



# NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK PLAN

## Traffic and Transport Working Group

11 March 2009

This paper provides a summary of the main outcomes of the Traffic and Transport Working Group meeting, held on Wednesday 11 March 2009 at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel.

### 1. Attendance and participation

The event was attended by representatives of 20 organisations (excluding National Park Authority members and staff). These are listed in Annex 1.

The session was introduced and chaired by Bob Morris, member of the New Forest National Park Authority, who explained the purpose of the Working Group and gained agreement to its Terms of Reference. Nick Evans summarised the key issues arising from the consultation on the draft 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

#### Traffic management measures

- The idea of road pricing, road closures, car park location and car free zones are all contentious. However most participants felt that at this stage no measures should be excluded as part of a range of tools for managing traffic in the National Park in the long term. If retained they must be explained better in terms of:
  - Positive benefits they may bring for the Forest
  - How they might be used in the future, and broad timescales involved
  - The need to apply them flexibly and carefully and not as 'blanket' measures
  - The need for detailed investigation into viability, impacts on local people (including elderly and disabled people), visitors, businesses and knock-on effects on the rest of the road system
  - The need for proper public consultation in advance of any decisions
- Road pricing, in particular, should only be considered as part of a national / government initiative if this is proposed in the future. Details of any scheme would need to be widely discussed locally and agreed by the various highways organisations (including routes to which it could apply and use of any revenue generated).
- In general non-regulatory and more positive means of managing traffic should be given much greater emphasis as a means of delivering the policies. This could include, for example, improved public transport and a different approach to signing and visitor information (in order to guide people to use preferred routes and locations).

#### Responsibilities for transport and working with others

- Responsibilities for transport should be made clearer, including the roles of the Highway Authorities, Highways Agency and local authorities.

- The National Park Authority should develop the detail of the policies, including realistic goals, through further discussion with the local County and District Councils, drawing on their experience and expertise in transport issues.
- Policies should take into account and complement the transport policies in the New Forest District Community Strategy.

### **Access for local people, businesses and visitors**

- The Plan should reflect the importance of private transport for access within the National Park and the need to maintain and improve a safe and effective road network.

### **Sustainable transport**

- There should be more emphasis on the expanded provision of more sustainable forms of transport (public and community transport, walking, cycling). This should include:
  - Supporting Green Travel Plans for major employers (including the public sector)
  - A better joined up and integrated cycle and path network (including the New Forest Strategic Cycle Network), linking recreation sites, visitor attractions and local communities
  - More effective public, community and visitor transport, building on current initiatives (eg extending New Forest Tour) and looking at innovative options (eg new forms of visitor transport, local taxis, minibus links for employees)
  - greater promotion and marketing of sustainable transport options
- The link between better sustainable transport and a gradual reduction in car use should be made clear, together with the need to tailor provision according to the needs of different groups of people.
- It will be difficult to provide alternative forms of transport and persuade people to use them. Major investment will be needed to extend existing public transport provision and at present it is not clear how this funding would be achieved.

### **Other points raised**

- The Plan needs to contain accurate data / evidence.
- A hierarchy of transport routes should be considered, including an approach which gives priority to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Through traffic, in particular, should be better managed.
- A Core Strategy should include achievable policies, not aspirations.
- The importance of road safety and the reduction of accidents should be emphasised.
- Speed limits should be reasonable – if too low they will be ignored.
- Quiet lane networks should be considered.
- Attention should be given to road design (such as road edge treatment) and signing more appropriate to the National Park
- The need for practical and safe crossings of major roads (for walkers / cyclists) should be considered.
- Reduced minor road access from and to the A31 should be considered.
- Air quality improvements in Lyndhurst should be mentioned.

- HGV regulation increases journey time, fuel use and CO2 emissions.
- HGV regulation is not sufficiently enforced; smaller vehicles are being used to avoid restrictions.

### **3. Key conclusions for further consideration by the National Park Authority**

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.

- The text of the policies referring to traffic management measures should be amended. A range of possible measures should be included as part of a long term strategy for traffic management, but only on the basis that they need further investigation and consultation and are accompanied by much better explanation, particularly clear references to implementation and responsibilities.

More emphasis should be placed on measures which are less regulatory, rely on education and information and do not deny access for local people.

Road pricing should not be pursued unless part of a government initiative.

- The detail of all the policies and measures proposed should be worked up in liaison with the relevant statutory highways organisations, to ensure they are in line with existing policies and that the measures proposed are feasible.
- Policies on sustainable transport should be strengthened and include practical measures to encourage non-car use. Innovative approaches will need to be considered, bearing in mind the high cost of public transport provision.

.....

#### ***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.

Six of the twenty 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.

#### **Traffic management measures**

- It should be made clear that the highways authorities and New Forest District Council do not support road user pricing.  
*New Forest District Council*

- It should be made clear that the discussion on road user pricing was about a nationally applied government initiative - which would prevent people diverting from 'charged' road to an uncharged route.  
*New Forest District Council*
- There was insufficient discussion of road closures and car park closure / reduction of spaces. This was one of the greatest objections to the entire Plan and the Recreation Management Strategy. Another meeting is required if the National Park Authority still intend to pursue these policies.  
*New Forest Dog Owners Group*
- It will be difficult to achieve a reduction in traffic entering the National Park; the only long-term solution is to ensure the road network is designed to move through traffic past the villages, rather than through them.  
*Lyndhurst Parish Council*

### **Responsibilities for transport and working with others**

- The role of the National Park Authority should be included.  
*Giffords*

### **Access for local people, businesses and visitors**

- It is disputed that there was a comment about 'improving' the road network, which implies expansion of roads or providing greater capacity.  
*New Forest Association*

### **Sustainable transport**

- It needs to be clearer that public transport funding is under pressure, and that it is very unlikely that finances will be available for improving rural services in the foreseeable future.  
*New Forest District Council, New Forest Dog Owners Group*
- It should be highlighted further that, in view of the above point, innovative thinking will be needed to achieve attractive alternatives to the car.  
*New Forest Dog Owners Group*
- A significant shift towards the use of sustainable transport would be needed to make any significant difference to congestion levels.  
*Giffords*

### **Other points raised**

- Minor road access to and from the A31 should not be further reduced.  
*Lyndhurst Parish Council*
- Emphasis should be given to the importance of reducing speeding and developing a closer working relationship with Hampshire Constabulary, and to reducing animal accidents, focusing particularly on 'high risk' routes.  
*New Forest Business Partnership*

- The idea of a ‘quiet lanes’ network should be clarified (it is not clear if this is a euphemism for local road closures, or a means of discouraging fast through traffic).  
*New Forest Dog Owners Group*

### Key conclusions

- The concept of a ‘tool kit of potential measures’ for traffic management should be included.  
*Giffords*
- The key conclusions should include clarification of the roles and responsibilities for transport planning in the area.  
*Giffords*

## ANNEX1 Traffic and Transport Working Group 11 March 2009

### Participants:

Organisation	Representative
Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council	Sally Arnold
Beaulieu Estate and Verderers of the New Forest	Ralph Montagu
Brockenhurst Parish Council	Kevin Whittle
Christchurch Borough Council	Simon Trueick
Dorset County Council	Kate Tunks
Federation of Small Businesses	Paul French
Forestry Commission	Michael Seddon
Gifford	Thaddaeus O’Higgins
Godshill Parish Council	Peter Stammers
Hampshire County Council	Kevin Fuller
Lyndhurst Parish Council	John Charlesworth
New Forest Association	Graham Baker
New Forest Business Partnership	Barry Olorenshaw
New Forest District Council	Nick Hunt
New Forest Dog Owners Group	David Dickenson
New Forest Friends of the Earth	Helen Corvus
New Forest Tourism Association	Stephen Lorton
New Milton Town Council	Graham Flexman
Wiltshire County Council	Robert Murphy
NPA Member	Bob Morris (CHAIR)
NPA Member	Lee Dunsdon
NPA Officer	Lindsay Cornish
NPA Officer	Richard Lemon
NPA Officer	Stephen Trotter
NPA Officer	Nick Evans
NPA Officer	Tony Spence