

## **Planning Guidance Note – applications for temporary camping uses**

**March 2022**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The National Park Authority confirmed a Park-wide Article 4 Direction on 24 March 2022 withdrawing permitted development rights for all new temporary campsites (first established after 1 March 2020) and for all existing temporary campsites comprising 51 pitches or more. The Direction takes effect on 30 September 2022 and after this date, planning permission will be required for temporary 28 day camping uses falling within either of these two categories.
- 1.2 This guidance note has been produced to assist applicants when applying for planning permission for temporary camping uses caught by the Article 4 Direction. It sets out the relevant planning considerations that the Authority will take into account when assessing related planning applications. This note has been approved by the National Park Authority and is a material consideration when determining planning applications for such camping uses.
- 1.3 Smaller 28 day campsites (50 pitches or less) that have been operating since before 1 March 2020 do not need planning permission and still benefit from permitted development rights - subject to meeting the requirements of the Habitat Regulations (see separate [Guidance Note](#)).

### **2 Applying for Planning Permission**

- 2.1 The New Forest is one of the most visited National Parks in England and has the highest proportion of designated land of international value for nature conservation in the country. Holiday parks and campsites are already well provided for in the National Park. For these reasons Policy DP47 of the [New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036](#) only permits new campsites where they would enable the removal of pitches from sensitive areas.
- 2.2 The Article 4 Direction was made in response to the recent increase in the number of 28 day 'pop up' campsites operating in the National Park and the associated concerns regarding their impact on the landscape, the designated sites and local communities.
- 2.3 As a result of the Article 4 Direction, planning permission is now required for:
  - Temporary 28 day campsites with 51 pitches or more; and
  - All temporary 28 day campsites established after 1 March 2020
- 2.4 Information on how to apply for planning permission can be found on the Authority's website by clicking [here](#).

### **3 Relevant Planning Considerations**

#### **3.1 Number of days and supporting infrastructure**

3.1 The Authority will only consider the grant of planning permission for up to 28 days per calendar year. Proposals for camping uses above 28 days will continue to be assessed under Policy DP47 of Local Plan. As with the previous national permitted development rights, each day that tents are on the land will count towards the 28 day limit. Similarly, having facilities on the land (e.g. temporary toilets) will also be included in the 28 day limit, even if the site is unoccupied.

3.2 National permitted development rights do not allow permanent works to support temporary uses. This is logical and the Planning Inspectorate has supported the Authority's position at appeal that temporary camping uses do not require permanent infrastructure. There is therefore a presumption against any associated permanent infrastructure (e.g. tracks, toilets, hardstanding) on sites granted temporary planning permission through the Article 4 Direction. The only exception would be a standpipe / water supply. This is consistent with the position set out in paragraph 8.28 of the Local Plan (2019).

#### **3.3 Site Location**

3.4 The New Forest's National Park status affords it the highest level of protection in the planning system in relation to landscape and scenic beauty<sup>1</sup>. In addition to this strong landscape protection, over 50% of the New Forest National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation. These designations – comprising the New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and the New Forest Ramsar – are legally protected and new development (including camping uses) must not have a detrimental impact on the site integrity.

3.5 As with other forms of planned development in the New Forest, new temporary camping uses will not be supported within the national (SSSI) or international (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) nature conservations designations of the National Park and this is consistent with Local Plan policy SP5.

3.6 In addition, the Habitat Regulations require consideration to be given to the impacts of development outside the designated sites on the integrity of these sites. There is considerable evidence showing that development around heathlands (such as the New Forest) has an adverse effect on the quality of heathland interest features underlying the designation of the European sites, Ramsar site and SSSIs. This includes the loss of functionally linked habitat, increased fire risk, changes in hydrology, and increased recreational use.

3.7 The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the adopted National Park Local Plan (2019) highlighted a range of potential 'urban edge' effects. It is important to note that urban edge effects are cumulative and therefore the scope for

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 176, National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

continuing to increase development within 400 metres of the designated SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites is limited. Natural England support the Authority's position that development within the 400 metre zone should be restricted. Consequently, the National Park Authority will not support new temporary campsites within 400 metres of the New Forest's internationally designated sites due to concerns over impacts on site integrity.

### 3.8 Meeting the requirements of the Habitats Regulations

3.9 The Habitats Regulations protect rare wildlife and habitats in designated nature conservation sites. As outlined above, over half of the land in the New Forest National Park benefits from this legal protection and development must demonstrate it will not impact on site integrity for it to proceed. Given the range and scale of internationally protected nature conservation sites in the New Forest and on its coast, these legal considerations are particularly important in the National Park.

3.10 The Habitats Regulation Assessment of the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) concluded that it is not possible to rule out likely significant effects from either recreational pressures or from changes to water quality on the designated sites from new housing or any form of overnight visitor accommodation (including campsites). Impacts must therefore be addressed through the planning application process to ensure legal compliance. The Authority can only approve development if it is ascertained it will not adversely affect the integrity of the designated sites following Appropriate Assessment.

#### *(i) Recreational impacts*

3.11 The Authority has devised a package of appropriate mitigation measures in a revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme SPD (2020) that will allow most visitor accommodation proposals to mitigate their recreational impacts on the designated sites. Financial contributions to this Scheme will be used to implement a range of measures that will mitigate the recreational impacts on the designated sites. This approach is supported by Natural England and includes funding from development to support ranger provision within the designated sites, interpretative material and wider awareness raising. Key messages set out in the [New Forest Code](#) should be available on-site.

3.12 With regard to financial contributions to the mitigation scheme, applicants will need to calculate the amount payable in accordance with the formula, using the number of pitches and number of days open during the year. As outlined in Section 2 of this guidance note, the National Park Authority will consider granting temporary planning permission for new campsites for up to 28 days per annum. A worked example of the financial contribution towards mitigating recreational impacts from new campsite use is shown below.

#### *Worked example of a contributions towards mitigation recreational impacts*

- £1,303 contribution to fund mitigation during the Local Plan period to 2036
- This equates to £65.16 per annum

- £65.16 is 'discounted' by the proportion of the year the campsite will be open  
$$\text{£65.16} \times (\text{number of days open}) / 365 = \text{£ per pitch for each year of operation}$$

For example, a 65-pitch campsite open for 28 days per annum would trigger a financial contribution of £325 for measures designed to mitigate recreational impacts. If planning permission was granted for a 3-year time limited period the contribution for the lifespan of the permission would be £975.

(ii) *Water quality*

- 3.13 Natural England has advised that there is a likely significant effect on the Solent's designated sites due to the increase in wastewater from new housing and any development providing overnight accommodation which would discharge into the Solent would also be likely to cause a significant effect. Similar issues affect the River Avon to the west of the National Park, with evidence that elevated levels of phosphates are impacting the River Avon Special Area of Conservation. Therefore, mitigation is required to enable compliance with the Regulations.
- 3.14 Applications for new temporary campsites will need to demonstrate effective mitigation for either nitrates entering the Solent designated sites catchment; or phosphates in the River Avon catchment to the west of the National Park and further details can be found on our website at [Nutrient mitigation - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/nutrient-mitigation). The requirement for nutrient neutrality in new development applies across the whole of the National Park and landowners should prepare a site-specific 'nutrient budget' setting out how the nutrients arising from the planned development will be managed. Applicants should use the nutrient budget calculator for either the Solent or River Avon available on our website to determine the amount of mitigation required and to read Natural England's advice on achieving nutrient neutrality.
- 3.15 Supporting the land-based economy
- 3.16 Taking the principle established in the Local Plan, applications for new temporary 28 day campsites will be expected to show how they support the local economy, contribute to farm diversification and maintain the landscape character of the National Park (as required by Policy SP48). As per paragraph 8.33 of the Local Plan (2019), diversification of a scale or extent which is likely to reduce the long-term agricultural operation of the landholding will not be supported. Planning permission will not be granted if the proposal would result in the loss of back-up grazing land.

## **4 Use of planning conditions**

- 4.1 The Article 4 Direction enables the Authority to protect the designated nature conservation sites, the landscape character of the New Forest National Park, local amenity and the well-being of the area through ensuring proposals for new campsites are considered in more detail.

4.2 In the event that planning permission is granted for temporary campsite use, standard conditions are likely to include:

- A time limit on the permission. This is considered appropriate for a temporary use that under normal permitted development rights is limited to a calendar year. The Authority is not looking to introduce a more permissive regime, or to grant planning permission for the permanent change of use of land for camping uses. The 3 year period provides certainty for applicants and local communities.
- Restrictions on barbeques and wildfires, unless provided in approved areas agreed in writing by the Authority. The New Forest is under extreme fire risk in the summer months and barbeques and fires are banned on the Open Forest due to the risks they pose to the designated sites. Restrictions are also justified to protect neighbouring properties (which include thatched properties) and their amenity. This is consistent with Policy DP2 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) which confirms development should not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity.
- No amplified music. The tranquillity of the National Park is one of its most valued 'special qualities' and the planning policies for the National Park seek to protect it. In order to retain this special quality and allow people to enjoy it, planning policies seek to control the potential impacts of noise and light pollution. Conditions will be applied so that applications will be consistent with Policy SP15, which sets out more detail. The use of amplified music on campsites is contrary to the statutory National Park purposes.
- No external lighting. As outlined above, the tranquillity of the New Forest National Park is valued by residents and visitors alike. People's enjoyment of the tranquillity of the area is damaged by poorly designed lighting and so appropriate planning conditions will apply so that applications will be consistent with Policy SP15, to ensure that these concerns are addressed.
- A requirement to display the New Forest Code on site (appropriate material will be provided by the Authority).
- Compliance with the habitat regulations.

## 5. Review of guidance

5.1 The Authority will continue to monitor and assess the impact of temporary 28 days campsites and will in turn will keep this guidance under review.