



Planning for the Future Consultation
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
3rd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Sent by Email

26 October 2020

Dear Sir or Madam

Planning for the Future: White Paper consultation (August 2020)

At the full New Forest National Park Authority meeting on 15 October, the members of the National Park Authority agreed our consultation response to the Government's '*Planning for the Future: White Paper*' consultation. We are also aware that National Parks England are submitting a separate response on behalf of the nine English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority, which we endorse.

Our attached consultation response is based on our experience as the sole local planning authority for the 220 square miles of the New Forest National Park. Our statutory planning function covers development management (we deal with over 900 planning applications per annum), Plan-making (including minerals & waste planning) and planning enforcement. The New Forest National Park is home to over 35,000 residents and to inform our consultation response we have engaged with the town and parish councils within the National Park.

We acknowledge the Government's intention to fundamentally reform the English planning system. We are a planning authority with an up-to-date Local Plan (2019), the preparation of which (including public consultation, independent Examination and formal adoption) took less than four years. Our adopted Local Plan is based on the two statutory National Park purposes and also allocates land within the National Park for development to meet local needs. Our development management statistics show that over 85% of planning applications within the New Forest National Park were permitted in 2019 – 2020 and we meet the Government's targets for determining minor and major applications within the required timescales. Therefore, although we

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CHAIRMAN GAVIN PARKER CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALISON BARNES

recognise some of the challenges outlined in the White Paper, we do not agree that blame for delays or lack of housing supply can be laid solely on the planning system.

Attached to this letter is the formal consultation response from the National Park Authority to the questions posed in the White Paper. A recurring theme in our response is the lack of acknowledgement given to planning in National Parks. Significantly greater clarity on the role of National Parks is therefore sought, as befitting areas with the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty in the current planning system (NPPF, 2019: paragraph 172). The extant 'English National Parks: UK Government Vision and Circular' confirms that the planning system is a key instrument in the achievement of National Park purposes (paragraph 136) and we contend that this must be reflected in the planning reforms. The Government's 'Landscapes Review: Final Report' (September 2019) recognises that National Park Authorities need to keep their local autonomy, especially over planning (page 9); and Proposal 6 in that Report recommends a strengthened place for national landscapes (including National Parks) in the planning system. The Government's proposed reforms outlined in the White Paper provide the ideal opportunity to implement the recommendations of the Landscapes Review and strengthen the important role of National Parks through the planning system.

Finally, we welcome the acknowledgement on page 72 of the White Paper that robust enforcement action should be taken if planning rules are broken, and Proposal 24 to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions. We are currently frustrated at the lack of enforcement powers available to us to address damaging developments within the National Park and therefore await further details on the intention under Proposal 24 to introduce more powers to address intentional unauthorised development, to consider higher fines, and look to ways of supporting necessary enforcement activity.

I would be happy to discuss any of the points raised in the National Park Authority's consultation response and to work with you to ensure reforms to the planning system contribute to the delivery of the two statutory National Park purposes.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Parker', written in a cursive style.

Professor Gavin Parker
Chairman