

## **NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE – 15 APRIL 2025**

### **DRAFT COPYTHORNE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT**

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

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Since the designation of the New Forest National Park in 2005 and the transfer of the statutory planning functions to the National Park Authority in 2006, the Authority has supported local communities in the preparation of local design guidance. There are currently 7 extant parish or village design statements for the National Park area (Ashurst & Colbury, Boldre, Hordle, Hyde, Landford, Sway and Wellow), all of which have been subject to public consultation before being formally adopted by the Authority as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- 1.2 In January 2022 the Authority adopted an updated National Park Design Guide SPD, which provides Park-wide design guidance (as well as incorporating a design code). The updated Design Guide ensures the National Park is covered by up-to-date design guidance, reflecting the importance national policy places on high quality design (particularly within a nationally protected landscape).
- 1.3 Although the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 includes enabling provisions to remove the role of Supplementary Planning Documents, these provisions have not been taken forward to date and therefore SPDs can still perform a function as material planning considerations in the current planning system.

#### **2 Draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement**

- 2.1 The parish of Copythorne is located almost entirely within the National Park for planning purposes and is home to circa 3,000 residents. It is one of the larger, more populated parishes in the National Park and this is reflected in the number of planning applications received by the National Park Authority from local residents, businesses and landowners in the parish each year.
- 2.2 Last year Copythorne Parish Council resolved to prepare a Parish Design Statement to provide local design guidelines for future development to assist residents and developers in preparing their proposals. The role of the draft Design Statement is not to prevent new development, but instead to enable development to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the parish.
- 2.3 Copythorne Parish Council established a steering group comprising local residents and representatives from the parish council to take the work forward. Information has been gathered through articles in the monthly parish newsletter, agenda items at parish council meetings and a briefing given at the Annual Parish meeting. Officers from the National Park Authority's policy & conservation team have also been engaged in the process, provided feedback where appropriate.

- 2.4 The Parish Council and Steering Group have consciously sought to prepare a succinct document focusing on local matters within the parish. This is in recognition that the majority of the parish is already covered by the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019), the National Park Design Guide SPD (2022) and the respective Conservation Area Character Appraisals for the Forest Central North and Forest North East Conservation Areas (insofar as they relate to the areas of the parish of Copythorne that lies within the Conservation Areas).
- 2.5 The draft Parish Design Statement in Annex 1 to this report has been endorsed by Copythorne Parish Council and has now been formally submitted to the National Park Authority to be taken forward for a statutory period of public consultation. The main elements of the draft Parish Design Statement in Annex 1 include:
- A brief history of the parish, with the document highlighting the evolution of the six main settlements in the parish (Bartley, Cadnam, Copythorne, Newbridge, Ower and Winsor), all of which have their own identity and origins.
  - Section 4 of the draft Parish Design Statement provides an overview of the 28 nationally listed buildings/assets in the parish.
  - The draft Statement sets out a series of recommendations to be taken into account when proposals in the parish are being considered (for example, the draft Statement encourages a 'rooftop first' approach to solar panels for both residential and business properties). These recommendations have been discussed with Authority officers, with revisions made where necessary to ensure they are in general conformity with the higher order national and local planning policies for the National Park area.
  - Section 9 of the draft Statement highlights factors outside the scope of local design guidelines, in recognition of the fact that the design statement cannot set new planning policies (which require independent examination); and can typically only address matters where planning permission is required.

### **3. Consultation on the draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement**

- 3.1 To be afforded weight as material planning considerations, supplementary planning documents are required to be subject to a period of consultation with statutory and other consultees. National planning regulations prescribe a minimum 4-week consultation period on draft SPDs and within the New Forest National Park the Authority is committed to a 6-week consultation period (which provides more of an opportunity for interested parties to respond).
- 3.2 This consultation would be co-ordinated by the Authority's Policy & Conservation team and would include liaison with Copythorne Parish Council. Members will be aware that for other consultations on local design guidelines we have made use of the local networks for engaging local residents within the relevant parish (e.g. parish newsletters, parish council meetings and events) and we will do the same with the draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement.

#### **4. Conclusions and next steps**

- 4.1 Copythorne Parish Council and the Steering Group have worked hard to prepare the draft Parish Design Statement and see the merit in having locally-specific guidelines for the parish to supplement the National Park-wide planning policy and design guidance prepared by the Authority.
- 4.2 It is therefore recommended that the Planning Committee endorses the draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement set out in Annex 1 to this report for a 6-week period of consultation. All of the representations received during this period will be considered by the National Park Authority and Parish Council, with changes made to the draft document where appropriate. The intention is to then present the final version of the Copythorne Parish Design Statement to the full National Park Authority meeting on 24 July 2025 for formal adoption as an SPD.

#### **Recommendation:**

**Members of the Planning Committee endorse the draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement in Annex 1 to this report for the purposes of statutory public consultation under Regulation 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended).**

#### **Papers:**

**PC 487/25** – Cover report

**Annex 1** – Draft Copythorne Parish Design Statement

#### **Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising out of this report. A wide range of statutory and other consultees will be consulted on the draft Design Statement.

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