NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2024 – 2043

Regulation 19

Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan

Prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority

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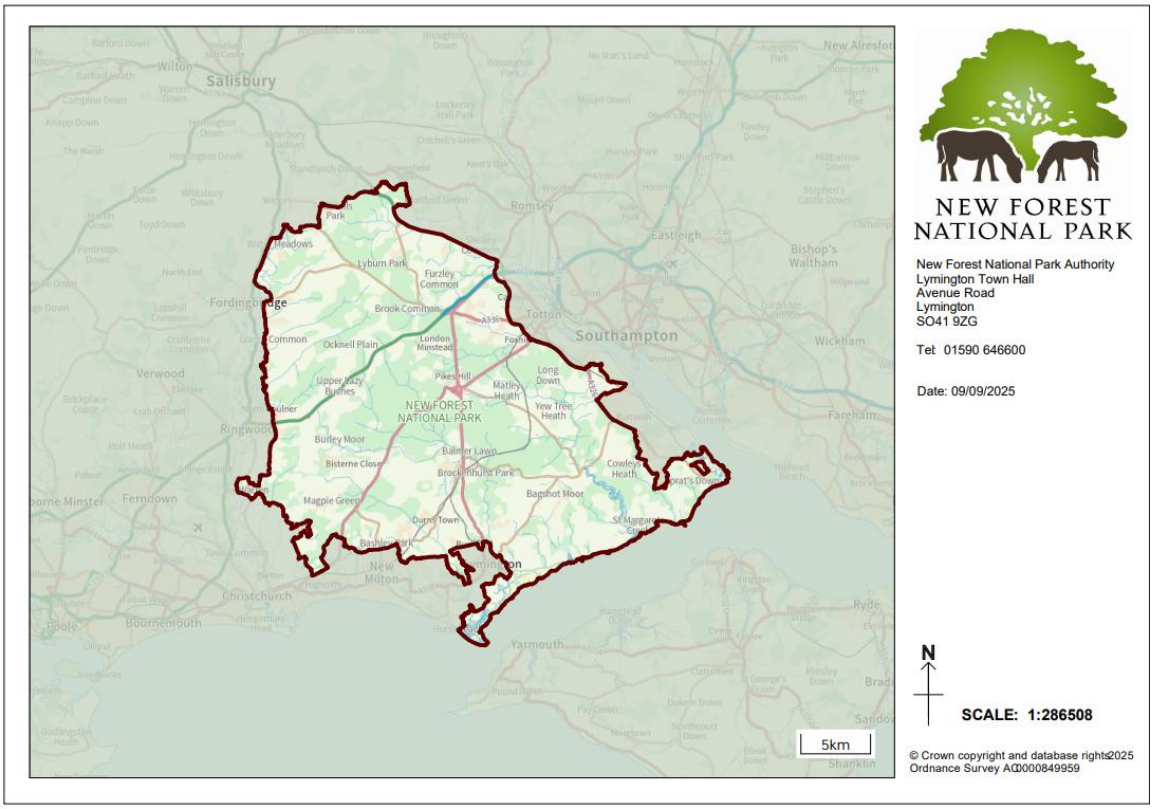
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1. Introduction and Background

1.1. The planning system plays a key role in keeping our national parks special and ensuring they remain living, working landscapes. It is for this reason that the Government, through primary legislation, has made national park authorities the sole planning authorities for their respective areas. As part of its statutory planning role, the New Forest National Park Authority is required to prepare, monitor and review a Local Plan for the National Park. Once adopted, the Local Plan forms part of the statutory 'development plan' (alongside any 'made' Neighbourhood Plans and the separate Minerals and Waste Local Plan) for the New Forest and is the principal guide for planning decisions within the National Park. The Local Plan focuses on the area within the National Park boundary, and it is the responsibilities of our neighbouring planning authorities to prepare the development plans for their respective areas outside the National Park.



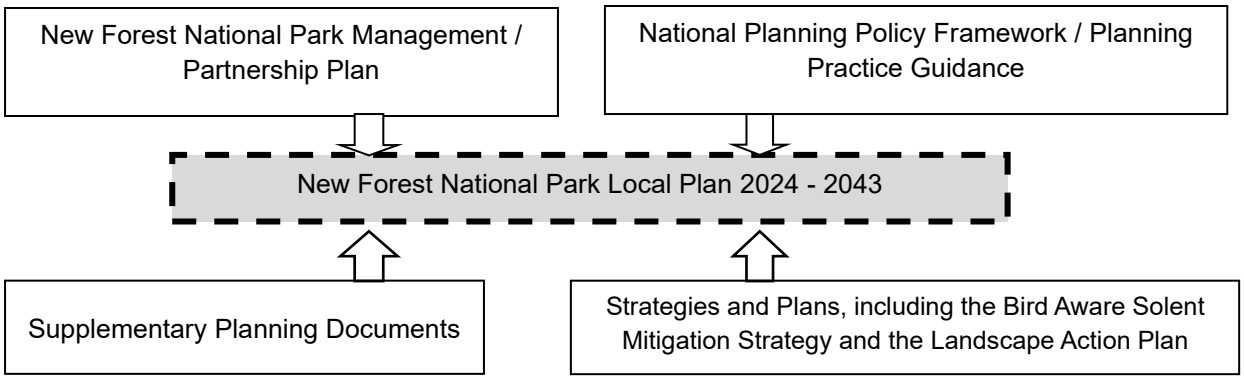
1.2. Key aspects of national policy and statute pertinent to National Parks are set out in the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Environment Act 1995, the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance. This includes the statutory National Park purposes; the relationship between the two purposes; the Authority's socio-economic duty; and the legal requirement placed on relevant bodies – including national park authorities - to seek to further the National Park purposes in undertaking their functions. It is this framework that the New Forest National Park Local Plan is prepared under and operates within.

Links to other plans and strategies

1.3. The Local Plan aims to deliver the long-term planning vision for the New Forest National Park and forms a key part of the statutory 'development plan' for the area. National policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guidance within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) also form material considerations when preparing the Local Plan.

1.4. The Environment Act 1995 also requires each National Park Authority to prepare a National Park Management Plan. The Management Plan – or Partnership Plan – is the overarching strategic document for the National Park and is intended to guide the work of all organisations within the National Park (not just the Authority). Although Management Plans do not form part of the statutory development plan, they should be taken into account in preparing Local Plans and may also be material considerations in assessing planning applications. In 2027 the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan will be updated and will set out a series of actions to be taken forward over the following five years, many of which have land use implications to be reflected in the Local Plan.

1.5. In addition to the development plan documents, Supplementary Planning Documents can provide more detail on planning policies, as well as specific strategies to guide the delivery of the two statutory Park purposes. These latter documents are not formal planning documents but provide detailed guidance on important issues within the National Park.



1.6. Since the adoption of the first set of New Forest National Park-wide planning policies in 2010 there have been significant changes in national policy, which continues to confirm that national parks have the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. In addition, the statutory National Park purposes originally established through the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949 remain and are supplemented by the Environment Act 1995. Changes introduced through Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 require 'relevant bodies' to seek to further these statutory National Park purposes in undertaking their functions. This strengthened duty applies to a wide range of bodies, including national park authorities, constituent local authorities and statutory undertakers.

1.7. The Environment Act 2021 introduced a new system of plans for nature recovery across England, known as Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). These aim to map out areas of wildlife, identify opportunities for improvement, and prioritize local actions to restore and enhance nature, in partnership with local stakeholders and landowners. Regulations introduced in 2023 set out how these strategies will be prepared by responsible bodies. The production of each LNRS is evidence-based, locally led and collaborative, to create a network of shared plans that public, private and voluntary sectors can all help to deliver. Natural England lead the Government's involvement and they work alongside each of the responsible bodies to help shape the strategy and ensure overall consistency. The preparation of each LNRS is also supported by the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

1.8. As the New Forest National Park is currently covered by two county council areas, two LNRSs apply to the National Park area. The strategies will be used to:

- guide investment into local priorities for protection and enhancement;
- help shape how future funding for farming and land management such as the Environment Land Management schemes will be used;
- map areas of opportunity for the use of 'nature-based solutions' to wider environmental problems like flooding, climate change mitigation and adaptation or poor water quality;
- guide mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) investments; and
- provide a source of evidence for local planning authorities, helping to understand locations important for conserving and restoring biodiversity.

1.9. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire was approved and published on 8 December 2025, following consultation during May and June 2025. The Wiltshire and Swindon LNRS covers the northern part of the national park and was subject to consultation between March and April 2025 and was approved in October 2025.

1.10. In addition, the New Forest National Park Local Plan is informed by a wide range of evidence base studies, including a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; Whole-Plan Viability Assessment; Employment & Business Needs Survey; and an objective assessment of housing needs arising within the National Park. The policies in the Local Plan have also been assessed against a number of environmental, economic and social indicators as part of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Overview of the New Forest National Park

1.11. The New Forest National Park was designated in 2005 and covers an area of 220 square miles within the counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire. The National Park operates within a detailed planning policy and legislative framework which is set out below. National parks have two statutory purposes that set out the main reasons for their designation and describe the overall focus for their management.

The two purposes as set out in primary legislation are the 'golden threads' running through the Local Plan:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the New Forest; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the New Forest by the public.

1.12. In taking forward the two National Park purposes, National Park Authorities also have a duty under Section 62(1) of the Environment Act 1995 to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park. The New Forest is a living-working area, home to 2,500 local businesses and nearly 35,000 residents. More detail is set out in Chapter 2 Profile of the New Forest National Park. All relevant authorities are required to seek to further the two purposes in any work that may affect the area and make every effort to reconcile any conflict between the two. If such efforts fail, then only as a measure of last resort should the first purpose take precedence. This is known as the Sandford Principle and is a well-established principle, dating back decades.

1.13. These statutory purposes, the related socio-economic duty and the strengthened legal requirement to seek to further the purposes in the delivery of the Authority's planning functions form the underlying themes running through this Local Plan. The vision for the National Park, and strategic objectives (Chapter 3) are drawn from these purposes, duty and the special qualities of the National Park. In addition, the review of the Local Plan has provided an opportunity to reflect its synergies with the Partnership Plan.

The New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027

1.14. The central role of the Partnership Plan (published July 2022) is to guide and co-ordinate the work of all those with an interest in, and influence on, the National Park in delivering its purposes and duty. This includes organisations with statutory responsibilities, land management interests, businesses, local communities and user groups.

1.15. The Plan outlines the key drivers and challenges facing the National Park and sets out how these will be addressed collectively. It sets out an overall approach to managing the National Park for the next five years, which will frame more detailed policies and actions over this period. The Plan will guide and align the priorities and resources of the National Park Authority with those of partner organisations, businesses and communities.

1.16. The vision for the Partnership Plan to 2050 is "The Vision for the New Forest is to be a national beacon for a sustainable future, where nature and people flourish". To support the vision a number of objectives are expressed which have strong links with the Local Plan:

- people live and work sustainably, having successfully adapted to the impacts of the climate emergency and supporting nature's recovery and resilience;

- all communities and visitors are better informed and gain inspiration, health and well-being and enjoy the extensive areas accessible across the National Park whilst respecting the fragile nature, unique environment and rich culture of the New Forest;
- tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the New Forest;
- facilities such as car parks, campsites, walking and cycling routes and community green spaces are in the right places to both protect rare wildlife and to provide a better, more informed experience for people;
- everyone contributes to caring for the National Park as a special place for present and future generations;
- the mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats have been conserved and greatly enhanced, supporting wildlife to recover and flourish;
- there is a strong sense, understanding of and support for the heritage and living culture of the New Forest, especially the local tradition of commoning;
- local, regional and national organisations recognise and work to enhance the value of the National Park; there is an appreciation of its importance and role within the wider area.

1.17. The Partnership Plan goes on to identify five themes based 'agendas for action', set below. To ensure that the Local Plan reflects where possible, not only the special qualities of the National Park, but also the themes of the Partnership Plan, each chapter precedes with a commentary of how these all relate.

Re:New Climate	**Net Zero with Nature** – significant cuts in land-based carbon emissions are secured through restoring natural habitats and enabling carbon capture.	• Develop a 'net zero with nature' programme with partners and communities to ensure the National Park is carbon neutral by 2050.	• Promote and develop best practice in nature-based solutions to meet climate and nature goals.	• Help communities to take action on the climate emergency.
Re:New Nature	**Nature Recovery** – habitats are more resilient, restored, expanded, connected and maintained to enable wildlife to thrive, both within and beyond the National Park.	• Produce a local nature recovery plan to (i) maintain, restore and expand habitats so that they are resilient and support thriving wildlife (ii) mitigate recreational pressures and (iii) ensure recreation takes place in the most resilient areas.	• Harness the benefits we receive from nature in the New Forest ('natural capital') to generate increased investment and projects to enhance nature and the services it provides.	• Help landowners, farmers and commoners move to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) which rewards working with nature.
Re:New People	**An inclusive National Park** – people within reach of the New Forest of all backgrounds, abilities and socio-economic groups value the National Park as an important part of their lives and seek to care for it.	• Develop opportunities to deliver a 'Natural Health Service' within and beyond the National Park, through a programme of measures provided by communities, businesses and the health and environment sectors.	• Foster a greater appreciation of the New Forest, its landscape and cultural heritage.	• Help new and diverse audiences connect with nature, discover why the National Park is special and how to care for it, with a particular focus on young people.
Re:New Place	**Thriving Forest** – a living, working Forest is sustained through its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and support for commoning. There is a vibrant local produce market, access to affordable homes and a growing green economy featuring sustainable tourism and green businesses.	• Protect cultural heritage assets and support commoning and local produce to sustain the unique natural beauty of the landscape and culture of the New Forest for future generations.	• Invest in green skills and jobs, creating a recognised reputation as a centre of excellence for a growing green economy.	• Provide more affordable housing.
Re:New Partnership	**Team New Forest** – communities, businesses and organisations work together as a team to deliver the vision of the Partnership Plan, sharing knowledge, ideas and resources to deliver the best for the Forest.	• Establish new ways of engaging with our communities, hearing their ideas and encouraging grassroots action.	• Ensure the New Forest is leading the environmental agenda by delivering exemplary projects and partnerships and showing how these can support and shape policy and sustainable decisions beyond our boundaries, both regionally and nationally.	• Develop a data, evidence and insights capability to underpin our collective decisions and actions and use up to date technology to help us manage and communicate across the National Park more effectively.

Cross-boundary planning issues

1.18. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a legal requirement for planning authorities – including national park authorities – to co-operate on strategic cross-boundary planning matters. The 'duty to co-operate' aims to ensure that neighbouring authorities continue to engage with each other constructively. Although this duty has been reformed, there remains a requirement for relevant authorities to work constructively on cross-boundary matters in plan-making.

1.19. The National Park Authority is well placed to fulfil this requirement due to:

- Its coordinating role in the preparation and adoption of the National Park Management Plan. The Partnership Plan (see above) is overseen by a group of statutory bodies working alongside the National Park Authority and this has helped establish good working arrangements between the respective authorities. This includes a 'Partnership Plan Leaders' Panel' which brings together senior representatives of the main bodies in the New Forest.

- The National Park Authority is the statutory planning authority for the National Park, but the constituent authorities retain their responsibilities for housing, economic development, flooding, environmental health, highways and education in the New Forest. The National Park Authority has therefore always worked closely with its constituent authorities on these matters.

- The membership of the National Park Authority is drawn from constituent local authorities and town and parish councils across the National Park, thereby ensuring good links across the tiers of local government.

1.20. The main areas of strategic cross-boundary planning interest are:

- Habitat protection – over half of the National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation. This includes all 26 miles of the National Park's coastline and the designated habitats in the heart of the New Forest. Consequently, there is a shared need to ensure that the planned level of development within the National Park and surrounding areas does not adversely impact on the integrity of the New Forest's protected habitats.

- Housing provision – there is a significant housing need within the New Forest and surrounding areas. The Government recognises that national parks are not appropriate locations for major development and unrestricted housing and is clear that unmet needs should be considered through cooperation with surrounding authorities.

- Transport – the National Park Authority is not the statutory highway authority for the National Park area, and it is therefore important the Authority liaises closely with the bodies with that responsibility. This includes active travel and the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans, as well as the traffic implications of major schemes close to the National Park boundary.

National policy and guidance

1.21. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, first issued in 2014) set out the Government's planning policies and guidance relevant to the work of all planning authorities. They constitute guidance for planning authorities and decision-takers in drawing up plans and are a material consideration in determining applications. The development plan remains the starting point for determining applications, and planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.22. The NPPF states that local plans should set out the strategic priorities for the area. This should include policies to deliver the homes and jobs needed in the area and conservation and enhancement of the environment, including landscape. National parks are identified as areas where development should be restricted and the NPPF confirms that national parks have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

1.23. The UK Government National Parks Vision and Circular provides policy guidance specifically for the English National Parks and for all those whose decisions or actions might affect them. The Circular calls for a renewed focus on achieving the two National Park purposes and for the fostering of vibrant, healthy and productive living and working communities.

1.24. In 2024 the Government published their 'Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework'. To support Protected Landscapes in meeting their potential for nature, climate, people and place, the Government has established ambitious targets for National Parks and National Landscapes. These targets will promote the actions that are most needed to achieve positive changes, and the New Forest National Park Local Plan has a role in the delivery of the Government's apportioned targets for the New Forest National Park.

1.25. The NPPF, National Parks Circular, NPPG and Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework for the New Forest have been taken into account in the preparation of this Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans

1.26. A number of the towns and parishes within the National Park have prepared Neighbourhood Plans and these have been 'made' following consultation and examination. The examination process requires draft neighbourhood plans to meet the 'basic conditions' as set out in legislation. One of these is compliance with the strategic policies in the Local Plan. Hence this Local Plan includes both strategic policies (prefixed with 'SP') and more detailed development management policies (prefixed with 'DP'). This form of numbering enables local communities to understand which are the strategic planning policies that they should be in general conformity with in preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

1.27. As Neighbourhood Plans are typically town or parish-based, several cross over into the current administrative areas of New Forest District Council or Test Valley Borough Council.

Minerals and waste planning framework

1.28. The New Forest National Park Authority is the minerals and waste planning authority for the whole of the National Park. This statutory role includes the preparation and adoption of the planning policy framework for minerals and waste development within the Park. The Authority works in partnership with the other minerals and waste planning authorities in Hampshire and has adopted the following planning policy documents.

1.29. The Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (adopted 2026) forms part of the statutory development plan for the National Park. The Plan covers the whole of the New Forest National Park, including the area within south Wiltshire. The plan is supported by the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

- Oil & Gas Development in Hampshire SPD (adopted 2016); and
- Minerals & Waste Safeguarding in Hampshire (adopted 2016).

1.30. With this separate policy framework in place for minerals and waste development in the Park, the New Forest National Park Local Plan does not cover minerals and waste planning matters.

Planning enforcement

1.31. To support the protection afforded to the New Forest as a nationally designated landscape, the Authority has a dedicated planning enforcement team to ensure that unauthorised development is not harmful to the National Park, its special qualities and to protect the amenities of residents. In accordance with the NPPF the Authority has adopted a Local Enforcement Plan that sets out the policy and procedures for enforcing planning control in the Park.

2. Profile of the New Forest



2.1. The local communities within the National Park are continually changing and adapting to modern life, but remarkably the Forest has largely escaped the effects brought about elsewhere by large scale development and intensive agriculture. This includes Commoners – holders of ancient rights that allow their livestock (mainly ponies, cattle, donkeys and pigs) to roam freely across the Open Forest. The villages retain their local character and distinctiveness and the medieval landscape of the 'Nova Foresta' – William the Conqueror's royal hunting forest – is still apparent. Today the National Park attracts large numbers of visitors each year, who come to enjoy the peace and quiet, wandering livestock, natural beauty and wildlife of one of the last ancient, unspoilt and open landscapes in England.

Area and population

2.2. The New Forest National Park covers 567 square kilometres (220 square miles). In 2022 the National Park had a population of 34,931 people[1] and with around

[1] New Forest Housing Needs Assessment, Iceni (2025)

62 people per square kilometre it is the second most densely populated British National Park after the South Downs. The housing stock amounts to 15,503 dwellings (New Forest Housing Needs Assessment, Iceni, 2025). The main settlements of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Burley, Cadnam, Landford, Lyndhurst and Sway have between 1,000 and 3,500 residents. Average house prices in the New Forest are significantly higher than surrounding areas, with an average property price more than 12 times the average annual earnings. This means the New Forest has the highest average house price of any UK National Park.

Landscape character

2.3. The New Forest Landscape Character Assessment (2015) describes 19 character areas. A Landscape Action Plan for the National Park extends the landscape assessment work and provides guidance for individuals and organisations wanting to help enhance and conserve the special landscape character of the area. At the heart of the New Forest is an extensive area of unenclosed woodland, grassland and heath which is of international nature conservation importance and is maintained largely by the grazing of Commoners' stock. Recent figures show that around 10,500 animals are depastured on the Open Forest by over 700 practising Commoners[2]. This historic form of land management faces threats from the high land and property costs and this Local Plan includes several policies that seek to support commoning due to its importance for the cultural heritage of the Forest; and the contribution it makes to land management and landscape character.

Nature conservation

2.4. In total 56% of the New Forest National Park is designated of international value for nature conservation – the highest proportion of land in any planning authority area in the country. The New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites cover more than 300 square kilometres in the core of the New Forest, including the most extensive area of heathland and valley mire in lowland Europe. Much of the coastline is similarly designated, principally for the populations of wintering wildfowl and waders and a framework is in place along the Solent (including the National Park) to ensure the impacts of new residential development on the coast are mitigated.

Cultural heritage

2.5. The National Park contains a wealth of designated and non-designated heritage assets. There are more than 340 Bronze Age barrows, a number of fine Iron Age hill forts, and numerous remnants of medieval and later buildings, enclosures and other earthworks associated with the royal forest. The main rivers supported a boat and shipbuilding industry, and the coastal salt workings were among the most important in the country during the 18th Century. The National Park has 187 scheduled monuments, 624 listed buildings and 17 designated

[2] Verderers of the New Forest data (2024)

conservation areas, plus three which straddle the National Park boundary with surrounding authorities. In addition to the nationally listed buildings, there are well over 2,000 non-designated heritage assets. There are also seven registered historic parks and gardens, four of which are grade II*.

2.6. The cultural heritage of the National Park extends beyond its rich built environment and includes the strong cultural identity and affinity the communities of the Forest feel towards the landscape and way of living. There is long history of commoning in the New Forest and the Commoners' stock comprising ponies, donkeys, pigs and cattle that roam free across the Open Forest are a key part of the 'special qualities' of the National Park, often being described as the 'architects of the Forest'. Commoning has helped shape the mosaic of landscapes, biodiversity and character of the National Park and is essential to the land-based economy and management of the Open Forest. This Local Plan includes several local planning policies designed to support commoning and the central role it plays in the cultural heritage of the National Park.

Access and recreation

2.7. The New Forest has 42 kilometres of coastline, 325 kilometres of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and over 30,000 hectares of accessible land (more than 50% of the area of the National Park). This provides numerous opportunities for quiet recreation. Tranquillity and a sense of remoteness can be found in many parts of the National Park. In addition, the major attractions, including Buckler's Hard, Lepe Country Park, Calshot Activities Centre, the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, Paulton's Park, and the villages of Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu and Burley attract people throughout the year.

2.8. Research by RJS Associates (2019) indicated that there were over 15 million visitor days spent per annum in the New Forest National Park – an increase of over 12% since the previous assessment was undertaken in 2004. Research commissioned by the Authority, New Forest District Council, Natural England and Forestry England and other local planning authorities[3] estimated that housing development in the period up to 2036 within 25 kilometres of the New Forest will result in an increase of around 11.4% in the number of visits to the New Forest's designated sites. Visitors help to support the local services of the New Forest and make a positive contribution to the economy. There are also pressures resulting from visitor pressures on the local communities, landscape and habitats of the New Forest and the National Park Authority works with a wide range of partners to seek to manage these. Many of these measures do not require planning permission, but where they do this Local Plan sets the policy framework.

Communities and settlement pattern

2.9. The local communities of the New Forest have a strong cultural identity; with a wealth of local traditions, and there remains an active commoning community. There are 37 parish and town councils wholly or partly within the National Park.

[3] Recreation use of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar: Overview of visitor results and implications of housing change on visitor numbers', Footprint Ecology (2020)

2.10. The larger villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway have been identified as '*Defined Villages'* within local planning policies for several decades due to their character, population and the range of facilities and services they provide.

2.11. Other smaller settlements with a basic range of local services within the National Park include Beaulieu, Burley, Cadnam - Bartley, East Boldre, Landford - Nomansland, Netley Marsh, Redlynch and Woodgreen. This Local Plan identifies three additional Smaller Defined Villages that provide some services for local people. The surrounding urban areas of Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury are easily reached by rail or road from the National Park and provide a wide range of housing, shops, leisure facilities and employment opportunities. The towns of Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood, Totton and the Waterside are important local employment centres and provide services to meet most of the needs of National Park residents.

Economy

2.12. While the National Park is predominantly rural in nature, the economy is diverse and is highly integrated with its surrounding areas. There are around 2,500 businesses in the National Park, reflecting a very broad range and types of businesses, with the largest sector, in terms of the numbers of individual businesses, being professional, scientific and technical services. Residents of the National Park are employed in a wide range of businesses and services, with the health sector; tourism; wholesale and retail; professional and technical services; and education all being particularly important employers. Only a small proportion of employment is now found in traditional rural land-based activities such as farming, forestry and commoning, but these activities remain vital in maintaining the land use management practices that help conserve the landscape character of the National Park. Unemployment within the National Park has remained at lower levels than in the South East and the UK as a whole over the last decade. Looking forward, a decline in the working age population is forecast.

2.13. In delivering the two statutory National Park purposes, the Authority has a duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of the communities within the National Park. The English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision & Circular (2010) confirms that national park authorities should continue to focus their expenditure on the delivery of their statutory purposes, while seeking to maximise the socio-economic benefits available from such activity. Experience to date has shown that by harnessing the economy to environmental ends, tangible economic benefits can be delivered through the statutory purposes whilst at the same time achieving those purposes[4].

[4] Paragraph 66, English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular, 2010

Transport

2.14. The National Park is crossed by several major routes which carry high volumes of traffic. The A31, linking South West England with Southampton and the wider South East, is the most heavily used road in the National Park, carrying over 70,000 vehicles daily and effectively cuts the area in two. Major roads in the Plan area cause severance issues which have a significant impact on the use of active travel. The National Park is well-served for long-distance rail travel, with connections at Ashurst, Beaulieu Road, Brockenhurst and Sway. Lymington – located just outside the National Park – also has two train stations which link with the Isle of Wight ferry. There are a number of regular scheduled public bus services, including a regular service between Southampton and Lymington, via Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst. However, many of the rural settlements are less well-served and here public transport is not a practical option for the majority of residents.

2.15. During the summer months the New Forest Tour bus operates three interlinked routes across the National Park and is aimed at both visitors and residents.

2.16. Southampton and Bournemouth Airports are located within close proximity to the National Park. Plans for the expansion of both airports are set out in the respective Airport Masterplans, with combined annual aircraft movements predicted to increase over the plan-period in line with the consented developments at the airports. The scale of the impact of this increase of passenger aircraft flights will depend on future flight paths and the extent of improvements in aircraft engine technology.

2.17. Southampton is a major international gateway port with significant global and economic importance. Land at Dibden Bay, adjoining the National Park and also referred to as the 'Strategic Land Reserve', has been identified as the only area of land physically capable of accommodating significant expansion of the port in the draft Port of Southampton Masterplan 2016-2035. The Waterside area of the New Forest also includes several of the designated Solent Freeport tax and customs sites. This includes part of the Fawley Waterside Solent Freeport site that is located partly within the boundary of the New Forest National Park – the only case in England that a Freeport occurs within a national park. Any future development proposals for the Strategic Land Reserve and Fawley Waterside must have regard to the Government's National Policy Statement on Ports; potential impacts on the adjacent New Forest National Park (as required by the strengthened Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995); national planning policy on major development in national parks; and the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

3. Vision and objectives

3.1. The Local Plan aims to deliver sustainable development within the context of a nationally protected landscape, in conformity with the statutory National Park purposes; the objectives of national planning policy; the national agenda for nature recovery and addressing the impacts of climate change in National Parks; and the ambitions in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan. The vision and objectives for the Local Plan set out how the New Forest will be at the end of the Plan period in 2043.

3.2. The vision has been informed by the 'Special Qualities' of the National Park. The special qualities of the New Forest are those qualities that define it, make it unique, immediately recognisable and, when taken together, distinguish it from all other parts of the country. These qualities are fundamental to the two purposes of the National Park and are the underlying reason for its designation and include:

- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals and habitats of national and international importance
- A unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage
- An historic commoning system
- The iconic New Forest pony
- Tranquillity
- Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation
- A healthy environment
- Strong and distinctive local communities

3.3. These special qualities of the New Forest were identified through public consultation, and further details are set out in Annex 1 of this Local Plan.

Vision for the New Forest National Park for 2043

In 2043 the New Forest's outstanding natural beauty has been safeguarded and enhanced. Nature recovery has enabled sites of international, national and local importance for nature conservation – and the National Park as a whole – to continue to host an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals. The New Forest remains an area with a unique and immediately recognisable sense of place, with a mosaic of distinctive landscapes and habitats including lowland heath, grasslands, wetlands, ancient woodland, the Solent coastline and farmed landscapes. Tranquillity and a feeling of naturalness pervade large parts of the National Park.

At the same time, it is a place where people can enjoy the wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery, to support their health and well-being. Recreation and visitor pressures have been successfully monitored and managed through a shared understanding of the issues.

Traditional land management practices, particularly commoning, are supported and continue to thrive and shape the New Forest's landscape and strong cultural identity. The impacts of climate change are being actively addressed through adaptation and change through nature-based solutions, high quality design and increased energy efficiency, and the use of renewable technologies consistent with the special qualities of the New Forest. People live, work and visit sustainably, and everyone contributes in appropriate ways to keeping the New Forest a special place for present and future generations.

The limited development that has taken place within the National Park has been focused on catering for the socio-economic needs of local people rather than meeting external demand, to create strong and distinctive communities. Small-scale housing development on allocated sites within the Larger Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Sway, and Smaller Defined Villages of Cadnam - Bartley, Landford - Nomansland and Redlynch has provided a mix of appropriate new housing to meet local needs arising within the National Park. Rural exception schemes and new dwellings focused on the needs of New Forest Commoners and Estate Workers have helped deliver appropriate housing in the rest of the National Park.

The cultural heritage and historic environment is better understood and appreciated through its continued protection and enhancement. The inherent characteristics and local distinctiveness of the individual villages have been retained and enhanced through the highest standards of design (and climate change adaptions) that respect the natural and built heritage of the National Park. The rural economy has been supported by small scale employment development that does not conflict with the special qualities of the National Park.

The communities within the National Park continue to look to adjoining areas, including the urban areas in South Hampshire, South East Dorset and South Wiltshire for a range of services. The relationship with these areas has been managed to the mutual benefit of all areas, including a shared approach to mitigating the impacts of new development on the National Park.

Key challenges for the Local Plan

3.4. The Local Plan has a key role in addressing the planning and land use challenges likely to affect the National Park over the next 15 years, including:

- **Conserving and enhancing the nationally protected landscape of the New Forest in the face of various pressures** – the outstanding natural beauty of the New Forest's landscape is the primary reason for its designation as a National Park and the area has the highest status of landscape protection in the NPPF.

- **Safeguarding the New Forest National Park from adverse impacts from development outside the Park** - the Government requires new homes to be built at a significant scale in the areas surrounding the National Park, some of

which have also been identified for special treatment to boost economic growth through Freeport designation. The New Forest is a national asset and managing these impacts will require close collaboration with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders and is not something this Local Plan can achieve alone.

- **Ensuring the impacts of new development on the nationally and internationally protected habitats of the New Forest are avoided or fully mitigated** – over half of the National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation and new development must not impact on the integrity of the New Forest and its coastal habitats. In addition, the Government has set ambitious targets for nature recovery in National Parks that the New Forest has an important role in delivering.

- **Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change on the New Forest National Park through a range of measures consistent with the statutory National Park purposes** – the focus on responding to the nature and climate emergency declared by the Authority in 2019 will be on nature-based solutions, high quality design and energy efficiency, renewable technology and local community initiatives, contributing towards meeting net zero targets.

- **Developing a positive strategy for the conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness and heritage assets within the New Forest's built environment** – the New Forest has a rich built and cultural heritage, and its conservation is key to the delivery of the first statutory National Park purpose.

- **Delivering new housing to help address local needs while at the same time ensuring development does not compromise the delivery of the two statutory National Park purposes** – national planning policy recognises that national park authorities have an important role to play in delivering housing for local people within the context of a nationally protected landscape.

- **Sustaining a diverse local economy** – in delivering the two statutory Park purposes, the Authority has a duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of the 35,000 people living within the National Park. This includes the land-based economy, with the future of commoning core to the long-term management of the New Forest and its cultural heritage.

- **Supporting sustainable tourism and recreation within the National Park** – the New Forest attracts millions of visitors each year and the Authority has a statutory purpose to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities. Recreational use of the New Forest should not compromise the tranquillity, dark skies or the tradition of commoning within the National Park. Increasing pressures can have detrimental impacts on the New Forest National Park's habitats, landscape, wildlife and local communities. These impacts need to be effectively managed, and this goes wider than the role of the planning system.

3.5. Many of the challenges set out above are consistent with those expressed in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan which includes reference to:

- Climate and nature emergencies
- Responding to recreational pressures
- Traffic and transport
- Commoning, farming and land management
- Affordable housing
- Connecting with people
- Working together

Strategic objectives

3.6. The vision and key challenges facing the New Forest have been translated into nine strategic objectives, which are consistent with those in the National Park Partnership Plan and reflect the Authority's overarching remit in delivering the two statutory purposes and the related socio-economic duty, namely:

1. to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the New Forest; and

2. to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the New Forest by the public.

3.7. The National Park Authority has a statutory duty to seek to further these purposes in the delivery of its functions – including through the planning system. The Authority also has a duty under Section 62(1) of the Environment Act 1995 in taking forward the two Park purposes to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the New Forest National Park.

3.8. The policies within the Local Plan will contribute towards meeting the vision and strategic objectives and will also help deliver the ambition and a range of priority actions identified in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan.

Local Plan policies

3.9. Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the role of the 'development plan' in the planning system. This Local Plan forms a key part of the statutory development plan for the New Forest National Park. The policies in the Local Plan include both strategic policies (prefixed with 'SP') and more detailed development management policies (prefixed with 'DP'). This Local Plan policy numbering enables local communities to understand which are the strategic planning policies that they should be in general conformity with in preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans. It should also be emphasised that all the policies contained within the Local Plan have equal 'development plan' status within the plan-led planning system.

Strategic Objective	Link to National Park Purposes and Duty	Link to Partnership Plan Theme	Link to Special Qualities	Relevant Local Plan Policies
1. Protect and enhance the natural capital and environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the diverse range of habitats and species.	First purpose	Climate Nature Partnership	The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty; An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation; learning and discovery; A healthy environment; Tranquillity.	SP1, DP2, SP7, SP11, SP12, SP13, SP14, SP15, SP20, SP22, SP23
2. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.	First purpose Second purpose	Place Partnership	A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; Strong and distinctive local communities; An historic commoning system; The iconic New Forest pony.	DP2, SP24, DP25, DP26, DP27, DP28
3. Plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the landscape, species, character, cultural heritage, special qualities and communities of the New Forest, including energy-efficient development.	First purpose	Climate People Place Partnership	The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty; A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; Strong and distinctive local communities.	SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10, SP20, SP21

Strategic Objective	Link to National Park Purposes and Duty	Link to Partnership Plan Theme	Link to Special Qualities	Relevant Local Plan Policies
4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.	Socio-economic duty	People Place Partnership	Strong and distinctive local communities; A healthy environment; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity.	SP1, DP2, SP6, DP16, DP26, DP27, DP28, SP30, DP51, DP52, DP53, SP54, DP60, DP61
5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs, including the delivery of affordable housing for local people, to maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.	Socio-economic duty	Climate People Place Partnership	Strong and distinctive local communities; A healthy environment.	DP2, SP3, SP9, SP10, SP29, SP31, SP32, SP33, SP34, SP35, SP36, SP37, SP38, SP39, SP40, SP41, SP42, SP43, DP44, DP45, DP46, DP47, SP48, SP49, SP50
6. Develop a diverse and sustainable low carbon economy, enabling suitable rural diversification, that contributes to the well-being of local communities and supports a 'working forest', throughout the National Park.	Socio-economic duty	Climate People Place Partnership	Strong and distinctive local communities; A healthy environment; An historic commoning system.	SP1, DP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP55, DP56, SP57, DP58, DP59, DP60, DP61, SP62, SP63, SP64

Strategic Objective	Link to National Park Purposes and Duty	Link to Partnership Plan Theme	Link to Special Qualities	Relevant Local Plan Policies
7. Encourage land management that both promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.	First and second purposes and socio-economic duty	Climate Nature People Place Partnership	The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty; An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals; A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; A healthy environment; Strong and distinctive local communities; An historic commoning system; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity.	DP17, DP18, DP19, SP57, DP58, DP59
8. Support proportionate development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, providing opportunities for enjoying the National Park without harming its special qualities or the welfare of its local communities.	Second purpose	Climate People Place Partnership	The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty; A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; A healthy environment; Strong and distinctive local communities; An historic commoning system; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity.	DP2, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP19, SP62, DP63

Strategic Objective	Link to National Park Purposes and Duty	Link to Partnership Plan Theme	Link to Special Qualities	Relevant Local Plan Policies
9. Reduce the impacts of traffic and enhance access to the National Park by supporting sustainable transport and active travel within the Park.	Second purpose and socio-economic duty	Climate People Place Partnership	A healthy environment; Strong and distinctive local communities; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity; The iconic New Forest pony.	DP2, SP62, DP65, SP66

4. Strategic Policies and Development Principles

4.1. This part of the Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy and how future development in the National Park will be managed over the plan period. At the heart of the Local Plan is the delivery of sustainable development and responding to the climate and nature emergencies in so far as they relate to planning. Accordingly, all of the strategic objectives apply, as do the Park's special qualities and links to the themes identified in the Partnership Plan.

Supporting sustainable development

4.2. The NPPF states that local plans should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should run through both plan-making and decision-taking. In addition, the National Parks Circular (2010) states that the national park authorities' primary responsibility is to deliver their statutory purposes and duties with a focus on economic and social well-being. More recently the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act has the strengthened the protected landscapes[5] duty. This requires relevant authorities to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes and in doing so, this reinforces National Parks being exemplars in achieving sustainable development.

4.3. There are three dimensions to sustainability:

- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, through the supply of housing, accessible local services and by creating a high-quality built and natural environment;
- an environmental role – protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environments, adapting to climate change, and making efficient use of natural resources while minimising waste and preventing pollution; and
- an economic role – contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by supporting local businesses and land managers.

4.4. Policy SP1 takes a positive approach to sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF, recognising the protection afforded to national parks in national planning policy and having full regard to the statutory National Park purposes and related duties.

4.5. There is also increasing recognition of the wider sustainability benefits that national parks offer to society, through their inherent natural capital (natural assets). These benefits are commonly referred to as 'ecosystem services' and cover the services provided by the landscape and habitats of national parks. A report was produced in 2019 which assessed the New Forest's valuable natural

[5] As amended by Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

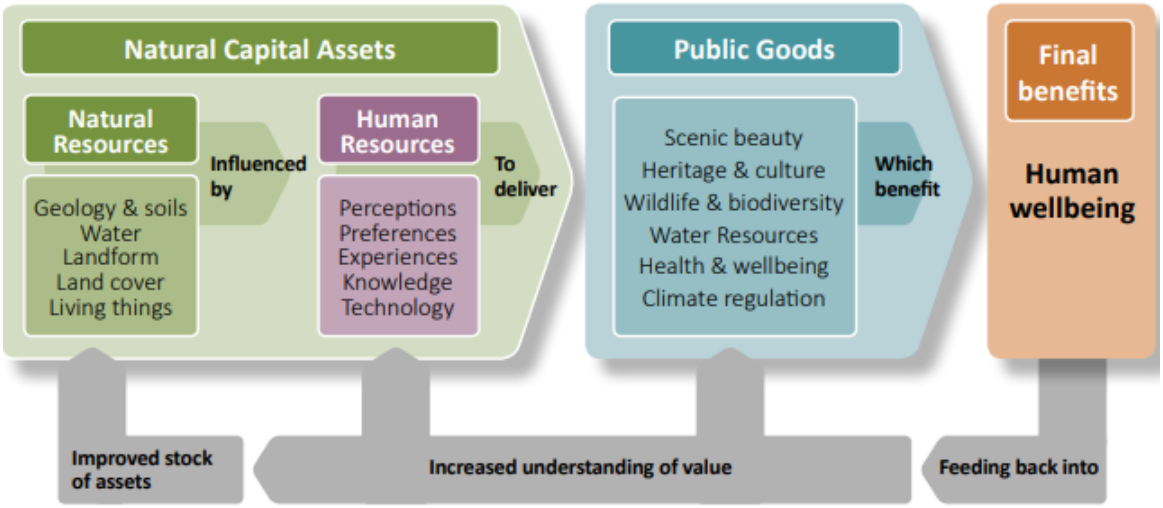
assets or 'natural capital', such as rivers, soils and woodland, and how these can be managed to benefit society. The public goods provided by the New Forest were identified as:

Special Qualities	Healthy Environment
Commoning and cultural heritage	Clean water and air
Scenic beauty and tranquillity	Mitigation of flooding
Thriving plants and wildlife	Habitable climate
Access and recreation	Healthy soils
Public engagement and education	Animal health

Source: NFNPA Natural Capital Report (2019)

4.6. The report concluded that the extent and condition of most natural capital assets in the New Forest was good and either static or improving. Key reasons related to the support for commoning, promoting both quality and quantity of grazing livestock, the restoration of commercial forestry enclosures to grazed heath and improvement to watercourses to a more naturally functioning state. Factors responsible for declining extent or condition include the changing climate, intrusion and disturbance from human activities and economic pressures.

4.7. A key element of natural capital is providing benefits to people's health and well-being (Natural Health Service) through their enjoyment of the National Parks' special qualities:



Source: NFNPA Natural Capital Report (2019)

4.8. Consequently, there is a key role for the Local Plan Review to influence where it can those matters that affect the natural capital to ensure its inherent elements continue to prosper, as expressed in Policy SP1.

Policy SP1: Supporting sustainable development

The National Park Authority will support sustainable development proposals that allow its natural and cultural heritage capital to prosper through:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and its special qualities; and
- promoting opportunities for their understanding and enjoyment by the public, and when doing so, will foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

Where there is an irreconcilable conflict between the statutory purposes, greater weight will be attached to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park (in line with Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995[6]).

Sustainable development in the National Park is considered to be that which:

a) makes the National Park a high-quality place to live, work and visit – including appropriate new housing to address local needs; access to local employment opportunities; improved public transport and active travel links; local infrastructure provision including digital connectivity; and enhanced community and recreational facilities;

b) either maintains or has a positive impact on the ability of the natural assets (capital) of the National Park to contribute to society through the provision of food and water, regulation of floods, prevention of soil erosion or compaction, and disease outbreaks, opportunities to improve health and well-being through informal recreation and access to open space;

c) enhances and protects the unique landscape of the New Forest through high quality design and responding to the local distinctiveness of the area;

d) contributes positively to the built and historic environment of the New Forest;

e) does not impact on the integrity of the protected habitats of the New Forest, including its coastline and includes proposals to mitigate against any negative impacts and provide for habitat improvement;

f) is resilient and positively responds to the impacts of climate change through mitigation and adaptation, improved energy efficiency and making appropriate use of small-scale renewable energy; and

g) maximises the use of sustainable construction and demolition practices that prioritise the reuse of waste in line with the Waste Hierarchy, favours

[6] The relationship between the two Park purposes is commonly referred to as the Sandford Principle. Every effort should be made to reconcile any conflict between the two purposes, but if such efforts fail, the first purpose takes precedence.

local materials, minimises energy use, and incorporates nature-based solutions such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

4.9. This approach is consistent with the NPPF which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates where development should be restricted, including sites protected under the Habitats Directive, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and land within a national park.

4.10. National policy is clear that objectively assessed needs should be met unless "any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole" (NPPF para 11b.ii).

4.11. The Authority will encourage and support the use of natural sustainable materials in the design of new development and for these to be sourced locally. This also benefits the local economy and supports land managers in the Park.

4.12. The Waste Hierarchy establishes the preferred order of waste management actions based on their environmental impact and is embedded within national legislation and planning policy requirements. The hierarchy places prevention as the most desirable option, aimed at avoiding the creation of waste. This is followed by reuse, which promotes the continued use of products and materials. Recycling enables waste materials to be processed into new products, while recovery encompasses the extraction of value – such as energy – from residual waste. The principles of prevention, reuse, recycling, and resource recovery underpin a circular economy approach and should guide sustainable development proposals.

4.13. In line with the requirements of national policy, Policy SP1 sets out the overarching approach to the delivery of sustainable development within the context of a nationally protected landscape. This strategic policy is supported by a number of more detailed policies throughout the Local Plan on specific aspects and the following general development principles that the Authority expects all development within the National Park to be considered against.

Policy DP2: General development principles

All new development and uses of land within the New Forest National Park must uphold and promote the principles of sustainable development.

New development proposals should reflect the New Forest National Park Design Code (set out in Annex 2) and the National Model Design Code in so far as it applies to the landscape and setting of a National Park and demonstrate high quality design and sustainable construction which enhances local character and distinctiveness.

Development proposals will be permitted where they can demonstrate how the development will work positively to increase biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, sustaining the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. Proposals should also demonstrate a positive impact on the socio-economic well-being of local communities where appropriate.

This includes, but is not restricted to, development that:

a) is appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, massing, appearance, form, siting and layout, and promotes well designed and safe, inclusive, and easily navigable places;

b) incorporates current best practice in energy conservation; such measures should be integral to the layout and building design and minimise impact on the site and its surroundings;

c) demonstrates how development would reflect mitigation and adaptation to climate change, including how flood resistance and resilience is incorporated into building design;

d) respects the natural, built and historic environment, landscape character and sustains biodiversity;

e) includes opportunities to protect and enhance the setting of groups and individual trees, hedges and hedgerows and to include new planting of native trees and hedges where appropriate;

f) incorporates materials and boundary treatments that are appropriate to the site and its setting;

g) would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity in terms of additional impacts, visual intrusion, overlooking, shading, or unreasonable loss of privacy;

h) would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts associated with traffic or pollution (including air, soil, water, noise and light pollution) and there is an appropriate access which respects the New Forest's status as a nationally protected landscape;

i) maximises opportunities to reduce the need to travel and enable active travel;

j) reflects the principles of Building for a Healthy Life and the Healthy Streets Approach;

k) where appropriate, enhances public health taking a holistic approach, incorporating best practice.

New development must also comply with required standards for:

l) car and cycle parking (see Annex 3);

m) open space (as set out in Policy DP16);

n) sustainable drainage (national standards).

4.14. High-quality design, as defined by the NPPF and National Design Guide, is development that is sustainable, functional and responsive to its context – not simply aesthetic. It should create durable places that strengthen local character and support community well-being. Key principles include using sustainably sourced high-quality materials, incorporating effective landscaping, and providing a strong sense of place that functions well throughout its lifetime.

4.15. Development should actively promote health and well-being through a holistic approach that encourages physical activity, social interaction, and mental resilience to promote safe and healthy communities, in line with the NPPF. Proposals should improve access to green space, support inclusive and public realms, and integrate design measures that reduce health inequalities, including those affecting rural areas and those exacerbated by climate change. These principles are enshrined in the Building for a Healthy Life[7] and Healthy Streets Approach which are summarised in the table below.

Building for a Healthy Life	Healthy Streets
Integrated Neighbourhoods Natural connections Walking, cycling and public transport Facilities and services Homes for everyone **Distinctive Places** Making the most of what's there Memorable character Well defined streets and spaces Easy to find your way around **Streets for All** Healthy streets Cycle and car parking Green and blue infrastructure Back of pavement, front of home	Everyone feels welcome Easy to cross Shade and shelter Places to stop and rest Not too noisy People choose to walk and cycle People feel safe Things to see and do People feel relaxed Clean air

Spatial strategy

4.16. Planning in the New Forest National Park is underpinned by the delivery of the two statutory Park purposes and the related socio-economic duty. These purposes and duty apply across the whole of the designated National Park. The focus of new development will be on small-scale proposals that reflect the area's character and address the needs of local communities in the National Park, rather than catering for external demand.

4.17. The New Forest is a rural area with small, dispersed settlements that generally have a limited range of facilities. None of the villages within the National Park have populations greater than 3,500 people and higher order services are normally provided in the larger towns and urban areas that fringe the National Park. The Local Plan sets out where new development will take place in line with the principles of sustainable development and the statutory framework of the National Park purposes.

[7] Building for a Healthy Life, Homes England (2020)

4.18. National policy confirms that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and concentrate significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. Sustainable development in rural areas should be promoted by focusing development where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and sustain the settlements over the long term, by supporting local services.

4.19. This Local Plan has provided the opportunity to revise the spatial strategy and how new development is distributed across the National Park. Establishing a settlement hierarchy is a recognised tool to distinguish between settlements in terms of their size, employment opportunities, transport links and range of services and facilities. At the top of the hierarchy will be settlements that fulfil the most functions and are the most sustainable. Below this will be settlements that offer a smaller range of services and facilities. Smaller, less sustainable, settlements with fewer services and facilities will be towards the bottom of the hierarchy.

4.20. Given the range of villages within the New Forest, the villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway (Larger Defined Villages) have in the past provided a focus for new development and currently these villages provide homes for around one third of all National Park residents.

4.21. In line with national policy, future development in the National Park is likely to be modest, but it will be important to ensure that the main villages continue to prosper. Consequently, a review of the settlement hierarchy has concluded there are other 'Smaller Defined Villages' which offer a basic range of facilities and services and could offer opportunities for sustainable development, these being Cadnam - Bartley, Landford - Nomansland and Redlynch.

4.22. Consequently, together these 'Larger Defined Villages' and 'Smaller Defined Villages' are considered to be the most sustainable settlements in the National Park as they have the broadest range of community facilities, local employment opportunities, transport links and a good range of other services for residents and visitors. The strategic approach for these villages seeks to:

- sustain and enhance the local services and facilities in the villages;
- support the important role of the villages in the local tourism economy;
- support the provision of appropriate housing, employment, retail and community facilities; and
- conserve the distinctive character and heritage of the villages.

4.23. The remaining settlements in the National Park are significantly smaller and have a more limited range of services, facilities and transport accessibility. The relatively small and scattered nature of these rural settlements means that the level of development will be more limited, but it is important that local communities across the National Park continue to thrive. The Spatial Strategy therefore supports the provision of affordable housing for local people in and adjoining these smaller settlements through the rural exception policy to help to address local housing needs. It also enables the delivery of housing specifically for New Forest Commoners, Estate Workers, and dwellings tied to the rural economy. In addition,

the Local Plan supports the provision of employment opportunities and essential local community facilities to support the sustainability of local communities.

4.24. A matter not to be overlooked is the proximity of the National Park to surrounding urban areas which provide a range of services, including but not limited to Downton, Fordingbridge, Ringwood, New Milton, Lymington, Hythe and Dibden, Totton and Eling and Romsey.

4.25. The spatial strategy recognises the importance of positively managing recreation and visitor activity across the National Park. This includes enhancing access and recreation provision in the most appropriate locations, increasing opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and other sustainable forms of travel, and ensuring that the Park's most sensitive habitats and landscapes are protected. By planning where recreation takes place, the strategy seeks to balance the enjoyment of the National Park with the conservation of its special qualities.

4.26. The evidence base[8] for the New Forest National Park Local Plan indicates a housing need of circa 260 dwellings per annum. This figure is the starting point for the plan-making process. It is a 'policy off' assessment of need that does not factor in the range of nationally and internationally important landscape and nature conservation designations in the New Forest National Park. Consequently, considering the environmental designations and revised settlement hierarchy, the Local Plan makes provision for around 950 homes over the plan period to 2043 – equivalent to about 50 per annum – taking into account existing commitments and completions since April 2024. This scale of development will stabilise the population of the National Park and help support local services within the Park.

4.27. Employment evidence[9] also suggests that the strategy for the Local Plan should be to retain existing employment provision and allow modest expansions and/or intensification where appropriate. There is also a need for an increase in employment floorspace, as evidenced by the Economic Needs Assessment. The total amount required over the plan period is in the region of 13,500 square metres and whilst some will be delivered through small-scale redevelopment and intensification schemes, the Local Plan also allocates part of the Solent Freeport site within the National Park for employment purposes.

4.28. With regard to retail provision, there is no specific need requirement identified for the National Park, the focus being on retaining existing provision and having a supportive policy to ensure local retail facilities and services are retained and allowed to expand where appropriate.

4.29. The Local Plan makes provision for pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as evidenced in the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment[10] through a site allocation and a criteria-based policy. Accordingly, the spatial strategy for the plan period 2024 – 2043 is set out below and settlement boundaries have been accordingly applied. **The Key Diagram** that follows

[8] New Forest Housing Needs Assessment, Iceni (August 2025).
[9] New Forest Economic Needs Assessment, Lichfields (August 2025)
[10] New Forest National Park Authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, ORS (January 2026)

illustrates the basic spatial strategy in the New Forest National Park.

Policy SP3 Spatial Strategy

The focus for new development within the New Forest National Park will be within the Defined Villages with settlement boundaries, as shown on the Policies Map and listed below:

Larger Defined Villages

- Ashurst
- Brockenhurst
- Lyndhurst
- Sway

Smaller Defined Villages

- Cadnam - Bartley
- Landford - Nomansland
- Redlynch

Over the plan period 2024 – 2043, the Local Plan will make provision for the delivery of around 950 homes, equivalent to about 50 per annum.

Employment needs will be met through the strategic allocation of Land North of Fawley Waterside for around 12,000 square metres of new mixed employment provision, in accordance with Policy SP5. In addition, smaller scale redevelopment and expansion opportunities for employment purposes will be supported within settlement boundaries where appropriate. Retail needs will be met within the existing defined shopping frontages and by the retention of existing local services and facilities.

Provision will be made for Gypsy & Traveller provision through a criteria-based policy; and 6 plots for Travelling Showpeople through a site allocation at policy SP50. The National Park Authority will make provision for additional pitches and plots by permitting suitable sites.

Development proposals on previously developed land will be supported where these comply with other relevant policies and are of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and function of the site.

In settlements without defined settlement boundaries, development proposals will only be permitted where:

a) it is in accordance with Policy SP43 on Rural Exception Sites; or

b) it is in accordance with Policy DP56 on employment sites; or

c) there is an essential need for a countryside location, or

d) it meets the specific locational needs for Commoners, Estate Workers or agricultural dwellings; or

e) it is an appropriate reuse or redevelopment of an existing building(s) in accordance with Policy DP59.

Key Diagram
(Defined Villages shown by the green dot; employment allocation by blue diamond)



Major development in the New Forest National Park

4.30. National planning policy dating back many decades has contained a clear presumption against major new development in national parks because of the harm it would cause to the long-term national interest in conserving these landscapes. Major development is therefore only permitted within protected landscapes in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest, as outlined in the NPPF.

4.31. The NPPG states that it will be a matter for the relevant decision taker as to whether a proposed development within the National Park should be treated as major development, taking into account the proposal in question and the local context. For the purposes of Policy SP4, the term 'major development' will not be restricted to the definition of major development in the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 or to proposals that raise issues of national significance.

4.32. Major development is development of more than local significance (i.e. it would exceed the local scale of development needed to address the socio-economic needs of the New Forest's 35,000 residents) and which would have a long-term impact on the landscape, wildlife or cultural heritage of the National Park because of its scale and form. This can include major residential and commercial development (including tourism), significant infrastructure projects and power generation, including renewable energy.

4.33. All forms of major development can have a significant impact on the special qualities of the New Forest and the reasons why the National Park was designated – relating to its outstanding natural beauty; the variety of landscapes and habitats, and the opportunities provided for the public to enjoy the Forest.

Policy SP4: Major development in the National Park

In the context of the New Forest National Park, major development is defined as development which has the potential to have a significant impact on the National Park and its special qualities due to its scale, character and nature.

Planning permission will only be granted for major development within the New Forest National Park in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the New Forest National Park, or meeting the need for it in some other way;

c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and quiet recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated and mitigated;

d) any detrimental impact on the special qualities of the New Forest National Park in particular its tranquillity, and whether these can be mitigated; and

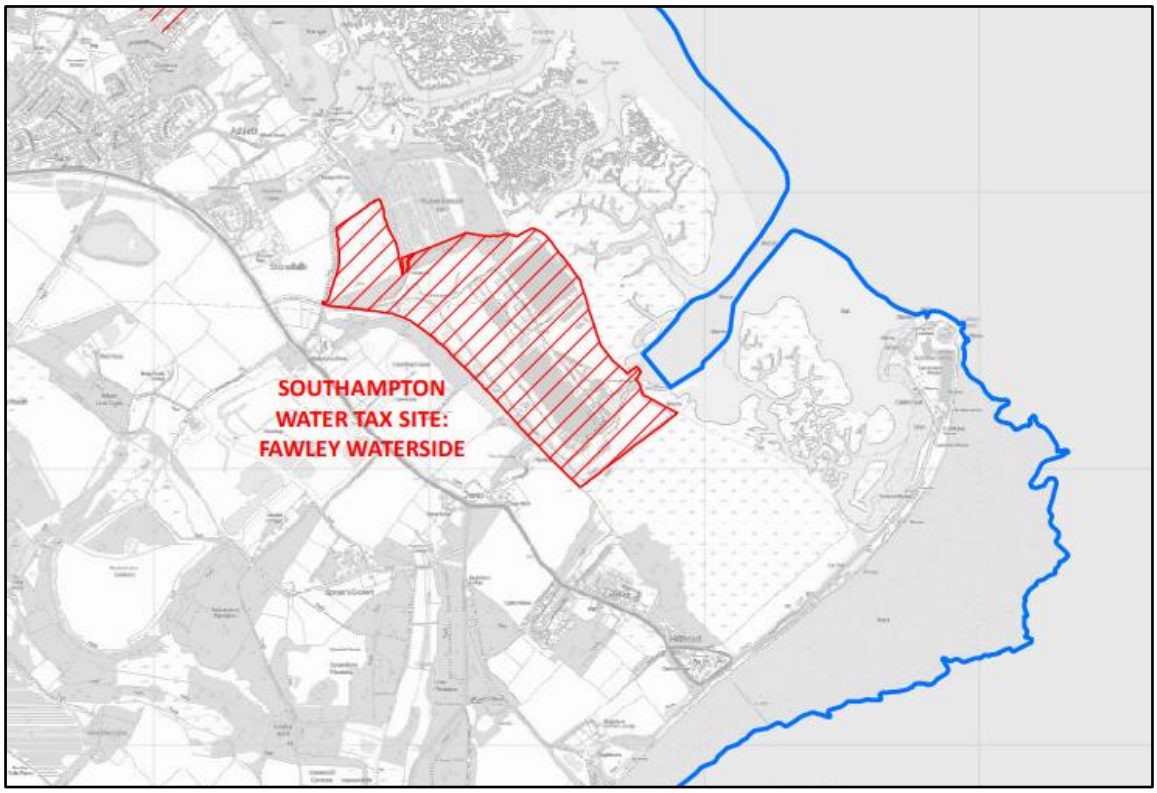
e) the cumulative impact of the development when viewed with other proposals.

Solent Freeport

4.34. The Solent Freeport was designated by Government in December 2022 and is one of 12 Freeports across the UK, and the only Freeport that includes land within a National Park in England. Freeports are new hubs for global trade, investment, and innovation within the UK that create a favourable environment and exciting opportunities for businesses to grow. Investment within a UK Freeport, enables access to a wide range of customs and tax benefits, as well as support from government around planning, infrastructure and innovation.

4.35. The Solent Freeport stretches across several sites (both tax and custom sites), located in and around Portsmouth and Southampton, making it one of the UK's most important gateways to European and global markets, with a population exceeding 1.25 million and over 42,000 businesses operating in the area.

4.36. Land at Fawley Waterside, is one of seven 'tax sites', covers 70 acres of land. The site has a dedicated dock and there is to a focus on marine innovation, port-centric manufacturing and energy sectors. The site lies partially within the National Park, with the commercial opportunity spread over 360,000 square metres on the site of the former Fawley Power station and adjacent land.



Source: Map of Solent Freeport, UK Government Publishing Service.

4.37. The Economic Needs Assessment commissioned to inform the Local Plan identified a need for an extra 13,500 square metres of employment land over the plan period, primarily for industrial/mixed employment purposes. Given the limited opportunities across the National Park to meet this quantum of growth through existing routes of redevelopment and extension/intensification on existing sites, the Plan allocates the land north of Fawley Waterside, which falls within the Southampton Water Freeport tax site, for employment purposes. Being a Freeport Tax site, the site will also benefit from a range of tax incentives such as enhanced capital allowances and relief from employer National Insurance contributions for new employees and relief on Stamp Duty Land Tax. The previously agreed five-year tax benefits window was extended in the summer of 2024 to 10 years, until September 2031, delivering a boost for businesses investing and hiring new employees in, or connected with, Solent Freeport to stimulate investment and provide greater certainty to investors to maximise the programme's impact.

4.38. The part of the Solent Freeport site which falls within the National Park equates to about 7 hectares of land. This lies to the north-west of the Fawley Power Station site, with Ashlett Creek Wastewater Treatment plant to the north. It is accessed off a private road, reached via the Northern Access Road. A public footpath (Fawley Footpath 1) runs alongside the site, parallel to the west of the private road.

The site is set back from public view and fully screened except to the north-east, from where the site can be viewed from Southampton Water. There is a watercourse running along the eastern boundary of the site. The site is relatively unconstrained, being beyond any of the international nature conservation designations which cover extensive parts of the New Forest, although it lies within the 5.6km buffer zone of the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (which relates to in-combination recreational impacts). It also lies beyond areas in the vicinity that fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is, however, located within the Aerodrome Safeguarding Consultation Zone for Southampton Airport, potentially limiting the height of new buildings and structures.

4.39. The site has been in recorded use since the 1940s, initially as a Ministry of Defence fuel storage facility which was decommissioned and largely dismantled during the 1960s. It has subsequently operated as a waste recycling and transfer facility. More recently, the site has been subject to unauthorised importation and deposition of household waste beyond the scope of the permitted waste recovery and transfer activities. Despite limited historic remediation, waste remains both above and below ground, presenting potential risks to soils and groundwater.

4.40. Remediation is therefore required to remove stockpiled and illegally deposited materials and to address suspected contamination associated with residual underground structures. Remediation is anticipated to be undertaken in two phases, addressing superficial waste first and then below-ground contamination. While remediation costs represent an abnormal development cost, contamination is not considered to be an overriding constraint to redevelopment, subject to appropriate remediation measures.

4.41. The site presents an opportunity to achieve sustainable new employment situated on land previously developed, in pursuance of the National Park Authority's socio-economic duty and in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, and the principles to be taken into consideration given the locality of the site within the National Park.

Policy SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside

Land to north of Fawley Waterside, as designated on the Policies Map, is allocated for employment and remediation purposes, in accordance with the following principles:

a) the area to be the focus for around 12,000 square metres of new mixed-use employment floorspace, predominantly in Use Class E(g) and B2, with limited B8 uses;

b) any scheme coming forward on the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigations and/or contributions to address transport impacts. This shall include assessment of the need for, and provision where necessary of, enhancements to the B3059 and the Northern Access Road junctions to provide safe vehicular access to and from the development;

c) provision of opportunities for active travel linking the site to surrounding settlements, employment areas, and public transport networks;

d) submission of a drainage strategy to address flood risk;

e) development proposals should explore opportunities to enhance and restore the watercourse along the eastern boundary, including a buffer between the watercourse and built development to support habitat creation;

f) development delivers the comprehensive remediation of the whole site through a layout that conserves and enhances the landscape setting of the National Park, reflects its historic character and maintains an appropriate transition from the urban form and land uses to the south to the countryside edge of the New Forest National Park;

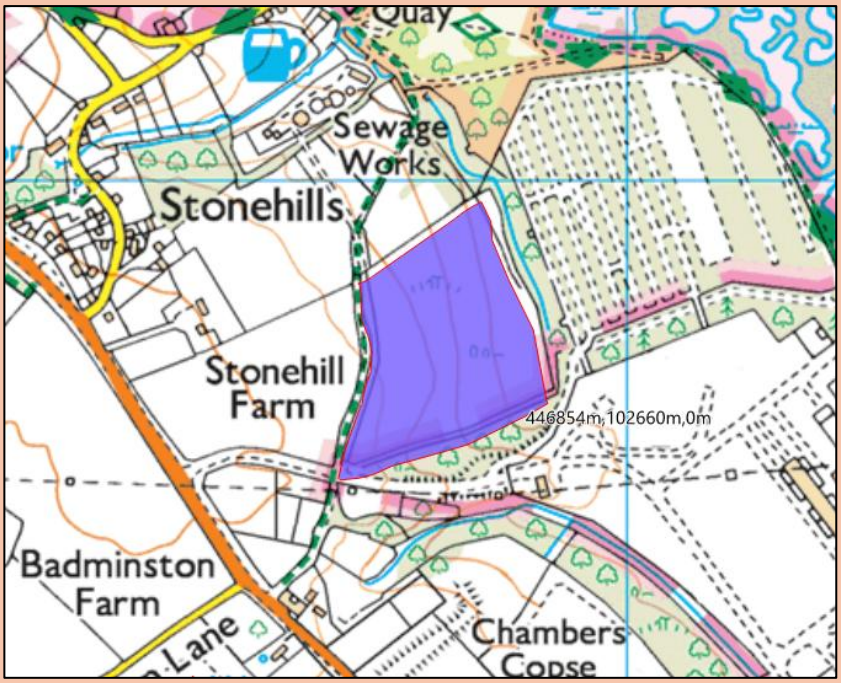
g) a masterplan for the whole site to ensure redevelopment is brought forward in a coordinated manner, comprehensive redevelopment is achieved and its impacts are fully mitigated.

The Authority will only consider proposals for further development on the site for mixed use employment uses, clean energy or digital infrastructure in addition to the quantum of development allocated above where robust evidence demonstrates:

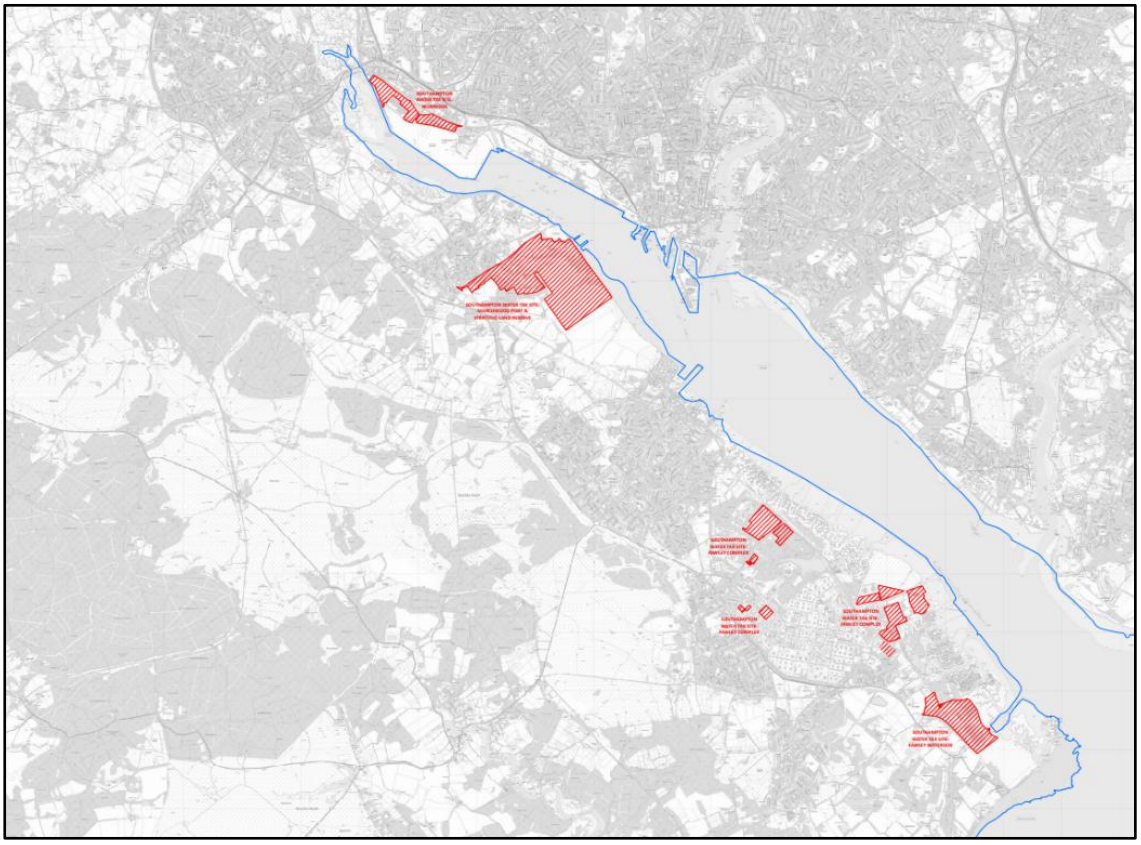
(i) sufficient local, regional or national need; and

(ii) that the comprehensive remediation of the site would not be viable without additional development.

In all cases, the phasing of development on the site must ensure remediation is delivered alongside new development.



4.42. In addition to the Fawley Waterside site, there are other Solent Freeport tax sites designated within close proximity of the New Forest National Park:



Source: Map of Solent Freeport, UK Government Publishing Service

4.43. In summary, the Solent Freeport sites close to the National Park comprise:

- ExxonMobil – ExxonMobil Fawley imports crude oil from countries all around the globe to Fawley Marine Terminal, which handles 2,000 shipping movements each year and is the longest privately owned jetty in Europe.

- Solent Gateway – Solent Gateway was formed in 2016, with a 35-year lease until 2051 to develop and operate the 83-hectare Marchwood Port on the River Test opposite the Port of Southampton. Solent Gateway is wholly owned by Associated British Ports.

- Redbridge – operated by Associated British Ports, the port is the UK's number one hub for deep sea trade, processing 900,000 vehicles per year, with more than 100 hectares of vehicle storage and distribution compounds; the port also welcomes around two million passengers annually to its five cruise terminals. There are 12 hectares of land available offering opportunities to create bespoke facilities of up to 55,472 square metres (600,000 square feet).

- Strategic Land Reserve – 100-acre expansion of the existing Port footprint to be a global hub for EV logistics, port-centric manufacturing and green energy.

4.44. The Strategic Land Reserve site covers land previously referred to as Dibden Bay, which was identified in the Port of Southampton draft Masterplan 2016 - 2035 as the only area of land physically capable of accommodating significant expansion of the port. The site is a designated SSSI and the foreshore is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site.

4.45. Developments within these Solent Freeport Tax sites will still be required to comply with planning and environmental regulations. Depending on the scale of proposals they may qualify as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the 2008 Planning Act. Consequently, the Authority would be invited to submit a Local Impact Report setting out the potential impacts of the development on the adjacent National Park but would be a consultee rather than a decision maker. It would be the Planning Inspectorate who would consider and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether a Development Consent Order should be issued. The Secretary of State would make the final decision.

4.46. As these sites are located either within, or in close proximity to, the National Park, it is appropriate for the New Forest National Park Local Plan to set out the range of factors to be considered should the site or part of a site come forward for development. These include:

- Any future proposals within the Freeport Sites that include major development within or affecting the New Forest National Park would need to satisfy the national planning policy tests for major development affecting the National Park set out in the NPPF, the requirements of Policy SP4 Major Development in the National Park and Policy SP5 Solent Freeport.

- Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 was amended by Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 to require all relevant bodies to seek to further the statutory National Park purposes in performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park. This includes development proposals outside the National Park that can impact on it. This is an active duty requiring the relevant body to take appropriate, reasonable and proportionate measures to explore how to further the statutory purposes, to avoid harm and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, special qualities and key characteristics of the protected landscape.

- Meeting the legal requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 in terms of the likely effects on the internationally designated sites in the area, including the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar Site and SPA; the Solent Maritime SAC; and the New Forest SPA and SAC.

4.47. The New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment (2015) identifies features, such as variations in the natural environment, settlement pattern and land uses, that give a locality it's 'sense of place' and pinpoints what makes it different from neighbouring areas. This together with the Authority's Waterside Green Links Study published in January 2024, has been informative in determining the key characteristics of those parts of the National Park area, which

would be affected by any Solent Freeport proposals[11]. In particular, the Waterside Green Links Study's aim is to promote connecting green spaces within the Waterside area.

4.48. Consequently, the Authority considers that given the strengthened Protected Landscapes Duty, development proposals in the sites designated within the Solent Freeport will be required to demonstrate how they make a positive contribution to – and further – the National Park's purposes, and should also take into consideration the following requirements to:

a) protect and strengthen the existing hedgerow network, and create new ones where appropriate, to reflect the historic small scale field patterns;

b) keep signage and lighting to a minimum;

c) protect levels of tranquillity and scenic views, using tree cover to filter long-distance views of built development;

d) reinforce the landscape's wooded character, through management of existing areas to ensure that appropriate species thrive, employ traditional techniques such as coppicing, and replant with native species as necessary;

e) protect, retain and reinforce woodland and other areas of planting with landscape value in strategic locations to minimise views of key infrastructure such as pylons, railways and roads;

f) ensure natural buffers are retained to protect the amenity of the area;

g) maximise opportunities to enhance existing and create new multifunctional green and/or blue infrastructure links, taking into account historic landscape character; and

h) protect long distance views of landmark features, such as Calshot Castle.

Infrastructure and developer contributions

4.49. New development, even on the limited scale planned in the National Park, can place extra demands on existing infrastructure. In such cases where it is not possible to make the necessary provision on site, the Authority will seek financial contributions from the developer in accordance with the framework provided by national planning policy and guidance. Within the context of the development that takes place within the National Park, developer contributions may be required towards highway and transportation works; affordable housing; education and health provision; recreation provision (including public open space enhancements); and nature conservation mitigation measures.

[11] See also New Forest District Council, Landscape Value, Settlement Gaps, and Green & Blue Infrastructure in the New Forest Waterside Report (June 2024)

4.50. The existing system of securing developer contributions through Section 106 legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is in the process of being reviewed by the Government. The National Park Authority is a charging authority under the relevant CIL Regulations and although it has not to date implemented CIL, this remains an option for the Authority in the future.

4.51. However, even if CIL (or any future national tariff system to support infrastructure provision) was implemented in the National Park there is likely to remain a role for Section 106 agreements in the future to: (i) secure necessary contributions towards infrastructure that cannot be funded through CIL (for example habitat mitigation measures that are not deemed 'infrastructure', such as ranger provision or an education campaign); and (ii) secure site-specific contributions from individual developments for measures that do appear on the general national park-wide infrastructure list.

4.52. Development resulting in net new dwellings or other forms of overnight accommodation will be required to contribute to the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme to mitigate recreational impacts on the New Forest's internationally designated sites. Funding is split between measures delivered during the Plan period and an in-perpetuity fund to ensure long-term protection of sensitive habitats and species. Mitigation within the National Park is delivered through ranger services, visitor communication, and promotion of alternative routes to divert footfall away from vulnerable areas, along with use of the New Forest Code and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO).

4.53. While the scheme directly relates to residential development and other forms of overnight accommodation within the National Park, extensive research into visitor behaviour has identified a 13.8km zone of influence from which most recreational visits originate, providing the basis for seeking mitigation contributions from new development. As such, the scheme is supported by cross-boundary working with neighbouring authorities and Natural England, with a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) framework being prepared to secure and pool contributions and deliver coordinated mitigation and monitoring of the protected sites.

Policy SP6: Infrastructure provision and developer contributions

Development proposals shall make provision for the infrastructure and measures necessary to ensure that the development is acceptable in planning terms in the context of the New Forest National Park Local Plan. Where appropriate, financial contributions for the provision of off-site infrastructure and measures will be sought. Appropriate new and/or improved utility infrastructure will be permitted in order to meet the identified needs of the community.

Contributions will be secured through the appropriate mechanism – including the Community Infrastructure Levy (or any future national tariff system) and Section 106 agreements – as required by national policy.

In implementing this policy regard will be had to economic viability considerations at the site-specific level.

5. Climate Change

Strategic Objective to support development that adapts and mitigates against the impacts of climate change

3. Plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the landscape species, character, cultural heritage, special qualities and communities of the New Forest, including energy-efficient development.

To support Partnership Plan Themes: Climate, Nature, People, Place, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- Strong and distinctive local communities
- A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage
- A healthy environment

5.1. Climate change is here, impacting communities and biodiversity within the National Park, and those impacts will continue to become more intense and widespread over the coming decades. It poses a long-term challenge for us all to address and has the potential to have a significant impact unless suitable measures are placed. Within the remit of the Local Plan, this means recognising that the natural and built environment plays a significant role in maximising opportunities for carbon capture and ensuring the longevity of our natural resources. As a National Park, with protected landscape status, the Authority has a duty to protect the special qualities of the New Forest, which are considered particularly sensitive to the impacts of climate change. The need to address climate change and maintain the National Park's outstanding natural beauty should be addressed cohesively and seek to support the longevity of the New Forest as a designated asset with wildlife and heritage not found anywhere else within the UK.

5.2. Currently climate change is associated with warmer and wetter winter seasons, drier and hotter summers, rising sea levels and an increased frequency of extreme weather events. The New Forest National Park is likely to experience increased summer temperatures of around 5°C by the end of this century[12]. Summer rainfall is expected to decrease by around 40% with winter rainfall up by around 20%. Sea level rise may be up by around 50cm, but possibly 75cm in worst-case scenarios. Development will need to mitigate and adapt to these changes, among other impacts, to ensure climate change does not have a detrimental impact on protected sites or the special qualities of the National Park. Building now means building for this future reality.

[12] Past and Future Climate Projections for the New Forest National Park (based on 25km resolution data). The grey numbers shown are the median (central) results for a low (RCP2.5) and high emission scenario (RCP 8.5). Future projections are relative to the average of the period 1981 to 2000.

		Baseline	Recent Past	+5 years	+25 years	+55 years	+75 years
		1981 - 2000	2001 - 2020	2030	2050	2080	2100
	Temperature	°C	°C	°C change	°C change	°C change	°C change
	Annual Average	10.2	10.9	+0.9	+1.3	+2.2	+3.0
				0.9 to 1.0	1.3 to 1.8	1.4 to 3.5	1.5 to 5.0
	Spring Average	9	9.7	+0.6	+1.0	+1.7	+2.2
				0.6 to 0.7	0.9 to 1.3	1.0 to 2.7	1.1 to 3.6
	Spring Maximum	13.5	14.5	+0.7	+1.0	+1.7	+2.2
				0.7 to 0.8	1.0 to 1.4	1.1 to 2.8	1.1 to 3.8
	Summer Average	16	16.5	+1.2	+1.9	+3.1	+4.4
				1.2 to 1.5	1.9 to 2.6	2.0 to 5.0	2.4 to 7.2
	Summer Maximum	21	21.5	+1.4	+2.1	+3.5	+4.9
				1.4 to 1.7	2.1 to 2.8	2.3 to 5.6	2.8 to 8.0
	Autumn Average	10.9	11.6	+0.9	+1.5	+2.4	+3.0
				0.9 to 1.1	1.4 to 2.0	1.5 to 3.8	1.5 to 5.2
	Autumn Maximum	14.9	15.7	+1.1	+1.6	+2.5	+3.0
				1.1 to 1.3	1.5 to 2.1	1.6 to 4.0	1.6 to 5.3
	Winter Average	4.9	5.5	+0.8	+1.3	+1.8	+2.3
				0.8 to 0.9	1.1 to 1.6	1.1 to 2.9	1.1 to 4.0
	Winter Maximum	8.1	8.8	+0.8	+1.2	+1.7	+2.1
				0.8 to 0.9	1.0 to 1.6	1.1 to 2.8	1.0 to 3.7
	Precipitation	mm	mm	% change	% change	% change	% change
	Annual Average	880.2	899.4	+1	+0	+1	-1
				0 to 1	0 t 0	0 to 1	0 to -1
	Spring Average	178.6	174.8	-2	-2	-7	-8
				-2 to -3	-1 to -3	-5 to -8	-5 to -9
	Summer Average	154.2	182.8	-13	-20	-29	-43
				-13 to -17	-20 to -24	-22 to -41	-30 to -59
	Autumn Average	283.8	268.5	+2.3	+2.7	+5.6	+8.1
				1 to 2	2 to 3	5 to 6	8 to 9
	Winter Average	257.4	274.6	+9.1	+10.2	+16.9	+19.5
				9 to 10	10 to 13	11 to 26	11 to 33

Source: New Forest Climate Risk & Adaptation Opportunities Assessment 2025

5.3. Mitigation measures can reduce emissions associated with development, reducing the growth of the contribution development has on the root causes of climate change. Adaptive measures can also be put in place to ensure development is resilient to the current and future climate, able to best support people and communities to thrive in challenging conditions. In 2021, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC)[13] identified eight key areas of climate change risk that needed to be managed as a priority for action for the next two years:

- risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species from multiple hazards;

[13] https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/independent-assessment-of-uk-climate-risk/

- risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought;
- risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards;
- risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple climate hazards;
- risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks;
- risks to people and the economy from climate-related failure of the power system;
- risks to human health, well-being and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings; and
- multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas.

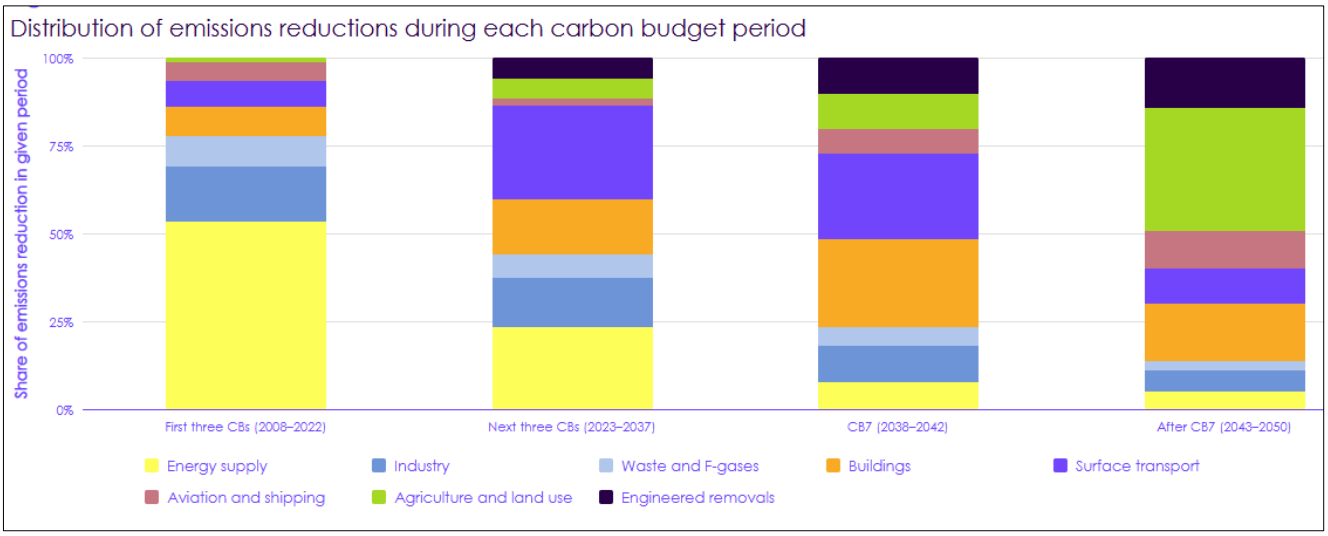
5.4. The New Forest National Park Climate Risk & Opportunities Assessment (CROA, published November 2025) details the likely impacts on habitats, species, heritage and landscape, identifying actions across the themes of Lead, Learn, Enable, Protect, Manage and Restore can help to make the special qualities of the New Forest National Park more resilient to climate change.

5.5. The New Forest has many protected sites which are considered highly vulnerable to climate change risk as set out by the CCC (2021) and CROA (2025). Therefore, it is imperative that the Local Plan recognises and responds to the need to protect local habitats and wildlife and provides a platform to advocate for sustainable development.

Working towards zero emissions

5.6. The Climate Change Act (2008) sets statutory targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050, and to achieve at least a 34% reduction by 2020, and 57% by 2030. The goal is to decarbonise all sectors of the UK economy to meet net zero by 2050.

5.7. The UK-wide target of net zero by 2050 demands decarbonisation across multiple emissions sources. The CCC Carbon Budgets for 2023 to 2037 will seek to target reductions in energy supply, industry, waste and fluorinated gases (F-gases), buildings, surface transport, aviation and shipping, agriculture and land use and engineered removals *(see Figure below).*



Source: Climate Change Committee 2024[14]

5.8. Where feasible, it is vital that the planning system can advocate for development that can drive these changes, from implementing renewable energy sources and energy efficient buildings to waste management and sustainable transport infrastructure.

5.9. The Future Homes Standard (FHS), released in Spring 2026, sets out uplifts in building efficiency, with the ambition of ensuring new development is net zero ready. The uplift presents a positive step forward for domestic development across England and will bring the development sector closer towards meeting the 2050 net zero target. The Future Building Standard (FBS) presents the net zero pathway for non-domestic development. The FHS, which will come into force from March 2027, seeks to reduce carbon emissions from new homes by 75% - 80%. Building Regulations remain the primary mechanism in which these changes are enforced and therefore remain outside the scope of the planning system. However, it is worth recognising that planning plays an important role in establishing sustainable and healthy development across the natural and built environment.

Working collaboratively to address climate change

5.10. Partnership working is vitally important to ensuring that both small scale and larger strategic matters can be interweaved with the climate agenda and addressed efficiently. The Authority is involved in several partnerships which enable the impacts associated with climate change to be addressed. These include, but are not limited to, New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022-2027, Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), Solent Mitigation Partnership (SMP), the New Forest Catchment Partnership, and the wider National Parks UK Partnership.

[14] Over half of the emissions reduction to meet the first three carbon budgets came in the energy supply sectors. Looking forward, the majority of reductions to meet future carbon budgets will need to come from other sectors. Around half of the reduction during the Seventh Carbon Budget period will come from surface transport and buildings.

5.11. National Parks UK has committed all national parks to the Race to Zero initiative which seeks "to drive action to halve carbon emissions by 2030 and become significant net carbon sinks by 2050"[15]. This pathway seeks to restore, remediate and create significant areas for nature interest, and increase the ability of the land identified to capture and sequester carbon. The built environment is also addressed by a pathway which seeks to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and reduce energy-related emissions from buildings, transport and industrial processes to near zero by 2050.

5.12. In 2019 the New Forest National Park Authority declared a climate and nature emergency with a commitment to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030[16]. Many partner organisations have made similar declarations, and all recognise that progress can only be made through collaborative working and a collective ambition to achieve net zero by protecting, restoring, and enhancing nature. Through partnership working and the adoption of documents, such as the Local Plan, the Authority aims to minimise vulnerability and maximise the resilience of the National Park (and its special qualities) to the impacts of climate change.

5.13. The policies set out within this chapter have been strengthened in response to the challenges associated with climate change. These range from efficient water management and sustainable construction to renewable energy. Climate change is considered a priority for the Authority to address across all workstreams and will remain a consideration within the planning process throughout this Local Plan and through national guidance.

Managing water resources and ensuring water efficient development

5.14. The Environment Agency monitor the water quality of a portion of the river network in the National Park, based on both ecological and chemical status. Of the 482 km of rivers, roughly 280 km are covered by Water Framework Directive monitoring stations. Around a quarter of the rivers in the New Forest that are monitored are recorded as achieving 'good' ecological status, but the majority are 'moderate', while a significant proportion are 'poor'. There has been a decline in the length of rivers with 'poor' and 'good' ecological status and a rise in those in 'moderate' condition. The Environment Agency objective is to achieve high or good ecological status for 70% of the monitored rivers in the New Forest by 2027.

5.15. The New Forest Catchment Partnership was established in 2012. The Authority will continue to co-host its work and seek to deliver collaborative projects that are in accordance with the partnerships aims. The Partnership complements the work of the Environment Agency by undertaking more widespread monitoring of waterbodies in the National Park, including standing water bodies which are often of national and international importance. This work highlights the need to address

[15] https://www.nationalparks.uk/2024/07/25/uk-national-parks-become-first-in-world-to-join-race-to-zero/
[16] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/climate-and-nature-emergency-and-the-new-forest-national-park/

diffuse pollution which is preventing waterbodies across the National Park reaching their potential and delivering ecosystem services such as biodiversity quality. The Partnership's Water Environment Improvement Plan identifies priorities for strategic action and localised project delivery.

5.16. The issues and pressures affecting the long-term quality of the region's water resources include abstraction, pesticides, phosphates, nitrates, physical modification and transport pollution. Opportunities will be sought to support diffuse pollution reductions and appropriate proposals to mitigate impacts and provide clean water environments (such as new pond complexes) will be supported. The Authority will also support the Environment Agency, Natural England, water companies and surrounding authorities in the development of strategic solutions to reducing nutrient inputs from wastewater discharges to the Solent and River Avon internationally designated nature conservation sites. Developments that could affect these sites will be considered under Policy SP11.

5.17. The Environment Agency have also defined Source Protection Zones (SPZs)[17] for groundwater sources used for public drinking water supply. These zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area, and the closer the activity to the source, the greater the risk of pollution. Where a site lies within a groundwater SPZ, developers will need to consult with the Environment Agency to ensure that the protection of the public water supply source is maintained, and to inform the Statutory Water Service Provider of the outcome of this consultation.

Implementing Sustainable Drainage Systems

5.18. National planning policy and design guidance emphasises that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be provided in new developments wherever appropriate. This particularly applies to new development in areas at risk of flooding and to planning applications for major development – developments of 10 dwellings or more, or equivalent non-residential or mixed development – unless it is demonstrated to be inappropriate or unnecessary.

5.19. SuDS are designed to mimic the natural drainage of surface water, typically managing rainfall close to where it falls. Surface water flows are then slowed down and discharged at a controlled rate before entering a watercourse. SuDS can be used in combination with Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) to enhance the longevity and effectiveness of SuDS within a scheme. For example, this might integrate more vegetative/permeable surfaces within a scheme in combination with ponds, swales, and rain gardens to effectively tackle local surface water flooding. In all cases the Authority advises that the drainage hierarchy set out within the NPPG is followed to ensure all options for surface water discharge have been considered[18].

5.20. Development can increase flood risk in scenarios where drainage systems are

[17] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html
[18] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change

inefficient or where there are large areas of hardstanding proposed. These scenarios can be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, such as severe weather (e.g., sustained rainfall and drier summers which scorch the ground and make it harder for the natural environment to absorb excess water). Development which does not implement SuDs or appropriate means of drainage will not be supported by the Authority.

5.21. In 2013, the Environment Agency looked at current and future water usage against climate change scenarios to provide an indicative stress situation for each water company. These findings were reviewed in 2021[19] and maintain the previous position that the Southern Water area is subject to both current and future water stress. The South Hampshire portion of Southern Water's operating area takes approximately two-thirds of its water from the Rivers Test and Itchen. Southern Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2025-2075 sets out a number of initiatives to reduce water usage and improve efficiency in supply.

5.22. In addition to measures being put in place by water companies, new development should manage demand for water and make efficient use of this resource. All new homes currently must meet the Building Regulations standard of a maximum of 125 litres per person per day. Authorities also have the option to set a limit of 110 litres per person per day. The 110 litres standard was adopted within the previous Local Plan, given that part of the National Park's water supply is classed as being 'water stressed'. The Water Stressed Areas (2021) classification has since identified that the whole area of the National Park is determined to be an area of 'serious water stress'.

5.23. In reflection of this and Southern Water's Target 100 ambition "to reduce average per capita consumption to 100 litres per person per day by 2040", the Authority has revised the requirement to further safeguard water resources from 110 litres to 100 litres per person per day. This is set out below within Policy SP7. Guidance on the implementation of this standard is available within the Government's Approved Document G (Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency) and Southern Water's Water Resources Management Plan (2024 – onwards)[20].

Policy SP7: Safeguarding and improving water resources

Development will not be permitted if it would risk harm to the quality and yield of water resources, including abstraction sites, groundwater, rivers, streams, still and coastal waters.

To ensure development is able to address surface water run-off and prevent pollutants entering watercourses new development must do the following:

a) all development must take account of flood risk through their location and design; existing flow routes and drainage features within the site should be identified and preserved e.g. ditches, seasonally dry watercourses, historic

[19] 'Water stressed areas – final classification', Environment Agency (2021) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification
[20] https://www.southernwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/

ponds. Where possible, natural flood management techniques should be explored and incorporated into development proposals;

b) development should integrate SuDS to minimise and control surface water run-off, provide flood storage capacity and improve habitats and species migration;

c) where implemented, SuDS measures should include source control components such as rainwater reuse/harvesting, green roofs, rain gardens, flood-tolerant trees, permeable paving. SuDS should adopt the principle of nature-based solutions and seek to address many planning policy requirements within the same area of the site e.g. biodiversity, amenity, green infrastructure, flood risk, drainage;

d) surface water from new development will not be permitted to discharge to the foul or combined sewer network, to minimise the risk of sewer flooding and protect water quality[21]. Proposals must demonstrate that surface water run-off from the development will not adversely affect any designated nature conservation sites or local buildings;

e) new homes will be required to meet either a water efficiency standard of 100 litres maximum daily allowable usage per person, or any future national standards, whichever is lower; and

f) where a site lies within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ), developers will need to ensure that the groundwater Source Protection Zone is protected.

Flood risk

5.24. The Authority has no direct responsibility for flood protection or coastal defence. However, as the planning authority for the coastline in the National Park, it is important that future strategic planning and development management decisions are consistent with the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (2010).

5.25. Shoreline Management Plans are non-statutory plans that evaluate the known risks to people, property and the built, historic and natural environment from the sea and coastal processes. They feature policies for each section of coast, based on the findings. The coastline of the National Park is covered by the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan, and it sets out detailed policies for coastal management over the next 100 years.

5.26. Within the National Park the Shoreline Management Plan[22] proposes to 'Hold the Line' (i.e. maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by existing coastal defences) on the coast between Hurst Spit and Elmer's Court outside Lymington, between Sowley and Saltershill, and around Calshot, but proposes

[21] In principle, all developments should not discharge surface water into the foul sewer, however there may be instances where the pollution risks are unavoidable due to the type of development proposed (e.g., petrol station, car wash). These cases will be reviewed by the Authority on a case-by-case basis.

[22] www.northsolentsmp.co.uk/

'No Active Intervention' (i.e. a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining any defences) elsewhere. It also makes allowance for landowners to maintain their own defences where these already exist, though landowners are advised to contact the Authority before undertaking any works. Where necessary, the Authority will consult New Forest District Council, or subsequent authority, as the Coastal Authority on planning applications. The Authority will also continue to be a member of the Solent Forum, which considers and provides advice on strategic issues for authorities involved in planning and management of the coast within the Solent area.

5.27. Flood zone maps have been developed by the Environment Agency, and their use is outlined in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)[23]. Zone 1 is where there is little or no risk of flooding, in Zone 2 there is a low to medium risk, and in Zone 3 there is a high risk. These zones relate to fluvial and coastal flooding and do not account for the risk imposed by surface water or groundwater flooding, meaning that a site can be located in Flood Zone 1 with little to no risk of fluvial and/or coastal flooding, but be at a very high risk of surface water or groundwater flooding. The Environment Agency publishes maps of flood risk on its website which show the locations of these zones and should be referred to as the most up to date source of information on flood risk. These maps are continually being updated and will be used in the implementation of Policy SP8. The National Park is at most risk of coastal flooding, but there is also significant flooding from the Lymington River in Brockenhurst, and to a lesser degree the Beaulieu River. The Cadnam area is also affected by surface water flooding and part of the evidence base for the Local Plan includes an updated Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) commissioned jointly by local planning authorities in South Hampshire in 2024.

5.28. The NPPG sets out the 'sequential test' that will be used to assess all planning applications (except where NPPF paragraph 175 applies[24]) to direct development away from Flood Zones 2 and 3 as the areas at highest risk of flooding[25]. This will also need to take account of the broader considerations set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024) and consider all localised flood risk areas and all surface water flood risks. Only if there are no reasonably available suitable alternative sites can development in areas of higher risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3) be considered by applying the 'exception test' as outlined in the NPPG.

5.29. While the National Park Authority is not the Lead Local Flood Authority for the New Forest, it maintains some influence over wider strategic flood risk matters and will continue to engage with local steering groups and its partners to ensure flood risk is effectively managed across the National Park.

[23] See NPPG at www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance and the Environment Agency's Flood Maps at https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/

[24] See NPPF for more information at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

[25] See PPG, paragraph 027 at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#the-sequential-approach-to-the-location-of-development

Policy SP8: Flood risk

Development proposals will not be permitted if they:

a) would increase the risk of flooding from any source (i.e., coastal, fluvial, or surface or groundwater), or increase coastal erosion on site or elsewhere;

b) do not comply with the sequential test, and, if necessary, the exception test (as outlined in National Planning Practice Guidance), or are in high flood risk areas* (as defined by the Environment Agency's Flood Zones 2 and 3 categories and the current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment);

c) are not compatible with the appropriate Shoreline Management Plan and Coastal Defence Strategy; and

d) have not evidenced taking a catchment approach to flood risk management or considered the relevant Catchment Management Plan policies.

* In some circumstances where development falls within a high-risk flood zone it may be permissible due to the nature of the development (e.g., installation of essential infrastructure, flood improvement works, or water compatible development). These proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Relevant developments will require a flood risk assessment, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. Flood risk assessments will need to demonstrate that:

- the development will remain safe and resilient for its lifetime (including access and egress);
- there has been assessment of the possible impacts of, and allowances made for, climate change in accordance with current Environment Agency guidance;
- where appropriate, residual risks (for example, the failure of coastal defences or blockage of drainage systems) have been assessed and mitigated for; and
- opportunities for flood risk betterment and/or natural flood management techniques have been considered and incorporated into site design, where reasonably achievable.

Development within the functional fluvial floodplain should be avoided. However, if there is to be any loss to flood storage in the fluvial floodplain, this should be compensated for on a level-by-level basis. Compensatory areas should be hydraulically and hydraulically connected to the floodplain but not located within it.

Sustainable construction

5.30. The planning system plays a vital role in delivering development that is sustainable both in longevity and its ability to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate

change. There are many ways buildings can be designed, built and/or retrofitted to improve building performance. The carbon impact of each development should be considered under this policy, and applicants are encouraged to consider reusing existing buildings/structures to minimise their carbon footprint. This is particularly important for the historic environment and historic buildings which come in a variety of conditions and have protected features which, in most instances, should be retained. Historic England advises that a 'whole building approach' is used when adapting historic buildings for energy and carbon efficiency[26].

5.31. As a standard, Building Regulations provide national requirements that all buildings must adhere to. However, where viable, developers may seek to achieve a higher standard of building performance i.e., LETI, Passivhaus. The Authority advocates for proposals where building performance can be improved and which respond appropriately according to the context of each site. This is especially important considering the protected landscape status of the National Park which means that some development may be considered inappropriate due to landscape impacts from scale, design, layout, positioning or energy sources.

5.32. Addressing climate change through the Local Plan provides an opportunity to protect the special qualities of the National Park and advocate for development that can appropriately reflect the needs and statutory purposes of the Park.

5.33. The Future Homes Standard (FHS) is a legislative requirement for all new homes to achieve and will seek to lower carbon emissions by 75-80% compared to homes delivered under current building regulations. This will be measured using the new Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) as part of national Building Regulations and is therefore separate from the planning system. FEES will come into force in March 2027, followed by a 12-month transition period, with the intention that all new build housing will be zero carbon ready. Extensions and thermal upgrades to existing homes will also become subject to improved building standards.

5.34. Under the FHS, and in exceptional circumstances where a developer cannot secure an 80% reduction in carbon emissions, it will be possible to explore carbon offsetting as an option. This is most likely to take the form of a financial contribution to local carbon sequestration activities, such as habitat restoration or tree planting.

Policy SP9: Sustainable construction

The Authority will support proposals for development that mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change through sustainable construction. To do this all development should seek to do the following:

a) incorporate energy and water efficiency measures appropriate to the building;

[26] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adapting-historic-buildings-energy-carbon-efficiency-advice-note-18/

b) consider 'small-scale' renewable sources (such as biomass and solar) that respond sensitively to the character of the local area;

c) adopt the principles of the circular economy[27] and seek to reduce consumption of finite resources, reduce waste and maximise recycling;

d) use locally and/or sustainably sourced materials within the design and construction of the development (e.g., certified timber[28]);

e) minimise the loss of existing native planting and nature features;

f) minimise the loss, degradation and erosion of soils and enhance soil structure wherever possible;

g) consider how the layout and orientation of the development can take advantage of solar gain;

h) incorporate public health factors in the design and construction of the development;

i) avoid development in places at highest risk of flooding/coastal erosion; and

j) include bird bricks across new residential development, including extensions (minimum two per dwelling).

5.35. The natural and built environment should work in harmony across all development to ensure climate change can be addressed from all angles. Through mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements all qualifying development must deliver improvements to biodiversity. This is to ensure development does not leave a site in a worse condition (for nature) than before. In some cases, achieving 10% on-site will not be feasible and there is scope for offsetting this requirement either financially or through an alternate site. Please refer to the 'Natural Environment' chapter for more information on BNG and other forms of habitat mitigation.

5.36. There is some uncertainty over how individual species and habitats in the New Forest will respond to climate change, but it is likely that some habitats will change or be lost, particularly coastal habitats, together with the appearance of new species. Maintaining a network of green infrastructure can help to increase the robustness of habitats by reducing their fragmentation through creating and restoring habitat and wildlife networks. The introduction of BNG and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will enable the planning system to improve nature's resilience to climate change.

5.37. In terms of the built environment, development should maximise health and well-being within the principles of sustainable construction and seek to evidence best practice as follows:

[27] Where feasible, and safe to do so, development proposals should look to repurpose and/or reuse building materials on site from existing building structures to reduce carbon impact.
[28] For example, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

- Undertake a fabric-first approach – to improve insultation, ventilation and comfort with the goal of improving respiratory health and reducing fuel poverty.
- Maximise design and orientation opportunities – passive solar gain, natural light can all contribute towards improving mental health, well-being and lower energy bills if designed appropriately.
- Enhance resilient landscaping – natural shade, biodiversity, and flood mitigation provide a safe environment to live in.
- Seek to reduce household costs – sustainable construction has the potential to reduce the cost of running a home where measures are efficient.

5.38. Other measures to reduce the National Park's impact upon – and vulnerability to – climate change include sustainable transport, renewable energy and local food production. These topics are covered in this chapter and other policies within the Local Plan.

Renewable energy

5.39. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the delivery of renewable, low carbon energy and associated infrastructure and requires local planning authorities to have a positive strategy to promote energy from these sources. The NPPF places the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. In response to this requirement, the Authority has taken a positive approach to supporting appropriate renewable energy proposals in the National Park. This includes the allocation of grant funding to support local community renewable energy projects; and the support offered through the planning system to proposals that respect their location within a nationally protected landscape.

5.40. National policy states that planning authorities should design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts. In addition, the NPPF clarifies that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in national parks. Consequently, the potential for renewable energy generation within the National Park will need to be balanced against the potential adverse visual and amenity impacts on the landscape, including views into and out of the Park.

5.41. To avoid compromising the landscape character and beauty of the National Park, the policy emphasis is on supporting appropriate, small-scale renewable energy developments that provide energy for an individual household or business use, or for a small local community facility within the Park. Proposals will be supported in appropriate areas of the National Park outside areas designated as nature conservation sites (including international nature conservation designations, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves), where they do not cause damage to the natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage, tranquillity and other special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with the statutory purposes and national policy.

5.42. The New Forest is not an appropriate location for onshore wind development due to insufficient wind speed and the impact such development would have on the landscape and statutory National Park purposes. Similarly, larger renewable energy developments to meet a wider-than-local need are not appropriate within the National Park.

Policy SP10: Renewable energy

Development proposals for, or incorporating, renewable energy generation, other than wind energy, will be permitted where they:

a) are small-scale and provide energy for individual households or businesses, or for small local community facilities;

b) are located and designed to have minimal visual impact – ground mounted solar arrays for example should be located within the curtilage of the property; and

c) do not have adverse impact on the landscape character, significance of heritage assets (including the contribution to significance made by their setting), natural beauty, wildlife, tranquillity or other special qualities of the National Park.

Planning permission for renewable energy developments likely to have an adverse effect on a designated nature conservation site (including international nature conservation sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves) will not be granted.

Proposals that are likely to be time-limited, such as solar panels, should evidence how the site will be remediated after permission has ended, specifying how the site will be returned to its original state.

5.43. All forms of small-scale energy production will be supported where these meet the criteria set out in Policy SP10. Evidence suggests that the most appropriate forms of renewable energy production in the New Forest are likely to be solar and biomass.

5.44. Some small-scale renewable energy development does not require planning permission, such as the use of solar panels in a domestic setting. However, domestic-scale wind turbines do require planning permission, and the above policy will apply. It is recommended that applicants seek advice on their proposals from the Authority before making an application.

5.45. Proposals should take account of the need to protect the natural historic and built environment, including consideration of potential visual and noise impacts of this type of development. The New Forest National Park Design Guide provides advice on the incorporation of energy efficiencies into the design of buildings. Appropriate proposals that make use of brownfield land in combination with renewable energy sources, such as found at Paultons Park[29] will be supported by the Authority.

[29] Best practice example of solar car ports installed alongside with visitors' car park

6. Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Strategic Objectives for protecting the Forest's natural environment:

1. Protect and enhance the natural capital and environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the diverse range of habitats and species.

4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.

To support Partnership Plan themes: Climate, Nature, People, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals
- A healthy environment
- Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery
- Tranquillity

6.1. This chapter sets out the strategic objectives for protecting and enhancing the natural capital and environment of the National Park. The natural environment of the New Forest supports a variety of habitats and wildlife and also provides multiple economic and social benefits. Protection of the natural environment can help tackle a wide range of challenges, including supporting biodiversity, improving public health, creating sustainable business, making better use of renewable resources, addressing climate change, and enhancing the setting of heritage assets. In recent years, the importance of biodiversity has been emphasised through the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), the mandatory requirement for qualifying developments to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and a legal Biodiversity Duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance species diversity. In National Parks, the Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework sets ambitious targets for each nationally protected landscape to drive nature recovery, and this is also a key theme within the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan.

6.2. The New Forest is one of the last remaining extensive areas of unspoilt natural beauty with rare habitats and wildlife within lowland Britain. The heart of the Forest, with its mosaic of ancient pasture woodland, lowland heath, lawns and wetlands and river systems, is intimately connected to the smallholdings and farms of the surrounding countryside. The National Park extends from the wooded slopes of Wiltshire in the north, across the central New Forest plateau, to the open coastline of the Solent in the south. The New Forest has been formed through the close relationship between the land and its people over hundreds of years, and much of the area is still managed by traditional agriculture and the historic system of commoning, which remains vital to the long-term management of the Forest.

6.3. The New Forest National Park is a nationally protected landscape, which has the highest status of planning protection in the NPPF in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. National planning policy also confirms that great weight in decision-making must be given to the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage. The Government's 'Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework' sets a series of ambitious targets for National Parks to enhance conservation and management of the landscape to achieve the key outcomes in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (2023). The planning system can contribute towards the delivery of these targets for the National Park.

6.4. The New Forest is home to a wide variety of important and often rare wildlife, habitats and species with over half of the National Park protected by international nature conservation designations. The importance of these means that large areas of land in the Park and along its coastline have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites, and that they benefit from a high level of protection under international nature conservation directives. The NPPF also confirms that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development could affect the integrity of these areas.

6.5. The New Forest National Park has a higher proportion of its land covered by international nature conservation designations than any other planning area in England, including all other English national parks. The National Park is also under intense pressure from development, and relevant proposals must ensure they meet the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

6.6. The New Forest's natural environment is further protected by extensive areas nationally designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), reflecting their national nature conservation importance. National policies establish duties to both conserve and enhance these sites and to avoid development having an adverse effect on them. These sites are complemented and supported by a landscape rich in regionally important habitats and species of principle importance for biodiversity, exemplified by the designation of around 400 local wildlife sites in the Wiltshire and Hampshire areas of the National Park.

6.7. The sense of naturalness, peace and quiet, and feeling of remoteness and tranquillity found within the National Park are part of its defined 'special qualities', contrasting dramatically with the intensively developed residential and industrial environments close to its boundaries. The Parliamentary Order[30] which established the New Forest as a National Park recognised that over the years the Forest has come under increasing development pressure from surrounding urban areas and that there has also been pressure from heavy and growing recreational use. It highlighted that these national, regional and local pressures are threatening its future and the very qualities that make it special[31]. In the face of these pressures, it is essential that the reasons for the designation of the New Forest as

[30] Explanatory Memorandum to the New Forest National Park Authority (establishment) Order 2005
[31] The special qualities of the National Park are highlighted in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan and are set out in Annex 1 of the Local Plan

a nationally important landscape are retained and enhanced, whilst at the same time facilitating the enjoyment of the Park's special qualities.

6.8. In response to these pressures, the New Forest National Park Recreation Management Strategy sets out a 20-year framework for managing visitor use while safeguarding sensitive habitats and protecting free-roaming livestock. The strategy promotes sustainable and responsible recreation by guiding visitors towards more resilient areas and by raising awareness of the New Forest Code.

6.9. The condition of the National Park's SSSI area has been gradually improving over the last decade, with 53% of SSSIs in favourable condition. The Government's Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework sets a target of 80% of SSSIs within the New Forest National Park to be in favourable condition by 2042. Trends for a variety of key species, such as the curlew, appear to show declines which reflect a variety of pressures, and the densities of several protected birds, including nightjar, woodlark and Dartford Warbler are relatively low compared with other lowland heathland sites. The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan (2023) aims to halt the decline in biodiversity through rolling out Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in qualifying new developments, as well as protecting 30% of the nation's land and sea for nature by 2030. The Plan states that National Parks are iconic landscapes, home to important habitat such as ancient woodland, peatland and grassland, which can play an important role in recovering nature and by doing so contribute more towards the Government's 30-by-30 commitment[32]. National Parks – including the New Forest – also receive and administer funding through the Government's 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' initiative to help restore nature.

Protection of internationally important nature conservation sites

6.10. There are thirty-three internationally designated nature conservation sites within a 20km radius of the National Park. Eleven of these are situated within or adjacent to the Park, and development proposals must ensure that adverse effects to the integrity of these sites are avoided. Designated sites within the National Park comprise Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance), as shown on the Policies Map. These designated areas are large and incorporate more than 30,000 hectares. They cover much of the core of the Forest and the coastal areas, as well as parts of the Avon Valley, and in most areas are also subject to national protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), these internationally designated sites enjoy the highest level of statutory and government policy protection. Specific and stringent tests within the Habitats Regulations are set to ensure that no development will harm the integrity of these areas, other than in exceptional circumstances.

[32] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-for-30by30-on-land-in-england/30by30-on-land-in-england-confirmed-criteria-and-next-steps

6.11. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has supported and informed this Local Plan. The HRA tests whether the policies and proposals in the Local Plan would affect the integrity of the National Park's internationally designated sites or those within a 20km radius. It has assessed a range of potential impacts on the designated sites including the recreational impacts from new households and visitor accommodation, water quality impacts on the Solent Coast and River Avon designations, 'urban edge' impacts and the effects on habitats adjacent to developments. Policy SP11 reflects the conclusions of the HRA and ensures that development complies with the Habitats Regulations. The main conclusions and resulting requirements of the HRA are:

- Prior to mitigation, the HRA cannot rule out in-combination recreational impacts of any new residential and visitor accommodation throughout the National Park having a likely significant in-combination effect on the New Forest SPA and SAC. The HRA also supports evidence from the Bird Aware Solent mitigation scheme that recreational impacts cannot be ruled out for any residential development within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites (the 'zone of influence'). Consequently, mitigation is required for all proposals of these types of development for the recreational impacts on both the New Forest and the Solent coastal designated sites.

- Prior to mitigation, the HRA cannot rule out in-combination water quality impacts from net new residential and other forms of overnight accommodation in the catchments of the internationally designated Solent and the River Avon sites, which between them cover the whole of the National Park. As a result, development within the River Avon catchment covering the west of the National Park will be required to demonstrate that it can achieve phosphate neutrality; and development in the centre and east of the Park will be required to demonstrate nitrate neutrality for the Solent catchment, in accordance with Natural England's latest calculators and published methodologies.

- Urban edge effects on the New Forest SAC and SPA cannot be ruled out for larger developments and therefore within the Local Plan no greenfield site allocations for C3 housing are proposed within 400 metres of these internationally designated sites. This is consistent with the approach taken in the previous New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) and that adopted in other lowland heathland areas in the country (e.g., Dorset Heathlands, Thames Basin Heaths, Wealden Heaths).

Policy SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance

All development must comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Where adverse effects on the integrity of an internationally important site cannot be ruled out, development will not be permitted unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development, and there are no alternatives. If this is the case, the Authority will require compensatory measures to ensure the overall coherence of the designated site. Any mitigation and/or compensation requirements for

development impacting nature conservation sites of international importance should be dealt with separately from biodiversity net gain provision.

Development may satisfy the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations if sufficient and effective measures are put in place to avoid or fully mitigate any likely significant adverse effects of the proposal (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) through its lifetime on the designated sites.

- In terms of addressing in-combination recreational impacts, a contribution to the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and/or the Bird Aware Solent Strategy (or any subsequent strategic mitigation schemes) will enable developers to ensure that mitigation measures are secured and managed in perpetuity for the recreational impacts of their development. The type of development and situations where recreational impacts can be mitigated are described in the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the Bird Aware Solent Strategy Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy Explanatory Note.
- Applications for new net dwellings and other forms of overnight accommodation will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality, irrespective of the conservation status of either the Solent Coast or River Avon designated sites. This applies to allocated sites and windfall development. Where proposals for other forms of new development – such as commercial or industrial uses or waste management facilities – have the potential to adversely affect water quality through surface water run-off, the Authority will assess impacts on a case-by-case basis. In such circumstances, applicants will be required to demonstrate how nutrient neutrality could be achieved. Early discussions with Natural England via their chargeable Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) are recommended.
- The National Park Authority will continue to work with partners to monitor the in-combination effects of increased road traffic and the associated emissions on the New Forest's designated sites. If the monitoring results indicate potential impacts on site integrity avoidance and mitigation measures will be required for development to be permitted. This may include a proportionate contribution from new development to support the implementation of measures.

Avoidance or mitigation may not be possible in some cases due to the impacts, scale, type, or proximity of the proposed development in relation to the designated site, and so the Authority will assess each case on its merits.

6.12. For development to comply with the Habitats Regulations, the Authority will need to be certain that there will be no negative impacts on the integrity of any of the designated sites. To achieve this, the Authority will need to be satisfied that sufficient and effective measures to avoid or fully mitigate any likely significant adverse effects from a proposed development (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) will be put in place.

6.13. The Authority has an adopted Habitat Mitigation Scheme which will fully mitigate

the lifetime recreational impacts of certain forms of development on the New Forest designated sites. Therefore, to ensure that their proposals comply with the Habitats Regulations, developers can make a financial contribution to the Authority's Mitigation Scheme in relation to the land-based designated sites (New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar), and to the Bird Aware Solent Strategy for development undertaken within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent- based coastal designated sites. These contributions from developments will be used by the Authority and the Bird Aware Solent mitigation partnership to implement a range of measures that will mitigate the recreational impacts of new development on the designated sites and help protect and maintain these sites.

6.14. However, due to the scale, type, or proximity of the proposed development in relation to the designated site, avoidance or mitigation and the use of financial contributions may not be possible in all cases. For example, if a larger number of windfall dwellings within 400 metres of the New Forest SAC and SPA were to come forward on a single site, or a closely related cluster of sites, then the Authority will require the applicant to supply sufficient evidence for an appropriate assessment[33] of the urban edge effects.

6.15. Applicants are not precluded from assessing the potential impact of their proposals on the designated sites and devising their own appropriate mitigation measures. When considering these measures, the evidence presented will need to allow the Authority (as 'competent authority') to be certain that there will be no likely significant adverse effects from the proposed development throughout its lifetime on the designated sites. Applicants will need to provide sufficiently detailed information about the potential impacts of their proposals on the designated features, species and habitats of all the internationally protected sites and set out their proposed mitigation measures to demonstrate conclusively to the Authority that the development will comply with the Habitats Regulations and there will be no likely significant adverse effects on the designated sites. This will need to take into consideration the proposal's potential impacts in combination with all other planned development in the National Park and surrounding areas. Under the precautionary principle, if the applicant does not demonstrate with certainty that the development, including any proposed mitigation, will not impact the integrity of the site, permission will be refused.

6.16. Developments covered by prior approval and permitted development, set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, are granted permission by central government and therefore a planning application is not required. However, these developments must still legally comply with the Habitats Regulations and therefore must adhere to the principles set out in Policy SP11. Where mitigation and/or avoidance measures are required, these can either be provided by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Authority, or where appropriate, a financial contribution can be made to the schemes set out above.

[33] The applicant will need to provide sufficient evidence for an appropriate assessment (that is informed by the HRA of this Local Plan) that will allow the Authority to be certain that there will be no likely significant adverse urban edge effects from the proposed development throughout its lifetime on the integrity of the designated sites, and, therefore, will comply with the Habitats Regulations. The Authority should be contacted to discuss requirements.

6.17. The Habitats Regulations and legal caselaw also require plans and projects to consider impacts on functionally linked land that supports the international nature conservation designations and their features. For the Solent's international nature conservation designations, the evidence base includes the updated Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (2024) which provides a classification of sites and should be referenced in preparing development proposals that could impact on the Solent coastal designations.

Protecting, maintaining and enhancing nationally and locally important sites and features of the natural environment

6.18. There are many nationally, regionally and locally important sites and features that characterise the New Forest and these should be protected, conserved and enhanced, together with the coherence of its ecological network. Policy SP12 is relevant to development proposals that could affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Hampshire, County Wildlife Sites in Wiltshire, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodlands, species and habitats of principal importance and trees and hedgerows.

Policy SP12: The natural environment – nationally, regionally and locally important sites

Proposals should protect, maintain and enhance nationally, regionally and locally important sites and features of the natural environment, including habitats and species of biodiversity importance, irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, geological features and the water environment.

Development, which is likely to have an adverse effect on, or lead to reduction of, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) will not ordinarily be permitted. This includes development activities such as the replacement of driveways or the removal of road verges where these form part of, or contribute to, designated SSSI areas, to prevent incremental loss. Only where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh both the impacts on the special interest features of the SSSI and on the broader national network of SSSIs will an exception be considered.

Development proposals which would result in the loss or deterioration of locally designated sites, irreplaceable habitats, priority habitats and species populations, protected species or those identified of importance by national or local biodiversity plans will be refused unless the Authority is satisfied that:

a) it has been demonstrated that suitable measures for mitigating adverse effects will be provided and maintained in order to achieve a net gain in biodiversity value; and

b) there are no reasonable alternative solutions; and

c) there are overriding reasons which outweigh the harm.

In addition, opportunities to enhance ecological or geological assets and the water environment should be maximised, particularly in line with the respective Hampshire and Wiltshire Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Applicants will be required to demonstrate the impacts of their proposal on biodiversity, and for certain types of development by submission of an Ecological Appraisal, which should outline the mitigation and enhancement measures needed to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

6.19. National planning policies also support the protection and enhancement of geological conservation and recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services. They require that impacts on biodiversity should be minimised, net gains in biodiversity provided where possible, and coherent ecological networks should be established that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Development applications need to be accompanied by an appropriate level of biodiversity information to allow an assessment of impacts, and the efficacy of any proposed mitigation or compensation. It is recommended that applicants seek pre-application advice to establish what information is required.

6.20. Trees and hedges provide very important habitats for wildlife. Trees help to improve air quality, reduce the effect of heavy rain, provide shelter, and are integral to the character of the New Forest. Trees also play a significant role in the sustainability of new developments and by retaining existing trees and carefully planting new trees in a well-designed layout, new developments can be successfully integrated as outlined in Policy DP2. The Authority's Tree Guidance Leaflet[34] provides advice on how this can be achieved.

6.21. Older mature trees, especially oak and beech, are a particular characteristic of the New Forest. They are a feature not only of the ancient woodlands of the Open Forest, but of the villages and other settlements that have developed over time as an integral part of the Forest landscape. The New Forest is recognised to be one of the most important sites in north-west Europe for ancient and veteran trees. The Authority will seek to conserve and protect mature trees in order to maintain the local landscape character, cultural history and wildlife value.

6.22. All trees, regardless of their protected status, are deemed a material consideration in planning applications. The Authority can make Tree Preservation Orders when considering planning applications to either prevent the removal of significant trees, or to protect significant trees from damage.

6.23. Hedgerows provide corridors for wildlife and link together the patchwork of the many habitats that make up the countryside. They also protect soil and water, add beauty and character to the landscape, and provide a significant contribution to local heritage and the distinctiveness of the area. Hedgerows are of particular importance for the conservation of farmland and woodland birds, and for mammals, but over recent years field and domestic boundaries in the New Forest have been changing. Creating links between habitats through an enhanced network of hedgerows is an identified action of the Partnership Plan. The

[34] www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/submit-tree-work-application/

landscape and biodiversity value of hedges is outlined in the National Park Design Guide[35] which, together with the New Forest Land Advice Hedgerow guide[36], provide guidance on how to establish a hedge and which native species should be used. Opportunities to include new hedges in developments will be encouraged through Policy DP2. Hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerows Regulations[37] and many require permission from the Authority if removal is considered.

Planning for nature recovery

6.24. The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, both of which are mechanisms that enable the planning system to contribute towards reversing the decline of biodiversity across England. BNG is a requirement of primary legislation, which establishes a minimum 10% gain for qualifying developments. Local planning authorities can adopt a higher figure where evidenced and supported. The development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies is led by responsible bodies who produce the framework and associated mapping required to identify priority areas for biodiversity (i.e., 'Statement of Biodiversity Priorities'). The New Forest National Park is covered by two Local Nature Recovery Strategies prepared by Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council, who act as responsible bodies for the New Forest area.

6.25. The Local Nature Recovery Strategies provide a framework within which Biodiversity Net Gain can be focused to achieve the greatest impact in terms of targeting off-site mitigation and meeting identified conservation priorities. Development projects that create, enhance or recover habitat in locations which are mapped in either of the two Local Nature Recovery Strategies covering the New Forest National Park, will get a higher biodiversity value in the statutory metric than they would in other locations. Development should support wider policy objectives as outlined within the Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to ensure biodiversity net gain focuses on habitat creation and enhancement where the greatest benefits can be achieved.

6.26. The New Forest National Park Authority holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational (or 'District') Licence granted by Natural England. The associated District Licensing Scheme, administered by the NatureSpace Partnership, is founded on a landscape-scale conservation strategy for Great Crested Newts. The scheme directs habitat creation to locations that deliver the greatest ecological benefit, while providing developers and planning authorities with a more efficient and predictable licensing route. The scheme provides an additional licensing option for developers, enabling sustainable development while securing long-term conservation outcomes for Great Crested Newts. However, the introduction of Environmental Delivery Plans in the future could supersede the functions currently fulfilled by the District Licensing Scheme.

[35] www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/design-guidance/
[36] www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/landscape-partnership/projects/better-boundaries/
[37] www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/hedgerows/

Policy SP13: Biodiversity Net Gain

Development must follow a nature-first approach, avoiding harm to existing on-site biodiversity. Where avoidance is not possible, proposals must demonstrate that impacts have been minimised, with any remaining harm fully mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated. Schemes relying on mitigation or compensation must provide clear evidence explaining why avoidance was not feasible.

Development must achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, or higher as stipulated in national legislation and/or policy or supplementary guidance, over the pre-development biodiversity value as measured by the latest Biodiversity Metric.

Biodiversity net gain must be delivered in the following hierarchical manner, taking into account the aims of the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

1. On-site delivery: where delivered on-site, habitats should be functionally linked to the wider habitat network creating coherent ecological networks on land and/or water.
2. Off-site delivery: should prioritise strategic delivery in accordance with the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the respective areas of the National Park.
3. Credits: as a last resort, and where it is agreed by the local planning authority that no suitable alternatives exist, through the purchase of national biodiversity units/credits.

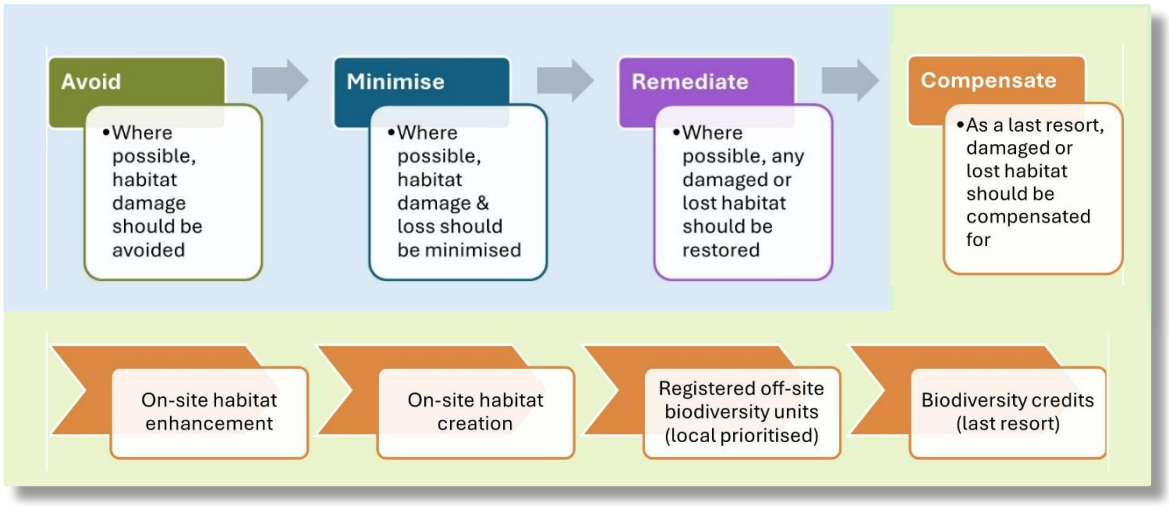
Planning applications subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain must submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan at the application stage setting out how a positive proportionate contribution has been made to the ecological priorities outlined within the respective Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Sites where net gain is provided (on- or off-site) must be managed and monitored by the applicant, or an appropriate body funded by the applicant, for a minimum period of 30 years.

In addition to any agreed mitigation measures, development proposals are expected to incorporate biodiversity enhancement features such as wildlife highways in solid boundary treatments, bat bricks or boxes, pollinator accommodation, reptile or amphibian hibernacula, and/or ponds to support priority, rare, or threatened species. Bird bricks should be installed in all new-build developments including extensions, at least two bricks per new home, specified and located in accordance with best-practice guidance such as BS 42021 or CIEEM standards. Where this is not feasible, alternative provision should be made within the site.

Alongside Biodiversity Net Gain, development should seek to deliver broader environmental gains, including natural capital benefits. Natural England's optional Environmental Benefits from Nature (EBN) tool[38] supports net gain through consistent assessment of land-use impacts across 18 ecosystem services.

[38] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6414097026646016



Source: DEFRA Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy

6.27. Developments eligible for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) are expected to deliver net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. BNG is calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric, which assesses habitats based on size, distinctiveness, condition, and strategic significance. A suitability qualified ecologist establishes the pre-development baseline and the post-development biodiversity value, including any on-site and/or off-site enhancements, which need to exceed this baseline by at least 10%.

6.28. Habitats created or enhanced to deliver BNG are secured and managed for a minimum of 30 years through appropriate legal mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements and Conservation Covenants. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is required from the applicant, and this sets out long-term management, monitoring, and remedial measures. Where BNG is delivered off-site, land is registered on the national register, and monitoring reports are required to be provided to the Authority to ensure compliance over the minimum statutory 30-year period.

6.29. The delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain can also benefit the aquatic environment (freshwater, wetlands, estuarine and coastal waters) by improving water quality, water resources, flood protection, and offer other gains through management of rivers and wetlands, including restoring natural processes.

6.30. There are other sources of biodiversity importance that are not attributed value by the Government's Biodiversity Net Gain metric. An example is swifts, which are an important species within the New Forest, given the number of older buildings in the National Park and the areas suitable for foraging. Utilised by a variety of bird species, universal nest bricks are a significantly better option than external boxes due to their long lifetime, zero maintenance requirements, improved thermal regulation, and aesthetic integration.

6.31. Led by Natural England, a partnership of environmental-interest organisations and the University of Oxford has developed the Environmental Benefits from Nature

(EBN) tool. While its use is not mandatory, the tool has been specifically designed to complement biodiversity net gain approaches to include wider natural capital benefits, such as improved air and water quality, flood risk mitigation, and increased opportunities for recreation. The EBN tool integrates with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Green Infrastructure Standards, and the Landscape Character Assessment database, providing a consistent and evidence-based method for evaluating the impacts of land use change across 18 defined ecosystem services.

Conserving and enhancing the landscape

6.32. The diverse landscape of the New Forest, including the ancient woodlands, mature trees and hedgerows, heathlands, unspoilt coastline, farmed landscapes and rural villages, are special qualities integral to the National Park designation.

6.33. National planning policies and primary legislation, including the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949, are particularly important within the New Forest as they provide the highest status of protection to landscape and scenic beauty for national parks. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also given great weight when assessing planning applications and sites for new development. The whole of the New Forest National Park is designated as a nationally protected landscape, and therefore all applicants will need to take account of this level of protection in any development proposal. The Authority will seek to ensure that the high-quality, diverse, historic and distinct landscapes and seascapes of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced for future generations.

6.34. Under Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023, all relevant bodies have a statutory duty to seek to further the two National Park purposes in undertaking any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park. This duty applies to national park authorities and to a wide range of other bodies. It is relevant for both development proposals that come forward in national parks through other routes (including national permitted development rights and nationally significant infrastructure projects), and for planning decisions. This strengthened duty reinforces the importance of considering landscape impacts in assessing development proposals. The duty requires relevant bodies to seek to enhance the landscape and habitats of the National Park, and such proposals include the restoration of land to lowland heathland and measures to improve the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, such as wetland restoration. Restoration of landscapes where features have been lost or degraded will be supported by the Authority, where it contributes positively to landscape character. When designing restoration schemes, suitable reference should be made to the historic landscape character, informed by historic characterisation (such as available from Hampshire County Council). Landscape scheme design should also contribute to climate resilience and human health by aiming to incorporate features that provide shade, cooling, flood mitigation, and opportunities for physical activity and mental well-being.

6.35. Consideration of the landscape character of local areas throughout the National Park should inform planning applications. The New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment 2015 (LCA) provides an evaluation of the different areas and types of landscape character across the Forest. It divides the New Forest landscape into a number of character areas which help to identify key attributes, differing pressures, trends and opportunities. It identifies those landscape features, such as variations in the natural environment, landscape condition, settlement pattern and land uses, that give a locality its 'sense of place' and pinpoint what makes it different from neighbouring areas. It also acts as a landscape framework to inform decisions regarding the location and design of development and the capacity of the landscape to absorb potential changes.

6.36. The New Forest's unique landscape character is, however, under pressure from a number of trends and factors that are likely to affect the National Park over time. The Landscape Action Plan (LAP) details those issues and pressures and sets out objectives, management guidelines and actions. It offers practical advice and guidance, aimed at both organisations and individuals, to help maintain the special character of the New Forest. Historic England has also published a Farmstead and Landscape Statement[39] which helps to identify the historic character of traditional farmsteads and their buildings in the New Forest, and how they relate to their surrounding landscapes.

6.37. An important aspect of national policy is its recognition that planning should acknowledge the 'intrinsic' character and beauty of the countryside. Landscape character cannot be solely determined by what is visible from a publicly accessible location, as this can change over time. It is the combination of all the various elements and features of the landscape described in the LCA that make the New Forest National Park's landscape character special.

6.38. The following policy seeks to ensure that development avoids detrimental impacts on the intrinsic landscape character and its key features. This is in accordance with national planning policy; the National Park's statutory purposes; and the strengthened legal duty placed on all relevant bodies to seek to further the Park's purposes in undertaking functions that could affect national parks.

Policy SP14: Landscape character

Great weight in planning decisions will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park, and to its wildlife and cultural heritage. Development proposals will be permitted if they conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes by demonstrating that:

a) they are informed by the New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment, and are compatible with the distinct features and type of landscape in which the development is located;

[39] https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/farmsteads-character/

b) the design, layout, massing and scale of proposals conserve and enhance existing landscape and seascape character and do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park;

c) the character of largely open and undeveloped landscapes between, within, and surrounding settlements will not be eroded or have their setting harmed; and

d) landscape schemes reinforce local landscape or seascape character and help to reveal or better appreciate the significance of the New Forest's assets. Where planting is appropriate, it is consistent with local character, native species are used and plants are locally or UK grown and sourced, in accordance with the national strategy for biosecurity[40].

Proposals which are likely to be significant in terms of scale and/or impact will be expected to provide a professionally prepared landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) as part of the application submission.

Green & blue infrastructure and open space

6.39. Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) can be defined as a planned and managed network of natural or semi-natural spaces that perform a number of functions. Nature-rich, beautiful places can bring a wide range of benefits to both communities and the natural environment and have a particular role to play in providing recreational opportunities, maintaining a good quality of life for local communities, and encouraging active, healthy lifestyles. Green infrastructure includes such areas as parks and gardens, green corridors, amenity greenspace and allotments, while blue infrastructure includes rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, and coastal marsh.

6.40. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework[41] complements biodiversity net gain by providing standards and tools to support the delivery of high-quality, accessible, multifunctional green and blue infrastructure. GBI helps communities thrive by creating attractive environments, supporting green jobs, and strengthening the local economy. Development should adopt an approach that is both environment and landscape led so as to maximise the beneficial provision of GBI for people and nature recovery. GBI can help in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, improving air and water quality, supporting biodiversity, providing for recreation, and enhancing active travel. It is recognised that the typically small scale of development means that significant new greenspace provision is unlikely for most schemes within the National Park area, but green infrastructure should still be considered at an early stage of design as the foundation of the design process.

6.41. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and green and blue infrastructure are closely integrated within spatial planning frameworks. LNRS provide the ecological evidence base that identifies priority locations for habitat restoration

[40] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-biological-security-strategy
[41] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/

and nature recovery, while GBI policies set out the spatial mechanisms for delivering these outcomes. LNRS mapping highlights optimal areas for targeting investment to maximise ecological enhancement. This evidence directly informs green and blue infrastructure funding and project delivery, ensuring that interventions – such as tree planting, wetland creation, or natural flood-management measures – support locally identified biodiversity priorities and strengthen habitat connectivity. Through this alignment, GBI can deliver multifunctional benefits, including improved climate resilience, better water quality, and enhanced access to nature. The New Forest National Park is covered by two Local Nature Recovery Strategies that act as a connecting layer, linking neighbourhood-scale green spaces with wider regional ecological networks.

6.42. The range of recreation mitigation strategies in place in and around the New Forest highlights the importance of accessible open space and recreational facilities within, and close to, the National Park. These measures help to protect the New Forest's designated nature sites by reducing recreational pressure, redirecting visitors away from sensitive areas, and providing accessible, alternative greenspaces in more suitable and robust locations.

6.43. Within the National Park, the Authority continues to work with partners and communities to support opportunities to create or enhance green infrastructure. In recent years the Authority has supported a range of open space enhancements, including the provision of new equipment such as children's play structures at open spaces in several villages, the creation of new wildplay sites and the enhancement of recreational walking routes close to communities. Green and blue infrastructure can provide additional opportunities for local communities to access open space and provides for healthy recreation. Provision or improvement of alternative greenspaces may also be considered along with a range of other measures[42] to mitigate the recreational effects of development within the National Park on the internationally important nature conservation designations. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) are usually large greenspaces designed to provide mitigation for recreational pressures from housing development. SANGs are typically part of the strategic mitigation package for larger scale residential development (generally schemes of at least 50 – 100 dwellings where the required SANG meets an indicative minimum size area to meet recreational needs arising from the development) and therefore, are unlikely to be appropriate for the scale of development envisaged in the National Park.

6.44. To deliver its first purpose, the Authority believes that it is important to consider landscapes on a wider scale. The Authority has established the Green Halo Partnership, bringing together public, private and third sector organisations to recognise the economic and social value of the natural environment, support shared objectives for environmental sustainability and economic prosperity, and promote research and awareness about natural capital and its significance. Although rooted in the New Forest, the principles of the Green Halo Partnership extend across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset and Wiltshire, informing

[42] The Authority will decide what measures are acceptable for a development to comply with the Habitats Regulations – see Policy SP11 and accompanying text.

strategic planning and cross-boundary environmental enhancement. The Partnership identifies natural capital – including geology, soil, water, air quality, biodiversity, and related ecosystem services – as a critical asset to local communities regarding spatial planning, investment, long-term stewardship, guiding decisions about how we manage or develop our area. This will include exploring opportunities for new green and blue infrastructure.

Policy SP15: Green & Blue Infrastructure

Green/blue infrastructure is known to improve mental and physical health by providing areas for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. Proposals which create, maintain, restore, or enhance green and blue infrastructure will be supported, particularly where they:

a) clearly apply a design-led approach to embed multifunctional green and blue infrastructure within development schemes, reflecting local needs and stakeholder input;

b) encourage connectivity between different habitats and designated sites;

c) offer opportunities for local communities to access good quality open space and provide for healthy recreation, community food growing, and active travel;

d) are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed, and accessible for all;

e) relieve recreational pressure on internationally important nature conservation sites;

f) provide scope for the integrated management of the natural and historic environments, while responding to the area's character;

g) incorporate nature-based solutions to address climate change, strengthen biodiversity, manage flood risk, and enhance air and water quality; and

h) demonstrate the long-term management and maintenance of existing and proposed green and blue infrastructure, with funding secured for a minimum of 30 years following completion of major development.

The Authority will work with partners and adjoining authorities to develop green/blue infrastructure, and to ensure that the impacts of development, both within and beyond the National Park's boundary, do not adversely affect the landscape character of the Park or of the internationally important nature conservation designations. However, providing new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in the nationally protected landscape of the National Park as mitigation for development outside the Park's boundary is not appropriate, and will only be considered under exceptional circumstances where very significant benefits for the landscape, biodiversity and internationally designated sites of the National Park can be clearly demonstrated.

6.45. The Authority is also working with Natural England and other local authorities within the defined 'zone of influence' of the New Forest's internationally designated sites to develop a strategic approach to prevent adverse recreational impacts on

internationally designated nature conservation sites in the New Forest. The overall mitigation package includes new and enhanced greenspace provision in local authority areas outside the New Forest National Park to provide alternative recreational areas close to new developments.

6.46. With the population who live within an easy journey of the New Forest increasing rapidly and planned development immediately surrounding the Park set to rise significantly, an increased number of visitors are likely to come to enjoy the National Park in the coming years. Clearly this will present challenges in how to balance the enjoyment of visitors with the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the National Park. Recreation management will be critical, with the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan identifying a range of priority objectives to address these impacts. One such objective is to develop a strategic approach to mitigate the potential impacts associated with increasing recreational pressures arising from planned new housing and visitor accommodation on the internationally designated habitats.

6.47. National policy defines open space as any publicly valued open area, including both land and water, that offers opportunities for sport and recreation or serves as visual amenity. It confirms the importance of access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation, and Policy DP16 supports this approach. Open space can play a vital role in facilitating access to nature, supporting public health, contributing to climate adaptation, safeguarding biodiversity, and mitigating flood risk. The open space requirement of 3.5 hectares of open space per 1,000 population is based on previous development plans for the National Park area. Given that the population of the National Park has been fairly static, this provision standard remains appropriate. The standard comprises 0.2 hectares of designed play spaces for children and young people, 1.25 hectares of formal recreational space, and 2 hectares of informal open space per 1,000 population. Based on the open space requirement as set out above, the Authority requires 35 square metres of public open space to be provided per person. The main villages in the National Park are all deficient in terms of open space provision against this standard.

Policy DP16: Open space

Where there is an identified need, development should either provide for the enhancement of existing open space and amenity areas or provide on-site open space to the minimum provision standard of 3.5 hectares of public open space per 1,000 population. Development proposals will be supported where they demonstrate opportunities to integrate open space within the wider green and blue infrastructure network, deliver measurable environmental net gains, and enhance public access to – and engagement with – nature.

Proposals that result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, will not be permitted unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use; or

d) the Education Authority has received approval for the disposal of surplus school playing fields from the Secretary of State, in accordance with Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998[43], and where equivalent or greater community benefits are provided.

6.48. New housing development should incorporate accessible open amenity areas and features, preferably within its site boundary to enhance the quality of the environment for the benefit of residents, biodiversity and the surrounding area. The requirement to provide public open space is separate to, and in addition to, the provision of alternative greenspace for mitigation against impacts on the internationally designated nature conservation sites.

Recreational horse riding and horse keeping

6.49. Horse riding and horse keeping have a long history in the New Forest and are part of its cultural identity. In the region of 3,500 horses are kept within, and immediately surrounding, the National Park. Together with horses kept by farmers and Commoners, the equine community makes a valuable contribution to the local economy.

6.50. When it is done well, horse keeping can make a positive contribution to the management of the New Forest and assist farmers and Commoners seeking to diversify their activities. But in the few cases where it is done badly, there can be problems associated with overgrazed fields, poor fencing and inappropriate lighting, all of which can lead to a negative impression of horse keeping. There are examples of both within the New Forest.

[43] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/section/77

6.51. Planning permission is usually required for most horse-related development. However, under the General Permitted Development Order 2015, there may be some scope to provide buildings or enclosures associated with the keeping of recreational horses in the garden of a domestic dwelling, incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house. It is advisable to seek the advice on the need for planning permission for such buildings from the Authority.

Policy DP17: Recreational horse keeping

Permission will be granted for recreational horse keeping provided that the proposal does not:

a) have an adverse impact on the landscape, aquatic environment, or any nature conservation interests;

b) harmfully increase riding pressures on the Open Forest; or

c) result in the loss of back-up grazing land.

6.52. The Authority cannot control the use of land for grazing. However, the keeping of recreational horses involves a more intensive use of land which is subject to planning control. The distinction between grazing and keeping is not always clear, although a judgement can normally be made on the basis of the area of grazing land available per animal. As a guideline, the keeping of horses is generally understood to be where less than 0.5 hectares of land is available per horse[44]. Other key indicators can include the existence of stables, other facilities, and the condition of the land.

6.53. Planning applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate that the associated impacts of any new recreational horse keeping use is positive rather than negative, for example by including details of fencing and landscaping.

6.54. The high demand for land for horse keeping can reduce the amount of back-up grazing available for Commoners, resulting in a need to maintain an adequate supply of back-up grazing land. Updated evidence highlights the pressures on back-up grazing in and around the New Forest[45].

6.55. Policy DP17 also seeks to ensure that horse keeping does not impinge on the New Forest by adding to riding activity in the area and/or contributing to the erosion of the Open Forest.

[44] Defra Code of Practice for the welfare of horses, ponies, donkeys and their hybrids (April 2013) reports that as a general rule, a horse will require a minimum of 0.5 hectares (1.25 acres) of good grazing if no supplementary feeding is being provided.

[45] Commoners' back-up grazing in the New Forest: extent and distribution, New Forest Association (2025) newforestassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Final_back-up_land_report.pdf

Policy DP18: Field shelters and stables

Permission will be granted for field shelters provided that the building is:

a) sensitively sited to be unobtrusive in the landscape;

b) simple in appearance and modest in scale; and

c) constructed of appropriate materials.

The same considerations apply to stables although these should be located close to existing buildings where these exist.

6.56. The Authority seeks to limit the proliferation of buildings within the New Forest, primarily because of their impact on the landscape. However, the need for field shelters (which are commonly characterised by one side of the structure left open) is recognised and therefore they will normally be permitted, providing they are sensitively designed and can be accommodated without being obtrusive in the landscape. The same considerations apply to stables, although these should be located close to existing buildings.

Policy DP19: Maneges

The development of outdoor maneges will be permitted provided that:

a) they do not result in any detrimental impact on the landscape and ecology of the New Forest; and

b) they do not involve the installation of lighting.

The development of indoor maneges will not be permitted other than in accordance with Policy DP58 (Reuse of farm buildings). The standard manege measures 20 metres by 40 metres and special justification will be required for larger structures within the nationally protected landscape of the National Park.

6.57. Maneges are all-weather riding arenas used for the schooling of animals and the training of riders. While the Authority recognises that the availability of maneges may reduce the use of the Open Forest, particularly by riding schools, there are concerns about the physical impact of their development on the New Forest landscape and ecology. The Authority wishes to minimise the environmental impact of these proposals and considers that this form of development is likely to be acceptable only where it is contained within, or closely related to, an existing group of buildings and makes use of materials that blend in well with the New Forest's landscape.

Coastal erosion and development

6.58. The New Forest National Park includes 26 miles of coastline along the Solent and Southampton Water. It will be necessary to ensure that the main settlements are given protection through carefully designed defences which do not adversely affect the sites of European nature conservation importance or create

additional flooding issues for other parts of the coast. In addition to coastal protection works, other small-scale coastal development might include coastal access works, upgrading existing coastal car parks, replacing beach huts and existing mooring facilities. The aim of this approach is to maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscape.

Policy SP20: Coastal development

Small-scale proposals for development on the coast will be permitted provided that they:

a) will not have adverse impacts on coastal processes or existing flood defences;

b) are in keeping with the character of the coast;

c) will not cause an unacceptable and/or unjustified level of harm to landscape or heritage interests, and will have regard to the importance of seaward and landward views;

d) protect or enhance coastal habitats and species, including all designated nature conservation sites; and

e) will not lead to the consolidation of scattered development.

6.59. Policy SP20 seeks to protect the undeveloped nature of the National Park coastline. The policy ensures a level of protection consistent with the Government's Marine Policy Statement (MPS) and the South Marine Plan. The South Marine Plan helps integrate marine and land planning, contributing to vibrant coastal communities and consideration of cultural and built heritage, seascape and local environmental quality. The Authority will work with the marine planning authority to ensure that the seascape quality of the New Forest coastline is maintained and enhanced.

6.60. The England Coast Path (ECP) is a new national trail being created by Natural England through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and extends along the coast of the New Forest. It allows people to gain access to the coastline and provide opportunities to enjoy one of the special areas of the National Park. Any small-scale proposals associated with the coast path will be considered against Policy SP20 on coastal development.

6.61. National policy states that strategic planning policies should set out an overall strategy for measures to address climate change and adaptation. Local Plans are required to reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast. Planning authorities should identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast and be clear as to what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances. Coastal Change Management Areas may be defined where rates of shoreline change are expected to be significant over the next 100 years. They will not normally need to be defined where the accepted shoreline management

plan policy is to hold or advance the line (maintaining existing, or building new, flood and coastal erosion risk management infrastructure) for the whole period covered by the shoreline management plan.

6.62. The North Solent Shoreline Management Plan covers the whole of the New Forest National Park's coastline and is a high-level, non-statutory policy document setting out a framework for future management of the coastline and coastal defences. The Plan was published in 2010 and for the majority of the National Park's coastline the policy is 'hold the line'. Since the Plan was published, the coastline of the National Park has continued to experience change. The Environment Agency's 'Hurst Spit to Lymington Strategy' is exploring a long-term (100 year) sustainable future for the coast between Hurst Spit and Lymington, to respond to climate change and sea level rise. The designation of a Coastal Change Management Area for the stretch of the Park's coastline between Hurst Spit and Lymington will assist in managing coastal change over the plan-period in an area rich in natural, historic, and built environment designations, and which makes a significant contribution to the economy of the area; for example, Hurst Castle. There is an existing Coastal Change Management Area designated for the coastline to the west between Barton-on-Sea and Highcliffe in the adopted development plan for New Forest District.

Policy SP21: Coastal Change Management Area

A coastal change management area (CCMA) is defined along the National Park's southern coast between Hurst Spit and Lymington (as illustrated on the Policies Map and the inset map below). Within this CCMA the following criteria will apply:

a) new residential development will generally not be appropriate (subject to the exceptions listed below);

b) residential extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted in accordance with the other policies in the Local Plan;

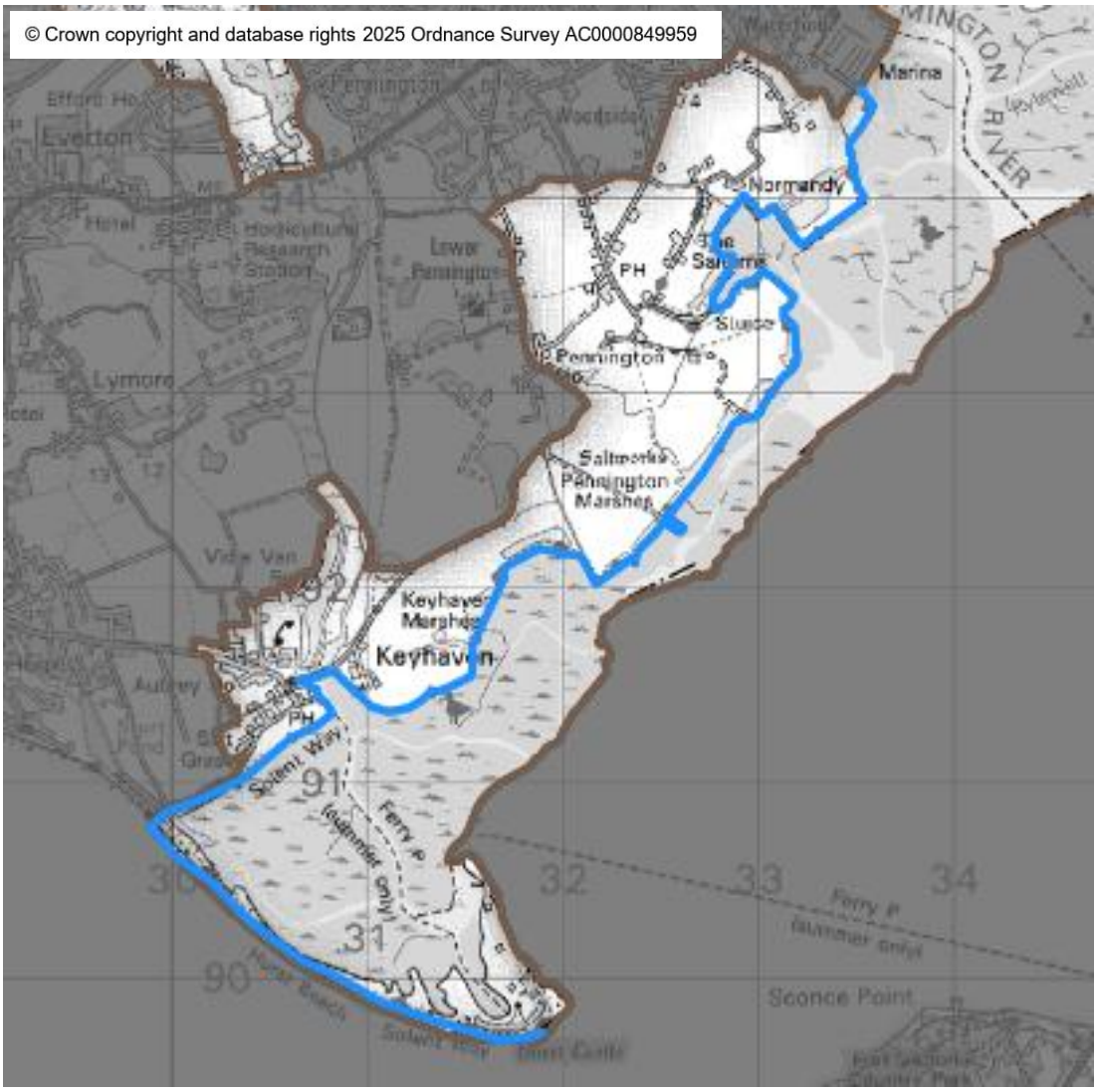
c) replacement dwellings will be permitted in accordance with the other policies in the Local Plan;

d) essential infrastructure will be supported – including the potential re-routing of the England Coast Path;

e) temporary uses such as car parks and camping uses may be permitted, subject to time-limited planning permissions; and

f) development proposals that deliver community benefits and/or create or enhance habitats will be supported.

Coastal Change Management Area



Pollution

6.63. Lying between the large urban areas of Southampton, the industrial areas along Southampton Water and the South East Dorset conurbation, the National Park is vulnerable to pollutants from industry, vehicles and many other sources which can harm human and other species' health, together with general noise and light pollution associated with urban areas.

6.64. The impacts on air quality arising from the increased traffic generated by development continue to be monitored to determine whether it would raise pollution levels that could affect the integrity of the internationally designated nature conservation sites in the New Forest. To date impacts have not been identified and monitoring work will continue under this Local Plan for the National Park area. If monitoring at any time shows that the change is likely to have a significant effect on the designated sites, the Authority will support other authorities in devising an appropriate strategic mitigation strategy.

Tranquillity in the New Forest

6.65. National planning policy recognises the importance of protecting areas of tranquillity. Tranquillity is identified as a special quality of the New Forest National Park, reflecting its relative peace and naturalness, extensive unfenced landscapes, and sense of space, remoteness and freedom. These characteristics provide a marked contrast to the increasingly urbanised and intensively managed landscapes of southern England and contribute significantly to the Park's role in supporting health, well-being, and enjoyment of the natural environment.

6.66. Tranquillity can be adversely affected by intrusive visual and auditory influences, particularly those arising from man-made features such as artificial lighting, transport infrastructure, noise generated from machine equipment, overhead power lines, and inappropriate development (either by virtue of its design, scale or location). Noise and other forms of disturbance may have significant harmful effects on amenity, wildlife behaviour, and the perception of remoteness that underpins the National Park's special character. Even small-scale development can result in disproportionate impacts in areas where existing background levels are low.

6.67. To safeguard this special quality for current and future generations, development proposals are required to demonstrate that they would not result in unacceptable impacts on tranquillity. To support this approach, the Authority has developed a map highlighting the most tranquil areas of the New Forest[46] based on levels of man-made noise and visual disturbance. Areas within the north and south-east of the Forest were identified as experiencing the highest levels of tranquillity.

6.68. The potential impacts of noise and light pollution will be appropriately managed in accordance with Policies SP22 and SP23. Visual intrusion and landscape character will be protected through the application of Policies DP2 and SP14. The Authority will also seek to secure International Dark Sky Reserve status through the International Dark Sky Association.

Policy SP22: Tranquillity

Development proposals must protect and, where possible, enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

Proposals for all forms of development should have regard to the latest version of the New Forest National Park Design Code, particularly in relation to windows, dormers, rooflights, and the design and placement of external lighting, to minimise light spill from both external and internal sources.

Development proposals will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that they would not result in unacceptable noise, visually intrusive structures or other disturbances that would adversely affect tranquillity.

[46] www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/landscape-policy-documents/

In assessing proposals, particular regard will be given to whether:

a) noise-sensitive receptors, including areas designated for nature conservation, and existing or approved residential development, would experience significant adverse effects;

b) the proposal is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, particularly where baseline ambient noise levels are low; and

c) the proposal would not encroach on areas identified as having high tranquillity value through tranquillity mapping[47] or other relevant evidence.

Development proposals that seek to remove visually intrusive man-made structures from the landscape will be supported.

Dark skies

6.69. The New Forest National Park contains some of the darkest night skies in England, which is integral to the Park's landscape character, biodiversity, and recreational enjoyment. Artificial lighting represents one of the principal threats to the dark skies of the National Park.

6.70. Excessive, poorly designed or unnecessary lighting can result in sky glow, glare, and light spill, leading to habitat fragmentation and adverse effects on bats, birds, nocturnal invertebrates, and other light-sensitive species. In addition, inappropriate lighting can harm visual amenity, the setting of heritage assets, and the wider experience of darkness.

6.71. Where external lighting is required, it should be energy-efficient and, where feasible, powered by on-site renewable energy sources. To ensure that lighting operates only when required, it should be controlled through curfews, sensors, timers, or adaptive technology and dimmed or switched off during periods of low activity.

6.72. While many minor forms of domestic lighting do not require planning permission, external lighting that does require consent – either in its own right or as part of a wider development – constitutes a material planning consideration.

Policy SP23: Dark skies

To protect the National Park's dark skies, development proposals must follow an avoidance-first approach to external lighting. External lighting will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated to be strictly necessary for an identified purpose, such as working, wayfinding, safety or security.

Development proposals must demonstrate that opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken through the avoidance of lighting where appropriate; and that, where external lighting or light spill from internal lighting cannot be

[47] New Forest National Park Tranquil Areas Mapping 2015: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/document/tranquillity-map-of-new-forest-national-park/

avoided, then adverse impacts are mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent through measures including down-lighting and avoiding bright-white lights.

Proposals involving external lighting will be permitted only where lighting does not cause harm to:

- the dark skies quality of the National Park;
- ecological networks and light-sensitive or nocturnal species;
- landscape character, heritage assets, or visual amenity; and
- neighbouring properties, open countryside, woodland edges, watercourses, or areas designated for nature conservation.

Proposals for major development, and for development within particularly sensitive locations, must be supported by a Lighting Impact Assessment.

7. Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Strategic Objectives to enhance the historic and built environment:

1. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.

4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.

To support Partnership Plan Themes: People, Place, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage
- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- Strong and distinctive local communities
- A healthy environment
- An historic commoning system
- Wonderful opportunities for quiet recitation, learning and discovery
- Tranquillity

7.1 The New Forest has a distinctive character which is made up not only of the numerous listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments, but also the many and varied locally important features. Many unlisted cob buildings, simple brick cottages and early bungalows give parts of the New Forest their distinctive character.

7.2 There are a variety of historic landscapes within the National Park that have been shaped by past human interaction with the land. Significant components of historic landscapes include field systems (including lynchets, ridge and furrow), historic woodland management, medieval settlements, traditional farmsteads and settlements, and networks of ancient routeways.

7.3 Archaeological sites and evidence in the New Forest range from finds that date from up to 500,000 years ago to observation posts from the Cold War period. Known sites and features are recorded on the publicly available Historic Environment Record, but it is likely many still await identification and recognition.

7.4 Small-scale changes to the landscape, buildings, settlements and sites take place almost constantly in responses to shifting values, fashions, availability of products and new technology. Although change is inevitable it is often at the expense of those features which give the New Forest its particular character. Over time this can cause a negative impact leading to suburbanisation and loss of character.

Heritage assets

7.5 The NPPF defines a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Designated heritage assets in the National Park include scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, listed buildings and conservation areas.

7.6 The New Forest also contains a wealth of locally important assets of architectural and/or historic interest that are not statutorily designated. These include sites on the Local List of Heritage Assets that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the National Park. There are at least 2,400 non-designated heritage assets that have been identified as locally important within the Park. The Authority uses criteria set out by Historic England to determine whether a building, structure, site, monument or other feature should be included on the Local Heritage List.

7.7 The National Park Authority has maintained a list of locally important assets for many years and received grant funding from Historic England to further develop this work. The majority of the Local Heritage List comprises assets of local interest in conservation areas; but additional assets of local interest have also been identified by local communities when developing Village Design Statements and through the development management process. The Authority works with parish and town councils and residents to identify additional assets of local interest outside conservation areas, for which it is committed to routinely bringing new nominations to the Planning Committee for consideration.

7.8 The historic environment of the National Park is particularly vulnerable to environmental change. The more frequent extreme weather conditions, resultant flooding, and temperature fluctuations are posing an increased risk to historic buildings and structures that have been standing for hundreds of years and archaeology previously buried safely underground. The historic landscapes and coastline of the Park are also at risk of significant change.

7.9 For historic buildings to continue to contribute to the cultural heritage of the National Park and be fit for purpose for the people who live in, care for, and experience them, they must evolve towards a greener future. When adapting historic buildings for climate change, a sensitive approach is needed to protect the significance, character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. It is recommended that a “whole building approach” is considered when adapting historic buildings, as advocated by Historic England.

7.10 This approach requires analysis and understanding of the construction, condition, significance, use and exposure to the environment of any heritage building or structure. A balance is then sought between energy savings, environmental impact, and a comfortable living or working environment.

Policy SP24: The historic and built environment

Proposals should protect, maintain or enhance nationally, regionally and locally important sites and features of the historic and built environment, especially those elements which contribute to the National Park's distinct identity including:

- local vernacular buildings;
- archaeological sites;
- designed and historic landscapes.

Where appropriate, proposals should help to secure a sustainable future for those heritage assets at risk.

Acknowledging the role of the historic environment in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the National Park Authority encourages:

- the reuse of historic buildings, and where appropriate, their sensitive adaption to improve their carbon and energy efficiency (avoiding and minimising harm to heritage significance); and
- the integrated management of the natural and historic environment, where practicable.

7.11 Where proposals for new development may have an impact on the significance of a heritage asset, applicants are required to produce a heritage statement setting out the significance of the asset. The more important the asset, the greater the weight given to its conservation, and any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification, as emphasised in the NPPF.

7.12 Applicants should also set out in their heritage statement any climate change mitigation or adaption measures that they will be undertaking as part of their proposed development, and the likely impact that these will have on the significance of any heritage assets present. These measures should aim to conserve and enhance the significance of all heritage assets, avoiding and minimising harm, and taking into account any impact on significance from development in the asset's setting.

Policy DP25: Heritage assets

The historic and cultural environment of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to its significance. In particular:

a) proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the significance or special interest of designated or non-designated heritage assets, i.e. they:

(i) do not harm the special interest, character or appearance of a conservation area, including local vernacular buildings, spaces, street patterns, views, vistas, uses and trees which contribute to that special interest, character or appearance, having regard to the

relevant conservation area character appraisal and management plan; and

(ii) do not harm the significance, or result in the loss of a:

- scheduled monument (or a non-designated asset of archaeological interest of demonstrably equivalent significance); or,
- listed building, including through inappropriate siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials, finishes (including colour and texture), design and forms; or
- registered park and garden, and particularly its layout, design, character, appearance and key views within, into and out; and

(iii) make a positive contribution to, or better reveal, or enhance the appreciation of, the significance or special interest of a heritage asset or its setting; and

(iv) help secure the long-term conservation of a heritage asset.

b) proposals will be resisted where they would harm the significance or special interest of a heritage asset, unless any harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, proportionate to the degree of harm and significance of the asset, including securing its optimum viable use.

c) all development proposals that affect, or have the potential to affect, the significance or special interest of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, either directly or by being within its setting, will need to be accompanied by a clearly evidenced heritage impact statement proportionate to the development and the significance or special interest of the asset, setting out the impact of the development on that significance or special interest and how any harm has been avoided or minimised through careful design and mitigation.

d) where proposals are likely to affect a site of known or potential archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment will also be required, including field evaluation where necessary.

7.13 National planning policy emphasises that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset, the applicant must demonstrate that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site into use.

Listed buildings and conservation areas

7.14 Listed buildings are buildings officially defined as being of special architectural or historic interest. There are 630 listed buildings in the National Park, which range from palaces and country houses to many smaller but more typical cottages and 'hovels' built of brick, timber frame or cob.

7.15 Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are 17 conservation areas wholly within the National Park, with a further three straddling the boundary with New Forest District Council. The boundaries of all these conservation areas are shown on the Policies Map.

7.16 In pursuance of its responsibilities under both National Park purposes and through the duty imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, the Authority is developing a framework for the management of conservation areas within the Park. This comprises:

- **Conservation area character appraisals**, one for each conservation area, which identifies the special historic and architectural qualities of an area which justify its designation;
- **Conservation Areas Management Plan**, covering all conservation areas (adopted October 2008); and
- **Conservation area specific management plans** covering individual conservation areas.

7.17 Development of listed buildings, and within conservation areas and their settings, will be carefully controlled to ensure that their significance and character are retained. The Conservation Area Character Appraisals are important sources to refer to in making planning applications and they will be used in evaluating the appropriateness of development proposals in those areas.

7.18 The National Heritage List for England records that there are seven historic parks and gardens within the National Park[48], whilst a much longer list of locally important sites is set out in the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Public Green Spaces[49].

7.19 Where planning applications involve Grade I or II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, or a registered battlefield, Historic England must be consulted. In addition, the Authority is required to consult the National Amenity Societies[50], alongside Historic England, when the proposal would include full or partial demolition of a listed building.

[48] Avon Tyrrell, Brockenhurst Park, Cadland House, Exbury House, Hale Park, Pylewell Park, Rhinefield House
[49] Hampshire Gardens Trust (2025)
[50] See Glossary for full list of societies

Archaeology

7.20 There are around 187 scheduled monuments in the National Park, and at least 4,000 known non-designated sites recorded on the publicly available Historic Environment Record (HER)[51], many of which are yet to be fully understood. Some archaeological assets may not be scheduled but are still nevertheless demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and therefore will be subject to the policies for designated heritage assets, in accordance with the NPPF.

7.21 Historic England maintains the Heritage at Risk register that identifies sites most in jeopardy of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. There are currently four scheduled monuments and one building within the National Park that are on the register. The Authority will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk through discussions with owners and willingness to consider positively development schemes that would ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using statutory powers.

7.22 The Authority aims to facilitate the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment of the National Park, through raising awareness, developing specialist building skills, encouraging sensitive management and promoting availability and access to these skills.

Local distinctiveness

7.23 The different villages and landscapes in the National Park all have distinctive characters, although they are also all recognisably part of the New Forest, linked through its history, economy and culture.

7.24 The first National Park purpose, together with national planning policy, recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing an area's local character. The level of development pressure within the National Park is evidenced by the volume of planning applications received by the Authority each year. Since becoming a local planning authority in 2006, the Authority has determined an average of just under 600 full planning applications per year[52], as well as the other routes to permission.

7.25 Whilst the vast majority of these applications entail minor development, increasing amounts of such small-scale household development can result in a creeping suburbanisation of the National Park, slowly eroding the Forest's distinctive character[53].

7.26 Many of the grass verges within the Forest are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and are of national importance for nature conservation.

[51] www.hants.gov.uk//historicenvironmentrecord
[52] Development management statistics, NFNPA (2025)
[53] Annual Monitoring Report, New Forest National Park Authority (2024)

They are therefore legally protected against damage. In addition, grass verges contribute to the appearance and rural character of the Park. Parking, driving or storing building materials on grass verges can cause serious damage and have a harmful impact on their landscape, ecological and grazing value. Much work has been undertaken on this issue within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area, and through the work undertaken by the Verderers of the New Forest and Forestry England as part of the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

7.27 To build a new drive or access over a SSSI verge, planning consent from the National Park Authority and approval from Natural England and the Verderers of the New Forest is required, as well as consent from Forestry England if it is located on Crown Land. In most cases, the Authority will consider the use of planning conditions restricting the storage of building materials and parking of contractor's vehicles on the protected grass verges.

Policy DP26: Local distinctiveness

Built development and changes of use which would individually or cumulatively erode the Park's local character or result in a gradual suburbanising effect within the National Park will not be permitted.

Design principles

7.28 Development, whether of a traditional or modern design, should be sympathetic and in keeping with its context and surroundings. New buildings should have a low (or zero) carbon footprint, and all new development should make a positive contribution to the National Park, particularly through its design, size, scale, materials and layout. High quality design is fundamental in creating a safe, inclusive and healthy environment where buildings and public spaces are attractive and user friendly, promote health, and enhance accessibility of jobs, key services, and facilities by active travel and public transport. These principles are enshrined in Building for a Healthy Life and the Healthy Streets Approach, and reflected in the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4, as summarised in the supporting text to Policy DP2.

7.29 A Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document for the National Park was adopted by the Authority in 2022, which sets out further details on the characteristics of the New Forest and suggests ways of maintaining local distinctiveness, and embedding the principles of good design into new development. The SPD included a Design Code for the Park, the key principles of which are set out within Annex 2 of this Local Plan. The following contextual considerations can be used as a checklist for applicants when preparing designs for new development. All these elements are important for the success of planning applications within the National Park:

- does the design preserve any key views and vistas, and respect the setting of landmarks?

- does the design sit comfortably within the existing landscape, responding to the topography, and patterns and means of site enclosure? Does it blend into the wider landscape?
- do the siting, orientation, form, and layout respond to patterns of light and shade, openness, and enclosure in the surrounding landscape?
- does the material palette reflect the colours and textures of the wider landscape?
- are native species used in the associated landscaping scheme?
- does the new development reflect the existing settlement pattern and grain of development?
- are existing boundaries, hedgerows, walls etc. being conserved and enhanced?
- do existing routes and spaces between buildings set a precedent for the setting, form, and layout of the design?
- does the proposed function correspond to the needs and character of the existing settlement or area?
- is the scale of the new development proportionate to the surrounding buildings?
- has the form of the design been influenced by traditional rural building typologies?
- does the design take precedents from the local vernacular material palette or architectural detailing?
- does the design reflect the architectural variety found in the buildings of the New Forest?
- have opportunities been taken to incorporate existing natural features or historic buildings into the design?
- are the parking provision, bin storage, and utilities paraphernalia discrete?
- does the design and layout maximise the opportunity to reduce crime and disorder?
- do the street pattern and streetscape aid navigability?

Policy DP27: Design principles

All new development will be required to achieve the highest standards for new design: including location, layout, size, scale, details and materials of new development within the National Park, with particular regard to:

a) enhancing the built and historic environment of the New Forest;

b) creating a safe, inclusive, and healthy environment where people want to live, work and visit;

c) ensuring new development is accessible where appropriate;

d) ensuring all new development incorporates sound sustainable design and construction principles, and good environmental practices;

e) ensuring development is contextually appropriate and does not harm key visual features, landscape setting or other valued components of the landscape, and enhances these where appropriate; and

f) reflects the principles of Building for a Healthy Life and Healthy Streets Approach.

7.30 National planning policy emphasises that new development should create safe communities where crime and disorder, or the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life. Employing the principles of 'Secured by Design', which is a national policing initiative focusing on 'designing out crime' in the design and layout of new residential and commercial development, can help address these concerns. Principles, which include places where publicly accessible spaces are overlooked and places that promote a sense of ownership and respect, should be taken into account in new development proposals.

7.31 In addition, several communities within the National Park have produced Village or Parish Design Statements which set out a statement of the individual character of a particular town or village. These are currently adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents by the Authority and are used in assessing relevant planning applications. The Authority will continue to support parishes that wish to undertake a Village Design Statement.

Adopted Village Design Statements (as at 2026):

- Copythorne Parish Design Statement (2025)
- Revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement (2025)
- Revised Hyde Village Design Statement (2022)
- Hordle Village Design Statement (2015)
- Boldre Parish Design Statement (2013)
- Sway Village Design Statement (2013)
- Landford Village Design Statement (2011)
- Wellow Village Design Statement (2011)

Residential character of the Defined Villages

Policy DP28: Residential character of the Defined Villages

To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the built heritage of the Defined Villages, development proposals within the villages must be informed by consideration of the distinct character of the local area.

Development densities should reflect the strong built heritage of the villages, their locally distinctive character and location within a nationally protected landscape.

7.32 The NPPF highlights the great importance that the government attaches to the built environment and the need to plan positively for the attainment of high-quality development. National policy confirms that local plans should aim to

ensure that development responds to local character and seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. This is particularly pertinent within the villages of the National Park. The Larger Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, and Smaller Defined Villages of Cadnam - Bartley, Redlynch and Landford - Nomansland, are small in size (all less than 3,500 residents) and are an important part of the New Forest landscape.

7.33 The built character of these villages is varied. Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway have more clearly defined village cores, which are broadly characterised by denser, close-knit development, whilst the outer residential areas are generally more spacious in character. In contrast, the villages of Ashurst, Cadnam - Bartley, Redlynch and Landford - Nomansland are characterised as more dispersed villages, with community facilities and residential development set in a more linear pattern. All these villages are distinguished by mature trees and gardens, and important open spaces and gaps, which make a valuable contribution to the quality and character of the settlements.

7.34 It is essential that general pressure for development within the National Park does not lead to inappropriate development in the Defined Villages. Therefore, it is important that proposals for infilling and redevelopment within the defined settlement boundaries respond to local character and reflect local development densities where appropriate. This could include relatively high densities within the centre of the villages, with lower density outside their cores. Sources of relevant information for some of these Defined Villages include Village Design Statements, Historic Settlement Surveys and Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

Ashurst, meaning “Ash wooded hill”, grew following the development of the Southampton – Dorchester railway line in the nineteenth century.

There is a mix of housing sizes and architectural styles which reflect the village’s growth over time.

The name **Bartley** is derived from the Old English “beorc(a) leah” meaning “birch wood”, and the settlement was first referenced in 1150.

Cadnam has been an important crossroads since the medieval period, connecting major towns like Southampton, Bournemouth and Poole. The village grew as a ribbon development along these major routes, with a varied mix of historic and modern architectural styles.

Brockenhurst developed as a popular holiday and residential settlement with the arrival of the railway in the nineteenth century. The western part of the village expanded between the 1970s and 1990s.

There is a variety of architecture from medieval times onward, with Victorian and Edwardian villas a defining feature of the village.

As the 'capital of the New Forest' **Lyndhurst** features significant historic buildings, with the Lyndhurst Conservation Area alone containing twenty listed buildings or structures.

The historic core is an eclectic mix of architecture of mainly commercial buildings, with 19th and 20th century residential development on the outskirts of the village.

The history of **Landford and Nomansland** in Wiltshire spans from prehistoric times through its mention in the Domesday Book and its growth as a part of a royal forest. In the 20th century linear development focused along Lyndhurst Road and New Road.

The style and design of development are largely shaped by the villages' rural and wooded character, with a focus on traditional building styles and materials.

The dispersed settlement pattern of **Redlynch** and surrounding communities emerged from historical smallholdings, cottage industries, and later 19th-century growth.

The architecture reflects the varied history of the area, featuring a mix of ages and styles.

The Parish of **Sway** was formed in 1849 when over 2,000 acres were taken from the extensive adjoining parish of Boldre. The arrival of the railway line in the nineteenth century led to the village expanding in the following decades.

8. Vibrant Communities

Strategic Objectives to support Vibrant Communities:

4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.

5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs, including the delivery of affordable housing for local people, to maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.

7. Encourage land management that both promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

To support Partnership Plan Themes: Climate, People, Place, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- Strong and distinctive local communities
- A healthy environment
- Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery
- Tranquillity
- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- An extraordinary diversity of plants and animals
- A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage

8.1. National planning policy recognises the need for small-scale, sustainably located development within national parks to support the socio-economic well-being of communities living within them. This includes the provision of local affordable housing and recognising the bespoke housing requirements of local communities in relation to commoning and agricultural land holdings. This chapter therefore takes forward the strategic objectives to promote affordable housing to meet local needs and to strengthen the well-being and sustainability of rural communities.

Housing

8.2. The provision of housing to meet the local needs of people living within the National Park is a key part of supporting the communities of the New Forest. The Local Plan establishes the level of new housing to be delivered in the Park between 2024 and 2043 in a way that is consistent with the two statutory National Park purposes and related duty.

National policy context

8.3. The Government's National Parks Vision and Circular (2010) – cross-referenced within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – recognises that national parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing. The expectation is that new housing in national parks will be focused on meeting local affordable housing needs, rather than catering for external demands. This is consistent with the Authority's statutory duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of communities within the National Park, set out in Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995. National park authorities are expected to work with local housing authorities and other agencies to ensure that the needs of local communities in the national parks are met, and that affordable housing remains so in the longer term. Previous strategic and local plans for the New Forest have acknowledged the sensitivity of the New Forest and its landscape and the area has been protected from large-scale new development.

8.4. The NPPF confirms that local plans should meet 'objectively assessed needs' identified for an area, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would outweigh the benefits. The objectively assessed housing need figure for an area is the starting point for the plan-making process and does not set the final housing requirement. Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development in National Parks should be restricted. These include policies relating to National Parks, sites protected under the European Birds and Habitats Directive, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and designated heritage assets. The New Forest National Park is covered by a wide range of national and international landscape and ecological designations and therefore national planning guidance on meeting housing needs must be considered alongside the protection afforded to the New Forest's landscape and habitats in primary legislation. Within this context, and when considered against the NPPF, meeting the area's full housing need is not achievable within the National Park without having a detrimental impact on the reasons for its designation and the statutory National Park purposes. This Local Plan therefore takes a capacity-based approach and make provision for a level of new housing that will stabilise the population of the Park, supporting local services.

8.5. The NPPF also states that planning authorities should plan for a mixture of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups. One of the roles of a Local Plan is to identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing required.

New Forest Housing Needs Assessment

8.6. In line with Government policy, the process for determining the amount of housing to be delivered in the National Park starts with the identification of the 'objectively assessed need'. This should be informed by a Housing Needs Assessment which, in the case of the New Forest, was jointly commissioned by the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council during 2024. This Assessment concluded that the National Park falls within three separate housing market areas centred on the Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury urban areas, but that there is no specific 'New Forest Housing Market Area'.

8.7. This assessment concluded that over the period 2024-2043, the objectively assessed housing need in the New Forest National Park is circa 260 dwellings per annum, or 4,940 new dwellings over the Plan period. This figure is based on anticipated changes in households in the National Park area, and the existing housing stock. The Authority considers this evidence to be robust and the best available information on the 'policy off'[54] housing needs arising within the Park. It should be noted that the New Forest National Park boundary does not align with local authority boundaries (it includes land within the current local authority boundaries of New Forest District, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Test Valley Borough) and therefore the National Park Authority does not receive a specific housing need figure generated by the Government's standardised methodology.

8.8. The NPPF and NPPG are clear that the assessment of need should not take account of development constraints, such as those related to the environment or land availability. These factors will however clearly affect the potential supply of land for housing and are relevant in translating the assessments of need into policy. The objectively assessed housing need figure for the National Park therefore represents an objective, 'policy off' analysis and takes no account of land supply or development constraints within the New Forest, including its National Park status and the significant areas subject to national and international nature conservation designations.

8.9. Policy SP29 sets out the planned level of new housing (affordable housing and market housing) to be provided within the New Forest National Park over the Plan period. This figure of circa 950 additional dwellings in the National Park between 2024 and 2043 is considered deliverable within the context of a nationally protected landscape. This level of development will stabilise the population of the National Park and help to support local service provision.

8.10. In arriving at this figure, the Authority has been mindful of the evidence from the most recent New Forest Housing Needs Assessment and evidence on constraints in terms of the wealth of habitat designations that cover the New Forest and its coastline. This has also included an assessment of previous levels of development and an assessment of potential development sites through the 'Call for Sites' and 'Call for Brownfield Sites' processes. In addition, an assessment of the role and function of the larger villages has been undertaken with regard to the existing settlement hierarchy, in line with the need to explore reasonable options and alternatives for meeting the identified need as required by planning legislation. This has considered the presence of key services within villages, their population, access to public transport and employment opportunities, to conclude that there are other villages that could accommodate some proportionate new development as per the revised spatial strategy.

8.11. Importantly, the dwelling provision set out below reflects national planning policy in the NPPF and NPPG which seeks to protect the landscape and natural beauty

[54] Assessments of housing need are required by national policy to be 'policy off', meaning that consideration is not given to the constraints and designations that cover an area in assessing needs. These considerations are, however, important in preparing a Local Plan.

of national parks. Of particularly relevance is that given the wide range of environmental designations covering over half of the New Forest National Park, to meet the full identified need for housing would clearly conflict with the statutory National Park purposes and such a scale of development which would impact on the integrity of such sites does not constitute sustainable development.

Policy SP29: New residential development in the National Park

An additional circa 950 dwellings will be delivered within the New Forest National Park between 2024 and 2043. To meet this, new residential development will be permitted within the National Park to maintain the vitality of local communities and support local services where the proposal involves:

a) the development of sites allocated for housing in this Local Plan (285 dwellings);

b) the implementation of extant planning permissions (which stood at 222 net new dwellings at 31 March 2026);

c) the development of land previously unallocated or unidentified (windfall development) within the Defined Villages of the National Park (Policy SP3);

d) development that comes forward on appropriate rural exception sites (Policy SP43); and

e) housing for New Forest Commoners (Policy DP44); Estate and tied agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings (Policies DP45 and DP46).

Proposals for residential development must take account of the housing needs of the local area to ensure that a range of house types and tenures are provided. Net new open market housing delivered within the National Park will be restricted to 'principal residency' in perpetuity. Affordable housing delivered within the National Park will have local connection criteria applied.

Subject to design considerations, new dwellings should be built to accessible and adaptable standards to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations M4(2), unless evidence indicates this is not feasible. In addition, and where evidenced by local need, a proportion of affordable dwellings are to be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3).

8.12. Policy SP29 indicates that about 950 dwellings will be delivered up to 2043. This will be made up of the following components:

Source	Number of dwellings
Housing completions in the Plan period to date (April 2024 to March 2026)	76
Extant permissions as at 31 March 2026	222
Site allocations in the Local Plan yet to be permissioned[55]	285
Windfalls (including rural exception sites, Commoners; dwellings, other tied dwellings, redevelopment within the Defined Villages, dwellings delivered through permitted development rights)	20 dwellings per annum = 380 over the Plan period

8.13. All new housing will be targeted at either principal residency (for open market dwellings) or subject to local connection criteria (for affordable dwellings). This is because the New Forest National Park already has high levels of underoccupied stock and increasing second home ownership. The New Forest Housing Needs Assessment (2025) highlights that the growth in the number of dwellings in the New Forest over the last decade has not been matched by an equivalent increase in the number of households forming, with many dwellings instead being used as second homes. The approach adopted by the New Forest National Park Authority is consistent with that taken in several other national park local plans (including Exmoor, Lake District, North York Moors, Northumberland and the Yorkshire Dales) and has been made in response to concerns raised by local communities.

8.14. Introducing a Local Plan requirement that all net new open market housing must be permanently occupied is intended to optimise the use of available sites within the protected landscape of the National Park, support the sustainability of local communities and stabilise the population of the Park. The principal residency restriction will be secured through a planning condition, and compliance will be monitored by the Authority. Occupiers will be required to keep proof that they are satisfying the principal residence requirements. The policy applies to net new dwellings and is not retrospective.

Addressing the needs of an ageing population

8.15. The New Forest Housing Needs Assessment (2025) confirms that the New Forest has an older age structure than seen regionally or nationally, but lower levels of disability compared with the national average. Over the Plan period to 2043 it is projected there will be a 23% increase in the population over 65 (the comparable figure for New Forest District outside the Park is 30% over the same period) and a decline in the population under 65 in the National Park area.

[55] Note that depending on the final form of development, some C2 units may not be equivalent to one additional C3 dwelling

8.16. Within the context of the National Park designation, and other housing policies in this plan, it is important that opportunities should be taken to address the local need for specialist housing for older people rather than simply catering for external demand and continuing in-migration into the Park. The provision of new specialist accommodation for older people will therefore be supported within the Defined Villages, as shown on the Policies Map, where residents will have better access to the ancillary services they require. Outside these villages, new developments would generate additional activities and traffic and therefore development will be limited to extensions to existing specialist accommodation where they can be achieved in a satisfactory manner within the existing site.

8.17. Given the limited availability of sites; clear national guidance that development in national parks should not be catering for external demand; and the Authority's duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of communities within the National Park; a planning obligation will be placed on new housing for older people to ensure it meets the needs of the local communities within the Park. This will apply to the development of Use Class C2 of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) where affordable housing would not usually be sought. The local occupancy tie will ensure that C2 development addresses the locally arising needs of the Park's older residents and other vulnerable members of the community, rather than contributing to a potential increase in older households moving to the area. Furthermore, the starting point in the statutory development plan for the New Forest National Park is that age-restricted housing falling within Use Class C3 (Specialist Accommodation) will be expected to provide on-site affordable housing (with a local connection tie) to ensure that a proportion of the development is directed towards meeting local housing needs. Where it is not feasible to provide this on-site (e.g., service costs link to communal facilities, lack of available Registered Provider), a commuted contribution for affordable housing will be considered.

8.18. When assessing applications for C2 or C3 care or extra care facilities, the Authority will consider whether development is likely to have a significant effect on nationally or internationally protected nature conservation sites. Where residents are genuinely immobile or unlikely to visit the nature conservation sites, the mitigation measures are likely to focus on urban edge effects. Where residents occupy self-contained accommodation and can live reasonably independently, a wider range of impacts must be assessed, including potential recreational impacts.

Policy SP30: Specialist housing for older people (Use Class C2)

Proposals which address an identified local need or requirement for specialist housing for older people will be permitted in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

Proposals for specialist housing for older people should demonstrate how they meet the principles of the HAPPI[56] guidance, ensuring high-quality, adaptable,

[56] Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI), Housing Learning and Improvement Network, https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/

and inclusive design. This includes features such as generous internal space standards, natural light, accessibility, and integration with outdoor spaces to promote independence, social interaction, and well-being, while responding sensitively to the National Park's character.

On sites outside of the Defined Villages, extensions to existing specialist housing for older people will be permitted providing this can be achieved in a satisfactory manner within the existing site, and without having a harmful impact on the locality.

A planning obligation will be secured to ensure that the occupancy of new specialist housing for older people is confined in perpetuity to a local person (and their dependents) who has a minimum period of 5 years permanent residence within parishes in the National Park.

Size of net new dwellings

8.19. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends; and identify the size of housing that is required, reflecting local need. The housing stock in the New Forest National Park should provide a range of accommodation types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs of local communities. The Local Plan necessarily focuses on new development, which will make up a small proportion of the Park's housing stock by 2043. Policy SP31 aims to ensure that, in terms of size, type and tenure, new housing permitted within the National Park will result in a better mix of dwellings across the Park with a focus on meeting the identified local needs in accordance with the Authority's socio-economic duty set out in Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995. This broad policy approach has been in place in the New Forest National Park since 2019 and has helped to ensure that net new dwellings are tailored towards identified local housing needs.

8.20. The existing dwelling stock in the New Forest National Park stands at around 15,000 dwellings and is heavily skewed towards larger properties, with 75% of homes having 3 or more bedrooms. The New Forest Housing Needs Assessment informing this Local Plan identifies a continuing need for smaller homes within the National Park, with virtually the whole of the identified local housing need being in the 1- to 3-bedroom dwelling categories.

8.21. In response to the clear evidence on local needs relating to smaller dwelling sizes, Policy SP31 sets out a maximum floor area for the size of new dwellings to ensure that the new housing delivered addresses the identified local housing needs as much as possible. This approach was first introduced in 2019 and reflects that of several other English national park authorities in response to the finite land resource for new development, coupled with the need to target new development towards meeting the identified local housing needs, rather than catering for external demands. The policy enables larger affordable dwellings where evidenced and supported by the statutory housing authority.

8.22. This approach is also supported by the data set out in the Government's Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015), which confirms

that 100 square metres enables provision of a family-sized 3-bed dwelling or a modest 4-bed (5 person) dwelling. The policy includes references to the nationally described space standard, to ensure smaller dwellings delivered under Policy SP31 provide appropriate space for future occupiers. The policy applies to all net new dwellings delivered within the National Park, including on site allocations, exception sites and windfall dwellings delivered within and outside the four Larger Defined Villages and three Smaller Defined Villages.

Policy SP31: The size of new dwellings

To ensure the dwelling stock of the New Forest as a whole is balanced and that development meets the identified local housing need for smaller dwellings, net new dwellings permitted in the National Park will have a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres. Dwellings will be required to meet the Government's 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard'.

Where there is robust evidence of a local need for larger affordable dwellings and the support of the relevant statutory housing authority, consideration will be given to larger dwellings. This only applies to affordable dwellings delivered on site allocations, rural exception sites or windfall sites, and does not include unrestricted open market dwellings, where the 100 square metre limit applies.

Where permission is granted for new dwellings of up to 100 square metres, a condition will be attached removing permitted development rights in respect of extensions to ensure the aims of the policy are achieved.

This policy applies to applications resulting in net new dwellings including, Commoners' dwellings, Estate Workers' dwellings, agricultural/forestry workers' dwellings and conversions of existing buildings.

Housing site allocations

8.23. In response to the requirements of national policy, in updating the local planning policies for the National Park, the Authority undertook a review of the settlement hierarchy and identified potential housing site allocations. The housing site allocation policies set out an indicative number of dwellings, and the final number will be determined through the planning application process.

8.24. To inform this, the Authority undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise and maintains a 'Brownfield Sites Register' which assess a wide range of potential development sites for housing, employment and Gypsy and Traveller use. All the sites submitted, as well as those identified through other sources, were assessed against a range of relevant criteria, including an assessment of the services and facilities within settlements across the Park. This was undertaken within the context of considering development within a landscape that has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, due to its National Park status. In addition, the New Forest includes a wealth of internationally protected habitats, and the potential impacts of the housing allocations have been considered through a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

8.25. The following section sets out the housing site allocations within the National Park. The distribution of these sites is in accordance with the spatial strategy for the Park which seeks to direct new development towards the most sustainable locations (the seven 'Defined Villages') in accordance with the Government's emphasis on sustainable development. The site allocations will deliver affordable housing for local communities within the National Park in line with the Authority's socio-economic duty under Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995, with the local connection on affordable dwellings secured through accompanying legal agreements ensuring development within the National Park meets local needs. The open market dwellings delivered on the site allocations will be subject to the 'principal residency' condition to ensure they are not used as second homes. In accordance with Policy SP57, none of the greenfield sites identified for housing development have been used for Commoners' back-up grazing land.

Ashurst

8.26. The parish of Ashurst & Colbury is home to around 2,100 residents. The village has a range of services within the defined shopping frontage, local schools and transport links (including a mainline rail station). The settlement grew in the 20th century, and the revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement (2025) provides further information on the history of the parish and settlement. The assessment of the Defined Village boundary of Ashurst concluded that development to the south of the A35 raises significant landscape concerns, and land to the north of the main railway line is located within an area at risk from flooding. The south-west part of the village is adjacent to the internationally protected habitats of the New Forest.

8.27. The north-east of the village is less constrained by flood risk, and the range of national and international habitat designations that cover the Open Forest to the west of Ashurst. The Parish Council produced a Village Design Statement that was first adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2013 and then updated in 2025. The work on the Village Design Statement has highlighted the value that residents of Ashurst place on the greenfield land around the edge of the village. The Village Design Statement expresses the desire to prevent the coalescence of the village with West Totton.

8.28. Land off Whartons Lane is well screened by mature trees which are protected through Tree Preservation Orders, and therefore the development of this site would not have a wider landscape impact on the National Park. The 2.5-hectare site is well located for the facilities at Ashurst and would not reduce the gap between the village and the National Park boundary to the east. There is an existing pedestrian pavement along the Whartons Lane frontage of the site that should be retained, and the site is also well related to the cycle route running along Lyndhurst Road, linking the site with services in Ashurst and Lyndhurst. The site was allocated for a residentially-led development of around 60 dwellings in the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 and full planning permission was subsequently granted in January 2024. The policy is retained in this Plan on the basis that development is not yet completed.

Policy SP32: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst

Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst is allocated for the development of around 60 residential dwellings. Detailed proposals for the site that meet the following site-specific requirements will be permitted:

a) the provision of on-site affordable housing for local people in housing need in accordance with the target of 50% affordable housing;

b) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres;

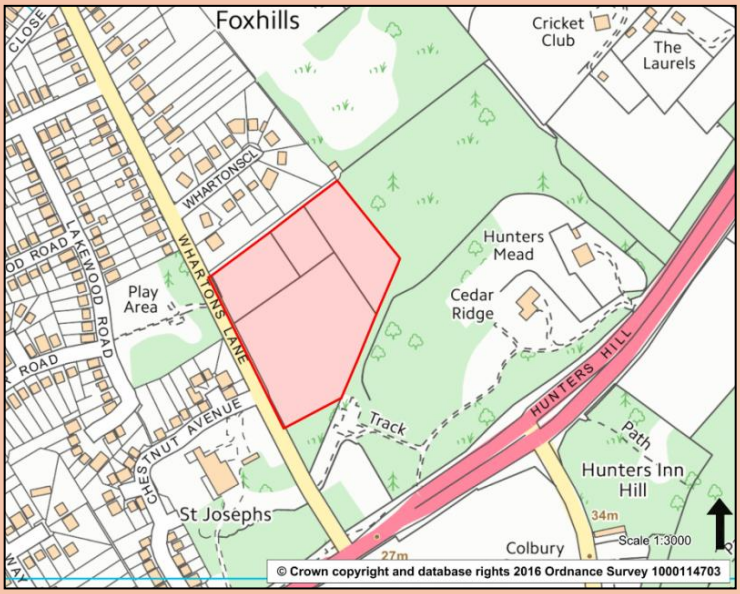
c) the site must be developed in a comprehensive manner;

d) measures must be put in place to protect the trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders that border the site;

e) contributions will be required to enhance the adjacent Whartons Lane Recreation Ground located opposite the site;

f) development proposals must provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by the service provider; and

g) a site-specific flood risk assessment will be required and measures put in place to address any groundwater or surface water flooding issues identified.



Ashurst Hospital

8.29. The Ashurst Hospital site comprises previously developed land with access to a range of local services, including a train station and local shops. The site immediately adjoins the existing Defined Village boundary of Ashurst and is located within Flood Zone 1 for fluvial flooding.

8.30. Large parts of the site have been declared surplus to the operational healthcare requirements of the NHS and are vacant. The more modern Snowden Building at the west of the site currently contains the Birthing Centre and is to be retained.

8.31. The New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 allocated the site for a mix of residential (C2 care home use or extra care) and retained healthcare provision. It is considered that the surplus part of this previously developed site can deliver around 30 units – although the exact number will depend on the final form of residential development, which will in turn be guided by the need to avoid impacts on the adjacent protected habitats.

8.32. The site allocation policy highlights the natural and built environment constraints and opportunities on the Ashurst Hospital site. The site lies adjacent to the New Forest SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Local Plan identifies the potential for a range of possible effects from development on these protected sites, including recreational pressure, urban edge effects such as predation by cats, and the loss or damage to off-site supporting habitats.

8.33. Policy SP33 therefore requires development to be confined to the previously developed land to the north of the site, and the planted boundary adjacent to the international nature conservation designations to be strengthened. Mitigation measures for potential urban edge effects could include the use of legal covenants (e.g., preventing cat or dog ownership), and arrangements for grounds maintenance. The requirement to ensure that no adverse impact on the adjacent national and internationally protected habitats occurs, will also influence the form of the C2 care home or extra care residential development on site. The residential element of the allocation responds to the evidence on demography in the National Park area and positively allocates the site for Use Class C2 care home or extra care use. The site allocation is retained in this Local Plan on the basis that, although full planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of parts of the site, work has not commenced.

8.34. Elements of the existing built development on the site date back to the 1830s. The former historic workhouse building is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its 19th Century origins. The Victorian chapel on the site was constructed sometime between 1869 and 1896, and the exterior remains in good condition. The former workhouse building and Victorian chapel have heritage significance and Policy SP33 confirms that the chapel will be retained as part of the redevelopment of the site.

Policy SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital

Land at Ashurst Hospital is allocated for a mixed-use development comprising:

- retained (and potentially extended) healthcare provision in the western part of the site (focused on the Snowden Building) – illustrated in blue on the map below; and

- around 30 residential units (Use Class C2 care home or extra care use) on the remaining previously developed part of the site (i.e., on the footprint of the existing buildings and car park).

Detailed proposals that meet the following site-specific requirements will be permitted:

a) the site must be redeveloped in a comprehensive manner, and detailed proposals for residential development will need to ensure the retained healthcare uses on the site can operate efficiently;

b) built development will be confined to the previously developed land to ensure the existing green buffer remains to the south of the site and the New Forest's protected habitats;

c) a detailed heritage assessment and structural survey will be required to describe the significance of heritage assets on-site, and the impact of the proposed development on that significance. The Victorian chapel will be retained as part of the redevelopment. Proposals are encouraged to retain the former workhouse buildings; any loss should be justified in accordance with Policy DP25;

d) redevelopment proposals must retain the protected trees on the site;

e) any scheme coming forward for the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigation and/or contributions to address any transport issues;

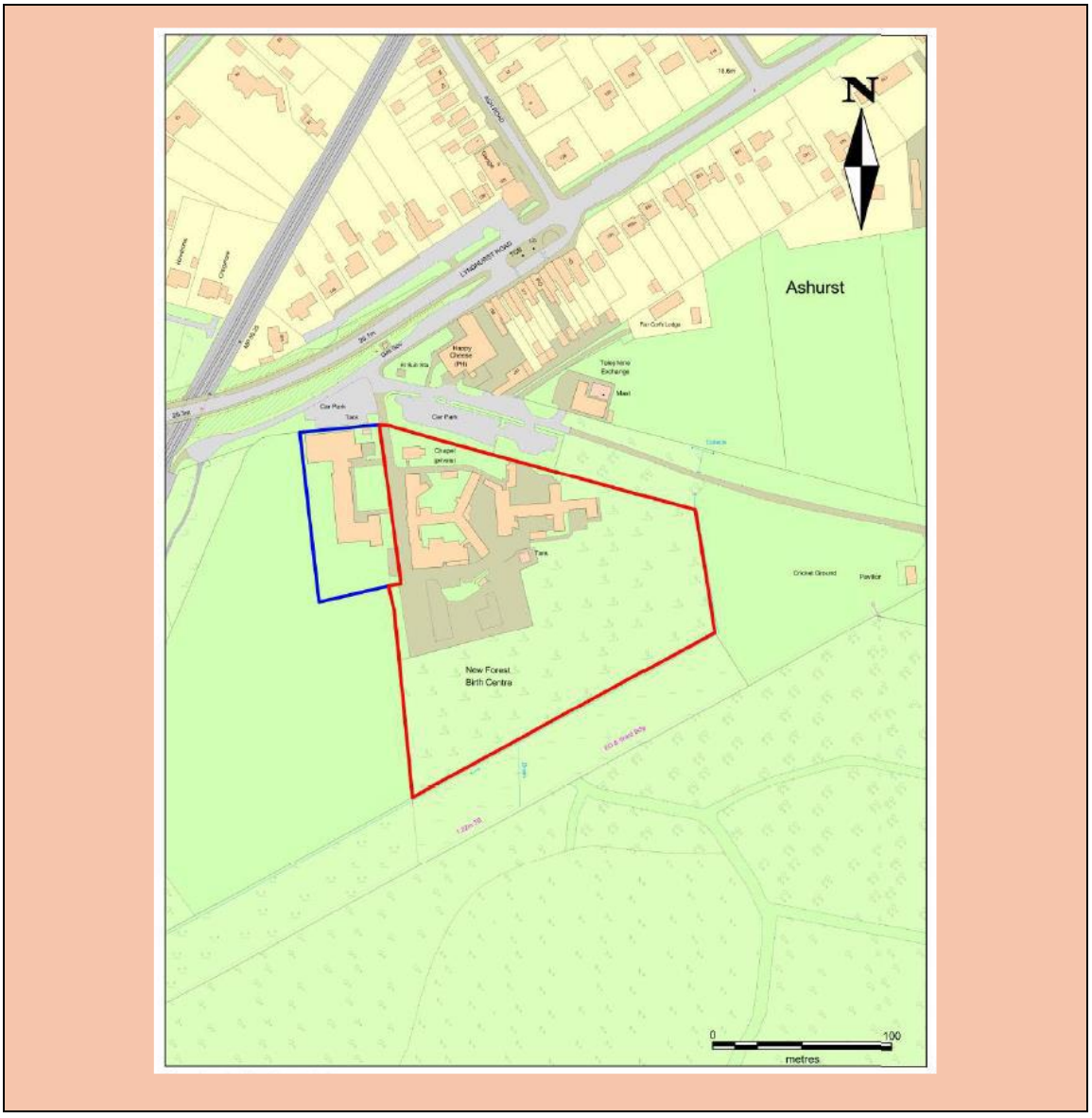
f) proposals for extra care use (that is not C2 Use) must provide on-site extra care affordable housing for local people in housing need as close to the Authority's target of 50% affordable housing as is viable. Viability will be demonstrated through an open book approach;

g) proposals for C2 care home use must be accompanied by a legal agreement requiring the occupancy to be limited to those with a local connection;

h) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal floor area of 100 square metres;

i) development proposals must incorporate measures to mitigate potential significant urban edge impacts on adjacent protected habitats. The existing southern boundary between the site and the adjacent protected habitats should be retained and strengthened with the planting of native species and the watercourse restored and enhanced. Proposals should seek to enhance both its role in buffering the designated sites and supporting species of principal importance for biodiversity. A detailed application for the site will be subject to a full appropriate assessment; and

j) development proposals must provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by the service provider.



Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst

8.35. Further assessment of the Defined Village boundary of Ashurst and natural and built environment designations, indicates that land to the north-east of the village is less constrained and could accommodate proportionate new development to meet local needs arising within the National Park. In accordance with Ashurst being one of the larger villages within the Park, together with its level of services and facilities and lack of environmental constraints to the north-east, this Local Plan identifies further land for allocation around Knellers Lane. This will include improvements to the local road network and associated pedestrian/cycle links to ensure safe access to local facilities, including the schools and sports facilities in this locality. The development will be required to maintain a green gap between the village and the National Park boundary at the A326, in recognition of the importance that the local community give to maintaining Ashurst's identity as a village within the New Forest National Park.

8.36. The site is in single ownership and can deliver wider community benefits (e.g., open space provision and facilities to alleviate some of the parking issues experienced at Foxhills Schools) alongside new residential development. Built development will be focused on the south-west of Knellers Lane given the importance attached by the local community to ensuring Ashurst maintains a distinct identity as a New Forest village, separate from the larger urban areas to the east outside the National Park boundary. The site is located above a Secondary A aquifer. Policy SP7 refers to the protection of groundwater resources, and the Environment Agency has advised that a detailed application for the site at Knellers Lane will need to ensure there is adequate assessment and prevention of risks to groundwater. Southern Water have confirmed that the existing local sewerage and water infrastructure to the site currently has capacity to accommodate the proposed number of dwellings set out in Policy SP34. This is subject to the requirement for a further capacity assessment when the site comes forward as a planning application.

Policy SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst

Land to the south-west of Knellers Lane, Ashurst is allocated for around 70 dwellings, including a target of 50% affordable housing.

Detailed comprehensive proposals for the development of the site that meet the following site-specific requirements will be supported:

a) provision of a landscaped buffer adjacent to Knellers Lane, to create a new village edge and to define the extent of the built-up area to avoid coalescence with urban areas adjacent to the National Park boundary;

b) traffic assessment to include enhancements to Knellers Lane to ensure safe access, for both vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists, to the site and the links via the A326 underpass at Foxhills to services to the east;

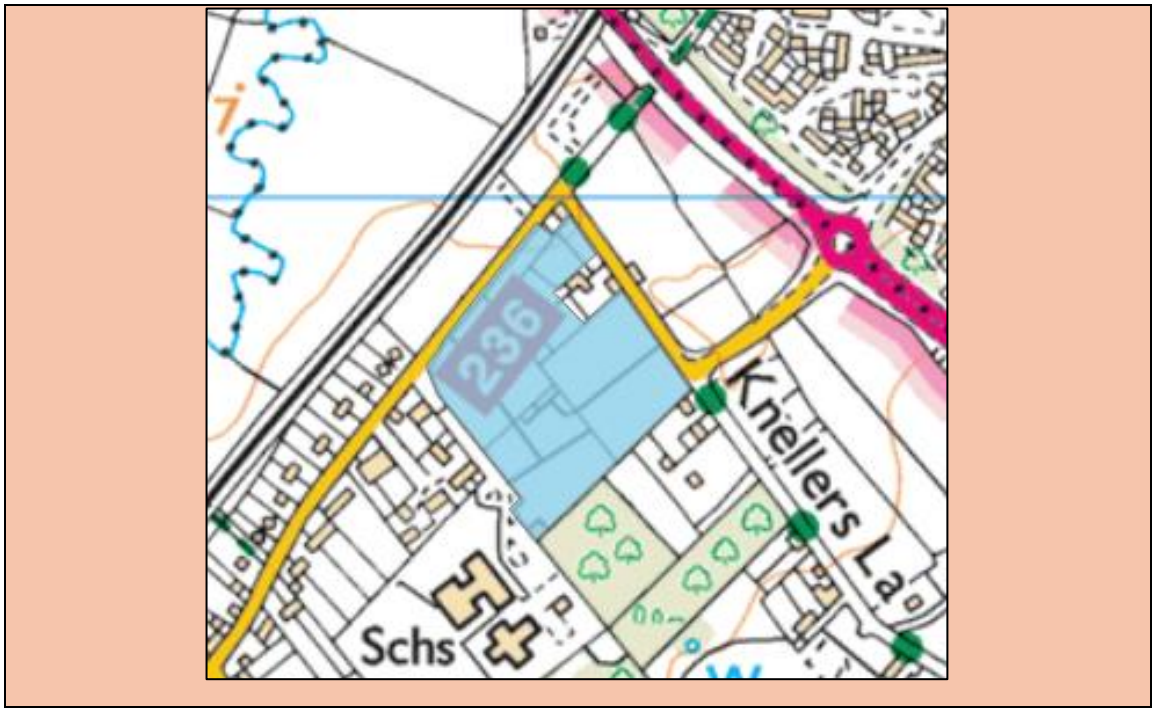
c) the submission and approval of a drainage strategy for the whole site;

d) layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the Ashurst and Colbury Village Design Statement (January 2025);

e) retention and enhancement of existing protected hedgerows and tree belts to be integral to the layout of the site to ensure the rural character of the site on the edge of the village is retained;

f) the development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and

g) the retention of the existing sporting facilities in the area centred on Langley Manor Cricket Ground.



Brockenhurst

8.37. Despite its size, Brockenhurst is also situated within an area of internationally important nature conservation designations. Parts of the settlement are also affected by fluvial flood risk. Consequently, there are no site allocations in Brockenhurst within the Local Plan, although windfall development continues to be delivered within the Defined Village boundary.

8.38. Therefore, through the Local Plan the focus will be on supporting appropriate redevelopment opportunities within the Defined Village boundary as they arise, alongside rural exception sites that may come forward adjacent to the settlement boundary.

Lyndhurst

8.39. The village of Lyndhurst (population 3,200 people) has the widest range of services and facilities of the settlements within the New Forest National Park. The village has a strong built heritage focused on the High Street but is also affected by traffic congestion. It is also one of the largest villages and is often referred to as the 'Capital of the New Forest'.

8.40. The Defined Village boundary of Lyndhurst was established in the 1980s, and in response to the requirements of the NPPF, a review of the Defined Village boundary was undertaken to inform the previous New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036. This review identified brownfield land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel as the main area with development potential. Although the site represents one of the largest brownfield sites within the National Park, its redevelopment also presents a number of challenges, and future redevelopment

of the site would be required to respect site-specific factors. Full planning permission has subsequently been granted for the redevelopment of the site for 79 residential units, with a number of retail units on the main frontage of the site. Construction is progressing, with the first completions delivered during the 2025/26 monitoring period. The site allocation has been retained in this Local Plan on the basis that although full planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site, development is not yet completed. The site has several sensitive, site-specific factors:

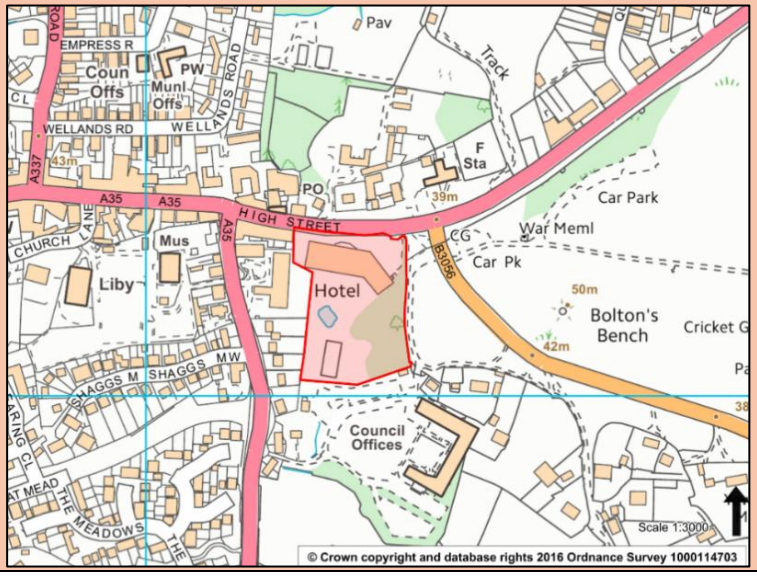
- The site occupies a highly prominent gateway location into the village and lies within the Lyndhurst Conservation Area, linking the High Street with the popular Bolton's Bench area.
- Large parts of the site are covered in mature trees which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and provide a natural transition from the built environment to the Open Forest at this important edge of village location.
- The site is located immediately adjacent to the internationally protected New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proximity of these protected habitats means the redevelopment of the site must adequately mitigate potential urban edge impacts (including predation by cats and the introduction of invasive species from fly-tipping of garden waste). Mitigation measures could include the use of legal covenants and arrangements for grounds maintenance.

Policy SP35: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst

Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel is allocated for a mixed-use development. The site has potential for around 50 dwellings alongside the retention of the historic elements of the existing building, and development could include tourism uses. Residential development should secure the future conservation of the heritage assets on the site. Detailed proposals that meet the following site-specific requirements will be permitted:

a) the site must be redeveloped in a comprehensive manner;
b) the historic elements of the existing hotel building must be retained and could be used for a range of uses, including tourism and residential use. A detailed heritage assessment will be required to justify any proposals which harm their retention;
c) the design and scale of the redevelopment of the site must conserve or enhance the character of this part of the Lyndhurst Conservation Area;
d) redevelopment proposals must retain the important trees on the site that contribute to the open verdant setting and the site's edge-of-village location;
e) redevelopment proposals for the site should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, given the proximity of the site to the designated Lyndhurst Air Quality Management Area. Adequate parking provision must be made on site;

f) proposals for C3 residential use must provide on-site affordable housing for local people in housing need as close to the Authority's target of 50% affordable housing as is viable. Viability will be demonstrated through an open book approach;
g) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres;
h) any proposals for C2 use (i.e. where no affordable housing for local people would be provided) must be accompanied by a legal agreement requiring the occupancy to be limited to those with a local connection;
i) development proposals must ensure future access to existing water supply infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes; and
j) \development proposals must incorporate measures to mitigate potential significant urban edge impacts on adjacent protected habitats.



8.41. Opportunities for further development are limited in Lyndhurst due to the various designations and constraints that exist. Over the course of the Plan-period to 2043, a potential future development opportunity could arise at Appletree Court, currently owned and occupied by New Forest District Council. The site is well located near to facilities in the village and has access to the main highway network. The main office building at Appletree Court is on the Local Heritage List (and so would be considered a non-designated heritage asset), and the site also includes several significant specimen trees. The site is located immediately adjacent to the New Forest's internationally designated sites (SAC, SPA and Ramsar), and nationally designated sites (SSSI). Should the site become available during the Plan-period, these factors would be important material planning considerations in the assessment of the future of the site.

Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst

8.42. Brownfield land at Calpe Avenue – most recently in use as a Hampshire County Council-owned residential care facility – has been identified for redevelopment through this Local Plan. This is a previously developed site within the Defined

Village boundary for Lyndhurst. The site lies within the 400-metre buffer of the New Forest's internationally designated sites and abuts the Lyndhurst Conservation Area; there are also a number of trees on the site. Given the demography of the National Park and the identified need for additional older persons accommodation, the Local Plan allocates the site accordingly.

8.43. In line with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan, the proximity of the New Forest's designated sites means that the form of development will be restricted to C2 care home, nursing home or extra care use to address potential urban edge impacts. Development will also be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites.

8.44. The site is located above a Secondary A aquifer. Policy SP7 refers to the protection of groundwater resources, and the Environment Agency has advised that a detailed application for the site at Calpe Avenue will need to ensure there is adequate assessment and prevention of risks to groundwater. Southern Water have confirmed that the existing local sewerage and water infrastructure to the site currently has capacity to accommodate the proposed number of dwellings set out in Policy SP36. This is subject to the requirement for a further capacity assessment when the site comes forward as a planning application.

Policy SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst

Redevelopment of land forming the site at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst for circa 50 C2 care home, nursing home or extra care units will be supported, in accordance with the following site-specific requirements:

a) proposals must retain the important trees on the site that contribute to the site's setting and edge-of-village location;

b) the design and scale of the proposals must positively respond to the character and proximity of the Lyndhurst Conservation Area;

c) proposals for C2 use must be accompanied by a legal agreement limiting occupancy to those with a local connection;

d) development proposals must incorporate measures to mitigate any potential urban edge impacts that remain on adjacent protected habitats;

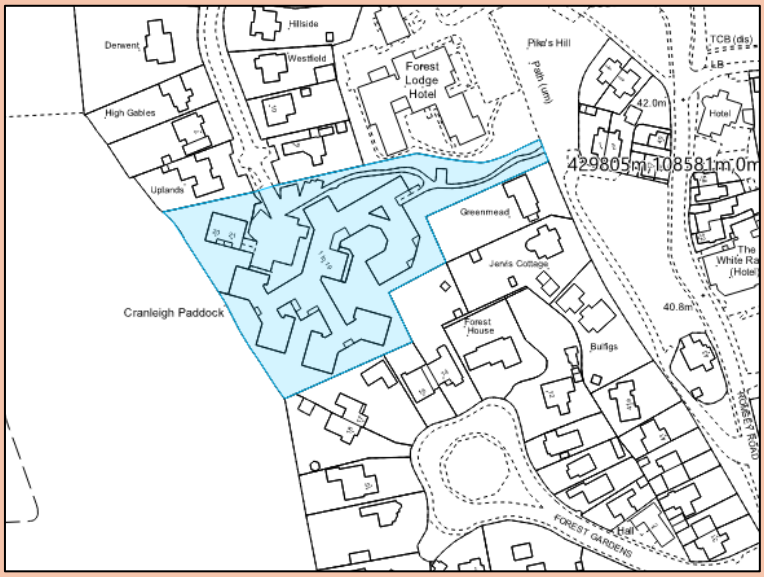
e) the development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites;

f) any scheme coming forward for the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigation and/or contributions to address any transport issues; as well as a Construction Traffic Management Plan covering the duration of the works. The scheme should include safe access for staff, residents and visitors (pedestrians and active travel), and enhance the site's connectivity with Lyndhurst village centre;

g) the submission and approval of a drainage strategy for the whole site;

h) adequate parking provision must be made on site; and

i) identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Sway

8.45. The village of Sway (population 2,700) includes a station on the main railway line and a modest range of services, shops and local businesses. The village adjoins the internationally designated sites of the New Forest to the north and east.

8.46. The Defined Village boundary of Sway was identified in the 1980s and was reviewed through the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036, and again for this Local Plan looking to 2043. With international nature conservation designations adjoining the village boundaries to the north and the east, the main area of potential is to the south and west of the village, which is also located closer to the school, services and transport links in the village centre.

8.47. Land to the south of Church Lane in Sway was allocated in the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) to make a significant contribution towards meeting the identified housing needs arising within the parish. The site is located within a short, level walk of the existing services within the village, including the station, shops and school. The provision of a safe, off-road pedestrian link from the Jubilee Fields Sports Ground to Church Lane through the site is supported. The site will also provide additional community benefits through the provision of 1 hectare of informal greenspace to complement the more formal recreational facilities available at the adjacent Jubilee Field. The site was allocated in the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 and full planning permission was granted in December 2023 for the development of 46 dwellings and public open space. As the development is not yet completed this Plan retains the site allocation policy.

Policy SP37: Land south of Church Lane, Sway

Land to the south of Church Lane, Sway is allocated for the development of around 40 residential dwellings. The site will also provide 1 hectare of informal greenspace provision for the local community. Detailed proposals for the site must meet the following site-specific requirements:

a) the provision of on-site affordable housing for local people in housing need, in accordance with the target of 50% affordable housing;

b) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres;

c) the site must be developed in a comprehensive manner;

d) residential development on the site will be limited to the part of the site that lies outside the New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) 400-metre zone (illustrated in the red shading on the map below);

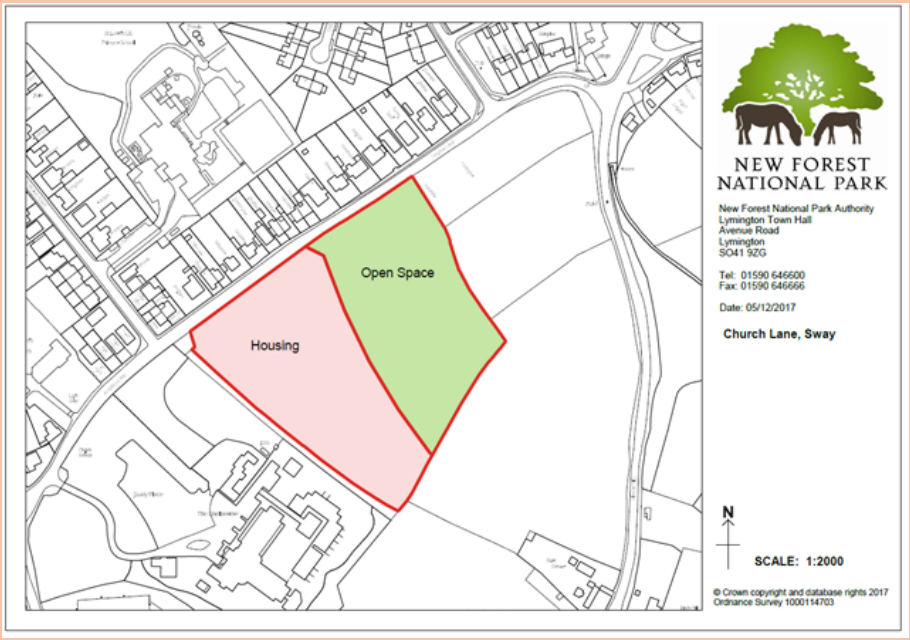
e) measures should be put in place to protect the trees that fringe the site and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders;

f) the access to the site off Church Lane must ensure adequate visibility splays and provide safe access to the school and on foot to the village centre;

g) any scheme coming forward on the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigations and/or contributions to address any transport issues;

h) the use of the remainder of the site (green shading) that lies within the New Forest SAC and SPA 400-metre zone for informal greenspace will be supported. Proposals should be accompanied by details of the proposed layout and long-term management arrangements for the greenspace provision; and

i) development proposals must provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by the service provider.



8.48. Given the existing designations and constraints, opportunities for further site allocations to meet local needs are limited in Sway. A small site to the north of the village and immediately adjacent to the Defined Village boundary has been identified. This lies adjacent to the cemetery, fronting Brighton Road, with existing built development to the south and east. The international nature conservations of the New Forest lie to the north of the site, and it falls within the 400m buffer of the New Forest's internationally designated nature conservation sites. This is an important factor in identifying the uses that the site can be developed for, as outlined in Policy SP38. This limits the use of the site to C2 care home, nursing home or extra care units, in line with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan. To the north of the site is an area of designated Ancient Woodland and this is reflected in the site allocation policy. The site is located above a Secondary A aquifer. Policy SP7 refers to the protection of groundwater resources, and the Environment Agency has advised that a detailed application for the site at Brighton Road will need to ensure there is adequate assessment and prevention of risks to groundwater.

Policy SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway

Land to the west of Brighton Road, Sway is allocated for C2 care home, nursing home or extra care dwellings. The site can accommodate around 30 C2 or extra care units.

Detailed proposals that meet the following site-specific requirements will be supported:

a) provision of a landscaped buffer to the north and west to create a new village edge, to define the extent of the built-up area, and to protect the adjacent area of designated Ancient Woodland;

b) layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the adopted Sway Village Design Statement;

c) appropriate retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and tree belts to be integral to the layout of the site;

d) the submission and approval of a drainage strategy for the whole site;

e) any scheme coming forward on the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigation and/or contributions to address any transport issues;

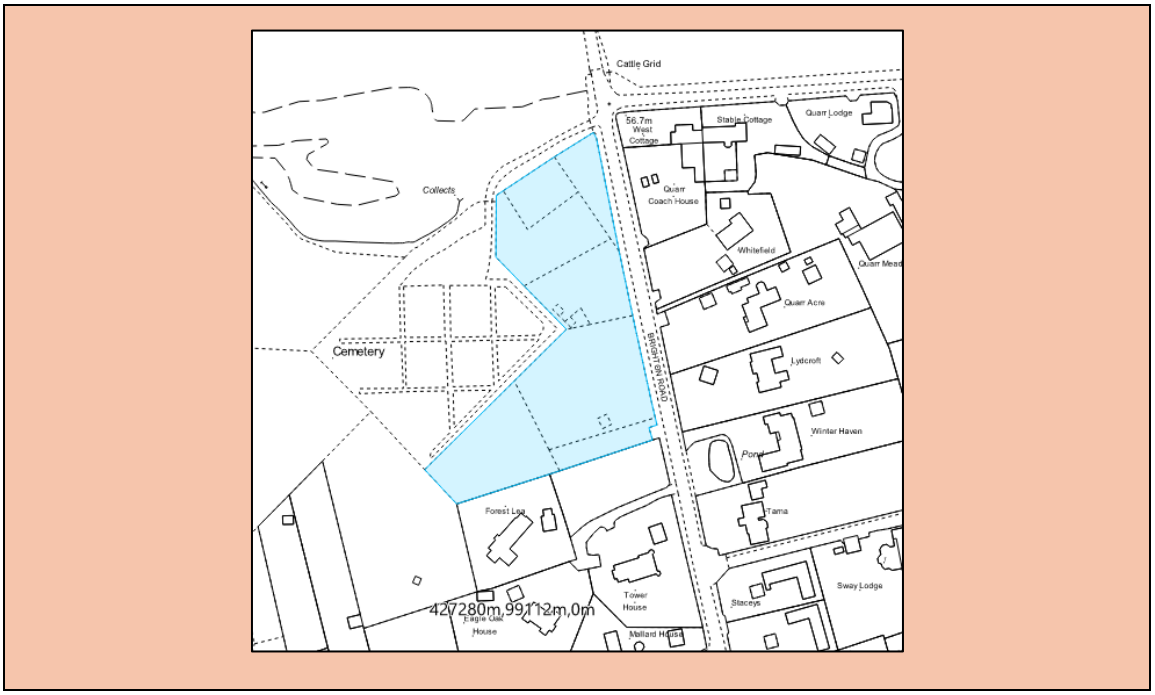
f) development proposals must be supported by information on how any remaining urban edge impacts on the adjacent internationally protected habitats will be addressed. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, demonstrating how potential construction impacts on the adjacent internationally designated sites will be mitigated;

g) development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites;

h) development must ensure that the peace and tranquillity of the adjacent cemetery is respected and safeguarded; and

i) Identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms, including traffic and transport links.

Occupation of the development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of wastewater network reinforcement, in consultation with the service provider. In order to assess available network capacity, the wastewater and water infrastructure provider will be consulted on the detailed proposals for the site as early as possible to review the development proposals and work with the developer on the intended delivery programme. Where there is a capacity constraint, the National Park Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of the development.



Land to the south of Fawley Power Station

8.49. The Fawley Power Station closed in 2013. The 49-hectare brownfield site is entirely within the New Forest District Council Local Plan area, but uniquely it is enclosed by the New Forest National Park. The former Power Station buildings – including the chimney – have been demolished. Redevelopment of the site involves a number of challenges.

- The foreshore, estuarine and coastal areas adjoining the site are internationally and nationally designated for their ecological value (Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar).

- Parts of the site are in Zone 3 for flood risk.

- The northern part of the brownfield site area (14.5 hectares) lies within the Health and Safety Executive's middle hazard consultation zone for the Fawley refinery complex and includes National Grid infrastructure.

- Land adjoining the site, within the National Park, is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Chambers Copse, Tom Tiddler's Ground).

8.50. Land to the south of the former Power Station was allocated in the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 for residential development to support the comprehensive redevelopment of the wider 49-hectare brownfield site. Since this previous allocation was made, the site has also been designated as one of the Solent Freeport tax sites (Southampton Water – Fawley Waterside tax site).

8.51. In 2024 the planning application for the redevelopment of the site allocation in the National Park – and the wider scheme within New Forest District Council's planning jurisdiction – was formally withdrawn by the applicant on the basis that the proposed scheme was not considered to be viable. National planning policy requires site allocations to be deliverable and based on engagement with the site promoters of the Fawley Waterside site it is not considered that the residentially led allocation is deliverable. The site allocation has therefore been removed from the New Forest National Park Local Plan.

8.52. The National Park Authority remains committed to supporting the positive regeneration of the previously developed land at the former Fawley Power Station and acknowledges the benefits that the site's Freeport Tax Site status brings in attracting employment-led development to the site. The Authority will continue to work in partnership with New Forest District Council and other stakeholders to deliver these benefits, recognising that development on the previously developed land outside the National Park will need to consider impacts on the Park in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy and Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023.

Other Villages

8.53. The preparation of this Local Plan has provided an opportunity to reassess the existing settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy. This reflects the requirements of national planning policy to seek to address identified housing needs where possible, as well as the need to consider 'reasonable alternatives' within the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. This has resulted in a revised settlement hierarchy identifying a new tier of 'Smaller Defined Villages' comprising Cadnam - Bartley, Landford - Nomansland, and Redlynch, where opportunities for proportionate, small-scale development to meet local needs should be explored.

8.54. These settlements have a level of basic services and facilities, together with some public transport links and access to employment provision, that can support limited growth to help sustain the socio-economic well-being of local communities within the National Park. Such growth would have the benefit of introducing housing to a wider range of settlements within the Park to support local schools (several of which are seeing a declining roll) and other services. Affordable housing delivered within these communities will be subject to a local connections tie; and open market housing will be conditioned to be 'principal residency' housing. This ensures new housing meets local needs and helps to sustain local services and facilities within these villages. There may also be opportunities for small-scale community projects to be supported and funded from any associated development, such as improvements to open spaces and community facilities.

Cadnam – Bartley

8.55. The villages of Cadnam and Bartley are within Copythorne parish located to the north-east of the National Park, adjacent to Totton, with good access to M27 via the A336 which serves both villages.

8.56. The combined population of Cadnam and Bartley is over 2,000 people, making it one of the larger settlements in the National Park. It also has a basic level of services and facilities to support this population, including local schools, sports facilities and community facilities.

8.57. With the exception of Cadnam, parts of Bartley and Ower, large parts of Copythorne parish fall within the 400-metre buffer of the New Forest SPA and SAC. Notably there are also areas identified as being at risk of surface water and fluvial flooding. Parts of the parish are also covered by Conservation Area designations in recognition of the built character of the area.

8.58. Land at Winsor Road, Winsor is identified as being suitable for development. The site is contained by existing residential development and therefore the impact of development on the wider landscape of the New Forest National Park is minimal. This part of the settlement is relatively unconstrained, lying beyond the 400-metre SPA buffer and the conservation areas; and the area is not identified as being at risk from surface water or fluvial flooding risk. Southern Water have confirmed that the existing local sewerage and water infrastructure to the site currently has capacity to accommodate the proposed number of dwellings set out in Policy SP39. This is subject to the requirement for a further capacity assessment when the site comes forward as a planning application.

Policy SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor

Land to the west of Winsor Road, Winsor, is allocated for around 55 dwellings, including a target of 50% affordable housing.

Detailed comprehensive proposals for the development of the site that meet the following site-specific requirements will be supported:

a) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres;

b) any scheme coming forward for the site shall carry out adequate transport assessment and design, with mitigation and/or contributions to address any transport issues. A Healthy Streets Audit and scheme shall be developed for the site. Due to the proximity of Bartley Junior School, contributions to increase the ease and safety of the school crossing will be required;

c) provision of suitable vehicular access onto Winsor Road, creation of pedestrian and cycle connections from the site to the wider networks, and safe crossing points to the nearby school;

d) retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees belts to be integral to the layout of the site;

e) the submission and approval of a drainage strategy for the whole site;

f) layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village, in accordance with the adopted Copythorne Village Design Statement (2025);

g) provision of on-site informal public open space in accordance with Policy DP16 to benefit future residents and the existing communities in the

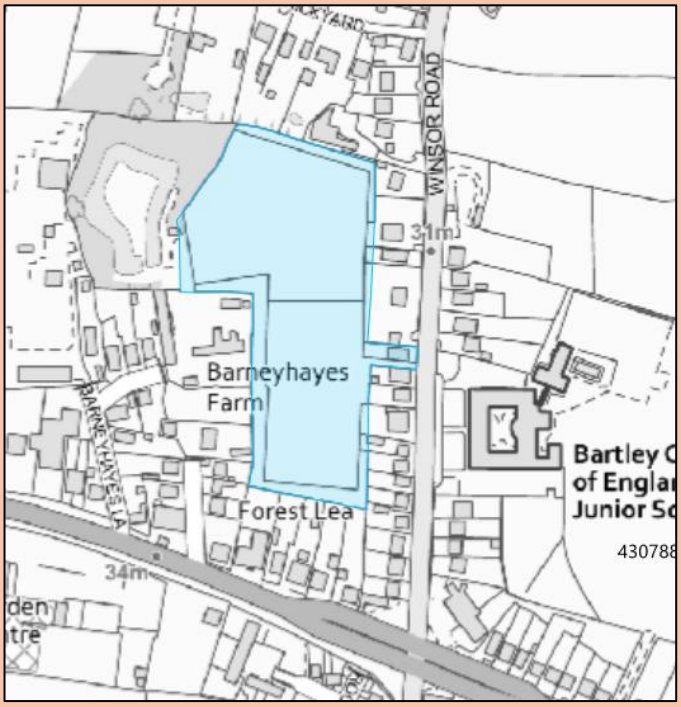
locality;

h) development must ensure that impacts on the existing residential properties in the area are addressed through the layout and design of the scheme;

i) development proposals will be required to consider impacts on the New Forest's internationally designated sites (including urban edge effects), and positively respond to the character of the Forest North East Conservation Area;

j) development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and

k) identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Landford – Nomansland

8.59. Landford and Nomansland lie within the Wiltshire area of the National Park. The linked settlements of Landford and Nomansland form one of the largest settlements in the north of the New Forest. For many years there was a single defined housing policy boundary for the two villages under the planning policies prepared by the predecessor planning authorities in Wiltshire. Whilst being smaller in terms of households and population than some of the other 'defined villages' in this Local Plan, the settlement is in close proximity to the A36, linking with South Hampshire to the south and Salisbury to the north. It also has a basic level of local facilities, including some local transport links, a village shop, public open spaces, a local school and village hall.

8.60. While the southern part of Landford and Nomansland is covered by the 400-metre buffer for the New Forest's internationally designated sites, land to the north is relatively unconstrained and offers the potential for some proportionate development to meet local needs arising within the National Park. The village does not include any Conservation Areas, and the overall level of flood risk is low – other than along the course of the River Blackwater and its tributaries which are a major spawning ground for Sea Trout. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan highlights that the site is just under 9 kilometres from the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation. Although some distance, the site could be within the range used by foraging bats from Mottisfont. The site allocation policy therefore highlights the requirement for further information on the use of the area by Barbastelle Bats to inform a more detailed appropriate assessment at the planning application stage, and this may also influence the layout of the site.

8.61. Land to the north-west of the site forms part of the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and this is reflected in the site allocation policy. Development in this location will help to support the local school (which the education authority advises has surplus spaces) and to provide community access to a new area of public greenspace where currently none exists. Landford Parish Council will be engaged in the future management of this new greenspace provision, which could be used for community uses including allotment provision, or a village green.

8.62. The site is located above a Secondary A aquifer. Policy SP7 refers to the protection of groundwater resources, and the Environment Agency has advised that a detailed application for the site at Hamptworth Road will need to ensure that there is adequate assessment and prevention of risks to groundwater. An ordinary watercourse lies to the north of the site and development should consider opportunities to enhance this, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain. The site allocation policy requires development to be located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and to provide a buffer between the development and the watercourse, to support habitat protection and water quality. Southern Water have confirmed that the existing local sewerage and water infrastructure to the site currently has capacity to accommodate the number of dwellings proposed in Policy SP40. This is subject to the requirement for a further capacity assessment when the site comes forward as a planning application.

Policy SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford

Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford, is allocated for around 30 dwellings, including a target of 50% affordable housing.

Detailed comprehensive proposals for the development of the site that meet the following site-specific requirements will be supported:

a) all of the open market dwellings on the site will be limited to a maximum total internal habitable floor area of 100 square metres;

b) provision of suitable vehicular access on Lyndhurst Road and the creation of pedestrian and cycle links and safe crossing points to the nearby primary school, village hall and the village facilities to the south;

c) a landscape-led design and layout that reflects the landscape character of this part of Landford;

d) provision of on-site informal public open space in accordance with Policy DP16 for the benefit of future residents and the existing local community. This will be available for a range of potential open spaces uses, to be determined in consultation with Landford Parish Council;

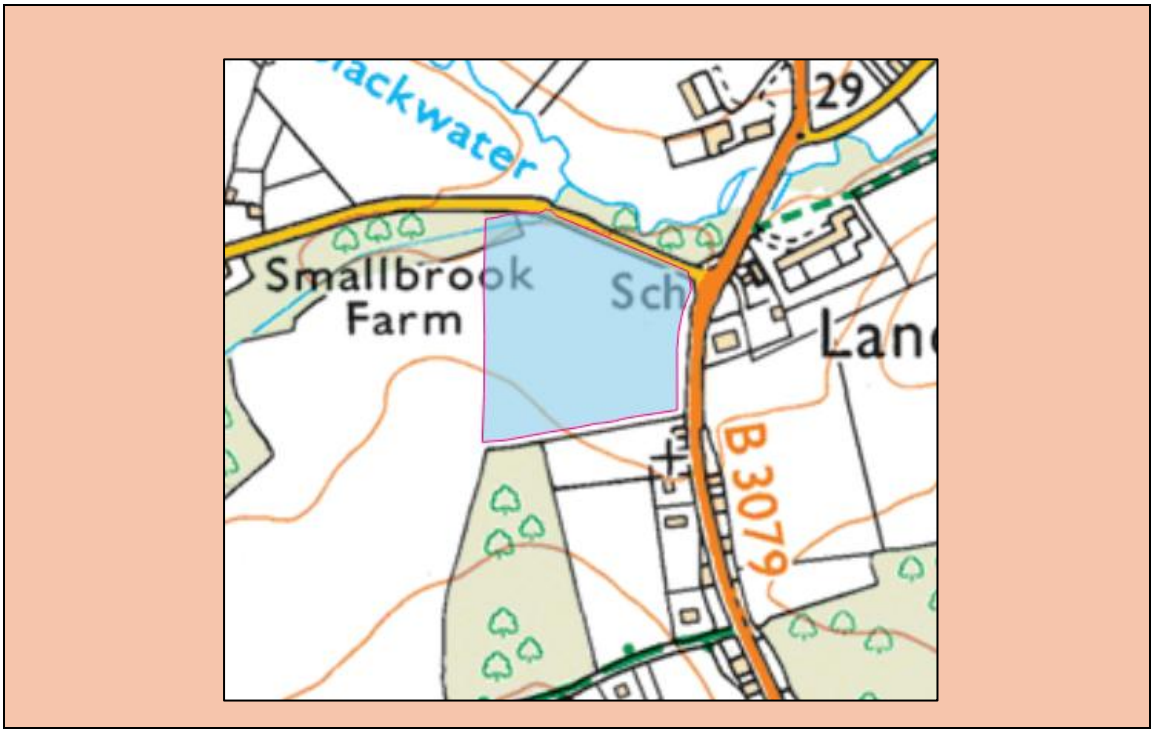
e) any scheme coming forward for the site must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and a drainage strategy. Built development is to be focused on the areas of the site in Flood Zone 1 for fluvial flooding, with a suitable buffer to the watercourses to the north of the site;

f) a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, demonstrating how potential construction impacts will be mitigated; with a suitable buffer to the designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the north of the site;

g) further information will be required to demonstrate that potential impacts on the use of the surrounding area by Barbastelle Bats have been addressed. This will inform the appropriate assessment process and should include the results of a robust survey regime, appropriate mitigation, site enhancement measures and a monitoring protocol. Buffer areas of a minimum of 20 metres with no development or lighting will be required in relation to Heath Copse and Smallbrook Meadow. The development will also be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites;

h) the layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the adopted Landford Village Design Statement; and

i) identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Redlynch

8.63. The village of Redlynch lies within Wiltshire, at the northern tip of the National Park. The adjacent settlements of Woodfalls and Morgan's Vale (outside the National Park) and Lover (within the Park) provide a number of local facilities, including a primary school and a bus service running along Quavey Road through Redlynch, as well as public transport serving The Ridge. The settlement of Redlynch had a defined housing policy boundary in the development plan prepared by the predecessor planning authority in Wiltshire, prior to the designation of the National Park.

8.64. Like other settlements within this area of the National Park, there are fewer environmental constraints, and the village of Redlynch is one of the larger settlements in the north of the National Park with some basic local services. Consequently, the area can provide some limited, proportionate development to meet the socio-economic needs of local communities living with the National Park and help to support local services. Land to the east of The Ridge is in single ownership, adjacent to a public transport route, and within walking distance of a range of local services (including a primary school, which the education authority advise has a surplus of places). The site currently comprises Grade 3B/4 poor grade agricultural land and so development will not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The identified site is unconstrained and can provide housing, as well as informal open space for the benefit of the local community. Tinney's Firs – managed by the Woodland Trust – is located approximately 400 metres to the south. The site allocation policy sets out a range of relevant criteria for the development of the site, with the need to carefully consider landscape sensitivity as a key factor. The site is located above Groundwater Source Protection Zones 2 and 3. Policy SP7 refers to the protection

of groundwater resources, and the Environment Agency has advised that a detailed application for the site at The Ridge, Redlynch will need to ensure that there is adequate assessment and prevention of risks to groundwater.

Policy SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch

Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch, is allocated for around 50 dwellings, including a target of 50% affordable housing.

Detailed comprehensive proposals for the development of the site that meet the following site-specific requirements will be supported:

a) provision of suitable vehicular access onto The Ridge and contribution to any off-site junction improvements necessary, as well as safe pedestrian and active travel links to services in the locality;

b) appropriate retention and enhancement of existing trees belts and hedgerows that surround the site to enhance its landscape setting;

c) a landscape-led design and layout that reflects the landscape character of this part of Redlynch and helps to create a high-quality scheme in the National Park;

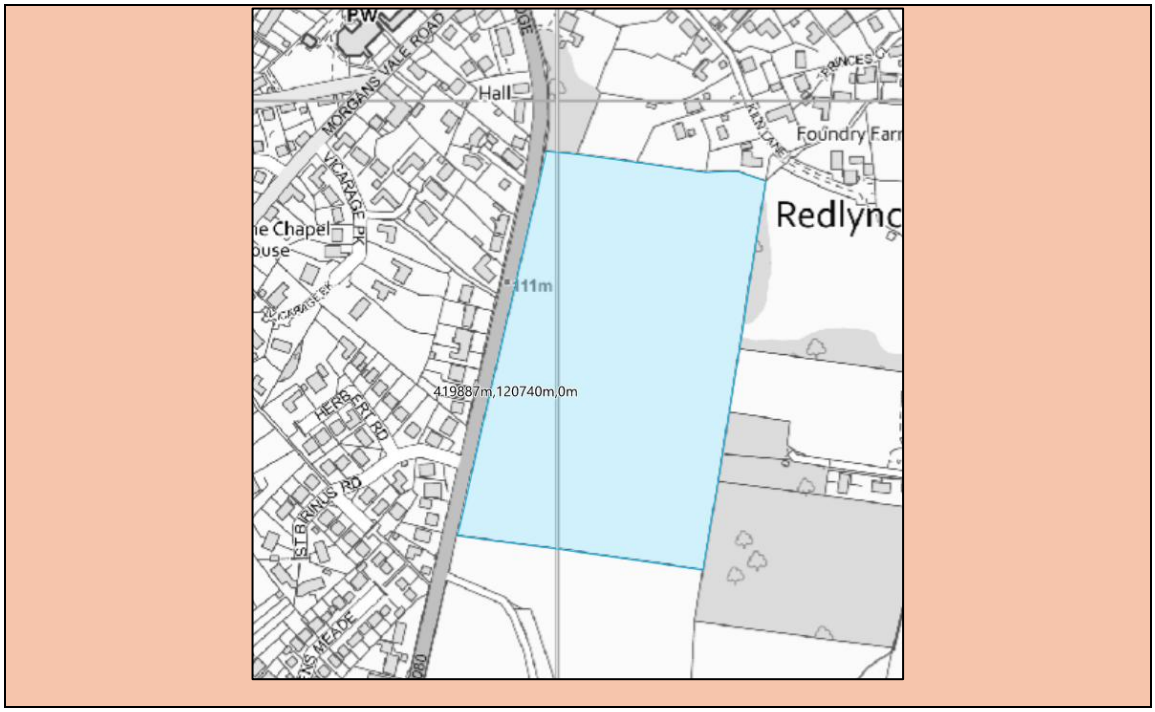
d) the submission and approval of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and drainage strategy, with a particular focus on surface water run-off and the opportunities to address this through site layout, design and landscaping;

e) provision of on-site informal public open space in accordance with Policy DP16 to benefit future residents and the existing communities in the locality. With over half of the site being greenspace, opportunities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain and nutrient mitigation on-site should be fully explored;

f) development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and

g) contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms (including, potentially highways and secondary education).

Occupation of the development may need to be phased to align with the delivery of wastewater network reinforcement, in consultation with the service provider. In order to assess available network capacity, the wastewater and water infrastructure provider will be consulted on the detailed proposals for the site as early as possible to review the development proposals and work with the developer on the intended delivery programme. Where there is a capacity constraint, the National Park Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of the development.



Windfall development

8.65. Windfall developments are those that are not specifically allocated for housing within the development plan. These sites come forward throughout the lifetime of the Local Plan on rural exception sites and through other sources of supply such as redevelopment within the Defined Villages, and the delivery of specialist housing (e.g., Commoners' dwellings, tied agricultural dwellings and permitted development such as office-to-residential conversions). In several English national parks all development is delivered through windfall schemes. The NPPF states that planning authorities can make an allowance for windfall development if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. Any windfall allowance should have regard to historic windfall rates and expected future trends.

8.66. Evidence from the monitoring of dwelling completions in the National Park over the last decade highlights the consistent delivery of housing on windfall sites. Over 250 additional dwellings were completed within the New Forest National Park between 2016 and 2025 on unallocated windfall sites. This equates to an annual average of just under 30 dwellings per annum and justifies the inclusion of a windfall allowance within this Local Plan.

8.67. The Local Plan therefore includes a future estimate of 20 dwellings per annum from windfall developments. This is considered to be cautious and realistic, given the historic level of windfall development within the Park and the increasing range of routes through which windfall development can now be delivered. Windfall development will continue to be an important source of small-scale development within the New Forest National Park.

Affordable housing

8.68. The provision of affordable housing in the New Forest is consistently raised as one of the biggest challenges facing local communities in the National Park. The affordability of housing is a major barrier to sustainable communities in the Park, with the New Forest the least affordable national park in the UK. As already outlined, the Government's National Parks Vision & Circular (2010) states that national park authorities have an important role to play in the delivery of affordable housing; and that the Local Plan should include policies that pro-actively respond to local needs. Therefore, a strong justification exists for policies that maximise the delivery of affordable housing, while at the same time upholding the purposes of national park designation. The evidence base for the Local Plan concludes that the level of affordable need justifies the Authority seeking to maximise the delivery of affordable housing at every opportunity.

8.69. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify the range of types and sizes of accommodation likely to be needed by the population in future. Based on the evidence base and the advice of New Forest District Council, as the current housing authority for the majority of the National Park, a strategic policy target of 20% intermediate and 80% social / affordable rented tenure is considered appropriate. Local connection criteria will be applied to the affordable housing provided to ensure that local needs arising within the National Park are met and more detail on this is set out in Annex 4 of the Local Plan. The 'local connections' criteria for affordable housing are administered by the statutory housing authorities for the National Park area, rather than the National Park Authority as the planning authority, and further details are set out in Annex 4 of the Plan.

8.70. National planning policy also requires planning authorities to balance meeting local affordable housing needs with the economic viability of development. To ensure viability, the costs of any affordable housing requirements applied to development should provide competitive returns to a willing landowner and developer to enable the development to be deliverable. To inform the affordable housing approach taken in the Local Plan, an Economic Viability Assessment[57] was commissioned. This assessment considered the proportion of affordable housing that could be sought on windfall, allocated development sites and C3 older persons' accommodation, as well as the approach towards rural exceptions sites within the National Park. The viability evidence demonstrates that the Local Plan target of 50% affordable housing on allocated sites and most windfall development sites within the Defined Villages can be achieved.

8.71. In addition, the viability evidence assessed the site size threshold above which it is viable to seek affordable housing to meet local needs. A large proportion of housing in the New Forest National Park is delivered on small windfall sites of fewer than 10 dwellings. National Planning Policy Guidance establishes size thresholds for the delivery of affordable housing (either through a financial contribution or on-site provision) and confirms that in 'designated rural areas' (including National Parks) local planning authorities can set lower site size

[57] Three Dragons (September 2024)

thresholds. The viability evidence commissioned as part of the Local Plan preparation process highlights that development remains economically viable with affordable housing provision on smaller development sites than that outlined in national policy (i.e. on sites smaller than 10 dwellings). The Local Plan seeks to maximise the delivery of affordable housing within the main villages and on-site allocations. This applies to all development falling within Use Class C3, including any retirement or assisted living accommodation within this use class.

8.72. Developers and landowners are expected to consider the overall cost of development prior to negotiating the sale or purchase of land. The Authority will not accept a case that a site is unviable to develop in line with the requirements of the development plan because the landowner has paid too much for the site. Land purchase should take account of the likely costs of development, including adopted development plan policies. Affordable housing provision will therefore result in reduced residential land values.

Policy SP42: Affordable housing provision within the Defined Villages and on allocated sites

50% of net dwellings developed within the Defined Villages, and on sites allocated for residential development in the Local Plan will be provided as affordable homes to meet local needs, with the local connection for the affordable housing secured through the accompanying legal agreement. In practice:

a) on developments of 1 – 2 net new dwellings, no affordable housing will be sought;

b) on developments of between 3 – 10 net new dwellings, a target of 50% affordable housing will be sought on site. At the discretion of the National Park Authority, financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will be accepted on smaller sites;

c) on development sites of 11 dwellings or more, a target of 50% affordable housing will be sought on site.

For C3 Older Person's housing (including sheltered and extra care) an affordable housing target of 20% is set.

The layout and design of affordable housing will be appropriately integrated into each development. Local connection criteria will be applied to affordable housing to ensure local needs arising within the National Park are met.

The tenure (social and affordable rented, intermediate, shared ownership and other) of affordable homes will be based on up-to-date evidence of local needs. A suitable mix will be determined through liaison with the relevant local housing authority, and the starting point is to seek 80% social / affordable rented tenure and 20% shared ownership / intermediate housing.

The proportion and tenure mix of affordable housing sought will take into account evidence on viability.

Rural Exception Sites

8.73. The NPPF confirms that in rural areas, authorities should plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites. Outside the Defined Villages of the National Park and the housing site allocations, rural exception sites can provide an important source of affordable housing to meet local needs on land that would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have a connection to the area.

8.74. The NPPF allows, at the Authority's discretion, for small numbers of full market homes where it is essential to enable the delivery of significant additional affordable housing. This has been tested through the viability assessment that forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The viability assessment concludes that an element of open market housing on rural exception sites is not necessary to make them deliverable in the New Forest National Park. The evidence does highlight that a degree of flexibility may be required on the tenure of affordable housing on rural exception sites to ensure that they are viable. The Local Plan therefore supports an element of shared ownership / intermediate ownership affordable housing (20%) alongside affordable rented housing (80%) on rural exception sites, and the precise tenure mix will be determined at the planning application stage.

8.75. The Authority will work with specialist housing providers, Rural Housing Enablers, and other relevant partners who can support the provision of affordable housing across the National Park.

Policy SP43: Rural exception sites

Small-scale developments of affordable housing on land in, or adjoining, villages will be supported provided that:

a) proposals meet a particular local housing need of the parish or a group of adjoining parishes, as evidenced through a Local Housing Needs Survey, the local housing authority's Housing Register or other evidence, that cannot be accommodated in any other way;

b) they are subject to a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to ensure that the dwellings provide for low-cost housing for local needs in perpetuity; and

c) they are capable of management by an appropriate body, for example a Registered Provider, the Authority, a community land trust or similar accredited local organisation to ensure dwellings remain affordable in the long term;

Proposals for villages where there is no defined settlement boundary will be considered, in accordance with criteria a – c above and:

d) the village has a basic level of services and facilities;

e) there is an identified and evidenced local need in the parish or group of adjacent parishes; and

f) the proposal is small-scale and makes a positive contribution to the sustainability of the community.

For the purposes of applying Policy SP43,'small-scale' is considered to be up to 10 dwellings. In all circumstances, 100% of the housing on rural exception sites will be affordable. The precise tenure mix will be agreed for individual schemes following consultation with the relevant housing authority.

Commoners' dwellings

8.76. Providing affordable housing for Commoners has long been recognised as essential for the future viability of the commoning system in the New Forest. The New Forest Commoners have played a key role in shaping the Forest over centuries and are fundamental to maintaining the landscape character and land-based economy of the National Park. The Authority is committed to supporting the long term viability of commoning through the Local Plan and the Commoners' Dwelling Scheme (CDS), which was originally established in 1992 to provide a mechanism by which Commoners could enter into an appropriate legal agreement to meet the requirement for obtaining planning permission to build a dwelling outside of a village, from which they could common.

8.77. Since its inception in 1992, the CDS has delivered over 20 new homes for Commoners across the New Forest and, in most cases, these have also included associated farm buildings to help establish viable new Commoners' holdings. In order to guarantee the long-term availability of dwellings built for Commoners under the CDS (which is administered by the Authority), applicants are required to enter into legal agreements and to demonstrate a long-term personal and family commitment to the exercising (or use) of common grazing rights on the New Forest.

8.78. The CDS comprises a three-stage process:

i. Stage one is the consideration of an applicant's commoning history and need for housing. This is undertaken by a Commoners' Dwelling Scheme Panel which includes representatives from the local commoning community appointed for their knowledge and understanding of commoning, as well as the National Park Authority. The Panel assesses an applicant's eligibility and makes a recommendation as to whether the application is within or without the remit of the Scheme.

ii. Stage two is the consideration of the planning application by the Authority. Applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice about the design, location and siting of the proposed development. Acceptance at Stage One does not necessarily mean that planning permission will be granted. All applications are reported to and determined by the Planning Committee. If

the Authority is minded to grant consent, the application proceeds to stage three.

iii. Stage three is the completion of various legal agreements, obligations, transfer and leasing arrangements to ensure that the property remains available for commoning in perpetuity.

8.79. The Authority will also encourage proposals for Commoners' dwellings to consider the reuse of existing buildings where appropriate, and to support the provision of suitable rented accommodation to better assist Commoners on lower incomes.

Policy DP44: New Forest Commoners' dwellings

Exceptionally, dwellings to meet the specific needs for New Forest Commoners may be permitted outside of an existing settlement.

The total internal habitable floorspace of the dwelling should not exceed 100 square metres.

Proposals for Commoners' dwellings must fulfil the requirements of the Commoners' Dwelling Scheme (CDS) and applicants must be able to demonstrate:

a) an established recent history of active commoning;

b) why they cannot common from their existing property; and

c) that they do not have access to a property from which they can carry out their commoning.

Applicants will be required to sign a legal agreement to ensure the dwelling remains in use for commoning in perpetuity.

Consideration will also be given to proposals that provide rented accommodation to assist Commoners on lower incomes where such accommodation is capable of management by an appropriate body such as the New Forest Trust. Proposals for rented accommodation must have common rights of pasture and include the minimum amount of grazing land as required under the CDS. The appropriate management body will also be required to sign a legal agreement to ensure the dwellings remain in commoning use in perpetuity.

Estate Workers' dwellings

8.80 Outside the Crown Lands at the core of the New Forest, the National Park is characterised by a number of large land-owning estates which include Beaulieu, Cadland, Exbury and Meyrick. These estates manage sizeable land holdings within the Forest and support commercial, social and environmental activities. Between them, the larger Estates manage a significant area of the Park and play an important role in the conservation of the landscape and cultural heritage of the New Forest, as well as the development of a sustainable rural economy. However, given the increasingly broad range of work undertaken by estate workers, many

are ineligible for agricultural or forestry worker dwellings.

8.81. The Local Plan recognises the role that large landowners play in the delivery of the two statutory National Park purposes and related socio-economic duty. Policy SP45 therefore encourages the production of Estate Plans to inform the consideration of development proposals within the larger estates. This allows a comprehensive picture of the whole estate to be shared and helps place individual development proposals within their wider context. Whole Estate Plans will generally be most suitable for estates with land holdings in excess of 1,000 acres within the National Park, with multiple activities taking place and employing or having residents in excess of 30 people.

8.82. Whole Estate Plans may demonstrate a range of material considerations related to the National Park purposes and special qualities that justify development outside the Defined Village boundaries. Where the need for additional development is identified through an Authority-endorsed Estate Plan, the Authority would encourage the reuse of existing buildings as a first preference. Where small-scale new housing is proposed (either through new build or a change of use), occupancy will be controlled through appropriate planning conditions and/or planning obligations. In considering proposals for new build dwellings for estate workers, the Authority will need to be satisfied that no available and affordable accommodation exists, or that the conversion/change of use of existing buildings is not a viable alternative. In accordance with Policy SP31, the floorspace of new dwellings will be a maximum of 100 square metres.

Policy DP45: New Forest Estate Workers' Dwellings

Development proposals – including small-scale housing through the conversion or change of use of existing buildings as the first preference, and then new build – within the larger Estates of the National Park will be supported where:

a) the development proposals comply with other relevant policies in this Local Plan and are part of a comprehensive Estate Plan endorsed by the Authority;

b) the development proposals, as part of an agreed Estate Plan, deliver multiple benefits in line with the purposes, duty and special qualities of the National Park;

c) the housing is subject to an occupancy condition and remains available for estate workers, or persons last employed as estate workers, in perpetuity;

d) no other suitable dwellings on the estate have been recently sold or let to non-estate workers; and

e) the proposals take into account and respond positively to the historic landscape character.

For the purposes of applying this policy, small-scale housing schemes should not exceed a maximum of 3 units per site.

Agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings

8.83. National policy has long acknowledged that certain agricultural and forestry activities may require a worker to live close to the site. In recent years woodland management work has diversified to include the management and restoration of open habitats, which can also require tied housing. Where this is justified, it is crucial that any housing provided is subject to strict criteria and conditions to ensure that it is only used for the accommodation of essential workers.

8.84. Agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings will not be permitted on holdings where other dwellings on, or closely connected with, that holding have recently been disposed of, for example, by sale or by removal of restrictive conditions so that the dwelling could be let out on the open rental market.

8.85. The size restriction of 100 square metres is consistent with Policy SP31 and seeks to ensure that the size of a worker's dwelling is commensurate with the needs of the holding. Permitted development rights to provide further accommodation will normally be removed by use of planning conditions since such dwellings are only supported as an exception to the usual approach of development restraint.

Policy DP46: New dwellings for agricultural and forestry workers

Proposals for agricultural and forestry workers dwellings will be supported where:

a) there is a demonstrable need for the new dwelling, and the nature of the work makes it essential for the worker to live at, or very close to their place of work;

b) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit;

c) no other suitable dwellings on the estate/holding/enterprise have been recently sold or let on the open market;

d) priority will be given in the first instance to the conversion of a building on the estate/holding/enterprise that could be converted for residential purposes;

e) the dwelling will be subject to an occupancy condition to ensure that it remains available in perpetuity for agricultural/forestry workers, or persons last employed as agricultural/forestry workers;

f) the size of the proposed dwelling would not result in the maximum total internal habitable floor area exceeding 100 square metres;

g) in all instances, a planning condition will be applied to the new residential unit limiting occupation to the nature of the worker applied for; and

h) the proposals take into account and respond positively to the historic landscape character.

Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions

8.86. There are some 100 dwellings in the New Forest National Park that are subject to agricultural occupancy conditions. These dwellings have usually only been supported due to a particular agricultural need and are located in areas where planning permission would not usually be granted for unrestricted housing.

8.87. A more detailed development management policy on the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions is justified to ensure that dwellings which have been permitted specifically to meet the needs of the rural economy remain available for that purpose. Policy DP47 relates not only to the needs of the particular holding but includes the general need for workers' dwellings in the surrounding area. The Authority will not readily accept the case for the removal of an occupancy condition where there is evidence that the associated landholding has been fragmented and reduced to such an extent that the agricultural holding is no longer viable.

Policy DP47: Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions

An occupancy condition restricting the occupancy of a dwelling to a person solely, mainly or last working in agriculture or forestry will not be removed unless the Authority is satisfied that the long-term need for the dwelling has ceased and there is no evidence of a continuing need for housing for persons employed or last employed in the National Park area in those categories, or practising commoning.

8.88. In order to demonstrate that the long-term agricultural need for the dwelling has ceased, the applicant will normally be expected to show that appropriate steps have been taken to try to realistically market and sell the property with the occupancy condition intact, and that marketing has been correctly targeted, was financially realistic and undertaken for a sustained period. This would be expected to include:

- contacting other local land and estate owners in the vicinity of the dwelling to establish whether they require further accommodation either presently or in the near future;
- the property placed with local and specialist estate agents and advertised locally for at least a 12-month period at a substantially discounted price that reflects the fact that it is subject to an agricultural occupancy condition;
- the property being advertised widely in local newspapers and appropriate publications including specialist trade organisation journals; and
- contacting the Commoners Defence Association to establish whether the property would meet the housing needs of a New Forest Commoner.

Self / custom build

8.89. A significant proportion of the housing development that takes place in the National Park is characterised by very small developments within its villages which is likely to fall within the Government's definition of custom and self-build dwellings. The Government wants to enable more people to build and own their own home. Consequently, all relevant authorities are required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 to maintain a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire a serviced plot for self-building.

8.90. The Government defines custom build housing as either a builder being contracted by a purchaser to create a 'custom built' home or where a private individual builds their own home as a 'self-build'. The National Park Authority has established a self-build register of people interested in self-build or custom build. The register is used to help identify and address the local need for housing. Custom / self-build will be considered positively within the seven Defined Villages of the New Forest National Park.

Policy SP48: Self and Custom House Building

Proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported where these comply with other development plan policies as relevant to the site and location within the National Park.

In all instances, a planning condition or legal agreement will be applied to restrict occupation to those with a local connection to the National Park.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

8.91. The New Forest has a long history of travelling communities, and their needs are recognised in national planning policy. The Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites outlines an overarching aim to ensure the fair and equal treatment of Gypsies and Travellers in a way that facilitates their traditional way of life, while respecting the interests of the settled community. This revised policy also updates the definition of a Traveller and now includes individuals who have a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in caravans, even if they have ceased travelling either temporarily or permanently.

8.92. National policy requires local planning authorities to assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller provision using robust evidence. National policy also makes it clear that, as with any other forms of development, planning permission should only be granted in national parks where it is demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised by the development. It also confirms that planning authorities should strictly limit new Traveller site development in open countryside away from existing settlements. The New Forest Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (ORS, 2026) covers the whole of the New Forest National Park (including the Wiltshire portion) and it identifies a need for additional Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople's provision

within the Park. The need for additional Gypsy & Traveller pitches was quantified at 12 pitches by 2043, with half of this need (6 pitches) required by 2029.

8.93. There are no existing public Gypsy and Traveller sites within the National Park, and no suitable sites were forthcoming through the 'Call for Sites' exercise that supported the preparation of this Local Plan. Policy SP49 therefore sets out a criteria-based policy that planning applications for new Gypsy and Traveller use/sites will be considered against, alongside national policy in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The policy sets out reasonable criteria and allows for the expansion and/or intensification of existing Traveller sites where appropriate.

Policy SP49: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Proposals for the provision of permanent and/or transit accommodation to meet an established need of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, will be supported within the National Park where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for the site to be located within the National Park; and that:

a) the impact of the site on the landscape character of the National Park is acceptable;

b) occupancy of the site will be restricted to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople with a local connection to the New Forest National Park;

c) the site is well located on the highway network and will not result in a level of traffic generation inappropriate for the roads in the National Park;

d) there are adequate on-site facilities for parking and storage;

e) in the case of any permanent site, be located where there are appropriate local facilities;

f) the site does not detrimentally affect the amenities of surrounding occupiers; and

g) the site has adequate provision for wastewater infrastructure and disposal.

In order to meet the identified need, consideration will be given to the intensification and expansion of existing permitted sites, subject to the impacts being acceptable on the protected landscape of the New Forest National Park and the existing local communities.

8.94. The New Forest Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (ORS, 2026) identifies a need for 6 additional Travelling Showpeople's plots within the New Forest National Park by 2043. The existing Travelling Showpeople's yard at Netley Marsh in the National Park has no capacity to expand and therefore an allocation is made specifically for Travelling Showpeople's use in Policy SP50 at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh, a site which is within half a mile of the existing established site.

8.95. The site has an existing vehicular access from the A336 Ringwood Road and is within half a mile of the A326. The site has previously been used for car boot sales and is well located on the highway network for the type of vehicular

movements anticipated. The character of the area is mixed, with residential properties fronting Ringwood Road interspersed with small-scale commercial uses. There are some basic facilities within the vicinity of the site, including an infant school, public house and village hall. The site is in Flood Zone 1 for fluvial flooding and is not covered by any nature conservation designations. The site is located within the Forest North East Conservation Area.

Policy SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use

Land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh is allocated for use by Travelling Showpeople to meet identified needs arising within the New Forest National Park. The allocation is for mixed use, including residential, business and storage purposes, subject to the following criteria:

a) development should be located away from the site boundaries towards neighbouring residential properties. A minimum 20-metre-wide landscape buffer is required along the northern boundary of the site to help protect residential amenity;

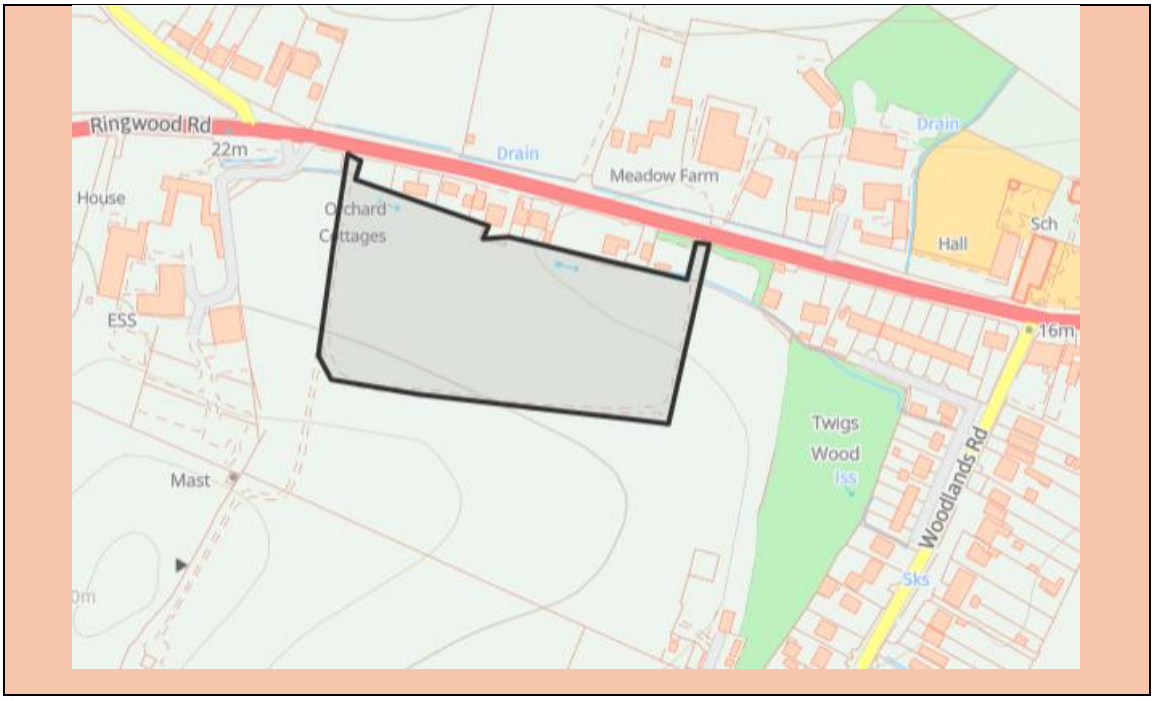
b) a comprehensive landscape scheme will be required, informed by the New Forest Landscape Character Assessment, setting out how the presence of the site within the New Forest's landscape will be softened;

c) the site access will be onto the A336 (Ringwood Road) and the requirements of the highway authority in terms of safety and visibility splays must be met;

d) the application must be accompanied by a noise assessment. Any planning consents will include a planning condition relating to the hours of use of the site for work on equipment; and

e) the submission and approval of a drainage strategy for the whole site.

Planning permission will include a condition or obligation to ensure that occupancy of the site is limited to persons who meet the definition of Travelling Showpeople under national guidance.



Replacement dwellings, extensions to dwellings and outbuildings

8.96. The following policies on replacement dwellings, extensions to dwellings and outbuildings reflect the local importance of the issues associated with these forms of development and the cumulative impact such development can have on the National Park. The policies in the Local Plan aim to protect the special qualities of the New Forest, while also recognising the need for development to meet the needs of local communities.

Replacement dwellings

8.97. The Authority continues to receive a significant number of applications for replacement dwellings in the National Park. To address concerns regarding long-term urbanisation, impacts on landscape character, the erosion of local distinctiveness, high initial embodied carbon, impacts on the balance of the housing stock, and the loss of heritage assets and dwellings which are of notable historical or architectural interest, successive local plans have sought to limit the impact of replacement dwellings through appropriate planning policies. It is appropriate that a restrictive approach to replacement dwellings is taken, in particular in relation to small dwellings.

8.98. The Local Plan therefore includes a detailed planning policy stating that replacement dwellings should be of a similar footprint, scale and size as the existing dwelling. The fundamental aim of the policy is to ensure that there remains a balanced housing stock within the National Park and to ensure replacement dwellings do not have an increased impact on the protected landscape of the New Forest. The policy also requires consideration to be given to impacts on heritage assets.

Policy DP51: Replacement dwellings

The replacement of existing dwellings will be permitted except where the existing dwelling:

a) is the result of a temporary or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use; or

b) makes a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the locality. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets and other dwellings which are of notable historical or architectural interest.

A replacement dwelling may be sited differently than the dwelling to be replaced, providing that there are clear environmental benefits (such as increasing the distance of the dwelling from protected habitats and reducing the landscape impacts). Opportunities should be taken to integrate appropriate, small-scale renewable energy measures within the replacement dwelling scheme and take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, in accordance with the NPPF.

Caravans and mobile homes may not be replaced by permanent dwellings.

In the case of small dwellings and those permitted by Policies SP29 to DP46 of this Local Plan, replacement dwellings must not result in the total internal habitable floor area exceeding 100 square metres. In exceptional circumstances, a larger dwelling may be permitted if it is essential to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality. In respect of this exceptional circumstance, the maximum habitable floorspace of the replacement dwelling must not exceed 120 square metres.

In the case of other dwellings, the replacement dwelling should be of no greater floorspace than the existing dwelling.

8.99. This policy does not apply to former dwellings that have either been demolished or abandoned. Abandonment is likely to have occurred where there has been a deliberate intention to cease the residential use of the property by: (i) leaving the dwelling vacant for a considerable period; (ii) allowing the dwelling to deteriorate to the extent that residential reuse would involve what would be tantamount to rebuilding; or (iii) introducing a different use that supplants the earlier residential use. In terms of the requirement for the existing dwelling to be authorised, dwellings with Lawful Development Certificates are exempt from planning enforcement action (typically through the passage of time) but are not 'authorised' for the purposes of Policies DP51 and DP52

8.100. With regards to floorspace considerations, the starting point is that a replacement dwelling should be no larger than existing. However, in adopting a pragmatic approach there may be scope in some instances to achieve an enlargement within the limitations of Policy DP51 where it can be demonstrated that the additional floorspace would complement and be subservient to the main dwelling. As a general rule, additional accommodation should be allocated to the side or rear and should be positioned below the main ridge line.

8.101. When considering proposals to extend (or even replace) a replacement dwelling, the "base point" for calculating the floorspace of the property remains the 1 July 1982. In the case of new dwellings built after 1 July 1982 (where no dwelling previously existed), including their subsequent replacements, then the baseline date is the date on which the "new" dwelling was first built. The dwelling as originally built, or when it was legally established, only means "existing dwelling" if the first instance of residential use post-dates 1 July 1982. If the dwelling is replaced and enlarged at the same time, any enlargement should accord with Policy DP52.

Extensions to dwellings

8.102. Even with extended permitted development rights, the Authority continues to receive a significant volume of applications each year for residential extensions. Proposals to incrementally extend dwellings in a nationally designated landscape can affect the locally distinctive character of the natural, historic and built environment of the New Forest (including designated and non-designated heritage assets). In addition, extensions can over time cause an imbalance in the range and mix of housing stock available. For these reasons, it is important that the Local Plan continues to include a clear policy to guide decisions for extensions to dwellings. From a review of recent evidence, a revised approach has been taken (requiring an assessment of impacts on landscape and character). This is in order to protect landscape character, settlement character, traditional building sizes, housing stock and prevent suburbanisation and over-domestication so as to limit the impact of such extensions on the protected landscape and special qualities of the National Park. This is also to reduce any cumulative impacts on the National Park.

Policy DP52: Extensions to dwellings

a) Extensions to existing small dwellings and dwellings permitted by Policy SP29 to DP46

Extensions to existing small dwellings and dwellings permitted by Policy SP29 to DP46 will be limited so as to retain the stock of such dwellings within the New Forest National Park.

Extensions to existing small dwellings and dwellings permitted by Policy SP29 to DP46 must not result in a total internal habitable floorspace exceeding 100 square metres.

In exceptional circumstances, a larger extension may be permitted to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality. In respect of these exceptional circumstances, the total internal habitable floorspace of an extended dwelling must not exceed 120 square metres.

This also applies to any replacement of such dwellings.

The Authority will consider restricting permitted development rights in order to prevent further extensions which would exceed this provision.

Policy DP52 B) also applies to extensions to existing small dwellings and dwellings permitted by Policy SP29 to DP46.

b) Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted where they:

(i) respect the scale, form, character and architectural composition of the original dwelling;

(ii) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, landscape character, scenic quality and special qualities of the National Park;

(iii) are designed to be subservient and do not result in a dwelling that appears disproportionately enlarged in relation to:

- the original dwelling;
- its plot;
- its landscape setting; and
- the prevailing character of the locality

(iv) do not, either individually or cumulatively with previous additions, erode the characteristic pattern, scale or appearance of buildings within the National Park; and

(v) do not materially undermine the range and mix of dwelling sizes that contributes to the sustainability and character of local communities in the National Park.

In assessing whether an extension would be disproportionate, the Authority will have regard to:

- the scale and massing of all previous additions;
- the cumulative increase in floorspace and volume relative to the original dwelling;
- visibility within the landscape;
- effects on settlement character; and
- the extent to which the original dwelling remains visually and functionally dominant.

In all cases, extensions will not be permitted where the existing dwelling is the result of a temporary permission or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use.

To minimise the risk of sewer flooding and protected water quality, rainwater drainage on residential extensions is not permitted to be discharged into a foul only or combined sewer. If the extension is within 3 metres of a public sewer, it is a mandatory requirement that the developer will need to submit a 'Build Over Application' to the wastewater service provider for approval.

8.103. In all cases, the Authority will have regard to the scale and character of the core element of the original dwelling (rather than subsequent additions) in determining

whether or not an extension is sympathetic to the dwelling. An extension should be in scale with the existing dwelling and always be subservient in size and height. Its form, elevation treatment and detailing should complement the original dwelling. It is also possible to lose the identify of a dwelling where a number of extensions, including wrap around extensions, are added.

8.104. Built form should retain the original building hierarchy; preserve architectural simplicity; avoid visually dominant additions; protect traditional forest character and avoid disproportionate expansion relative to plot and setting.

8.105. In terms of the requirement for the existing dwelling to be authorised, dwellings with Lawful Development Certificates are exempt from planning enforcement action (typically through the passage of time) but are not 'authorised' for the purposes of Policies DP51 and DP52.

8.106. For the purposes of applying Policies DP51 and DP52:

- **original dwelling** means the dwelling as first built;
- **existing dwelling** means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1 July 1982;
- **small dwelling** means a dwelling with a floor area of 80 square metres or less as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1 July 1982;
- **floorspace of original, existing and small dwellings** will be measured as the total internal habitable floorspace of the dwelling, but will not include floorspace within conservatories[58], attached outbuildings and detached outbuildings (irrespective of whether the outbuilding's current use is as habitable floorspace);
- **floorspace of proposed extensions** will include conservatories and attached outbuildings and any habitable floorspace provided within a detached outbuilding;
- a **conservatory** is defined as having not less than three-quarters of the area of its roof and not less than one-half of the area of its external walls made of clear or translucent material;
- a modest **basement** will not normally be regarded as habitable floorspace. However, some judgement will need to be applied in terms of whether it is genuinely a secondary space in association with the main dwelling. Key criteria to consider include availability of light; size (in relation to the main

[58] This only applies to conservatories in New Forst District which have previously been permitted as an 'exception' to policy and which are subject to a planning condition that limits their use as a conservatory

dwellings); access; use; layout and headroom. Basements to houses set into a hillside with any form of exposed elevation will usually be treated as habitable accommodation;

- **genuine family need** is defined as an exceptional and unique family need that could not have been reasonably anticipated at the time of purchase of the property. For example, additional floorspace may be required to cater for specialist equipment and facilities required in connection with an unforeseen event, such as a severe disability arising from an accident whilst in occupation of the property; but, it normally would not cater for the needs of growing families or the need to care for elderly relatives, as these needs are not considered to be so 'exceptional' as to warrant a departure from the floorspace restrictions set out in this policy;

- **double height living rooms** – as planning permission is not required to extend or add a mezzanine floor within a dwelling, double height living rooms with glazing up to what would be first floor, will be regarded as having two floors. Where glazing is not proposed at first floor level, there may be scope to include only the ground floor subject to a restriction on any further windows at first floor level (if it is likely that any further accommodation will exceed floor space limits);

- **porches** – if the porch is open-sided, it would not be included in the floor space calculation. Proposed open-sided areas more than the permitted development allowance will be conditioned to remain open;

- **roof space accommodation** – is included in the calculation of habitable floor space where there is natural light (e.g. via a dormer window or roof light), a permanent staircase and headroom of 1.5 metres or more.

Residential outbuildings

8.107. There remains considerable development pressure to provide for larger outbuildings in the context of domestic properties. Concerns have been raised that proposals for outbuildings ancillary to residential uses are:

- impacting on the character of the New Forest;
- increasingly being used to circumvent restrictions on residential extensions and replacement dwellings;
- taking up important amenity space, including parking provision, within the curtilage of dwellings and this is resulting in parking being pushed beyond sites onto protected verges; and
- resulting in the overdevelopment of sites.

8.108. The Authority therefore continues to carefully control proposals for domestic outbuildings through its Local Plan, while at the same time recognising the role of

such buildings in supporting homeworking, for example. It is important that the number, scale and design of any buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling should not detract from the character or appearance of the dwelling, the site and the surrounding area. The Authority will normally impose a planning condition limiting the use of the outbuilding to purposes incidental to the dwelling on the site and excluding any use as habitable floorspace.

Policy DP53: Outbuildings

Domestic outbuildings relating to residential dwellings will be permitted where they:

a) are proportionate and clearly subservient to the dwelling they are to serve in terms of their design, scale, size, height and massing;

b) are located within the residential curtilage of an existing dwelling;

c) are demonstrably required for purposes incidental to the use of the main dwelling;

d) are not providing additional habitable accommodation, except where such accommodation is to be used by a dependent relative of occupiers of the existing dwelling and not be sold off, occupied or used as an independent unit of accommodation by a third party; and

e) will not reduce private amenity space – including parking provision – around the dwelling to an unacceptable level.

Domestic outbuildings should not include dormer windows and only minimal areas of glazing will be permitted to safeguard impacts on residential amenity and light pollution.

Non-domestic outbuildings relating to non-residential uses will be permitted where they are proportionate and clearly subservient to the building they are to serve in terms of their design, scale, size, height and massing. Such outbuildings should be located within the curtilage of the neighbouring / associated building; and be demonstrably required for purposes incidental to the use of the neighbouring / associated building.

8.109. The use of outbuildings to support home working and home-based businesses will be considered acceptable where this does not involve a change of use of the main dwelling or have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers or the special qualities of the National Park.

Community facilities and services

8.110. In pursuing the two statutory National Park purposes, the Authority is committed to fostering, '…the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.' The special qualities of the New Forest National Park include its strong, distinctive local communities and one of the strategic objectives identified in this Local Plan is to further strengthen the well-being and sustainability of local communities.

8.111. The NPPF states that to support a strong rural economy, local plans should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

8.112. Local communities in the New Forest face similar challenges to those in many rural areas. However, changes to the General Permitted Development Order (2015) and the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended, have allowed for various retail and community uses to convert to other uses without the need for planning permission.

8.113. Community facilities and key services are essential in sustaining local villages but are often under threat and therefore it is important that local planning policies for the area support their retention and improvement where possible. In recent years, the planning policy framework for the National Park has supported the development of new and enhanced community facilities, such as village shops in Woodgreen and Boldre, and this approach is retained.

8.114. The Local Plan supports the retention of existing community facilities and the provision of essential facilities (including village shops and local educational services) in villages across the whole of the National Park where there are clear community benefits. Where planning permission is required, any proposals for the change of use of local commercial services and community facilities will only be considered where robust evidence is provided to demonstrate that:

- there is no longer a need for a specific service or facility in the longer term;
- the property has been subject to a rigorous marketing exercise;
- a suitable replacement service or facility is provided; or
- there is an existing similar facility accessible to the local community.

8.115 Essential local community facilities are facilities that provide an essential service and are of direct benefit to the immediate local community. These include village shops, pubs and village halls, as well as small-scale health, educational services and social facilities. Public open space, sport and recreational facilities are covered by Policy DP16.

Policy SP54: Local community facilities

The Authority will support the retention of existing community facilities throughout the National Park and prevent their loss or redevelopment where they contribute to the sustainability of local communities.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of an existing local community facility will not be permitted unless:

- for commercially-run community facilities, evidence is provided of a robust marketing campaign of at least 24 months that clearly demonstrates there is no market demand for the existing use of an equivalent community use; or

- for community or publicly managed facilities, it can be robustly demonstrated that there is a lack of need for the existing facility within the local community and wider National Park, or an equivalent community use.

The Authority will support the development of essential local community facilities where the proposal is of clear and direct benefit to the local village or rural community, the scale of the proposed facility is proportionate to the local areas, and they are accessible to the local communities they will serve.

9. Thriving Local Economy

Strategic Objectives to support a Thriving Local Economy:

4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.

6. Develop a diverse and sustainable low carbon economy, enabling suitable rural diversification, that contributes to the well-being of local communities and supports a 'working forest', throughout the National Park.

7. Encourage land management that promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

8. Support proportionate development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, providing opportunities for enjoying the National Park without harming its special qualities or the welfare of its local communities.

To support Partnership Plan Themes: Climate, Nature, People, Place, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- Strong and distinctive local communities
- A healthy environment:
- Wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery;
- Tranquillity
- An historic commoning system
- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty
- A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage

9.1 This section of the Local Plan covers traditional employment uses such as office and industrial workspace, together with retail activity in the Park's many villages, and tourism. Reference is also made to telecommunications and digital infrastructure.

9.2 A healthy local economy is essential in maintaining the life and vibrancy of the National Park, providing local employment, and sustaining its rural communities. The Local Plan aims to support a sustainable local low carbon green economy, providing business and employment opportunities that benefit the National Park's communities, without compromising the special qualities and rural character of the area. This approach will help to deliver the Authority's duty[59] to foster the social and economic well-being of its local communities.

[59] Chapter 1: Introduction and the Environment Act 1995

9.3 Maintaining high-quality landscape, historic and natural environments can contribute substantial economic benefits by both supporting tourism and helping to attract high-value employees and businesses, which contribute to wider ecosystem services and rural supply chains. Research suggests that National Park designation brings economic benefits for businesses both within a National Park and within the wider region[60]. Therefore, by successfully pursuing its two statutory purposes, the National Park Authority can make a positive contribution to economic prosperity both locally and in surrounding areas.

9.4 In terms of a prosperous rural economy, the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) requires planning polices to enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship.

9.5 There have been various changes to the Planning Use Classes Oder in recent years as to how employment, retail and other associated activities are recorded for planning purposes. Consequently, through changes introduced by the updated General Permitted Development Order, planning permission may not be required for uses listed under Class E (Commercial, Business and Services) changing to other activities within the same class. This means there is now less control as to how employment and retail areas can change and evolve.

9.6 The economic approach of this Local Plan takes into consideration some key aspects of the economic and employment characteristics of the National Park. There is a very low level of unemployment, which has been no higher than 1.3%[61] for the last three years, with a peak in 2021/22 in response to the covid pandemic, prior to that it was around 0.8% and is typically lower than regional and national levels.

9.7 A further factor is the ageing population, whilst not unique to the National Park, the New Forest Housing Needs Assessment (2025) refers to the Park as having approximately 60% of the population aged 50 and older, with only 20% being within the 25-49 age range. Indeed, the population has aged between 2011 and 2022, demonstrated by very sharp declines in the three youngest age bands and

[60] Prosperity and Protection: The economic impact of National Parks in the Yorkshire and Humber region, Council for National Parks (2006); Valuing England's National Parks - Final Report for National Parks England, Cumulus Consultants Ltd and ICF GHK (2013).
[61] Unemployment measured by the percentage of the working age population that are claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Source: NOMIS

significant growth in the oldest (aged 50 and above) age bands. Having an older demographic, there will be a greater portion of the population outside of the economically active category (16-64 years) during the plan period.

9.8 As a rural area, there are no large employment centres which benefit from critical mass (in terms of labour and the local market for goods and services). Consequently, the local economy is not only dispersed but also very diverse with the leisure, tourism, agriculture, health, and the professional, scientific and technical sectors all creating a wide range of employment opportunities. Analysis of the Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS, March 2022) shows the number of companies and employee distribution across industry sectors in the National Park:

Broad Industry Group	Number of companies	Total employees
Accommodation and food services	190	3,692
Health	115	2,823
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	140	1,728
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	215	1,598
Professional, scientific and technical	465	1,508
Education	70	1,348
Construction	275	1,329
Retail	170	1,032
Business, administration and support	205	985
Production	130	910
Public administration and defence	20	667
Information and communication	170	501
Wholesale	75	537
Property	150	362
Motor Trades	85	351
Transport and storage	55	319
Finance and insurance	55	121

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS, March 2022)

9.9 The 2025 Economic Needs Assessment reflects the above, acknowledging that employment opportunities are concentrated in the larger villages, as well as there being distinct business clusters around Sway / Hordle / Tiptoe, and Ashurst / Netley Marsh. Distributed across these key employment locations, the dominant sectors are Professional and Other Private Services, Manufacturing, and Administrative and Support Services, reflecting a mix of tourism, local services, administration, and specialised production.

Business

9.10 Within relatively short distances, the National Park is surrounded by local employment centres, such as Lymington, Ringwood, Totton, and larger urban areas, in particular Southampton/Eastleigh and Romsey/Salisbury and

Bournemouth/Poole, that provide significant employment opportunities. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that net out-commuting by residents to these larger centres occurs and, given their proximity, it is likely that some of the employment needs of National Park residents both now and in the future will continue to be met beyond the National Park's boundaries.

9.11 With strong economic expansion planned for the surrounding employment centres in South Hampshire, including the Solent Freeport, southern Wiltshire and South East Dorset, the task for the local economy will be to find ways of benefiting from the National Park's advantages, whilst retaining its special character. Taking into account the forecasted decline in the working age population, competition from surrounding areas, and the need to maintain the special environmental qualities of the National Park, supporting the economic well-being of the National Park's communities will be best served by focusing on small businesses, with locally distinctive, higher value and low impact types of businesses being most appropriate, and indeed the bulk of existing businesses are relatively small (85% of the total):

Size of enterprise	No of enterprises
0-9 micro	2,200
10-49 small	325
50 – 249 medium	50
250+ large	10

Source: ONS 2022 Inter Departmental Business Register

9.12 Evidence set out in the Economic Needs Assessment 2025, acknowledges that employment growth is forecast to be driven by the health, agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors amongst others; with a large decline in sectors requiring distribution spaces, such as wholesale and land transport, storage and post.

9.13 The assessment of data to establish future land requirements utilises, amongst other matters, past development rates to reflect market demand and actual development patterns. This therefore provides a reasonable basis for informing future space needs, being based on analysis of monitoring planning data on past completions of employment sites over a ten-year period from 2014/15 to 2023/24, representing an average of about 680 square metres per annum.

9.14 Accordingly, the Economic Needs Assessment identifies the need for an additional circa 13,530 square metres of employment floorspace over the plan period; taking into consideration existing commitments, this leaves a shortfall of circa 12,390 square metres to be allocated through the Local Plan.

Use Class	Requirement to 2043	With planning permission	Shortfall to meet
	sq. m	sq. m	sq. m
Offices E(g)(i)/(ii)	1,220	580	640

Industrial and distribution E(g)(iii)/B2/B8	4,760	560	4,200
E(g)(B1-B8)	7,570	0	7,570
Total	13,550 sq. m	1,140 sq. m	**12,390 sq. m**

Source: NFNPA Economic Needs Assessment 2025

9.15 Provision of this amount of additional floorspace represents a challenge for the Authority, given that the existing employment stock is both varied in terms of size, type, and quality, and is dispersed across the National Park. Indeed, the bulk of the existing stock comprises small sites of less than a hectare. Consequently, the Authority has identified a strategic employment allocation on Solent Freeport land at Fawley Waterside (Policy SP5). In addition to this, the priority for the Local Plan is to focus on maximising opportunities through the redevelopment, refurbishment, and on-site intensification of existing sites and premises.

9.16 In relation to sustainable development that is appropriate within a nationally designated area, throughout the National Park the Local Plan will support:

- suitable reuse and extension of existing employment buildings;
- retention and redevelopment of existing employment sites for a wider range of employment uses;
- retention of existing employment, retail and leisure sites;
- farm diversification to suitable uses to support the local economy.

9.17 The diverse nature of the local economy means that it does not rely heavily on traditional business uses that need bespoke office and industrial spaces. Consequently, the Authority will encourage the redevelopment of redundant brownfield employment sites for employment use by supporting a wider range of business uses, other than storage and warehousing. Proposals for small-scale starter units/offices and rural business units will be considered favourably. However, the redevelopment of existing employment sites for general warehousing purposes will not be encouraged, as this type of development does not generate significant employment opportunities relative to the space required; such development typically results in additional traffic and can have a greater impact on the landscape.

9.18 Given the long history of business development that spans a wide range of economic sectors, it is anticipated that employment development will continue to come forward that will support the well-being, vitality and viability of the National Park's communities. The priority will be to locate such services within the settlement boundaries of the Defined Villages to take advantage of existing facilities and transport links, where possible. However, a considerable number of current employment sites are located outside of the settlement boundaries, and it will be important to enable some further business development of an appropriate scale where this helps to improve the long-term sustainability and resilience of these more rural communities.

9.19 Retaining employment sites also aims to avoid creating unsustainable settlements with little or no employment, thus increasing out-commuting to jobs beyond the National Park. It is important to recognise that existing employment sites are under pressure from higher-value land uses such as housing, particularly given the high level of house prices within the National Park. As there are limited alternative sites, it is important to retain existing sites for employment use to ensure a prosperous local economy and to secure employment opportunities for local residents in the future. Proposals to change use from an employment site to other non-employment uses, will therefore be required to provide evidence of marketing and economic viability, to demonstrate that there is no market demand for the site or premises in their current use, or any use within the same use class, for a sustained period, to be able to ensure that all opportunities to sell/let for a suitable employment use have been explored.

Policy SP55: Maintaining and improving business floorspace

Within the Defined Villages, small-scale new employment development and redevelopment of existing sites that fall within Use Class E(g) and B2, will be permitted where:

a) the form and layout of the site is suitable for employment purposes;
b) there is no detrimental impact on surrounding uses in terms of design, amenity and traffic/parking impacts.

Outside of the Defined Villages, small-scale employment development that falls within Use Class E(g) and B2, and contributes to the sustainability of local communities, will be permitted in appropriate locations through:

c) reuse, extension and/or intensification of existing sites; and

d) redevelopment of existing employment sites; and

e) farm diversification schemes, taking into consideration:

(i) impact on the environment, local landscape and amenity of the area; and

(ii) capacity of the site to accommodate any new buildings or extensions, and associated increases in activity; and

(iii) levels of traffic movement and parking provision.

Particular encouragement will be given to small businesses offering flexible startup / move-on space.

Support will be given to businesses that help to maintain the land-based economy and cultural heritage of the National Park and contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities.

Development which would result in the loss of an existing employment building or site, will only be permitted where the loss of that use can be justified by having regard to the following considerations:

- market signals indicate that the premises/site are unlikely to be utilised for a suitable employment use; or
- the site is not appropriate for the continuation of its employment use due to significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area.

9.20 In addition, throughout the National Park there are a number of existing buildings in use for employment[62] purposes, but not within the setting of an employment site. In principle, the Authority would encourage proposals to ensure that these buildings are retained for an employment activity, although in some cases it may be necessary for these to be extended to provide more usable floorspace.

Policy DP56: Redevelopment and extension to existing employment buildings

The redevelopment and/or intensification of existing employment buildings for industrial, office, business and low-key storage uses will be permitted throughout the National Park where:

a) there would be minimal additional effect on the visual impact of the site in the landscape, or on the amenities of nearby properties, or on traffic or other disturbances from the site, including parking and pollution;

b) where feasible, redevelopment schemes should comprehensively deal with the full extent of the site; and

The limited extension of existing buildings will be permitted where it:

c) would not materially increase the level of impact of the activity on the site.

In all instances, the proposal should:

- be contained within the existing site boundary;
- be appropriate to their surroundings in terms of scale, design and materials.

The land-based economy

9.21 The land-based economy in the New Forest encompasses agriculture, forestry, commoning, and other traditional rural businesses. Whilst providing a reasonable proportion of local jobs, farming, commoning, forestry and woodland management remain vital in maintaining the land use management practices that help conserve the landscape character, cultural identity and special qualities of the National Park.

9.22 The National Park Partnership Plan outlines the important role these activities play in the rural economy, particularly following the departure of the UK from the EU and subsequent changes in funding. Farmers and land managers in protected landscapes (National Parks) can apply for funding from the Farming in Protected

[62] Falling within Class E(g), B2 and B8 of Use Classes Order

Landscapes (FiPL) programme until March 2029. The programme offered grants for projects that:

- help nature recover;
- reduce the impacts of climate change;
- protect and enhance cultural heritage;
- improve access to and enjoyment of our beautiful landscapes.

9.23 In the National Park, the practice of commoning is recognised as being integral to the maintenance of the essential landscape character, mosaic of habitats and cultural heritage of the area. Whilst Commoners have rights to graze their animals in the historic area of common grazing, they also require back-up grazing areas in the enclosed agricultural lands. Consequently, it is important that agricultural land, which is used for these purposes, is not developed or lost to other uses. Further information on the pressures on back up grazing land is available in the Back-up land report 2025.

9.24 Farming and farm diversification will be given particular support to enhance or maintain the characteristic landscapes and habitats, provide local produce, allow greater public access and/or create local employment. Diversification of a scale or extent which is likely to provide an incentive to reduce the long-term agricultural operation of the land will not be supported.

9.25 Forestry has been an important feature of the New Forest over the past 150 years, providing local employment and training and enabling much of the timber to be sourced and processed locally. It will be important for the industry to adapt to changing markets for forestry products, including wood fuel, and continue to champion sustainable production in the local context.

Policy SP57: The land-based economy

Land-based businesses that help maintain the overall character and cultural identity of the National Park will be supported by:

a) working with key organisations to ensure the future viability of commoning through:

(i) enabling affordable housing for Commoners that includes land suitable for holdings (as set out in Policy DP44); and

(ii) maintaining the supply of land available for back-up grazing on the enclosed lands; resisting the loss of back-up grazing through development or change of use.

b) supporting farming and forestry that would be beneficial to the New Forest through:

(i) the provision of new agricultural and forestry buildings subject to Policy DP58;

(ii) farm diversification where this would help to sustain the long-term agricultural operation of the land and would be:

- agricultural diversification based on an extensive system of land management; or
- non-agricultural diversification, through the reuse of farm buildings in line with Policy DP62 or Policy DP59, and where it can be demonstrated that the new use would remain ancillary to, and support, the farming business;

(iii) helping to support markets for local produce and products.

9.26 The following policy seeks to enable development necessary to sustain agricultural activity, including forestry and commoning. However, development associated with agriculture can have a substantial environmental impact, and the Authority will not support buildings or other structures that would be damaging to the ecology, landscape or character of the National Park.

Policy DP58: New agricultural and forestry related development

Permission will be granted for buildings, structures and linked development required for agriculture or forestry purposes where:

a) there is a functional need for the building/structure, and its scale is commensurate with that need and its setting in the landscape;

b) the building/structure is designed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;

c) the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business, unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location; and

d) they do not involve large or obtrusive structures or generate a level of activity which would have a detrimental effect on the National Park.

9.27 A more sustainable alternative to the construction of new buildings is the reuse of existing buildings, providing opportunities for business and employment development to ensure the provision of future employment opportunities for local communities in the National Park. The following policy supports the reuse of farm buildings:

Policy DP59: Reuse of farm buildings

The reuse of existing farm buildings, where these support a farm diversification scheme and the main agricultural or forestry enterprise, will be supported where the building:

a) is appropriate in scale and appearance to its location, and should be capable of conversion without significant extension or detriment to itself, its heritage significance or its surroundings; and

b) is structurally sound and capable of reoccupation without rebuilding.

Proposals for farm buildings that do not relate to a farm diversification scheme should be offered to Commoners in the first instance, to facilitate the continued existence of commoning in the New Forest.

Only residential uses set out in Policy SP29 will be supported.

Only after the above matters have been given due consideration, will consideration be given to other alternative activities, such as accommodation for tourism purposes.

9.28 This policy is intended to enable the reuse or change of use of existing buildings which are appropriate to their New Forest setting, are a reusable resource capable of conversion without significant reconstruction and are on sites which meet highway and other local authority standards. The policy enables the use of a building to change to an alternative use, which is considered to be appropriate in the New Forest under the policies of this plan.

9.29 Given the importance that land management practices have in maintaining the landscape, the Authority will support farm diversification schemes which reuse existing farm buildings in accordance with Policies SP62 and DP59, where the proposal relates to the diversification of an existing and continuing farm business. However, where proposals for farm buildings do not relate to a farm diversification scheme, the Authority will take into account the potential of the buildings to continue in some form of beneficial agricultural use, in particular one which serves the interests of the New Forest, both in terms of supporting its special qualities and in delivering its Partnership Plan.

9.30 The Authority has a responsibility to ensure that, wherever practical, New Forest Commoners should be given the opportunity of utilising the existing stock of agricultural/forestry buildings. While some agricultural buildings may no longer be required by a particular farm, they may still be suitable for use by Commoners, e.g., for storage of feedstuffs or housing animals, or for conversion to a Commoners' dwelling. Accordingly, the Authority will need to be satisfied that

agricultural and forestry buildings cannot continue to fulfil any beneficial agricultural use before giving favourable consideration for their reuse independently of a farming enterprise.

9.31 For buildings required for pony and horse breeding – whether new build or created through the reuse of existing structures – as part of a commercial operation carried out by Commoners in conjunction with grazing the New Forest, the Authority will need to assess the impacts of any increased grazing pressures on the Open Forest and be satisfied that the enterprise is commercially viable.

9.32 A planning condition will normally be imposed, requiring the building to be removed and the land restored to its former condition should the building no longer be required for such purposes. In assessing the functional need for a building, first consideration will be given to the conversion of any existing building under the terms of Policy DP59.

9.33 The reuse of purpose-built or prefabricated agricultural buildings, e.g., glasshouses or prefabricated barns, particularly those of a large scale, are unlikely to be considered favourably under this policy, as such buildings are often out of character with the New Forest landscape. This policy does not apply to agricultural buildings that are subject to a planning condition requiring their removal on the cessation of agricultural use.

Retail

9.34 The NPPF states that to support a strong rural economy, local plans should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Both large and small villages play a positive role in providing services for the communities of the National Park, and the Local Plan seeks to protect that role.

9.35 Consequently, within the boundaries of the Defined Villages, the aim is to protect existing facilities and allow for redevelopment and changes of use where these contribute to the vitality of the area. Opportunities for small retail outlets associated with the rural economy will also be supported where appropriate.

9.36 While national policy requires planning authorities to define retail areas and set out policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations, given the size of settlements within the National Park (there are no ‘town centres’), the Authority has taken a proportionate approach through the identification of local retail frontages.

9.37 Local distinctiveness has an important part to play in the local economy. Many existing producers and new businesses related to the rural economy are benefiting from this through the local produce and products market. There is widespread recognition of the New Forest Marque, which is awarded to produce which has been grown, reared, caught, brewed, produced or processed within the New

Forest and an increasing number of small businesses, farmers markets and farm shops are using this New Forest brand. Proposals for farm shops will be considered under Policy DP61.

9.38 Successive local plans have sought to safeguard the role in meeting some of the day-to-day retail needs of local residents and visitors to the shopping frontages in the Larger Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway. This has typically been achieved by requiring that, where possible, a proportion of the designated shopping/commercial frontages (as shown on the Policies Map) is retained for retail uses formerly listed within Class A. However, changes to the Use Classes Order have broadened the list of activities now categorised under Class E 'Commercial, Business and Service' and Class F2 'Local Community Facilities' deemed to be suitable within a shopping/commercial centre and Policy DP60 addresses this accordingly.

Policy DP60: Loss of local retail facilities

Within the defined retail frontages (shown on the Policies Map) in the Larger Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, proposals involving the change of use of ground floor premises from retail to other uses will be supported where planning permission is required and the proposals:

a) support the vitality and viability of the frontage;

b) respect and enhance the existing character of the frontage, including the historic character and intrinsic qualities of the built environment within conservation areas, if applicable.

Elsewhere, proposals that would involve the loss of a valued local service or retail facility will be resisted where the loss of the service or retail facility would cause harm for those living within the village or locality, in terms of its vitality, unless the loss is part of an agreed plan to provide improved local services in an equally accessible location.

In all cases, proportionate evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the premises are no longer required for retail or other Class E(a-f) or F2 uses.

9.39 Facilities such as shops and pubs can play an essential role in the vitality and viability of villages and local communities. They have the potential to act as hubs and meeting places for the local community, often in combination with other activities. The Authority will therefore consider carefully the role that the premises/site does or could provide as part of the assessment of any application, for the loss of a local facility or service.

9.40 The growing importance of local produce to the New Forest economy is acknowledged and it is therefore appropriate that the Local Plan includes a local planning policy supporting appropriate small-scale retail development outside of the defined village boundaries. Farm shops which sell goods produced on the farm do not normally require planning permission.

Policy DP61: Retail development outside of the Defined Village boundaries

Outside of the Defined Village boundaries, small-scale convenience shops within rural settlements that serve local needs, and farm shops that are part of a farm diversification scheme, will be permitted, together with small-scale extensions of existing shops.

Any development should not extend into the open countryside or have impacts on adjoining land uses.

The potential effects of farm shops on other shops in neighbouring villages will be assessed.

Tourism

9.41 The New Forest National Park's unique environment attracts millions of visitors, and the tourism industry is of considerable importance to the National Park's economy. Spending associated with leisure trips – there are over 15 million day visits each year[63], which has been increasing year on year since 2013[64] – is consequently significant to the Park, supporting the accommodation, retail and other business sectors, and providing employment, thus supporting local communities.

9.42 The development and implementation of sustainable tourism in the New Forest involves a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The key destination management role is operated by the New Forest Tourism Association, which has merged with the Go New Forest Community Interest Company to promote and market the New Forest, and encourage sustainable tourism. The Authority is supportive of the delivery of sustainable tourism and recognises the important contribution it makes to the National Park's communities and its economy.

9.43 The Authority therefore aims to support sustainable tourism and provide opportunities for enjoying the New Forest's special qualities without compromising its purpose to conserve and enhance the National Park's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. To achieve this, new tourism development will, in general, be supported.

Policy SP62: Sustainable tourism development

1. Sustainable tourism development will be supported where it provides opportunities for the understanding, enjoyment and enhancement of the special qualities of the National Park. This will be facilitated by:
    a) supporting small-scale development of new visitor facilities and accommodation within the Defined Villages, as appropriate to the scale and setting of the site;

[63] New Forest Partnership Plan (2022)
[64] With the exception of 2020. Source: STEAM report for New Forest National Park

b) supporting alterations and limited extensions to existing small-scale visitor attractions, facilities and accommodation where these do not materially increase the level of impact on activity on the site, and are contained within the existing site boundary;
c) outside of the Defined Villages, visitor facilities will be supported through the reuse or extension of existing buildings, and visitor accommodation will be considered as part of a farm diversification scheme as outlined in Policy DP59;
d) retaining where possible, existing serviced visitor accommodation where it contributes to the sustainability of local communities; and
e) supporting opportunities to relieve visitor pressures where this would assist in the conservation or enhancement of internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites.

2. Proposals for the enlargement and diversification of major tourist attractions and sites offering accommodation facilities should be justified and supported by *Whole Estate Plans* to ensure that they remain appropriate and proportionate in the context and setting of a National Park. These should include but not be limited to, an assessment of:

a) identification of site opportunities and constraints;
b) priority to utilising existing buildings and structures;
c) maximising sustainable construction and transport opportunities, setting out how the proposal promotes sustainable development;
d) identification of clear mitigation measures for significant adverse impacts on local communities;
e) delivery of the National Park's purposes and related duty; and
f) opportunities for sustainable active travel and public transport links.

9.44 Small-scale development of new visitor facilities – meaning the infrastructure and services/amenities designed to meet the needs of tourists and overnight accommodation – will be supported within the boundaries of the Defined Villages. These villages already provide pubs/cafes, shops and other services used by visitors, and together with their access by public transport, make them more sustainable locations for tourism developments. Elsewhere in the National Park, impacts on the landscape and natural beauty of the area are likely to be more significant and accordingly, new facilities and accommodation are not acceptable.

9.45 The New Forest is home to a number of large tourist attractions such as Paultons Park, the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, and Exbury Gardens. There are also several large holiday parks offering overnight lodge and camping/caravan accommodation. These major attractions and supporting facilities are a vital part of the local economy, however the impacts of these already substantial enterprises, can present challenges for the Authority in terms of delivering its purposes.

9.46 It is also important to recognise that existing serviced accommodation is under pressure from higher value forms of development, such as housing. Given that serviced accommodation makes a significant contribution to the local economy by providing employment and supporting businesses and local produce markets, retaining the existing stock is considered important. In the case of an extension to existing serviced accommodation, this will be supported provided the extension is modest in scale and also operates as serviced accommodation.

9.47 Existing holiday parks and campsites provide significant opportunities to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park. They are well provided for in and around the New Forest and this means that no additional camping facilities[65] are needed.

9.48 The New Forest National Park contains over three times the average number of camping and touring caravan bedspaces per square kilometre than found in any other English national park, and consequently there is considerable recreational pressure on protected habitats. Moreover, the New Forest has a higher proportion of un-serviced versus serviced visitor accommodation. This amount of un-serviced accommodation is in addition to the high number of locations which have licences for seasonal 'pop-up' campsites.

Policy DP63: Holiday parks and camp sites

New campsites and extensions to existing holiday parks, caravan or camping/glamping sites will only be permitted to enable the removal of pitches from sensitive areas by the relocation to a less sensitive area, providing:

a) there would be overall environmental benefits;

b) there would be no increase in the overall site area or site capacity; and

c) the area where pitches or other facilities are removed from would be fully restored to an appropriate New Forest landscape, and any existing use rights are relinquished.

9.49 Although many sites are seasonal, they can have a significant impact on the New Forest environment, particularly those located in areas of designated nature conservation importance. Proposals for ancillary developments to support seasonal campsites, such as hard standings and toilets, will not be viewed favourably. In the longer term, it would be of benefit to the New Forest environment to reduce the overall number of camping and caravan pitches in the most sensitive areas.

9.50 Due to the increase in 28-day ‘pop up’ campsites, which account for some extra 7,000 overnight stays in the Forest, an Article 4 Direction was introduced across the National Park in September 2022. The consequences are that where a ‘pop up’ camp site could previously happen under Permitted Development; this now requires a formal planning application to ensure that this type of development is properly planned and controlled.

[65] Including all forms of self-catering camping and caravan accommodation

9.51 A further Article 4 Direction was introduced in February 2024, in response to the Government's relaxation of permitted development rights in respect of temporary campsites. As a result, the Authority has published guidance on this matter, which explains in more detail the implications of both Article 4 Directions and the need for temporary camping uses to address their recreational impacts on designated nature conservation sites and the need to meet requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

Telecommunications and digital infrastructure

9.52 Modern communications infrastructure delivering high-quality mobile and broadband internet services is vital for both a modern economy, and society in general. Reliance on communications technologies becomes even greater when other services are declining. High speed broadband and mobile coverage can be patchy in rural areas, which can have an adverse impact on people working from home or those businesses reliant on the internet.

9.53 In January 2023, the government published a National Parks Accord under its Building Digital UK programme, its purpose being to see the proactive roll out of fixed-line gigabit-capable broadband services and other technologies, and their associated benefits to communities, in ways that protect and enhance the special qualities of National Parks. The Accord expressed the following objectives:

- to maximise the delivery of gigabit-capable broadband to rural areas of National Parks to facilitate business growth, support home working, support rural services, strengthen communities, and improve quality of life in ways that protect the special qualities of National Parks and their settings;
- to explore opportunities to deploy innovative technologies, to maximise coverage and speed of roll out of broadband services through removing cost barriers to deployment, to explore opportunities to coordinate works with other infrastructure projects, and to positively enhance the landscapes of National Parks where this is possible; and
- to maintain a positive working relationship between all parties at national and local levels to allow the above to be achieved.

9.54 The Accord covers a number of detailed points including the consideration of all design options such as undergrounding, site sharing, and use of existing infrastructure wherever possible to reduce the need for new infrastructure. There is also reference to the need for environmental impact assessments, and where work is to be undertaken in an area with a large number of international environmental designations, procedures under the Habitats Regulations would also need to be adhered to.

9.55 It is a requirement for works associated with telecommunications infrastructure implementation to need the agreement of the landowner; in the New Forest this is more complex with the works potentially proposed on Crown Land and therefore consent of the Verderers would be required.

9.56 Consequently, whilst some applications for the installation of equipment could fall under permitted development, others may require planning permission, and the Authority wishes to influence their siting and design. In principle, support will be given to proposals which deliver high-quality and reliable communications, but keep the number of supporting masts and sites to a minimum and protect the National Park's special qualities:

Policy SP64: Telecommunications and digital infrastructure

The provision of infrastructure for radio, broadband and other telecommunications/information technology will only be permitted where it is of a scale and design appropriate to the National Park and helps meet the digital needs of local communities and businesses.

1. Development will only be permitted where:
   a) evidence demonstrates the service cannot be delivered less harmfully by installing equipment on existing masts, buildings or other structures;
   b) the equipment is located and designed to minimise its impact; and
   c) there is no unacceptable adverse visual impact upon the character of the locality and the wider landscape, or the National Park's special qualities;
   d) the equipment does not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the built environment and/or its heritage significance and tranquillity.
2. A condition will be applied, requiring removal of all digital / telecommunications structures and equipment, and the reinstatement of the site to its former condition, should the technology become redundant.

Emerging technologies and employment sectors

9.57 The NPPF makes specific reference to the need for local planning authorities to plan for the growth of the modern economy by identifying and addressing the specific locational needs of sectors and uses, such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics. Given the nature of the National Park and its inherent special qualities, it is unlikely that a site suitable for the scale of development envisaged, and with the uses mentioned, is likely to come forward during the plan period.

9.58 Locally, the obvious opportunity for such activities is part of the Solent Freeport Fawley Waterside tax site. The Economic Needs Assessment acknowledges that the whole site, not just the portion within the National Park, has potential to generate 4,000 jobs in research and development, and 700 jobs in advanced manufacturing and engineering. With a corresponding increase for both Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and higher technical skills such as data analytics, Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and automation.

9.59 Accordingly, Policy SP5 Land to north of Fawley Waterside allocates land in the National Park for around 12,000 square metres of mixed-use employment land, which could accommodate such activities. Proposals for larger scale development would be required to address the policy tests set out by the Government for major development in National Parks in the NPPF and also Policy SP4 of this Local Plan. These include the consideration of alternatives for developing within the nationally protected landscape of the National Park.

10. Transport and Access

Strategic Objectives to support transport and access:

9. Reduce the impacts of traffic and enhance access to the National Park by supporting sustainable transport and active travel within the Park.

To support Partnership Plan Themes: Climate, People, Place, Partnership

Reflecting the following special qualities:

- Strong and distinctive local communities
- A healthy environment
- Tranquillity
- The New Forest's outstanding natural beauty

10.1 The National Park has an extensive road network, with a number of major trunk routes and several A-roads that carry high volumes of traffic from commuters, residents and visitors alike. These high-volume major roads create significant severance issues for sustainable and active travel users, due to a lack of safe crossing points.

10.2 Unlike many national parks, the New Forest is easily accessible by train via four railway stations located within the National Park at Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Sway and Beaulieu Road, as well as New Milton, Totton, Hinton Admiral and Lymington branch line just beyond the Park's boundary; these are all on the London Waterloo to Weymouth line. As such, there are real opportunities to encourage arrival by train, although these stations are currently poorly connected to other forms of public transport and active travel. Whilst several bus routes cross the Forest, the services are greatly reduced in the evenings and at weekends.

10.3 The New Forest Tour, a seasonal open-top bus, is aimed at both visitors and residents, and operates during the summer months, with three interlinked routes across the Forest stopping at popular villages and major attractions within the National Park. The Tour links to rail stations at Brockenhurst, Lymington Pier, Ashurst and New Milton, as well as to ferry services to the Isle of Wight and Southampton. During 2024, around 35,000 journeys were made by people exploring the Park on the New Forest Tour during the 11-week summer season – saving an estimated 200,000 private car miles.

10.4 Across the Park, traffic volumes are high, especially during the summer months, and trends indicate a general increase each year on a variety of routes. The National Park receives an estimated 15 million day visits each year, with only 7% of visitors travelling car free.

10.5 The main South Coast National Cycle Network Route 2 crosses the New Forest, linking Southampton and Portsmouth with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

10.6 National predictions[66] cite an increase in total car travel of between 8% and 54% (depending on different scenarios) by 2060. Combined with the impacts of a potential 150,000 additional dwellings proposed in South Hampshire, Wiltshire and South East Dorset between now and 2039, additional demands on the road network within the National Park will be generated.

10.7 The increase in traffic within and around the Park raises significant issues. Campaigns in recent years have seen a reduction in the numbers of Commoners' livestock (ponies, cattle, pigs, sheep and donkeys) killed or injured on the Forest's unfenced roads, with 2024 seeing the lowest numbers of livestock fatalities in history. There were 37 animals killed in accidents on the roads in 2024, down from 42 in 2023, compared to 68 animals in 2014. Every animal killed is a loss to the Forest and its Commoners, and the Authority is working with partners to develop initiatives to reduce the numbers of accidents year on year, including the consideration of traffic calming measures where appropriate.

10.8 Traffic speeds can be a concern to local communities and can contribute to human and animal accidents. Hampshire County Council has introduced 30 mph speed limits in many New Forest villages and advisory 20 mph limits in the vicinity of many schools.

10.9 Vehicular traffic also detracts from the tranquillity of the New Forest, and can conflict with other road users, especially on more minor roads. Over the coming decades, with a potential increase in recreational pressure on the New Forest and a drive to increase active travel, it will be important to develop further education and traffic management initiatives to ensure that quality of life, environmental quality and experience of other road users is not undermined.

10.10 Reducing CO2 emissions from transport is a major priority. The Government's Decarbonising Transport Strategy (2021) sets out the commitments to fully decarbonise transport by 2050, including greater promotion of cycling and walking. New Local Transport Plans adopted by Hampshire County Council (2024) and Wiltshire Council (2025) place a strong focus on sustainable transport and reducing dependency on the private car.

10.11 These principles are carried through in a number of other policies in this Local Plan. In particular, the Spatial Strategy (set out in Chapter 4) is based on the objective of reducing the need to travel, and therefore the location of development is based on the most sustainable settlements in the National Park, which have the best access to public transport, including rail, and existing community facilities and services. This also reflects the idea of the '20-minute neighbourhood', as set out in the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This aims to enable people to access many of their daily needs within a 20-minute round-trip walk of their home, as far as is possible within a rural area like the New Forest.

[66] National Road Traffic Projections, Department for Transport (2022)

Transport infrastructure

10.12 Policy DP65 supports development that reduces the need to travel, and prioritises access for walking, wheeling and cycling. 'Walking and wheeling' represents the action of moving as a pedestrian, regardless of whether someone is walking or wheeling unaided or using any kind of wheeled mobility aid, such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, prams or buggies. More advice can be found in the Rural Active Travel Guidance produced by Hampshire County Council to support Hampshire's LTP4.

10.13 The Healthy Streets Approach is referenced in the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 and is a holistic framework, based around ten Healthy Streets Indicators, for creating environments that feel welcoming, comfortable, and safe for walking and cycling, regardless of confidence, age and ability. Development proposals should set out how these principles have been taken into account, where appropriate.

10.14 Furthermore, Policy C3 of Hampshire LTP4 sets out further information about how proposals should take full consideration of all road users through the Road User Utility Framework.

Policy DP65: Transport infrastructure

1. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have been designed to:
   a) reduce the need to travel;
   b) promote sustainable forms of transport appropriate to their particular location and related to the uses and users of the development. In order of preference this should consider:
      (i) walking and wheeling;
      (ii) cycling;
      (iii) public transport;
   c) provide for safe and convenient access for all modes.

2. Where additional or enhanced transport infrastructure is proposed to support new development (either within or outside the National Park), this must be provided as part of the development, and will be supported where it can be demonstrated that their siting and appearance:
   a) minimises harmful impact on tranquillity, visual amenity, including the character and appearance of the locality and the wider landscape character; and
   b) will not result in significant adverse impacts upon features of ecological, archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

   Where any harmful impacts on the above features occurs, mitigation measures will be required.

3. Development proposals which are likely to have significant transport implications will need to be accompanied by a transport assessment or transport statement to show how car-based travel will be minimised, and sustainable transport and active travel encouraged.

10.15 Only a relatively limited amount of small-scale development is proposed for the National Park. Additional new or upgraded transport infrastructure is not normally needed to service this level of development. However, there may be large-scale developments proposed beyond the Park's boundaries that require supporting transport infrastructure within, as well as outside, the National Park. Such proposals will need to clearly evaluate the potential impact on the Park and its setting in any planning application.

10.16 Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council, the Authority will use the transportation contributions it collects from larger development schemes within the National Park, through implementation of Policy SP6, to help mitigate the likely effects of increased levels of trip generation within the Park by addressing accessibility, road safety, air quality and traffic congestion.

10.17 Of greater concern, is the impact of increased trip generation on the National Park

arising from development outside the Park's boundary; some 150,000 dwellings are proposed for South Hampshire, Wiltshire and South East Dorset during the period up to 2039. It is important that the likely impacts are researched and fully understood to allow the implementation of measures which will mitigate the impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

10.18 The National Park Authority will take account of national transport policy and the Hampshire and Wiltshire Local Transport Plans regarding the consideration of any major new traffic or demand management measures over the course of this Local Plan. Any such measures will not be considered without further detailed research and public consultation and will need to evaluate the potential impacts on the National Park, as set out in Policy DP65 above. This will apply to any transport infrastructure changes proposed within the National Park to support any future development proposals outside the Park's boundary, such as the Strategic Land Reserve at Dibden Bay and Fawley Waterside.

10.19 Where proposed development would generate significant amounts of traffic movement, then a detailed Transport Statement or Transport Assessment will be required, as set out in national planning policy. This will be identified on a case-by-case basis.

Parking standards

10.20 The Hampshire Local Transport Plan 2024-2050 recognises that access to sustainable modes of transport is often more limited in rural areas, and identifies a major challenge for the area to be 'Improving accessibility for people without access to a car, while recognising that the car is likely to remain the main mode of travel for many people in rural areas' such as the New Forest. Similar objectives are echoed in The Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2025-2038.

10.21 These standards are set out in Annex 3 of this Local Plan and identify the required level of car parking for new residential and non-residential development. Policy DP2 (General Development Principles) in this Plan requires all new development proposals to make adequate provision for parking in accordance with the standards in Annex 3. Reduced parking provision may be acceptable in certain circumstances, such as where there is relatively good accessibility by public transport, or where alternative capacity is clearly demonstrated. However, the preference is for parking spaces to be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling. It is recommended that applicants also consider the Authority's Design Code in Annex 2 which sets out general guidance on the design and integration of parking within new development.

10.22 In addition, objective 3.1 of the National Park Authority's Landscape Action Plan (2013) seeks to encourage traffic management and road design solutions that reflect their rural context and feature a landscape-led approach.

Policy SP66: Sustainable transport and access

The Authority will promote safer access and more sustainable forms of transport to, and within, the National Park for access to services and amenities and for enjoyment, health and well-being, aligning with the core principles of the emerging New Forest Traffic Management Strategy, where appropriate by supporting:

a) local public transport initiatives such as the New Forest Tour;

b) the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans in and around the New Forest National Park;

c) safe and inclusive public transport and active travel connectivity and associated supporting infrastructure;

d) community transport initiatives such as the New Forest Community Rail Partnership;

e) appropriate design-led improvements to make existing paths, tracks and roads safer and more user-friendly;

f) opportunities for the creation of a more joined-up network of routes for non-motorised transport through the protection and enhancement of PRoW networks and other active travel routes;

g) appropriate improvements to public transport facilities;

h) the safeguarding of disused railway lines and roads from development that would compromise their future reuse as sustainable transport routes; and

i) appropriate small scale electric vehicle charging facilities, where feasible.

Access

10.23 National planning policy and guidance and the local transport plans all emphasise the need to reduce reliance on the car and improve public transport and access to a range of services and community facilities. Creating safe and inclusive environments which facilitate active travel will not only support the climate change agenda but support the mental and physical health and well-being of residents and visitors alike. This includes supporting better connections between public transport and active travel, together with the provision of related facilities such as lockers or secure cycle parking.

10.24 The dispersed nature of settlements in the National Park, coupled with seasonal congestion and a limited public bus network, can create barriers to accessing local services and amenities or visitor facilities. In recent years there have been reductions to some less well-used public bus services, which have added to the problem. The National Park Authority recognises the importance of maintaining an effective network of public transport and the added value that community transport initiatives can bring.

10.25 The revised Hampshire Local Transport Plan (2024) now focuses on enabling and

providing opportunities for walking, cycling, public and shared transport, to give people more choice about how they travel. Reducing dependency on the car, especially for shorter local journeys and for longer trips where sustainable alternatives offer an attractive and viable option, will help to reduce the number of vehicles using the road network. The Local Transport Plan will be supported by Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), including the New Forest LCWIP (2025) and a New Forest Transport Strategy. The latter document is a commitment in the current New Forest Partnership Plan

10.26 The New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) seeks to identify a utility trips network with the aim of providing strategic links within and between key settlements; together with a leisure network connecting car parks and campsites with key leisure attractions and incorporating already-popular leisure routes, core walking zones and local access plans within some settlements. Managing recreational pressure on designated nature conservation sites continues to be an important issue in the National Park and will be pertinent when any of the proposed routes in the New Forest LCWIP come forward for implementation. It is likely that any such proposals will need to be accompanied by a Habitats Regulation Assessment as appropriate.

10.27 Although, outside of the Crown Lands, there are more than 325 kilometres of rights of way within the National Park, the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035, together with the Wiltshire Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2015-2025, highlight the need for improved connectivity of routes, with particular emphasis on encouraging suitable routes for less mobile people. This is important for the New Forest, given the forecast of an ageing population, and reflects the objectives of national planning policy, which promotes accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. It also supports the aims established in the 'Recreation Management Memorandum of Understanding for the New Forest' drawn up by the National Park Authority in partnership with Natural England, Forestry England, the Verderers of the New Forest, New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council. This sets out the guiding principles for the management of recreation across the New Forest and will be used by relevant statutory organisations.

10.28 The New Forest National Park Partnership Plan sets out the following priorities for the period 2022 to 2027 to increase sustainable travel by:

- producing and delivering an agreed New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP);
- campaigning for lower speed limits across the Forest where appropriate and evidenced, to secure quieter, slower and reduced traffic impacts;
- developing a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to sustainable transport through the relevant Local Transport Plans and by developing a New Forest Transport Strategy;
- supporting bids for schemes that enable us to decarbonise the transport system.

10.29 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 the National Park Authority is the statutory access authority. However, responsibility for the maintenance of rights of way remains with Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council as the relevant highway authorities.

10.30 The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 introduced new powers to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the coastline of England, including that within the New Forest National Park. Natural England is responsible for developing a suitable route in consultation with local communities and organisations, which will be subject to restrictions in certain areas for nature conservation or land management purposes.

11. Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring

11.1 The National Park Authority produces a Monitoring Report on an annual basis to assess the effectiveness of the Local Plan policies and to consider whether they are achieving the intended objectives and targets, or if trends indicate that an early review of one or more policies is necessary. Reference is also made to the relevant organisations that influence the implementation of these policies, particularly where these are taken forward in other plans and strategies.

11.2 In addition, the Authority is required to publish a State of the Park Report, describing any changes to the condition of the National Park through the monitoring of indicators relating to objectives in the New Forest National Park Management Plan. This document provides data and background information to set the context for the implementation of the Local Plan policies.

Implementation and delivery

11.3 There are numerous key organisations involved in the day-to-day administration and management of the National Park. Many are statutory agencies with responsibilities covering a wider geographical area (such as the county councils, Natural England, Forestry England and the Environment Agency), others are local land managers or service providers (including the district and borough councils). Parish and Town Councils also have an important role in many aspects of management at a local level and in reflecting the wider views of their communities.

11.4 Although the Local Plan anticipates a relatively limited level of development in the National Park up to 2043, the detailed assessment of infrastructure needs is set out in the Authority's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Cross-boundary issues

11.5 The importance of cross-boundary partnership work is critical to the functioning of the National Park. Close working relationships with neighbouring authorities have been developed and fostered under the 'duty to co-operate', as originally introduced through the Localism Act 2011. This will continue, facilitating a more integrated approach to a variety of cross-boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure, habitat protection, and housing provision.

11.6 In particular, Chapter 6 clarifies that the Authority will work with Natural England and other local authorities, as well as with a range of relevant stakeholders, to develop a strategic approach to prevent adverse effects on internationally designated nature conservation sites from recreational pressures. As part of any strategic approach, it will be important to monitor potential effects to ensure that any mitigation measures are effective.

Monitoring indicators

INDICATOR	TARGET	DATA SOURCE
OBJECTIVE 1: Protect and enhance the natural capital and environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the diverse range of habitats and species.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objectives: Maintain and enhance the extent and quality of designated sites for biodiversity conservation, habitats, geology, and biodiversity networks within and surrounding the National Park. Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape of the National Park, National Landscapes, and green infrastructure corridors.		
Local Plan Policies: SP1, DP2, SP7, SP11, SP12, SP13, SP14, SP15, SP20, SP22, SP23		
Mitigation measures funded by developer contributions	-	New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA)
Planning applications refused on landscape grounds	-	NFNPA
Planning permissions granted contrary to the Environment Agency advice on water quality	Zero applications	NFNPA, Environment Agency
Planning applications refused on the basis of adverse impacts on the coast	-	NFNPA
Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including: (i) change in BAP priority habitats and species; and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional or sub-regional significance	Net increase in areas of biodiversity importance	Natural England, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
Monitor levels of windfall development within 400m of the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	To ensure potential urban edge impacts of windfall development within 400m are mitigated	NFNPA
Provision of public open space	In line with the Authority's Open Space Standards. No net loss of existing open space	NFNPA
Work with neighbouring authorities to monitor changes in	To establish the trend of movement in critical levels	NFNPA, NFDC, Natural England

air quality – including ammonia and acid deposition – on the New Forest's internationally designated sites	of pollutants for the New Forest's European site and work with partners on a strategic mitigation package if significant effects are likely to affect the integrity of sites	
OBJECTIVE 2: Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the National Park.		
Local Plan Policies: DP2, SP23, SP24, DP25, DP26, DP27, DP28		
Planning applications refused on adverse impacts on the historic environment	Not to allow development that would have adverse impacts on the Park's historic environment	NFNPA
Planning applications refused on design grounds	Not to allow development that would be incompatible with the character and local distinctiveness of the area	NFNPA
OBJECTIVE 3: Plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the landscape, species, character and special qualities and communities of the New Forest, including energy-efficient development		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience by supporting a low-carbon economy, promoting energy efficiency and renewables, and adapting land use and infrastructure to future climate risks.		
Local Plan Policies: SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10, SP20, SP21		
Level and type of renewable and low carbon energy schemes permitted	Increase in numbers of applications permitted	NFNPA
Implementation of water efficiency limit of 100 litres maximum daily allowable usage per person, or any future national standards, whichever is lower	All relevant applications permitted comply with the limit	NFNPA
Planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency or the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) on flooding grounds	Zero applications	NFNPA, Environment Agency, Hampshire LLFA, Wiltshire LLFA
OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.		

Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Support healthy, inclusive, and safe communities by improving access to services, promoting well-being for all ages, and reducing inequalities related to age, disability, deprivation, and rural isolation.		
Local Plan Policies: SP1, DP2, SP6, DP16, DP26, DP27, DP28, SP30, DP51, DP52, DP53, SP54, DP60, DP61		
Proportion of new employment development, dwellings, retail uses and community facilities in the Defined Villages	To ensure the Defined Villages remain the focus for development	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire Council
Density of new dwellings completed	Not to allow development that would be incompatible with the character of the area	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire Council
No. and size of replacement dwellings permitted / completed	Not to allow development that would be incompatible with the character of the area	NFNPA
Planning applications refused on the basis of over-enlargement of a dwelling	Not to allow development that would be incompatible with the character of the area	NFNPA
Levels of developer contributions received and spent	To ensure infrastructure and mitigation measures are implemented	NFNPA
Location and type of community facilities permitted / completed	Net gain in facilities / improved facilities	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council
Loss of retail activity in defined frontages	Monitor defined frontages in Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Ashurst and Sway to ensure they retain retail activities	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council
OBJECTIVE 5: Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs, including the delivery of affordable housing for local people to maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Provide for the full range of housing needs and maximise delivery of affordable housing.		
Local Plan Policies: DP2, SP3, SP9, SP10, SP29, SP31, SP32, SP33, SP34, SP35, SP36, SP37, SP38, SP39, SP40, SP41, SP42, SP43, DP44, DP45, DP46, DP47, SP48, SP49, SP50		
Location and type of new housing permitted and completed	To meet the Local Plan requirement of 950 dwellings between 2024 and 2043 (approx. 50 pa)	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire Council
Location and type of affordable housing permitted and completed	Target of 50% on site allocations and within the Defined Villages; with 100% affordable housing on rural exception sites elsewhere	NFNPA

Applications permitted for agricultural or forestry workers dwellings	-	NFNPA
Net additional pitches permitted for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	12 Gypsy and Travellers pitch required up to 2043 6 Travelling Showpeople plots required up to 2043	NFNPA
Numbers of self-build or custom build housing permitted	To contribute to the list of eligible applicants on the Authority's Self and Custom Build Register	NFNPA
OBJECTIVE 6: Develop a diverse and sustainable low carbon economy, enabling suitable rural diversification, that contributes to the well-being of local communities and supports a 'working forest' throughout the National Park.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Support a productive, diverse and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all.		
Local Plan Policies: SP1, DP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP55, DP56, SP57, DP58, DP59, DP60, DP61, SP62, DP63		
Type and location of new employment provision (Use Class E (g) and B2)	No net loss of employment sites	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council
Existing employment sites lost due to the implementation of permitted development rights, e.g. change of use from office to residential	-	NFNPA, Hampshire County Council
OBJECTIVE 7: Encourage land management that both promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objectives: Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape of the National Park, National Landscapes, and green infrastructure corridors. To protect and improve air quality, soil condition, and water resources by minimising pollution, managing sustainable use of natural resources, and reducing risks from contamination and coastal erosion.		
Local Plan Policies: DP17, DP18, DP19, SP57, DP58, DP59		
Applications permitted for agricultural and forestry buildings	-	NFNPA
Applications permitted for recreational horse keeping and associated development	-	NFNPA

OBJECTIVE 8: Support proportionate development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, providing opportunities for enjoying the National Park without harming its special qualities or the welfare of its local communities.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objectives: Support a productive, diverse and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all. Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape of the National Park, National Landscapes, and green infrastructure corridors.		
Local Plan Policies: DP2, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP19, SP62, DP63		
Planning applications for new or improved visitor facilities and accommodation	To ensure the Defined Villages remain the focus for visitor facilities and accommodation	NFNPA
OBJECTIVE 9: Reduce the impacts of traffic and enhance access to the National Park by supporting sustainable transport and active travel within the Park.		
Associated Sustainability Appraisal Objective: Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.		
Local Plan Policies: DP2, DP65, SP66		
Level of road traffic in the Forest, especially on A31	-	Department for Transport daily flow statistics, Hampshire County Council
Enhancements to public rights of way	Increase / improve footpaths, cycleways and bridleways	Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire Council
Numbers and location of electric vehicle charging facilities permitted	-	NFNPA
Numbers of people using the New Forest Tour Bus	Year on year increase	NFNPA
Provision of new / improved routes and associated infrastructure identified in the New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	-	Hampshire County Council, NFNPA
Proportion of New Forest residents regularly cycling and walking	-	National Travel Survey, Active Lives Survey
Mode of transport used for trips in New Forest	-	National Travel Survey

Annex 1: The special qualities of the New Forest National Park

1. The special qualities of the New Forest are those qualities that define it, make it unique and immediately recognisable and, when taken together, distinguish it from all other parts of the country.

2. These qualities are fundamental to the two purposes of the National Park and are the underlying reason for its designation. Although particular features that we value about the New Forest today may alter over time, conserving the essence of the place, and ensuring its uniqueness can be experienced by future generations, is the central priority for the National Park and is at the heart of the National Park Management Plan.

3. The special qualities of the New Forest, identified through public consultation in 2007[67], are:

- **the New Forest's outstanding natural beauty**: the sights, sounds and smells of ancient woodland with large veteran trees, heathland, bog, autumn colour and an unspoilt coastline, with views of the Solent and Isle of Wight.

  The National Park encompasses a wide variety of different landscapes, from the woodlands and rolling heathland in the centre of the New Forest, to the flat and wild coastline and the farmed landscape of small fields, hedgerows and narrow lanes. Together these form an extensive area of unspoilt and ancient countryside, with hidden villages and hamlets, which has largely been lost from other parts of lowland Britain.

- **an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals** and habitats of national and international importance.

  The mosaic of lowland heath, mire, ancient pasture woodland and Forest lawns that forms the Open Forest is unique in Britain and Europe. In addition, the Solent coastline comprises extensive areas of mudflats, salt marsh and shingle, backed in places by low cliffs, supporting large populations of wintering wildfowl and waders. The inter-connectedness and scale of these habitats allow many rare or restricted species of plants, birds, animals and insects to thrive, as well as the Commoner species that are in many cases declining elsewhere in the country. In total 56% of the National Park is designated for its national or international nature conservation value – a far higher proportion than any other English National Park.

- **a unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage**, from royal hunting ground, to shipbuilding, salt making and 500 years of military coastal defence.

[67] New Forest National Park Authority paper 191/07: A Statement of Special Qualities for the New Forest National Park Authority (June 2007).

The cultural landscape of the New Forest has developed continuously from prehistoric times to the present. A wealth of features have survived to indicate this long use by human society, including more than 340 Bronze Age barrows, a number of fine Iron Age hill forts and many Roman pottery production sites. Throughout the area there are numerous remnants of medieval and later buildings, enclosures and other earthworks associated with the royal forest. The main rivers supported a boat and shipbuilding industry, and the coastal salt workings were among the most important in the country during the 18th century. The National Park has 187 Scheduled Monuments, constituting almost 10% of all scheduled monuments in the south-east region, together with many important unscheduled sites.

- **an historic commoning system** that maintains so much of what people know and love as 'the New Forest' forming the heart of a working landscape based on farming and forestry.

  Although common rights were once widespread in Britain and Europe, they have been lost in many areas due to the enclosure of common land and the disafforestation of former royal forests. The New Forest remains one of the few extensive lowland commons where rights are still widely practised and a strong commoning culture continues. Over the centuries commoning has largely been responsible for shaping the distinctive landscapes and habitats of the Open Forest. There were six traditional rights of common, several of which are still practised today: the right of mast allows the turning out of pigs to feed on the acorn crop, while common pasture allows the grazing of ponies, cattle and donkeys.

- **the iconic New Forest pony** together with donkeys, pigs and cattle roaming free.

  The grazing of ponies and cattle has always been central to the pastoral economy of the New Forest. The animals are free to roam over the Open Forest, across the unfenced roads and along many of the verges within the Perambulation. In recent years between 6,000 and 7,400 ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs and sheep have been depastured on the New Forest as a whole. They are one of the most obvious and distinctive features of the area, and for many visitors they are undoubtedly a very important part of their experience of the New Forest.

- **tranquillity** in the midst of the busy, built-up south of England.

  The tranquillity and sense of remoteness that can still be found in many parts of the National Park is a quality of importance to many people. The relative peace and naturalness, combined with the open and unfenced landscape of much of the area, gives a sense of space and freedom. This contrasts with the increasingly built-up and intensively managed landscape of southern England and provides a means of release from the pressures of modern life.

- **wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery** in one of the last extensive gentle landscapes in the south including unmatched open access on foot and horseback.

  The gently rolling countryside of much of the National Park represents a traditional English lowland landscape that feels familiar and safe and is accessible to many people. There is open access on foot or horseback to more than 30,000 hectares (116 square miles) in the centre of the National Park, and an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths across the rest of the area. There are many opportunities for quiet recreation and the exploration of the landscape, while a range of visitor facilities and organised events make it easy for people to learn more about different aspects of the New Forest.

- **a healthy environment**: fresh air, clean water, local produce and a sense of 'wildness'.

  Quality of life within the National Park is underpinned by the overall environmental quality of the area. The coastal location and prevailing south-westerly winds mean that air pollution is generally low, and water quality in the New Forest rivers and streams, and on the coastal beaches, is also good. The variety of food and other products produced and sold locally continues to increase, giving the opportunity for people to live healthily and sustainably and at the same time support the local economy.

- **strong and distinctive local communities** with a real pride in and sense of identity with their local area.

  The New Forest communities have a strong cultural identity, with a wealth of local traditions and a thriving commoning community. Many local people have a strong sense of New Forest history and are deeply committed to the protection of the area. Local dialect, unique place names, rural skills and traditional events still continue, while new village events created by local people may become the traditions of the future. Community life is constantly evolving and adapting to modern ways of living and working. Many communities are involved in work to help shape the future of their local area and in initiatives to make their villages or towns more socially and economically sustainable. Local businesses continue to thrive, often providing services or products for residents and visitors, or taking advantage of the recognised image and distinctiveness of the New Forest.

Annex 2: The New Forest National Park Design Code

1. National planning policy encourages planning authorities to prepare local design guides and codes to raise the standard of new development in their areas. A design code is a set of simple, concise, design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of an area to provide greater certainty about the design of development for communities and applicants. The Design Code guidance set out below applies across the whole of the National Park.

2. The National Park is characterised by small villages of less than 3,500 people and rural settlements. The key Design Code elements drawn out below reflect the New Forest's context as a nationally protected landscape and the relatively limited scale of planned development.

Street pattern, driveways and movement

3. Within villages and hamlets, preserve and reflect the historical street pattern in new developments. This can be managed in the following ways:

- avoiding development which compromises the layout and clarity of the existing street pattern and street-scape;
- the design of small housing schemes should be considered by looking at the spatial layout and orientation of the proposed dwellings, areas of green space and then the provision of an access road to serve it;
- it is possible to create rural lanes using narrower roads, which will encourage vehicles to slow down and give priority to pedestrians and New Forest stock;
- following historic building lines to preserve historic boundaries, and protect sensitive and protected verges;
- referring back to development pre-World War II for density, layout and spacing between the dwellings in order to understand the historic development of the village;
- ensure the road layout and access to dwellings, the circulation, as well as the location of parking spaces and garages is unobtrusive, so that the highway and car do not dominate and create a suburban layout;
- any on-site rights of way should be retained as part of development plans, with a suitable green buffer either side of the paths which conserves their character and biodiversity value. Paths should be wide enough to accommodate the users for whom they are designed;
- the choice of materials has a profound effect on the appearance of the highway and finish of the development. The edging treatment is important. Standard smooth concrete kerbs should be avoided in rural areas. Smaller unit blocks,

with a rough texture which resemble granite setts, are more likely to be supported, or conservation standard designs;

- driveways should be surfaced in materials which are appropriate to rural locations, such as hoggin or gravel, rather than concrete or brick paviours. Edges should be of treated timber or granite setts;
- soft verges are an important feature and characteristic of the New Forest rural lanes. Their sizes and widths should always be maintained, along with any ditches, as they are an intrinsic part of the New Forest landscape. New development should consider the introduction of verges into the design, to soften the edges and retain this tradition;
- the level of street lighting should be appropriate to the locality. The majority of the National Park has no street lighting and if the surrounding lanes and villages are unlit, new development should be the same.

Building character

4. Within any hamlet or village, the existing building character and form should be strengthened. This may be achieved in the following ways:

- ensuring the scale of new development is consistent with local traditional buildings, such as building spans, ridge and eaves heights which reflect local style; spans exceeding 7 metres in depth should be avoided;
- ensuring that the siting of buildings relative to the highway, plot curtilage and adjacent buildings, reflects the historic settlement pattern;
- ensuring the appropriate orientation of new buildings follows a recognisable pattern which may already exist in a village;
- using a simple rectangular form for the main body of the house, enlarged if necessary by a small scale, well-articulated extension to the rear;
- ensuring that roof pitches relate to traditional roof pitches in the area, set at the same angle; and/or
- avoiding flat roofed extensions, garages or other out-buildings, where possible.

Boundaries

5. Local distinctiveness should be reinforced by the appearance and treatment of boundaries and spaces between and around buildings:

- landscape design should be considered as an integral part of the building design process, and is equally as relevant at the initial site planning stage, when considering the overall basic form and layout of the development;

- existing mature hedges and boundary walls should be retained and reinforced wherever possible, especially where these form important features within the village;
- ensure boundary treatments to the front, side and rear of properties are sympathetic to the locality and reflect local traditions and styles;
- new boundaries to the front, side and rear should be sympathetic to the locality – in terms of materials and height – whether this is hedgerows, or low brick boundary walls, and should relate to the surrounding topography;
- new hedgerows should be indigenous to the local area to harmonise with the landscape and provide wildlife habitats;
- hedges should be reinstated, or the use of woven hazel or willow fences at 1.5 metres can be a suitable soft alternative to close boarded fencing;
- re-instating metal estate fencing where it is missing or has been damaged in parks and country estates will be encouraged, and their installation may be suitable in other rural locations;
- fences are more appropriate to the larger village settings, than the rural nature of the open Forest. Close-boarded fences in particular, appear hard and oppressive and are damaging throughout the New Forest National Park wherever they are used as boundary fencing;
- good existing trees should be preserved wherever possible and incorporated into a development. Similar species should be planted to offer succession planting, and indigenous species are encouraged;
- gate posts and entrance gates should be of a scale and design befitting the dwelling, without decorative details and lighting. Simple timber five bar gates fit within most rural settings in the New Forest.

Appropriate design

6. Local identity should be preserved by appropriate design:

- good modern design will be encouraged, provided it is appropriate for the locality. Proper attention to detail is a prerequisite for all good buildings, including contemporary designs. Designers should consider the traditional buildings of the locality, especially those which contribute to local distinctiveness;
- it is not intended to prescribe the design of extensions or new dwellings, as design implies a degree of subjectivity and creativity. However, the quality of design, in terms of the form of buildings, their basic proportions, materials and attention to detail, can be measured and will be subject to scrutiny in accordance with the approved local planning policies;
- traditional building techniques are still relevant today, especially in rural locations. Many historic buildings were built to be energy efficent for the use

for which they were designed, but conversion may require careful consideration on how this changes the need to develop sustainablility.

Building proportions

7. New dwellings should reflect the proportions of traditional buildings:

- traditional buildings were very simple, in terms of their form and elevational treatment. Many older houses are very plain, with straight eaves lines and simple roofs. The relationship between solid wall to window/door openings in a façade is important. A solid/void relationship ratio of 5:1 is common, with more solid wall than glazing, and should be used as an approximate measure for new dwellings. Typically modern houses tend to be 2:1, with much more glazing provided;
- traditional buildings may include box sash windows or casements or a combination of both. The casements may have single, double or triple lights (windows), resulting in a vertical, square or horizontal opening;
- the use of double or triple glazing over the last 30 years has led to a distinct but subtle change in the appearance of dwellings. The use of upvc and timber replacement windows tends to provide standardised mouldings, which are significantly chunkier than the original windows. Where it is necessary to replace windows, timber will be preferred and the moulding details need to be accurately replicated. In some instances the use of powder coated aluminum will be a suitable alternative material;
- the use of symmetry and harmony in design, and the use of geometric ratios which underpin the design of Georgian buildings (Golden Section) still represent sound principles for the design of modern dwellings.

8. Extensions should ensure the character of the original building is preserved:

- an extension should be in scale with the existing dwelling, and always be subservient in size and height. Its form, elevation treatment and detailing should complement the original dwelling, including the angle of roofslope from the vertical. The use of appropriate and good quality materials are more likely to be supported, and where necessary, should exactly match those used on the original dwelling:
- with side extensions, the proposed width should not normally exceed half the width of the main house, otherwise it is likely to appear elongated, and contrived, and out of proportion to the original dwelling. The exception to this are historic single room depth cottages. The ridge should be set down from the main roof to distinguish the later addition;
- In some cases, an exemplary modern design may be acceptable form of extension, in order to illustrate the progression of a building over the years;

- it is possible to lose the identity of a dwelling when a number of extensions, including wrap around extensions are added;
- many buildings of special historic character (Locally Listed Buildings), have been subject to incremental alterations and extensions over time. The essential character of a cottage depends on its size and scale, and each successive extension however modest in size, can undermine this character. Additional rooms should reflect the proportions, scale and size of the original floorplan;
- space standards and rooms sizes which are taken for granted in modern homes cannot be strictly applied to historic dwellings. Where it is considered that the threshold has been reached for extensions, further additions will not be acceptable where they will result in the loss of character of the cottage.

Heritage Assets

9. The significance of Heritage Assets and historic places and landscapes should be conserved and enhanced:

- the setting of listed buildings can be preserved by ensuring that important curtilage buildings, structures or walls, are not damaged or compromised by the erection of inappropriate development;
- by encouraging the repair of traditional buildings using appropriate materials, especially cob, combed wheat thatch, brickwork and clay tiles;
- further Locally Listed Buildings will be identified and included on the Local List, and proposals which affect these should provide a Statement of Heritage Significance;
- as clear justification is required to support any applications for Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission, set out in a Statement of Heritage Significance, of how the proposals will impact on the heritage asset and how the asset will be enhanced.

Materials

10. Proposals should ensure the use of appropriate building materials:

- the use of materials from the locality, such as local brick, will be encouraged;
- the use of lime putty mortar in new brickwork for aesthetic, practical and sustainable reasons will be encouraged on historic buildings;
- where new brickwork is proposed on historic buildings, a 1m x 1m sample panel will be required to be provided on-site and approved prior to development. The proposed bricks should match the local vernacular brick in texture, colour, size, mortar and bonding pattern;

- where appropriate, rendered blockwork will be encouraged where cob buildings were traditionally located, but not in villages predominantly of brick. Rendered walls should have plinths of red brickwork and the render should have a smooth finish. The roofs would traditionally have been of thatch or slate;
- cob is rarely used in modern construction, though the material has seen a revival in recent years for its energy saving sustainable environmental qualities, especially as pioneered by the University of Plymouth's CobBauge Project. It is appropriate for the repair of cob buildings and to avoid difficult joints with cement render;
- the use of natural stone within the New Forest is extremely rare, except on high status buildings such as churches, some barns and manor houses;
- the use of weatherboarding for garages and outbuildings is likely to be supported, and can be used to clad single storey extensions to dwellings;
- decorative tile hanging is appropriate in the villages where it has been traditionally used, such as in Lyndhurst and Burley;
- the use of hand made or hand crafted plain clay tiles will be encouraged instead of machine made tiles. Despite advances in technology, many machine made tiles remain uniform in appearance and texture on roofslopes;
- slates are used throughout the Forest and will be encouraged in villages where they already exist. Natural non-shiny slates are likely to be supported on any pitch, not just shallow pitches;
- the use of thatch throughout the New Forest is widespread, and most commonly is of combed wheat reed now. New thatched buildings are likely to be supported where other thatched buildings are already in existence;
- the use of simple corrugated metal sheeting on low key outbuildings and barns is likely to be supported, and would traditionally have been painted black. Modern metal profile sheeting, concrete tiles, fibre cement and plastic sheeting is not acceptable.

Windows, dormers and rooflights

11. The number, size and placement of windows and rooflights is vitally important in the design of a building:

- large modern windows and substantial areas of glazing or roof lanterns, are not acceptable where the light spill may impact on the tranquility and dark skies of the National Park;
- where additional rooflights are acceptable in principle, traditional conservation style rooflights which lie close to the plane or flush to the roofslope are encouraged, with a narrow glazing bar and top or side hinges, rather than a pivot. Large modern rooflights or lanterns are not acceptable in sensitive parts

of the National Park (for example near to the Open Forest or close to sites of nature conservation value) where the impact on the dark skies is greater;

- rooflights provide greater levels of daylight than traditional windows in walls, and can help to reduce the need for electric lighting, which can account for up to 25% of a building's energy consumption;
- dormer windows are not traditional features, and where they do occur historically were very small, just large enough to light the roofspace. Where dormer windows are considered appropriate, they should have careful detailing to ensure the design retains the elegance of historic detailing, and to avoid being top heavy with over large cheeks, roofs and bargeboards;
- new dormers should be as narrow as possible, little wider than the window itself, with a projecting fascia or bargeboards adjacent to the window head. The barge boards should be plain without filets. Side cheeks should be of lead to avoid widening the dormer with cladding;
- window reveals should be set back from the face of the brickwork by 80mm, as they were in 19th century dwellings;
- windows constructed of uPVC do not have the style or character of traditional timber windows, and their use should be avoided. Well made sustainable timber windows which use well seasoned timber (or Accoya) will outlast uPVC windows.

Conservatories and glazed links

12. To reduce the visual impact of a conservatory, proposals should consider the following points:

- conservatories need to look and feel as though they belong, designed to be an integral part of the house, without appearing to be too grand. Orangeries were originally the preserve of the country house and wealthy, and these ornate and decorative conservatories often have elements which are entirely out of place for New Forest cottages;
- a conservatory should be modest and subordinate in footprint and scale to the dwelling, set well below the cill of the first floor window. A lean-to, mono pitch design often works well, and is more sympathetic in design than the grander decorative designs;
- where a glazed link is acceptable, the use of a modest glazed link can offer an opportunity to link an outbuilding to a dwelling. However, it must be sympathetic in form and design, and subservient in scale to the dwelling and outbuilding.

Barns, outbuildings and garages

13. Outbuildings, barns and cart sheds are an integral feature of the rural landscape Their unique character should be protected:

- Where supported by local planning policies, conversions should maintain their simple robust form, utilising existing windows and apertures. Excessive rooflights or expansive glazing should be avoided, particularly on the roadside elevation. Large full height statement glazing should be avoided;
- the setting of barns is often compromised by conversions, where new boundaries can split sites, and new access drives and domestic clutter lead to damaging urbanising effects;
- it is very difficult to extend barns without the extension appearing contrived and creating a domestic alteration to the original building, so these will not be acceptable;
- new garages can be extremely large and bulky, and it is far better to break buildings up than to have such dominating features. They should be low key in design and appearance, built of traditional materials, such as weatherboarding with shallow pitched roofs.

Porches

14. It is important that porches relate well to the dwelling:

- porches should be designed to be in proportion to the front elevation of the house, to be a small enclosed space, rather than an additional room or grand statement. Traditionally pitched or mono pitched, with a slate, thatched or clay tiled pitched roof, they can be an attractive addition to a front or side elevation.

Shopfronts, commercial signs & exterior lighting

15. Supporting well designed shopfronts is important:

- traditional shopfronts will be actively encouraged throughout the villages of the National Park – there are existing examples in Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Burley – with the use of traditional materials in the elements of the design;
- where new fascias and signs are proposed, these should be as small as possible, in proportion to the scale of the building and should not be internally illuminated. Off the peg standard logos by large national companies, should be redesigned to reflect individual detailing for sensitive sites in the New Forest. Shiny, plasticky signs look poor and should be avoided, as should back-lit box signs, because they have an overly suburban appearance;
- lettering needs to be both readable and suitable to the setting; the size, font and colour of lettering is often crucial to the impact, and oversized lettering should always be avoided. Gaudy, and garishly bright colours should be avoided. The colour palette should be chosen to complement the fabric of the building or the natural surroundings;

- on older buildings, especially shop fronts, the property could be enhanced by the removal of unsympathetic plastic and box signs. Where new fascias and signs are proposed, these should be as small as possible and in proportion to the scale of the building;
- external lighting should be avoided unless it is for a business which needs to open at dusk and in the evening. External lights, where they are acceptable, should be discretely located with the minimum number of lights to adequately light the fascia and will require consent.

Annex 3: Car parking & cycle standards

Residential

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard	
		Individual	Communal
1-bedroom units	1 space per unit	1 stand^	1 stand
2- to 3-bedroom units	2 spaces per unit	2 stands^	1 stand
4- or more bedroom units	3 spaces per unit	2 stands^	1 stand
Active elderly with warden control	1 space per unit	1 stand per 4 staff	
Nursing and rest homes	1 space per 4 residents and 1 space per staff	1 stand per 4 staff	

^ *Where a garage is provided for storing sufficient cycles individual cycle parking will not be required*

Commercial development

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
Use Class E Office	1 space per 30 m^2	1 stand per 150 m^2
Use Class E High tech/light industry	1 space per 45 m^2	1 stand per 250 m^2
Use Class B2 General industrial	1 space per 45 m^2	1 stand per 350 m^2
Use Class B8 Warehouse	1 space per 90 m^2	1 stand per 500 m^2

Education establishments

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
Schools	1.5 spaces per classroom	*
16+ Colleges and further education	1 space per 2 full time staff	*
Day nurseries / playgroups (private) and creches	1.5 spaces per 2 full time staff	1 stand per 6 full-time staff

* *Cycle provision to be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis*

Health establishments

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
Health centres	5 spaces per consulting room	1 stand per 2 consulting rooms or 1 space per 6 staff
Doctors, dentists or veterinary Surgery	3 spaces per consulting room	

Leisure facilities and places of public assembly

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking Standard
Hotels / motels / guest houses / boarding houses	1 space per bedroom	1 stand per 6 staff or 1 per 40m^2
Eating and drinking establishments	1 space per 5m^2 dining area / bar area / dance floor	1 stand per 6 staff or 1 per 40m^2
Places of worship / church halls	1 space per 5 fixed seats and 1 space per 10m^2 open hall	1 stand per 6 staff or 1 per 40m^2

Details of guidance on the provision of cycle infrastructure, including for those with mobility impairments is set out in Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020).

Annex 4: Local connection criteria

1. Policy SP30 (Specialist Housing for Older People) states that a planning obligation will be secured to ensure that the occupancy of new specialist housing for older people is confined in perpetuity to a local person (and their dependents). Likewise, Policy SP47 Self and Custom House Building also restricts occupation to those with a local connection. This is defined as someone who has a minimum period of a total of 5 years permanent residence within parishes in the National Park.

2. Similarly, new affordable housing provision on sites in the National Park – either on allocated sites (Policies SP32 to SP41), windfall sites (Policy SP42), or rural exception sites (Policy SP43) – is provided for local people in housing need. The allocation of affordable housing is managed by the housing authorities in the National Park (currently[68] New Forest District Council, Wiltshire Council and Test Valley Borough Council):

New Forest District Council

3. The main housing authority for the National Park area is currently New Forest District Council where the main settlements including the Larger Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, and Smaller Defined Village of Cadnam – Bartley are all designated as 'local connection areas'. Only applicants with a local connection will normally be considered for the housing available, and this is administered by New Forest District Council via their Homesearch Allocation Scheme. The strength of a local connection with these rural parishes of the National Park will be defined according to the following bands.

   - Band A: Persons who live or have their work-base in the parish and have done so for longer than 10 years, or who have lived in the parish for longer than 10 years previously, or a designated key-worker performing an essential service for the village community where there is an established need for an applicant to be re-housed to maintain the service.

   - Band B: Persons who live or have their work-base in the parish and have done so for longer than 5 years, or who have lived in the parish for longer than 5 years within the last 15 years, or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the parish and have done so for 10 years or longer.

   - Band C: Persons who live or have their work-base in the parish and have done so for longer than 2 years, or who have lived in the parish for longer than 2 years within the last 15 years, or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the parish and have done so for 5 years or longer.

[68] The situation with regard to the current housing authorities will change in due course as a result of local government reorganisation in Hampshire, accordingly the information set out with regard to local connections and affordable housing allocation criteria may change during the period covered by this Local Plan.

Wiltshire Council

4. The northern extent of the National Park, including the Smaller Defined Villages of Redlynch and Landford - Nomansland, is covered by Wiltshire Council as the statutory housing authority. The allocation of affordable homes is through Homes4Wiltshire, a choice-based lettings system allowing people with a housing need choose where they want to live. The allocations policy refers to applicants having a connection to a town or parish on the basis of:

- a person who is resident in the parish, town or city and has been resident in the same parish, town or city for the past 12 months; or
- a person who is in permanent paid employment or has a fixed term contract for a minimum of one year or an offer of paid employment for a contract for a minimum of one year or is self-employed and works predominantly in the parish; or
- a person with close family (grand-parents, parents, legal guardian, adult children or brothers and sisters) who have lived in the parish or town for 5 years or longer. However, for extra care properties the connection criteria will be defined within the extra care procedure to ensure that those in rural locations are not unfairly disadvantaged as all existing extra care schemes are located in towns and large villages.

Test Valley

5. Whilst only a small part of the National Park lies within Test Valley, local connection criteria and other matters in relation to affordable housing are set out within Test Valley's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document 2020. Details of social housing allocations are set out in the Hampshire Home Choice Allocations Framework (July 2025).

6. Where there are no local people meeting the definitions above, and properties are vacant, a cascade approach will apply, and the planning obligation will allow other local persons with a minimum period of 5 years permanent and continuous residence in an adjoining parish of Test Valley Borough to qualify.

7. A planning obligation will be secured to ensure that occupancy of the dwelling(s) is confined to persons in local housing need in perpetuity.

Annex 5: Glossary

Active travel
Active Travel refers to journeys made by modes of transport that are fully or partially people-powered, irrespective of the purpose of the journey. It includes walking, people using wheelchairs (wheeling), cycling (including e-bikes) to name but a few.

Adjacent commons
Commons in a variety of ownerships outside the Crown Lands but included within the Perambulation by the New Forest Act, 1964.

Affordable Housing
Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers), as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ancient Woodland
A general term used for woodlands which have had a continuous history since at least 1600, and probably much earlier. They are of very high nature conservation and cultural heritage value. In addition, Ancient and Ornamental (A&O) Woodlands is a local term applied to pasture woodlands within the Crown Lands that are grazed by deer and Commoners stock.

Article 4 Direction
Issued by the National Park Authority, the effect of an Article 4 Direction is to remove certain permitted development rights, meaning that a planning application would be required for that form of development to take place. Article 4 Directions are usually focused on a specific use and geographical area.

Back-up grazing / back-up land
Enclosed pastureland which forms an integral part of the commoning economy. Generally, it is located close to a Commoner's holding. Its uses include overwintering of stock, raising store cattle, making hay or silage, tending sick animals and young stock, finishing ponies for riding, and preparing stock for market.

Biodiversity
The whole variety of life encompassing all species and ecosystems variations, including plants and animals.

Commons
Defined areas of land which are subject to rights of common. The present Perambulation of the New Forest (New Forest Act, 1964) includes both common land owned by the Crown and public bodies and privately owned commons and manorial wastes. There are also a few registered commons outside the Perambulation (such as Whiteparish and Pennington Commons).

Commoners of the New Forest
Those people eligible to use rights of common. In the New Forest this is based on the occupation of specific land to which common rights are attached. Practising Commoners are those who exercise their rights and pay marking fees to the Verderers.

Common rights
The New Forest Atlas of Common Rights was prepared under the 1949 New Forest Act, using the register of New Forest Claims published in 1858. The 1964 New Forest Act extended the Perambulation to include the adjacent commons. A further Atlas of Rights was prepared defining land to which rights are attached in added areas. There are six different rights of common in the New Forest. Common of pasture (the right to turn out ponies, horses, cattle and donkeys) and common of mast (the right to turn out pigs in the pannage season in autumn to feed on acorns and beech nuts) are the most used today.

Conservation Areas
Conservation Areas are established under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas, any "areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve".

Crown Lands
The land owned by the Crown. Crown Land in the New Forest is managed by Forestry England (part of the Forestry Commission family), overseen locally by the Deputy Surveyor.

Defined Villages
Seven villages within the National Park are designated as 'Defined Villages'. Of these, four 'Larger Defined Villages' – Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, and Sway – offer the greatest range of facilities and services for their surrounding communities. The remaining three 'Smaller Defined Villages', comprising Cadnam - Bartley, Landford - Nomansland, and Redlynch, provide fewer facilities and services than their larger counterparts but still support their surrounding communities. These villages have defined settlement boundaries on the Local Plan Policies Map and are the settlements within the National Park where the spatial strategy focuses small-scale housing and employment development to support the services within the villages and meet identified local needs.

Depastured stock
Commoners' stock which are turned out to graze on the Open Forest.

District Licence Scheme
The New Forest National Park Authority holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational ("District") Licence from Natural England, offering developers an additional, sustainable licensing route that focuses conservation where it delivers the greatest benefit, safeguarding the species and wider biodiversity while reducing delays, cost, risk, and uncertainty.

Ecosystem Services
The benefits provided by ecosystems (natural capital) that contribute positively to society. Examples include products such as food and water, regulation of floods, soil erosion and disease outbreaks, and non-material benefits such as recreation.

Enclosed land
Fenced land from which Commoners' stock is excluded, both in Crown and private ownership.

Extra Care housing
Consisting of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, both now and in the future. Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff; developments often include extensive communal areas.

Forest lawns
Grassland which is relatively rich in nutrients (often due to winter flooding of streams). The lawns are important for the grazing of stock and frequently have a rich and distinctive flora.

Habitats Regulations
The European Habitats Directive has been transposed into national law through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations, 1994 (as amended), commonly known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
In line with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, the HRA procedure assesses whether a plan or project will have a likely significant impact on a European designated site, and if so, an 'appropriate assessment' is required. The HRA is undertaken by the 'competent authority' which is normally the planning authority.

Heritage Asset
A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage at Risk Register
The Register is an annual English Heritage publication that identifies the most important heritage assets at risk of damage or loss.

Historic Environment Record (HER)
A database of known historic sites and features across the National Park.

Inclosure woodland
Those areas of the Crown Land enclosed under earlier statutes and retained by the New Forest Act 1877 for the purpose of growing timber and trees. Many of the

inclosures are still fenced to prevent grazing of stock, but now have wider recreational, amenity and nature conservation uses.

Intermediate Housing
Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents – see affordable housing.

Listed building
A building recognised to be of national historic importance, designated and protected under Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Local community facilities
Facilities of direct benefit to the immediate local community that provide a service, including village shops, pubs, village halls and public toilets, as well as small-scale health and educational services, sports and social facilities.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
A network plan for walking and cycling routes to encourage investment and improvement to existing and future routes.

Manege
An area specifically designed or used for the training of horses and riders.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)
Large scale developments (relating to energy, transport, water, or waste) which require a type of consent known as “development consent”. The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new development consent process for NSIPs which was subsequently amended by the Localism Act 2011.

National Amenity Societies
The National Amenity Societies are statutory consultees on planning applications affecting heritage listed building consent applications.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
Nationally important sites for nature conservation, where conservation is the primary land use. Designated under the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
The 1949 Act which established the statutory National Park purposes which continue to provide the legal framework for our National Parks today.

National Park Partnership Plan
The National Park Partnership Plan sets out the framework for everyone to work together to deliver the two statutory National Park purposes. The Partnership Plan is not a Plan for the Authority alone, but a Plan for the National Park as a place. Also referred to as the ‘National Park Management Plan’ in some protected landscapes.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local authorities and qualifying bodies produce local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
The online NPPG resource provides more detailed guidance on the Government's national planning policies.

Nature Recovery Network
An expanding, connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats, as well as landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats through the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Open Forest
The unenclosed Crown Lands and adjacent commons which are subject to common rights.

Perambulation
The historic term for the boundary of the area governed by Forest law. It is now the area within the cattle grids over which Commoners' stock are able to roam freely. It is defined in the New Forest Act 1964 and encompasses Crown Land, adjacent commons, certain areas of road verge, and unenclosed land outside the Open Forest.

Permitted development rights
Planning permission is not required for certain forms of minor development. These are called 'permitted development rights' and are more restrictive in certain areas such as National Parks.

Principal residence housing
A form of market housing controlled by a mechanism which ensures it can be lived in by anyone, but only as their main residence. Principal residence housing must be used as the primary residence of the household living in it but does not have any price restrictions or any local connection requirements. Principal residence requirements will be secured through a planning condition, and compliance will be monitored by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Ramsar site
A wetland of international importance, especially for wildfowl, designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetland of International Importance.

Registered Parks and Gardens

A site included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England.

Robust
Sensitive/fragile areas are defined as those being at most risk of damage by recreational activity. They typically have nature conservation and cultural heritage designations and fragile habitats such as bogs or are the most tranquil and remote, but also the most easily damaged. More robust areas are those that have greater physical resilience and capacity to absorb recreational activities.

Scheduled Monument
A designated archaeological site, building or structure of national importance that is protected from destruction or change under the provisions of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.

Section 106 agreement
This refers to the benefits or safeguards, often for community benefit, secured by way of a legally binding agreement between the local planning authority and a developer as part of a planning approval. These are usually provided at the developer's expense, for example, affordable housing, community facilities or mitigation measures.

Semi-natural habitats
Habitats such as ancient woodland, heathland and meadows, which are rich in wildlife and appear 'natural' but have been created to a greater or lesser extent by the influence of long-term human management. This applies to virtually all habitats in the UK.

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
Non-statutory sites of local importance for nature conservation, identified by county councils and wildlife trusts and given some level of protection by local planning policies.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Nationally important sites for nature conservation designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Social Rented Affordable Housing
Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered providers, for which the rent is set in accordance with the Government rent policy for social rent.

South East Dorset
Parts of Dorset, including the urban areas of Christchurch, Poole, and Bournemouth.

South Hampshire sub-region
Urban areas encompassing the Waterside, southern Test Valley, Southampton, Eastleigh and other settlements west of Portsmouth, represented by the PfSH authorities (Partnership for South Hampshire).

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Areas designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitats Directive) 1992 as being of European importance for habitats and species.

Special Protection Area (SPA)
Areas of European importance for birds, designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 1979 (the Wild Birds Directive).

Special Qualities
These are the qualities that define the New Forest, make it unique and immediately recognisable and, when taken together, distinguish it from all other parts of the country. These qualities are fundamental to the two purposes of the National Park and are the underlying reason for its designation. A list of these can be found in Annex 1 of the Local Plan.

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)
A strategic framework of mitigation measures designed to manage and monitor recreational impacts on internationally designated nature conservation sites, using a defined 'zone of influence'. Funding is secured through developer contributions from new residential developments and other forms of overnight accommodation. SAMM measures typically include ranger provision and infrastructure measures within the designated sites, and they supplement alternative greenspace provision delivered outside the designated sites. SAMM funds are not used for the delivery, maintenance or management of SANGs.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive is required by European Directive 2001/42/EC which has been transferred into UK regulations to ensure that environmental and/or sustainable considerations are integrated into strategic decision-making through systematic appraisal of different options during planning. This process applies to Local Plans.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)
The name given to new greenspace provision that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for development likely to affect protected habitats.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
A sustainability appraisal is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a Local Plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
Sustainable Drainage Systems are designed to mimic the natural drainage of surface water, typically managing rainfall close to where it falls.

Tranquillity
A state of peace, quiet and calmness – usually used in the context of artificial intrusions (such as noise and the presence of visual disturbance) into the relatively natural environment of the national park.

Travellers
See national planning policy for the full definition of Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Verderers of the New Forest
The Court of Verderers is a statutory body reconstituted under the New Forest Act 1877. The jurisdiction of the Verderers extends over the areas within the Perambulation which is subject to rights of common. They have duties and powers under the New Forest Acts for the protection and administration of the rights of common, the welfare of the Commoners' animals and the regulation of development which affects commonable land.

Windfall sites
Windfall sites are unplanned development sites that become available unexpectedly and can receive planning permission despite not being allocated in the Local Plan. This includes rural exception sites, tied dwellings and sites coming forward within the Defined Villages in accordance with the Local Plan policies that are unallocated.