

Sustainability Appraisal Report for the
New Forest National Park
Management Plan Update 2015-20

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Preface

This Sustainability Appraisal Report, incorporating the requirements of a Strategic Environmental Assessment, (hereafter referred to as the SA Report) has been prepared to inform members of the public, key stakeholders and consultees about the methods and results of the appraisal of the sustainability of the actions of the New Forest National Park Management Plan Update.

The New Forest National Park Management Plan Update (hereafter referred to as the Plan Update) sets out the actions to enable the Management Plan to achieve its objectives for the National Park.

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 Management Plan update.

It involved testing the proposed new actions included in the update against a set of sustainability objectives and criteria. The SA process both informed the development of different actions and tests the sustainability of the final actions that are chosen to be included in the document.

A Sustainability Appraisal and a Strategic Environmental Assessment are both required for the National Park Management Plan update. 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 guidance¹ 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 Management Plan update?

The Environment Act 1995 requires the National Park Authority (NPA) to produce a Management Plan to show how the statutory national park purposes and duty will be delivered by a range of interested organisations, individuals, and communities. The New Forest National Park Management Plan was published in 2010 following comprehensive public consultation. The Vision, objectives and descriptions of the various topics are still relevant, and they have therefore not been changed.

The Management Plan update is designed to be a supplement to the 2010 National Park Management Plan, produced primarily in order to bring the actions in that plan up to date. It should be read in conjunction with the full Plan, which contains much more background information about the New Forest and its special qualities. In addition, the update includes a summary of the more important changes affecting the National Park since the Management Plan was published in 2010.

Methodology for completing the SA

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

A set of sustainability objectives and criteria were used in the Sustainability Appraisal of the original National Park Management Plan 2010, developed from an earlier scoping report produced in consultation with stakeholders and statutory consultees.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance 2014.

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 Plan Update are as follows:

Sustainability Objectives:

- 1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors**
- 2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities**
- 3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park**
- 4. Support local community needs for essential utilities and transport infrastructure having regard to environmental considerations**
- 5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic and employment opportunities that enhance the well being of local communities and village centres**
- 6. Ensure a thriving rural economy**
- 7. Promote sustainable tourism**
- 8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests**
- 9. Maintain, enhance and create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character**
- 10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture**
- 11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil**
- 12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.**

The current state of the environment and a description of the characteristics of the National Park are set out in the National Park Management Plan 2010, and a summary can also be found in Section 3.2 of this Report. The main issues and trends facing the National Park are also outlined in the National Park Management Plan 2010, and a summary can be found in Section 3.3 of this Report.

Stage B: Developing actions and assessing effects

Developing actions

A range of actions have been included in the Plan update, where these meet the following criteria:

- Direct relevance to the national park purposes and duty and to the objectives in the 2010 Management Plan
- Newly proposed or recently started projects, rather than on-going work.

- Fairly precise and specific actions, which, where possible, could be completed within the next five years
- Actions felt to be a priority by the organisation(s) concerned, where resources are available to take them forward.

The range of alternatives was, by definition, limited by the need to coincide with the statutory purposes and duty of the National Park and the large area covered by international nature conservation legislation. In many cases there were, therefore, few realistic alternatives for the direction to be followed in the National Park. However, an assessment was made of the likely evolution of the key environment, social, and economic issues in the area if the proposed Management Plan actions are not pursued. This evaluation is **shown in Table 3.3**.

Assessing the proposed actions

A detailed appraisal of all of the actions was undertaken, using a matrix based on the SA objectives and criteria in the SA Framework to test each of the actions. The effects of the actions were predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective) and assessed (i.e. how significant that effect will be). 'Scores' were determined for each action, reflecting whether the impact of the action was likely to be positive or negative. If appropriate, recommendations for improving the action or mitigating negative impacts were noted.

The initial Sustainability Appraisal of the first draft of the Management Plan Update in October 2014 concluded that there were “no proposed actions in the Management Plan Update which would have a significant adverse effect on any of the Sustainability Objectives, and many would make a positive contribution to sustainability.” The draft Management Plan Update was then revised following the ‘Call for Views’ consultation held from October to December 2014. As a result, a number of amendments were made to the draft Plan, and an updated Sustainability Appraisal was completed for these in March 2015. This further informed the development of the Plan Update. A further consultation on a revised draft then ran for 6 weeks until 22 June 2015. As a result, a number of further amendments were made to the Plan, including two new actions. Details of all the final actions that were included in the final version of the Plan Update and the SA assessment of these can be found in **Appendix 3**

The key findings of the SA assessments

- None of the actions showed any significant adverse impact on sustainability objectives.
- Many of the actions are likely to have a positive impact on sustainability objectives.
- There are, however, a few actions where the impact on the sustainability objective is uncertain.

The likely significant effects of the plan

A list of the significant effects of the Plan Update actions can be found in **Appendix 4**. All the significant effects are beneficial for sustainability, and there are no significant effects that are considered to be detrimental for sustainability.

How social, environmental and economic issues have been considered in developing the actions

The results and recommendations of the SA assessments of the draft actions were carefully considered and taken into account. Together with other comments resulting from the consultation they informed the process of amending the actions and producing the revisions to the Management Plan update. Whilst no actions showed any significant negative effects on sustainability, recommendations for mitigation and enhancement of a number of actions were made during the process.

The difference the process has made

The SA process made an important contribution to the draft stages of producing the Management Plan update. It has confirmed that no significant adverse effects on sustainability are likely to result from the proposed actions, and highlighted a number of areas where amendments or further explanation were needed. These were used to revise the document during the preparation of the Plan Update.

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

A draft SA Report was prepared to inform the initial draft of the management Plan update, and there were two subsequent updates of the SA to reflect the revisions to the Plan Update. All SA reports have incorporated the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Those parts of the final SA Report that meet the specific requirements of an 'Environmental Report' under the SEA Directive have been identified in **Appendix 2**.

Stage D: Consulting on draft Management Plan Update and draft SA Report

Any significant changes to the actions of the draft Plan update, resulting from the public consultations, were subject to further SA assessments before this final SA Report was produced to accompany the final version of the Plan update.

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan

This final SA Report for the Management Plan Update sets out the approach for monitoring the significant sustainability effects in line with the SEA Regulations.

1. Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

1.1 Approach adopted for the Sustainability Appraisal

The approach adopted for this SA Report is that recommended in the current Planning Practice Guidance, and follows the stages described in this Guidance.

- Stage A - Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
- Stage B - Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
- Stage C - Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Stage D - Consulting on the SA Report
- Stage E – Monitoring and reporting after adoption

1.2 Stage A: Setting the Context and Scope

A SA Scoping Report was produced to cover the Local Development Framework for the New Forest National Park in May 2006. It was also intended to be used for other future documents that required an SEA (but were not development plans that needed a SA). It was produced in consultation with stakeholders and the statutory environmental consultees. It set out the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the area, the significant issues the New Forest faces, and the objectives of other relevant plans and the environmental protection they provide. It also developed a Sustainability Framework, with sustainability objectives and criteria which were used to measure the sustainability of the National Park Management Plan 2010.

To determine whether these sustainability objectives and criteria are still relevant, a new scoping exercise was undertaken to determine what changes, if any, were needed. To achieve this, the policy context, baseline information for the area, and the key sustainability issues used for the SA of the initial Management Plan 2010 have been re-assessed and updated where necessary. Some small changes have been made to produce an updated set of sustainability objectives and criteria and these have been used to measure the sustainability of the Plan Update. Details of the new SA objectives used to assess the Plan Update are found in **Appendix 1**.

To fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive, the SA objectives cover biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and the interrelationships between them. **Appendix 2** shows how the SA Framework was developed to ensure it meets the requirements of the SEA Directive.

1.3 Stage B: Developing and Refining Alternatives and Assessing Effects

A range of actions were considered that have direct relevance to the national park purposes and duty and to the objectives in the 2010 Management Plan, together with focusing on newly proposed or recently started projects and those that could be completed within the next five years. Many of these actions are felt to be a priority by the organisations concerned, and where resources are available to take them forward.

The range of alternatives was, by definition, limited by the need to coincide with the statutory purposes and duty of the National Park and the statutory framework within which it operates, including the large area covered by international nature conservation legislation. In many cases there were, therefore, few realistic alternatives for the direction to be followed in the National Park. However, an assessment was made of the likely evolution of the key environment, social, and economic issues in the area if the proposed Management Plan actions are not pursued.

A detailed sustainability appraisal of the different proposed actions was then undertaken. A systematic matrix-based approach was adopted to complete these SA assessments, using the objectives and criteria in the SA Framework to test each of the actions. The effects of the actions were predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective) and assessed (i.e. how significant that effect will be). In every case the assessment considered what effect the action would have on each sustainability objective. 'Scores' were determined for each action, reflecting whether the impact of the action was likely to be positive or negative. A range of different types of effect were considered to determine the likely significant effect of each proposed Plan action. The type of impacts considered included the spatial extent, probability, duration, magnitude, frequency, permanency and reversibility of the effects, together with the cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects. These 'scores' were measured on the scale outlined below.

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

Where effects are assessed to be significant, the reasons have been explained in **Appendix 4**. Where possible, recommendations have been made for mitigating any uncertain effects that might be potentially negative, and for enhancing any potentially positive effects. In other instances, however, it may not have been possible to quantify the effects, especially as the Plan Update will only be one of many influences on what actually happens in the future. In these cases where the impacts of an action are uncertain, monitoring may be required in the future. Monitoring the implementation of the actions is described in the Management Plan Update.

Difficulties encountered with information or carrying out assessment.

It is recognised that the National Park includes areas within Wiltshire and Test Valley Borough, as well as the New Forest District. One of the difficulties encountered in compiling information has been that some of the data required in the SA Framework is not available specifically for the National Park area and relates to the New Forest District, Wiltshire and Test Valley Borough. It was also felt that judging the vulnerability of the area to effects of the actions was an issue, particularly when the National Park contains such a large area of designated European nature conservation sites.

1.4 Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

This final SA Report has been prepared to report on the sustainability of the Management Plan Update, and incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Those parts of the draft SA Report that meet the specific requirements of an 'Environmental Report' under the SEA Directive have been identified in Appendix 2.

1.5 Stage D: Consulting on draft Management Plan Update and draft SA Report

Any significant changes to the actions of the draft Plan update, resulting from the public consultations, were subject to further SA assessments before this final SA Report was produced to accompany the final version of the Plan update. The draft Management Plan Update was revised following the 'Call for Views' consultation held from October to December 2014, with a number of amendments being made to the draft Plan. The draft Plan Update was further revised following the consultation on the Final Draft which ran for 6 weeks until 22 June 2015 - a number of further amendments were made to the draft Plan, including two new actions. All the significant changes to the actions of the draft Plan Update, resulting from the public consultation, were then subject to a further SA assessment before this final SA Report was produced to accompany the final version of the Plan Update.

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

Chapter 5 of this SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the significant sustainability effects in line with the SEA Regulations.

2. Setting the Context and Scope

2.1. Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal

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 New Forest National Park Management Plan Update. It involves testing the Plan's proposed new actions against a set of sustainability objectives and criteria. The SA process both informs the development of different actions and tests the sustainability of the final actions that are chosen to be included in the Plan Update.

Whilst not a planning document, the purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal is described in the current Planning Practice Guidance². It states that 'Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. This process is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have'.

The National Park Authority (NPA) has determined that it will also complete an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC. This is called a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The difference between the SA and the SEA is that the SA assesses a broad range of environmental, economic and social impacts of the Management Plan Update, whereas the SEA focuses on the environmental impacts. This SA Report incorporates a SEA, and has been produced in line with the current Planning Practice Guidance.

2.2. Management Plan Update objectives and contents

About National Park Management Plans

All National Parks are expected to have a Management Plan for their area, to help guide the work of those with responsibilities or an interest in the National Park. Government guidance emphasises that the plan should be for the National Park as a place, and not specifically for the NPA or any other particular organisation. However relevant authorities are required to take the two national park purposes into account in any work that may affect the area (Environment Act, 1995). The purposes are:

to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;

to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public;

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal-and-how-does-it-relate-to-strategic-environmental-assessment/>

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

The relationship between the purposes is commonly known as the Sandford Principle, which states that every effort should be made to reconcile any conflicts between the purposes, but that if such efforts fail the first purpose should take precedence.

The New Forest National Park Management Plan was agreed in 2010 following comprehensive public consultation over several years with all the local communities, interest groups and organisations in the Forest. The long-term vision and objectives and the descriptions of the various topics are still relevant, and in its final form the plan gained the support of most of the organisations and interests in the Forest. Therefore, it has not been changed.

The purpose of the update

The Management Plan update is designed to form a simple supplement to the 2010 National Park Management Plan. It should be read in conjunction with the 2010 Plan, which contains much more background information about the New Forest and its special qualities, and can be viewed at http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20016/our_work/81/management_plan

The original 2010 Plan included a number of priority actions covering the period up to 2015, many of which have been completed or are underway. The main purpose of the update is therefore to suggest a series of new or updated actions for the next five years. In addition, the preliminary chapters help to set the scene by including examples of some of the recent work undertaken in the Forest by a variety of organisations, communities and individuals, together with a summary of some of the more important changes affecting the National Park since the original Management Plan was published.

An important feature of the Plan Update document is that it has been produced jointly by many of the statutory organisations in the National Park. They have agreed the text and contributed the actions that their organisations will take forward. It also includes work that a number of other local organisations are planning to undertake in the near future, and as part of the consultations, further Forest organisations and communities suggested other priorities to be added to the document. The update is therefore not about the work of the NPA or any particular organisation, but is an attempt to bring together a broad range of actions which may be of benefit to the Forest and its communities.

About the actions

The actions contained in the Plan update are a selection of projects for the period 2015-20. They are not meant to be seen as a comprehensive list of all the work likely to occur in the Forest, but instead focus mainly on new ideas and initiatives designed to deliver the objectives in the 2010 Management Plan. The reasons for choosing these particular actions are described in section 4.1.

Many of the actions have been suggested by the larger statutory or voluntary sector organisations in the Forest, but there will be other initiatives, being planned by local groups or communities, which are also important for the Forest and fit in with the objectives of the Management Plan. A 'Call for Views' initial consultation asked people to suggest further actions, which they are working on, in order to show the full range of activities taking place over the next five years.

2.3. Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations

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 SA Report

The SEA Directive's requirements	Where covered in SA Report
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;	2.2 ; 3.1
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	3.2, 3.3
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	3.2; 3.3
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;	3.2, 3.3
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;	3.1, 3.3, 3.4, Appendix 1, 2
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 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;	4.3
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;	1.3
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring;	5.2
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Non technical Summary

To fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive, the SA objectives must cover biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and the interrelationships between them. The Sustainability Appraisal objectives for the Plan Update have been determined to ensure they meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. **Appendix 2** demonstrates how the Sustainability Appraisal objectives cover the SEA Directive topics.

3. Sustainability objectives, baseline and context

3.1. Links to other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives

The SEA Directive requires that the Environmental Report (included in the SA Report) includes the following:

- (a) *“An outline of the (...) relationship with other relevant plans or programmes”... and*
- (e) *“The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or member state level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way in which those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation...”*

Other relevant plans

The development of the SA objectives and criteria in the SA Framework was informed by many relevant plans and programmes and their environmental protection objectives, and were included in the SA Scoping Report for the Management Plan 2010.

International plans and programmes

Some of the important international plans and programmes that are relevant to the National Park include:

- Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive)
- EC Council Directive 79/409 (the Birds Directive)
- Ramsar Convention.
- Kyoto Protocol
- International Convention on Biological Diversity

National plans and programmes

Some of the important national level policy documents that are relevant to the National Park include:

- Environment Act 1995
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance.
- English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010

Other plans and programmes

Important documents at the county level include the Hampshire Local Transport Plan and the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton and New Forest National Park Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, and the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan. The Local Enterprise Partnerships programmes are also important.

Local plans and programmes

At the local level, the key documents are:

- The New Forest National Park Authority's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD
- The Local Plans for New Forest District, Wiltshire and Test Valley Borough. These sets out the broad strategy for the future of the local authority's area, and policies for delivering this.
- The National Park Management Plan, published in 2010.

Environmental protection objectives

Some of the key legislation and plans that provide the framework for protecting the environment within the Park are:

- Section 61(1) of the Environment Act, which sets out the statutory purposes of the National Parks of England and Wales:
 - to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas specified in the next following subsection; and
 - to promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.

Section 62(1) of the Act states that in pursuing the two National Park purposes above, the National Park Authority “...*shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park....*”

- European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the ‘Habitats Directive’) ensures strict conservation of Natura 2000 sites (‘European’ sites). This is particularly important in the New Forest as European designated sites amounts to more than 50% of the whole area of the National Park.

- National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Paragraphs 115-119, states

115 “Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

116. “Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

117. To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:
- plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
 - identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;
 - promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
 - aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and
 - where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.
118. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:
- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs;
 - development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
 - opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
 - planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and
 - the following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as European sites:
 - potential Special Protection Areas (SPA) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
 - listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
 - sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential SPAs, possible SAC, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

119. The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.

Review of the policy context

To consider the context within which the sustainability of the Management Plan Update has been assessed requires a review of the main changes to the policy context since the Management Plan was adopted in 2010. The main policy context that steers the overarching strategy for the National Park, however, has not changed. The Environment Act 1995 still provides the two purposes and the duty for National Park, and there has been no change to the protection provided by European nature conservation designation of the areas that make up over half of the New Forest National Park.

The vision for National Parks and the key legislative requirements and functions for National Park Authorities have been clarified in “English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular” – Defra 2010. Guidance on the preparation and principles for Management Plans is provided in “National Park Management Plans – Guidance” – Countryside Agency 2005, and these remain relevant for the Management Plan update.

An up to date planning strategy for the area, the NPA’s Core Strategy, was adopted in Dec 2010 and sets out the main settlement and development strategy for the Park until 2026. The Core Strategy used many of the strategic objectives that were established in the initial Management Plan 2010. A new minerals and waste planning strategy, the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest and South Downs Minerals and Waste Plan, was adopted in September 2013 to provide a framework for minerals and waste developments in the National Park until 2030.

On a national basis, new planning rules were introduced when the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) was introduced by the government in March 2012. The NPPF, however, retained the previous national planning policy approach that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. A NPA assessment found that its Core Strategy is compatible with the NPPF, other than in some aspects of the housing arena.

3.2. Description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics

This section covers a description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics of the National Park and incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive for the following information:

(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan – this is covered in the following Section 3.3);
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;

This section provides a summary of the baseline characteristics of the National Park. More detail can be found in the National Park Management Plan 2010.

Summary of baseline characteristics of the National Park.

A key task of the SA process involves researching local conditions (baseline information) in order to determine the key sustainability issues (environmental, economic and social) in the National Park. This task was completed in the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Management Plan 2010. This baseline information and the key sustainability issues were used at the scoping stage to produce the sustainability objectives. To determine whether these sustainability objectives were still appropriate to assess the Plan Update, it was necessary to update this baseline information and re-assess whether the key sustainability issues arising from this baseline information had changed. The following summary of the baseline information, therefore, is an update of that found in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Management Plan 2010. More detailed information about current conditions can be found in the State of the Park Report 2013, which can be found on the following weblink http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/downloads/file/750/state_of_the_park_report_2013

Location

The Park is located largely within Hampshire, with most of its area lying within New Forest District, with a small area in Test Valley Borough, and a further small area in Wiltshire, as shown on the map below.



To the west, the New Forest District extends to the county boundary with Dorset and Wiltshire and includes the Avon Valley. The National Park boundary runs down the eastern side of the valley. The northern parts of the National Park extend beyond the District boundary into Wiltshire and Test Valley Borough. To the east parts of the National Park are bounded by Southampton Water and to the south by the western Solent. The Southampton and Bournemouth-Poole conurbations provide employment and services for National Park residents, but also have an impact on the environment of the Forest including traffic generation, development pressures and visitors.

The New Forest National Park

The New Forest was created around 1079 as a royal hunting Forest, and has survived remarkably intact to become a highly valued part of the national heritage. It is an area of outstanding national and international importance for the extraordinary richness of its ecology and wildlife, the quality of its landscape, and the continuity of human influences over many centuries, in the form of management of woodlands, heaths, wildlife, game and domestic animals.

Area

The New Forest National Park is the smallest national park at 56,658 hectares, with one of the largest resident populations at approximately 35,000. At 61 people per square kilometre this makes the New Forest National Park one of the most densely populated national parks in England.

Population and Settlements

Within the National Park, there are four main settlements: Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, with populations varying between 2,000 and 3,500. These four settlements have a broad range of community facilities and services, good accessibility, including public transport and include a significant proportion of the existing houses and jobs in the National Park. Community facilities and access to key services are essential in providing a focus and vibrancy in community life. Although many villages do still have some services, such as a pub and village hall, many of the smaller settlements do not have schools, play grounds, village shops or other facilities which together help sustain the rural communities.

Property prices have continued to rise over time, and therefore many local people struggle to find affordable housing in the area. The average cost of a house is estimated to be many times the average local income. With the close proximity of the major centres of Bournemouth, Southampton and Salisbury, local communities in the New Forest tend to look towards these cities for indoor leisure, entertainment, shopping facilities and employment.

Landscape and land use

Recognition of the very high quality of the landscape is reflected in the New Forest designation as a National Park. The New Forest National Park encompasses a wide variety of landscapes ranging from open heaths and woodlands to river valleys, coastal

marshes and farmland. About 48% of the National Park is open forest habitats and forestry enclosures, and about 27% is farmland.

A Landscape Character Assessment for the National Park and New Forest District was updated in 2010 and published as part of the Landscape Action Plan for the Park in 2013. It identifies 19 distinctive Character Areas within the National Park and describes the current condition, issues and trends for each.

Nature conservation

The majority of the National Park is of outstanding national, European and international value for its nature conservation interest. Its unique combination of habitats includes lowland heath, valley and seepage step mire and ancient pasture woodland. The National Park contains a substantial area covered by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and the majority of this is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a listed Ramsar site.

The heart of the Forest, with its mosaic of ancient pasture woodland, lowland heath, lawns and wetlands and river systems is recognised to be one of the most important sites for nature conservation in Europe. It is home to many species of plants and animals that are rare nationally and some that are only found in the New Forest. The coastline and river estuaries also provide a diversity of natural habitats and support major populations of wintering waders and wildfowl. Many of the habitats and species identified in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act (which defines a set of habitat and species of principle importance) are found in the National Park.

More than 31,000 hectares within the National Park is covered by international, national and local nature conservation designations. The total area covered by these designations amounts to more than half of the whole area of the National Park (about 54% of the National Park is given protection as a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or Ramsar Site). This is a higher proportion than in any other English National Park. These designations cover much of the core of the Park and the coastal areas. In addition local non-statutory designations include 381 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation or County Wildlife Sites, which together comprise a further 5% of the National Park.

Condition of SSSIs

Sites of Special Scientific Interest together form a network of the most important sites for nature conservation across the country. The New Forest has a higher proportion of SSSIs (by land area) than any other national park, and is particularly well-known for the New Forest SSSI which comprises 28,890 ha in the heart of the National Park. In addition a further 19 smaller SSSIs cover 3,300 ha including much of the New Forest coast.

51.5% of the total SSSI area is in favourable condition. This figure has increased in recent years as a result of large scale habitat restoration work, and further improvements are likely in forthcoming years. Nevertheless a significant proportion of

the SSSI units in the Park are not yet in favourable condition. A very small percentage of SSSIs are unfavourable with no change or declining in condition.

Condition	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Favourable	34.3%	33.6%	34.0%	34.0%	45.2%	51.5%
Unfavourable recovering	59.7%	60.7%	64.0%	64.5%	52.7%	46.4%
Unfavourable no change	0.7%	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	1.3%
Unfavourable declining	4.8%	4.7%	1.6%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
Part destroyed^[1]	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Destroyed^[2]	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Considerable resources are needed to achieve and maintain the high conservation value of these primary sites. Pressures on these areas include those arising from human activity (recreation, development and various forms of pollution including noise and light), and from other forces such as climate change. Human intervention through land management, including depasturing of grazing stock, has also helped to create biodiversity. The practice of commoning, which is so important in shaping much of the landscape and habitats in the National Park, remains under economic pressure.

Tourism and Recreation

The New Forest is a major destination for visitors, because of the extensive opportunities it offers for informal outdoor recreation. The larger villages and parts of the coastline at Calshot and Lepe also attract substantial numbers of visitors, and the National Park includes a number of major tourist attractions such as the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and Exbury Gardens. The National Park has 42 kilometres of coastline (not all accessible), 235 kilometres of public footpaths, 57 kilometres of public bridleways, 226 kilometres of waymarked cycle routes and over 27,000 hectares of open access land (nearly 50% of the area of the National Park).

The coast is a major recreation resource, and there are 23,000 moorings for boats in the Solent (including moorings within or close to the National Park at Buckler's Hard, Calshot, Hythe, Keyhaven and Lymington). The Park also accommodates formal recreation facilities in the form of sports pitches serving predominantly local village needs. There are a number of golf courses and cricket and football clubs, plus facilities catering for other specialist activities including polo and archery.

Research in 2005 by Tourism South East indicated that there were 13.5 million visitor days spent per annum in the New Forest National Park. This is a large number when compared to its geographical size. Relative to the other National Parks, the number of

^[1] Very small areas have been affected, but insufficient to show as a percentage.

^[2] As above.

visits per annum per square kilometre is very high. The vast majority of these visitors are local day visitors, most of which use private vehicles to travel to the Park. About 15 million people live within a 90 minute drive of the New Forest National Park, and with the development proposals in the two urban sub-regions either side of the National Park, this figure is likely to increase in the future.

One of the National Park purposes is to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the New Forest. However, this does not equate directly to promoting recreational use of the National Park. Instead, it is the enjoyment of the Park's special qualities, which include the Forest's outstanding natural beauty, tranquillity and the opportunities for quiet recreation, that is to be promoted.

Economy

Whilst the National Park is predominantly rural in nature, the economy within the area is diverse. In 2011 there were 2,430 businesses in the National Park, giving an indication of the level and variety of business activity. A very broad range of types of business are represented, with the largest sector, in terms of the numbers of individual businesses, being professional, scientific and technical services. 21% are new businesses, less than two years old, while 44% are established enterprises that have been operating for at least ten years. Overall this represents a higher density of businesses per square kilometre than in any other English National Park except the South Downs. In March 2013 there were 8,180m² of employment floor space available for development in the National Park, as measured by unimplemented planning permissions for new development.

The percentage of people unemployed within the National Park remains low compared to the levels in the rest of Hampshire, Wiltshire, the south east and the UK as a whole. 0.5 % of the working age population were unemployed and claiming Job-seekers Allowance in April 2014, the lowest figure for five years. This equates to 100 people, with the majority falling into the 25-49 years age category. Residents of the National Park in active work are employed in a wide range of businesses and services based either within or outside the Park. The health and social work sector, wholesale and retail, professional and technical services and education are all particularly important employers. According to research done in 2005, there are 13.5 million visitor days each year spent in the Park. The value of tourist visits to the Park in 2011 was £201 million.

Only a small proportion of employment is now found in traditional rural land-use activities such as farming, forestry and commoning. Whilst the viability of these activities is under pressure, they are essential for maintaining the land use management practices that help to conserve and enhance the landscape character and natural habitats of the National Park. A particular example is the importance of commoning to the character of the New Forest.

Transport

The transport network in the New Forest National Park serves its residents and provides connections to the bordering towns in the New Forest District, the two major

conurbations centred on Southampton and Bournemouth and beyond. The area is served by road, rail and bus routes, and there is a large network of cycle ways and footpaths. There are also significant contrasts in the transport network. Areas of relative remoteness, tranquil footpaths and quiet lanes contrast with the busy motorway and occasionally congested village streets.

The road network spans the full range of roads from country lanes to motorway. There is also a combination of trunk roads, strategic A-class roads, local rural roads (B-class) and minor unclassified roads crossing through the National Park. The M27 motorway passes through the eastern part of the National Park and brings traffic from the Southampton conurbation and urban South Hampshire, together with traffic arriving via the M3 motorway from further north.

There is a seasonal change in traffic volumes as a larger number of visitors are attracted to the New Forest during the summer months. This can produce congestion on some sections of the National Park road network, including approach roads to and within village centres. A particular aspect of the road network in the National Park is that of accidents involving animal and the number of accidents involving commoners' stock is of particular concern.

The National Park is relatively well served for long-distance rail travel, with good connections to the national rail network. There are four stations at Brockenhurst, Sway, Beaulieu Road and Ashurst. Brockenhurst station is particularly well served with over 130 trains stopping each day. There is also a rail connection between Brockenhurst and Lymington, which has been designated a Community Rail Partnership, and is important in serving the ferry services to the Isle of Wight. There are a number of regular scheduled public bus services through and across the National Park, including the hourly 56 service between Southampton and Lymington which also links Lyndhurst village and Brockenhurst rail station. The transport network also provides links to other transport facilities, including the regional airports in Southampton and Bournemouth, the port of Southampton, and the ferry services in Southampton, Hythe and Lymington.

The New Forest Tour recreational open top bus serves the large visitor market during the summer months. It has been expanded in recent years to include three a circular routes which include most of the larger villages, popular visitor attractions and surrounding market towns. Passenger journey numbers have risen from 9,000 in 2006 to over 40,000 in 2013.

Agriculture

Management of land and stock for agriculture, forestry and horticulture is a major determinant of landscape quality. The contribution of the commoning system and woodland management to the character of the National Park is very important. The maintenance of a viable agricultural and commoning economy is therefore an issue of great significance for the National Park. Increasingly, diversification of activity and agricultural enterprise is seen as a way of sustaining agricultural management of land.

The majority of the land that is of high nature conservation value in the National Park, principally the open Forest, is of poor agricultural quality. This is one of the reasons why commoners need back-up land to support stock depastured on the open Forest. This is a unique and vital element of the land management regime associated with the New Forest. Back-up land is to be found in farmland in and around the National Park. A particular issue affecting the future of commoning is the availability of back-up land; land values for both rent and sale are high, and in many cases are beyond the reach of most commoners. The highest quality agricultural land in the National Park is in the southern parts of the Park between Hinton and Boldre and along the north-west Solent shore, and in the small parts of the Avon valley included within the Park, where there are large areas classified as Grades 2 and 3.

Historic Environment

The National Park is of substantial historic and cultural importance in its own right, encompassing a system of land management that has survived remarkably intact for many centuries. The commoning system and the associated Verderers Court, which derives from the medieval system of Forest Law, is one manifestation of this, as are many of its landscape characteristics, including historic features such as the Ancient and Ornamental woodlands, 13th Century Forest boundary markers, enclosure banks, and ancient field patterns.

In terms of the built heritage, the National Park contains a built environment of mixed age and quality. Forest settlements are typically dispersed in character, with dwellings and farmsteads scattered along lanes and tracks, interspersed with fields and woodlands. In the larger villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway this pattern has largely been lost to more modern infilling development; however, most other settlements in the Forest have retained the more characteristic layout.

Distinctive building types include timber-framed cottages with thatched roofs and cob-walled cottages and barns. Larger houses include Georgian manor houses, and Victorian and Edwardian dwellings notable for their steeply pitched roofs and tilehung upper storeys. The National Park contains 20 Conservation Areas and many listed buildings. Listed buildings are a key part of the built environment of the National Park, with structures range from grand houses and religious buildings to simple cottages and milestones. 2% of the 622 listed buildings in the National Park are at risk, compared with a figure of 3% nationally. This percentage for the Park has remained fairly constant over the last 5 years.

There is also extensive archaeological evidence of earlier occupation, particularly Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman, and the Park contains 214 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, of which a small percentage are considered at risk. The more recent historic heritage includes evidence of both World Wars, with remnants of airfields in the

Forest, the seaplane hangers at Calshot and Mulberry Harbour structures on the south coast. A number of man-made landscapes are also identified as being of particular importance. Six areas within the National Park are on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and a further 16 are also identified as being of historic interest.

Noise and light

Tranquillity is considered to be one of the special qualities of the National Park, but this is under pressure from noise and visual disturbance from road (and air) traffic, light pollution, man-made structures and from recreational activities. A 1996 assessment of Tranquil Areas in the New Forest Heritage Area found that there was a high degree of remoteness/ tranquillity in the north-west and south-east of the area. This broad pattern is confirmed by a new study carried out in 2014 (in progress) It found that the most remote areas were west of Fritham, the north west Solent shore (south and west of Beaulieu), south of Burley and Hatchet Moor.

Minerals and Waste Sites

A couple of small scale operational mineral extraction and waste management sites are dotted throughout the Park, and are likely to continue during the lifetime of the Management Plan, including sand and gravel extraction in the south east, and a number of waste management sites, including a landfill site in the north of the Park.

Energy

In 2005 New Forest District (including National Park) had an average level of domestic and commercial electricity consumption, relative to other South East local authorities.

Water supply

Much of Hampshire County relies on groundwater or groundwater-fed streams for its water supply. New Forest District contains groundwater protection zones at Ampress, Lymington and in the Western Downlands extending to Fordingbridge and through Breamore into the National Park at Hale, serving boreholes at Hale and Woodgreen. The District is well supplied with water as it contains large reservoirs at Blashford Lakes which draw water from the River Avon, and Testwood Lakes which draw from the River Test. The Environment Agency has identified water catchment areas around the Avon and the Test.

Pollution

Air Quality Air quality is generally good, although localised problems exist from traffic emissions, for example in Lyndhurst where high traffic flows and queues are common. Poor air quality is associated with heavy industry in the Waterside Area of the District and mineral workings in the Avon Valley.

Water The Environment Agency monitors the water quality of rivers in the National Park, based on both ecological and chemical status. Of the total river length of 482.1km, about 280km are covered by Water Framework Directive monitoring stations. The New Forest has a relatively high proportion (37%) of rivers with good water quality, but also a number with poor quality (15%). No rivers fall within the highest or lowest categories for water quality, in common with most of the other English National Parks.

3.3. Main social, environmental and economic issues and problems

The SEA Directive Annex 1 requires the following information:

(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (covered in the previous Section 3.2) and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC [the ‘Birds Directive’] and 92/43/EEC [the ‘Habitats Directive’].

To satisfy this SEA Directive requirement, the environmental problems have been summarised into key environmental issues, and for the purposes of this Sustainability Appraisal have been extended to include economic and social issues. The likely evolution of the state of the environment (and its problems/issues) without implementation of the Management Plan Update is outlined below.

The aim of the following table is not to present all issues relevant to the character of the New Forest National Park, but to draw out those that are particularly relevant to the preparation of the Plan Update and the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Key sustainability issues were previously identified in the SA Report of the New Forest National Park Management Plan 2010. The table below has been updated to reflect the changes to the policy context and the base information that could affect sustainability issues, and it examines the likely evolution of each of the key issues in the absence of the National Park Management Plan and the Management Plan Update.

Table 3.3 Key issues

Key Issue	Likely Evolution without the National Park Management Plan and its Update
<i>Environment</i>	
The majority of the New Forest National Park, is covered by local, national, and international nature conservation designations (SINC, SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, SAC) and is covered by its national landscape designation (National Park), The character and condition of these areas are under pressure from a variety of sources, such as	A possible gradual erosion of the landscape quality and the condition of the designated nature conservation sites, and the quality of the National Park landscape overall.

development, recreation, transport, and climate change.	
Although mechanisms are in place to help enable favourable or recovering condition for a high proportion of the nationally and internationally important sites, nevertheless only about 52% are in favourable condition at the present time.	It may be difficult to achieve and sustain favourable condition for all SSSIs units.
<p>Although the Park is still clearly different in many ways from its surroundings, the small-scale changes to the local landscape, buildings and settlements take place almost constantly. Although change is inevitable it is often at the expense of those features which give the New Forest its particular character and local distinctiveness. There has been a gradual and continuing loss of character, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suburbanisation of the villages • Use of standard highways infrastructure • Mediocre building design • Decline in traditional rural crafts and land management • The general ‘tidying’ of the landscape. 	These trends are likely to continue unless local distinctiveness in the New Forest is much better understood, and conserved by all those with an interest in the area.
<p>Climate change is likely to alter the character of large parts of the National Park over the next 20-50 years and beyond, modifying landscapes, habitats, biodiversity and the way the Park is perceived and used. Predictions relevant locally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial rise in sea-levels affecting coastal habitats and recreation • Increased summer droughts causing the decline of important wetland and woodland habitats • Warmer wetter winters causing localised flooding and allowing the spread of plant and animal diseases • Changes to traditional land management. 	<p>Without global and national action to reduce carbon emissions it is likely that climate change impacts will affect the area in the future.</p> <p>Building knowledge and awareness and putting into place mechanisms allowing adaptation to the impacts of climate change, it will help to ameliorate some of the most damaging effects.</p>
<p>The significant economic development planned in areas close to the Park (e.g. South Hampshire and South East Dorset) could create important impacts on the National Park.</p> <p>Development could affect the visual setting of the Park, and create increased recreational pressures and more traffic (from both visitors and commuters)</p>	<p>Nearby and regional authorities may be less aware of the opportunities to provide alternative green infrastructure to help relieve some of the recreational pressures on the Park, and avoid or mitigate policies and proposals that could have a negative impact on the National Park.</p> <p>There would be less likelihood of protection of the visual setting of the Park, and the retention of back-up grazing land for commoning beyond the Park boundary</p>
Development pressures (including the cumulative impact of small-scale development), pose threats to the character of the built environment, historic building and monuments, the cultural landscapes and biodiversity within the Park. High land and property prices fuel these pressures.	Planning policies have prevented significant levels of development in the rural settlements, but traditional and historic buildings and features will be vulnerable to new development (replacements, extensions etc) that undermine the character of villages.

<p>The future viability of the commoning practice is uncertain. This is due in part to the continuing rise in the cost of housing for young commoners, the need for flexible part-time employment in other parts of the economy, and the decline in the availability of back-up grazing land.</p>	<p>Without strong supportive policies, this traditional land-use management may decline. The landscape and biodiversity value of much of the National Park depends on commoning, without which there would be a rapid change and loss of quality of typical habitats and features, and cultural traditions.</p>
<p>Agriculture has a significant impact on the nature of the landscape and habitats in the National Park. However, like the commoning practice, it continues to be subject of economic uncertainty. Government subsidy schemes are complex and there are practical problems in their implementation.</p>	<p>Without strong support and guidance, agricultural land may not be managed to achieve the highest environmental benefits and diversification may include development and activities not appropriate within the National Park. There is likely to be pressures to diversify farming businesses away from the traditional land management activities.</p>
<p>Tranquillity is one of the National Park's special qualities. Elements which affect tranquillity and include noise levels of road and air traffic and other human activities, the visual intrusion of buildings and structure, and light pollution. The greatest influence on tranquillity is the main road network.</p>	<p>Unless regional and local policies take the Park's qualities into account it is likely that there will be a further erosion of tranquillity in the National Park due to increasing road and air traffic, development, recreational demand and light pollution</p>
<p>The impacts of recreational activities are difficult to evaluate, but there are concerns about the effects of visitor pressures on the fabric of the New Forest, its wildlife, sense of remoteness and on the day to day lives of residents.</p> <p>With more than 13 million visitor days per annum to the Park, a more precise knowledge of recreational activities and their impacts on the National Park needs to be built up over time. Clear guidance is needed to establish the basic principles for managing recreation across the whole of the National Park. A Recreation Management Strategy for the National Park was adopted in 2010 which sets out in more detail the actions for recreation, based on the framework given in this plan.</p>	<p>The National Park Management Plan provided the framework for the more detailed Recreation Management Strategy. While further research is needed into the precise impacts of recreation on the Park's Special Qualities, it is likely that without management and mitigation measures this will include adverse impacts on sensitive species, erosion of fragile habitats and loss of tranquillity.</p>
<p>The volume of road traffic in the National Park is derived from a number of different sources. These include recreational visits, local traffic accessing local services, commuters (both into and out of the Park, and those passing through the Park) and business traffic within, and passing through, the National Park.</p>	<p>Tranquillity would continue to be eroded.</p> <p>The experience of travelling to or through the National Park would not be as distinctive.</p>
<p>Road traffic is a major issue for many residents and visitors, affecting the quality of life in local communities (e.g. congestion and pollution), the quiet enjoyment of the Park (tranquillity), the welfare of stock and the integrity of the Forest's landscapes and habitats.</p>	<p>The quality of life for village residents would be eroded by greater traffic congestion. There would be fewer opportunities to use sustainable alternatives to private cars. The numbers of animal accidents would remain too high.</p>

Economic	
The numbers employed in traditional rural land use activities associated with forestry, farming, and commoning have declined over time. With the viability of these activities under pressure, many farms are looking to diversify their businesses – not all of the new proposals, however, support the land management activities, which are so important in helping to maintain the landscape and habitats.	There is a risk that some farms will move away from their traditional land management activities to concentrate on other businesses. Because land based activities are so important in maintaining the landscape, habitats and cultural identity, and contributing to the sustainability of rural communities, the decline in these activities could be very detrimental.
Whilst the National Park is predominantly rural in nature, the economy within the area is diverse. A very broad range of types of business are represented, with the largest sectors, in terms of the numbers of individual businesses, being professional, scientific and technical services. Only a small proportion of employment is now found in traditional rural land-use activities such as farming, forestry and commoning. There is a challenge to ensure that the local economy is sufficiently sustainable to maintain the life and vibrancy of the National Park, providing local employment and sustaining its rural communities. Flexibility is needed to respond to changes in the wider economy, but without compromising the special qualities and essentially rural character of the area.	Without retention of existing employment sites, the sustainability and identity of many local communities could be put under pressure. Loss of local employment could increase the number of out-commuters dependant on jobs outside the National Park.
Some rural skills are being lost, and new skills involving sustainable technologies and new local products will need to be developed.	Lack of skills could hamper some rural businesses, including land management activities. Opportunities to develop new businesses could be limited by insufficient skills in the local workforce
Social	
The cultural identity and cohesion of rural communities remains under pressure and they are changing rapidly in response to a combination of social and economic trends, including high property prices, the desirability of the area for commuting, second homes and retirement	Local culture and heritage could diminish. There would continue to be a loss of skills, local knowledge and traditions which contribute to community identity and distinctiveness, where these are no longer transferred between generations or from established to new residents. It is possible that some rural communities could become 'dormitory' settlements for out commuters.
There are concerns about the loss of village pubs and shops, local services, and community facilities.	Without the Plan, there would be less support for maintaining essential local services and facilities.
Affordable housing for people with a strong connection to the New Forest is a particular issue, especially affecting younger people who wish to remain involved in the traditional landbased economy (including commoning) and other rural businesses. There is a large gap between house prices and local earnings.	Fewer people with local housing needs would be able to find affordable accommodation.

3.4. The SA Framework, including objectives, criteria and indicators

The SA Framework is a key output of the SA Scoping Report as it establishes a set of sustainability objectives to measure the sustainability of documents, including the National Park Management Plan Update.

A SA Scoping Report was produced to cover the Local Development Framework for the New Forest National Park in May 2006. It was also intended to be used for other future documents that required an SEA (but were not development plans that needed a SA). The SEA Directive is focused on environmental impacts, and does not specifically require the use of objectives or indicators, but they provide a useful means of meeting its requirements. It is necessary, however, to identify within the SA how the requirements of the SEA Directive are being met. To fulfil the requirements of the SEA Directive, the SA objectives must cover biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and interrelationships between them. **Appendix 2** shows how the SA Framework covers the SEA topics. The Sustainability Appraisal objectives have, therefore, been developed to ensure they meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.

The SA Scoping Report for the National Park Management Plan 2010 was produced in consultation with stakeholders and the statutory environmental consultees. This SA Scoping Report set out the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the area, the significant issues, and the objectives of other relevant plans and the environmental protection they provide. It also developed a Sustainability Framework and sustainability objectives.

This set of sustainability objectives and criteria were used in the Sustainability Appraisal of the National Park Management Plan 2010. To determine whether these sustainability objectives and criteria were still relevant, a new scoping exercise was undertaken to determine what changes, if any, were needed. To achieve this, the policy context, baseline information for the area, and the key sustainability issues used for the SA of the Management Plan 2010 were re-assessed and updated where necessary (see Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Some small changes were then made to the sustainability objectives and criteria and these were used to measure the sustainability of the Plan Update. The new SA objectives used to assess the Plan Update are as follows:

Sustainability Objectives:

- 1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors**
- 2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities**
- 3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park**
- 4. Support local community needs for essential utilities and transport infrastructure having regard to environmental considerations**

5. **Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic and employment opportunities that enhance the well being of local communities and village centres**
6. **Ensure a thriving rural economy**
7. **Promote sustainable tourism**
8. **Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests**
9. **Maintain, enhance and create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character**
10. **Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture**
11. **Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil**
12. **Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.**

To complete the development of the SA Framework, criteria and indicators were established that might assist in the assessment of the impacts of the Plan Update's actions on the SA objectives. The criteria provide a guide of the sort of things that will determine the likelihood of each SA objective being achieved. This enables a judgement to be made of the likely outcome or 'effects' of the Plan Update in sustainability terms. The indicators are proposed data sets by which the achievement of the SA objective could be measured. Most of the criteria and indicators are derived from, and are similar to, those used in the SA Framework for the SA of the Management Plan 2010. The detailed SA Framework, including the objectives, criteria, and indicators can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

The SA Framework provides a methodological yardstick against which the sustainability of plans is tested. Plan objectives and actions may not necessarily reflect a balance of social, economic and environmental objectives and the SA objectives can help identify any imbalances and conflicts between them. Once inconsistencies and adverse effects have been identified, options and more specific actions are refined further, and the Plan's sustainability can be improved where necessary.

4. Developing and refining actions and assessing sustainability effects of the Plan Update.

4.1 Developing actions

A range of actions was considered with the aim of achieving the Plan's objectives. The context for these actions was set by the Plan's objectives, and were informed by a number of sources, as described below.

When considering the range of actions for the Plan Update, the NPA had to ensure they were compatible with the statutory framework within which National Parks exist (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Environment Act 1995), including:

- Section 61(1) of the Environment Act, which sets out the statutory purposes of National Parks :
 - to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas specified in the next following subsection; and
 - to promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.

Section 62(1) of the Act states that in pursuing the two National Park purposes above, the National Park Authority "...shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park...."

- Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 confirms that if there is a conflict between those purposes, greater weight should be given to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park (commonly known as the Sandford Principle).
- National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Paragraph 115, which states that "Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads"
- European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the 'Habitats Directive') ensures strict conservation of Natura 2000 sites ('European' sites). European designated sites amount to more than 50% of the National Park area.

The range of actions included in the Plan update also met the following criteria:

- Direct relevance to the national park purposes and duty and to the objectives in the 2010 Management Plan
- Newly proposed or recently started projects, rather than on-going work.
- Fairly precise and specific actions, which, where possible, could be completed within the next five years
- Actions felt to be a priority by the organisation(s) concerned, where resources are available to take them forward.

The range of alternatives was, by definition, limited by the need to coincide with the statutory purposes and duty of the National Park and the statutory framework within which it operates, including the large area covered by international nature conservation legislation. In many cases there were, therefore, few realistic alternatives for the direction to be followed in the National Park. However, an assessment was made of the likely evolution of the key environment, social, and economic issues in the area if the proposed Management Plan actions are not pursued. This evaluation is **shown in Table 3.3**.

4.2 Assessing the actions

A detailed appraisal of all the actions has been undertaken. A systematic matrix-based approach was adopted, using the SA objectives and criteria in the SA Framework to test each of the actions. The effects of the actions were predicted (i.e. what the effect will be on each SA objective) and assessed (i.e. how significant that effect will be). In every case the assessment considered what effect the action would have on each sustainability objective. ‘Scores’ were determined for each action, reflecting whether the impact was likely to be positive or negative. A range of different types of effect were considered in order to determine the likely significant effect of each action, including the spatial extent, probability, duration, magnitude, frequency, permanency and reversibility, together with the cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects. If appropriate, recommendations for improving the action or mitigating negative impacts were noted. Details of all the actions that were considered and the SA assessment of these can be found in **Appendix 3**

The key findings of these SA assessments:

- None of the actions showed any significant adverse impact on sustainability objectives.
- Many of the actions are likely to have a positive impact on sustainability objectives.
- There are, however, a few actions where the impact on the sustainability objective is uncertain.

The likely significant effects of the plan

A list of the significant effects of the Plan Update actions can be found in **Appendix 4**. All the significant effects are beneficial for sustainability, and there are no significant effects that are considered to be detrimental for sustainability.

In addition, cumulative effects were considered. In cases where actions were assessed as uncertain but with the potential to have a negative effect, it was found that the potential for a negative impact is more than compensated by positive sustainability effects on other sustainability measures in the Sustainability Framework. Therefore, the overall cumulative effect when all actions are combined is considered to be positive for each of the sustainability objectives.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan update considers the potential impacts of the actions on designated European nature conservation sites. As part of this, the impacts of the actions were assessed in combination with other relevant plans. Any recommendations from this Assessment will also need to be considered.

4.3 How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in developing the actions

The results and recommendations of the SA assessment of the initial draft actions were carefully considered and taken into account with the 'Call for Views' consultation held from October to December 2014. Together with other comments resulting from the consultation, the SA assessment helped in amending the actions and so informed a revised draft of the Management Plan update. A number of amendments were made to the draft Plan, and an updated Sustainability Appraisal was completed for these in March 2015.

There was then another consultation on a further revised draft which ran for 6 weeks until 22 June 2015. As a result, a number of further amendments were made to the Plan, including two new actions. These changes were then subject to a further SA appraisal.

During this SA process the assessments concluded that none of the actions, and the amendments to them, were expected to have a significant adverse impact on the Sustainability Objectives and, indeed, some would make a positive contribution to sustainability.

In some cases, however, the assessment showed an uncertain impact on the Sustainability Objectives, and where there was considered a possibility that these could be negative, recommendations for mitigation and enhancement were made, and these are shown below.

Recommendations for mitigation or enhancement:

Action EP8

- Improved public bus services to Lepe from the Waterside parishes and Hythe Ferry, particularly during the summer months
- Potential location of the new centre away from the shoreline, reducing direct disturbance from visitors
- Educational and interpretive materials on the site explaining the potential impacts of recreational use on sensitive habitats and wildlife.

Action EW7

- Careful siting and design of the necessary infrastructure should be agreed by the various organisations involved to avoid, where possible, any adverse impacts on the landscape. Mast sharing between the various providers should be encouraged.

5. Implementation and Monitoring

5.1. Implementation

Some of the assessments of the actions 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 to the success of the Management Plan Update, the effects of actions will need to be monitored during its implementation to identify any adverse impacts.

5.2. Proposals for monitoring

Monitoring the significant sustainability effects of the implementation of the Management Plan Update will be done by the NPA continuing to produce both a State of the Park Report and an Annual Monitoring Report to assess the condition of the Park, measure progress towards objectives and targets, and examine the effectiveness of the Management Plan Update actions. It is envisaged that the Authority's main monitoring arrangements will also be appropriate to monitor the significant sustainability effects.

APPENDIX 1: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

SA objectives and underlying criteria

SA Objective	Criteria	Indicator (Including those used in SA Scoping of Management Plan 2010)
1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve road safety, especially for vulnerable groups including pedestrians, cyclists and young people? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal injury traffic accidents • Animal deaths on NFNP roads
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce the risk from flooding and coastal erosion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area/ nos. of dwellings at risk from fluvial and coastal flooding or coastal erosion • Coastal erosion rates of cliffs and marshes • Applications refused because of flood risk/ coastal erosion • * No. of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence • Permissions granted for coast protection/ flood defence works
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure the environment does not encourage crime? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported crime figures per 1000 population • Fear of crime data • Applications where advice sought on community safety
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage walking and cycling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of public footpaths/ cycleways/ permissive paths etc • % population within 1.2km of public open space • % population within 5km of public indoor leisure centre
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce noise pollution? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % in tranquil areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it support access to health care? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality rates • Healthy life expectancy • * % population within 30 minutes public transport time of GP/ hospital/ dentist/ pharmacy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage healthy outdoor activities? 	
2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it support delivery of housing for local communities? • Will it support special accommodation needs? (Elderly/Disabled/ Commoners/Agricultural and forestry workers/ other occupational needs/Gypsies/ travelling showpeople) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing trajectory showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - net additional dwellings for the current year - projected net additional dwellings up to the end of the DPD period - annual average no. of net additional dwellings needed to meet overall housing requirements, having regard to previous year's performance • Affordable housing completions • Homelessness/ nos. people on housing waiting list • Care home bedspaces • Nos. commoners' dwellings • Gypsy/ traveller site needs and provision • Travelling showpeople accommodation needs and provision

3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it enable provision of, access to & maintenance of outdoor and indoor recreation, leisure and cultural facilities for all including young people, elderly people and those with disabilities? • Will it enable the quiet enjoyment of New Forest National Park? • Will it enable recreational access to countryside and coast within environmental considerations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in areas of formal and informal open space by parish • % population within 1.2km of public open space • Nos/ location of other (formal) recreation facilities • Nos. visiting New Forest National Park • Length/ location of recreational footpaths/ cycleways/ bridleways • Community use of school sites • Nos. and location of community halls
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage provision for educational development needs including further education opportunities for those seeking new skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School places • School waiting lists • Participation in adult education • Vocational training opportunities • Permissions granted for development of education facilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment? Will it provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment 	
4. Support local community needs for essential utilities and transport infrastructure having regard to environmental considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure transport infrastructure (roads/ rail/buses/ cycleways/footpaths) serves local needs? • Will it improve/ increase provision of sustainable transport? • Will it encourage greater use of sustainable transport? • Will it limit the impacts of traffic on the quality of life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volumes of traffic on strategic road network • Bus & rail usage • Journey to work • Car ownership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure utilities infrastructure serves local needs? • Will it limit adverse environmental impacts of infrastructure provision? • Will it enable economic/environmentally acceptable provision of services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water/ electricity/ gas usage per head of population • Water resources • Capacity of sewage treatment infrastructure • Areas with access to mobile telecoms and Broadband • Utilities infrastructure refused because of environmental impact • Development refused because service provision uneconomic/ environmentally unacceptable

5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic and employment opportunities that enhance the well being of local communities and village centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure that there is sufficient support for business development in sustainable locations? • Will it encourage provision of diverse employment opportunities? • Will it enhance skill levels and training? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type • Amount of floorspace development for employment by type in employment or regeneration areas • Employment land available by type • *Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development • Losses of employment land • Amount of employment land lost to residential development • Nos. of jobs by sector • Vacant premises • Business start-ups/ closures per annum • Nos./ types/ sizes of businesses • No. of unemployed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure that, within environmental constraints, economic activity is supported by an adequate transport network • Will it support village shops and community facilities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated HGV routes • % employment sites within 0.5 km of strategic road network
6. Ensure a thriving rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it support commoning and Forest-related enterprise? • Will it enable farm diversification appropriate to the character of the area? • Will it support management of the landscape? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commoning/ Forest/ agriculture -related business start-ups • Permissions granted for change of use of agricultural buildings • Area covered by management/ stewardship schemes
7. Promote sustainable tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it help maintain a viable tourist economy? • Will it ensure that tourist/visitor pressure does not harm the environment of the New Forest, countryside, and coast? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contribution to economy - nos. tourism-related jobs - visitor bedspaces - visitor numbers - visitor attractions (location, visitor nos./ accessibility) - use of visitor transport facilities (NF Tourist bus, cycle routes, Forest tracks) • Tourism applications refused because of environmental impact

<p>8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect and enhance designated sites? • Will it encourage appropriate management of designated sites? • Will it limit pressures on designated sites arising from recreational and other uses? • Will it maintain biodiversity levels, protecting and enhancing existing nature conservation interests and creating new areas of nature conservation value? • Will it allow biodiversity to adapt to the effects of climate change? • Will it protect rare and vulnerable species wherever they occur? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nos./ area of sites subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - statutory nature conservation designations - local designations (SINC, LNR) • Reported condition of national / international sites and reasons for unfavourable condition • Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Changes in priority habitats & species (by type) (ii) Changes in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance • Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets • Nos./ areas of sites managed to enhance biodiversity e.g. Countryside Stewardship • Nos./ areas sites subject to landscape schemes creating new nature conservation interest • Applications refused for nature conservation/ biodiversity reasons • Applications granted with species licensing conditions • Applications granted for access facilities/ hides/ interpretation facilities for nature conservation sites
<p>9. Maintain, enhance and create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect the landscape character of the New Forest National Park ? • Will it encourage appropriate management of designated landscapes? • Will it protect the character of the countryside and coast? • Will it protect and retain trees, woodlands and hedgerows? <p>• Will it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintain local distinctiveness? - enhance and contribute to local building traditions? - ensure high design standards? <p>• Will it improve quantity and/or quality of amenity space?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in areas covered by national and local landscape designations • Areas in active management for landscape quality • Applications refused because of adverse effects on New Forest/ landscape/ townscape/ seascape • Applications refused because of impact on trees/ woodland/ hedgerows • Applications refused because of design • Applications refused because of inadequate amenity space
<p>10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect, maintain and enhance listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological sites, historic landscapes and the setting of these assets?". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. and location of listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological sites & historic landscapes • Listed Buildings and archaeological sites at risk • Applications refused for listed building/ conservation area/ archaeological/ historic landscape reasons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage local cultural traditions including commoning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nos. of practising commoners • Nos. commoners dwellings permitted • Applications refused because of impact on commoning/ loss of back-up grazing land
11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect the quality of air, water and soil by avoiding harmful emissions or adverse effect on coastal, surface or groundwater quality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution levels in areas subject to Air Quality Management • Condition of watercourses and coastal waters • Applications refused on grounds of air/ water/ soil pollution • Applications granted contrary to EA advice on water quality (including surface water and groundwater)% new residential development on previously developed land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure sustainable use of land? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % new residential development on previously developed land • Amount of employment floorspace by employment type which is on previously developed land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it limit waste generation, and encourage recycling of waste materials? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. & location of waste management facilities by type • Capacity of waste management facilities by type • Amount of municipal waste arising/ managed by management method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it promote the value and benefits of natural resources? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage sustainable use of water? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % development with water saving/ water meters Per capita water consumption
12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it limit greenhouse gas emissions from domestic and industrial sources by means of energy-efficient building construction and layout? • Will it require new buildings to incorporate energy generating infrastructure? • Will it encourage the use of energy generating devices in existing buildings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusals based on inadequate construction methods/ materials • % new homes meeting Eco Homes standards • Electricity/ gas/ solid fuel usage per head of population • Applications refused on basis of failure to incorporate energy generating infrastructure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce the need to travel by car by means of sustainable location of development? • Will it encourage the use of alternative modes of transport, including more walking and cycling? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distances travelled per person per year by mode of transport • Pedestrian and bicycle numbers on selected lengths of road/ paths
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage generation of renewable energy by enabling the development of renewable energy schemes consistent with local resources and the environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable energy capacity installed by type

APPENDIX 2: Relationship between SEA Directive topics and the sustainability objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal for the New Forest National Park Management Plan Update

SEA Directive Topic	Sustainability Appraisal Objectives
Biodiversity	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors 2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities 3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park 4. Meet local community needs for essential transport and utilities infrastructure having regard to environmental considerations
Human health	1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors
Fauna & Flora	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests
Soil	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil 12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil 12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.
Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors 11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil 12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.
Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a safe and secure environment and improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors 4. Meet local community needs for essential transport and utilities infrastructure having regard to environmental considerations 5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic and employment opportunities that enhance the well being of local communities and village centres 11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, and maintain and enhance the quality of air, water and soil 12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change, and plan to adapt to it.
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park 9. Maintain, enhance and create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character 10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Maintain, enhance and create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character 8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests 3. Support the delivery of education and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities and cultural heritage of the National Park 10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture 6. Ensure thriving rural economy 7. Promote sustainable tourism

APPENDIX 3: Sustainability Appraisal of Management Plan Update actions

Assessment of Plan Update Actions against the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

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

An assessment of the likely affect of each of the Management Plan Update actions on each of the Sustainability objectives.

SA Objective Management Plan Update action	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
LH1 Improve the condition of locally important nature conservation sites , working with site owners and prioritising the most vulnerable grassland, heathland and wetland habitats. The target is to enhance at least 30 local sites.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0
LH2 Work with landowners and managers to maintain the national SSSI condition targets of 95% of SSSI units in favourable or recovering condition, with 50% of these in favourable condition by 2020. Whilst these are national targets it will be the ambition of the delivery partners to aim higher locally, within the New Forest, to achieve 60% favourable condition by 2020.	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+*	+	0	0	0
LH3 Create links between habitats through a better network of hedgerows, woods, streams, road verges and field margins, working with private and public sector landowners. The target is to develop and complete at least one major	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+*	0	0	0

<p style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management Plan Update action</p>	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
landscape scale project within the Park by 2020.												
LH4 Seek opportunities for large-scale habitat restoration, including continuing the major restoration work at Foxbury which will return the area to heathland and broad-leaved woodland, improve access for visitors and complement the open landscapes of the nearby Bramshaw commons.	+?	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	+*	0	0	0
LH5 Continue to monitor coastal change to inform the conservation and creation of habitats, and help in the development of schemes to stabilise saltmarsh.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+
LH6 Take forward a project to protect the grazed verges of the Open Forest from damage and erosion, both by parked cars and traffic overrun.	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0
LH7 Promote an integrated approach to river catchment management in the New Forest, including wildlife conservation, surface and ground water quality and flood prevention, working with all agencies, communities and landowners.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+*	+	0	+*	+?
LH8 Improve the water quality and ecological value of river catchments by carrying out practical enhancements to at least 43 km of rivers and 5 ponds, working with land managers.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	+	0
LH9 Expand the project to remove invasive non-native plants along river corridors, working with landowners to target at least 40 prioritised locations.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	0	0

<p style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management Plan Update action</p>	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
LH10 Reduce the impacts of any new development which may have an effect on the internationally protected habitats and species of the National Park by access management, education and awareness-raising projects and the provision of new or improved areas for countryside recreation, all funded by developer contributions.	0	+?	+?	0	0	0	+?	+	+	0	0	0
LH11 Develop a green infrastructure plan for the National Park to help identify opportunities for an improved network of open spaces and attractive alternative locations for recreation, with benefits for health and well-being, linking with the green infrastructure strategies of neighbouring local authorities and identifying joint projects.	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+*	+	0	0	0
LH12 Carry out a targeted programme of surveys of protected or vulnerable species to assess population levels and inform conservation needs.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
LH13 Publish a comprehensive Ancient Woodland Inventory for the National Park, and promote to land managers as the basis for ancient woodland restoration projects.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+?	0	0
LH14 Establish clear methods for monitoring the status of wildlife and habitats, contributing to the Government's Biodiversity 2020 targets, including the extent and condition of priority habitats and the number of	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0

<p style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management Plan Update action</p>	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
local people engaged in wildlife issues.												
LM1 Provide New Forest-focused land management advice and supporting information, including Lidar and infra-red data where appropriate. The target is to provide advice to 250 landowners, farmers, commoners and woodland managers over five years.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+*	+*	+?	+?	0
LM2 Provide practical training on best practice for land management, aimed at farmers and commoners, with at least six courses arranged each year. The target is to enable training for 600 land managers and at least 30 new and young commoners.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+?	+?	0
LM3. Promote the use of ecosystem services maps of the National Park and surrounding area as an aid to sustainable land management and to show the value of the natural environment for social well-being and the economy.	+?	0	0	0	0	+?	0	+	+	0	+	+?
LM4 Increase the availability of back-up land for commoning by enabling the use of land managed by public and voluntary sector organisations, and in addition seek to maintain the stock of existing back-up land The target is to provide at least 20ha of additional back-up land.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	0
LM5 Increase the economic viability and environmental value of woodlands by establishing 'management hubs' of nearby woodland owners and expanding the	0	0	0	0	+	+*	0	0	+*?	+?	+	+?

<p style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management Plan Update action</p>	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
markets for local timber products, working with the industry and neighbouring local authorities. The target is to improve the management of at least 2000 ha of woodland by 2020.												
LM6 Research potential new markets for the products of Open Forest management, to aid the economic and environmental sustainability of these important habitats.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	?	?	0	+?	?
LM7 Co-ordinate and promote the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme, in particular encouraging uptake from farmers and landowners adjacent to the New Forest SSSI.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+*?	+*	0	0	0
LM8 Support commoners and smaller farmers in adapting to changes in the Common Agricultural Policy, including events for land managers to raise awareness and help with the new on-line system for payments.	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+?	0	0
LD1 Complete a comprehensive record of vernacular buildings and structures, and work with owners to ensure their local importance and conservation value is recognised.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0
LD2 Bring together all available information on archaeology and identify gaps in knowledge, focusing on specific time periods or themes each year, including the Bronze Age, Roman period, historic industries and ancient route ways.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+*	0	0

<p style="text-align: center;">SA Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management Plan Update action</p>	1. Provide a safe environment, and improve health.	2. Support the delivery of housing for local communities.	3. Support education and understanding, enjoyment of special qualities and cultural heritage	4. Support essential utilities and transport infrastructure within environmental considerations	5. Facilitate a sustainable economy that creates economic opportunities that enhance local well being.	6. Ensure thriving rural economy	7. Promote sustainable tourism	8. Maintain and enhance local, national and international nature conservation interests	9. Maintain, enhance, create high quality landscape, seascape, and village character.	10. Maintain and enhance local heritage and culture	11. Encourage sustainable use of resources, prevent pollution, maintain quality of air, water and soil	12. Minimise factors contributing to climate change and plan to adapt.
LD3 Develop a WWI project, involving local people in recording family memories and mapping wartime locations in the Forest, and developing an on-line archive of WWI material.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
LD4 Design and take forward a project to assess changes in the local distinctiveness of settlements over time, with the involvement of communities.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	0
LD5 Work with property owners to encourage the renovation and active use of historic buildings where these are 'at risk'. The target is to improve the condition of 20 historic buildings by 2020.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	0
LD6 Actively manage the scheduled and unscheduled ancient monuments on the Crown Lands and Open Forest to bring them into good condition. The target is to improve the condition of at least ten sites on the Crown Lands each year.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	0
LD7 Maintain the character of Forest edge settlements by working with, initially, two local communities to protect traditional boundaries and other features, and prevent encroachments on Forest land.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0
LD8 Deliver a range of projects to enhance the Western Escarpment Conservation Area, including recommendations for the design of new highway infrastructure and addressing damage to verges, and evaluating success for use in	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+?	+	+	0	0

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other Conservation Areas.												
LD9 Support communities wishing to produce Village Design Statements or Neighbourhood Plans, including policies that take into account the local distinctiveness of their area.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0
CC1 Raise awareness about the increased risk of tree diseases and pests, and agree a strategy to sustain the woodlands of the New Forest in the long-term; including a public seminar in 2015 and other discussion / consultation events.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	0	+*?	+	0	0
CC2 Research the effects of coastal change on winter bird roosts, and breeding sites for gulls and terns, and recommend key sites to safeguard in the future.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+
CC3 Maintain the New Forest's important function as a carbon sink by protecting and restoring natural habitats, including wetland and mires.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	?	+
CC4 Produce and promote a climate change adaptation plan for the National Park, identifying likely future climate-related impacts and suggesting ways of adapting to them.	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+
CC5 Support communities wishing to prepare Emergency Response plans, or establish Flood Action Groups, to plan ahead for future flood or other extreme weather events.	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	+
CC6 Seek further support and funding for identified flood relief, coastal defence and beach management works	+*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	0	?	+*

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designed to reduce flooding and coastal erosion in future.												
ST1 Ensure the updated tranquillity mapping for the National Park, is available in the necessary mapping formats and encourage its use by those involved in managing or administering the Forest.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
ST2 Agree ways to maintain and enhance the tranquil areas of the National Park over time, including ways to reduce disturbance from low-flying aircraft, working with interested groups and local communities	0	0	+	0	0	0	+?	?	0	0	+	0
ST3 Progress the undergrounding of low voltage cables in appropriate locations, prioritising the most visually sensitive areas	+?	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0
ST4 Seek national funding for protected landscapes to underground high voltage cables and remove pylons, focusing on the pylons in the north of the Forest and close to the Waterside.	+?	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0
ST5 Carry out an assessment of the visual impacts of communications, services, and other infrastructure on the open landscapes of the Forest and seek ways to reduce those impacts where possible.	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0
SQ1 Promote public awareness campaigns on specific New Forest issues, with initiatives targeted at both visitors and local people. The aim is to achieve, year on year, fewer road traffic animal deaths, less disturbance of ground nesting birds, greater	+	0	+*	0	0	0	0	+*	0	?	0	0

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protection of fungi, reduced dog fouling and litter and lower incidence of feeding ponies.												
SQ2 Support and help co-ordinate the work of volunteer groups and networks, enabling them to become an integral part of delivering specific projects in the National Park, including (as examples) mapping of local heritage features, archaeological field work and removal of invasive plant species. The target is to involve as many local people as possible, with a combined total of at least 5000 volunteer days over five years	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+?	+?	+?	0	?
SQ3 Fully support the New Forest Volunteer Ranger Service through the provision of staff resources, funding and training. The service will aim to deliver about 1,400 volunteer days annually.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+?	+?	+?	0	?
SQ4 Further develop targeted, effective and suitable interpretation that helps tell the story of the New Forest to a wide variety of audiences, using, for example, exhibitions, self-led trails and new media.	0	0	+	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0
SQ5 Establish an E-cademy on-line centre for research and studies related to the New Forest, enabling access to a wide range material held by different organisations and academic institutions.	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	?	?	0	?
SQ6 Organise a regular New Forest Wildlife Forum event bringing together the many wildlife organisations and researchers to exchange ideas and publicise projects.	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	?	0	0

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<p>SQ7 Support educational activities and programmes that encourage learning about the National Park, from Forest School activities for pre-school children to Countryside Management courses for university students, including expanding the New Forest Curriculum for local schools and colleges and annual conferences for teachers and secondary school pupils.</p>	0	0	+*	0	0	0	0	+?	+?	+?	+?	+?
<p>SQ8 Improve understanding of commoning traditions by restoring the historic features of the Verderers Hall and enabling free public access.</p>	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0
<p>EP1 Improve specific areas of open space for people and wildlife in parishes within and around the National Park, working with interested local communities. The target is to work on projects with at least ten communities and local groups.</p>	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+?	0	0	0
<p>EP2 Work with individual communities to design and fund at least five projects annually to help improve local rights of way or access to countryside recreation</p>	+?	0	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
<p>EP3 Improve the safety and connectivity of routes used by pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists to travel between settlements and places of interest, including an awareness-raising campaign to encourage mutual respect and the responsible shared use of the network of roads and agreed tracks by all.</p>	+	0	+	+?	0	0	+	?	?	0	+?	0

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EP4 Establish a volunteer-led organisation to give people with disabilities the opportunity to experience cycling in the National Park, using specially adapted bikes.	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	+?
EP5 Through the New Forest Public Events and Safety Advisory Group , monitor the effectiveness of the charter for cycle event organisers to assess if there is a need for any further controls in the future, and work with all event organisers to improve the running of any large-scale events within the National Park, reducing impacts on the Park and its communities, while ensuring they can be enjoyed by all those involved.	+	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+?
EP6 Develop a new 'Forest Park' in the southern Test Valley to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation close to communities in Romsey, Eastleigh and Southampton, helping to reduce pressure on the sensitive habitats of the National Park.	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+?	0	0	0
EP7 Develop the facilities at Blashford Lakes nature reserve to create an important centre for visitors near the western edge of the National Park.	+?	0	0	0	0	0	?	+	+?	0	0	0
EP8 Redevelop the visitor facilities at Lepe to provide a flagship country park, incorporating sustainable design and creating an innovative centre for interpretation, relating to the coast and Forest.	0	0	+	0	0	0	+?	-?	?	0	0	0

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LC1 Work with communities to identify heritage features of importance to them, and help them record and celebrate these to a wider audience; initially involving eight local communities.	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	?	+	0	0
LC2 Continue to support the Community Wildlife Plans initiative , helping eight local communities to deliver their action plans, including practical environmental improvements.	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	+	+	0	0
LC3 Provide best practice advice and potential funding support for village shops, community buildings and other community facilities, including organising an annual Hampshire village shops conference to share information and encourage collaborative working.	0	0	0	0	+?	+	?	0	0	+?	0	0
LC4 Expand the Village Agents programme within the New Forest, enabling older residents to gain advice on transport, home maintenance and financial matters from volunteers within the community.	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LC5 Identify possible sites for affordable housing, including suitable publicly owned land, and agree new schemes designed for local people which are of high quality and sustainability, and are in keeping with the character of the area.	0	+	0	0	+?	+?	0	0	?	0	0	+?
LC6 Use the Forestry Commission's housing stock in ways which benefit the special qualities of the area, by	0	+	0	0	+?	+	0	?	+?	+?	0	0

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including lettings to practising commoners and those involved in local land-based businesses or organisations.												
LC7 Reduce fly-tipping by monitoring the main hotspots on council land in order to tackle known offenders, and improving awareness of the best means for households to dispose of unwanted bulky waste.	+	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	+?	0	+	0
LC8 Actively involve local communities in a variety of initiatives to improve health, mental health and well-being, including the New Forest Health Walks programme, dementia awareness training and projects to encourage a more active younger generation.	+*	0	+?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LC9 Help young people to become more involved in the National Park by removing barriers and providing new opportunities, including developing at least three 'wildplay' sites enabling direct experiences of the natural environment, and encouraging confidence and skills through the Mosaic Youth Project.	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	?	?	0	0
LC10 Support a range of local initiatives that encourage more sustainable lifestyles and economies, including energy conservation, local food production and sustainable transport. The target is to support at least 50 community projects over five years.	0	0	0	+	?	+	0	0	?	0	+	+
EW1 Continue to promote the Brand New Forest campaign encouraging greater use of	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+?	0	0

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local businesses by local people, including a pilot Fair Booking initiative, establishing a locally based visitor accommodation booking system.												
EW2 Deliver the Rural Development LEADER Programme for the New Forest, funding the growth and creation of jobs in rural businesses and supporting local services.	0	0	0	0	+*	+*	+?	0	?	+?	0	0
EW3 Work closely with the relevant Local Economic Partnerships to identify initiatives that both support a sustainable local economy within the Park and help deliver the LEPs wider economic objectives.	0	?	+?	+?	+?	+?	+?	?	?	?	0	0
EW4 Encourage private sector investment in forestry and land management by providing a range of business opportunities for work on the Crown Lands, suitable for companies of different sizes and expertise.	0	0	0	0	+?	+	0	?	?	?	+?	?
EW5 Promote the New Forest Marque as the recognised symbol of local produce and help to support and develop new and existing local produce businesses. The target is to achieve 160 businesses as Marque members by 2020.	0	0	0	0	+?	+	+?	0	+?	+?	+?	0
EW6 Provide practical means of connecting local producers with outlets, such as hotels, shops and pubs, through the European funded 'DEAL' project, providing supply chain software and a centre enabling the easy distribution of	0	0	0	0	+?	+	+?	0	0	?	+?	0

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products.												
EW7 Help rural businesses and communities to function more efficiently by supporting the national programmes to deliver superfast broadband to 95% of premises, and seek additional funding to provide a more complete coverage throughout the National Park.	0	0	0	?	+*	+*	+*	?	-?	0	+?	+?
EW8 Support a range of skills training related to the local area, including providing apprenticeships in environmental conservation, training at least 125 people in traditional building skills	0	?	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+?	0	0
EW9 Arrange training for at least 100 tourism businesses and staff to help make their business more sustainable, and to better promote the special qualities of the Park to visitors.	0	0	+	0	+?	+?	+	?	?	0	?	0
EW10 Actively encourage the development of social enterprises within rural communities, providing practical support, advice and guidance on funding.	0	0	0	0	+?	+?	0	0	0	?	0	0
EW11 Increase interest and demand for courses in rural and land-based skills through improved marketing and promotion.	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+?	+?	+?	+?	0
TT1 Investigate measures aimed at reducing HGV through-traffic by encouraging the use of more appropriate roads, including a web-based route planning system that identifies preferred routes.	+	0	0	+	?	?	+?	0	0	0	+?	?
TT2 Review speed limits for the minor roads in Wiltshire that lie within the National	+	0	0	+?	-?	-?	+?	0	0	+?	?	?

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Park, considering suitability and enforceability, in order to reduce traffic speed.												
TT3 Work with Highways England to help minimise delays and improve the reliability of journey times on the A31 and M27, in order to reduce the use of other routes through the Forest by long distance traffic.	+?	0	0	+	?	?	+?	+?	+?	0	+?	?
TT4 Develop a 'Quiet Lanes' network in appropriate locations, initially as a limited pilot project, to help maintain the rural character of minor roads and enable their safe use by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, as well as motorists.	+	0	+	+?	0	0	+?	0	+?	0	+?	+?
TT5 Reduce unnecessary sign clutter within the National Park, particularly targeting the minor road network.	-?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?	+?	0	0
TT6 Publish design guidelines for highway infrastructure to ensure that new works to the road network respect local distinctiveness and avoid suburbanisation, including the appropriate design and location of signs, kerbing, footways and other elements, taking into account the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users.	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	0	+*?	+* ?	0	0
TT7 Produce and implement a maintenance plan and specification for highway operations, setting out agreed standards within the National Park, taking into account the sensitivity of its protected landscapes and habitats.	0	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+?	+?	0	0	0
TT8 Improve opportunities to	+?	0	0	+	+?	0	+	0	0	0	+	+

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<p>use a range of sustainable transport options, including the New Forest Tour , Beach Bus, other seasonal bus services, rail links, walking and cycling, and investigate the possibility of Park and Ride. The target is to achieve a 5% reduction in the number of visits by car by 2020.</p>												
<p>TT9 Rebrand and promote existing local bus routes into and across the National Park, adding a New Forest theme, providing user-friendly information and enabling commercially viable services for residents. To include routes between Lymington and Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury and Southampton and Salisbury.</p>	0	0	0	+	+?	0	+?	0	0	0	?	?
<p>TT10 Explore the funding and feasibility options, such as the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, for adjacent to carriageway cycle routes on fenced roads between main settlements to improve safe access for commuting and leisure cycling, including a link between Lymington and Cadnam.</p>	+	0	+?	+?	0	0	+?	?	?	0	+	+?
<p>TT11 Undertake an 'active travel' programme, encouraging walking and cycling to reduce car use and improve health through a series of guided walks, cycle skills training and other initiatives, aimed at people of all ages and abilities.</p>	+*	0	+	+?	0	0	+?	0	0	0	+	+

Conclusion of the Sustainability Appraisal:

There are no actions in the Management Plan Update which are expected to have a significant adverse effect on any of the Sustainability Objectives, and many would make a positive contribution to sustainability.

There are, however, a few actions where the impact of the action is considered to be uncertain for specific Sustainability Objectives.

Where the impact of the action is considered to be uncertain and not linked with a potentially positive impact (ie marked as +?), these will require particular consideration when more specific implementation plans are being drawn up for the actions to ensure they avoid potential adverse impacts.

There are a few actions where the impact on the sustainability objective is uncertain and may have a potential for an adverse impact (ie marked as -?). For each of these actions, there are more positive impacts (and potentially positive impacts) than there are potential adverse impacts on the sustainability objectives. The actions that are considered to have the potential to have an adverse affect on one of the sustainability objectives are as follows:

- EP8 It is possible that by redeveloping the visitor facilities at Lepe to provide a flagship country park could attract more visitors, who would have the potential to disturb the birds along the coastline, which is designated as a European nature conservation site.
- EW7 By helping rural businesses and communities to function more efficiently by supporting the national programmes to deliver superfast broadband to 95% of premises could require new communications infrastructure that has the potential to conflict with maintaining a high quality landscape and protecting village character.
- TT2 By introducing reduced speed limits on minor roads in Wiltshire that lie within the National Park could cause difficulty for some locally based businesses and therefore has the potential to conflict with the objective of facilitating a sustainable economy.
- Comment: This potential impact, however, is not likely to be significant as speed limits have been in place for some time elsewhere in the National Park without causing significant disruption.
- TT5 Reducing unnecessary sign clutter within the National Park, particularly targeting the minor road network, could have the potential to reduce road safety
- Comment: This potential impact, however, is not likely to be significant if the signage is “unnecessary”, then it is unlikely to affect road safety
- LC5 Sites for affordable housing will have to be carefully selected as they could have an impact on the landscape and village character.

- *Comment: This potential impact, however, is not likely to be significant as planning policies are in place to ensure new development respects the natural and built environment and the landscape character.*

Recommendations for mitigating potential negative impacts

Action EP8

- Improved public bus services to Lepe from the Waterside parishes and Hythe Ferry, particularly during the summer months
- Potential location of the new centre away from the shoreline, reducing direct disturbance from visitors
- Educational and interpretive materials on the site explaining the potential impacts of recreational use on sensitive habitats and wildlife.

Action EW7

- Careful siting and design of the necessary infrastructure should be agreed by the various organisations involved to avoid, where possible, any adverse impacts on the landscape. Mast sharing between the various providers should be encouraged.

Appendix 4 : Likely significant effects

A list of the significant effects of the Plan Update's actions can be found below. All the significant effects are beneficial for sustainability, and there are no effects that are significantly detrimental for sustainability.

Action	Likely Significant Effects
LH2 Work with landowners and managers to maintain the national SSSI condition targets of 95% of SSSI units in favourable or recovering condition, with 50% of these in favourable condition by 2020. Whilst these are national targets it will be the ambition of the delivery partners to aim higher locally, within the New Forest, to achieve 60% favourable condition by 2020.	Enhancements to a significant area of nationally and internationally protected habitats over the period of the update.
LH3 Create links between habitats through a better network of hedgerows, woods, streams, road verges and field margins, working with private and public sector landowners. The target is to develop and complete at least one major landscape scale project within the Park by 2020	Improvements to landscapes and habitats over a large continuous area, linking land both within and outside the National Park.
LH4 Seek opportunities for large-scale habitat restoration, including continuing the major restoration work at Foxbury which will return the area to heathland and broad-leaved woodland, improve access for visitors and complement the open landscapes of the nearby Bramshaw commons.	Landscape and habitat enhancements over significant areas of countryside.
LH7 Promote an integrated approach to river catchment management in the New Forest, including wildlife conservation, surface and ground water quality and flood prevention, working with all agencies, communities and landowners.	A holistic approach bringing together different interests and disciplines
LH10 Develop a green infrastructure plan for the National Park to help identify opportunities for an improved network of open spaces and attractive alternative locations for recreation, with benefits for health and well-being, linking with the green infrastructure strategies of neighbouring local authorities and identifying joint projects.	An important means of reducing pressure on sensitive habitats by developing new areas of green space in appropriate locations close to centres of population.
LM1 Provide New Forest-focused land management advice and supporting information, including Lidar and infra-red data where appropriate. The target is to provide advice to 250 landowners, farmers, commoners and woodland managers over five years.	Significant due to the large number of landowners likely to be given advice, with consequent improvements to privately owned land across the National Park.
LM5 Increase the economic viability and environmental value of woodlands by establishing 'management hubs' of nearby woodland owners and expanding the markets for local timber products, working with the industry and neighbouring local authorities. The target is to improve the management of at least 2000 ha of woodland by 2020.	Potentially significant due to the amount of woodland that could be brought into productive management, with additional conservation and landscape benefits. There could be significant benefits for the rural economy.
LM7 Co-ordinate and promote the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme, in particular encouraging uptake from farmers and landowners adjacent to the New Forest SSSI.	A national programme that is targeted at those with land adjacent to the New Forest SSSI, extending valuable habitats beyond the core of the Forest.
LD2 Bring together all available information on archaeology and identify gaps in knowledge, focusing on specific time periods or themes each year, including the Bronze Age, Roman period, historic industries and ancient route ways.	Potentially significant in developing a comprehensive understanding of the history and archaeology of the Forest.
CC1 Raise awareness about the increased risk of tree diseases and pests, and agree a strategy to sustain the woodlands of the New Forest in the long-term; including a public seminar in 2015 and other discussion / consultation	Addressing an issue which could have far-reaching effects of the landscape of the New Forest as a whole.

events.	
CC6 Seek further support and funding for identified flood relief, coastal defence and beach management works designed to reduce flooding and coastal erosion in the future.	Important due to the effects of sea-level rise and storm surges on the coastal landscape and its communities.
SQ1 Promote public awareness campaigns on specific New Forest issues, with initiatives targeted at both visitors and local people. The aim is to achieve, year on year, fewer road traffic animal deaths, less disturbance of ground nesting birds, greater protection of fungi, reduced dog fouling and litter and lower incidence of feeding ponies.	Significant due to the number of important New Forest issues that this action seeks to address.
SQ7 Support educational activities and programmes that encourage learning about the National Park, from Forest School activities for pre-school children to Countryside Management courses for university students, including expanding the New Forest Curriculum for local schools and colleges and annual conferences for teachers and secondary school pupils.	An important contributor to the way future generations view and help to conserve the National Park.
LC8 Actively involve local communities in a variety of initiatives to improve health, mental health and well-being, including the New Forest Health Walks programme, dementia awareness training and projects to encourage a more active younger generation.	Significant in its contribution to national programmes to improve health and well-being
EW2 Deliver the Rural Development LEADER Programme for the New Forest, funding the growth and creation of jobs in rural businesses and supporting local services.	A Forest-wide programme to support rural businesses, based on significant external funding.
EW7 Help rural businesses and communities to function more efficiently by supporting the national programmes to deliver superfast broadband to 95% of premises, and seek additional funding to provide a more complete coverage throughout the National Park.	A significant factor in the viability of local businesses throughout the Park.
TT6 Publish design guidelines for highway infrastructure to ensure that new works to the road network respect local distinctiveness and avoid suburbanisation, including the appropriate design and location of signs, kerbing, footways and other elements, taking into account the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users.	Potentially significant action affecting the Park as a whole and addressing one of the main factors which has produced a more urban feel to the highways and villages in the Forest.

Appendix 5: Consultation responses to the SA Scoping Report

Summary of consultation responses to New Forest National Park Management Plan Update SA Scoping Report

Organisation	Comment	Action
General		
Natural England	No comment	
Environment Agency	No comment	
English Heritage	<p>We welcome the informative overview of the historic environment in the Park, but would normally expect a more detailed baseline for the historic environment including the numbers and grades of designated heritage assets, the dates of designation of the conservation areas and whether or not they have an up-to-date character appraisal and management plan, an explanation of which, if any, of those assets are at risk and why, and references to the Historic Environment Record and non-designated assets of local interest. However, we are aware that the State of the Park Report 2013 contains much of this information. It might be helpful therefore to include a reference within the Scoping Report to the State of the Park Report.</p> <p>Table 3.2 identifies development pressures as posing threats to the character of the built environment, with which we agree, but there is no reference to the threats to the six scheduled monuments at risk: animal burrowing, visitor erosion, stock erosion and forestry, which could all perhaps be summed up as lack of appropriate management (whilst the key issues do include agriculture and recreational activities, their effects on archaeological remains are not noted). These issues would seem appropriate for a Management Plan.</p> <p>We welcome SA Objectives 9 and 10, although for the first criterion for Objective 10 we would suggest “<i>Will it protect, maintain and enhance listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological sites, historic landscapes and the setting of these assets ?</i>”. We would also suggest two additional criteria: “<i>Will it provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment?</i>” and “<i>Will it provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment?</i>” for SA Objective 3.</p> <p>The Scoping Report normally also sets out the “indicators”, with which the policies and/or site allocations can be assessed against the objectives and sub-objectives.</p>	<p>Reference and a link to the State of the Park Report has been made in the SA Report</p> <p>This recommendation has been included.</p> <p>These recommendations have been included.</p> <p>Indicators have now been included.</p>