

FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING REPORT

Summary of the minutes of the meeting of the National Park Authority held on 28 October 2010

Copies of the papers referred to and the full minutes of the Authority meeting on 28 October 2010 are in the 'About Us', 'Meetings and Minutes' page on the Authority's website at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk

Chief Executive's Report.

The Chief Executive introduced the report, highlighting to Members that the NPA's Core Strategy had been found sound by the Planning Inspector, and praising staff and stakeholders for their input to the Core Strategy. The Chairman thanked and congratulated all the Officers who had worked on the Core Strategy. Alison Barnes reminded Members that the NPA would be holding Parish Council quadrant meetings to take the Parish Councils through the new Core Strategy policies and how the NPA would take the policies forward.

The Natural History Museum had been carrying out work in the New Forest during the current year as part of a project to highlight the importance of biodiversity. 2010 was the International Year of Biodiversity and the United Nations conference on biodiversity was taking place during the current week in Nagoya, Japan. The Natural History Museum's work would form a valuable baseline of scientific information which could be used to assess future changes. The New Forest was one of only two projects being carried out by the Museum, and had been selected owing to its national and international importance for biodiversity. Officers had been working with the Museum to help link to the NPA's education and conservation work and had recently achieved media coverage for the project and the work of the NPA.

The Chief Executive also updated Members on the expected budget cuts, confirming that Defra's funding had been cut by approximately twenty nine percent but that the implications for the NPA were not yet known.

Proposed review of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

In introducing the report (NFNPA 358/10), Sarah Applegate reminded Members that the NPA had adopted a Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. That Strategy now required updating following a legal challenge by Associated British Ports (ABP) and following the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy. These changes gave minerals and waste planning authorities, such as the NPA, an opportunity to revise the approach to minerals and waste documents. The report set out a comprehensive review of the Core Strategy, incorporating areas of search for minerals and strategic waste sites.

One Member said it would be inappropriate for any waste sites to be located within the National Park, and that the large amount of traffic generated by waste sites, even if positioned on the outskirts of the National Park, was detrimental to the Park. It was important that the NPA seek to influence how such sites were managed, especially with regard to traffic routing. Another Member said that he believed that the Silkin test still applied to National Parks, which would affect any works on the Park's boundaries.

Members then approved the proposed approach and timetable for a single Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document to be known as the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan; and revoked the Member resolution of July 2008, to finalise and submit the Hampshire and New Forest Minerals Plan to the Secretary of State

Oral update on Governance Review.

The Chairman updated Members on the Defra led review of governance arrangements for national parks, which would take place until the end of January 2011, the purpose of which was to make national parks more effective and more accountable to local communities. He asked Members to assist with the local consultation process and the four meetings scheduled for 30 November 2010, 7 December 2010, 9 December 2010 and 15 December 2010, asking that as a minimum for each public event one local authority, one Secretary of State and one Parish appointed Member attend.

Amanda Brace (English National Park Authorities' Association) added that there was a lack of public awareness as to the work of national park authorities and their members. She advised that Members should be cautious about the desirability of direct elections, as they were expensive and onerous to administer.