

Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group
The King's House, Forestry England, Lyndhurst
8 March 2024

Attendance:

Gavin Parker, Chair (NFNPA)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)
Charlotte Bartlett (FE)
Richard Burke (FE)
Tim Guymer (NFDC)

Edward Heron (Verderers)
Graham Horton (NE)
Sam Jones (FE)
Jim Mitchell (NFNPA)
Graham Smith (TVBC)

1. Welcome / apologies / introductions

- 1.1 GP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Jonathan Woods (HCC).

2. Minutes and matters arising from the last RMSSG meeting on 27 September 2023

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed. GH provided an update on the New Forest Strategic Mitigation work and confirmed that NE had now written to all the relevant local authorities.

3. Feedback from the Partnership Plan Leaders Panel

- 3.1 The Verderers hosted the Panel meeting on 7 March 2024 where the focus was on commoning and understanding the links between commoning, land management and environmental sustainability. The Panel heard how recreational pressures continue to have a negative impact on commoning.
- 3.2 SA reported that the previous meeting of the Panel had agreed a draft annual work programme for taking forward the actions in the Partnership Plan – producing a spatial plan to better manage recreational pressures was a high priority for the Panel.

4. New Forest LCWIP

- 4.1 The Steering Group noted that the New Forest LCWIP consultation document had still not been published and it was agreed that the Chair of the Steering Group would write to Hampshire County Council for an update.

Action: JM to draft note for GP to send to Cllr Nick Adams-King with a request that HCC confirm the timeline for the New Forest LCWIP.

5. PSPOs

- 5.1 There was agreement that the PSPOs had been a success in their first year of operation, with over 700 engagements recorded. The PSPOs had made it

easier for staff to discourage the public from feeding and petting ponies by 'legitimising' the conversations. As a result, staff felt more confident in engaging the public on these issues and driving behaviour change.

- 5.2 That said, some posts on social media still show people feeding ponies and EH suggested it would not be unhelpful for some tickets to be issued this year, noting that the emphasis remains on engage, explain, educate and only then, enforce. As PSPOs are time limited to three years it was considered important to review the impact of the PSPOs sooner rather than later.
- 5.3 The Government's response to the Landscapes Review had suggested that National Park Authorities be given powers to make PSPOs and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). It was agreed that it would be useful for the NFNPA to follow this up.

Action: NFNPA Chair/CEO to follow up on proposals for extending powers to NPAs to make PSPOs and TROs.

6. Progressing the Spatial Plan

- 6.1 FE shared plans collated to date which show proposed changes to the car parks on the Crown Lands and extensions to the off road cycle network. Other plans shared included the 'Area Recreation Management Plan' prepared for Dartmoor, a plan illustrating potential recreational areas outside the New Forest National Park, LUC's tranquillity map and an overview map of the New Forest LCWIP. It was agreed that it would be helpful to share these plans with Group members, ideally online through a SharePoint site.
- 6.2 Reference was made to the earlier Future Forest work and the resulting 22 Strategic Actions which together provide the rationale for the spatial plan. It was agreed that there were five immediate tasks for the Steering Group in progressing the spatial plan:
- strategic narrative
 - shared master maps and GIS layers
 - refine/refresh guiding principles
 - methodology
 - sequencing/prioritisation
- 6.3 Some discussion on how the spatial plan might be phased, starting with the least contentious proposals in order to secure 'proof of concept'. Other views leaned towards sharing with the public as much detail as possible in 'one go'. Either way, the plan would need to be shared with the Leaders Panel prior to any publication and it was also considered important to engage wider stakeholders through the RMS Advisory Group. The 'spatial plan' master map would be developed by NFDC's GIS team (the NPA currently procure GIS services from NFDC through a SLA) – SA to co-ordinate in liaison with TG.

Action: NPA and FE officers to progress the five tasks listed above. SA to ensure the RMSAG meets before the next RMSSG meeting.

7. AOB

7.1 None

8. Date of next meeting

8.1 TBC – but will be in advance of the next Leaders Panel meeting.