

## NFNPA 560/18

### NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### AUTHORITY MEETING – 11 OCTOBER 2018

## RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – INTERIM REPORT

**Report by:** Nigel Matthews, Head of Recreation Management and Learning

### 1 Introduction

1.1 A new and updated suite of focused actions is needed for the New Forest National Park Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030. Across the National Park and beyond we want to achieve a net gain for the working and natural landscape and for the recreational experience, by:

- protecting the spectacular, yet fragile, wildlife-rich landscape that people come to see;
- managing recreation for local people and our visitors.

We also need to use limited resources wisely.

1.2 At the Authority meeting in June, members agreed that 25 draft proposed recreation management actions should be put out for public consultation (see **Annex 1**). The actions were based on feedback received last year and ranged from developing an agreed New Forest-wide network of key visitor sites and core walking and cycling routes; to measures to protect against specific activities that impact on the Forest; and increasing the range of initiatives designed to help people understand why the Forest is so special.

1.3 This was a joint consultation for the Forestry Commission, Verderers of the New Forest, Natural England, New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council and the National Park Authority (NPA) all of which have a remit for managing recreation in the National Park and are represented on the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group.

### 2 2018 Consultation – initial analysis of results

2.1 The draft actions received a very high level of support. On average 78% of people agreed or strongly agreed with them and only 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

2.2 Of 1,074 respondents including 40 organisations, about 670 provided additional comments.

2.3 One of the aims of the survey was to hear the views of a wide range of local people and visitors, including people who don't normally get involved in public

consultations and 58% said they had never taken part in a consultation about the New Forest before. 28% of responses were from people living within the National Park, 41% live between the boundary and 4km away and 23% live between 4km and 50km away.

### **3 Next steps**

- 3.1 Following the 2017 consultation members supported the RMS Steering Group's desire to publish jointly agreed recreation management actions. However, there is still a lot of work to do, both to analyse the comments received through the 2018 consultation and to confirm what the actions will mean in practice.
- 3.2 Current thinking is that the new actions are likely to remain fairly high-level and strategic, leaving the detail of delivery to be decided by the organisations and groups that agree to lead each action. This will work well for activities that have, at least in part already started and for which there is little to debate. Other actions are best taken forward with the involvement of local communities to help shape them (e.g. through Parish Quadrants), and this process needs to be given time before the full suite of actions are ready to be jointly approved.
- 3.3 One new development is that following a successful bid for Government funding, six local planning authorities (including the NPA) have commissioned a significant piece of research by Footprint Ecology. This will include a face-to-face questionnaire, telephone interviews and counts of cars parking across the New Forest SPA. When complete (August 2019) the results of the research will provide invaluable data and evidence to support the delivery of recreation management, especially draft action 5.2 which refers to coordination between local planning authorities.

### **4 Member engagement**

- 4.1 Officers will continue to inform and engage members through the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee and Authority meetings but would be pleased to receive further suggestions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the work being done to agree an update to the New Forest National Park Recreation Management Strategy 2010-2030 and advise officers how they would like to be engaged in the coming months.**

### **Equality Impact Assessment:**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.

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