of the National Park Authority have all directly contributed their knowledge and expertise.

During the production of this Plan a number of other key documents, produced by various organisations, have been taken into consideration where these are relevant to the management of the National Park. These are listed in Annex 4. The policies and text also draw on the Strategy for the New Forest (2003), which is the adopted interim National Park Management Plan, and the current Development Plan policies relevant to the National Park.



The purpose of this consultation

This is a draft Plan for formal public consultation. It is not meant to be a completed document, but to elicit comments from all interested parties. The comments made will be carefully considered and will help to influence the content of the final document.

The actions and targets, in particular, require further refinement both as part of this consultation and through detailed discussion with the organisations relevant to the various areas of work. The final Plan will include an identified lead organisation and partners for each action and target.

The consideration of different policy options and the reasons for choosing the policy currently shown in the plan are described in Annex 1. This is part of the public consultation and views are welcomed on alternative policies for inclusion.

Copies of the draft plan have been circulated to all those who have helped in its production so far, to all the statutory bodies and consultees and to a wide range of other local, regional and national organisations. It will be generally available to the public on the New Forest National Park Authority website at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/consultations, at the New Forest National Park office, at local council offices and by individual request.

All comments on the consultation draft should be sent to the New Forest National Park Authority by 31 October 2008, using the website response form or the form included with this document.

Further information

If you have any queries about the consultation process or the draft plan itself, please contact: **Policy and Plans Team**, New Forest National Park Authority, South Efford House, Milford Road, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 0JD.

Email: nationalparkplan@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Tel.: 01590 646679 (Nick Evans) or 01590 646673 (Sarah Applegate)

The completed plan will be adopted as the National Park Management Plan and submitted to the Government as the Local Development Framework Core Strategy for the National Park early in 2009. Final adoption as the Core Strategy will take place later in that year following an examination in public and the findings of an independent planning inspector.

Finding your way around the Plan

The Vision	The Vision sets out the ambition for how the National Park should look and function in 30 years time and beyond
Chapter 1	The Portrait of the National Park describes the Park as it is now and emphasises its special qualities
Chapter 2	Pressures, trends and opportunities discusses the current issues facing the Park and the external forces for change which are likely to affect the area in the future
Chapter 3	The strategic policy approach sets out the overall approach for the location of development, land management, recreation management, transport management and public understanding and enjoyment of the area. It also provides a list of all the objectives of the Plan, including the priorities for particular attention over the next 6 years
Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7	The objectives and policies outline the issues and gives the policy framework for each of the 12 objectives, divided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority objectives ▪ Conserving and enhancing the National Park ▪ Understanding and enjoying the National Park ▪ Living and working in the National Park.
Chapter 8	Working together emphasises the importance of a partnership approach to delivering the plan and includes a series of targets and actions. It also summarises mechanisms for monitoring and reporting.
Chapter 9	Development Control policies list the detailed planning policies designed to guide development in the National Park
Annex 1	The consideration of policy options describes the various alternative policies which were considered before arriving at the preferred policy included in the plan

The draft Plan also includes the strategic policy framework (formal guidance and regional policies relevant to the plan), a glossary of terms and a list of key documents.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement give an assessment of the sustainability of each policy and its impact on the European Sites of nature conservation importance. These can be found on the accompanying CD (paper copies available on request).

A number of supporting documents are also available on request. These include topic papers and technical documents providing the evidence base for the Plan.

Vision for the New Forest National Park

An area which has a unique and immediately recognisable sense of place...

- Where the New Forest continues to develop its own identity, responding positively to wider environmental, economic and social change while remaining true to the qualities which make it special;
- the different landscapes, villages and communities are distinctive, but complement each other and contribute to the character of the National Park as a whole; and
- the special qualities of the landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage are in healthy condition and continue to be the main focus of future management.

A place where tranquillity and a sense of naturalness pervade large parts of the Park...

- Where visually intrusive development, light pollution and noise is minimised, and no longer impinges on people's enjoyment of the National Park;
- new technology has allowed transport to become quieter and cleaner, and many areas within the National Park are car-free; and
- the natural environment of the Park is enjoyed with respect for its intrinsic peacefulness.

A place where the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats are all of the highest quality and a great variety of wildlife is able to flourish.....

- Where the internationally important Open Forest heathland, mires, lawns and ancient woodland have been extended and reconnected and are managed primarily through common grazing;
- the enclosed lands create a feeling of intimacy and have a distinctive New Forest character, with small

scale non-intensive farming, ancient hedgerows and native woodland;

- the changing coastal landscapes and habitats remain unspoiled by new development, and are allowed to evolve naturally through the gradual realignment of the coastline; and
- above all a place which is a working landscape, shaped and maintained primarily by a thriving commoning and farming community, the private estates and woodland managers.

A place where cultural heritage is an essential part of the fabric and spirit of the Forest...

- Where there is a strong sense of living history and culture, commoning continues as a way of life and a wealth of local traditions and knowledge are valued and shared by the whole community;
- the villages and historic buildings are an integral part of the landscape and have resisted suburbanisation, retaining an edge of grittiness amongst the prettiness; and
- the rich legacy of the past, including bronze age barrows, hill forts and other historic sites are well understood and conserved as a part of the wider cultural landscape of the New Forest.

A place where all visitors can gain inspiration, enjoyment, health and well-being....

- Where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to appreciate the special qualities of the New Forest;
- there is a diverse range of opportunities for outdoor recreation, providing a great richness and quality of experience;

- young people, in particular, have the opportunity to enjoy, and so relate to, the natural and historic environment;
- many people choose to travel within the National Park using the excellent network of public transport, footpaths and cycle routes, rather than the private car;
- all those who visit the New Forest understand and respect the needs of other users and those who live and work in the National Park; and
- recreational use is carefully managed to conserve the natural beauty, wildlife value, cultural heritage and tranquillity of the countryside.

A place where the far reaching consequences of climate change are taken into account in all policies and future plans....

- Where measures to adapt to climate change are in place, well understood by communities, land managers and businesses and are being actively pursued; and
- local people, businesses and organisations have acted to minimise their carbon footprint, use renewable natural resources and enjoy a lifestyle which is more truly sustainable.

A place where people live and work sustainably and contribute to the care of the Forest....

- Where communities are strong, dynamic and inclusive, and people have a sense of stewardship and pride in the local area;
- communities are increasingly self-sufficient, with improved access for all to local housing, employment,

sustainable transport and a range of services, including well established local food production;

- many small and medium sized businesses integral to the National Park thrive, contribute positively to the special qualities of the area and are leaders in good environmental practice;
- tourism is focused primarily on 'green tourism' which emphasises the special qualities of the destination, sustainable travel and the high quality and distinctiveness of local food and rural products; and
- all development meets local needs, employs the highest standards of sustainability and uses innovative design, while remaining in context with its surroundings.

A place which looks outwards and is fully recognised and valued as a national asset....

- Where national and regional decision-makers take full account of the National Park in their policies and plans;
- the National Park has a clear role in the south west and south east regions and makes a significant contribution to their quality of life, environment and economic sustainability;
- high quality countryside extends beyond the National Park, contributing to its wider setting, allowing the commoning system to function sustainably and linking important natural habitats.

A place for which people work together towards a common goal.....

- Where all organisations, communities and individuals with an interest in the New Forest are committed to this vision, contributing fully in whatever ways are appropriate to them.

