

PROTECTING TOGETHER, SHAPING TOMORROW

A new partnership plan for the National Park
2020-2025



Produced jointly by:



Why do we need a Partnership Plan?

All English national parks are required to publish a management plan for their area and to update them every five years¹. It is the overarching strategy document that guides and monitors the work of all those organisations who have a statutory responsibility for delivering the two statutory **national park purposes**:

1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
2. to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

National parks also have a duty, in taking forward the two purposes, to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

It is a Plan for the place, not the National Park Authority or any other organisation. Now known as the Partnership Plan, it is due to be updated in 2020.

All those tasked with updating the Plan need to think about how we should work together to meet the challenges and opportunities for the National Park, now and in the future.

The Sandford Principle

Where there is a conflict between the two purposes, then the Sandford Principle applies, as enshrined in the 1995 Environment Act:

'If it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, [the national park authority] shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.'

¹The Environment Act 1995



The story so far...

The first Management Plan was published in 2010 and updated in 2015. It includes a summary of the special qualities of the New Forest and describes a vision for how the New Forest should look and function in 20 years' time.

These major issues were identified in the 2010 Plan and are still relevant:



Threats to traditional
land management
including commoning



Increasing
development and
recreation pressures



The impact of
climate change
on the Forest



The gradual
loss of local
distinctiveness

PROTECT

The Management Plan was updated in 2015 through the Partnership Plan and over 80 separate actions were delivered, grouped around the themes of **Protect, Enjoy and Prosper**, reflecting the two purposes and duty.



Children enjoying the wild play event at Keyhaven

Enhancing the Forest's landscapes and habitats

Encouraging sustainable land management

Conserving local distinctiveness

Planning for climate change

Safeguarding tranquillity

Aerial view of the restored Fletchers Water



Recent achievements

- 20 miles of New Forest streams and wetland habitats restored
- A new 1,000 acre RSPB nature reserve (Franchises Lodge) created
- 500 people trained in specialist skills such as land management, hedge laying and repairing historic buildings.

ENJOY

Understanding what makes the Forest special

Enjoying these special qualities

Cycling near Brockenhurst



Recent achievements

- £250,000 from Government to help us understand how people use the Forest
- 9,700 pupils from 43 schools learned about the special qualities of the national park and its management
- 500 volunteers have provided 6,500 days undertaking a variety of activities to help look after the Forest's heritage.

PROSPER

Supporting local communities

Fostering economic wellbeing

Improving traffic and transport

The New Forest Tour open top bus



Recent achievements

- 40,500 New Forest Tour customers in 2018 – the highest-ever daily average and an increase of 15% in patronage on the previous year
- £370,000 of private sector funds invested to establish business, digital and social innovation academies
- 78,000 of funding allocated towards community projects supporting volunteering, education and encouraging sustainable living.

The vision

There is an opportunity to refresh the vision which appears in the Management Plan (2010) and is carried through into the current Partnership Plan (2015):

The vision for the National Park in 20 years' time is of an area which has a unique and immediately recognisable sense of place, where:

- Tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the Park
- the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats are all of the highest quality and a great variety of wildlife is able to flourish
- there is a strong sense and understanding of the heritage and living culture of the Forest
- all visitors can gain inspiration, health and wellbeing and enjoy the extensive areas of land with open access
- the far-reaching consequences of climate change are taken into account in all policies and future plans
- people live and work sustainably and contribute to the care of the Forest
- local, regional and national organisations recognise the value of the National Park and there is a shared understanding of its role within the wider area
- everyone contributes in appropriate ways to keeping the National Park a special place for present and future generations.



Mogshade Hill at sunrise

The review

The review is a timely opportunity for all of us to demonstrate a renewed commitment to delivering the two purposes and duty by aligning our collective skills, knowledge and resources. Above all, the next iteration of the Partnership Plan must deliver a much clearer and visibly more integrated strategy for improving nature conservation and managing recreation.

Much has happened since the last review which will need to be reflected in the new Plan:

- the National Parks (Glover) review – expected to report in 2019
- a new national planning policy framework (NPPF 2019)
- A Green Future: the Government's 25 Year Plan to improve the environment
- a new Agriculture Bill and devolved arrangement for environmental stewardship
- the Green Halo Partnership
- the natural capital agenda
- the emerging work of the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group
- population growth and demand for housing
- the regeneration of the Waterside to the east of the national park..

'We hold our natural environment in trust for the next generation. By implementing the measures in this ambitious plan, ours can become the first generation to leave that environment in a better state than we found it and pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future.'

Foreword from the Prime Minister – 25 Year Environment Plan

The Partnership Plan is subject to a full public consultation. As well as being produced jointly with the nine statutory partner organisations, it is also informed by contributions from a host of other Forest-based and national organisations.

Timetable



Contact us

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