



# **Sustainability Appraisal Report**

**for the**

## **New Forest National Park Submission Draft Local Plan 2016 - 2036**

**January 2018**

## The New Forest National Park



**Map 1** New Forest National Park

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

### **Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

The purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of the Local Plan.

It involves testing the proposed policies and objectives included in the Local Plan against a set of sustainability objectives and criteria. The SA process both informs the development of different policies and tests the sustainability of the final policies that are chosen to be included in the document.

A Sustainability Appraisal and a Strategic Environmental Assessment are both required for the National Park Local Plan. The SEA assesses the environmental impacts of the plan being prepared (in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC), whereas the SA assesses a broad range of environmental, economic and social impacts. Following Government guidance<sup>1</sup> this report incorporates both of these assessments together, so that reference to the Sustainability Appraisal or the SA Report will incorporate the requirements in the European Directive for a SEA.

### **What is the National Park Local Plan 2016-2036?**

The planning system plays a key role in keeping National Parks special and ensuring they remain living, working landscapes. It is for this reason that the Government has made National Park Authorities the sole planning authorities for their respective areas. As part of its statutory planning role, the New Forest National Park Authority is required to prepare, monitor and review a Local Plan for the National Park. Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the statutory 'development plan' for the National Park and will be the principle guide for planning decisions within the National Park.

The Local Plan applies to the area within the National Park boundary, and aims to deliver the long term planning vision for the New Forest National Park. National policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) also form material considerations when preparing the Local Plan.

The first set of consistent, National Park-wide planning policies were adopted through the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD in December 2010. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy there have been significant changes in national planning policy – most notably the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. Although the vast majority of the policies within the adopted Core Strategy are in general conformity with the NPPF, there is a need to ensure the New Forest National Park continues to be covered by an up-to- date planning framework that accords with relevant national planning policies. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Practice Guidance 2014.

the Authority decided to review its existing policies and produce an updated Local Plan for the period 2016-2036.

The planning system plays an important role in delivering the two statutory National Park purposes and fostering the well-being of the 35,000 people who live within the National Park. The Submission draft Local Plan sets out a range of policies to cover all planning aspects in the National Park including those that seek to protect the Forest's natural environment; conserve the built and historic heritage of the area; meet local needs for housing where possible; and ensure the local economy remains strong.

The Local Plan contains the following strategic objectives;

1. Protect and enhance the natural environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the range of habitats and species.
2. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.
3. Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest.
4. Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.
5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs and maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.
6. Develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities throughout the Park.
7. Encourage land management that sustains the quality of the National Park.
8. Support development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation and provides opportunities for enjoying the Park's special qualities.
9. Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and support a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park.

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

### **Stage A: Setting the context, objectives, baseline and scope**

The SA Scoping Report (June 2016) sets out the context and overall approach of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan. It draws on the SA Reports previously produced for the 2010 Core Strategy and for the 2015 National Park Management Plan, while including updated baseline information and trends and any new issues which may affect sustainability.

A set of sustainability objectives and criteria were used in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy in 2010, developed from an earlier scoping report produced in consultation with stakeholders and statutory consultees. A new scoping exercise was undertaken which resulted in some small changes being made to these original sustainability objectives to bring them up-to-date and include new information about the National Park which is now available. The new SA objectives used to assess the Submission draft Local Plan are as follows:

### **Sustainability Objectives:**

1. **Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and seascape, and safeguard the tranquillity of the National Park**
2. **Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests**
3. **Conserve and enhance the character of the historic environment, local heritage and culture**
4. **Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance the quality of air and water and help mitigate climate change**
5. **Enable the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park**
6. **Improve the well-being of local communities by providing a safe environment, access to local services and opportunities for healthy living**
7. **Support the delivery of housing for local communities**
8. **Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport**
9. **Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports local businesses and communities, while maintaining the quality of the New Forest environment**
10. **Ensure a thriving land-based economy**

The current state of the environment and a description of the characteristics of the National Park are set out in the SA Scoping Report, and a summary can also be found in **Section 4A(a)** of this Report. A number of key sustainability issues for the National Park were identified during the scoping stage and reviewing the baseline information. Those which may be affected by policies in the Submission draft Local Plan, together with a summary of how these may evolve if the Submission draft Local Plan policies are not put in place can be found in **Section 4A(c)**.

### Stage B: Developing policies and assessing effects

#### **Developing policies**

A range of policies have been included in the Submission draft Local Plan. For some of the planning policies, alternative policy options were considered and a number of these were highlighted in the Authority's consultation draft Local Plan (October 2016), with representations invited on the alternative options. The range of alternatives was, however, limited – this was mostly due to the need to conform with the statutory legal purposes and duty of the National Park and the legal protection required for the large area of the National Park covered by international nature conservation legislation. In many cases there were, therefore, limited realistic alternatives for the policy direction to be followed in the National Park, and this is outlined in **Section 4B(c)**. However, an assessment was made of the likely evolution of the key environment, social, and economic issues in the area if the proposed Submission draft Local Plan policies are not pursued in **Section 4A(c)**.

#### **Assessing the proposed strategic objectives**

An appraisal of the compatibility of the Local Plan Objectives was undertaken to assess any conflict with the SA Objectives. This was done using a compatibility matrix

and the findings are outlined in **Appendix 3**. Potential conflicts were outlined for Local Plan Objectives 5, 6, 8, and 9 and mitigation has been identified and this can be found in **Section 4B(a)**.

### **Assessing the proposed policies**

A detailed appraisal of all of the policies was undertaken, using a matrix based on the SA objectives and criteria in the SA Framework to test each of the policies. The effects of the policies were predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective). 'Scores' were determined for each policy, reflecting whether the impact of the action was likely to be positive, negative, neutral or uncertain. If appropriate, recommendations for improving the policy or mitigating negative impacts were noted. Details of all the policies that were considered and the SA assessment of these can be found in **Appendix 4**

### **The key findings of the SA assessments**

- The majority of the Submission draft Local Plan policies are likely to either have a positive impact on sustainability objectives or a neutral impact.
- There are, however, a small number of cases where the impact on specific sustainability objectives has a potential for an adverse impact. The SA assessment concludes that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that these potential adverse impacts are mitigated.

Prior to considering the mitigation provided by other policy requirements and measures contained in the Local Plan, the following policies were identified as having the potential for an adverse impact on some (or all) of SA Objectives 1,2,3 and 4.

*Policy SP19: New Residential Development in the New Forest National Park*

*Policy SP20: Specialist Housing for Older People*

*Policy SP22: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst*

*Policy SP23: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel*

*Policy SP24: Land south of Church Lane, Sway*

*Policy SP25: Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station*

*Policy SP26: Land at Calshot Village*

*Policy SP28: Rural Exception Sites*

*Policy SP29: New Forest Commoners' Dwellings*

*Policy SP30: New Forest Estate Workers' Dwellings*

*Policy SP31: Agricultural and Forestry Workers Dwellings*

*Policy SP33: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople*

*Policy SP42: Business and Employment Development*

In all these cases, the SA assessment concludes that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that potential adverse impacts from all these policies on the SA Objectives will be mitigated. Details of the SA assessments of each of these policies can be found in **Section 4B(b)**.

## **How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in developing the policies**

The results and recommendations of the Draft SA (2016) assessments were carefully considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Submission draft Local Plan 2016-2036 and in this SA Report of the Submission draft Local Plan.

Whilst the majority of policies provided positive effects on the sustainability objectives, a few policies had the potential for negative impacts, and recommendations for mitigation and enhancement were made in the Draft Sustainability Report. These have resulted in amendments to the Local Plan. On balance it is now considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that the potential adverse impacts from the Local Plan policies on the SA Objectives will be mitigated.

### **The difference the process has and will make**

The SA process has made an important contribution to the production of the Submission draft Local Plan. Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement were made in the Draft Sustainability Report, and many of these have resulted in amendments to the Local Plan, making it more sustainable. This final SA Report also contains an assessment of all the final policies contained in the Submission draft Local Plan, and the assessment concludes that these will be sustainable, and that potential adverse impacts on the SA Objectives will be mitigated. Hence, the SA process has ensured that the Submission draft Local Plan aims to produce a sustainable outcome.

### Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

This SA Report has been prepared to assess the sustainability of the Submission draft Local Plan, and incorporates the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Those parts of the SA Report that meet the specific requirements of an 'Environmental Report' under the SEA Directive have been identified in **Section 3, Table 1**.

### Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan and SA Report

This SA Report is supporting evidence for the Submission draft Local Plan and accompanies it during the Local Plan's public consultation. Comments can be made about this SA Report and the sustainability of the Local Plan.

### Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan

This SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the significant sustainability effects in line with the SEA Regulations, and this can be found in **Section 5**.



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The New Forest National Park Authority was established as the sole planning authority for the area in 2006. It works closely with other constituent local authorities that have a range of responsibilities within the National Park, as well as the areas immediately adjacent to it. These include Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Wiltshire Council.
- 1.2 A National Park Management Plan ('Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park') was produced jointly by all the main statutory organisations in the Park in 2015. It sets out a series of priority actions for the period up to 2020.

## **2. Review of the Local Plan**

- 2.1 The current planning policies for the National Park are contained in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, 2010. This has been an important tool in achieving the two statutory purposes and the duty of the National Park<sup>2</sup>, but is now due to be replaced by the Local Plan.
- 2.2 Many of the current policies have proved effective over the last seven years and are not being changed substantially. However the new Local Plan will:
- include an overall updating of the Core Strategy
  - add clarity to existing policies where required
  - focus in particular on any areas of policy affected by recent changes in national planning policy and guidance
  - include proposed sites for housing.
- 2.3 The Local Plan contains the following strategic objectives;
1. Protect and enhance the natural environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the range of habitats and species.
  2. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.
  3. Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

4. Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.
5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs and maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.
6. Develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities throughout the National Park.
7. Encourage land management that sustains the special qualities of the National Park.
8. Support development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, and provides opportunities for enjoying the National Park's special qualities.
9. Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and support a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park.

### **3. Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 3.1 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for all new policies, plans and programmes likely to have environmental, social and economic impacts.
- 3.2 The aim of the SA is to identify any possible adverse impacts on sustainability by assessing emerging policies against a series of sustainability criteria. The SA may result in suggestions for alternative policy options or recommendations for mitigating policy impacts.
- 3.3 The SA incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which specifically evaluates the environmental impacts of plans or programmes in order to ensure the protection of the wider environment. SEAs are required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004, which implement the 2001 European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessments.

## Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations

- 3.4 It is necessary to identify within the SA how the requirements of the SEA Directive are being met. This is done in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: The SEA Directive requirements and where these have been addressed in this draft SA Report**

<b>The SEA Directive's requirements</b>	<b>Where covered in SA Report</b>
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is:	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 2, Section 4A(b) and Appendix 2
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 4A(a) and Section 4A(c)
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 4A(a) and Section 4A(c)
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Section 4A(a) and Section 4A(c)
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 4A(b), Appendix 2, Section 4A(c), Section 4A(d)
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, & 13 fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Appendix 3 and 4
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 4B(a) and (b)
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 4B(c)
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring;	Section 5
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Non technical Summary

## 4. Methodology and Appraisal

- 4.1 National Planning Practice Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal requirements for Local Plans suggests four stages in producing an SA, as outlined below. This report documents Stage C – Sustainability Appraisal Report, which also refers to the previous Stages of the process.

Stage and description	Timing in Local Plan review
Stage A - Scoping Report setting out the background information and sustainability objectives which will inform the SA process	June 2016
Stage B - Draft Sustainability Appraisal to assess policies proposed in the draft Local Plan and any alternative policy options, including recommendations for mitigation and improvements to sustainability	September 2016
Stage C - Sustainability Appraisal Report, focusing on the likely significant effects of the Local Plan and any mitigation required	Winter 2017
Stage D - Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Report as part of the Submission draft of the Local Plan	Jan - Feb 2018

### Stage A - Scoping

- 4.2 According to the Guidance, the Scoping Report should set out the findings of Stage A (which includes gathering an evidence base) together with information on what happens next in the process.
- 4.3 The Scoping Report (June 2016) sets out the context and overall approach of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan.
- 4.4 It aimed to be a reasonably concise document, proportionate and relevant to the revised Local Plan. It draws on the SA Reports previously produced for the 2010 Core Strategy and for the 2015 National Park Management Plan, while including up-to-date information on trends and any new issues which may affect sustainability.
- 4.5 In line with Government guidance the Stage A in the SA process involved five key tasks:
- (a) Collect baseline information about the National Park
  - (b) Identify the international, national and local policy context

- (c) Identify key sustainability issues which may be affected by planning policies
- (d) Develop a sustainability framework including objectives and criteria for assessing the Local Plan policies
- (e) produce a Scoping Report and consult relevant authorities, the public and other key stakeholders on the scope of the appraisal.

## **(a) Baseline information and trends**

- 4.6 The first task in Stage A of the process involved researching local conditions in order to determine whether the environmental, economic and social conditions in the National Park were favourable, unfavourable or average. This task was undertaken during the production of the Scoping Report. A summary of the baseline information from the Scoping Report (June 2016), with some updates since, is given below from paragraph 4.11 to 4.68.
- 4.7 There is a wealth of research and study information available about the National Park held by many local and national organisations. The key facts and trends are outlined in the [State of the Park Report](#) and more detailed monitoring data on the performance of current local planning policies can be found in the [Annual Monitoring Reports](#) produced by the National Park Authority.
- 4.8 This report focuses on baseline and trend information directly relevant to the Local Plan and which may therefore be affected by the Plan policies below. This is a starting point for judging how different policies are likely to influence the condition of the Park and contribute to the delivery of sustainable development.
- 4.9 The information has been divided into an overview of the Park, together with six topics which are broadly reflected in the structure of the Local Plan.
- 4.10 The trend information will be regularly updated through the National Park Authority's Annual Monitoring Reports and State of the Park Report, and will be used to assess the longer term effects of relevant Local Plan policies.

## **Overview of the National Park**

### ***Location and designation***

- 4.11 The New Forest National Park covers 56,658 ha (220 square miles) in southern Hampshire and Wiltshire. Most lies within New Forest District, with small areas in Test Valley Borough and Wiltshire. It was designated in 2005 in recognition of its national importance for the quality of its landscape, natural habitats and cultural heritage, and the opportunities it gives for their understanding and enjoyment.

### ***Description***

- 4.12 At the heart of the National Park lies the 19,700 hectares of Open Forest which once formed the medieval Royal Hunting Forest and which has survived remarkably intact to the present day. A further 3,000 hectares of the adjacent commons was added by the New Forest Act, 1964. This extensive mosaic of heathland, woods and mires is maintained largely by the common grazing of ponies and cattle, practised for at least the last millennia and now overseen by the historic Court of Verderers.
- 4.13 The enclosed land within and surrounding the Open Forest is predominantly woodland and farmland, often owned by large estates, and extends south to the Solent coastline, which has important areas of protected mudflats, shingle and grazing marsh.
- 4.14 The whole area is largely rural in character, but is home to around 35,000 people and is the most densely populated of all the national parks other than the South Downs. The four main villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, each have populations of more than 3,000 people and provide local shopping and other facilities. Smaller villages and hamlets, with a limited range of facilities, are dispersed throughout the Park.

### ***Special qualities of the Park***

- 4.15 The special qualities of the National Park are essential in maintaining the unique character of the area. They were identified through public consultation in 2007 and include:
- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
  - An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals
  - A unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage
  - An historic commoning system
  - The iconic New Forest pony
  - Tranquillity
  - Opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery
  - A healthy environment
  - Strong and distinctive local communities

### ***Development pressures and opportunities***

- 4.16 Within the Park the quality of the environment, good transport links and high land values create significant pressure for development. Nevertheless the protection afforded to the New Forest's landscape and the sensitivity of its internationally important habitats has resulted in relatively low levels of housing development

over the last 10 years. On average, about 23 new homes (net) have been built each year since 2006.<sup>3</sup> The majority were located within the four main villages, although some were rural exceptions sites and housing for agricultural workers and commoners.

4.17 In line with the requirements of national planning policy and national park legislation and guidance, the review of the Local Plan has considered the appropriate level of new housing development within the New Forest National Park. National parks are identified in the National Planning Policy Framework as areas where development should be restricted.

4.18 The adopted development plans prepared for the urban areas close to the National Park (including Southampton, Portsmouth, Christchurch, Poole, Bournemouth and the Salisbury area) make provision for a very large amount of new housing to be built. This may have impacts on the setting of the National Park, and is likely to increase pressure on traffic levels and the transport system and add to the numbers making recreational visits.

4.19 In addition the New Forest is relatively easy to access from other areas of southern England, including London, and is a major visitor destination, attracting some 13.5 million visits each year.<sup>4</sup>

## The natural environment

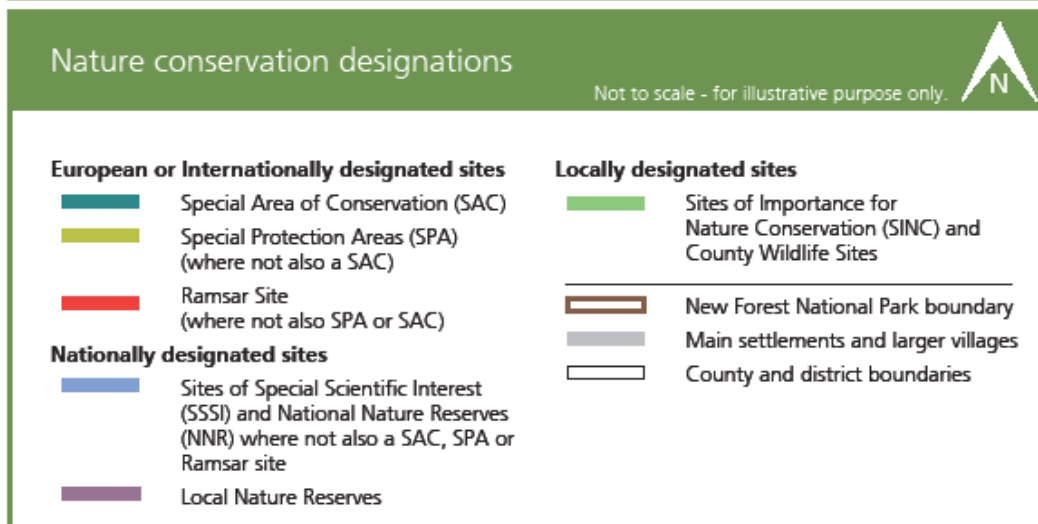
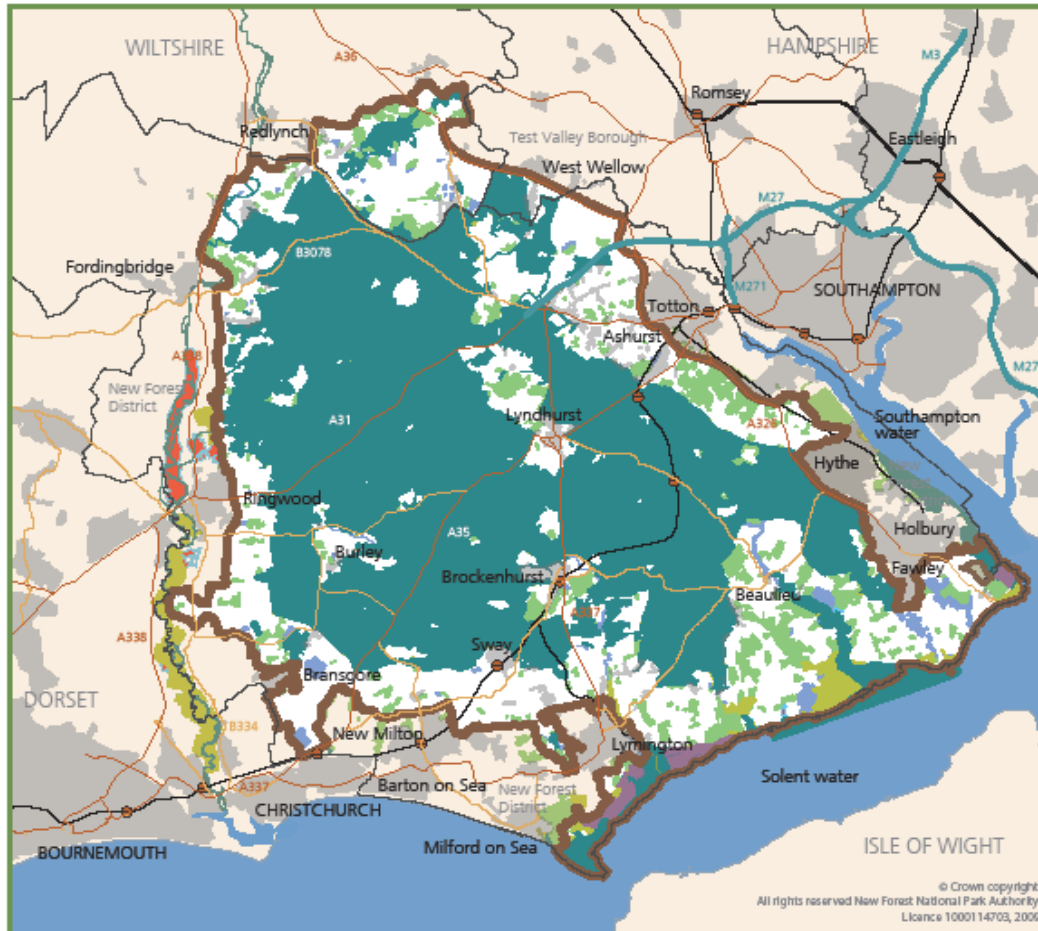
### *Biodiversity*

4.20 56% of the National Park has been designated under national and international legislation for its wildlife value (a higher proportion than any other national park). This includes extensive Open Forest and coastal habitats with many rare or vulnerable species. The various statutory designations include:

Special Areas of Conservation	30,643 ha	54.1% of land area
Special Protection Areas	30,122 ha	53.2%
Ramsar sites	30,152 ha	53.2%
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	32,190 ha	56.8%
National Nature Reserves	1,199 ha	2.1%
Local Nature Reserves	416 ha	0.8%
SINC / County Wildlife Sites	3,033 ha	5.4%

<sup>3</sup> New Forest National Park Authority data

<sup>4</sup> New Forest Visitor Survey, *Tourism South East, 2005*



**Map 2 Nature conservation designations**

4.21 Over recent years there has been an increase in the area of SSSI units in favourable condition as a result of large scale habitat restoration work. Nevertheless additional resources and clear policies will be needed to maintain this condition and further improve the quality of protected habitats in the future.



Table 1 Condition of SSSI units				Source: Natural England and Hampshire Biological Information Centre		
Condition	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<i>Favourable</i>	34.0%	34.0%	45.2%	51.5%	51.9%	51.9%
<i>Unfavourable recovering</i>	64.0%	64.5%	52.7%	46.4%	46.1%	46.1%
<i>Unfavourable no change</i>	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%
<i>Unfavourable declining</i>	1.6%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%

4.22 The New Forest holds nationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler, comprising 12%, 9.3% and 16% of the total number of UK breeding pairs respectively.<sup>5</sup> There are also significant populations of breeding waders, including lapwing, curlew, snipe and redshank, all of which have been subject to major national declines in recent years.

4.23 A number of surveys of ground nesting bird species in the New Forest have been carried out since the 1960s, although methodologies have varied and therefore direct comparison between different surveys is difficult. Populations of most species seem to have remained relatively stable, but the recent figures for woodlark, Dartford warbler and redshank do appear to indicate an overall decline.<sup>6</sup> Survey work on curlew has also indicated local declines in line with national trends. Further surveys, using consistent methodologies, are needed to clarify long-term population trends.

### ***Landscape character***

4.24 A Landscape Character Assessment for the New Forest was published in 2013. The Character Assessment identifies 19 distinctive Character Areas within the National Park and describes the current condition, issues and trends for each.

4.25 In addition a Tranquil Areas Study in 2015<sup>7</sup> produced tranquillity mapping for the National Park and surrounding area, for use in planning policy and recreation management, and will provide a baseline for future monitoring. The study showed that 51% of the Park was tranquil to highly tranquil. Traffic noise, visual intrusion from development, size of settlements and recreational activity were the

<sup>5</sup> 2013 and 2014 data in reports by RPS for the Verderers Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

<sup>6</sup> New Forest State of the Park Report, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Land Use Consultants for New Forest National Park Authority.

main factors affecting tranquillity. A detailed national survey assessing light pollution has been completed by the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

### ***Environmental quality***

- 4.26 River water quality is a good indicator of the ecological status of wetland habitats and the general health of the environment.
- 4.27 The most recent figures<sup>8</sup> cover 268km of rivers cut to the National Park boundary. 22% of the total length sampled was of good quality, 76% was of moderate quality and 2% was of poor quality. In addition of two freshwater lakes one is of moderate quality and one poor, and of six transitional water bodies (estuarine and coastal) three are moderate (Solent, Beaulieu estuary and Lymington estuary) and two are good (Black Water lagoons and Sowley Marsh lagoons).<sup>9</sup>
- 4.28 The New Forest Catchment Partnership involves a number of organisations in achieving practical improvements to rivers and streams in the National Park, including water quality and habitat condition.
- 4.29 Air quality can be affected by pollutants from industry and traffic. Traffic congestion in Lyndhurst is a particular issue and it has been designated an Air Quality Management Area by New Forest District Council. Various traffic management measures are in place aimed at reducing air pollution in the village.
- 4.30 Soil types within the National Park largely comprise various base-poor sands, gravels and clays overlying the chalk of the Hampshire Basin. The majority of the centre of the New Forest is classed as 'very poor' agricultural land or used for non-agricultural uses (such as woodland or heathland). 'Good' to 'moderate' agricultural land surrounds this core, often seasonally wet and generally used as meadow or pasture for grazing. 'Very good' agricultural land is restricted to areas towards the coast and the southern Avon Valley and is used for arable crops.
- 4.31 Some soil erosion has occurred as a result of historic drainage channels on the Open Forest. This causes erosion of stream gravels and mire peat soils which continues, although some has been addressed through a series of stream restoration projects.
- 4.32 Land contamination is not a major issue within the National Park and there are no major former industrial sites. Just outside the National Park the old landfill site at Keyhaven, Fawley Power Station and the heavy industry along the

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<sup>8</sup> Based on Water Framework Directive Cycle 2 classification, with 2015 data supplied by the Environment Agency through Natural England's protected landscapes monitoring project.

<sup>9</sup> Environment Agency pers.comm.

Waterside could have impacts in the longer term, depending on any future change of use and the possible effects of sea-level rise.

## **Climate change**

4.33 Planning policies can help in mitigating and adapting to climate change through the location and design of new development and encouraging the use of sustainable energy technologies.

4.34 The 2009 medium emissions projections (below) for South East England indicate possible changes affecting the New Forest. Particular impacts locally are likely to be:

- Changes to the coastline due to sea level rise, with impacts on communities and habitats
- Increased storm events and flooding from surface water, groundwater, fluvial and coastal sources, with impacts on communities and essential infrastructure
- Increased summer droughts and higher average summer temperatures, with impacts on land management and the spread of plant and animal diseases.

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Climate projections for South East England</b>			
			Source: UK Climate Impacts Programme
	Projected change 2020s	Projected change 2050s	Projected change 2080s
Average summer temperature	Rise of 1.6°C	Rise of 2.8°C	Rise of 3.9°C
Average summer daily maximum temperature	Rise of 2.1°C	Rise of 3.7°C	Rise of 5.3°C
Average winter temperature	Rise of 1.3°C	Rise of 2.2°C	Rise of 3°C
Average summer rainfall	Reduction of 8%	Reduction of 19%	Reduction of 23%
Average winter rainfall	Increase of 6%	Increase of 16%	Increase of 22%
Relative sea level rise (compared to 1990 levels) <sup>10</sup>	Increase of 14cm	Increase of 25.5cm	Increase of 36cm

4.35 The Environment Agency has updated the climate change ‘allowances’ recommended for use in flood risk assessments and in determining the vulnerability of new development. These are predictions of anticipated future changes affecting peak river flow, peak rainfall intensity, sea level rise and

<sup>10</sup> Figures from the Environment Agency's 2016 climate change allowances.

offshore wind speed / extreme wave height as a result of climate change. A number of variables are considered which are applied differently in different flood zones. More details can be found at [Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances - Detailed guidance - GOV.UK](#)

- 4.36 There has been considerable interest from local communities in reducing carbon emissions through small-scale renewable energy projects. Between 2006/7 and 2014/15 the National Park Authority's Sustainable Communities Fund provided grant-aid for 62 projects that will have a direct impact on the carbon footprint of the area, including twenty five renewable energy projects designed for community and business use. New Forest Transition is working to create low carbon societies and is involved in the growing of local food, supporting village markets and organising community events and workshops.
- 4.37 In addition, a range of sustainable transport initiatives have promoted alternatives to private car use, and are summarised under Transport and Access below.

## **The historic environment**

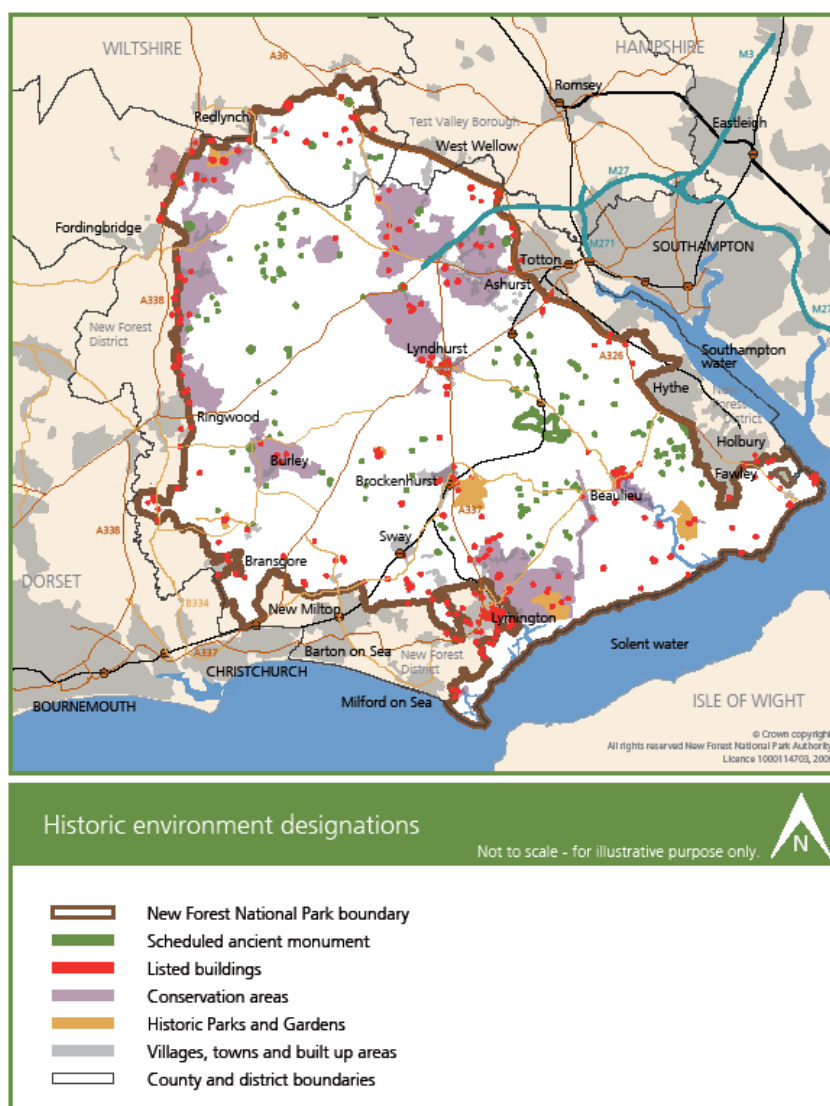
### ***Designated and local sites***

- 4.38 The National Park includes a wealth of historic environment features, including 214 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (about 30% of the total for the whole of Hampshire) and 624 listed buildings, the majority of which are Grade II. Currently a relatively low number of these are 'at risk' - 3.3% of ancient monuments and 1.8% of listed buildings<sup>11</sup>.
- 4.39 There are also 7 historic parks and gardens registered by Historic England, and about 1,760 buildings of local historic interest. The Historic Environment Record for Hampshire lists around 3,750 scheduled and non-scheduled sites within the National Park<sup>12</sup> and this is increasing as additional features are identified through new technologies such as Lidar. On the Open Forest Lidar mapping has revealed about 2,000 new archaeological sites and historic landscape features to date.

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<sup>11</sup> Figures as at June 2016. Ancient monument data from Historic England's Heritage at Risk; listed building data from the National Park Authority's buildings at risk register (all at risk listed buildings are Grade II).

<sup>12</sup> Some 200 non-scheduled sites have been assessed as worthy of statutory protection.



**Map 3 Historic environment designations**

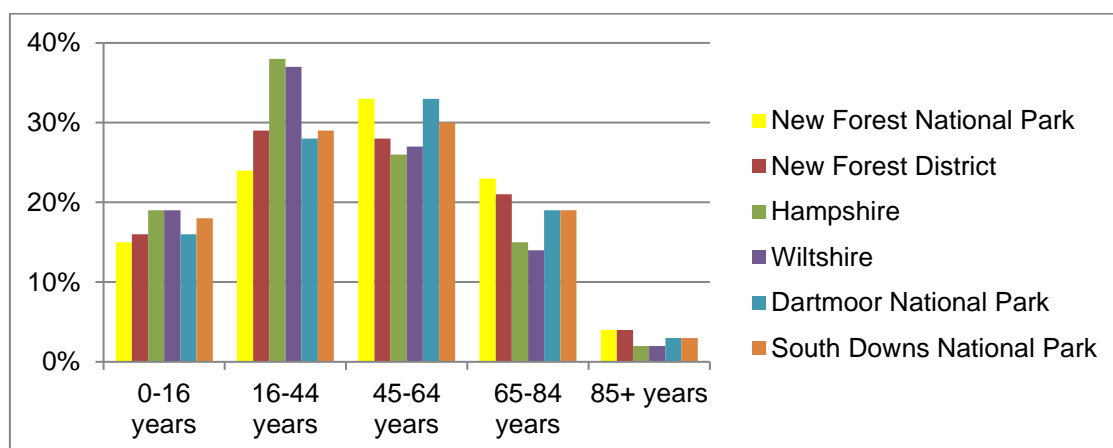
### ***Local distinctiveness***

- 4.40 Many of the villages and their environs are within one of the 20 Conservation Areas designated in the Park, which in total cover around 7,500 ha. All the Conservation Areas have up-to-date Conservation Area Character Appraisals.
- 4.41 Maintaining the local distinctiveness of the villages is of concern to many of the communities in the National Park. Seven parishes have completed Village Design Statements for their area, providing local design guidelines, which have been formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 4.42 The Authority also adopted a detailed National Park-wide Design Guide SPD in 2011 which reinforces the importance of design in the planning process.

## Vibrant communities

### Population

- 4.43 The National Park has a population of 34,922 (2011 Census), a modest increase of 2.6% since 2001. More than one third of residents live in the four main villages of Ashurst (2,093), Brockenhurst (3,552), Sway (3,448) and Lyndhurst (3,029). The rest are dispersed amongst the smaller villages and hamlets scattered through the National Park.
- 4.44 In terms of the working age population, compared to surrounding areas the National Park has a relatively low proportion of younger people between 16 and 44 years, but a high proportion in the 45-64 years category. The figures indicate that the New Forest remains a popular location for retired or older people.



**Figure 1**  
**Population age profile**

Source Census, 2011

- 4.45 Also compared to nearby areas, a high proportion of the population have bought their own property (with relatively few living in private rented, shared ownership or socially rented accommodation), 58% of households have either two, three or more cars, and 63% of those employed are involved in managerial, professional or technical work, or in skilled trades.
- 4.46 Nevertheless there are people in many of the rural communities who have difficulty in accessing housing and transport and are employed in lower paid sectors such as agriculture and tourism.
- 4.47 The 2011 Census shows that 82% of those living within the National Park are in good or very good health. More detailed figures for New Forest District (including the majority of the National Park) in 2012 indicate that:
- 21% of adults and 15% of children are classed as obese

- Smoking related deaths average about 300 per year (better than the average for England)
- Road traffic accidents resulting in fatalities or serious injury is higher than the England average
- Rates for drug misuse, heart disease and early deaths from cancer are all lower than the national average

### ***Facilities and services***

- 4.48 Local facilities and shops are centred largely within the main villages, while more rural areas have seen a recent decline in community-based services, which also provide a focus for village life, including post offices, car repairs, police offices and bus services.

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Services in rural parishes</b> Source: NPA survey of local facilities and services; data supplied by parish and town councils			
<b>Service</b>	<b>No. of parishes 2004</b>	<b>No. of parishes 2009</b>	<b>No. of parishes 2015</b>
Village shop / general store	19 (76%)	18 (72%)	18 (72%)
Post office	18 (72%)	15 (60%)	14 (56%)
Pub	23 (92%)	23 (92%)	22 (88%)
Garage (car repairs)	14 (56%)	14 (56%)	12 (48%)
Village Hall	24 (96%)	24 (96%)	24 (96%)
Primary school	16 (64%)	16 (64%)	16 (64%)
Children's play area	13 (52%)	13 (52%)	13 (52%)
Sport and recreation facilities	18 (68%)	18 (68%)	18 (68%)
Police station / mobile office	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	5 (20%)

- 4.49 For additional facilities, including leisure and entertainment, local people rely on the larger market towns adjacent to the Park, such as Ringwood and Lymington, and the larger centres of Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury.

### ***Housing***

- 4.50 Land and property prices within the National Park have continued to rise over the last ten years. Recent figures indicate that the average price for a house was £531,162 in 2015, about 12.5 times the average wage of people living in the National Park and one of the highest ratios in England outside London. This makes it difficult for communities to retain a mixed population, including younger people, those employed in traditional rural occupations and key workers.

- 4.51 In response to the requirements of national planning policy, a detailed assessment of housing needs within the National Park was commissioned. This assessment was based on demographic and population projections and did not take policy or environmental constraints into account. It identified a significant housing need arising in the National Park which is higher than historic rates of development. The Government has clarified, however, that this assessment does not automatically establish the final housing requirement, and thus the particular circumstances of the National Park have been taken into consideration in determining the level planned for in the Submission draft Local Plan.

### ***Community plan-making***

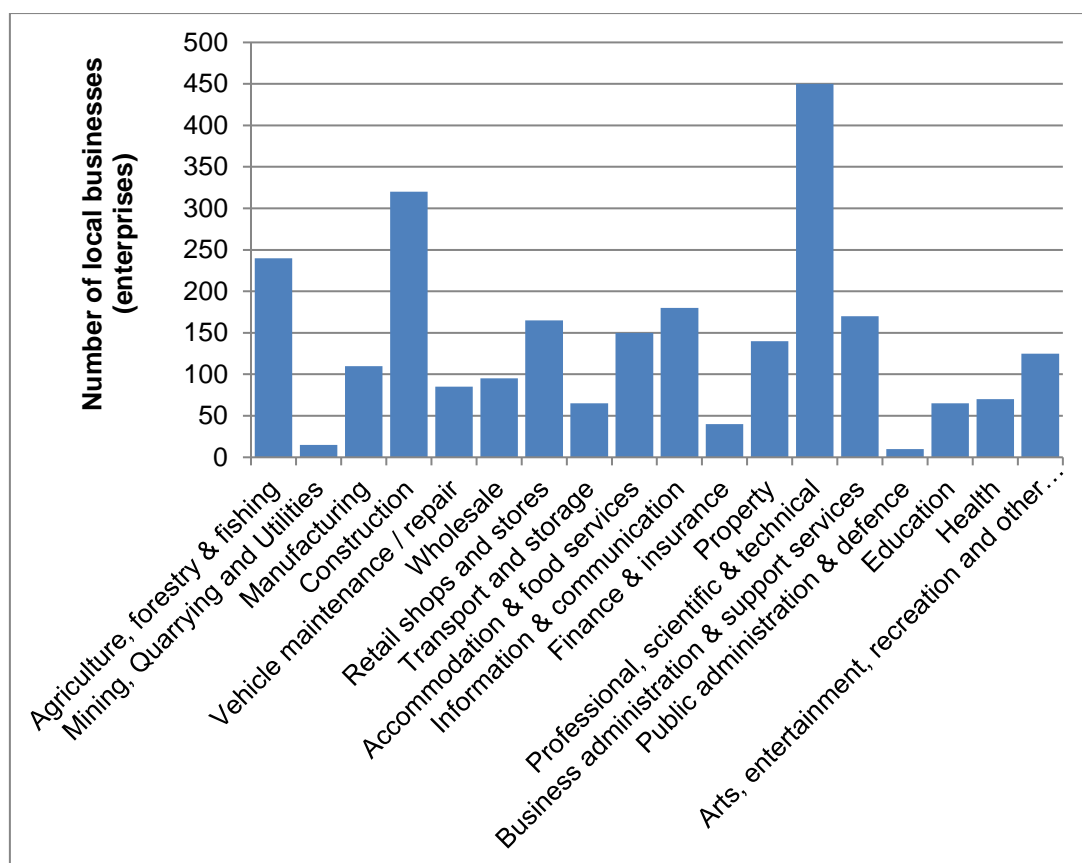
- 4.52 Local communities are involved in producing neighbourhood plans for their parish or town. The major part of all these plan areas lay within adjacent local authority areas, but the National Park Authority is offering appropriate support to help the process. Once formally adopted, following independent examination and local referendum, these plans, where relevant to the National Park, will form part of the planning policies for the area.
- 4.53 In addition seven parishes have completed Village Design Statements to help conserve the local character of their settlements. These have been adopted by the National Park Authority as Supplementary Planning Documents.

## **A sustainable local economy**

### ***Business diversity***

- 4.54 The National Park has a diverse rural economy with a broad range of small and medium sized businesses. In terms of numbers of individual businesses the largest sectors are professional / scientific / technical services, construction and agriculture. In 2015 there were a total of 2,540 businesses within the National Park, representing a slight increase since 2011.
- 4.55 A Business Needs Survey of the National Park and New Forest District, 2014, found that there was general confidence within the business sector. Most recognised that the quality of the landscape was an asset to their enterprise, although rural locations bring constraints in terms of transport and communications infrastructure. Home-based micro businesses make up a significant proportion of enterprises within the National Park.





**Figure 2**  
**Number of local business enterprises by sector**

Source: Office for National Statistics

### ***Employment***

4.56 Unemployment has remained consistently low compared to surrounding areas and the UK as a whole. In October 2017 only 0.4% of the working age population was claiming job-seekers allowance, with unemployment at near its lowest level for 10 years.

### ***The land-based economy***

4.57 The land-based economy, although no longer a major source of employment, is particularly important in maintaining the quality and character of the landscape. It involves around 250 individual enterprises ranging from the large farming estates to small commoners holdings and local food producers.

4.58 The New Forest remains one of the few places in northern Europe where traditional commoning is still practised on a large scale. It is particularly important in maintaining the extensively grazed pastoral landscapes characteristic of the New Forest. The numbers practising commoners have not changed significantly in recent years, but there are concerns about the long-term viability of commoning and in particular the high costs of land and housing,

the low returns from the sale of ponies and pressures from other land uses and activities.



**Figure 3**  
**Number of practising commoners**

Source: Verderers of the New Forest

- 4.59 The total area of farmland has not changed significantly since 2009 and amounts to 14,600 ha or 26% of the National Park. The most important land uses are permanent pasture and rough grazing for livestock (9,328 ha). By comparison arable land covers 2,225 ha and farm woodland 1,760 ha.
- 4.60 There has been a decline in the numbers employed in agriculture and in particular those working on a full-time basis. In 2013 716 people were employed on holdings larger than 5 ha, of whom 406 were part time.<sup>13</sup>
- 4.61 Forestry and woodland management have traditionally been an important part of the local economy. There is a total of more than 20,000 ha of woodland within the National Park. The majority is managed by the Forestry Commission, but a significant proportion (about 7,000 ha) is privately owned.

### ***Tourism and the visitor economy***

- 4.62 Tourism provides considerable economic benefits to the National Park and helps to support the retail sector, services and local employment. Visitors spent around £246.37 million during trips or holidays in the National Park in 2014, and

<sup>13</sup> Defra June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture, 2013

the tourism sector employed 3,325 people (full-time equivalent) within the National Park boundary.<sup>14</sup>

- 4.63 The New Forest is one of the major visitor destinations in southern England and more than 13 million visitor days are made to the National Park each year<sup>15</sup>. There is open access on foot or horseback to around 29,000 ha of land in the core of the National Park and in addition there are 326 km of public rights of way. Natural England has begun work to create a national coastal access route which will include the New Forest coastline.
- 4.64 There has been a strong focus on sustainable tourism for a number of years, promoted through the New Forest Tourism Association's (which has merged with Go New Forest Community Interest Company) network of businesses. Tourism providers and local organisations help to promote key messages about caring for the Forest and its special qualities.

## **Transport and access**

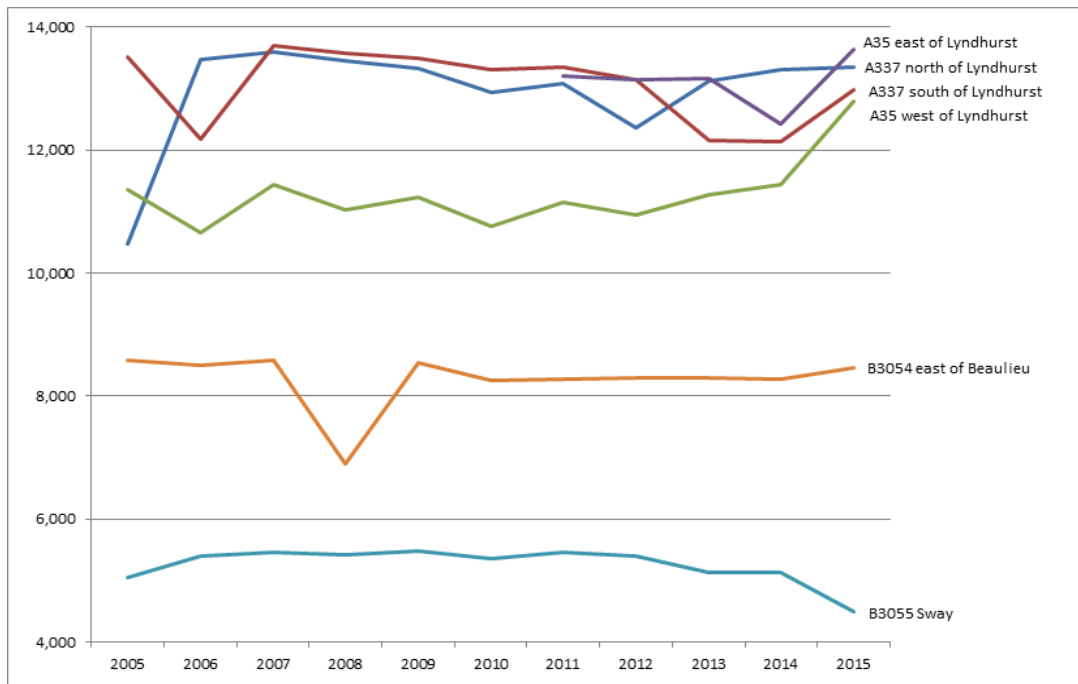
### ***Transport network***

- 4.65 The National Park is served by a good network of major and minor road routes, with the majority of through-traffic using the A31, which bisects the National Park running east-west. The A31 takes by far the largest traffic volumes with an average of more than 60,000 vehicle movements each day.
- 4.66 Traffic volumes increase during rush hour and the peak holiday season, and some villages are subject to congestion at these times. Average daily flow rates did not change significantly on most routes between 2005 and 2011, although there are signs of an increase in traffic since 2014, which is in line with national predictions.

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<sup>14</sup> STEAM figures for the National Park, 2014

<sup>15</sup> New Forest Visitor Survey, Tourism South East, 2005



**Figure 4**  
**Average daily traffic volumes on selected routes**

Source: Hampshire County Council

### ***Sustainable transport***

- 4.67 Planning policies can help to reduce the impacts of traffic on the quality of life of local communities through the location of new development and support for sustainable transport alternatives.
- 4.68 A number of recent initiatives, such as the New Forest Tour (open top bus) and Beach bus, have provided non-car transport for both local people and visitors, linking the main villages, adjacent towns and visitor attractions. These bus services combined enabled more than 40,000 journeys in 2015. In addition rail routes to and from the National Park are well used and Brockenhurst Station caters for more than one million journeys each year, including use by local commuters.

## **(b) The international, national and local policy context**

- 4.69 In preparing the SA Framework a number of international, national and local plans, policies and programmes have been taken into account, which set the wider policy context relevant to sustainability issues. Those of relevance to the development of planning policies within the National Park are listed in Appendix 2.
- 4.70 It should be noted that minerals and waste policies are contained in the separate Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan and related supplementary documents and are therefore not addressed in the review of the Local Plan.

## **(c) Key sustainability issues and how these may be affected by Local Plan policies**

- 4.71 A number of key sustainability issues for the National Park were identified in Stage A through tasks (a) and (b). Those which may be affected by policies in the Local Plan are listed below, together with a summary of how these may develop if Local Plan policies are not in place. The issues are loosely arranged under environmental, social and economic headings, although several cut across these categories.

<b>Key issues</b>	<b><i>Likely evolution without the Submission draft Local Plan</i></b>
<b>Environmental</b>	
1. The whole area is designated as National Park. The landscape, cultural heritage and natural habitats of the area are therefore of the highest importance, but are under pressure from a variety of sources, including development, recreation, transport and climate change.	Possible gradual loss of landscape quality, fragmentation of habitats and decline in cultural heritage features without a positive planning framework being in place.
2. More than half the area of the National Park is of national or international value for nature conservation. Although the area of SSSIs in favourable condition has increased in recent years, further work is needed to continue this trend and to maintain areas currently assessed as favourable. There are also important populations of a number of ground-nesting birds and many other vulnerable species for which the New Forest is currently a stronghold.	Possible gradual loss of condition of protected habitats and decline in populations of vulnerable species.
3. The Environment Agency aim to maintain and improve the ecological status of rivers, standing water bodies and transitional waters	Targets for improving water quality and the ecological value of rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries and

(estuarine and coastal). This will require policies and practical improvements to ensure the quality of river systems and coastal waters within the New Forest Catchment area.	coastal waters throughout the National Park may be more difficult to achieve.
4. About 50% of the National Park is shown as having some level of tranquillity in a recent Tranquil Areas study. Tranquillity is one of the special qualities of the National Park and maintaining tranquillity is one of the priorities for residents and visitors.	Levels of tranquillity may be reduced in certain locations and less of the National Park overall may be classed as tranquil.
5. There are significant development pressures affecting the historic built environment, landscapes and character of settlements within the National Park, due to its desirable location and the high value of land and property. Monitoring of heritage features at risk is needed to indicate any future trends and the reasons for these.	Much higher levels of development would be likely in the more rural settlements as well as the main villages, together with an increase in cumulative small-scale changes affecting local character and the historic environment.
6. The National Park is close to large urban areas where major economic development is planned, including Southampton, south east Dorset and south Wiltshire. This could affect the setting of the Park and lead to increased recreational and transport pressures.	Without plan policies there is less likelihood that adverse impacts will be mitigated, including impacts on the setting of the National Park, or that green infrastructure will be put in place to reduce recreational pressure.
7. Climate change over the next 50 years and beyond is likely to lead to changes in habitats and landscapes, rise in sea-levels, higher likelihood of storms and river flooding and an increase in pests and diseases of plants and animals.	Without action there may a limited reduction in carbon emissions locally, and there is less likelihood of effective adaption to climate change, by, for instance, the location of new development, innovative design and use new technologies.
<b>Social</b>	
8. The lack of low cost or affordable housing for those with a local housing need is a particular issue in the National Park, especially affecting younger people. Recent figures indicate that the average price of a house in the Park is 12.5 times the average wage, making it one of the least affordable places in the country outside London.	Without clear policies on low cost or affordable housing fewer people in housing need are likely to find homes within the National Park.
9. Road traffic is a major issue for many residents and there are issues of congestion and air quality on some of the roads and villages, particularly during peak holiday periods. Nevertheless a good transport network is vital for local people and businesses. Traffic volumes on many roads appear to have risen over the last two years as the economy	Without policies to guide the location of development there may be increased pressure on the road network within the National Park, loss of tranquillity and impacts on quality of life. Without supportive policies sustainable transport options may be more difficult to implement and prove less effective.

<p>becomes more buoyant and fuel prices remain low.</p> <p>Sustainable transport provides an alternative to car use, and existing initiatives may expand and become more popular in the future.</p>	
<p>10. The cultural identity and cohesion of rural communities remains under pressure due to changing demographics, high property prices and the decline in rural services. Many local people, particularly younger people, are unable to find suitable housing in the area. There has been a continuing decline in some rural services, particularly post offices, bus services and local policing.</p>	<p>Local cultural identity may diminish, with the loss of local skills, knowledge and traditions. More people may commute to jobs outside the National Park, and there may be a further decline in rural facilities and services.</p>
<p><b><i>Economic</i></b></p>	
<p>11. Although predominantly rural in character the National Park currently supports a diverse range of business activities and has very low levels of unemployment. A high proportion of local businesses are small to medium sized and many rely on home-working. Good communications infrastructure is a priority. For those requiring premises within the National Park it will be important to safeguard the limited supply of employment sites, which are under pressure from competing land uses.</p>	<p>Continued support is needed for a wide range of businesses and employment opportunities which are located sustainably and which have a low environmental impact. Business activity could fall if existing employment sites are not retained and flexible policies for home-working are not in place.</p>
<p>12. The commoning economy is critical to the maintenance of the traditional landscapes and culture of the New Forest. The long-term future of commoning is uncertain, due particularly to a continuing rise in land and property prices and the lack of available back-up land.</p>	<p>Without strong supportive policies the extent of commoning and its economic viability may decline in the future.</p>
<p>13. Farming and woodland management has helped to create many of the enclosed landscapes of the National Park. Agriculture continues to be subject to economic uncertainty, including changes to agri-environment schemes, and is also likely to be affected by changes in the climate. Many landowners are looking to support their farm incomes through diversification.</p>	<p>Policies are needed to support farming practice and woodland management which will conserve the characteristic landscapes of the New Forest. There is a risk that some farms will move away from traditional land management and seek alternative businesses and land uses.</p>
<p>14. Tourism provides considerable economic benefits to the National Park and helps to support the retail sector, services and local employment. Visitor numbers are expected to rise in the future and could result in increased recreational pressures on the National park's sensitive landscapes and habitats.</p>	<p>Without appropriate policies there is a risk that rising recreational use could impact the special qualities of the National Park.</p>

**(d) The SA Framework including objectives and criteria for assessing the Local Plan policies**

4.72 The SA Framework is a key output of Task 4 of Stage A of the Scoping Report as it establishes a set of sustainability objectives to measure the sustainability of environmental, economic and social effects of Local Plan Policies which can be described, analysed and compared.

4.73 The proposed framework for assessing the Submission draft Local Plan policies comprises the 10 sustainability objectives and decision-making criteria listed below.

4.74 The objectives represent a mix of national and local outcomes relevant to the National Park and are based on those objectives used previously to assess the 2010 Core Strategy. These have been re-assessed in light of the updated national policy context, baseline information and sustainability issues set out in the Scoping Report. Where necessary they have been amended and re-ordered to create an up-to-date set of objectives that are easy to use and reflect changes over the last 7 years.

SA Objective	Criteria
<b>1. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and seascape, and safeguard the tranquillity of the National Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Will it protect the landscape character of the New Forest National Park?</li><li>▪ Will it encourage appropriate management of designated landscapes?</li><li>▪ Will it protect and retain trees, woodlands and hedgerows?</li><li>▪ Will it maintain or extend areas of tranquillity?</li></ul>
<b>2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Will it limit pressures on designated sites arising from development, recreation and other uses?</li><li>▪ Will it protect and enhance existing local sites of nature conservation importance or create new areas of nature conservation value?</li><li>▪ Will it protect ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees?</li><li>▪ Will it allow biodiversity to adapt to the effects of climate change, including enhancement of ecological networks / corridors?</li><li>▪ Will it protect the range of biodiversity, including rare and vulnerable species where they occur?</li></ul>
<b>3. Conserve and enhance the character of the historic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Will it protect, maintain and enhance listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological sites,</li></ul>



<b>environment, local heritage and culture</b>	<p>historic landscapes and the setting of these assets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment?</li> <li>▪ Will it maintain the local character and settlement pattern of villages within the National Park?</li> <li>▪ Will it enhance and contribute to local building traditions?</li> <li>▪ Will it ensure high design standards?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage local cultural traditions including commoning?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance the quality of air and water and help mitigate climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it promote the value and benefits of natural resources and the use of sustainable materials?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage water conservation and the sustainable use of water?</li> <li>▪ Will it protect the quality of air and water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions?</li> <li>▪ Will it aid delivery of the Water Framework Directive?</li> <li>▪ Will it ensure the sustainable use of soils and safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage the use of energy efficiency and enable small-scale renewable energy schemes?</li> <li>▪ Will it help in adapting to climate change?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Enable the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it encourage educational development including lifelong learning for those seeking new knowledge and skills?</li> <li>▪ Will it further understanding of the special qualities of the National Park by local people and visitors?</li> <li>▪ Will it allow opportunities for all social groups to experience and enjoy the National Park, while ensuring that visitor pressure does not harm the sensitive habitats of the area?</li> </ul>
<b>6. Improve the well-being of local communities by providing a safe environment, access to local services and opportunities for healthy living</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it reduce the risk from coastal, fluvial and surface water flooding?</li> <li>▪ Will it discourage crime?</li> <li>▪ Will it support local services, community facilities and community enterprises?</li> <li>▪ Will it focus development in settlements with adequate infrastructure and where a range of services and employment reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>▪ Will it support access to health care?</li> <li>▪ Will it help to maintain, connect or increase green infrastructure for the benefit of local communities?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it improve safe access to the countryside and encourage walking, cycling and other healthy outdoor activities?</li> </ul>
<b>7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it support delivery of an appropriate level and mix of housing for local communities?</li> <li>▪ Will it increase the amount of low cost or affordable housing for those in housing need?</li> <li>▪ Will it support special accommodation needs, including those who are elderly or disabled, active commoners, gypsies, travelling show people and others?</li> <li>▪ Will it ensure an appropriate level of utilities infrastructure, while limiting any adverse environmental impacts?</li> </ul>
<b>8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it ensure transport infrastructure (roads/ rail/buses/ cycleways/footpaths) serves the needs of local businesses and communities?</li> <li>▪ Will it locate development in areas with good access to the main road network?</li> <li>▪ Will it improve the provision and use of sustainable transport?</li> <li>▪ Will it help reduce any environmental impacts of transport infrastructure, including impacts on the quality of life of residents and the character of settlements?</li> </ul>
<b>9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports local businesses and communities, while maintaining the quality of the New Forest environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it help support business development in sustainable locations?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage provision of diverse employment opportunities?</li> <li>▪ Will it enhance local skill levels and training?</li> <li>▪ Will it help to ensure diverse and vibrant village centres?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage sustainable tourism?</li> </ul>
<b>10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will it strengthen the commoning, farming, forestry and woodland management economies while benefitting the landscape of the New Forest?</li> <li>▪ Will it enable farm diversification appropriate to the character of the area?</li> <li>▪ Will it encourage training in rural skills relevant to land based businesses?</li> </ul>

## **Stage B - Sustainability Appraisal**

- 4.75 An appraisal of the compatibility of the Submission draft Local Plan Objectives was undertaken to ensure that they were not in conflict with the SA objectives. This was done using a compatibility matrix (Appendix 3) with the findings outlined below in section (a).
- 4.76 An appraisal was also performed to evaluate the effects of each of the Submission draft Local Plan policies on each sustainability objective. This appraisal uses a matrix of results and can be found in Appendix 4 with the findings outlined below in section (b).

### **(a) Sustainability Appraisal of Local Plan Strategic Objectives**

- 4.77 The SA assessment shows that overall the Submission draft Local Plan strategic objectives are sustainable. Most Local Plan strategic objectives demonstrate beneficial sustainability effects when compared against the SA Objectives.
- 4.78 There are, however, some areas of potential conflict with the SA Objectives, and these are highlighted below. It is considered that other policies and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will have sufficient beneficial effects to provide mitigation for the potential conflicts with the SA Objectives.

### **Local Plan Objective 5: Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs**

- 4.79 There is some potential for conflict with SA Objective 1, 2, 3, and 4. To meet the Local Plan Strategic Objective 5, additional housing development could lead to a possible conflict with the protection of the landscape, habitats, wildlife, the character of the built environment and cultural heritage. It also raises the potential of some negative impacts on the sustainable use of resources.
- 4.80 Mitigation could include ensuring the choice of sustainable locations for housing development, achieving high quality design, limiting the scale of housing delivered and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements. The Authority's Design Guide and Village Design Statements will help to ensure that new developments are sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment. Policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP4 (Spatial Strategy), Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), Policy SP17 (Local Distinctiveness), Policy DP18 (Design Principles), Policy DP2 (General Development Principles) and Policy SP21 (Size of New Dwellings) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts on the built environment from Strategic Objective 5.

- 4.81 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan concludes that it cannot rule out that the recreational impacts of new housing development throughout the National Park will have likely significant in combination adverse effects on the internationally designated nature conservation sites. As the SA is informed by the HRA, the SA concludes that Local Plan Objective 5 would have a negative sustainability impact on the SA's nature conservation objectives. Consequently, all housing development delivered will require mitigation before it can become sustainable.
- 4.82 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that potential impacts on nature conservation interests could be mitigated through a range of measures including the use of rangers, interpretation and educational information about the potential impacts to influence visitor behaviour. Alternative area of greenspace could be used for recreation to take pressure away from the most sensitive areas of habitat and wildlife. These and other mitigation measures are included in the National Park Authority's (NPA) revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership's (SRMP) Mitigation Strategy, which are described in Chapter 5 of the Submission draft Local Plan and are designed to provide mitigation for the potential recreational impacts of new housing in the National Park. The HRA of the Local Plan concludes that the NPA's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Scheme will adequately mitigate potential recreation pressures from development within the National Park. Policy SP5 of the Submission draft Local Plan is also written to specifically avoid impacts on nature conservation designations, and the implementation of mitigation is outlined in this Policy.
- 4.83 There is a specific policy in the Submission draft Local Plan, Policy SP7, which provides protection for the landscape. It is also considered that policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy DP2 (General Development Principles), Policy SP6 (The Natural Environment) and Policy SP21 (Size of New Dwellings) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of this strategic objective on the landscape. The Submission draft Local Plan also proposes a lower scale of housing development than the 'policy-off' objectively assessed need. It further proposes to locate the majority of windfall housing development within the four defined villages (and, thus, separate these from the open countryside), and locate the allocated housing sites where they are not considered to have a significant impact on the landscape.
- 4.84 Concern over the possible impacts on climate change and any unsustainable use of resources will be mitigated by policies in the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1, Policy DP2, Policy DP8 (Safeguarding Water Resources), Policy SP11 (Climate Change) and Policy SP14 (Renewable Energy).

- 4.85 Overall, it is concluded that policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, together with the implementation of the NPA and SRMP Mitigation Schemes will ensure that potential adverse impacts from Local Plan Objective 5 on the SA Objectives are mitigated.

#### **Local Plan Objective 6: Develop a diverse and sustainable economy**

- 4.86 There may be some potential for tension between this objective and SA Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4. Additional economic development has the potential to impact on nature conservation interests (SA Objective 2), landscape/ townscape/ seascape interests (SA Objective 1), local heritage and culture (SA Objective 3), potential pollution (SA Objective 4) and could give rise to carbon emissions, and lead to an unsustainable use of resources (SA Objective 4).
- 4.87 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that mitigation could include an emphasis on high quality design, sustainable construction, and on the sustainable location of development to avoid impacts on the landscape, habitats, wildlife and heritage. It was also suggested that mitigation could include the focus on certain scale and types of economic development or employment that would be low impact and avoid any significant impacts on landscape, habitats, and heritage. Measures to reduce the need to travel, and promoting alternative modes of transport (to private vehicles) should be encouraged.
- 4.88 Policy SP1: Supporting sustainable development and Policy DP2: General Development Principles of the Submission draft Local Plan provide clear guidance on sustainable construction and high quality design principles, and require new development to respect the natural, built, and historic environments, landscape character and biodiversity. Policy SP42: Business and Employment Development outlines the focus for employment development to be within the four Defined Villages, which are considered to be the more sustainable locations, particularly for travelling to work. Focus on these villages also keeps development away from the open countryside and the sensitive landscapes and habitats. Outside the four Defined Villages the policy also requires the re-use or conversion of existing buildings and sites, farm diversification schemes and home working as a priority for business development. This approach will help to reduce any potential adverse impacts on the landscape.
- 4.89 The scale of business developments is required to be small scale and Policy DP2: General Development Principles requires development to be appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, appearance, form, siting and layout. In terms of the type of business development that would avoid impacts on the landscape and habitats, the Local Economy Chapter of the Submission draft Local Plan states that.. *“Taking into account the need to maintain the special environmental qualities of the Park, supporting the economic well-being of the Park’s*

*communities will be best served by focusing on small businesses, with locally distinctive, higher value and low impact types of businesses being most appropriate.”*

- 4.90 A new Policy has been introduced to the Submission draft Local Plan compared to earlier iterations. Policy SP7: Landscape Character outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. This Policy aims to conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest’s landscapes and seascapes and ensures that new development should be informed by the New Forest National Park’s Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.91 Concern over the possible impacts on climate change and any unsustainable use of resources will be mitigated by policies in the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1, Policy DP2, Policy DP8 (Safeguarding Water Resources), Policy SP11 (Climate Change) and Policy SP14 (Renewable Energy).
- 4.92 Overall, it can be concluded that policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that potential adverse impacts from Local Plan Objective 6 are mitigated.

#### **Local Plan Objective 8: Support development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation**

- 4.93 There is some potential for visitors to the National Park to impact on nature conservation interests (SA Objective 2), landscape/ townscape/ seascape and tranquillity (SA Objective 1), pollution (SA Objective 4) and carbon emissions (SA Objective 4), particularly if visitors are travelling by car.
- 4.94 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that mitigation could include measures to minimise use of the private car and the encouragement of sustainable tourism. Policy SP46: Tourism Development outlines that tourism development will be supported where it provides opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park in a way that either enhances, or does not damage the special qualities. This Policy outlines the focus for tourism development to be within the four defined villages, and thus away from the open countryside and the sensitive landscapes and habitats. Policy DP47: Holiday Parks and Camp Sites also restricts the development of new camping and caravanning accommodation. Policy DP2: General Development Principles aims to avoid adverse impacts associated with traffic or pollution.
- 4.95 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Submission draft Local Plan concludes that it cannot rule out that the recreational impacts from new visitor

accommodation throughout the National Park will have likely significant in combination adverse effects on the designated nature conservation sites. Consequently, all visitor accommodation will require mitigation for these impacts before it can become sustainable.

- 4.96 A wide range of mitigation measures are included in the NPA's revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership's (SRMP) Mitigation Strategy and are designed to provide mitigation for the potential recreational impacts in the National Park. The HRA of the Submission draft Local Plan concludes that this revised NPA Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Scheme will adequately mitigate potential recreation pressures from development within the National Park. These schemes are enacted through Policy SP5, which provides protection for recreational impacts on the internationally designated sites.
- 4.97 A new Policy has been introduced to the Submission draft Local Plan to further protect the landscape character. Policy SP7: Landscape Character, outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park. It is also considered that policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy DP2 (General Development Principles), will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of this strategic objective on the landscape.
- 4.98 On balance it is considered that policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, together with the implementation of the NPA and SRMP Mitigation Schemes will ensure that any potential adverse impacts from Local Plan Objective 8 are mitigated.

#### **Local Plan Objective 9: Reducing impacts of traffic**

- 4.99 There is some potential for tension with SA Objectives 9. This objective implies a greater emphasis will be put on reducing the impacts of traffic than providing for the transport requirements of businesses. However, reducing road congestion could also be a benefit for the local economy. Policy SP11: Climate Change also support proposals to mitigate climate change and adapt to the impacts of climate change through locating development to enable a reduction in the need to travel.

## **(b) Sustainability Appraisal of Local Plan Policies**

4.100 The SA assessment shows that overall the Submission draft Local Plan policies are sustainable. The Local Plan includes a policy on delivering sustainable development in a National Park context (Policy SP1). Most Submission draft Local Plan policies demonstrate beneficial sustainability effects when assessed against the SA Objectives.

4.101 There are, however, a few policies which could have the potential for an adverse impact on one or more of the SA Objectives. These are highlighted below. On balance it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that the potential adverse impacts from these policies on the SA Objectives will be mitigated.

### **Policy SP19: New Residential Development in the New Forest National Park**

### **Policy SP20: Specialist Housing for Older People**

4.102 The SA assessment of Policy SP19 and SP20 shows that new housing development could lead to possible conflicts with the protection of the landscape, nature conservation, and with the character of the built environment and cultural heritage (SA Objectives 1, 2 and 3). It also raises the potential of some negative impacts on the sustainable use of resources (SA Objective 4).

4.103 It is considered that to mitigate these potential adverse impacts, measures including the choice of sustainable locations for housing development, high quality design, and limiting the scale of housing to be delivered could be considered. The potential conflict of these housing policies (SP19, SP20) with SA Objectives 1, 2 and 3 may be tempered by a more modest level of housing. However, as is recognised within the SA Objectives, the delivery of housing to meet the needs of local communities within the National Park is also a key element of sustainable development. The Submission draft Local Plan proposes a lower scale of housing development than the identified 'policy-off' objectively assessed housing need figure and this is partly due to the other sustainability factors (including those relating to landscape, nature conservation, and the built environment) that must be considered alongside housing needs in preparing the Local Plan.

4.104 Policy SP19 and the settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy SP4 propose to locate the majority of housing development within or close to the four defined villages, which will provide a greater distance between these houses and the landscape and nature conservation habitats of the open countryside. This approach to new housing will also focus development in the most sustainable locations, where there are existing facilities and services and transport links, and minimise the need to travel. An assessment comparing the settlement



hierarchy and spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4 with alternative settlement approaches (such as a more dispersed settlement pattern) found that the approach outlined in Policy SP4 was the most sustainable approach (see Appendix 5).

- 4.105 Concern over the possible impacts on climate change and any unsustainable use of resources is mitigated by other policies in the Submission draft Local Plan. Policy SP1 identifies sustainable development as development which makes use of sustainable building techniques, local materials and minimises energy use and waste. Policy DP2 requires no adverse impacts from pollution, including air, soil, water, noise and light. Policy DP8 ensures the efficient use of water resources, and Policy SP11 supports proposals that mitigate climate change, including the sustainable design and construction of buildings with improved water and energy efficiency. Policy SP14 supports renewable energy proposals for households and businesses. It is considered that the combination of these other policies in the Submission draft Local Plan will provide sufficient measures to ensure that the sustainable use of resources is supported.
- 4.106 It is also important that attention is given to the location, siting, building materials used, and design of dwellings to limit any potential adverse impacts on the built and cultural heritage. Mitigation of the possible impacts could include an emphasis on high quality design and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (as outlined in Policy DP2). The Authority's Design Guide and various Village Design Statements will help to ensure that new developments are sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment.
- 4.107 It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP4 (Spatial Strategy), Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), Policy SP17 (Local Distinctiveness), Policy DP18 (Design Principles), Policy DP2 (General Development Principles) and Policy SP21 (Size of New Dwellings) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of Policy SP19 and SP20 on the built environment.
- 4.108 A new Policy has also been introduced to the Submission draft Local Plan to further protect the landscape character from the effects of new housing development. Policy SP7: Landscape Character, outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. This Policy aims to conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes and ensures that new development should be informed by the New Forest National Park's Landscape Character Assessment. This policy helps to deliver the SA objective of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty and

landscape of the New Forest, linked to the National Park's statutory first purpose.

- 4.109 Mitigation of the possible impacts could also include paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (for example protecting existing trees and hedgerows together with the implementation of appropriate new planting schemes) and on high quality design to ensure that new buildings are appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, appearance, form, siting and layout, so that they sit comfortably in the landscape. All of these are covered by Policy DP2, which also requires development to respect the natural environment and landscape character. Policy SP1 requires development to enhance the landscape through high quality design.
- 4.110 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan concludes that it cannot rule out that the recreational impacts of new housing development throughout the National Park will have likely significant in combination adverse effects on the internationally designated nature conservation sites. As the SA is informed by the HRA, the SA concludes that Policy SP19 would have a negative sustainability impact on the SA's nature conservation objectives. Consequently, all housing development delivered through Policy SP19 will require mitigation for these impacts before it can become sustainable. Due to the age of some occupants of specialist housing, there may not be a recreational impact in certain circumstances under Policy SP20.
- 4.111 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that potential impacts on nature conservation interests could be mitigated through a range of measures including the use of rangers, interpretation and educational information about the potential impacts to influence visitor behaviour. Alternative area of greenspace could be used for recreation to take pressure away from the most sensitive areas of habitat and wildlife. These and other mitigation measures are included in the NPA's revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Mitigation Strategy, which are described in Chapter 5 of the Submission draft Local Plan and are designed to provide mitigation for the potential recreational impacts of new housing in the National Park. The HRA of the Local Plan concludes that the National Park Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Scheme will adequately mitigate potential recreation pressures from development within the National Park.
- 4.112 Policy SP5: Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance specifically provides protection from all impacts on the internationally designated sites from new housing development. Furthermore Policy SP6: The Natural Environment provide protection for local, regional and nationally important nature conservation interests.

4.113 In conclusion, it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, together with the implementation of the NPA and SRMP Mitigation Schemes will ensure that potential adverse impacts of Policy SP19 and SP20 on SA Objective 2 will be mitigated.

**Policy SP 22: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst**

**Policy SP23: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel**

**Policy SP24: Land south of Church Lane, Sway**

**Policy SP25: Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station**

**Policy SP26: Land at Calshot Village**

4.114 The SA assessment of these Policies shows that these new housing allocations could lead to a potential conflict with the SA Objective of conserving and enhancing the landscape (SA Objective 1). It is recognised that any loss of open countryside or land next to open countryside for development could have an impact on the landscape, although the Local Plan-making process has also already factored in potential landscape impacts into the site identification process. The sites at Ashurst, Lyndhurst and Sway all directly adjoin the existing Defined Village boundaries and have a degree of self-containment from the wider National Park landscape. Mitigation of the possible impacts could include paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (for example protecting existing trees and hedgerows together with the implementation of appropriate new planting schemes) and on high quality design to ensure that new buildings are appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, appearance, form, siting and layout, so that they sit comfortably in the landscape. All of these are covered by Policy DP2, which also requires development to respect the natural environment and landscape character. Policy SP1 requires development to enhance the landscape through high quality design. The landscape setting of the housing sites at Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Calshot and Sway has been protected through the designation of significant Tree Preservation Orders at each site prior to their proposed allocation in the Local Plan.

4.115 It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy DP2 (General Development Principles), Policy SP6 (The Natural Environment) and Policy SP21 (Size of New Dwellings) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of these Policies on the landscape.

4.116 A new Policy has also been introduced into the Submission draft Local Plan to further protect the landscape character from the effects of new housing development. Policy SP7: Landscape Character, outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty

of the National Park and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. This Policy aims to conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes, and ensures that new development should be informed by the New Forest National Park's Landscape Character Assessment.

4.117 Policy SP22, Policy SP23, Policy SP24 and Policy SP26 all contain a requirement to protect trees, and Policy SP25 requires a net positive public benefit in relation to the landscape.

4.118 On balance it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that potential adverse impacts from these policies on the landscape will be mitigated.

**Policy SP22: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst**

**Policy SP23: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel**

**Policy SP24: Land south of Church Lane, Sway**

**Policy SP25: Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station**

**Policy SP26: Land at Calshot Village**

4.119 The SA assessment of these Policies highlights that these new housing allocations could lead to possible conflict with the SA Objective of conserving and enhancing the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture (SA Objective 3).

4.120 It is important that attention is given to the location, siting, building materials used, and design of dwellings to limit any potential adverse impacts on the built and cultural heritage. Mitigation of the possible impacts could include an emphasis on high quality design and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (as covered by Policy DP2). It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), Policy SP17 (Local Distinctiveness), Policy DP18 (Design Principles) and Policy DP2 (General Development Principles) will provide appropriate mitigation for the potential impacts of Policies on the built environment. Moreover, the Authority's Design Guide SPD and a number of Village Design Statements will help to ensure that new developments are sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment.

4.121 One of the proposed housing allocations – land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel – is located within a Conservation Area. Policy SP23 states that the design and scale of the development must conserve and enhance the character of the Lyndhurst Conservation Area.

4.122 On balance it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that potential adverse impacts from these policies on SA Objective 3 will be mitigated.

**Policy SP22: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst**

**Policy SP23: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel**

**Policy SP24: Land south of Church Lane, Sway**

**Policy SP25: Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station**

**Policy SP26 Land at Calshot Village**

4.123 The SA assessment of these Policies shows that these new housing allocations could lead to potential conflicts with nature conservation. Additional housing throughout the National Park could give rise to an adverse impact on SA Objective 2 due to an increase in recreational pressures on the internationally designated nature conservation sites. It should also be recognised that potential impacts on nature conservation designations has been a key factor in assessing potential housing site allocations and is one of the principle reasons for the small scale nature of new development proposed within the National Park.

4.124 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 considered that housing allocations could have an impact on areas subject to nature conservation designations. Subsequently, the previously proposed allocations at Strawberry Fields and Gaza Avenue, East Boldre have been removed from the Local Plan and the proposed housing site allocation on land south of Church Lane, Sway has been reduced significantly to remove the area of land closest to the New Forest Special Protection Area.

4.125 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the proposed Submission draft Local Plan concludes that it cannot rule out that the recreational impacts of new housing development throughout the National Park will have likely significant in combination adverse effects on the internationally designated nature conservation sites. As the SA is informed by the HRA, the SA concludes that these Policies would have a negative sustainability impact on the SA's nature conservation objectives. Consequently, all housing development delivered through these policies will require mitigation for these impacts before it can become sustainable.

4.126 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that potential impacts on nature conservation interests could be mitigated through a range of measures including the use of rangers, interpretation and educational information about the potential recreational impacts to influence visitor behaviour. Alternative area of greenspace could be used for recreation to take pressure away from the most sensitive areas of habitat and wildlife. These and other mitigation measures are included in the NPA's revised Habitat Mitigation

Scheme and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership's (SRMP) Mitigation Strategy, (which are described in Chapter 5 of the Submission draft Local Plan) and are designed to provide mitigation for the potential recreational impacts of new housing in the National Park. The HRA of the Local Plan concludes that the revised NPA's Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Scheme will adequately mitigate recreation pressures from development within the National Park.

4.127 The HRA also assessed the urban edge impacts of these housing allocations, and in the case of Policy SP23 recommended that more wording was inserted into this Policy. This Policy now requires any proposal to incorporate measures to mitigate potential significant urban edge impacts on the adjacent protected nature conservation habitats.

4.128 Policy SP5: Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance specifically provides protection from all impacts on the internationally designated sites from new housing development. Furthermore Policy SP6: The Natural Environment provide protection for local, regional and nationally important nature conservation interests, and Policy SP6 provides protection for habitats and species of biodiversity importance.

4.129 Consequently, the SA concludes that given the use of the NPA and SRMP Mitigation Schemes and the implementation of Policy SP5 and Policy SP6 of the Submission Draft Local Plan, then it can be concluded that potential adverse impacts from these policies on SA Objective 2 will be mitigated.

#### **Policy SP28 – Rural Exceptions Sites**

#### **Policy SP29 - New Forest Commoners' Dwellings**

#### **Policy SP30 - New Forest Estate Workers' Dwellings**

#### **Policy DP31 - Agricultural and Forestry Workers Dwellings**

#### **Policy DP33 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

4.130 Permitting small-scale housing through rural exception sites plays an important part in providing affordable housing for local people. Permitting Commoners' dwellings provides affordable housing for commoners, thus helping to sustain the practice of commoning in the New Forest. Estate Workers' dwellings help the larger estates in the National Park in their role of conserving the landscape and cultural heritage of the New Forest and assist the development of a sustainable rural economy. Support for agricultural and forestry workers dwellings plays an important part in supporting the rural economy. Permitting permanent and/or transient accommodation assists in meeting the housing need for gypsies, travellers and showpeople.

4.131 However, all these types of dwellings are likely to be found outside the four Defined Villages and some may be in sensitive parts of the open countryside.

Thus, the SA assessment shows that this could potentially give rise to adverse impacts on the SA Objectives of protecting the landscape, wildlife and habitats, together with the character of the built environment and cultural heritage (SA Objectives 1, 2 and 3).

- 4.132 Attention is required to be given to the scale of these housing developments and it is considered that the requirement of Policy SP28 restricting developments to those of a 'small-scale' should be effective in reducing some adverse impacts. Policy SP21, Policy SP29, Policy SP30 and Policy DP31 all restrict the size of new dwellings and thus reduce their impact in the landscape. Policy SP30 also requires the conversion or change of use of existing buildings as the first preference which will help to ensure that any potential adverse impacts on the landscape are minimised.
- 4.133 It is important that attention is given to the location, siting, building materials used, and design of dwellings to limit any potential adverse impacts on the built and cultural heritage. Mitigation of the possible impacts could include an emphasis on high quality design and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (as covered by Policy DP2). It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), Policy SP17 (Local Distinctiveness), Policy DP18 (Design Principles) and Policy DP2 (General Development Principles) will provide appropriate mitigation for the potential impacts of Policies on the built environment. Moreover, the Authority's Design Guide SPD and a number of Village Design Statements will help to ensure that new developments are sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment.
- 4.134 Mitigation of the possible impacts on the landscape could include an emphasis on high quality design and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (for example protecting existing trees and hedgerows together with the implementation of an appropriate new planting scheme as covered by Policy DP2). It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy DP2 (General Development Principles), Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP6 (The Natural Environment), Policy SP21 (Size of New Dwellings) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of these Policies on the landscape. Moreover, Policy SP30 requires proposals to deliver multiple benefits in line with the National Park purposes and special qualities, and Policy SP33 requires a detailed landscaping plan.
- 4.135 A new Policy has also been introduced into the Submission draft Local Plan to further protect the landscape character from the effects of new housing development. Policy SP7: Landscape Character, outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty

of the National Park and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. This Policy aims to conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes, and ensures that new development should be informed by the New Forest National Park's Landscape Character Assessment.

- 4.136 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the proposed Submission draft Local Plan concludes that it cannot rule out that the recreational impacts of new housing development throughout the National Park will have likely significant adverse effects on the internationally designated nature conservation sites. As the SA is informed by the HRA, the SA concludes that Policy SP19 would have a negative sustainability impact on the SA's nature conservation objectives. Consequently, all housing development delivered through these Policies will require mitigation for these impacts before it can become sustainable.
- 4.137 The SA of the draft Local Plan in October 2016 recommended that potential impacts on nature conservation interests could be mitigated through a range of measures including the use of rangers, interpretation and educational information about the potential impacts to influence visitor behaviour. Alternative area of greenspace could be used for recreation to take pressure away from the most sensitive areas of habitat and wildlife. These and other mitigation measures are included in the NPA's revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Mitigation Strategy, (which are described in Chapter 5 of the Submission draft Local Plan) and are designed to provide mitigation for the potential recreational impacts of new housing in the National Park.
- 4.138 The HRA of the Local Plan concludes that the National Park Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP's Scheme will adequately mitigate potential recreation pressures from development within the National Park.
- 4.139 The HRA also assessed the urban edge impacts of Policy SP33, and recommended that more wording was inserted into this Policy. This Policy now requires any proposal to incorporate measures to mitigate potential significant urban edge impacts on the adjacent protected nature conservation habitats.
- 4.140 Policy SP5: Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance specifically provides protection from all impacts on the internationally designated sites from new housing development. Furthermore Policy SP6: The Natural Environment provide protection for local, regional and nationally important nature conservation interests.
- 4.141 In conclusion, it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, together with the NPA and SRMP Mitigation Schemes will ensure that potential adverse impacts from these policies are mitigated.



## **Policy SP42: Business and Employment Development**

- 4.142 Support for new small-scale business and employment development plays an important part in contributing to the well-being of local communities (SA Objective 8). However, while the priority is to locate such facilities within the defined villages, there is the potential for business development to take place in locations outside the defined villages. Thus, the SA assessment highlights a potential adverse impact on the SA Objective of conserving and enhancing the landscape (SA Objective 1).
- 4.143 The policy however, requires the re-use or conversion of existing buildings and sites, farm diversification schemes and home working as a priority for such development. This approach will help to reduce any potential adverse impacts on the landscape. Mitigation of the possible impacts could also include an emphasis on high quality design and paying careful attention to landscaping requirements (for example protecting existing trees and hedgerows together with the implementation of an appropriate new planting scheme, as covered by Policy DP2).
- 4.144 It is considered that other policies contained within the Submission draft Local Plan, including Policy DP2 (General Development Principles), Policy SP1 (Sustainable development), Policy SP6 (The Natural Environment) will all provide mitigation for the potential impacts of Policy SP42 on the landscape. Policy SP42 also contains a requirement for development to be small scale which will also limit impacts.
- 4.145 A new Policy has also been introduced into the Submission draft Local Plan to further protect the landscape character from the effects of new housing development. Policy SP7: Landscape Character, outlines that great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. This Policy aims to conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes, and ensures that new development should be informed by the New Forest National Park's Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.146 On balance it is considered that other policy requirements and measures contained within the Submission draft Local Plan will ensure that potential adverse impacts on the landscape from Policy SP42 are mitigated.

### **(c) Appraisal of alternatives considered**

- 4.147 A requirement of the SA process is to identify, describe and evaluate any reasonable alternative approaches, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan. In the case of a nationally protected landscape, the range of alternatives is limited by the need to conform to the statutory legal purposes and duty of the National Park (as originally established in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949). Given the success of the existing Core Strategy policies in delivering these National Park purposes, it has been considered prudent to continue with the existing approach in many policy areas. This means that alternative approaches in many policy areas have not been required.
- 4.148 The National Planning Policy Framework clarifies that for plan making, development in National Parks should be restricted and therefore do not have to meet objectively assessed needs. This means that some development approaches have not been considered, and this restricts the amount of possible alternatives.
- 4.149 Furthermore, well over half of the land in the National Park's planning area is covered by internationally designated nature conservation sites which have the highest level of protection under nature conservation legislation. The New Forest National Park has a higher proportion of land covered by these international designations than any other planning authority in England. The National Planning Policy Framework also clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds and Habitats Directives is being considered. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan concludes that prior to mitigation, the recreational impacts of new residential and visitor accommodation throughout the National Park cannot be ruled out as having a likely significant in combination effect on these designated areas. Therefore, this further NPPF restriction applies throughout the National Park and again limits the possible alternative approaches that can be considered.
- 4.150 Consequently, in many cases when considering possible planning approaches for the area there are limited realistic alternatives that can be followed in the National Park.
- 4.151 Despite these restrictions, a number of alternatives were considered during the preparation of the Local Plan. Alternative approaches have been considered for the following issues:
- Retail development
  - Affordable Housing provision within the defined villages

- Alternative sites for housing allocations
- Parking standards
- Replacement Dwellings
- Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Self Build Housing
- Rural Exceptions Sites

4.152 Details of the results of the sustainability assessment of each of these alternatives can be seen in the Draft Sustainability Report (2016) that accompanied the Regulation 18 Consultation of the Draft Local Plan. These assessments informed the choice of the final policy approaches taken in the Submission draft Local Plan, which have all been assessed in Appendix 4.

4.153 As the settlement pattern is a key element of delivering sustainable development in the National Park, an assessment was completed to test the preferred approach (initially included in the Regulation 18 Consultation and now outlined in the Submission draft Local Plan Policy SP4: Spatial Strategy) with two alternative approaches, including:

- (a) Removing all the settlement boundaries and have a criteria based approach for assessing applications across the National Park
- (b) Extending the settlement hierarchy to include other larger villages with some basic services such as Landford, Burley and Cadnam.

4.154 This assessment can be found in Appendix 5, and concludes that the approach taken in the Submission draft Local Plan Policy SP4 is the most sustainable of the possible alternatives.

## **5. Implementation and Monitoring**

5.1 Some of the assessments of the policies were judged to have uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives. This uncertainty derives from a number of sources, including the quality and availability of relevant data. Given that implementation will be important in the success of the Local Plan 2016-2036, the effects of actions will need to be monitored during its implementation to identify any adverse impacts.

5.2 The NPA will continue to produce both a State of the Park Report and an Annual Monitoring Report to assess the condition of the National Park, measure progress towards objectives and targets and examine the effectiveness of the Submission draft Local Plan policies and strategic objectives. These monitoring reports will also provide information which will allow judgement of how different policies are likely to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development and

how well policies are acting as mitigation for potential adverse sustainable impacts. Moreover, by monitoring a wide range of the baseline information and trends (see Section 4A(a) ) in the State of the Park Report, it will be possible to identify any new unforeseen adverse effects that will need to be addressed. Therefore, it is envisaged that the Authority's monitoring arrangements will not only serve to assess the progress of delivering the Submission draft Local Plan policies, but will also be appropriate to monitor the significant sustainability effects.

## **Appendix 1: National Park purposes and duty**

The two National Park purposes, as set out in the Environment Act, 1995 are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

National Park Authorities also have a duty, in pursuing the Park purposes, to 'seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park'.

## Appendix 2: International, national and local plans, policies and programmes relevant to the development of planning policies within the National Park

Plan, policy or programme	Relevance
<b><i>International</i></b>	
Rio Earth Summit, 1992	International conventions seeking agreement on sustainability and climate change issues.
Kyoto Protocol, 1997	
Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, 2002	
Paris Climate Conference, 2015	
Wild Birds Directive, 2009	EU Directive on the conservation of bird species.
Habitats Directive, 1992	EU Directive on the conservation of natural habitats.
Water Framework Directive, 2000	EU Directive on improving water quality and ecological value of rivers, lakes, coastal waters and ground water.
European Landscape Convention, 2000	Promoting the conservation of natural and cultural landscapes through planning policies and other decision-making.
Granada Convention, 1985 and Valletta Convention, 1992	Council of Europe Conventions on the protection, conservation and better understanding of the historic environment.
European Strategic Environmental Assessment, 2001	EU Directive to ensure environmental issues are fully considered in taking forward new plans or programmes.
<b><i>National</i></b>	
National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 and National Planning Practice Guidance	Government policy and guidance on planning. Within National Parks the NPPF emphasises the importance of conserving landscape and scenic beauty and giving great weight to conserving the wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
Environment Act, 1995	Legislation setting out the purposes and role of national parks.
English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular, 2010	Government guidance on the work of English national parks.
UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005	Government commitment to promote sustainability, focusing on the economy, lifestyles, use of resources and waste.
Habitats Regulations, 2010	National legislation implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives.

Plan, policy or programme	Relevance
Biodiversity 2020	National strategy to halt the decline in England's wildlife and natural resources.
Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement for England, 2013	Government policies to improve the economic, social and cultural value of woodlands and forests.
Housing and Planning Bill, 2016	Legislation proposing various changes to affordable housing and release of land for housing development.
Climate Change Act, 2008 and the Carbon Plan, 2011	Legislation which sets targets for reducing UK carbon emissions and includes a national adaption plan to address likely impacts of climate change.
Water for life and livelihoods, <i>Environment Agency, 2013</i>	Ways of improving water resources in England through water regulation.
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979	The legal framework for recording and preserving scheduled monuments and areas of archaeological interest.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Legislation relating to the protection of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.
The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans, 2015 and The Historic Environment in Local Plans (Good Practice Advice Note 1), <i>Historic England</i>	Advice to help local authorities ensure the historic environment is taken into account through effective policies and site allocation processes.
Heritage 2020, <i>Historic Environment Forum, 2015</i>	A partnership approach to conserving and promoting understanding of the historic environment.
<b>Regional / Local</b>	
National Park Management Plan, 2010 and Partnership Plan for the National Park, 2015, <i>National Park Authority and partners</i>	Sets out an overall Vision, objectives and a series of actions to achieve the national park purposes and duty in the New Forest.
New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, 2010	Current planning policies covering the National Park.
Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, 2013	Policies for Hampshire, including the whole of the National Park, on minerals and waste.
New Forest District Local Plan Review, 2016	Proposed planning policies for the District outside the National Park.
Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan, 2016	Planning policies for the Borough outside the National Park.
Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2015	Planning policies for Wiltshire outside the National Park.
Crown Lands Management Plan, <i>Forestry Commission, 2008</i>	Includes policies and actions for managing the various landscapes and habitats of the Crown Lands.

<b>Plan, policy or programme</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
Special Area of Conservation Management Plan, <i>Natural England, 2001</i>	Describes the habitats and management requirements for the New Forest SAC.
River Basin Management Plan for the South East River Basin District, <i>Environment Agency, 2015</i>	A strategic approach to conserving water resources and quality in the region.
North Solent Shoreline Management Plan, <i>New Forest District Council, 2010</i>	Suggests policies to address coastal change, flooding and erosion in different sections of the North Solent coastline.
New Forest Water Environment Improvement Plan, <i>New Forest Catchment Partnership, 2012</i>	Includes practical projects to improve water quality, involving partners and local communities.
New Forest National Park Design Guide SPD, <i>National Park Authority, 2011</i>	Sets out guidance to help conserve the character of the landscape and built environment of the Park.
New Forest National Park Development Standards SPD, <i>National Park Authority, 2012</i>	Sets out additional guidance on the provision of affordable housing, habitat mitigation measures, open space provision, sustainable construction and parking within the Park.
Landscape Character Assessment, <i>National Park Authority, 2013</i>	Describes the landscape character areas within the Park.
Conservation Area Character Appraisals for each Conservation Area, <i>National Park Authority 2008/9</i>	Describes the characteristics of each Conservation Area and gives details of their distinctive building styles, materials and landscape setting.
Tranquil Areas Study, <i>Land Use Consultants for National Park Authority, 2015</i>	Mapping the levels of tranquillity and disturbance across the National Park.
Annual Biodiversity Monitoring Reports, <i>Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre</i>	Annual reports on the extent and condition of habitats and species for each local planning authority area.
Annual Monitoring Reports, <i>National Park Authority</i>	Annual reports monitoring the performance of adopted planning policies.
Working for a Smarter Future, <i>Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014</i>	Sets out a strategy for economic development within the M3 LEP area.
New Forest Business Needs Survey, <i>New Forest District Council, 2014</i>	Gauges the needs and concerns of the local business community through questionnaires to local businesses.
Hampshire Local Transport Plan, <i>Hampshire County Council, 2011</i>	Strategic policies for traffic and transport in the County, with a three year rolling programme of highway improvements.
Manual for Streets, <i>Hampshire County Council, 2010</i>	A companion to the national guidance, giving recommendations for highway and street design in Hampshire.

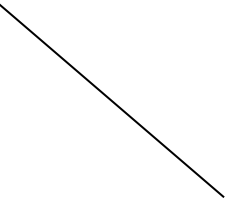


### Appendix 3

## Comparison of Local Plan strategic objectives and Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

**Assessment:** + Positive    o Neutral    ? Uncertain    x Potential conflict

Potential conflicts/ tensions between proposed Submission draft Local Plan objectives and the Sustainability Appraisal objectives will be explained in Section 4B(a), along with mitigation measures or other policy considerations that may resolve them.

<div style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">Local Plan strategic objectives</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
1. Protect and enhance the natural environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the range of habitats and species.	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	+	?

<div> <div>SA Objective</div> <div>Local Plan strategic objectives</div> </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
2. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.	+	+	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	+?
3. Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest.	+	+	+	+	+?	o	o	o	+?	o
4. Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.	o	o	+	o	o	+	+ ?	+?	o	o

<div> <div>SA Objective</div> <div>Local Plan strategic objectives</div> </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs and maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.	x?	x?	x?	o	o	+	+	o	o	o
6. Develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities throughout the Park.	x?	x?	x?	?	o	+	o	o	+	+
7. Encourage land management that sustains the special qualities of the National Park.	+	+	+	?	o	o	o	o	+	+

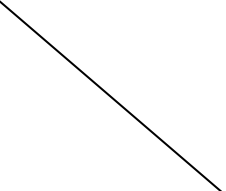
<div> <div>SA Objective</div> <div>Local Plan strategic objectives</div> </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
8. Support development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, and provides opportunities for enjoying the Park's special qualities.	x?	x?	o	o	+	o	o	+?	+	o
9. Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and support a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park.	+	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	x?	o

## Appendix 4

### Sustainability Appraisal of Regulation 19 Submission draft Local Plan Policies

**Assessment:** + Positive    0 Neutral    ? Uncertain    - Negative

Where the Sustainability Appraisal identifies a negative assessment of the sustainability of a policy, then other mitigating Policies or mitigation measures are identified in Stage B (b) Sustainability Appraisal of Local Plan Policies.

<div style="text-align: center;"> <b>SA Objectives</b>   </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
Local Plan policy										
SP 1: Supporting sustainable development	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?
DP2 : General Development Principles	+	+	+	+?	0	+?	0	0	0	0
SP3 : Major Development in the National Park	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?
SP4 : Spatial Strategy	+?	+?	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	?

<div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
SP5 : Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance	+	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0
SP6 : The Natural Environment	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SP7 : Landscape Character	+	+	+?	0	0	0	0	0	?	?
DP8 : Safeguarding and Improving Water Resources	+?	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
SP9 : Green Infrastructure	+	+	0	+	+?	+	0	0	0	0
DP10 : Open space	+?	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
SP11 : Climate Change	+?	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0
DP12 : Flood Risk	?	?	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0
DP13 : Coastal Development	+	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
SP14 : Renewable energy	+?	0	0	+	0	+?	0	0	+	0
SP15 : Tranquillity	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0

<div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
SP16 : The Historic and Built Environment	+	0	+	+?	+	0	0	0	0	0
SP17 : Local Distinctiveness	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
DP18 : Design Principles	+	0	+	+	+?	+	0	0	0	0
SP19 : New residential development in the National Park	-	-	-?	-?	0	0	+	0	0	+?
SP20 : Specialist Housing for Older People (Use Class C2)	-?	-?	-?	0	0	+	+	0	0	0
SP21 : The size of new dwellings	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+	0	0	0
SP 22: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst	-?	-	-?	?	0	?	+	?	0	0
SP23: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst	-?	-	?	?	?	?	+	?	?	0
SP24 : Land south of Church Lane, Sway	-?	-	-?	?	0	+?	+	?	0	0

<div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
SP25 : Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station	-?	-?	-?	?	0	+	+	?	+	0
SP26 : Land at Calshot Village	-?	-	?	?	0	+	+	?	0	0
SP 27: Affordable Housing provision within the defined villages and on allocated sites	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0
SP 28: Rural Exceptions Sites	-?	-	-?	?	0	+	+	0	+	0
SP 29: New Forest Commoners Dwellings	-?	-	-?	?	0	0	+	0	0	+
SP 30: New Forest Estate Workers Dwellings	-?	-	-?	?	0	0	+	0	0	+
DP 31: Agricultural and Forestry Workers Dwellings	-?	-	-?	?	0	0	+	0	0	+
DP 32: Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	?



<div> <div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div> </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
SP 33: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	-?	-	?	?	o	o	+	o	o	o
SP 34: Residential Character of the Defined Villages	o	o	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
DP 35: Replacement Dwellings	?	o	?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
DP 36: Extensions to Dwellings	?	o	?	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
DP 37: Outbuildings	o	o	?	o	o	o	o	o	+	o
SP 38: Infrastructure Provision and Developer Contributions	?	+?	o	o	o	+	+?	+	o	o
SP 39: Local Community Facilities	?	o	?	o	o	+	o	o	?	o
DP40 : Change of Use from retail in the Defined Villages	o	o	+?	o	o	+	o	o	+	o
DP41 : Retail Development outside the Defined Villages	+	o	?	o	o	+	o	o	+?	+?

<div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
SP42 : Business and Employment Development	-?	o	?	o	+	o	o	o	+	+
SP43 : Existing Employment Sites	o	o	?	o	o	o	o	o	+	?
DP44 : Redevelopment of Existing Employment Sites	o	?	+?	o	o	o	o	o	+	?
DP45 : Extensions to Non Residential Buildings and Uses	o	o	?	o	o	o	o	o	+	?
SP46 : Tourism Development	o	-	?	o	+	o	o	?	+	+?
DP47 : Holiday Parks and Camp Sites	+	+	o	o	+?	o	o	o	+?	o
SP48 : The Land-based Economy	+?	o	+	o	o	o	+	o	+?	+
DP49 : Re-use of Buildings outside the defined villages	o	o	?	o	?	o	o	o	+	+?
DP50 : Agricultural and Forestry Buildings	?	?	?	o	o	o	o	o	o	+

<div> <div>SA Objectives</div> <div>Local Plan policy</div> </div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
DP51 : Recreational Horse Keeping	?	o	o	o	o	+	o	o	o	+?
DP52 : Field Shelters and Stables	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
DP53 : Maneges	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
SP54 : Transport Infrastructure	?	?	o	?	o	o	o	+	?	o
SP55 : Access	+	?	o	+	+	+	o	+	+	o

## Appendix 5: Sustainability Appraisal of Alternatives for the Spatial Strategy.

**Assessment:** + Positive    0 Neutral    ? Uncertain    - Negative

<div style="text-align: center;">SA Objectives</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Local Plan policy and alternative</div>	1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and seascape, and safeguard tranquillity	2. Conserve and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	3. Conserve and enhance the character of the built environment, local heritage and culture	4. Encourage sustainable use of resources, enhance air and water quality, help mitigate climate change	5. Deliver opportunities and education for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities	6. Improve the well-being of communities by providing a safe environment, access to services and opportunities for healthy living	7. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	8. Support the local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport	9. Facilitate a sustainable economy that supports businesses & communities, while maintaining the quality of the environment	10. Ensure a thriving land-based economy
Local Plan Policy SP4 : Spatial Strategy	+?	+?	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	?
Alternative (a) Remove the settlement boundaries and have a criteria based approach for assessing applications across the National Park	-?	-?	-?	-?	0	?	+	-?	+?	?
Alternative (b) Extend the settlement hierarchy to include other larger villages with some basic services such as Landford, Burley and Cadnam	?	-?	?	-?	0	?	+	-?	+?	?

## **Assessment of alternatives to Policy SP4 Spatial Strategy:**

### **Local Plan Policy SP4 – Spatial Strategy**

The conclusion of the SA assessment of the Spatial Strategy Policy SP4 is that it scores positively for helping to deliver housing needs (SA Objective 7), improving the access and maintenance of services (SA Objective 6), supporting existing transport services (SA Objective 8), and using the most sustainable location for business development (SA Objective 9). In addition there are potential benefits in this approach for protecting the wider landscape and nature conservation elsewhere in the National Park (SA Objectives 1, 2). Overall, this approach is considered to be a more sustainable approach than Alternative (a) or Alternative (b).

Focusing development in the existing larger settlements of Brockenhurst, Sway, Lyndhurst and Ashurst will allow residents of new developments to access a wider range of services that are available in these locations, including shops, doctors and schools. Moreover, the increased development in these villages will support the retention of existing services and encourage the start of new ones. A more dispersed settlement pattern may not necessarily be able to support new services in smaller villages.

Brockenhurst, Sway and Ashurst benefit from frequent and long distance railway services and also have regular bus services. Consequently, focusing development in these locations is likely to help the amount of sustainable transport available to residents, and therefore be beneficial for SA Objective 8. A settlement pattern focusing development in the four defined villages would be likely to minimise the need to travel to work, shops, doctors and schools, and, therefore, would minimise the possible impacts of carbon emissions and climate change.

Focusing development in the existing four defined villages will allow residents of new developments to access a wider range of jobs and business services and will allow businesses to locate closer to customers. The existing transport facilities will support a more sustainable supply and delivery of their goods and services and locating in the four defined villages will minimise the need to travel to work. Moreover, the increased development in these villages could support the retention of existing businesses and encourage the start of new ones. A more dispersed settlement pattern would likely to mean businesses are developed in less sustainable

locations, but focusing new development on the four defined villages may mean that the housing or employment and development needs of other communities may not be fully met.

The settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy SP4 will locate the majority of housing development within or close to the four defined villages, which will separate these houses and businesses from, and reduce the impact on, the landscape of the open countryside. The whole of the National Park is a nationally protected landscape and the National Planning Policy Framework specifically identifies National Parks as areas where development should be restricted so that the landscape can be protected. Large numbers of houses and businesses built in the open countryside could erode the reason the area was designated as a National Park. Under these circumstances.

A settlement pattern focused on the four defined villages would also reduce the likelihood of new housing being located close to the internationally designated nature conservation areas. These designated sites are protected by the Habitats Regulations and make up more than half of the land in the National Park. Natural England have advised that it is not appropriate to locate new housing allocations close to these designated sites. Under these circumstances, Policy SP4 is likely to be a more sustainable approach than Alternative (a) and Alternative (b).

### **Alternative (a)**

The conclusion of the SA assessment of Alternative (a) is that this alternative settlement pattern would help to deliver housing needs, but could lead to possible conflicts with the protection of the landscape, nature conservation, and with the character of the built environment and cultural heritage (SA Objectives 1, 2 and 3). It also raises the potential of some negative impacts on the sustainable use of resources (SA Objective 4), and the support for local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport (SA Objective 8). Overall, therefore, Alternative (a) is considered to be a much less sustainable approach than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

It is considered that this approach would not result in a sustainable location for housing development. Dispersed and thinly scattered housing development would not help the retention of services and shops, the provision of utilities, an effective transport network, and would be likely to increase the need to travel to work, shops, doctors and schools.

The settlement hierarchy outlined in Policy SP4 will locate the majority of housing development within or close to the four defined villages, which will separate these houses from the landscape and nature conservation habitats of the open countryside. Alternative (a) does the opposite to this. By locating new housing and other development throughout the National Park, including areas closer to the open countryside, there is a likelihood that this will have a greater impact on the landscape. The whole of the National Park is a nationally protected landscape and the National Planning Policy Framework specifically identifies National Parks as areas where development should be restricted so that the landscape can be protected. Large numbers of houses built in the open countryside would erode the reason the area was designated as a National Park. Under these circumstances, Alternative (a) is likely to be a much less sustainable approach than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

A dispersed settlement pattern would also increase the likelihood of new housing being located close to the internationally designated nature conservation areas. These designated sites are protected by the Habitats Regulations and make up more than half of the land in the National Park. Natural England have advised that it is not appropriate to locate new housing allocations close to these designated sites. Under these circumstances, Alternative (a) is likely to be a much less sustainable approach than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

The approach to locating new housing anywhere throughout the National Park in Alternative (a) could lead to adverse impacts on the character of the built environment. The distinct character of New Forest villages and their close relationship with the open countryside, which is often integrated right into settlements, means that new buildings face a significant challenge to be sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment. Opportunities to integrate new buildings through landscaping schemes are reduced when located close to or in the open countryside, with its very natural and historic habitats. Under these circumstances, Alternative (a) is likely to be a much less sustainable approach than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

The dispersed settlement approach in Alternative (a) is likely to mean more difficulty in provision of utilities, and a much greater need to travel. Consequently there would be greater concern over the possible impacts on climate change and a less sustainable use of resources than in Policy SP4.

Whilst a more dispersed settlement approach is likely to mean businesses are developed in less sustainable locations, new development in smaller settlements could support local businesses and services, provide jobs and strengthen those communities. Focusing new development on the four defined villages may mean that the housing or employment and development needs of other communities may not be fully met.

### ***Alternative (b)***

The conclusion of the SA assessment of Alternative (b) is that this alternative settlement pattern would help to deliver housing needs, but could lead to possible conflicts with the protection of nature conservation interests (SA Objectives 2) and raises the potential of some negative impacts on the support for local transport infrastructure, including sustainable transport (SA Objective 8). There are considered to be uncertain impacts on the protection of the landscape, the character of the built environment and cultural heritage (SA Objectives 1, and 3), and the sustainable use of resources (SA Objective 4). Whilst this approach is considered to be more sustainable than Alternative (a), it is considered to be a less sustainable settlement pattern than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

Extending the settlement hierarchy to include other larger villages would increase the likelihood of new housing being located close to the internationally designated nature conservation areas. These designated sites are protected by the Habitats Regulations and make up more than half of the land in the National Park. Natural England have advised that it is not appropriate to plan for new housing allocations close to these designated sites. Many of the villages which are a little smaller than the four defined villages, such as Burley, are located within close proximity of the designated nature conservation sites. Moreover, the proposed allocated housing sites in East Boldre had to be withdrawn from the Local Plan and the housing allocation in Sway was substantially reduced for this reason. Under these circumstances, Alternative (b) is likely to be a less sustainable approach than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

Brockenhurst, Sway and Ashurst benefit from frequent and long distance railway services and also have regular bus services. Extending the settlement hierarchy to including smaller villages is likely to reduce the amount of sustainable transport available to residents, and therefore be detrimental for SA Objective 8. Moreover, a more dispersed population would be likely to increase the



need to travel to work, shops, doctors and schools. Consequently there would be greater concern over the possible impacts on carbon emissions and climate change, and a less sustainable use of resources than in Policy SP4.

The SA assessment considers that the approach to locating new development in a number of smaller villages may have an adverse impact on the character of the built environment. The distinct character of New Forest villages and their close relationship with the open countryside, which is often integrated right into settlements, means that new buildings face a significant challenge to be sympathetically incorporated into the existing built environment. Opportunities to integrate a substantial amount of new buildings in smaller villages may be limited, and there is a risk that the distinct character of the villages are eroded. For instance, with no settlement boundary currently for Burley, the village is characterised by large amounts of green spaces and fingers of open countryside throughout the village. If a settlement boundary was established, the rural and Forest character of the village would likely to disappear with substantial amounts of in-filling. Under these circumstances, Alternative (b) is likely to be more sustainable than Alternative (a), but it is considered to be a less sustainable settlement pattern than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

Alternative (b) may not result in a substantial impact on the landscape, but this is still a possibility. Opportunities to find sufficient building sites within the smaller villages may not be sufficient to be able to integrate new developments into the existing settlement. Therefore, there remains a risk that new development could have an impact on the open countryside and the landscape setting of the village. In these circumstances it is considered that the risk of an adverse impact on the landscape is less than Alternative (a), but is more than the spatial strategy outlined in Policy SP4.

Whilst a more dispersed settlement approach is likely to mean businesses are developed in less sustainable locations, new development in smaller settlements could support local businesses and services, provide jobs and strengthen those communities. Focusing new development on the four defined villages may mean that the housing or employment and development needs of other communities may not be fully met.

There are other sustainability issues to consider. One of the other villages considered in Alternative (b) is Cadnam, and there are areas within this village which are particularly vulnerable to surface flooding, which would limit the potential for new development.