

NFNPA RAPC 408-19

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 4 November 2019

ACCORD BETWEEN THE FORESTRY COMMISSION (ENGLAND) AND NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND

Report by: Paul Walton, Head of Environment and Rural Economy

Summary:

This report provides an update on joint working between Forestry England (FE) and the NFNPA in relation to the national Accord between Forestry Commission and National Parks England

Recommendation:

That members note the content of this report

1 Introduction

1.1 Forestry England and National Parks England have a joint Accord which sets out 5 priority areas where the two bodies will work together to deliver a shared ambition for the management of woods and forests within England's National Parks.

1.2 These 5 priorities are:

- Decision making that enhances National Park landscapes and the woodlands in them
- Woodland creation and expansion in National Parks
- Exemplary FE and NPA owned/managed woodlands in National Parks
- Woodland grant schemes fit for the future
- National Parks woodlands for people

1.3 With almost 50% of the New Forest National Park under the management of Forestry England the relationship between the two organisations is closer here than in many other National Parks. Members will recall the presentation of the Accord by Alison Barnes and Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, at the RAPC meeting on 4 March 2019 (NFNPA RAPC 388/19). The presentation outlined how the Accord is being interpreted locally in the New Forest.

2 Progress on the local outcomes

2.1 Discussions between FE and NFNPA staff identified 5 areas where greater coordination and collaboration between the two organisations could have better outcomes for the National Park.

The table below shows examples of progress against each of these 5 areas in the last six months.

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| Sharing resources and capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LUC jointly commissioned to investigate feasibility of a Local Development Order to manage changes to public car parking provision in the Forest. • FE part funded the Forest Farming Group report “Understanding the New Forest’s Natural Capital” • FE part funding the work to reinforce the sense of place of the New Forest “Special by Design” |
| Data and evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff from the NPA and FE have worked together to produce bird survey and woodland data for the State of the Park Report. |
| Skills and expertise (especially around land management and woodland creation projects) | |
| Community engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NPA and FE are working together to celebrate the wetland restoration work through the winter. This is being led by two seasonal NPA rangers. |
| Staff development and training (secondments, apprenticeships and shared posts) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is regular joint working and liaison between ranger staff • Shared seasonal ranger posts to work with camp site visitors during the summer months • FE host the OPOF apprentice rangers for two months each year |

2.2 The examples above have built on existing partnership working and there are other examples of continued cooperation between our two organisations on topics such as the Recreation Management Strategy, management of verge parking and encroachment, permissions for events and organised activities and enforcement activities to deter illegal use of the Forest.

2.3 NPA and FE officers meet to review the delivery of the Accord. The review of the Partnership Plan in the coming months provides the ideal opportunity to address some of the more complex challenges around the delivery of our shared interests, that are best achieved together. Key areas of mutual interest such as land management and woodland creation and the Forest Design Plan remain areas of opportunity for new thinking and approaches.

- 2.4 The recently published Landscapes Review highlighted the opportunity for greater collaboration between different forms of designation, “to join up with others to make the most of what we have”. The Accord between FE and the National Parks was highlighted in regard to climate change and the need for more tree planting. The opportunity for National Parks to learn from FE (amongst others) in relation to fundraising was also highlighted.
3. The Deputy Surveyor will attend the March meeting of RAPC to provide an annual update on the progress of the Accord.

RECOMMENDATION

That members note the content of this report

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Papers:

Previous papers: Accord between the Forestry Commission (England) and National Parks England (NFNPA RAPC 388/19).

Equality Impact Assessment: None

Resources: None