

ANNEX 1 - Part A- main Park Plan policies

Consideration of policy options

Introduction

Updated Government guidance in PPS12: Local Spatial Planning (2008) requires local planning authorities to "...seek out and evaluate reasonable alternatives...there is no point in inventing alternatives if they are not realistic..." – paragraph 4.38.

The Planning Inspectorate publication Local Development Frameworks: Lessons Learnt Examining Development Plan Documents (2007) reiterates that the policy options considered by planning authorities should represent genuine alternative approaches to governing future development and change in the area. Options should cover the range of reasonable spatial options, and if there are no alternatives, the local planning authority should explain and justify this.

There is no standard set of options and each area will have a locally distinctive set of issues reflecting their particular circumstances. Although the draft National Park Plan represents the Authority's emerging policy framework, it remains open to consultees to express a preference for any alternative option, including those the Authority has rejected and those not discussed in the consultation document

Environment Act 1995

Consideration of alternatives within the National Park context

In considering alternative options, the National Park Authority must acknowledge the statutory framework within which National Parks exist (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Environment Act 1995) and the nationally protected landscape within which the planning authority operates.

Section 61(1) of the Environment Act sets out the statutory purposes of the National Parks of England and Wales (including the New Forest):

to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas specified in the next following subsection; and

to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.

Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 confirms that if there is a conflict between those purposes, greater weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.

This statutory framework is reflected in PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, (2004), which states that national parks have been confirmed by Government, "...as having the highest status of

protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty...” – paragraph 21. The Government policy goes on to state that the conservation of the natural beauty and the landscape and countryside should be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas.

Paragraph 22 of PPS7 states that, “Major developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances.” This policy includes major development proposals that raise issues of national significance. Major development proposals should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being considered within a nationally protected landscape.

Policy options and alternatives must be consistent with the high level of protection afforded the New Forest as a nationally protected landscape; and the statutory purposes should be the starting point for considering all future management and spatial development options and the limited range of possible alternatives.

The Government also requires local planning authorities to demonstrate sufficient flexibility in preparing planning documents to respond to changing circumstances (e.g. changes to the requirements in the Regional Spatial Strategy prior to its adoption). Possible Government changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (expected during the summer 2008) are unlikely to have significant impacts on the New Forest National Park policy (C1A), which reflects the national planning framework National Parks operate within.

The tables on the following pages:

- **set out the Authority’s proposed policy approach as set out in the draft National Park Plan.**
- **identify where potential alternatives have been identified (where a policy is not mentioned in this column, it means that no viable alternatives have been identified)**
- **discuss of some of the key issues.**

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
The Authority’s proposed policies as set out in the draft National Park Plan.	Sets out realistic alternative options to the proposed policies that have been considered by the Authority or raised by consultees.	Discussion of the proposed approach and alternatives, including reference to national guidance, the previous ‘Future Matters’ consultation and the 2007/8 stakeholder workshops.

Priority Objectives for the New Forest National Park

Objective P1: Climate Change

Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the Special Qualities of the area and reduce the overall environmental footprint of the National Park.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
PP1.1: Improve dialogue and understanding about climate change impacts with those most affected.		
PP1.2: Conserve and where necessary restore extensive areas of connected habitat, both within and across the National Park boundary, improving the resilience of the characteristic habitats and increasing the natural water holding and carbon sink capacity of the area		There was general agreement during the 2007/8 stakeholder workshop sessions that climate change was a priority for the New Forest National Park, and a view that policy PP1.2 should be linked with policies throughout the Plan.
PP1.3: Allow the natural realignment of the majority of the coast as a result of sea-level rise, assist the replacement of existing coastal habitats where possible and develop environmentally acceptable coastal defences where these are identified to be essential for the protection of local communities.	<p>PP1.3: The Authority's proposed approach of allowing natural processes to reform the majority of the National Park's coastal landscape as a result of sea-level rise is considered to be the most realistic option. The Habitats Regulations Assessment recognises that this policy approach could lead to both losses and gains in European site features. Alternative approaches include:</p> <p>Managed realignment of the coastline – guiding the main areas subject to flooding by moving defences inland, removal of existing defences or use soft engineering and natural buffer features; or</p> <p>Holding the line of current defences – maintaining or upgrading or existing defences.</p>	PP1.3: Some participants felt that the Authority's draft policy stance of allow the natural realignment of the majority of the coast, although realistic, was premature and should await the completion of the Shoreline Management Plan (currently timetabled for November 2009). The option of holding the current line of defence is not felt to be realistic in practical or financial terms for the majority of the National Park coastline and would also result in the large-scale loss of European habitats through coastal squeeze.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>PP1.4: Raise public awareness about the environmental footprint of the area and encourage a change in culture towards more sustainable lifestyles by organisations. Communities, businesses and individuals.</p>		<p>PP1.4: During the workshop sessions some participants raised concerns about the term 'environmental footprint' in policy PP1.4, while others felt the term was easily understood. The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted the positive impact the draft policy could have on promoting sustainable tourism, maintaining nature conservation interests, preventing pollution, encouraging the sustainable use of resources and minimising factors that contribute to climate change.</p>
<p>PP1.5: Support local, small scale or community based initiatives for producing sustainable energy.</p>	<p>PP1.5: The Authority's proposed approach (which is consistent with that taken in other National Parks) is to support small scale community based sustainable energy initiatives. An alternative approach would be for the Authority to support moderate scale development involving new infrastructure or changes in land use, even where this may have visual impacts on the Park (e.g. off shore wind turbines).</p>	<p>PP1.5: Some participants at the workshop sessions raised concerns at the potential policy conflict of promoting sustainable energy development (e.g. solar panels), and built environment / design policies that may restrict their use.</p>
<p>PP1.6: Ensure the use of sustainable design and construction and good environmental practices in all new developments.</p>	<p>PP1.6: During the workshop sessions, it was suggested that a policy supporting sustainable design and construction was unnecessary, given the limited level of development likely to take place in the National Park over the next twenty years. An alternative option is to delete this policy and rely on national guidance (e.g. PPS1).</p>	<p>PP1.6: The requirement for sustainable design and construction was generally supported at the workshop sessions, but it was emphasised that the policy requirements must be practical and not overly prescriptive (acknowledging that it could raise costs which might impact on the viability of affordable housing schemes for example). Some participants commented that given the low level of development within the National Park, this policy would have little impact.</p>

Objective P2: Conserving Local Distinctiveness

Conserve the wealth of individual features that contribute to local distinctiveness and resist the gradual loss of landscape character.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
PP2.1: Identify and raise awareness about the full range of features that contribute to local distinctiveness in the National Park.	The requirement to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the National Park is core to the first statutory purpose. Local distinctiveness is an important part of the cultural heritage and central to the character of the New Forest. Realistic alternative options are therefore limited.	
PP2.2: Support a phased programme of enhancements to the character of selected settlements, working closely with local communities.		
PP2.3: Develop specific design and maintenance protocols applicable to the National Park for highways and verges, telecommunications masts, overhead cables and other major services, in liaison with the relevant bodies.		PP2.3: Public bodies - including the major agencies, local authorities and statutory undertakers, such as highways authorities, energy suppliers and telecommunications providers - have a statutory duty to have regard to the special character of the National Park. The Authority will continue to look to work closely with these organisations in developing tailor-made design solutions which respect and enhance local character, and this is reflected in draft policy PP2.3. There was general support for this policy approach during the workshop sessions. Issues noted included the gradual enlargement of road width; the enforcement of existing weight restrictions; and maintaining the character of rural roads.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>PP2.4: Prevent small scale built development and changes of use which cumulatively erode local character and result in a gradual suburbanising effect within the National Park.</p>	<p>Concern locally over the impact of new development and the incremental damage replacement dwellings have had on the character of the National Park justifies this policy approach. PP2.4 seeks to prevent these small scale changes which erode local character and this overarching policy links with the development control policies which control equestrian development, replacement dwellings and extensions.</p> <p>The 'do nothing' option would result in features that contribute towards local distinctiveness gradually being lost through cumulative small scale changes (e.g. boundary treatments, extensions, signage, planting etc).</p>	<p>The urgent need to address the incremental changes to the character and special qualities of the New Forest National Park featured prominently in the stakeholder workshops held during 2007/8. Concerns included the perceived suburbanisation of New Forest villages through the design of replacement dwellings, boundary features and the impact of highway signage. The Authority's 2006/7 Annual Monitoring Report highlighted that design issues were used in over 70% of planning application refusals, illustrating the importance of the issue to the New Forest National Park.</p>

Objective P3 – Conserving Tranquillity

Maintain, extend and enhance the tranquillity of the National Park.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>PP3.1: Conserve and extend the most tranquil and remote areas of the National Park.</p>	<p>The value attached to the relative tranquillity of parts of the New Forest National Park is clear from the consultation undertaken into the Park's 'special qualities'. The second statutory National Park purpose is to promote the enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park, and therefore the Authority is justified in developing policies that seek to protect tranquillity and allow people to enjoy it.</p> <p>The 'do nothing' or 'business as usual' approach will result in the increasing erosion of this special quality within the New Forest from the current trends of increasing noise from road and air traffic, light pollution from surrounding urban areas, and the impact of infrastructure (masts, pylons, signage).</p>	<p>The tranquillity of the New Forest is one of the National Park's special qualities and featured prominently during the consultation on 'special qualities' undertaken by the Authority in 2006 and 2007. Work in the 1990s by the New Forest Committee and more recent work by the CPRE illustrates the relative tranquillity of parts of the National Park compared to surrounding urban areas. The Authority and other 'relevant authorities' have a legal duty to promote the enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park and conserving the tranquillity of the National Park is central to this. People's perception of tranquillity is affected by traffic noise, air traffic, light pollution, and visual intrusion including development close to the Park boundary and infrastructure such as pylons and mobile phone masts.</p> <p>There were some concerns raised at the workshops that attempts to map and define tranquil areas will make them more attractive to visitors, therefore detracting from their special qualities.</p>
<p>PP3.2: Control and reduce the impacts of noise, visual intrusion and inappropriate activity generally; and in particular:</p> <p>the noise and visual impacts of the A31 trunk road and its physical severance of the National Park;</p> <p>the visual impacts of telecommunications masts and overhead pylons on the landscape of the National Park.</p>		
<p>PP3.3: Reduce the impacts of light pollution on the 'dark skies' of the National Park and control development to prevent artificial lighting from eroding rural darkness.</p>		<p>There was strong feedback from the workshops that the impacts of the A31 on people's enjoyment of the tranquillity of the New Forest should be specifically addressed. This is reflected in draft policy PP3.2. There was also felt to be a need for education about tranquillity and its importance.</p>

Conserving and Enhancing the New Forest National Park

Objective C1

Restore, extend or enhance large scale landscapes and semi-natural habitats of the New Forest, where character or condition has been lost or degraded

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
CP1.1: Develop a shared vision and agree priorities for the different landscapes and habitats of the National Park	The landscape and habitats of the New Forest are the main reason for its designation as a National Park. 56% of the New Forest National Park is of national or international importance for nature conservation importance (the highest proportion in any UK National Park) and the enhancement of landscapes and habitats within the New Forest is core to pursuing the first National Park purpose. It is therefore considered that there are no viable alternative options under this strategic objective of enhancing the Park's landscape and habitats.	
CP1.2: Extend the area of typical Open Forest habitats by reinstating common grazing.		
CP1.3: Improve and sustain the quality of nationally designated habitats (SSSIs) where these are not currently in favourable condition.		CP1.3: There is a national Government Public Service Agreement target for 95% of SSSIs to be in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition by 2010. This policy therefore reflects the national target. The New Forest National Park includes 31,943 hectares of land designated as SSSIs, covering 17 sites. In 2007, 81% of the total SSSI area was in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition.
CP1.4: Encourage integrated land management on the enclosed lands which enhances the characteristic landscapes, habitats and archaeological features of the area.		

Objective C2

Protect the cultural landscapes, biodiversity and character of the built environment from the impacts of development pressure within and beyond the National Park

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>CP2.1: Work with surrounding authorities (and regional decision makers) to maintain the integrity and value of the special qualities of the National Park, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving awareness of "Section 62" responsibilities, the requirements of European nature conservation legislation and the need for protection of the setting of the National Park; influencing external policies and development proposals at an early stage; providing the necessary infrastructure close to the development itself (such as green space, community facilities and local services). 	<p>CP2.1: The draft policy refers to Section 62 of the Environment Act, and therefore it could be claimed this is duplicating national statute. However, the Authority's role in raising awareness of the Section 62 responsibilities with relevant authorities is outlined in the Guidance to the New Forest National Park Authority, on behalf of the Secretary of State, in March 2005. This guidance states that the Authority is expected to "...be active in raising awareness of the duty amongst relevant authorities whose work may impact on Park purposes." Policy CP2.1 does this and is therefore justified.</p>	<p>CP2.1: There was strong support for the wording of draft policy CP2.1 during the 2007/8 stakeholder workshop sessions. In the longer term, many felt the Section 62 wording should be strengthened to offer National Parks greater protection, but this will require a change in primary legislation.</p> <p>Until the designation of the New Forest National Park in 2005, the South East was the only region in the whole of England (apart from London) not to include land within a National Park. Consequently, the statutory framework within which National Parks operate is new to many authorities and bodies within the area surrounding the New Forest, and there is a need to raise awareness of the duty and clarify the requirements.</p> <p>Some respondents felt that protecting the setting of the National Park warranted its own policy, and that Authority should develop protocols with surrounding authorities, triggered as proposals are being developed. This links into the Inspector's Report into the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East which recommends additional wording be added to policy C1A to provide greater protection for the setting of the National Park. This is reflected in the first bullet point of draft policy CP2.1</p>

Objective C3

Support land management which sustains the Special Qualities of the National Park

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>CP3.1: Ensure the future viability of commoning through:</p> <p>Support schemes to maintain Open Forest grazing, tailored to the specific needs of the New Forest;</p> <p>affordable housing for commoners, including land suitable for holdings;</p> <p>a safeguarded stock of back-up land on the enclosed lands and adjacent to the National Park;</p> <p>reciprocal links between farming and commoning across the boundary, particularly the Avon Valley and the coast;</p> <p>understanding of the importance of commoning among visitors, local people and organisations.</p>	<p>CP3.1: Consultation during 2007/8 sought views on supporting the future viability of commoning through extending the New Forest Perambulation boundary where practical to include adjacent commons and reinstating links to the coast.</p> <p>However, although there was general support for this option, the need for legislative change was seen as a major stumbling block. The policy has therefore not been retained.</p>	<p>CP3.1: The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that policy CP3.1 should have a very positive impact on the long term sustainability of the commoning economy and community. Supporting commoning should also help to maintain conservation interests and a high quality landscape.</p> <p>The stakeholder workshops sessions questioned how achievable the safeguarding of land outside the National Park for back-up grazing purposes is. While it is accepted that the achievement of this policy will require the support of neighbouring authorities, policy C1A of the draft South East Plan states that, "The local planning authority and other partners should also develop supportive sustainable land management policies, both inside the National Park and within the zone of 'New Forest commoning activity', including protection of grazing land outside the National Park which is needed to support National Park purposes." The Authority therefore considers the inclusion of this policy (and the reference to 'back up grazing land' in draft policy PP3.4) to be justified.</p>

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>CP3.2: Support farming that is directly beneficial to the Forest through:</p> <p>farm diversification where this helps sustain the existing farm business and is either</p> <p>(i) agricultural diversification based on an extensive system of land management, or</p> <p>(ii) non-agricultural diversification, including the re-use of redundant farm buildings, where the new use has a connection with the National Park and a low environmental impact.</p> <p>The co-ordinated provision of long-term land management advice relevant to the New Forest;</p> <p>Influencing the design and targeting of Government land management support schemes to ensure these are relevant to the circumstances of the New Forest;</p> <p>The development of markets for local produce.</p>	<p>CP3.2: The first bullet point offers conditional support for farm diversification, which can provide valuable opportunities for supporting the two National Park purposes. There is an important distinction between farm 'diversification' which supports the continuation of farming practices and that which replaces them. This is reflected in the wording of the first bullet point and the Authority does not consider there to be viable alternatives to the proposed approach within the context of a National Park.</p>	<p>CP3.2: Paragraph 30 of PPS7 states that local planning authorities, "...should be supportive of well conceived farm diversification schemes for business purposes that contribute to sustainable development objectives and help sustain the agricultural enterprise, and are consistent in their scale with their rural location." This has been translated into CP3.2 which supports farm diversification which helps to sustain the agricultural enterprise and has a low environmental impact.</p>
<p>CP3.3: Encourage sustainable forestry and woodland management, in particular where this:</p> <p>Restores the ancient woodland resource;</p> <p>Increases the area of broad-leaved woodland types typical of the area;</p> <p>Supplies wood products for the local economy, including wood-fuel energy systems</p>		
<p>CP3.4: Resist the loss of agricultural land and back up grazing through development or change of use.</p>		<p>CP3.4: Paragraph 32 of PPS7 states that authorities should set out their policies for supporting equine industries that "...maintain environmental quality and countryside character." There is increasing concern at the impact of recreational horse keeping on the character of the New Forest National Park, and the Authority considers draft policy CP3.4 to be justified given the specific issues in the National Park. Draft C1A in the South East Plan promotes the protection of back up grazing land.</p>

Understanding and Enjoying the New Forest National Park

Objective U1

Achieve a shared understanding and recognition of the special qualities of the National Park by local people, visitors and organisations

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>UP1.1: Publicise key messages about the special qualities of the New Forest in a consistent and co-ordinated way, and in particular:</p> <p>Develop creative and innovative ways of communicating messages to less easily reached groups, including local day visitors, residents and under-represented groups;</p> <p>Ensure the special qualities are fully emphasised in tourism information to guide those considering the New Forest as a holiday destination.</p>	<p>Promoting the understanding of the special qualities of the New Forest National Park is one of the two statutory Park purposes (as set out in the Environment Act 1995). It is considered essential that the Authority's approach to this purpose is set out and expanded in the Authority's overarching policy framework. The objective also reflects the importance of the special qualities of the New Forest and provides an important headline objective to be developed further. There are not considered to be viable alternatives to this approach, as the understanding of the Park's special qualities is central to the Authority's work.</p>	<p>Publicising the key messages about the special qualities of the New Forest is a core element of the second National Park purposes. The Authority undertook consultation in 2006 – 2007 on "What makes the New Forest special?" and received responses from the general public, statutory consultees and visitors to the New Forest Show. The Authority has now agreed a list of special qualities and these are central to the Authority's work. Likewise, the use of publications and education are central to promoting the "...understanding of the Park's special qualities..." – the second statutory purpose. The policies under Objective U1 are justified given the Authority's statutory purposes.</p> <p>Following feedback from the workshop sessions held during 2007/8, draft policy UP1.1 was re-worded to ensure that information on the special qualities of the National Park was communicated as part of the key messages to local visitors, residents and under-represented groups (the first bullet point). The Sustainability Appraisal identified the positive effect the policy should have on providing educational opportunities and enabling the enjoyment of the National Park.</p>
<p>UP1.2: Incorporate behavioural messages, linked to the special qualities, into a wide range of informative publications about the National Park targeted at different visitor groups.</p>		
<p>UP1.3: Encourage environmental education and study "About the Forest in the Forest" both for academic purposes and enjoyment.</p>		

Objective U2

Improve people's enjoyment and the quality of their experience of the National Park

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>UP2.1: Provide opportunities for safer and easier access to and within the National Park on foot, cycle, horseback (and other non-motorised means) for enjoyment, health and wellbeing by:</p> <p>Making existing rights of way and roads safer and more user friendly;</p> <p>Creating new access links to join up current routes and provide a more coherent network</p>	<p>UP2.1: The draft policy seeks to provide opportunities for easier access within the National Park through making existing rights of way safer and providing a more coherent network of core routes. An alternative option would be for this policy to support greater general access, for instance allowing access for cyclists on the Open Forest.</p>	<p>UP2.1: There was strong support during the 2007/8 stakeholder workshops for the creation of new routes within the National Park to form a coherent network. It was also emphasised that the routes should cater for residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the option of allowing greater general access (e.g. open access for cyclists on the Open Forest) could have significant negative impacts on sustainability objectives. The Habitats Regulations Assessment concluded that such a policy could result in increased access to the protected European habitats, and under the precautionary principle this policy option has not been pursued.</p>
<p>UP2.2: Actively involve groups who feel the National Park provides few opportunities for them, or who feel excluded due to cost, lack of transport or other barriers.</p>		
<p>UP2.3: Develop sensitive and innovative forms of interpretation which add to the appreciation and enjoyment of the National Park, while minimising the need for additional signage.</p>		
<p>UP2.4: Provide a high standard of services and facilities for visitors within the four defined Service Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway.</p>	<p>UP2.4: The Authority's preferred approach is to support visitor facilities and services within the four defined Service Villages. Alternative policy options to this approach include:</p> <p>Provide a high standard of services and facilities for visitors throughout the National Park;</p> <p>Provide for no new services and facilities for visitors.</p>	<p>UP2.4: The Authority's proposed approach is to focus visitor facilities within the defined villages. This approach recognises the relative accessibility of the defined villages compared to the remoter parts of the Park and acknowledges the need for visitor facilities to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities (the second purpose).</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that this option would be positive for the tourist economy and contribute towards the vitality of the four defined villages. A more dispersed set of facilities (option a) would increase the need to travel, and the facilities could affect the character of the landscape and nature conservation interests (impacting on the first statutory purpose).</p>
<p>UP2.5: Maintain a clean and litter free National Park.</p>		
<p>UP2.6: Develop a culture that welcomes and values visitors.</p>		

Objective U3

Manage the impacts of recreation on the environment and communities of the National Park.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>UP3.1: Improve understanding of the current and likely future recreational demand, and the impacts of recreation, on the National Park's Special Qualities.</p>		
<p>UP3.2: Provide additional, improved or relocated facilities and infrastructure for outdoor recreation appropriate to the National Park in more robust areas within the Park</p> <p>and</p> <p>Avoid any increase in the overall provision of recreational facilities and infrastructure within the most sensitive and fragile landscape and habitats, seeking opportunities to relocate existing facilities where these are damaging or undermining the Special Qualities.</p>	<p>UP3.2: An alternative to the Authority's proposed approach of supporting recreational facilities in more robust locations (while avoiding any increase in the most sensitive landscapes) would be to support additional, improved or relocated facilities and infrastructure for outdoor recreation throughout the National Park.</p>	<p>UP3.2: The Authority must have regard to the two statutory Park purposes in considering recreational provision in the National Park. The 'Sandford Principle' (contained within the Environment Act) makes it clear that where there is a potential conflict between the two Park purposes, the conservation and enhancement of the National Park takes precedence. The Authority's proposed approach acknowledges the importance of the New Forest for quiet open air recreation and directs it towards more robust areas, but seeks to protect the more sensitive habitats through seeking the relocation of facilities where they are damaging the special qualities.</p> <p>In terms of the alternative option of supporting additional facilities throughout the National Park, the Sustainability Appraisal raised concerns over the potential negative impacts of this option on the character of the landscape and nature conservation interests. Dispersed facilities could also increase the need to travel.</p> <p>The workshops in 2007/8 highlighted concerns that the provision of additional 'facilities' in UP3.2 could include large scale built facilities and infrastructure in the National Park. Feedback from the sessions also supported the approach of locating major new facilities outside the National Park.</p>
<p>UP3.3: Work with nearby authorities and land managers to identify and establish countryside sites outside the National Park, close to population centres.</p>		<p>UP3.3: The Appropriate Assessment of the draft South East Plan could not conclude that there would be no adverse effect due to recreational pressures associated with developments under the South East Plan on the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. The Assessment recommends the provision of large scale additional green infrastructure to partly mitigate the impacts of development on increasing recreational pressures within the National Park. This is reflected in draft policy UP3.3.</p>

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>UP3.4: Prevent major development of new or existing visitor attractions or accommodation within the National Park.</p>	<p>UP3.4: An alternative to the Authority's preferred policy of preventing further development of major built attractions or accommodation within the National Park (continuing the existing planning policy stance for the National Park) would be to support the further development of major built visitor attractions or accommodation within the National Park.</p>	<p>UP3.4: The proposed policy approach is a continuation of existing policies. Feedback from the workshop sessions was that there was no evidence of the need for new accommodation (existing provision is not used to capacity except during peak times). The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted the potentially adverse sustainability impacts for the landscape and nature conservation interests from the development of further major built visitor facilities.</p> <p>Other attendees at the workshops highlighted the importance of surrounding towns in providing accommodation.</p>

Living and Working in the New Forest National Park

Objective L1

Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of National Park communities and the pride of people in their local area

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP1.1: Provide for small scale development to meet National Park needs, including employment, retail and main community facilities, within the four defined Service Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway.</p>	<p>LP1.1 and LP1.2: During the 2007/8 workshops the approach to the general location of future development was discussed in detail. The consensus was that the Authority should maintain the present settlement hierarchy of four defined villages, but the options considered at the workshops included:</p> <p>Maintaining the present settlement hierarchy of four defined villages of Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Ashurst and Sway; or</p> <p>Changing the currently defined main villages (for instance to include additional settlements such as Burley);</p> <p>Defining no main villages, but allowing modest levels of development within settlements throughout the National Park.</p>	<p>LP1.1: Paragraph 30 of PPS3 states that local authorities should consider allocating sites solely for affordable housing. The Authority considers that the exceptions site policy and detailed site by site negotiations on delivering rural affordable housing are more effective (and have delivered a number of sites within the National Park) than the allocation of sites, which will often take longer to deliver affordable housing.</p> <p>The option of setting an annual housing target for the National Park is not considered to be realistic or appropriate within the National Park context, where development is limited to that which furthers the statutory purposes. This approach is also not required in the New Forest where the draft regional housing requirement for the 'New Forest' area is proposed to be exceeded without requiring development within the Park. Some participants at the 2007/8 workshop sessions felt that there should be no development at all in the National Park.</p> <p>LP1.1 and LP1.2: The consensus from the workshops was that the approach of focussing development towards defined villages was preferred. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the option of maintaining the present settlement hierarchy would provide for a more sustainable and concentrated service provision than a dispersed approach, which could also increase the need to travel.</p>
<p>LP1.2: Allow the provision of essential local community facilities within villages outside the defined Service Villages where the proposal is of clear and direct benefit to the local village or rural community.</p>		<p>Policy LP1.2 supports modest levels of development in other settlements where this meets local needs. This approach recognises the larger settlements, with a range of services, access to employment and transport links, provide the most sustainable location for development, but also allows small scale development in smaller settlements to meet local needs.</p>

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP1.3: Restrict residential development to the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs through development within the four defined Service Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway or through the release of 'exceptions' sites within or adjacent to other villages.</p>	<p>LP1.3: The Authority's proposed approach is to restrict residential development within the National Park to the provision of affordable housing. A number of alternative options for guiding the type and scale of housing development within the National Park were consulted on during the workshops held in 2007/8, as set out below:</p> <p>Provide more affordable housing to meet local needs including the specific requirements of housing for commoners), both in the main villages and rural settlements across the National Park; either</p> <p>with no open market housing; or</p> <p>some open market housing, even if this does not contribute to affordable housing; or</p> <p>open market housing, but only where this also provides a proportion of affordable housing (or a contribution to it).</p>	<p>LP1.3: The proposed approach is to focus development within the National Park on affordable housing. To allow open market housing would be an inefficient use of the finite land resource in the Park and would not assist in meeting local need. There is already a significant dwelling stock in the National Park (circa 15,000 dwellings), so the limited development that does take place should focus on meeting local needs, linked to the Authority's socio-economic duty. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that both options (a) and (c) would help meet some local housing needs, it is considered most sustainable to deliver as much affordable housing as possible (option a).</p>
<p>LP1.4: Encourage village communities to develop proposals for their area, undertake practical enhancement projects and celebrate their cultural heritage; and support the role of voluntary and community sectors in contributing to economic and social well-being.</p>		<p>LP1.4: Feedback from the workshops indicated that there was a need for the Authority to pro-actively support the delivery of proposals contained in Parish Plans and that the Authority should do this as part of its socio-economic duty.</p>

Objective L2

Develop a sustainable local economy which makes a clear contribution to the National Park

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP2.1: Retain existing employment sites, community facilities and community facilities throughout the National Park where these contribute to the sustainability of local communities, encourage their promotion and use and prevent their loss through redevelopment or change of use.</p>	<p>LP2.1 and LP2.2: The Authority's proposed approach is to retain existing employment sites within the National Park, support employment development in redundant buildings outside the defined villages, and support small scale employment development within the defined villages – policy LP1.1. These policies link to the Authority's socio-economic duty and the needs of the Park's resident population. An alternative option would be for the Authority to support the development of new build employment sites across the National Park.</p>	<p>LP2.1: The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that this draft policy should have a highly beneficial impact on the sustainability of the rural economy in the National Park.</p> <p>LP2.1 and LP2.2: During the 'Future Matters' consultation 67% of organisations and 80% of individuals who responded felt that the retention of existing employment sites was 'important'. This is reflected in policy LP2.1 which in principle seeks to retain employment sites.</p> <p>Given the low level of unemployment within the National Park, the lack of any regional employment land requirement and the need to be consistent with National Park purposes, the alternative option of allocating employment sites or supporting new build employment sites outside the main villages is not considered to be realistic or necessary.</p>
<p>LP2.2: Support employment development in redundant buildings and home-working in order to broaden the rural economic base, providing it:</p> <p>has a low environmental impacts in terms of design, scale, transport impacts and environmental practices.</p>		<p>LP2.2: During the workshops there was general support for policy LP2.2, although some felt that it should be tied to appropriate locations (e.g. defined villages). However, it is felt that this approach would fail to respect the duty to have regard to the economic well-being of all of the communities within the National Park. Local employment needs may well arise within the other communities and draft policy LP2.2 provides the flexibility required to meet these needs. (It should also be noted that policy LP1.1 supports small scale employment development within the defined villages, and the Plan should be read as a whole). The second bullet point reflects the fact that the socio-economic duty applies to the two Park purposes, and is not a stand alone purpose.</p> <p>Only 38% of organisations and 32% of individuals who responded to the 'Future Matters' consultation considered it to be 'important' that business development was encouraged in rural areas through new development. Likewise, only 38% of organisations and 37% of individuals felt that is 'important' to allocate employment land to meet needs beyond existing requirements. This is reflected in policy LP2.2 which supports the re-use of redundant buildings, rather than the allocation of employment land in the National Park or through new employment development.</p>

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP2.3: Invest in local training and business advice, in particular catering for those wishing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new businesses or markets using New Forest produce or products; Continue rural skills and trades; Develop innovative sustainable technologies giving direct benefits to the National Park 		<p>LP2.3: This policy supports local training and business advice and reflects the National Park duty to support the socio-economic well being of local communities in ways that sustain the National Park's special character.</p>
<p>LP2.4: Strengthen the New Forest's role at the forefront of sustainable tourism through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued emphasis on a partnership approach to tourism involving the visitor, industry, community and environment. Clearer emphasis on the Special Qualities of the National Park in tourism destination management. Support for practical sustainability projects within the tourism sector. 	<p>LP2.4: Tourism makes a major contribution to the economy of local communities within the National Park. It is estimated that over 13 million visitor days per annum are spent in the National Park, with 30% of jobs in the New Forest provided by tourism. Given the importance of tourism to the National Park, draft policy LP2.4 is justified and links sustainable tourism to the special qualities of the National Park. There were not felt to be realistic alternatives to this policy approach.</p>	

Objective L3

Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and provide a range of real and sustainable transport alternatives.

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP3.1: Influence regional and sub-regional transport policies and development proposals with transport implications (including air transport) to minimise impacts and, where possible, achieve benefits for the National Park.</p>	<p>LP3.1: A number of participants at the workshops felt that the Authority's ability to influence highways matters was limited, with Hampshire and Wiltshire county councils and the Highways Agency having primary responsibility. An alternative option would be for the Authority to effectively delegate the consideration of highways issues to HCC, WCC and the Highways Agency. However, these bodies have a statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995 to have regard to the National Park purposes and the Authority believes that highway schemes should take account of the New Forest's protected status in assessing schemes.</p>	<p>LP3.1: The New Forest National Park includes land within the counties of Hampshire (in the South East region) and Wiltshire (in the South West region) and the respective county councils are the highways authorities. A weight limit of 7.5 tonnes (except for loading) has been implemented in the north of the New Forest (between the A31, A36 and A338) by Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire County Council and there is a need to continue joint working on transport issues across the county boundary in the National Park (e.g. speed limits).</p>
<p>LP3.2: Create a distinctive and different experience when travelling within the National Park which clearly indicates its special and protected status.</p>		<p>LP3.2: There was general support for the ambition of the policy at the workshops, but concern that it will be difficult to achieve, and about the infrastructure (such as signage) which may be necessary. The Authority is working with partners to review existing signage in the Park and to reduce sign clutter and its effects on the landscape wherever possible.</p>
<p>LP3.3: Reduce the impacts of road traffic on the tranquillity and environmental quality of the National Park through traffic and demand management, road design and landscaping.</p>		<p>LP3.2 and LP3.3 are justified by the Authority's two statutory purposes. Road traffic impacts on the natural beauty of the National Park, and people's enjoyment of the New Forest's special qualities. The draft policies seek to reduce the detrimental impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park.</p>

Policy Framework	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>LP3.4: Improve the quality of life within the villages by reducing traffic and giving greater priority to pedestrians, cyclists and community use; and develop a safe and integrated network of public and community transport, footpaths and cycle routes designed to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.</p>		
<p>LP3.5: Reduce the number of animal accidents on unfenced New Forest roads.</p>		<p>LP3.5: The Authority is working with the Verderers to reduce animal accidents on New Forest roads. Initiatives include portable temporary signs placed at the site of an animal accident, as well as the Animal Emergency hotline cards.</p>

PART B - Development Control policies

Introduction

Following the designation of the New Forest as a National Park in March 2005, the National Park Authority inherited the development control policies contained within local plans that cover New Forest District, Salisbury District and Test Valley Borough; the two Structure Plans and minerals and waste plans for Hampshire and Wiltshire and the respective South East and South West regional planning guidance. This resulted in the Authority inheriting over 1,000 planning policies.

A number of these policies have been replaced through the adoption of the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and New Forest National Park Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in July 2007. The Authority is now seeking to review its development control policies through the National Park Plan.

Government guidance

Government planning guidance does not prescribe how development control policies should be dealt with in the Local Development Framework (LDF) system. PPS12 (2004) and recently replaced by the updated PPS12 in June 2008 states that the LDF should contain a limited suite of development control policies that set out the criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be considered. The former PPS12 (which provided the main planning policy context within which the draft National Park Plan was prepared) stated that development control policies could be included as part of the Core Strategy or in a separate development plan document.

A number of planning authorities have prepared and adopted development plan documents specifically for development control policies (e.g. Blythe Valley Borough Council, Hambleton District Council, Horsham District Council). The Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and New Forest National Park Minerals and Waste Core Strategy takes the alternative approach of including a limited number (23) of development control policies as part of the Core Strategy document. Likewise, the Submission draft version of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies Development Plan Document (January 2008) includes development policies within the main Core Strategy document for dealing with development within a National Park context.

This National Park Plan includes a much reduced and revised number of development control policies. PPS12 (June 2008) confirms that every local planning authority should produce a Core Strategy and include a delivery strategy showing how the objectives will be delivered. The delivery of the National Park Plan objectives can be partly achieved through the determination of planning applications and the Authority is justified in including the development control policies within the main National Park Plan.

National Park context and the development of reasonable options

The Government has confirmed that development control policies should not repeat or reformulate national or regional policy (paragraph 4.40 of PPS12). The Government's planning policy statements are material planning considerations, which must be taken into account in decisions on planning applications, and therefore do not need to be repeated verbatim within the Authority's development control policies. Within the context of the New Forest National Park, PPS7 provides guidance on nationally protected areas including National Parks. Paragraph 21 of PPS7 confirms that,

"The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas. The conservation of wildlife and the cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas. They are a specific purpose for National Parks, where they should also be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions."

The National Park Plan must also be in general conformity with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East – within which draft policy C1A provides a regional level policy for the New Forest National Park.

Updated Government guidance in PPS12 requires local planning authorities to "...seek out and evaluate reasonable alternatives...there is no point in inventing alternatives if they are not realistic..." – paragraph 4.38. Within the context of a National Park, it is clear that for alternative options to be reasonable they must conform with the statutory purposes as set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended by the Environment Act 1995). This limits the spatial options that are reasonable and deliverable within the National Park.

Links between the core policies and development control policies

The draft development control policies contained within this Plan support and add further detail to the strategic policies contained within the main part of the Plan, but do not repeat them. The draft Plan should be read as a whole.

The draft policies are primarily criteria based and have been developed to provide sufficient flexibility to cope with a range of circumstances, while giving clear policy guidance for the most often recurring forms of development proposed within the national Park. They move away from the raft of detailed policies covering every conceivable issue contained within the inherited Local Plans.

The table on the following pages sets out the Authority's proposed policies and explains where reasonable alternatives have been identified. This provides the opportunity to comment on whether the Authority's emerging policy choices are suitable, or whether alternative options are preferable.

Development Control Policies for the New Forest National Park

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC1: Control of development</p> <p>The conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals.</p> <p>Development will only be permitted where it does not significantly increase human or animal pressures on the National Park. New buildings, extensions and alterations to buildings should enhance the built heritage of the New Forest.</p>	<p>Policy DC1 sets out the requirement for all development proposals to have regard to the statutory National Park purposes and duty, and confirms that the conservation and enhancement of the National Park takes precedence over other considerations (reflecting the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as updated by the Environment Act 1995). Given the statutory framework, the only alternative option would be to rely on national legislation and guidance on National Parks. However, the Park purposes are considered to be so vital to the work of the Authority and partners that they must be clearly set out in the planning framework for the National Park.</p>	<p>The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that Policy DC1 should be very beneficial for the sustainability of nature conservation interests, the landscape and townscape, and the cultural and historic heritage. Where there is conflict, it gives clear priority to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park over other considerations in determining development proposals.</p>
<p>Policy DC2: General development criteria</p> <p>Development shall be appropriate and sympathetic in scale, appearance, materials, form, siting and layout and shall not cause unacceptable effects on local amenities, the historic environment, landscape character or biodiversity by reason of:</p> <p>additional impact; visual intrusion; overlooking; shading; increases in traffic or pollution (including light and noise); incompatibility with adjoining development; loss, deterioration or fragmentation of habitats or species populations of biodiversity importance; and loss of historic character, features or settings; increase of suburbanisation with inappropriate boundary treatments</p> <p>Development shall comply with required standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> car parking open space Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 by 2010 and level 6 by 2015 BREEAM standards for commercial and industrial buildings: Level 'very good'. 	<p>This policy should be read in conjunction with the strategic policies, in particular PP2.4, PP3.2, CP2.2 and LP3.3.</p> <p>A general development criteria policy is considered necessary. Although additional detail could be provided through a Supplementary Planning Document, this must expand on a general policy and DC2 fulfils this role. A further discounted option would be to rely on national guidance in the Government's PPGs/PPSs to guide development.</p>	<p>This policy sets out succinctly the criteria to be considered and will replace a number of development control policies within the inherited Local Plans.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the policy should be very beneficial for the sustainability of nature conservation interests, the landscape and townscape, and the cultural and historic heritage.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC3. New residential development</p> <p>New residential development will only be permitted where it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DC4; or a replacement of an existing dwelling in accordance with Policy DC5; or an extension to an existing dwelling in accordance with Policy DC6; or an agricultural or forestry workers dwelling in accordance with Policy DC10. <p>Permission will not be granted for new residential caravans or mobile homes, except in accordance with Policy DC10.</p>	<p>The strategic policies (in particular LP1.1, LP1.3 and CP3.1) in the National Park Plan set out the general approach to housing and the settlement hierarchy.</p> <p>Given that the higher level policies establish the principles for housing within the National Park, there are not considered to be a range of reasonable alternatives for implementing the policy approach.</p>	<p>Policy DC3 provides the detail of how the strategic policies on the settlement hierarchy and the approach to residential development in the National Park will be implemented.</p>
<p>Policy DC4: Affordable housing</p> <p>Within the four defined Service Villages at least 50% of the development shall be for social rented housing with the balance being intermediate housing. An element of market housing for not more than 25% of dwellings on the site, in place of intermediate housing, may be considered, if it can be shown that the market housing is essential in order to ensure the viability of the affordable housing.</p> <p>Proposals for single dwellings shall either be for a social rented house or an intermediate house with an equity sharing arrangement agreed with the local planning authority.</p> <p>Elsewhere small-scale affordable housing developments may be permitted as “exceptions” on sites in or adjoining villages. At least 75% of the development shall be for social rented housing with the balance being intermediate housing.</p> <p>Proposals for affordable housing should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meet a particular local need that cannot be accommodated in any other way; and ii. be subject to a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to ensure that the dwellings provide for low-cost housing for local needs in perpetuity; and iii. be capable of management by an appropriate body, for example a Registered Social Landlord, the Authority, or a village trust or similar accredited local organisation; and iv. be located where there are appropriate local facilities (e.g. shops, schools and public transport). 	<p>Policy LP1.3 states that residential development within the National Park will be limited to the provision of affordable housing. DC4 sets out the Authority’s proposed mix of social rented: intermediate housing. An alternative approach would be for the policy to be less prescriptive in setting out the mix of affordable housing to be provided.</p> <p>Policy DC4 also sets out the Authority’s proposed approach to ‘exceptions’ sites within the National Park. An alternative approach could be to allocate sites specifically for affordable housing (in accordance with paragraph 30 of PPS3).</p>	<p>Policy DC4 confirms that there is some flexibility in the mix of dwellings that may be considered within the Service Villages if it can be shown that this is necessary to ensure the viability of the scheme. It is therefore felt that there is sufficient flexibility in the policy.</p> <p>The Authority considers that the wording relating to exceptions sites within policy DC4 will be more effective in delivering affordable housing through site specific discussions when opportunities arise than the allocation of sites (as permitted by PPS3), which will often take longer to deliver affordable housing.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the policy should be successful in meeting some local housing needs.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC5: Replacement dwellings</p> <p>The replacement of existing dwellings will be permitted except where the existing dwelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the result of a temporary or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use; has been abandoned; has been demolished; or makes a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the locality. <p>The replacement dwelling should be sited in the same position as the dwelling to be replaced.</p> <p>Caravans and mobile homes may not be replaced by permanent dwellings.</p> <p>Outside the defined Service Villages, the replacement dwelling should be of no greater floorspace or height than the existing dwelling. In exceptional circumstances, a larger dwelling may be permitted if it is essential to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality. In respect of this exceptional circumstance, the maximum habitable floorspace of the replacement dwelling must not exceed 120 sq.metres.</p>	<p>Policy DC5 seeks to reduce the impact of replacement dwellings on the character of the New Forest National Park by limiting replacement dwellings to the same position and of no greater floorspace or height than the existing dwelling. Alternative approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a continuation of the existing New Forest District Local Plan policy approach allowing an increase in floorspace of replacement dwellings of up to 30% the original floorspace; allowing the replacement dwellings to be sited in a different position to the dwelling it replaces; allowing the replacement of existing dwellings even if they make a positive contribution to the built heritage of the locality. 	<p>The cumulative impact of replacement dwellings on the character and built heritage of the National Park was identified as a major concern at the stakeholder workshops held during 2007/8 and is reflected in objective P1: Conserving Local Distinctiveness. DC5 has an important role in conserving the special character of the New Forest National Park, and seeks the retention of existing dwellings that make a positive contribution to the locality. The policy also aims to limit the landscape impact of replacement dwellings by ensuring they are built in the same location and are of the same floorspace and height as the existing dwelling.</p> <p>The proposed approach in DC5 aims to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the New Forest and maintain a stock of smaller dwellings. The existing Local Plan approach of setting a limit on increases in floorspace has caused problems and it is not proposed to continue this approach. The Authority considers the policy approach in DC5 supports the conservation and enhancement of the National Park – the first statutory purpose.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC6: Extensions to dwellings</p> <p>Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that they are appropriate to the existing dwelling and its curtilage.</p> <p>In the case of small dwellings, the extension must not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 100 sq. metres, and in the case of other dwellings (not small dwellings) outside the defined Service Villages the extension must not increase the floorspace of the dwelling by more than 30%. In exceptional circumstances a larger extension may be permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality; or to meet design considerations relating to the special character of the dwelling (e.g. listed buildings). <p>In respect of these exceptional circumstances, the maximum habitable floorspace of an extended small dwelling must not exceed 120 sq.metres.</p> <p>In the case of agricultural or forestry workers' dwellings, the extension must not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 120 sq. metres.</p> <p>Extensions will not be permitted where the existing dwelling is the result of a temporary or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use.</p>	<p>An alternative approach to the Authority's proposals in DC6 would be to place no limit on the size of extensions for small dwellings (i.e. take the same approach to small dwellings as is taken to other existing dwellings within the National Park).</p>	<p>In the same way as replacement dwellings, extensions to existing dwellings are cumulatively impacting on the character of the National Park. The approach in policy DC6 allows small dwellings to be extended while retaining them as modest dwellings, which play an important role in the local housing stock. The floorspace limitations are felt to be helpful (and represent a continuation of the existing planning policy approach within the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration, 2005), but is important to emphasise that all extensions must be appropriate to the existing dwelling and its curtilage.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC7: Outbuildings</p> <p>Domestic outbuildings will only be permitted where they: are located within the residential curtilage; are required for purposes incidental to the use of the main dwelling; and are not providing additional habitable accommodation</p>	<p>Policy DC7 represents a more restrictive approach to domestic outbuildings than that taken in the existing local plan policies. An alternative approach would be a continuation of existing policies which do not require the outbuildings to be incidental to the use of the main dwelling (criterion ii); or for them not to provide habitable accommodation (criterion iii).</p>	<p>Domestic outbuildings can be visually intrusive and can impact on the character of the National Park. Policy DC7 recognises this and contributes to the conservation of the character of the National Park (linked to the first statutory purpose). The Authority considers criterion (iii) to be justified to avoid additional pressure for the conversion of outbuildings for accommodation.</p>
<p>Policy DC8: Extensions to all non residential buildings / uses</p> <p>The limited extension of existing non residential buildings and uses outside defined Service Villages will only be permitted where it: would not materially increase the level of activity on the site (in terms of employment, visitors and traffic); or is necessary for the efficient operation of the premises concerned; is contained within existing site boundaries</p>	<p>The Authority could give an indicative guidance figure for the scale of extension that would generally be supported within the Park (as is done with the 30% figure for extensions to small dwellings in policy DC6 for example).</p> <p>More prescriptive policies for different use classes of buildings could be set out</p>	<p>Policy DC8 aims to provide a single generic policy for the consideration of extensions to a range of non residential uses including agricultural, business, tourism and community uses – replacing a whole raft of existing Local Plan policies.</p> <p>Given the range of uses covered by the policy, it is not considered realistic to give an indicative figure for the scale of extensions that would be supported; and this should be determined through the general criteria and an assessment of activity impact.</p>
<p>Policy DC9: Agricultural buildings</p> <p>Permission will only be granted for buildings required for agriculture, horticulture or forestry purposes where: there is a functional need for the building and its scale is commensurate with that need; the building is designed for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture or forestry; the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location; and they do not involve large or obtrusive structures or generate a level of activity which would have a detrimental affect on the National Park.</p>	<p>An alternative to the Authority's proposed approach in policy DC9 would be to remove the requirement for agricultural buildings to be related physically and functionally to existing buildings. This is the approach taken within the existing New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (2005) which does not require this link between the proposed agricultural buildings and the existing buildings associated with the practice.</p>	<p>Policy DC9 seeks to enable development that will sustain agricultural activity, but accepts that such development can have significant landscape impacts. The Authority considers policy DC9 to be justified in seeking to ensure new agricultural buildings are well sited in relation to existing buildings given the impacts such buildings can have on the landscape character of the National Park.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC10: Dwellings for agricultural or forestry workers in the New Forest</p> <p>Permission will be granted for an agricultural, or forestry worker's dwelling provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a the labour needs of the enterprise require a full-time worker or workers to be on hand day and night; and b no other suitable accommodation is available either on the holding/enterprise or elsewhere which could reasonably serve the holding/enterprise (including existing tied cottages); and c it can be demonstrated that the existing farm or forestry enterprise is economically viable, or in the case of a proposed enterprise that it has been planned on a sound financial basis and intentions are genuine; and d no other dwellings either on or closely connected to the holding/enterprise have been sold separately or some way alienated from it. As an additional safeguard, where an existing dwelling with unrestricted residential use serving the holding/enterprise exists and is not subject to an occupancy condition, a condition restricting the occupancy of that dwelling will be imposed. <p>The size of the proposed dwelling should not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 120 sq.metres unless the larger dwelling size is essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i to meet the genuine family needs of the occupier; or ii to meet the need for additional floorspace on a large farm unit. <p>Where practicable and appropriate first consideration should be given to the conversion of an existing building under the terms of Policy DC15.</p> <p>Where evidence of the financial soundness and future sustainability of the holding/enterprise appears inconclusive, consideration may be given to permitting a caravan or other temporary accommodation for a limited period of time.</p>	<p>An alternative option to policy DC10 would be for the Authority to rely on the detailed guidance set out in Annex A of PPS7 covering agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings. This sets out the need for a functional test to establish whether for workers to be on site at all times; and a financial test to test whether the enterprise is economically viable.</p>	<p>PPS7 makes it clear that one of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified in rural areas is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural or forestry workers to live. "It is essential that all applications for planning permission for new occupational dwellings in the countryside are scrutinised thoroughly." – Annex A.</p> <p>Policy DC10 is based on the existing policy in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (2005) that is considered to have been effective in considering proposals for agricultural or forestry workers dwellings. Although the Authority could rely on the guidance in Annex A of PPS7, it is felt that policy DC10 provides more detailed guidance on the issue within the National Park context and is therefore appropriate. Policy DC10 should be considered in conjunction with PPS7 (which is a material planning consideration) in determining applications for agricultural or forestry workers dwellings.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC11: Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions</p> <p>An occupancy condition restricting the occupancy of a dwelling to a person employed or last employed in agriculture or forestry will not be removed unless the local planning authority is satisfied that the long term need for the dwelling has ceased and there is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in the locality in these categories or practising commoning. If such evidence can be produced, then the local planning authority will seek to restrict the occupancy of the dwelling to a person in local housing need by means of an agreement similar to that for individual dwellings in accordance with Policy DC4</p>	<p>Policy DC11 states that if there is no long term need for an agricultural occupancy condition to be retained, the Authority will seek to restrict the occupancy of the dwelling to a person in local housing need. An alternative approach would be for the Authority to remove this requirement and allow the dwelling to be available on the open market – the approach taken in the existing policy in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (2005).</p>	<p>Annex A of PPS7 states that, "...local planning authorities should set out in their LDDs their policy approach to the retention or removal of agricultural and, where relevant, forestry and other forms of occupancy conditions."</p> <p>The Authority considers that the need for local affordable housing justifies the final part of the policy restricting the occupancy of the dwelling to a person in local housing need. This approach is consistent with that taken in policy H9 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan 2001 -2011 (adopted in March 2005).</p>
<p>Policy DC12: Recreational horse keeping</p> <p>Recreational horse keeping will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no adverse impact on the landscape or any nature conservation interests; no increased riding pressures on the Open Forest; and no loss of run back grazing land. 	<p>Recreational horse keeping can impact on the National Park by increasing pressures on the Open Forest, reducing the supply of back up grazing land, and affecting the character of the landscape through the provision of related structures (see DC13 and DC14). The Authority therefore considers policy DC12 to be justified and does not consider there to be a range of realistic alternatives.</p>	<p>Paragraph 32 of PPS7 states that authorities should set out their policies for supporting equine industries that "...maintain environmental quality and countryside character." There is increasing concern at the impact of recreational horse keeping on the character of the Park, and policy DC12 reflects this. Draft policy C1A in the South East Plan promotes the protection of back up grazing land – reflected in criterion (iii).</p>
<p>Policy DC13: Field shelters</p> <p>Field shelters will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it can be shown that the land has a lawful horse keeping or agricultural (horse grazing) use; they are simple in appearance and modest in scale with the long side of the building left open (concrete floors and hardstandings will not be permitted) 	<p>Policy DC13 seeks to limit the impact of field shelters on the landscape of the National Park. The policy allows field shelters where they are simple in appearance and is considered to be reasonable. No alternative options to this policy have been identified.</p>	<p>Policy DC13 is slightly more prescriptive than the existing New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration policy, but this is felt to be justified given the increasing concerns at the impact of field shelters on the character of the National Park landscape (linked to the first statutory National Park purpose).</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC14: Stables and maneges</p> <p>Stables and maneges will not be permitted in the open countryside. They will only be permitted in residential curtilages or immediately adjoining a residential curtilage where both the land and the property are in the control of the applicant. Replacement of existing stables and maneges on lawful horse keeping sites will be permitted where it can be shown that the proposed development offers a positive environmental improvement that would help to protect and enhance the landscape.</p>	<p>Policy DC14 takes a more restrictive approach to the provision of stables and maneges than the existing New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration, and this is considered to be justified given the impact stables and maneges are having on the New Forest landscape. An alternative approach would be a less restrictive policy that did not require stables and maneges to be located within or immediately adjoining residential curtilages.</p>	<p>As with recreational horse keeping (DC12) and field shelters (DC13), the development of stables and maneges can have detrimental impacts on the landscape of the National Park. Policies DC12, DC13 and DC14 have a role in delivering the first National Park purposes of conserving and enhancing the National Park.</p>
<p>Policy DC15: Re-use of buildings</p> <p>Permission will be granted for the re-use of buildings outside defined Service Villages provided that</p> <p>the proposal does not result in the loss of an employment use or community facility; and</p> <p>the proposal does not involve a residential use (other than in accordance with policies DC3 and DC4).</p> <p>The building must be appropriate in scale and appearance to its location, and should be capable of conversion without significant extension or detriment to itself or its surroundings. The building should be structurally sound and capable of re-occupation without re-building.</p> <p>In the case of agricultural or forestry buildings, the building must be genuinely redundant in its existing use and not capable of fulfilling any beneficial agricultural use or the proposal is part of the diversification of a continuing farm business.</p>	<p>Policy DC15 conditionally supports the re-use of buildings outside the defined Services Villages for a range of uses, including local needs affordable housing. An alternative policy approach would be for the Authority to be more prescriptive in the type of uses that would be supported through the re-use of buildings.</p>	<p>Paragraph 17 of PPS7 states that the Government, "...supports the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building." Policy DC15 responds to this guidance and sets out the Authority's position on the re-use of existing buildings in the National Park outside the defined villages.</p> <p>Policy DC15 is more succinct and generic than the existing local plan policies covering the re-use of buildings in the National Park. The policy recognises that the re-use of existing buildings is often a more sustainable option than allowing new build within the National Park, and also has landscape benefits (linked to the first Park purpose).</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC16: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas</p> <p>Exceptionally, permission may be granted for a change of use of a listed building, or other building of importance to the character of a Conservation Area, or development intended to enable the retention of such a building provided that it can be demonstrated that this is the only way in which a listed building or building of value to a Conservation Area can be retained and/or restored.</p>	<p>Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are covered by a detailed range of legislation (e.g. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Government guidance (PPG15). The Authority could simply rely on this higher level national legislation and guidance for considering development proposals for listed buildings and Conservation Areas.</p>	<p>The New Forest National Park includes 16 Conservation Areas (and a further 3 that straddle the Park boundary). Paragraph 3.8 of PPG15 states that “Generally the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active use.” Although national legislation and guidance in PPG15 provides a framework, policy DC16 provides greater detail on the Authority’s policy for securing the future of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and is therefore considered justified.</p>
<p>Policy DC17: Retail within Service Villages</p> <p>Change of use of ground floor premises from retail to financial and professional services or food and drink uses within the local shopping frontages of the defined Service Villages will be permitted provided that it will not result in proportion of retail units in the shopping frontages of Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst being reduced to less than 50%; and in the frontages of Ashurt and Sway to less than 40%.</p>	<p>Policy DC17 seeks to retain local shopping facilities within the main village shopping areas, which serve visitors and local residents. An alternative policy option would be for the Authority to relax the policy on changes of use to allow the market to dictate the range of retail services within the villages.</p>	<p>Policy DC17 aims to ensure that at least some of the basic retail needs of the Park’s resident population, together with visitors, can be met within the National Park. This aids the vitality of local communities and links to the Authority’s socio-economic duty. The thresholds identified in DC17 are consistent with those in the existing Local Plan policy which have been felt to operate well.</p>
<p>Policy DC18: Advertisements</p> <p>The display of advertisements will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a they are located on, or directly adjacent to the premises to which the advertisement relates, or they provide advance direction or warning which is necessary in the interests of public safety; and b they are appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the New Forest and do not detract from the public amenity of the area, c they are constructed of appropriate traditional materials, and are not visually intrusive by reason of their size, form, colour or illumination. <p>Where two or more signs are proposed in one location, they shall normally be of coordinated design and appearance.</p>	<p>The Authority could simply rely on the guidance in PPG19 Outdoor Advertisement Control in considering proposals for advertisements, rather than including policy DC18 as a development control policy within the National Park Plan.</p>	<p>Policy DC18 is consistent with the existing New Forest District Local Plan policy, which is generally considered to have been effective in conserving the traditional character of the New Forest landscape and settlements (linked to the first statutory purpose).</p> <p>PPG19 Outdoor Advertisement Control acknowledges that all advertisements affect the appearance of the local area and that stricter controls usually apply to the display of advertisements in National Parks. Given the need to protect the character of the New Forest from inappropriate development, the inclusion of policy DC18 is considered to be justified, rather than relying on national guidance.</p>

Proposed Policy	Alternatives	Discussion
<p>Policy DC19: Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople</p> <p>Proposals for the provision of permanent and / or transit accommodation to meet an established need of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:</p> <p>there is a need for the site to be located within the National Park and there are no suitable sites outside the National Park boundary; and</p> <p>the site is accessible to jobs, shops, schools, medical and other local services, the transport network and is well related to the service villages.</p>	<p>The issue of gypsy and traveller sites is being taken forward by the South East England Regional Assembly through an early review or the South East Plan to identify the number of pitches required for each local authority. The figure for New Forest District Council will include the New Forest National Park. Alternative options to DC19 include:</p> <p>having no policy on the provision of gypsy and traveller sites within the New Forest National Park until the SEERA proposals are published later in 2008; or</p>	<p>Government Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites does not preclude the development of gypsy and traveller sites within National Parks. Paragraph 31 states that planning authorities should set out criteria for the location of sites within their Core Strategy. Policy DC19 is therefore considered necessary and reflects paragraph 52 of Circular 01/06 which states that within National Parks planning permission for gypsy and traveller sites, "...should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development." (paragraph 52). Until the Regional Assembly publishes the propose pitch requirements for each local authority, policy DC19 is considered to be the only realistic option.</p>