

**NFNPA 590/19**

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY MEETING – 18 DECEMBER 2019**

**HYTHE AND DIBDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - ADOPTION**

**Report by:** David Illsley, Policy Manager

**Summary:**

Following receipt of the Examiner’s Report into the draft Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan in June 2019, the National Park Authority (and New Forest District Council for their respective part of the Neighbourhood Area) agreed what actions to take in response to the Examiner’s recommendations in the ‘Decision Statement’ of August 2019 (report NFNPA 581/19).

Under the relevant regulations, the final part of the Neighbourhood Plan-making process is a local referendum for residents within the parish of Hythe & Dibden. This was arranged by New Forest District Council (as the ‘relevant council’) and was held on 29 October 2019. The overwhelming majority of local residents who voted in the referendum supported the proposed Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 1) and it can now proceed to adoption.

This report therefore recommends the formal adoption of the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) for the part of the parish within the National Park. Once adopted, the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the National Park – alongside the Authority’s recently adopted Local Plan (August 2019) - and will form the basis for decisions on planning applications within the parish.

**Recommendation:**

**The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) be formally adopted and brought into immediate effect to form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ and the basis for planning decisions within the part of the National Park in the parish of Hythe & Dibden.**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Work on the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan commenced in Summer 2015 when the Parish Council applied to the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council for the whole of the parish to be designated as a ‘Neighbourhood Area’. Around a third of the parish lies within the National Park and the designation was confirmed by both local planning authorities in December 2015.

1.2 The diagram below summarises the various stages that the preparation of the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan has gone through over the last four years.



- 1.3 The Authority has liaised with the Parish Council and New Forest District Council throughout this Plan-making process. The Authority submitted representations at each of the main consultation stages and these are set out in the Planning Committee reports NFNPA PC 270/18 and NFNPA PC 282/19. The independent Examiner's Report into the draft Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (June 2019) considered all of the representations made at the Submission draft stage and endorsed the main amendments the Authority had sought to the draft Neighbourhood Plan. These related to the publication of maps of potential development sites in the National Park and greater clarification of the purpose of the proposed 'buffer zone' at Dibden Bay.
- 1.4 Following receipt of the Examiner's Report, it is the responsibility of the local planning authority / authorities to:
- ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and to determine whether it proceeds to referendum, with or without modifications; and
  - decide whether the voting area should be the Neighbourhood Area or should include other areas too.
- 1.5 Report NFNPA 581/19 was agreed at the August 2019 Authority meeting and sets out a 'Decision Statement' in response to each of the independent Examiner's recommendations. It was also agreed that the voting area for the local referendum would be the Parish of Hythe & Dibden and that there was no need for it to be extended further. This was in accordance with the independent Examiner's recommendations.

## **2. Local Referendum – 29 October 2019 (Annex 1)**

- 2.1 As the 'relevant council' under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, it was the responsibility of New Forest District Council to make arrangements for the referendum into the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Practice Guidance resource on 'Neighbourhood Plans' and the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 provide details on the referendum process. This includes the question to be asked; details of the information that must be made available; the hours of polling; and the notice required in advance of the referendum date.
- 2.2 The referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan – as amended in line with the recommendations made in the independent Examiner's Report – was held on Tuesday 29 October 2019. The question asked was "*Do you want New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Hythe and Dibden to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?*" and the main headlines from the referendum result set out in Annex 1 are:
- Turn out of 14.6% of the eligible electorate in the parish of Hythe & Dibden
  - 84.8% of the local residents who voted in the referendum voted in favour of the Plan
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan-making process requires at least 50% of the people who vote in a local referendum to support the Plan for it to proceed to formal adoption. As highlighted above, the overwhelming majority of the local community who voted on 29 October 2019 supported the Neighbourhood Plan (see Annex 1). Although the turn out is relatively low, the referendum process still resulted in over 2,000 members of the local community voting in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **3. Adoption as part of the ‘development plan’ for the National Park (Annex 2)**

- 3.1 With a majority of those who voted in the October 2019 referendum supporting the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan must be ‘made’ (i.e. adopted) by the National Park Authority and District Council within eight weeks of the referendum date.
- 3.2 This report therefore recommends that the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan – as set out in Annex 2 – be formally adopted by the National Park Authority. The Plan has been through several rounds of public consultation; independent examination; and has been supported by the majority of local residents who voted in the October 2019 referendum. On adoption, the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the part of the National Park within the parish of Hythe and Dibden; forming the basis of planning decisions in that area.
- 3.3 The recommended adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan marks the culmination of over 4 years work by the Parish Council, Steering Group and local community. As the first Neighbourhood Plan in the New Forest area (National Park or District) to reach this stage the Parish Council and others involved are to be commended for their efforts and for preparing a Plan that meets the Basic Conditions and the relevant legal requirements.

#### **Recommendation:**

**The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (Annex 2) be formally adopted and brought into immediate effect to form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ and the basis for planning decisions within the part of the National Park in the parish of Hythe & Dibden.**

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**Papers:** **NFNPA 590/19** – cover paper

**Annex 1** – Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (29 October 2019) – results of poll

**Annex 2** – Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (for adoption)

**Equality Impact Assessment:** No impacts have been identified.