

## New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036

### Examination Statement – New Forest National Park Authority

---

#### **Matter 14 – Transport and Infrastructure and Community Facilities**

***Issue – Whether the Local Plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to the approach to transport and infrastructure?***

**14.1 *What are the inter-relationships with other Authorities in terms of travel patterns and how have these been taken into account?***

1. The New Forest National Park lies in close proximity to the conurbations of Bournemouth / Poole / Christchurch, and Southampton / Portsmouth, whilst the M27 and M3 provide the main access routes to Winchester and the north, and to south Hampshire (including the ports and Southampton Airport). Railway stations at Ashurst, Beaulieu Road, Brockenhurst and Sway provide good rail links to South East Dorset, Salisbury, London, as well as longer distance links to Reading and the Midlands and the North.
2. The 2014 New Forest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (CD164) states that the New Forest is predominantly covered by the Southampton Travel To Work Area (TTWA), extending from the New Forest to Romsey, Winchester and Eastleigh. However, the SHMA notes there are “*also localised relationships with the Bournemouth TTWA (affecting the south west of the New Forest area) and with the Salisbury TTWA which affects only a very localised area in the north*” (paragraph 3.21).
3. The Local Plan sets out an overview of the transport links in and around the National Park, particularly in Chapter 2 (Profile of the New Forest National Park) and in Chapter 9 (Transport and Access). In addition, more details of the inter-relationships between the National Park and adjoining authorities with regard to travel patterns are set out in the following evidence base documents:
  - *Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2011–2031* (CD133), in particular Chapters 3 and 6, and the accompanying *New Forest Transport Statement, 2012* (CD165), which set out the details of the commuting and leisure journeys with adjacent authorities and beyond.
  - *Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026* (CD134) contains an overview of transport links and cross-boundary transport issues.
  - [New Forest 2011 Commuter Flows](#) – sets out details of travel to work patterns to and from the New Forest.
  - *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* (CD24) sets out an overview of transport issues and existing infrastructure (see section 5).
  - *New Forest Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2014* (CD164) details travel to work commuting flows.

4. The Authority has taken account of the travel patterns in and around the National Park in determining the most sustainable location for development, underpinning the Submission Draft Local Plan's Spatial Strategy. This includes consideration of the proximity of settlements to public bus routes and railways stations at Ashurst, Brockenhurst and Sway in helping to reduce the need to travel where possible. These factors were also taken into account in assessing the sites considered in the Authority's SHLAA (CD104). This reflects paragraphs 30 and 34 of the NPPF in supporting a pattern of development that enables the use of sustainable modes of transport.
5. The Sustainability Appraisal (CD10) concludes that "*Brockenhurst, Sway and Ashurst benefit from frequent and long distance railway services and also have regular bus services. Consequently, focusing development in these locations is likely to help the amount of sustainable transport available to residents, and therefore be beneficial for SA Objective 8. A settlement pattern focusing development in the four defined villages would be likely to minimise the need to travel to work, shops, doctors and schools, and, therefore, would minimise the possible impacts of carbon emissions and climate change.*" (Page 69).
6. The travel to work pattern also indicates a small increase from the 2001 to the 2011 censuses in the levels of homeworking, and the Submission Draft Local Plan continues to support home working through Policy DP37 on outbuildings, and in Policy SP42 on Business and Employment Development.

**14.2 Have the overall transport implications of the Local Plan been adequately addressed?**

1. The Authority's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CD24) considers the transport implications of the Submission Draft Local Plan and any identified improvements.
2. Any site-specific transport requirements relating to the housing site allocations are addressed in their respective policies. For instance, Policy SP23 pertaining to land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel states that parking provision must be made on-site. In addition, Policy SP25, land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station, requires the preparation of a masterplan and supporting technical assessments to ensure redevelopment fully mitigates any impacts.
3. The Authority continues to work with Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council as the Highway Authority for their respective areas of the National Park, particularly in the preparation and implementation of the respective Local Transport Plans.
4. Hampshire County Council, in their Regulation 19 representation on the Local Plan, noted that "*The proposed development sites, in transport terms, appear to be strategically placed within the main settlements of Lyndhurst, Ashurst, Sway and the village of Calshot.*" Additionally, a number of transport related comments pertaining to the housing site allocations and respective policies have been addressed by the Authority (see MAIN-06, MAIN-07, and MIN-33).

5. Annex 2 of the Submission Draft Local Plan sets out the Car Parking and Cycle Standards, as referenced in Policy DP2. These standards are currently set out in the Authority’s adopted Development Standards Supplementary Planning Document (CDX), and are based on the original standards drawn up by Hampshire County Council. However, a couple of representations on the Submission Draft Local Plan sought to include standards relating to retail uses. In response, the Authority recommends to the Inspectors a Minor Modification (CD154, MIN-49) as follows:

**Retail Development**

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
Non-food retail and general retail (covered retail areas)	1 space per 20 m <sup>2</sup>	Greater of 1 space per 6 staff or 1 per 300 m <sup>2</sup>
Non-food retail and general retail (uncovered retail areas)	1 space per 30 m <sup>2</sup>	Greater of 1 space per 6 staff or 1 per 300 m <sup>2</sup>
Food retail	1 space per 14 m <sup>2</sup> covered areas	Greater of 1 space per 6 staff or 1 per 300 m <sup>2</sup>

6. The Submission Draft Local Plan sets out an overview of the existing transport infrastructure in and around the National Park, and assesses the implication for any new or improved infrastructure in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This is proportionate to the relatively low level of development anticipated during the life of the Local Plan, and the limited role of the National Park Authority in directly addressing transport issues. Consequently, the Authority considers that the overarching transport implications of the Submission Draft Local Plan have been satisfactorily addressed.

**14.3 Is the approach set out in Policy SP54 effective, justified and consistent with national policy?**

1. Policy SP54 reflects the broad principles of national planning policy, in particular paragraph 30 of the NPPF, which encourages Authorities to support solutions that reduce congestion.
2. In addition, the English National Parks UK Government Visions and Circular (CD35) (which is also referenced in the NPPF – footnote 25) states that *“Improvements of main routes through the Parks are governed largely by considerations outside those relating to the Park area itself. However, there is a strong presumption against any significant road widening or the building of new roads through a Park, unless it can be shown there are compelling reasons for the new or enhanced capacity and with any benefits outweighing the costs very significantly.”* (paragraph 85). The Circular goes on to emphasise that *“When assessing options for dealing with increasing demand for access to and within Parks, Transport Authorities are expected to have considered demand management measures before new infrastructure is considered.”* (paragraph 87).

3. The A31 is an important route between Bournemouth and the Southern Coast. It experiences delays at peak times, caused by a high volume of traffic and by the number of junctions that are close together. The route also experiences heavy seasonal congestion during the summer months. Consequently, Highways England have planned a scheme of works to improve capacity of the road through Ringwood, outside of the National Park boundary. Policy SP54 reflects the wider context of such improvement schemes on the A31, and sets out the considerations for any future works that may be required within the National Park.
4. Policy SP54 also reflects objective 1 of the New Forest Transport Statement (CD165), which seeks to promote economic growth by providing a well-maintained, safe and efficient highway network, with one of priorities being “As part of a longer term strategy, in partnership with the Highways Agency, investigate capacity improvements for links on M3, M27 and A31” (paragraph 4.2).
5. Finally, it should be noted that Policy SP54 is identical to policy CP18 of the Authority’s adopted Core Strategy (CD167). The Inspector’s Report (CD168) at that time concluded that “*The DPD is consistent with national planning policies (CD110) in supporting sustainable transport initiatives and promoting safer access..... The Plan reflects the Authority’s limited scope and remit in influencing transport issues within the National Park*” (paragraph 49).
6. Given the principles established in national policy, it is considered that Policy SP54 represents a justified approach based on the Authority’s limited remit for transport, relatively low level of development, and protected landscape status, and is consistent with national policy.

#### **14.4 Does Policy SP55 facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport?**

1. In line with paragraph 35 of the NPPF, Policy SP55 promotes pedestrian and cycle movements, public transport facilities and supports routes that are safer and more user friendly. The policy also supports local bus and rail initiatives. For instance, the Authority supports the [New Forest Tour](#) bus service, cited in criterion a), which operates across the National Park. Bus travel from Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury is included free when buying a New Forest Tour ticket on board certain local buses. In addition, the New Forest Tour bus has the capacity to carry a number of customers’ bicycles, and the routes connect with local rail stations. Major tourist attractions, accommodation and main villages within the National Park are also included as stopping points on the various routes of the New Forest Tour, and the bus ticket includes discounted entry to some of these attractions.
2. Policy SP55 supports similar objectives in the Partnership Plan for the National Park (CD29), which has been drawn up by a partnership of organisations operating in and around the National Park, some of whom have responsibilities for the provision of public transport, including Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council.

3. It should be emphasised that the Submission Draft Local Plan reflects the limited scope and remit of the Authority with regard to transport provision, as Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council are the Highway Authority for their respective parts of the National Park.

**14.5 *Is the approach set out in Policy SP38 effective, justified and consistent with national policy? What is the evidence for this approach? How has the effect of the policy on viability been considered?***

1. Policy SP38 sets out that, where necessary, the Authority will seek financial contributions from developers to make development acceptable in planning terms. This is consistent with the framework outlined in national policy, in particular paragraphs 203 and 204 of the NPPF, and the [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) \(2010 Regulations\)](#), as amended). These confirm that planning obligations must be necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
2. Currently the Authority collects any necessary financial contributions through Section 106 agreements, although the future implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has not been ruled out, and Policy SP38 allows either mechanism to be used. In fact, paragraph 7.85 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states that even if CIL were to be implemented there would remain a role for the Section 106 agreements.
3. Given the nature of the area as a rural protected landscape with significant national and international nature conservation designations, it is often not possible to deliver the necessary infrastructure or mitigation measures on-site, and therefore it is entirely appropriate to seek off-site financial contributions, especially for the provision of affordable housing.
4. The Housing Topic Paper (CD115) sets out the Authority's approach on the use of planning obligations in delivering affordable housing, in particular the justification for a lower site-size threshold than that set out in the NPPF.

Viability

5. The NPPF places importance on taking viability into account in developing plans and ensuring viability and deliverability, by stating that the costs of any requirements for infrastructure or mitigation measures should provide competitive returns to the landowner and developer (paragraph 173).
6. The Whole Plan, Affordable Housing and CIL Viability Assessment (CD107) assessed the viability of the Submission Draft Local Plan's policies and factored in the costs on developers of all Section 106 agreements. This methodology used the Three Dragons Toolkit for residential development and the Three Dragons Non-Residential Model for non-residential development. It factored in

a representative cost of £2,500 per unit for site specific obligations plus a further amount of £4,000 per unit for habitat mitigation. Annex 1 of the Viability Assessment sets out more detail on the costs assumptions used.

7. In conclusion, the Viability Assessment found that for residential development the *“whole plan viability assessment indicates good general viability across the National Park and suggests that there is some potential to collect a CIL, should the Authority decide to charge a levy. Some of the more straightforward case studies that we tested achieved high residual values and would indicate some viability headroom should further obligations be required from these sites”* (paragraph 15).

#### **14.6 Is the approach set out in Policy SP39 effective, justified and consistent with national policy?**

1. One of the core planning principles enshrined in the NPPF is that planning should *“...deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.”* (paragraph 17). In addition, the NPPF emphasises that local plans should *“promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”* (paragraph 28). Policy SP39 seeks to both retain existing facilities, and support the provision of new community facilities where appropriate.
2. The Submission Draft Local Plan reflects not only the NPPF, but also the English National Parks Circular (CD35) in emphasising that National Park Authorities *“in their work furthering Park purposes, they give sufficient weight to socio-economic interests in order to fulfil their duties appropriately to...support thriving rural communities”* (paragraph 68). Indeed, one of the New Forest National Park’s Special Qualities (see Annex 1 of the Local Plan) is its strong and distinctive local communities with a real pride in and sense of identity with their local area.
3. Paragraph 7.88 of the Submission Draft Local Plan states that exceptions to Policy SP39, relating to changes of use of local commercial services and community facilities, will only be considered in certain circumstances, and where supported by robust evidence. Therefore, such scenarios may be considered where appropriate, but the focus of the policy remains on the retention of existing facilities and support for new facilities.
4. Many of the settlements in the National Park have a limited range of community services and facilities. Consequently, the Authority considers that Policy SP39 is appropriate and justified in focusing on retaining existing community facilities, and supporting the provision of appropriate new facilities.