

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK PLAN
SOCIO-ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP:
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. KEY ISSUES RAISED IN THE CONSULTATION

A wide range of comments were made regarding the economic and social well being of local communities. Some comments relating to this topic overlap with the role of service villages, housing, traffic management and zoning, and these have also been discussed in separate Working Groups. The main focus for this Group is the comments made about the economic well being and the facilities and services of local communities. The Authority's summary of the comments received is set out below:

a. The balance between achieving the Park's two purposes and performing its duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities

Many comments were received about the National Park Authority's duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (the purposes and duty are described in Annex 3). This was a major area of concern with many querying whether sufficient emphasis has been placed on this duty relative to the two National Park purposes. Issues raised included:

- Too much focus on the National Park's purposes and insufficient emphasis on the duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities
- Too much focus on conservation, not enough on the local economy...
- Not enough support for development of businesses, tourism and employment
- The economic and social duty should have the same status as the purposes. The duty should be an additional Priority objective.
- The Forest can be conserved whilst also promoting a thriving tourism industry.
- The Plan should have regard to national and regional guidance, and the local Sustainable Community Strategies
- Economic growth should not have a detrimental impact on the purposes.

b. The scale and type of economic development

Many comments were made about the scale and type of economic development that might emerge from the draft Plan. These ranged from those who are concerned about the potential damaging impact of further development to those who would like to see greater development opportunities, including many in the above Section a. that believe that the draft Plan places insufficient emphasis on the economic and social duty. Issues raised included:

Scale

- Greater emphasis should be given to economic and social development
- Further development / employment is needed to ensure a buoyant economy
- Development should be limited to a scale appropriate to a National Park, and tied to the needs of the immediate locality
- Care is needed to ensure that economic growth does not harm the special qualities of the Forest.

Type

- A wide variety of employment activities are needed to foster local communities, with a diversity of industry and businesses.
- Restricting support for businesses to those only with a connection to the Forest will be detrimental. Not all businesses can directly contribute to National Park purposes. By creating local jobs, businesses contribute to the Park's general economic sustainability.
- Businesses that do not detract from the purposes but help maintain local employment should be supported, particularly those with low impact, high tech characteristics.
- Development should be appropriate to the National Park, or support its purposes
- The land-based economy, that maintains the Forest, should be supported.
- Whilst some want to diversify, many feel that further support for tourism is needed
- Home working is welcomed, but better communications are needed to support this

c. **The impact of Development Control policies on the economic well being of communities**

Even though there was some general support, many of the comments about the draft Development Control policies expressed concerns about whether they would restrict the ability of businesses to help sustain the local economy and employment. Many thought they were too restrictive and insufficiently flexible and some thought that they have too much emphasis on conservation. Issues raised focussed on:

Policy DC2: General development criteria

- Gives too much weight to aesthetics. Could restrict development
- Concern that the standards set for the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and BREEAM will add to costs and limit development opportunities.

Policy DC6: Extensions to dwellings; and Policy DC7: Outbuildings

- Doesn't support Policy LP2.2 that encourages people to work from home
- Should amend to allow development of home offices to encourage home working
- Outbuilding should be encouraged to allow offices, studios, small workshops

Policy DC8: Extensions to all non residential buildings and uses

- Provides insufficient flexibility for expansion of existing businesses. Likely to restrict the possibility of creating employment as any business extension will create increased activity.
- Businesses must be able to grow within 'reasonable bounds'. The interpretation of a 'material' increase in activity will be important.

Policy DC12,13,14: Recreational Horse Keeping

- Many comments received oppose these policies, and these will be reviewed by a separate Working Group. The key concern raised about the economy is that any restriction on horse keeping activities will have an impact on the local economy.

Policy DC15: Re-use of buildings

- Some buildings require 'significant extension' to allow for modern requirements.
- Shouldn't be restricted to uses that have a New Forest connection (as stated in L2). Others thought that the use must be appropriate to New Forest.
- Should allow for the possibility of development of services in smaller villages.

d. The support for local communities

There were a number of concerns relating to the risk of declining services and facilities in local communities, particularly the potential loss of local shops, pubs, post offices and schools. There is also concern that lack of local jobs may mean that some, including young people, have to commute to surrounding towns/cities for work. Issues raised included:

- Smaller hamlets suffer from a lack of local facilities. People rely on village shops and businesses since public transport is not extensive
- Concern about the loss of community services and facilities, such as shops, post offices, schools, pubs and community facilities. These need to be retained or enhanced. There should be more support for local artists, craftsmen and local goods / produce
- Limited development should be allowed in villages outside the service villages. Employment development should benefit local communities, and meet the needs of the immediate locality.

2. RELEVANT POLICIES IN CONSULTATION DRAFT NATIONAL PARK PLAN

List of objectives, policies and text taken from the draft Plan

Strategic policy

The key challenge over the next twenty years, for all involved with and caring for the New Forest, will be to protect its unique environment while responding to and managing what may be a period of considerable change driven by a range of environmental, social and economic factors beyond the boundaries of the National Park itself. In order to achieve this effectively the focus must be on allowing change and adaptation, but also maintaining and enhancing what is the essence of the New Forest expressed through its Special Qualities. To this end the overarching **Strategic Policy** of this National Park Plan is:

Land management and development proposals should enhance the two purposes of the New Forest National Park and must not detract from them

Where proposals would cause conflict between the two Purposes or the Special Qualities, greater weight will be given to the first purpose of conservation and enhancement and those special qualities directly relating to it.

Policies and Objectives for 'Living and Working'

Objective L1: Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of National Park communities and the pride of local people in their area

Policy framework

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.

The larger centres of population within the National Park should be maintained by providing some employment opportunities and a good range of shops and facilities to meet the local needs of each Service Village itself, other nearby villages and visitors to the National Park. Communities within the Park will continue to look to nearby towns to provide wider shopping, housing and leisure needs.

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.

In the rural settlements essential local services and facilities will be supported where these meet the immediate needs of the local community, allow greater social cohesion and improve the overall sustainability of the settlement.

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.

This should help empower, bring together and strengthen the identity of communities - for example through the parish plan process, village design statements, village welcome packs, local conservation projects, village archives, stronger community-voluntary sector networks and advice on project funding available.

Objective L2: Develop a sustainable local economy which makes a clear contribution to the National Park

Policy framework

LP2.1 Retain existing employment sites 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.

For details of relevant Development Control policies see Chapter 9. In addition there should be close working with communities, for instance through the production of parish plans, to ensure facilities and services remain viable and well used. This could be achieved, for example, through new community uses for pubs and halls and local campaigns to promote small businesses to residents.

LP2.2 Support employment development in redundant buildings and home-working in order to broaden the rural economic base, providing it has a low environmental impact in terms of design, scale, transport impacts and environmental practices.

In general business development will be focused within the four defined Service Villages, but limited small-scale development will be appropriate in the rural areas to provide local employment and services or allow the re-use of redundant buildings of architectural or historic value.

Particular support will be given to businesses that help to maintain the land-based economy and cultural heritage of the National Park or contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's Special Qualities. However a wide variety of employment opportunities for local people will also be encouraged where these do not have an adverse impact on the Special Qualities of the National Park, including home-based businesses, high value small businesses and those with a low carbon / environmental footprint.

LP2.3 Invest in local training and business advice, in particular catering for those wishing to:

- **develop new businesses or markets using New Forest produce or products**
- **continue rural skills and trades**
- **develop innovative sustainable technologies giving direct benefit to the National Park.**

This should include a more co-ordinated approach by the range of agencies involved in business advice and funding, improved links between businesses and local colleges and the encouragement of a more adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit locally. Sufficient medium-term support is needed to make sure new businesses succeed beyond the first few years and continue to contribute to the New Forest economy. The successful local produce market can be further developed by introducing the added benefit of quality assurance, encouraging wider sales outlets and increasing the use of local produce by local hotels and B&Bs. Greater development is needed of the wood product market, with the opportunity for small businesses to create high quality specialist goods related to the New Forest aimed at both visitors and local people.

LP2.4 Strengthen the New Forest's role at the forefront of sustainable tourism through:

- **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.**

Community tourism initiatives and the links between tourism and a high quality natural environment should be developed further. The image of the National Park as a unique destination with particular Special Qualities should be placed at the forefront of tourism information and marketing. There should be a particular focus on the sustainability of the New Forest as a destination, including encouraging new (and more visible) sustainability initiatives by local tourism businesses, such as greater use of renewable energy, local products / produce and integrated non-car transport.

Policies and Objectives for land – based businesses

Objective C3: Support land management which sustains the Special Qualities of the National Park

Policy framework

CP3.1 Ensure the future viability of commoning through:

- Support schemes to maintain Open Forest grazing, tailored to the specific needs of the New Forest
- Affordable housing for commoners, including land suitable for holdings
- A safeguarded stock of back-up land on the enclosed lands and adjacent to the National Park
- Reciprocal links between farming and commoning across the boundary, particularly the Avon Valley and the coast
- Understanding of the importance of commoning among visitors, local people and organisations.

This will include ensuring externally funded schemes such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme are extended or replaced after 2013 (when the current scheme ends) and continued support for marketing commoners products. Stronger collaboration between farmers and commoners will be encouraged where this is of mutual benefit, and links with Open Forest and woodland management (providing supplementary income) will be sustained.

CP3.2 Support farming that is directly beneficial to the Forest through:

- farm diversification where this helps sustain the existing farm business and is either
 - agricultural diversification based on an extensive system of land management, or
 - 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
- the co-ordinated provision of long-term land management advice relevant to the New Forest
- influencing the design and targeting of government land management support schemes to ensure these are relevant to the circumstances of the New Forest
- the development of markets for local produce.

Farming and farm diversification will be given particular support through advice and planning policies where this enhances or reinstates the characteristic landscapes and habitats of the area, provides local produce, encourages greater public access or provides local employment in rural businesses. Diversification which replaces the farm business or which entails intensive production methods will not be supported. Farm advice should be easily accessed through a first stop service for land managers, covering both business and conservation advice and utilising the various schemes already in place.

CP3.3 Encourage sustainable forestry and woodland management, in particular where this:

- restores the ancient woodland resource
- increases the area of broad-leaved woodland types typical of the area
- supplies wood products for the local economy, including wood-fuel energy systems.

Particular support will be given to the reinstatement of coppice management in enclosed woodlands (formerly managed in this way), the removal of conifers from broad-leaved, and particularly ancient, woodland and the creation of a range of woodland habitats. Initiatives will also be encouraged where these provide improved public access and opportunities for informal recreation in robust areas.

Development Control Policies:

Policy DC1: Control of development

The conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals.

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.

Policy DC2: General development criteria

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:

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

Development shall comply with required standards for:

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"

Policy DC6: Extensions to dwellings

Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that they are appropriate to the existing dwelling and its curtilage. 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:

- i. to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality; or
- ii. to meet design considerations relating to the special character of the dwelling (e.g. listed buildings).

In respect of these exceptional circumstances, the maximum habitable floorspace of an extended small dwelling must not exceed 120 sq.metres. In the case of agricultural or forestry workers' dwellings, the extension must not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 120 sq. metres. 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.

Policy DC8: Extensions to all non residential buildings and uses

The limited extension of existing non residential buildings and uses outside defined Service Villages will only be permitted where it:

- i. would not materially increase the level of activity on the site (in terms of employment, visitors and traffic); or
- ii. is necessary for the efficient operation of the premises concerned;
- iii. is contained within existing site boundaries

Policy DC15: Re-use of buildings

Permission will be granted for the re-use of buildings outside defined Service Villages provided that

- i. the proposal does not result in the loss of an employment use or community facility; and
- ii. the proposal does not involve a residential use (other than in accordance with policies DC3 and DC4).

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. 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.

Policy DC17: Retail within Service Villages

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 the 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%.

ANNEX 1: EXISTING PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

National planning policy guidance

Planning Policy Statement 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* highlights guidance on four key topics:

In Rural Communities, policies should:

- sustain and enhance country towns and villages;
- focus new development in local service centres;
- support a wide range of economic activity;
- provide access to a range of services;
- allow some limited development in rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs.

In The Countryside,

- traditional land-based activities that require a countryside location should be supported;
- landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage should have the highest level of protection in nationally designated areas;
- major developments should not take place in designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances;
- policies should support development that delivers sustainable farming enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies.
- development proposals should be encouraged which enable farmers to become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly; adapt to new and changing markets; comply with changing legislation and associated guidance; diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.
- Planning authorities should set out the policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic, residential and any other purpose.

Policies for Agriculture and Forestry should support well-conceived farm diversification schemes, even though these should not result in excessive expansion of building development into the countryside.

Policies for Tourism should

- support sustainable rural tourism that does not harm the character of the countryside;
- support general tourist facilities in service centres;
- focus most new tourist accommodation in existing towns and villages. Policies for caravan and holiday parks should protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites and examine relocating existing sites, away from sensitive areas.

Planning Policy Statement 1 - *Delivering Sustainable Development* states that planning authorities should ensure that development plans promote outcomes in which environmental, economic and social objectives are achieved together over time. Planning Policy Statement 1 also outlines that:

1. Good quality, carefully-sited accessible development within existing towns and villages should be allowed where it benefits the local economy and/or community (e.g. affordable housing for identified local needs).
2. Decisions on the location of developments in rural areas should, where possible, give people the greatest opportunity to access them by public transport, walking and cycling, consistent with achieving the primary purpose of the development.

3. New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements should be strictly controlled.
4. Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed ('brownfield') sites in preference to the development of greenfield sites.
5. All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.

Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 *Planning for Sustainable Economic Development* plans to ensure that sufficient and appropriate land is supplied to meet the needs of business. It suggests that an assessment of the existing supply of land available for economic development should be done through an employment land review. Economic strategies should take account of local character, the need for a high quality environment, and the economic needs of rural areas.

Regional planning framework

The draft South East Plan identifies that the countryside of the region:

- contributes to the quality of life
- is a key asset to the region's economy attracting visitors and businesses.
- This is certainly the case for the New Forest National Park, *as its contribution to the South East region will be the maintenance of its environmental assets.*

The Draft Plan outlines that local authorities should ensure the development necessary to maintain and develop thriving and socially inclusive rural communities and economies is appropriate, balancing development with environmental constraints. In relation to rural activities, it outlines the important role that agriculture, horticulture and forestry play in the management of the landscape and biodiversity, as well as in commercial production. It encourages the strengthening of these land-based industries, and their ancillary industries, to enable them to effectively undertake these functions and support and maintain incomes and commercial viability. Specifically within the New Forest National Park it states that supportive sustainable land management policies should be developed, and these should also cover the protection of grazing land outside the National Park.

In the New Forest and South Downs priority areas for tourism, the Draft Plan states that *'the majority of land area covered by the existing and proposed national parks is of special interest for nature conservation, including areas designated under international and national designations. Considerable work has been undertaken on promoting links between the sympathetically managed countryside, reinstating traditional agricultural practices, environmental benefits, quality local produce and green tourism and access issues. **Such integrated approaches to rural development need to continue to be a priority for the new proposed national park authorities in partnership with other bodies.'***

The Draft South East Plan Policy RE2 covering employment and land provision states that local authorities should assess the employment needs of the local economy and workforce. The assessments will take account of sub-regional strategies for the location, quantity and nature of employment land and premises. Policies should provide for a range of sites and premises.

Accessible and well-located industrial and commercial sites should be retained where there is a good prospect of employment use. Local Development Documents should be supportive of the agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries, and rural economic diversification and non-land based business proposals in towns and villages or on farm sites where applications show positive benefits, based on clearly defined criteria and evidence-based assessments.

However, neither the Draft South East Plan, nor the Hampshire County Structure Plan (1996-2011), provides any specific requirement for employment development in the Park to meet sub-regional needs.

The South East's Regional Economic Strategy has three key targets:

1. a 3% average annual increase in GVA per capita;
2. an average 2.4% annual increase in productivity per worker;
3. a reduction in the rate increase in the ecological footprint, and seek to reduce it by 2016

In relation to rural areas, however, its priorities are to:

- Invest in the economic viability of villages and market towns.
- Exploit the potential of the knowledge economy.
- Assist the food and farming sectors. Support the development of premium local products and the land-based products supply chain.
- Promote the cultural, heritage and landscape assets; develop the visitor economy linked to conservation of high quality environments.

Current Local Plan policies covering the New Forest National Park

The New Forest District Local Plan (NFDLP), Salisbury District Local Plan (SDLP), and Test Valley Borough Local Plan (TVBLP) all encourage the focus for economic activity to be primarily in built up areas. The NFDLP allocates almost 40 hectares of employment land. All of the sites for this allocation, however, were chosen to be outside the National Park to 'avoid areas of greatest ecological, conservation and landscape constraint'. The NFDLP also makes provision for business expansion in rural areas. It identifies Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Ashurst and Sway to be the focus of any employment development within the National Park. Policies aim to control the scale and type of development and to retain the character of the villages. Farm diversification is controlled by scale and type, but also access, traffic impacts and impact on National Park character. The TVBLP aims to avoid development in the countryside other than that necessary in rural locations (agricultural) and to sustain rural communities. The SDLP permits small scale business development in defined areas as long as it doesn't have a detrimental impact on landscape or settlement character, and is accessible.

The interim National Park Management Plan's business objective is to support sustainable businesses which contribute to the Forest's economic well-being, environmental quality and special character, and use local knowledge and resources to create Forest-based work opportunities

The economic objective of the Draft New Forest District Sustainable Community Strategy is for businesses to have better local opportunities to thrive and influence decisions that affect them. The South Wiltshire Community Strategy has a priority of leading by example, particularly in relation to improving the basic skills and health of the workforce. The aim for the economy in the Test Valley Community Plan is to ensure that the local economy thrives and remains competitive.

The NFDC Economic Strategy aims to facilitate a sustainable and growing economy that creates economic and employment opportunities whilst making best use of the natural environment. It recognises that while larger scale development may be appropriate in some locations, most of the development in the District should focus on small-scale, locally distinctive, knowledge-based and low impact businesses. The Test Valley Core Strategy Preferred Development Options include a focus for employment in rural areas on encouraging employment floorspace contributions from the conversion of rural buildings no longer required for agriculture.

ANNEX 2: LOCAL ISSUES FOR THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

In preparing the Draft Plan for consultation the following economic issues were identified (from various sources including *Future Matters*¹ consultation, *New Forest, New Chapter workshops* (National Park Authority, 2007))

- The beautiful environment of the National Park is a significant economic asset as it attracts visitors and business to the New Forest, Hampshire and the South East. Maintaining this environmental asset makes a key contribution to both the local and regional economy. Recent studies² show that environmental assets make a key contribution to both local and regional economies.
- The large areas covered by national and international nature conservation designations, and the high level of environmental protection provided by national planning policies, means that there are environmental constraints on new business and business expansion.
- There is no requirement in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy to meet regional employment needs in the area, but local employers do have business needs.
- Unemployment is rising from a low level - is lower than county, regional and national levels.
- The economically active population is expected to fall.
- An estimate of 11 houses per year will be built in the Park
- The key economic sectors found in the Park include some low wage, low value-added businesses. Low paid employment results in residents' incomes that struggle to afford housing in the area.
- The proximity and economic growth in the urban conurbations to the east and west attract many residents to higher paid jobs, thus creating substantial commuter traffic flows.
- The tourist industry makes a significant contribution to the local economy. The challenge is to balance the economic benefits from visitors, whilst avoiding any material impact they may have on the environment.
- Whilst traditional rural land use activities provide only a small proportion of jobs in the area, they are essential for maintaining the land use management practices that help to conserve or enhance the landscape character and natural habitats of the National Park. With likely structural changes in the agricultural economy, there may be increasing demand for diversification of activities on farms to support ongoing agricultural activity.
- Whilst the practice of 'commoning' is integral to the character of the National Park and the maintenance of the landscape, its economic viability remains under pressure.
- Local businesses with a clear New Forest relevance and origin can provide local employment that will help to sustain the rural communities in the National Park.
- Retaining existing employment sites is difficult in the face of pressure for housing, particularly given the difference in land values between the two uses. However, to do so may be important in helping to sustain rural communities.
- There has been a loss of traditional skills and new skills are needed to support a mixed rural economy.

¹ *New Forest District Council, Changing Lives Partnership, New Forest National Park Authority, 2006*

² *Prosperity and protection -The economic impact of National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber region, Council for National Parks 2006*

Consultations – What you told us

*'Future Matters'*³ (Dec 2006).

The National Park and District Council conducted a major consultation about the future of the New Forest in December 2006. We asked about the key economic issues. The response to this consultation showed that the following were considered to be important:

- The sustaining of commoning and land management which contributes to the special qualities of the area.
- Supporting local skills and trades, and reflecting local distinctiveness in new development.
- Encourage business development in rural areas through use of existing buildings
- Encourage a wide range of farm businesses to sustain the rural economy (farm diversification)
- Use the “New Forest” as a powerful brand to maximise the impact in marketing and other initiatives which use this identity to help support the survival rates of some small businesses
- Develop closer working between colleges and local businesses
- Encourage local business to demonstrate good environmental practice
- Encourage a sustainable approach to tourism management through the use of local produce and local products
- Improving management of access and travel arrangements for tourism
- Protecting local facilities, such as the post office, education facilities, police services, health services.

*'Citizens Panel' Survey (Nov 2004)*⁴.

Respondents showed some support for the following:

- Allowing only minimal development which meets local needs
- The retention of employment sites
- Locating new employment development in the main towns, but
- Allowing some new employment development in rural areas
- Not relaxing restrictive development policies to allow new industrial /storage development on farms in existing and new buildings

³ New Forest District Council, *Changing Lives Partnership*, New Forest National Park Authority, 2006

⁴ New Forest District Council Nov 2004

ANNEX 3: STATUTORY BACKGROUND FOR NATIONAL PARKS

Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995 establishes the two statutory purposes (and related duty) that relate to all National Parks in England and Wales, namely:

- (a) conserving and enhancing of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

The Act also confirms that in pursuing the two statutory Park purposes, National Park Authorities, “...*shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.*” – Section 61(1)

Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 states that if it appears that there is a conflict between the two statutory purposes, greater weight shall be attached to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park (often known as the ‘*Sandford Principle*’). The Act also places a duty on all relevant authorities, including statutory undertakers and local authorities, to have regard to the statutory Park purposes in carrying out their functions.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004) states that National Parks, “...*have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. 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.*” – paragraph 21

PPS7 goes on to state that planning policies in National Parks should also, “...*support suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of these designated areas and their communities....*” – paragraph 21

National Park Management Plans and Local Development Framework Core Strategies

Under Section 66(1) of the Environment Act 1995 each National Park Authority is required to prepare and publish a National Park Management Plan. The central role of the Management Plan is to guide the delivery of the National Park purposes. The Government’s *National Park Management Plans – Guidance* (Countryside Agency, 2005) states that, “*National Park Management Plans are Plans for National Parks, not just Park Authorities. All those with interests in a National Park should take account of the Management Plan’s vision of the area...The National Park Management Plan is the single most important document for each National Park...it is the over-arching strategic document for the National Park.*”

National Park Authorities are also the sole local planning authorities for their National Parks, with responsibility for producing policies for spatial planning, including minerals and waste, appropriate to the National Park purposes. All planning authorities are required to produce a Local Development Framework outlining the spatial planning strategy for their local area.