

A Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park

- updating the National Park Management Plan with actions for 2015-20

Consultation Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Partnership Plan is designed as an update of the 2010 National Park Management Plan, focusing primarily on a series of priority actions for the Park for 2015 to 2020.
- 1.2 It has been produced as a joint plan by a partnership group comprising many of the main statutory organisations in the Forest. They advised on the content of the document and contributed many of the actions. Further actions were suggested and will be led by a range of non-statutory organisations working in the Forest.
- 1.3 The partnership group agreed a two-fold consultation process to gain full involvement from partner organisations, wider Forest interests and the public:
 - A 'Call for Views' consultation on an initial draft
 - A six week consultation on the revised draft

2. Call for views consultation

- 2.1 The 'Call for Views' public consultation took place for a nine week period between 20 October and 19 December 2014. The consultation was widely publicised in a variety of ways, including:
 - Notification or copies sent to 270 organisations and individuals
 - Posters on parish notice boards and at Local Information Points
 - Public drop-in events in village halls within the Park
 - Articles in Park Life and information on the National Park Authority website
 - Discussions involving the New Forest Consultative Panel, New Forest Access Forum, parish quadrants and many individual organisations
- 2.2 There were 79 responses to the consultation. A list of the organisations that responded is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In general there was positive feedback to the structure of the document, its purpose as an update (rather than a full review) and its emphasis on practical actions. Respondents specifically mentioned support for more than 40 of the actions.

- 2.4 The largest single issue raised related to the text and actions concerning cycling, which was the main subject of 33 of the responses. The comments focused on the approach to large-scale cycling events and the importance of cycling for sustainable transport. In addition an on-line petition calling for a more positive approach to cycling was endorsed by 147 people nationally.
- 2.5 Other comments covered a range of topics, with no particular issues dominating, but including:
- Better access / information for people with disabilities
 - Greater clarity on the wording of the second purpose of national parks
 - Inclusion of text on the special qualities of the Park
 - Additional projects in the chapter on 'Achievements over the last five years'
 - Additional text relating to the Water Framework Directive
 - Additional actions relating to support for farmers and commoners, and adjacent to carriageway cycle routes
 - Various changes to improve factual details or add clarity
- 2.6 There were also a range of comments relating to planning policy issues, activities which are part of the general work of specific organisations, and complex issues, such as the management of recreational pressures, which need further discussion and agreement with relevant organisations. These are outside the scope of this current update. However queries relating to the work of other organisations, on-going work by the National Park Authority, or suggestions for new work, were passed on to the relevant officers / organisations.
- 2.7 All organisations that responded were sent details of changes made to the initial draft and informed of the further consultation process.
- 2.8 The main revisions to the Plan resulting from the 'Call for Views' consultation were as follows:
- A list of all organisations that have contributed to the Plan was added to show the wide range of interests involved
 - Two additional projects were included under 'Achievements over last five years', namely Maybush Copse, Landford and the New Forest LEADER programme
 - The text of the section on recreation in 'Important recent changes affecting the National Park' was re-worked in order to clarify the approach, bring the wording up to date and include all large-scale recreational events, and this was also applied to the action on cycle events under 'Enjoying the special qualities'.
 - New text and a new action was added to the section on 'Safer, more enjoyable and responsible use of routes within the National Park' to make this more relevant to people with disabilities.

- Three new actions were added to the section on 'sustainable travel' to reflect the importance of this issue and include recently agreed initiatives

2.9 In addition a number of minor changes were made to improve the wording of the text, include additional partners or provide background information.

3. Consultation on the revised draft

3.1 Consultation on the revised draft took place for a six week period from 11 May to 22 June 2015.

Again it was widely publicised including:

- Meetings with individual organisations, the parish quadrants, Consultative Panel, Access Forum and other local interests
- Notification or copies sent to about 300 organisations and individuals, including all those who responded to the initial consultation
- Press release and website information
- Posters on parish notice boards and at Local Information Points

3.2 34 organisations and individuals made comments during the consultation. A list of those who responded is shown in Appendix 2.

3.3 No particular issues dominated the responses and 11 respondents specifically supported the Plan or particular sections or actions within it. The range of issues raised included:

- The need to mention the national project to develop a coastal access route
- Further clarification of the approach to large-scale cycle events
- New actions relating to the protection of verges and the visual impacts of infrastructure
- Amendments to the actions on tranquillity
- Amendments to the actions on sustainable transport

3.4 As in the previous consultation there were a number of comments relating to issues already being looked at, or which form part of the on-going work of particular organisations. These comments have been passed on to the relevant organisations. Suggestions for substantial new initiatives, such as climate change projects, or dealing with complex issues, such as managing recreational pressure, need further discussion with the relevant organisations outside the Management Plan process.

3.5 The more important amendments made as a result of the consultation are listed below:

- A new paragraph was added under 'Important recent changes affecting the National Park' concerning the national coastal access project
- The text and action on cycling and other large-scale events was updated to include monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of the Charter for Cycle Event Organisers

- Two new actions were added, relating to verge protection (under 'Enhancing landscapes and habitats') and the visual impacts of infrastructure (under 'Safeguarding tranquillity')
- Amendments were been made to the sustainable transport actions, in order to include Park and Ride in action TT8 and add further clarification of action TT10.

4. Publication of the final document

- 4.1 Following the two periods of public consultation a final version of the Partnership Plan was approved by the National Park Authority on 16 July 2015. It has been published on the website as an interim text document, pending endorsement by the main partner organisations.
- 4.2 Formal endorsement from the partners will take place between July and September 2015, after which the Plan will be properly designed and published on the National Park Authority website.
- 4.3 The main partners will continue to meet at regular intervals to monitor progress on the actions, which will be reported on the website.

Appendix 1 List of organisations responding to the Call for Views consultation

(individuals not included for data protection reasons)

Organisations
British Cycling
CLA
CTC Wessex Cycling
English Heritage
Fawley Parish Council
Godshill Parish Council
Hampshire County Council
Hants & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Hyde Parish Council
Meyrick Estate Management Ltd
Minstead Parish Council
National Farmers Union
New Forest Access Forum
New Forest Association
New Forest Business Partnership
New Forest Commoners Defence Association
New Forest District Council
New Forest Equestrian Association
New Forest Transition
Redlynch Parish Council
Ringwood Town Council
RSPB
Solent Protection
Sway Parish Council
The Friends of Brockenhurst
UK Youth
Verderers of the New Forest
Whiteparish Parish Council
Woodgreen Parish Council

Appendix 2 List of organisations responding to the consultation on the revised draft

(individuals not included for data protection reasons)

Boldre Parish Council
Christchurch and East Dorset Councils
CLA
Cranborne Chase AONB
Cycle New Forest
Dorset County Council
Godshill Parish Council
Hampshire County Council
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Highways England <i>(no comments)</i>
Historic England
International Mountain Bike Association UK
Keyhaven Forum
Meyrick Estate Management Ltd
Milford-on-Sea Parish Council
Minstead Parish Council
New Forest Access Forum
New Forest Association
New Forest Business Partnership
New Forest Commoners Defence Association
New Forest Equestrian Association
Ringwood Town Council <i>(no comments)</i>
RSPB
Sway Parish Council
Test Valley Borough Council
The Friends of Brockenhurst
Verderers of the New Forest