Equalities Impact Assessment

New Forest National Park draft Local Plan Review 2024 - 2043

New Forest National Park Authority has prepared a draft Local Plan following early engagement and commissioning of technical evidence. The Local Plan review will set out policies to guide development in the New Forest National Park up to 2043. A number of policies are carried forward from the 2019 adopted Local Plan, in addition to new policies on matters that have come to light in the intervening period and changes in national planning policy.

This assessment presents the findings of an assessment of the likely effects of the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan on equality impact issues.

The requirement to undertake formal Equalities Impact Assessment of plans was introduced in the Equality Act 2010. The Act was subsequently abolished in 2012 as part of Government bid to reduce bureaucracy. Despite this however, authorities are still required to have regard to the provisions of the Equality Act, namely the Public Sector Duty which requires public authorities to have due regard for equalities considerations when exercising their functions. In fulfilling this duty, many authorities still find it useful to produce a written record of equalities issues having been carefully considered. This is the purpose of this document.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and seeks to protect people from discrimination on the basis of these characteristics. They are – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender; and sexual orientation.

The Regulation 19 draft Local Plan document has been reviewed to consider the likely impacts of the policies on each of the nine protected characteristics in terms of their likely effects (positive, neutral or negative). The findings are set out in the table below.

The assessment must consider the nine protected characteristics as set out above.	**Comment**
Why is the policy, procedure or strategy required?	To provide the overall vision, strategic aims and objectives and spatial planning policies for the whole of the administrative area of the New Forest National Park for the period to 2043.
How will it be implemented? Do you have documented procedures in place?	The Local Plan policies will be mainly implemented through the Authority's Development Management function, as well as working with other authorities and stakeholders to achieve the Strategy's objectives. At this stage the Local Plan is a consultation document and will be reviewed in light of representations received, prior to further consultation and submission for independent examination in late 2026.
For which groups of people will there be an impact? Do men and women use the service in different ways / have different needs from the service?	The strategic and long-term nature of the Local Plan means it has the potential to have some impact on many who live or work in or visit the National Park.
How significant is it in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	The strategic and long-term nature of the Local Plan means it has the potential to have some impact on many who live or work in or visit the National Park.
Is the impact positive, negative or neutral?	The attached assessment specifically identifies the potential impact of each policy within the Local Plan. Whilst some Local Plan policies may have an impact on all members of the community, the assessment attempts to identify policies that may impact the particular groups being considered.
How will you disseminate your policy, procedure or strategy?	The Local Plan review commenced in 2024. Early public engagement took place between February and March 2025 to gather views on the Regulation 18 (Part 1) Strategic Direction of Travel. The Authority report to the Authority dated 16 October 2025, seeking approval to publish the Local Plan for the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation during November and December 2025, explains how representations received from the Part 1 consultation informed preparation of the Part 2 draft. A consultation statement for the Regulation 18 (Part 1) consultation was appended to the report.

	A subsequent report to the Authority (23 July 2026), seeking approval to publish the Local Plan for Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation between 17 August and 30 September 2026, explains how representations from the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation informed preparation of the pre-submission draft, with a consultation statement for the Part 2 consultation appended to the report.
Is your policy, procedure or strategy in Plain English and available in different formats?	Yes, it is in plain English and is available in other formats upon request.
Does your policy/procedure/strategy complement or link to other policies or procedures? If so, are these links made clear?	Yes, it is linked with the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan in particular, but also with other National Park strategies such as the Landscape Action Plan.
What methods have you used to consult?	The nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 were taken into consideration when preparing and consulting on the Plan, in particular ensuring that all groups of people have the opportunity to access and participate in consultations. Further details on the methods used to consult are set out in the Authority's Consultation Statement.

Outcomes / Monitoring of the impact assessment:	**Comment**
How will you measure the effect of your policy /procedure for end users?	Through the Annual Monitoring Report, produced each December/January, the latest of which can be found at: https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning-home-page/planning-policy/mitigating-impacts-on-protected-areas/monitoring-and-reporting/
How would you know from your monitoring if anyone was disadvantaged?	The Annual Monitoring Report includes the monitoring of: ▪ New additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches ▪ Planning applications refused due to inadequate access provision for disabled people.
How is monitoring information fed back to end users?	The Annual Monitoring Report is published on the website after its production in December/January each year
When is your next review?	The Local Plan has yet to be adopted, so no review date has been set yet.

Assessment of Regulation 19 New Forest National Park Local Plan Policies

Protected characteristics abbreviations

A = Age
D = Disability
E = Ethnicity
G = Gender
GR = Gender reassignment
MC = Marriage & civil partnership
PM = Pregnancy & maternity
RB = Religion or belief
SO = Sexual orientation

Scoring system

+	Positive	-	Negative	+/-	Positive and negative	/	No impact

Local Plan Policy	Description	Protected characteristics									Policy's potential impact[1] on groups with protected characteristics
		A	D	G	GR	SO	PM	MC	RB	E	
SP1 Supporting sustainable development	The policy supports the NPPF's aim to promote sustainable development through provision of appropriate housing and employment opportunities to meet local needs, better public transport and active travel, enhanced community and leisure facilities, better digital connectivity, and improved health and well-being through informal recreation and access to open space.	+	+	/	/	/	+	/	/	/	Planning for new homes of different types and tenures, including affordable housing, is likely to have positive equality impacts by helping people who cannot access market housing and by meeting unmet local need. This may particularly benefit younger people, families with children and disabled people. Improved public transport and digital connectivity may also promote equality of opportunity by improving access to services and employment, especially for younger, older, disabled and pregnant people, and carers. Open space may be particularly beneficial for younger and older people by supporting both active and passive recreation.
DP2 General development principles	The policy supports proposals that improve local socio-economic well-being and public health.	+	+	/	/	/	+	/	/	/	The policy is expected to have a positive impact by promoting well-connected, accessible neighbourhoods, supporting active travel and public transport, and enabling access to local services within easy reach. Clear layouts, routes and landmarks may particularly benefit people living with dementia, while safe, accessible roads with seating and shelter can help reduce barriers of older people, disabled

[1] Where no data is available to inform the assessment, professional judgement has been used to assess the potential impact of the policy.

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											people, pregnant women, and other vulnerable groups.
SP3 Spatial strategy	The policy sets out how homes, jobs, and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be provided to meet community needs within the National Park.	+/-	+/-	+/-	/	/	/	/	/	+	The policy supports all residents in the plan area by protecting retail units, local services and facilities, although benefits may be greater for people with limited mobility or in areas with poor public transport, including disabled people, older residents and those with caring responsibilities. Planning for new homes across a range of types and tenures, including affordable housing, is likely to have positive impacts by helping people whose housing needs are not met by the market. This may particularly benefit younger people, families with children and disabled people, with positive effects in relation to age and disability. However, the policy does not meet the NPPF objective of addressing local housing needs, which is likely to have adverse effects across all protected characteristics. Limited supply of suitable housing may also restrict local job growth, particularly in the context of an ageing and declining population. Insufficient affordable housing is likely to disadvantage people on low incomes, especially younger people and women, who on average earn less and may face greater barriers in the housing market. Disabled people may also be affected by reduced access to homes built to M4(2) and M4(3) standards. Younger people starting families may find it harder to access homes that are affordable and suitable for their needs. Positive impacts are expected for the ethnicity protected characteristic group as the policies recognise the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling

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											Showpeople with a local connection to the National Park. The policies should also positively affect the protected characteristic of age by providing a settled base in locations with good access to schools and health services.
SP6 Infrastructure provision and developer contributions	The policy sets out how development contributions will be used to provide new infrastructure or improve existing infrastructure.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Development contributions help ensure that proposals are acceptable in planning terms, in line with NPPF tests. Affordable housing contributions can support people experiencing income deprivation, particularly younger people, to access housing. Contributions to health, education and transport can also help to provide targeted services for children, disabled people and older people.
SP15 Green and blue infrastructure	The policy supports the creation, maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of green and blue infrastructure and improving public access to nature.	+	+	+	+	+	+	/	+	+	No adverse impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic. The policy aims to improve environmental quality, enhance perceptions of public safety, and support inclusion. Younger and older people, disabled people, women, LGBTQ+ communities, people from different ethnic backgrounds, and people whose appearance proclaim their faith can particularly benefit from safe, welcoming and accessible green and blue spaces that support active travel, recreation, relaxation, social connection, and physical and mental well-being.
DP16 Open space	The policy requires new or enhanced open space in development, protects existing open space, strengthens links to the wider green and blue infrastructure network, and improves public access to nature.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	The policy aims to protect and provide open space and recreational areas, benefitting all residents and users of the plan area. These spaces may be especially important for people without access to transport – often younger and older people and some disabled people – by offering both active and passive recreation.

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DP27 Design principles	The policy requires new development to deliver high-quality design that creates safe, accessible, inclusive and healthy places.	+	+	+	+	+	+	/	+	+	The policy seeks to secure high-quality living, working and visitor environments that provide benefit to all residents and users of the plan area. By promoting well-designed, inclusive and accessible development, it is anticipated to deliver positive impacts for a range of protected groups, including women, LGBTQ+ people, children and older people, people living with dementia, disabled people and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, through improvements to passive surveillance and safety.
SP29 New residential development in the National Park	The policy sets the level of new housing in the National Park and requires proposals to meet local need; subject to design considerations, new homes should be accessible and adaptable, including affordable and wheelchair-user housing.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	No adverse impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic group. Expanding the mix of housing types and tenures will benefit the whole community, with particular positive effects for age and disability through the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes.
SP30 Specialist housing for older people (Use Class C2)	The policy supports delivering specialist housing for older people where there is an identified need, in sustainable locations.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	No adverse impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic. The policy is expected to have positive impacts for age and disability by supporting new or expanded specialist accommodation for older people.
SP31 The size of new dwellings	The policy seeks to ensure that the New Forest's housing stock is balanced to meet an identified local need for smaller homes and requires new dwellings to achieve nationally described space standards.	+									The policy supports all residents in the plan area but is anticipated to have particular positive benefits for younger adults and downsizing older people who may otherwise be prevented from accessing suitable dwellings due to constraints relating to housing supply and/or affordability.
SP32 Land at Wharton's Lane, Ashurst	The policy seeks contributions for enhancements to Wharton's Lane Recreation Ground.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	The policy aims to provide enhancements to Whartons Lane Recreation Ground, benefitting future residents and existing communities. Recreation grounds may be especially important for people without access to transport – often younger and

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											older people – by offering both active and passive recreation.
SP33 Land at Ashurst Hospital SP35 Land at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, Lyndhurst SP36 Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst	The policies support delivering specialist housing for older people where there is an identified need.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	No adverse impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic. The policies are expected to have positive impacts for age and disability by supporting new or expanded specialist accommodation for older people.
SP37 Land south of Church Lane, Sway	The policy requires new green space, safe school crossing points, plus active travel connections.	+	+	+	+	+	+	/	+	+	The policy aims to provide informal green space, active travel connections, and safe school crossing points, benefitting future residents and existing local communities. Safe crossing points are expected to provide particular benefit to protected groups such as children, older people and some disabled people. The benefits may be particularly significant for older people and women, who often have caring responsibilities, including school drop-offs and pick-ups. Green space may be especially important for people without access to transport – often older and younger people – by offering both active and passive recreation.
SP38 Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway	The policies support delivering specialist housing for older people where there is an identified need.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	No adverse impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic. The policies are expected to have positive impacts for age and disability by supporting new or expanded specialist accommodation for older people.
SP39 Land to west of Winsor Road, Bartley	The policy requires new open space, safe school crossing points, plus active travel connections.	+	+	+	+	+	+	/	+	+	The policy aims to provide informal open space, active travel connections, and safe school crossing points, benefitting future residents and existing local communities.

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											Safe crossing points are expected to provide particular benefit to protected groups such as children, older people and some disabled people. The benefits may be particularly significant for older people and women, who often have caring responsibilities, including school drop-offs and pick-ups. Open space may be especially important for people without access to transport – often older and younger people – by offering both active and passive recreation.
SP40 Land to south of Hamptworth Road, Landford	The policy requires new open space, safe crossing points to the primary school, village hall and village facilities to the south, plus active travel connections.	+	+	+	+	+	+	/	+	+	The policy aims to provide informal open space, active travel connections, and safe crossing points, benefitting future residents and existing local communities. Safe crossing points are expected to provide particular benefit to protected groups such as children, older people and some disabled people. The benefits may be particularly significant for older people and women, who often have caring responsibilities, including school drop-offs and pick-ups. Open space may be especially important for people without access to transport – often older and younger people – by offering both active and passive recreation.
SP41 Land to west of The Ridge, Redlynch	The policy requires new open space provision.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	The policy aims to provide informal open space, benefitting future residents and existing local communities. Open space may be especially important for people without access to either public transport or to transport – often younger and older people – by offering both active and passive recreation.

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SP42 Affordable housing provision within the Defined Villages and on allocated sites SP43 Rural exception sites	The policies ensure that new development helps to meet local housing needs, including affordable housing provision.	+	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Providing affordable housing is expected to have positive impacts by supporting people who cannot access market housing due to affordability constraints or where a particular local housing need housing need is unmet. Where young people, families with children, and/or disabled people are disproportionately affected, the policy will also have positive impacts in relation to age and disability.
Policy DP45 New Forest estate workers' dwellings	The policy ensures that homes are provided for estate workers at, or very close to their place of work.	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	+	/	The policy may have positive benefits for younger adults who require access to housing in the open countryside in proximity to their place of work, but who may otherwise be prevented from doing so due to constraints relating to housing supply and affordability.
DP46 New dwellings for agricultural and forestry workers	The policy ensures that homes are provided for agricultural and forestry workers at, or very close to their place of work.	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	+	/	The policy may have positive benefits for younger adults who require access to housing in the open countryside in proximity to their place of work, but who may otherwise be prevented from doing so due to constraints relating to housing supply and affordability.
SP49 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople SP50 Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use	These policies aim to provide suitable accommodation that meets the identified needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.	+	/	/	/	/	/	/	+	/	Positive impacts are expected for the ethnicity protected characteristic group as the policies recognise the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople with a local connection to the National Park. The policies should also positively affect the protected characteristic of age by providing a settled base in locations with good access to schools and health services.
DP51 Replacement dwellings	These policies permit larger dwellings in exceptional circumstances to meet genuine family need.			/	/	/	/	/	/	/	No negative impacts are expected for any protected characteristic group. The policies may have positive impacts by enabling, subject to criteria, extensions or

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DP52 Extensions to dwellings											replacements to dwellings to meet changing needs, including adaptations for accessible living or multigenerational care while maintaining separate living space.
SP54 Local community facilities	The policy supports the retention and provision of local community facilities that sustain communities and are accessible to the people they serve.	+	+	/	/	/	+	/	+	/	No negative impacts on any protected characteristic groups are anticipated. The policy supports all residents in the plan area by protecting existing social and community facilities and securing new provision to serve development across the New Forest. Benefits may be greater for people with limited mobility or without access to a car or in areas with poor public transport, including disabled people, older residents and those with caring responsibilities. Community facilities can offer accessible, safe meeting spaces, help reduce social isolation, and provide venues for worship, health programmes, leisure activities, exercise, education, and play.
DP60 Loss of local retail facilities DP61 Retail development outside the Defined Villages	The policies support the retention, expansion and provision of local retail facilities within rural areas, including small-scale convenience and farm shops.	+	+	/	/	/	+	/	/	/	No negative impacts on protected characteristic groups are anticipated. The policies will support all residents within the plan area by retaining existing retail facilities and securing new provision to serve development across the New Forest. Benefits may be greater for people with limited mobility or in areas with poor public transport, including disabled people, older residents and those with caring responsibilities.
SP65 Transport infrastructure SP66 Sustainable transport and access	These policies promote sustainable travel by seeking to improve walking, wheeling, and public transport, reducing the need to travel in new developments, and making existing routes and roads safer and more user-friendly.	+	+	/	/	/	+	/	/	/	No negative impacts are anticipated for any protected characteristic group. The policies promote sustainable travel and reduce the need to travel, which should benefit all members of a community. Improved public transport increases mobility for people who cannot or do not drive, particularly those who are less

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											mobile, including young people, older people, disabled people, carers, and potentially pregnant women, by improving access to services, amenities, and employment opportunities.

The following policies have been assessed as having a neutral impact; that is, they are considered to have neither a positive nor a negative effect, or they are not relevant to protected characteristics.

SP4: Major development in the National Park
SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside
SP7: Safeguarding and improving water resources
SP8: Flood risk
SP9: Sustainable construction
SP10: Renewable energy
SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance
SP12: The natural environment – nationally, regionally and locally important sites
SP13: Biodiversity Net Gain
SP14: Landscape character
DP17: Recreational horse keeping
DP18: Field shelters and stables
DP19: Maneges
SP20: Coastal development
SP21: Coastal Change Management Area
SP22: Tranquillity
SP23: Dark skies
SP24: The historic and built environment
DP25: Heritage assets
DP26: Local distinctiveness
DP28: Residential character of the Defined Villages
SP34: Land at Kneller Lane, Ashurst
DP44: New Forest Commoners' dwellings
DP47: Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions
SP48: Self and custom house building
DP53: Outbuildings
SP55: Maintaining and improving business floorspace
DP56: Redevelopment and extension to existing employment buildings
SP57: The land-based economy
DP58: New agricultural and forestry related development
DP59: Reuse of farm buildings
SP62: Sustainable tourism development
DP63: Holiday parks and camp sites
SP64: Telecommunications and digital infrastructure