



NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK PLAN

Service Villages & Housing Working Group Meeting

4 March 2009

This paper provides a summary of the main outcomes of the Service Villages and Housing Working Group, held on Wednesday 4 March 2009 at the Lyndhurst Community Centre.

1. Attendance and participation

The event was attended by representatives of 16 organisations (excluding National Park Authority members and staff). These are listed in Annex 1.

The session was introduced and chaired by John Sanger, member of the New Forest National Park Authority, who explained the purpose of the Working Group. Richard Lemon, Director of Strategy and Planning then set out the consultation process in relation to the Management Plan and Local Development Framework.

David Illsley introduced the summary of the key issues raised during the consultation on the draft New Forest National Park Plan, as set out in the background paper. The meeting discussion was broadly structured around these issues. A summary of the main outcomes of the meeting is given below.

2. Overall outcomes of the discussion

The scale of future housing development and affordable housing targets

- Any development in the National Park should be to meet local needs, rather than to satisfy wider needs that are best met in surrounding urban areas. Many participants felt it was inappropriate for the National Park to have a housing target.
- The draft South East Plan proposed annual housing requirement for the National Park for 11 dwellings per annum should not be used to constrain development opportunities.

Are the affordable housing targets appropriate?

- Development should be principally focussed on the delivery of affordable housing. However, the Authority's proposed affordable housing targets were queried in terms of deliverability and soundness (with regard to the affordable housing economic viability evidence). There was a concern that seeking 75% or 100% affordable housing within the four service villages would prevent sites coming forward.
- Although the principle of exception site housing was widely supported, the exception site policy was felt to lack flexibility. No exception sites have been developed within the National Park for 4 years and if affordable housing is indeed a priority, the planning policies should be more enabling.

Other housing issues raised

- Support for the continuation of the commoner's housing scheme which was felt to warrant its own policy within the Plan.
- It was confirmed that the Regional Assembly were leading on assessing gypsy and traveller accommodation needs. Until the Assembly's work was complete it was

agreed there was nothing further to be discussed on this issue.

The concept of 'Service Villages' – Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway

- It was agreed that the term 'Service Villages' was not suitable. Alternatives included continuing the existing term 'Defined Villages', or changing it to 'Main Villages' or 'Sustainable Villages'.
- Concerns were raised that seemingly all development would be focussed on the 'Service Villages', with no consideration of infrastructure capacity. Some felt that development should take place across the National Park as a whole to meet local needs, and not be solely focussed on the four defined villages.

Alternative options proposed to the four 'Service Villages' identified

- Limited support for the designation of a second tier of settlements below the 'Service Villages', based on the approach taken in other National Parks. However others felt that a settlement hierarchy was not necessary at all, and that all development proposals should be judged on their merits against a set of sustainability indicators.
- There was no support for the designation of a further 'Service Village' in the north of the Park (some consultees had suggested Redlynch or Landford).
- Reference should be made to the services and facilities available to New Forest communities but provided by towns and villages outside the National Park.

Other issues relating to the 'Service Villages'

- The NPA should be protecting as many local shops as possible through its DC policies – policy DC17 needs clarifying as it is currently causing confusion.
- The villages need local employment and development should be supported where it would not have a detrimental impact on the Park. The Authority's socio-economic duty needed to be given greater prominence. (NOTE – the Socio-Economic Working Group will look into these issues in more detail).

3. Key conclusions for further consideration

All the above points will be used to help inform the review of the Plan, but the main points for consideration by the National Park Authority are distilled below.

Affordable Housing Targets

The National Park Authority should reconsider the affordable housing target in the Plan (Policy LP1.3 and DC4) in light of the economic viability evidence and the need to ensure deliverability. A revised 50% target within the four villages received some support, as it would allow single open market dwellings to be built (with an affordable housing contribution).

Rural Exceptions Sites

If the National Park Authority is to rely on rural exceptions sites to deliver local needs housing across the Park (outside the four villages), consideration should be given to making the policy (DC4) more flexible and enabling.

Settlement Hierarchy

The group came to no clear consensus over the settlement hierarchy. Suggestions for consideration in revising the National Park Plan included:

- Option 1: designation of a second tier of settlements below the four 'Service Villages' where limited development would be considered, an approach adopted in a number

of other National Parks; or

- Option 2: replacement of the settlement hierarchy with a set of indicators to assess proposals on a site by site basis.

'Service Villages' Terminology

If 'Service Villages' are to be retained, the terminology needs to be changed. Potential alternatives include 'Defined Villages', or changing it to 'Main Villages' or 'Sustainable Villages'.

Further comments from participants on the outcomes of the meeting

All those attending the meeting were asked for agreement that the note was a fair summary of the key points raised at the meeting for consideration by the National Park Authority in revising the Plan, or to comment where they felt this was not the case.

Five of the sixteen organisations attending made comments on the content of the notes: the key points of these are summarised below. These comments will be included as part of the views of the working group, to be fully considered by the National Park Authority when deciding on revisions to the National Park Plan.

The Scale and Type of Future Housing Development in the National Park

- Would like to see thought given to encouraging the provision of "small houses" in the National Park through the planning policies.
Bramshaw Parish Council
- It is unfortunate that the draft notes state that the draft South East Plan housing requirement for the National Park should not be used to constrain development opportunities.
New Forest Association
- The NFA's attitude to affordable housing targets, second tier settlements and 'Service Villages' is largely dependent on how many houses the NPA plan to build in the Park.
New Forest Association

Affordable Housing (including rural exceptions sites)

- Support the principle of affordable housing and would prefer Policy DC4 to include a preference for one or two bed houses per site, rather than referring to "small scale development".
Redlynch Parish Council
- Making the rural exceptions sites more flexible and enabling could result in the loss of character to the villages and landscape if the planning criteria are diluted.
Redlynch Parish Council
- Redlynch Parish Council would like assurances that there will be no loss of back up grazing land through the affordable housing policy. DC4 should ensure that there will be no loss of good quality grazing land.
Redlynch Parish Council

- There is a factual error in the notes – it is untrue that no exception housing sites have been developed in the Park in the last four years. The site at Mill Lane, Brockenhurst was developed last year.
New Forest Association
(Note for clarification – The planning application for 10 dwellings on the exceptions site at Mill Lane, Brockenhurst, was registered in April 2005 by New Forest District Council (05/84765). Planning permission was granted by the National Park Authority in March 2007 following the completion of the Section 106 legal agreement.)

The Concept of ‘Service Villages’ and alternative options

- There was near universal rejection of the concept as well as the term “Service Villages”.
Brockenhurst Parish Council
- More than “some” felt that development should take place across the Park as a whole. The four villages are considered to be “full”.
Brockenhurst Parish Council
- There was indeed “limited support” for the designation of a second tier of settlements. This is not properly carried forward in the third key conclusion statement that there was no clear consensus. No unanimity perhaps, but an overwhelming majority view.
Brockenhurst Parish Council
- Terminology: “Developed Villages” was also offered – underscoring the fact that the villages are full.
Brockenhurst Parish Council
- In the key points, you refer to two options for possible change on the subject of settlement hierarchy. Our view is that Option 2 is preferable.
Friends of Brockenhurst

Other Issues relating to ‘Service Villages’

- The draft note omits the point made by several participants about the Authority’s socio-economic duty.
Brockenhurst Parish Council

**Service Villages and Housing Working Group
4 March 2009**

Participants:

Organisation	Representative
Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council	Sally Arnold
Bramshaw Parish Council	Sue Bennison
Brockenhurst Parish Council	Thorold Masefield
Friends of Brockenhurst	Russell Horne
Hampshire County Council	Frances Stokes
Hyde-Martlet Housing Association	Chris Buchan-Hepburn
Lyndhurst Parish Council	Mark Rolle
New Forest Association	Graham Baker
New Forest Commoners Defence Association	Mike Eccles
New Forest District Council	Louise Evans
New Forest Villages Housing Association	Rachel Smith
Redlynch Parish Council	Bill Dunn
Rural Housing Enabler	Gordon Richardson
Sway Parish Council	Kathy Gulliver
Test Valley Borough Council	Tim Crouch
Verderers of the New Forest	Peter Frost
NPA Member	John Sanger (CHAIR)
NPA Member	Maureen Holding
NPA Officer	Lindsay Cornish
NPA Officer	Richard Lemon
NPA Officer	Sarah Applegate
NPA Officer	David Illsley