

**New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036  
Submission draft (Regulation 19)**

**Topic Paper:  
Historic and Built Environment**

**January 2018**



## **Topic Paper – Historic and Built Environment**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The National Park Authority is reviewing the planning policies in the Authority's adopted Core Strategy (2010) and producing a Local Plan. It is supported by a number of background technical documents and evidence base, including a number of topic papers which bring together the guidance, key issues and evidence base on specific topics and themes.
- 1.2 This topic paper is focused on issues of the historic and built environment and is structured to:
- identify key messages from national and local policy;
  - present baseline information of the characteristics of the National Park to help inform an appropriate strategy for the area over the next 20 years; and
  - outline some of the emerging issues and policy approaches for the future of the area

### **2. Policy Framework**

#### National Policy

##### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

- 2.1 One of the core dimensions of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. In particular, the core planning principles set out in paragraph 17 emphasise that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and seek high quality design.
- 2.2 In paragraph 126 it is emphasised that local plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.
- 2.3 National policy recognises that as heritage assets are irreplaceable any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 132).

##### *National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)*

- 2.4 The guidance sets out more advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment, with regard to both plan-making and decision taking.

It states that Local Planning Authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets where they are of local significance.

- 2.5 The NPPG also sets out advice on the consideration of viable uses for heritage assets at risk through decay or neglect. It emphasises that "*Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset*" (NPPG paragraph 016 ref ID: 18a-016-20140306).

#### *Legislative framework*

- 2.6 In addition to the planning framework there are a number of specific acts pertaining to the historic environment. These comprise:

- the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest
- the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979** provides specific protection for scheduled monuments
- the **Protection of Wrecks Act 1973** provides specific protection for protected wreck sites

#### *Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens*

- 2.7 Historic England has established and maintains a national record of historic parks and gardens, known as the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Sites are divided into three grades:

- Grade I: International Importance
- Grade II: National interest
- Grade II\*: Exceptional interest II\*

- 2.8 Within the National Park there are the following registered sites:

- Avon Tyrrell (Grade II)
- Brockenhurst Park (Grade II)
- Cadland House (Grade II\*)
- Exbury House (Grade II\*)
- Hale Park (Grade II\*)
- Pylewell Park (Grade II\*)
- Rhinefield (Grade II)

- 2.9 In addition, there are a number of locally important parks and gardens whose details are held on a register maintained by Hampshire Gardens Trust on behalf of Hampshire County Council.

*National Heritage List for England*

- 2.10 The National Heritage List for England is an online searchable database of designated heritage assets (excluding conservation areas) and can be viewed on Historic England's website. It holds the official records for listed buildings, scheduled monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Protected Wrecks.

*Joint Statement on the Historic Environment in the National Parks of England, Wales and Scotland*

- 2.11 In 2015 the UK's National Park Authorities, together with a number of leading conservation and environmental organisations re-signed and re-affirmed their commitment to safeguard the historic environment of the UK's National Parks, including the New Forest. The Joint Statement guides joint work on conservation and interpretation of the historic environment of the National Parks.

*Local Policy*

*The Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park (2015)*

- 2.12 The update to the New Forest National Park Management Plan, the Partnership Plan, sets out priority actions for the National Park over the period 2015 to 2020 seeking to achieve:
- improved knowledge of the archaeology, historic buildings and local character of the National Park;
  - improvements to local distinctiveness through practical projects;
  - local guidelines for future development, such as supporting Village Design Statements or Neighbourhood Plans;

*Hampshire Historic Buildings and Archaeological Record (Hampshire County Council)*

- 2.13 This is maintained by Hampshire County Council and consists of known archaeological sites and finds, registered historic parks and gardens and listed buildings.

*Living Register - archive of New Forest traditions and culture*

- 2.14 The 'Living Register' is comprised of memories, photographs, local words, Forest place names, history and myths which make up a living record of the New Forest traditions and culture. The register is a published outcome of a project that ran for eight months during 2007 / 08 and was part funded by the New Forest LEADER+ Small Grants Scheme.

### *Coastal Heritage Project*

- 2.15 In 2009 the New Forest National Park Authority with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the Crown Estate, Hampshire County Council and Exxon Mobil (based at Fawley) set up the Coastal Heritage Project. The project recorded, promoted and encouraged protection of the huge variety of archaeology found along the New Forest coast and worked to ensure long term protection of this important resource for the enjoyment of future generations.
- 2.16 A total of 437 new sites were discovered during the field assessment by archaeologists and volunteers. Two new wreck sites were discovered in the Solent adding to current knowledge of maritime activity along the New Forest coast.

### *The Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme*

- 2.17 This is a 10 year agreement with Natural England, running until 2020, and worth £19m. It is held by the Verderers of the New Forest, and managed by them in partnership with the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission. One recent project saw HLS archaeologists use Lidar laser scanning to build up a 3D map and discover archaeological sites hidden under dense forest and thick heather. So far, more than 3,000 such sites have been identified and preserved. This work has helped to identify sites and monuments that may have fallen into disrepair through damage, erosion or vegetation growth. As a result, a number of sites identified will have improvement works undertaken on them as part of the HLS scheme.

### *Our Past, Our Future*

- 2.18 Our Past, Our Future is a £4.4million Landscape Partnership Scheme for the New Forest supported by Heritage Lottery Fund. It will undertake 21 projects to restore lost habitats, and develop Forest skills. The five year scheme, starting in 2016, is being led by the New Forest National Park Authority with 10 other partners. One of the projects being funded is a training programme for agents, builders and homeowners about the importance of traditional buildings to the area's character and equip them with skills in specialist repair techniques.
- 2.19 Other projects include cataloguing information and archival material on the unique commoning heritage of the New Forest, to increase public support for, and better understanding for the commoning way of life.
- 2.20 The Park Authority is leading a project entitled 'Heritage on My Doorstep' that aims to get people involved with, and inspired by, their local heritage. Members of eight local communities will be trained in archaeology and

history as well as skills such as surveying and archive research, in order to better understand and appreciate the heritage in their local area.

### *Community Planning Initiatives*

- 2.21 A number of different community planning schemes and initiatives are being undertaken or considered by the town and parish councils covering the Park. These include Village Design Statements, Parish Plans and Appraisals, and Neighbourhood Plans. The Authority has adopted seven Village Design Statements as Supplementary Planning Documents. In addition there are six Neighbourhood Plans in preparation

## **3. Key Evidence**

### *Cultural Heritage*

- 3.1 The cultural heritage of the New Forest has been formed through the richness, complexity and peculiarities of its social history. Its development can be seen in archaeological sites, the domestic and agricultural buildings, historic houses and designed landscapes, settlement patterns and the character of the forest landscape itself. Less tangible are the traditional craft skills, building techniques, dialect, artistic and literary achievements, and the people and events of the past which are remembered in fact and legend.
- 3.2 A wealth of archaeology survives in the Forest within areas of heath, woodland and common that have not been ploughed since the sites were created. The vast majority of sites remain unrecorded with many more invariably remaining to be discovered. Areas outside the heathlands and commons no doubt originally had a similar density of sites but these this have largely been obscured by subsequent human activities.
- 3.3 The major visible and upstanding surviving evidence that can be seen today of past human impact on the Forest landscape dates from the late Neolithic and through the Bronze Age, with over 250 known barrow burial sites, initially possibly associated with single families or tribal groups and later for individuals, possibly of high social or religious status. Over 1600 boiling sites, mounds of fire cracked burnt flint, are known from within the Forest through ongoing survey work. These sites are possibly quasi-ritual in origin, possibly associated with initiation rites. They may even be related to historic evidence for Scandinavian saunas or Irish sweat houses, used simply for seasonal bathing and personal hygiene purposes.
- 3.4 Evidence of settled prehistoric communities is much rarer in the New Forest compared with other areas though they may have existed on the better soil types and remain to be discovered. In areas such as the Avon Valley, where intensive field survey has taken place, there is greater evidence of such

- communities from around 1000 BC. The absence of settled communities is a pattern that continued on the heathland and common areas through to modern times. From the Iron Age there is evidence of well developed field systems, continued evidence of woodland clearance and the development of defended settlements and hillforts such as Tatchbury and Buckland which are visible today.
- 3.5 Following the Roman invasion a considerable pottery industry developed, focused particularly on the North West of the Forest. Clusters of kilns have been found in use from about AD250 to 400. The earliest evidence for a road system in the area dates from the Roman period. The Roman road from Lepe towards Totton was clearly an important route along Southampton Water presumably linking, via a harbour at Lepe, the Isle of Wight with the mainland. In the immediate Post-Roman period the area with the Isle of Wight was under Jutish rule from the 5th century until the defeat of the ruling class by the West Saxons in about 686.
  - 3.6 The existing pattern of nucleated settlements and the older forest villages probably originated in the early to mid Anglo-Saxon period in the 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD with ecclesiastical parish boundaries being established by the 11<sup>th</sup> century.
  - 3.7 In the later Saxon period large estates such as Lyndhurst owned by the Crown and groups of other royal holdings that had been used for hunting formed the basis of the Royal Forest that has resulted in the retention of woods heaths and commons and protected sites of archaeological importance until the advent of commercial and mechanised forestry.
  - 3.8 The modern system of commoning may well result from the pre-Norman tradition of holding lands in common by groups or tribes rather than by individuals, a system that may well even reflect the way the area was managed throughout the later prehistoric periods, with those living in small settlements around the forest using the unenclosed land for grazing. Following the Norman Conquest the administrative and social framework of the Royal Forest became formalised under Forest Law, designed to protect the area for the hunting of deer by the king.
  - 3.9 The boundary of the Royal Forest remained remarkably consistent over time and Forest Law to a large extent helped preserve the overall pattern of settlements which had developed since prehistoric times, and which still exist today. The unenclosed Forest formed the core, with small settlements around its edges and larger privately owned estates beyond. Some decline in the enforcement of Forest Law from later medieval times did however lead to gradual enclosures around the heathland edge of the Open Forest in particular on the better soil types. By the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries this encroachment had helped to create settlements such as Nomansland, East Boldre and Norleywood. Equally other village settlements such as South

Baddesley declined and some manor houses disappeared as small estates became absorbed to form larger land units.

- 3.10 The older settlements on the enclosed lands and in and around the Open Forest are generally linear and dispersed, with clusters of roadside dwellings located along a series of minor roads, and often with no obvious centre. Larger villages such as Burley, Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst have a denser pattern of settlement originating in late medieval times but possibly reflecting earlier Saxon land divisions, generally still based on a linear pattern but now with local shops, businesses and Victorian buildings. In the post-Medieval period the present day field pattern emerged but this probably reflects the boundaries of the earlier landholdings.
- 3.11 Post-medieval archaeological evidence includes industrial sites Sowley Iron works, many brick and tile making sites, a substantial gunpowder factory at Eyeworth Lodge near Fritham. Evidence of boat and ship building sites exist along the creeks and river systems. Major landscape features such as seawalls and dykes survive from the post-medieval period and evidence of much earlier maritime and intertidal archaeology survives along the coastal margin of the Park.
- 3.12 Significant changes were imposed on the landscape by the increase in transport communications during recent times. In particular the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the growth of the railway system across the Park and increased use of transport for leisure time activities associated with the developments of harbours, hotels, walking, camping and cycling facilities.
- 3.13 The 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeological record within the Forest is dominated by both military and industrial relicts. The two World Wars left a lasting legacy with airfields, mulberry harbour construction sites and various army camps, also the use of local houses by the military provide a lasting reminder of the New Forest at war.
- 3.14 The historic buildings of New Forest National Park vary widely in styles. Many dwellings are simple, small-scale buildings made from inexpensive locally available materials. In some ways this reflects the general poverty of the area, but also reflects the lack of any other locally available building materials; and that the dispersed population gained a living from subsistence small-holdings. The oldest known surviving cottages date from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and are timber framed with thatched roofs. Cob survives from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and appears to be used widely until the mid Victorian period. The later Victorian cottages, found in many villages, are typically simple semi-detached often double fronted with a central front door of red brick with slate roofs. Agricultural buildings were occasionally built of cob, but generally were timber framed and timber clad, often with cladding to be replaced later with corrugated iron.



- 3.15 The commoning system and way of life has remained a central part of the social fabric of the Forest and has undoubtedly played a major role in creating the present cultural landscape, and is responsible for the form of many of the buildings on the edge of the Forest and their relationship to one another.
- 3.16 In contrast the private wealthy estates were centred on large manor houses and the central part of the Forest became increasingly popular for *Gentlemen's residences* from the 18th century onwards. The estates include a number of significant farm houses often with substantial weather boarded barns, together with timber framed or brick cottages built in a distinctive style according to each estate. With the exception of Beaulieu Abbey the large Medieval houses have not survived, however some were replaced by later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, as for example at Exbury and Pylewell.
- 3.17 Slightly less affluent people also sought to move into the Forest in the later 19th and 20th centuries facilitated by improved transport links and the railways system.
- 3.18 Associated with the more wealthy estates there are a number of historic parks and gardens on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens which lie with the Forest and a further number of notable historic parks and gardens which are not on the register.

#### *Built Environment*

- 3.19 The rural character of the New Forest sets it apart from the adjacent urban conurbations. Throughout the National Park there are a number of unprotected buildings which typify areas around the fringe of the New Forest and add substantially to the Park's character. Much of the built environment has a very strong local character, through the historic evolution of buildings serving the rural community.
- 3.20 The New Forest is one of the most densely populated National Parks in the UK and is subject to intense development pressures, from both within and outside the Park boundary. In response to these development pressures, and in order to safeguard the special character of the New Forest, successive and current local plans have sought to control and limit the scale of new development that takes place within the New Forest.
- 3.21 The cumulative impact of proposals to extend and replace dwellings, if not carefully controlled, would lead in the long-term to the urbanisation and erosion of the character of the area. Also, as such proposals tend to increase the size of dwellings, they would also reduce the stock of smaller dwellings at the lower end of the market, creating an imbalance in the housing stock prejudicial to meeting local needs.

- 3.22 The Local Plan therefore continues the approach of seeking to retain the stock of defined small dwellings and in considering extensions to other dwellings, limit the increase in floorspace to no more than 30%. This policy of constraint has played an important role in limiting the detrimental and suburbanising impacts of cumulative extensions to New Forest properties. It has been widely supported on appeal by Inspectors who have acknowledged the importance of applying a policy consistently for the wider public benefit.

*Conservation Areas*

- 3.23 Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Planning controls are tighter in conservation areas, although in practice this means less in the New Forest as almost exactly the same level of planning control also applies in all national parks.
- 3.24 There are 20 Conservation Areas within the New Forest National Park, of which 17 are wholly within the Park boundaries. These are listed below:

| <b>Conservation Area</b>    | <b>Date of Designation</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bank                        | February 1999              |
| Beaulieu                    | September 1999             |
| Brockenhurst (Waters Green) | September 1999             |
| Bucklers Hard               | September 1999             |
| Burley                      | September 1999             |
| Exbury                      | May 1998                   |
| Forest Central North        | January 2008               |
| Forest Central South        | January 2008               |
| Forest North East           | March 2008                 |
| Forest South East           | January 2008               |
| Fritham                     | February 1999              |
| Keyhaven                    | December 1999              |
| Lyndhurst                   | April 1999                 |
| Swan Green                  | February 1999              |
| Sway Tower                  | September 1999             |
| The Weirs                   | October 2009               |
| Western Escarpment          | March 2008                 |

- 3.25 In addition there are 3 Conservation Areas that straddle the boundary with New Forest District Council and these are:

| <b>Conservation Area</b> | <b>Date of Designation</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ashlett Creek            | February 2000              |
| Breamore                 | April 2000                 |
| Buckland (Lymington)     | December 1999              |

- 3.26 Many cob buildings, simple brick cottages, and early bungalows give parts of the New Forest their strong character, but every year fewer - and fewer in original condition - survive. Conservation area status prevents the all-too-final loss of these valuable buildings.
- 3.27 A review of all the conservation areas has been completed which included looking at the boundaries of the existing conservation areas and producing character appraisals for these areas. An overarching Conservation Areas Management Plan was adopted in October 2008 and provides a framework for conservation area management. Individual Character Appraisals have been produced for all conservation areas.

#### *Listed Buildings*

- 3.28 There are 624 listed buildings in the National Park, ranging from country houses to many smaller but more typical cottages and hovels built of brick, timber frame or cob - clay earth reconstituted with water and binding aggregates. The condition of listed buildings is periodically monitored with the worst being termed 'Buildings at Risk', where the local planning authority liaises with owners to prevent further deterioration and discuss long term restoration options.
- 3.29 The Authority's Conservation Officers are currently undertaking a baseline assessment of buildings at risk in the National Park. The assessments are initially focussing on agricultural and estate buildings during 2018, with a view to updating the Buildings at Risk Register for the National Park, and considering solutions for those heritage assets at risk.

#### *Designations*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Scheduled Ancient Monuments                            | 214 monuments which include 281 individual sites   |
| Listed Buildings and Structures                        | 624  |
| Historic Parks and Gardens (Historic England Register) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Avon Tyrrell</li> <li>▪ Brockenhurst Park</li> <li>▪ Cadland House</li> <li>▪ Exbury House</li> <li>▪ Hale Park</li> <li>▪ Pylewell Park</li> <li>▪ Rhinefield</li> </ul> |
| Buildings at Risk                                      | 11   |

### *Archaeology*

- 3.30 A wealth of archaeology survives in the Forest within areas of heath, woodland and common which have not been ploughed since the sites were created. The table below indicates the number of designated sites and monuments, although it is estimated that there is in addition something approaching 1500 known unscheduled archaeological sites in the New Forest.

### *Design of Development*

- 3.31 The Authority's 2015 Annual Monitoring Report identified the cumulative impact of small-scale extensions to existing dwellings within the National Park and the potential loss of stock of smaller dwellings as areas of concern. It is also noted that there is particular concern over the loss of traditional dwellings through demolition to facilitate, more modern dwellings and the impact this may have on maintaining local distinctiveness.
- 3.32 A Building Design Guide for the National Park was adopted as Supplementary Planning Document in 2011, and provides more detail on appropriate design considerations for development in the National Park.

### *Cultural Traditions*

- 3.33 Customs and traditions, folklore and legends and artistic links form an essential part of the distinctiveness of the cultural heritage of the New Forest. There are tales of smugglers who planned their operations at pubs like the Royal Oak at Fritham. A number of Victorian and more recent writers have published accounts of the lives of gypsy families. Much has been written about special characters of the Forest. There is a strong artistic and literary tradition associated with the Forest, for example Heyward Sumner the artist and archaeologist who produced a series of carefully observed Forest landscapes. The place names of the Forest reveal a living picture of its history. Almost every wood, heath, field and pond has its own name which is remembered recorded and used. Local skills and crafts survive such as thatching, sculpture, pottery and painting.
- 3.34 The last few decades have seen a general trend in the decline of some traditional cultural aspects, rural craft skills and building techniques. Although they are a less tangible aspect of the area's cultural heritage they have contributed over generations to a strong local identity in the New Forest. A range of economic pressures and social change have progressively threatened these traditional skills and practices. This includes skills such as pollarding, coppicing and hurdle-making, as well as practices such as commoning, which are an essential component of the National Park and have helped shape the Park's landscape.

## **4. Key Issues**

- 4.1 In 2010, when the adopted Core Strategy was prepared, Local Planning Authorities were advised that local planning policies should not replicate national planning policy. Thus, the Core Strategy contains two strategic level policies on the historic and built environment. In reviewing the Authority's planning policies the following matters have been identified as the main areas for consideration.
- Addressing concerns regarding the impact of new development on the local distinctiveness of the New Forest's built environment.
  - Considering the need to balance making efficient use of land with conserving the rural character of the National Park, including the New Forest's main villages. This includes concerns over the scale of new development.
  - Reviewing the approach to enabling development (as advocated by Historic England)

## **5. Initial Regulation 18 consultation**

- 5.1 There was an initial Regulation 18 six week period of public consultation during September and October 2015. There was broad support for the continued protection of heritage assets, particularly from Parish Councils.
- 5.2 In addition, there was continued support for the protection of the distinct character of the New Forest villages by stopping large extensions and replacement dwellings, and a feeling that new housing should not be in a suburban style.
- 5.3 There was general support for making efficient use of brownfield land within the National Park, especially where this is balanced against conservation issues.
- 5.4 One particular issue concerned the amount of damage being done to grass verges in the National Park. These are often designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and can be easily damaged by parking, driving or storing building materials on them. This is a particular problem in the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and the Authority will be looking to address such issues with the use of a condition on any relevant planning application to ensure any building work or construction vehicles do not impact on the adjacent verges.

## **6. Draft Local Plan consultation – October 2016**

- 6.1 The Authority published a detailed, non-statutory draft Local Plan for an eight week period of public consultation in Autumn 2016, including four public drop-in sessions across the National Park. Again, there was broad support for the policies relating to protection of the New Forest's local distinctiveness. Historic England made a number of detailed specific comments including requiring the Local Plan to identify how the Authority is being proactive in supporting the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 6.2 The representations made at this stage have resulted in the relevant Local Plan policies and supporting text being revised. Additional wording has been added to the Submission draft Local Plan setting out the information required from applicants when submitting applications that may affect the built environment of the National Park.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The issue of the erosion of the character of the National Park is a key concern that is addressed by the policies in the Core Strategy and remains a key issue to be addressed in the revised Local Plan. Revised policies emphasise that features which contribute to the overall character of the National Park should also be protected, whether they are designated heritage sites or not.
- 7.2 It is important to ensure that appropriate development management policies are in place to promote well designed development that respects the existing character of the Park. The policies on local distinctiveness and design in the Core Strategy have largely been retained but with additional criteria, and will continue to be supplemented by the advice in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. This sets out what comprises 'local distinctiveness' in the National Park.
- 7.3 From a cultural heritage point of view there is a need to address the issue of retaining the traditional skills and practices in the Forest where possible, particularly policies that continue to support the traditional practice of commoning to continue to shape the landscape of the Park in the future. This is reflected in the relevant policies in the draft Local Plan.