



New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2024 – 2043

Regulation 18 (Part 2) Consultation

Prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority

October 2025

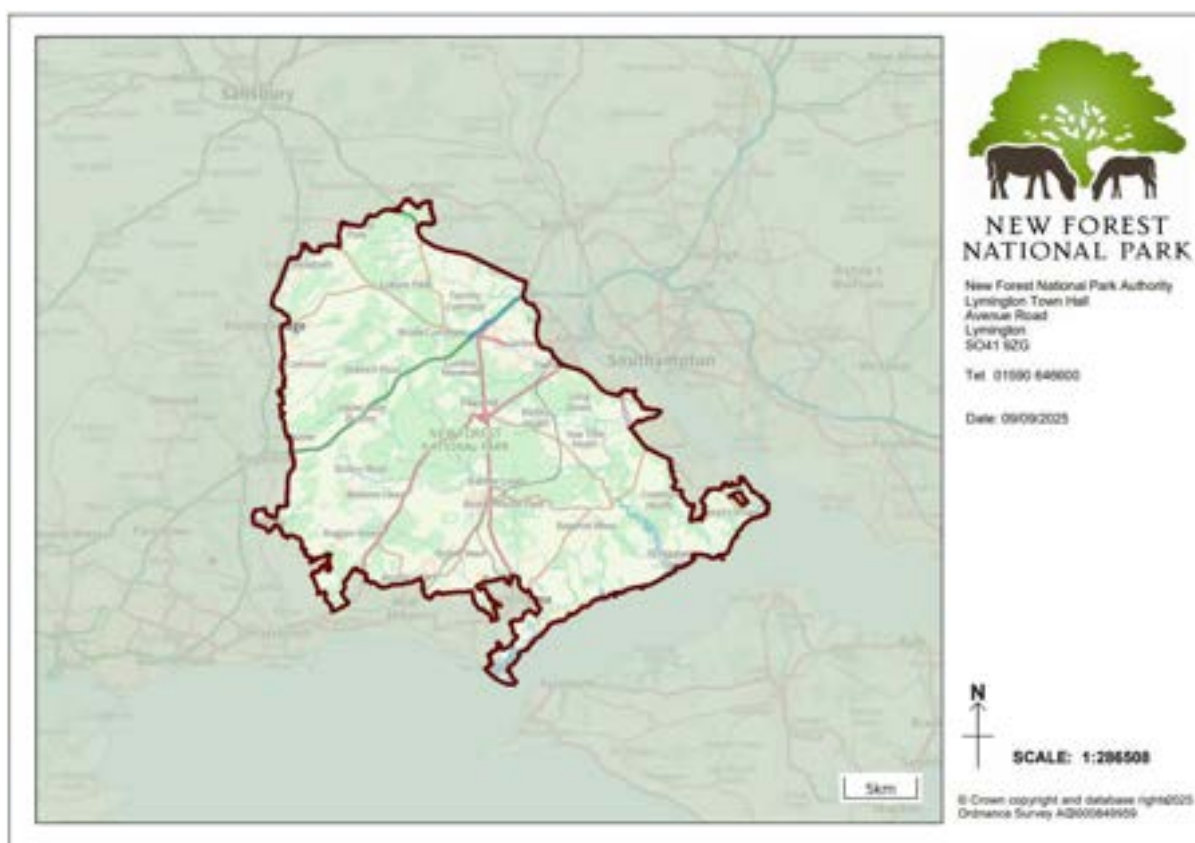
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1. Introduction and Background

- 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. The New Forest National Park Authority is undertaking a review of the local planning policies covering the National Park – currently contained within the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (adopted August 2019). This review is in response to changes in national policy and the experiences of applying the adopted policies for the past six years. However, it is important to emphasise that many key aspects of national policy, guidance and law relating to National Parks remain unaltered from the time the adopted Local Plan was prepared, examined and adopted. Consequently, the Authority is undertaking a partial review of the Local Plan rather than preparing a new Local Plan at this time. The Local Plan Review will cover the period 2024 – 2043.

- 1.3. During this period local government and the planning system will be going through a period of change, with Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution also potentially impacting on planning areas and the processes for plan-making. Reform of the planning system is being introduced through various changes under consideration by the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which is progressing through parliament. This local plan review is proceeding on the basis of being prepared under the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024, and existing plan-making legislation and requirements.

Local Plan Review Progress to date

- 1.4. The Authority resolved to commence a review of the Local Plan in March 2024 (Authority report [AM 675/24](#) refers) and this decision was informed by a [comprehensive assessment](#) of the existing Local Plan to identify which policies required updating and modification. In addition the [Local Development Scheme](#) was accordingly updated to set out the timescale for the Local Plan review, which included two consultations under Regulation 18, one in quarter 4 of 2024/5 and the other in quarter 3 2025/6.
- 1.5. In January 2025 the [Strategic Direction of Travel](#) document was published for consultation, outlining the key matters considered in scope for the review, as well as those areas of the adopted Local Plan that remain consistent with the latest national planning policy. Consultation ran from 4 February 2025 until 18 March 2025 and at the same time a 'call for sites' was also undertaken.
- 1.6. Assessment of the comments received to the Strategic Direction of Travel document, together with updated evidence, has enabled the Authority to progress to consultation on a revised local plan.
- 1.7. Consultation under Regulation 18 on the draft New Forest National Park Local Plan Review will commence in early November 2025 for 6 weeks, closing before Christmas in December 2025.

All documents can be found on our website at [Consultations - New Forest National Park Authority](#). Comments¹ can also be submitted via our on-line consultation portal [add link](#). This consultation document and key supporting documentation is also available for inspection at:

Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington
SO41 9ZG

You can also respond by email policy@newforestnpa.gov.uk or by writing to the Policy Team at the above address. If responding by email or in writing, please identify which section, policy or site you are responding to.

¹ Comments received cannot be treated as confidential and responses will be published – please see the Authorities [Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement](#)

- 1.8. All the representations made during the six-week consultation period will be considered as we prepare the next stage in the partial review process – the timetable for which is set out below.

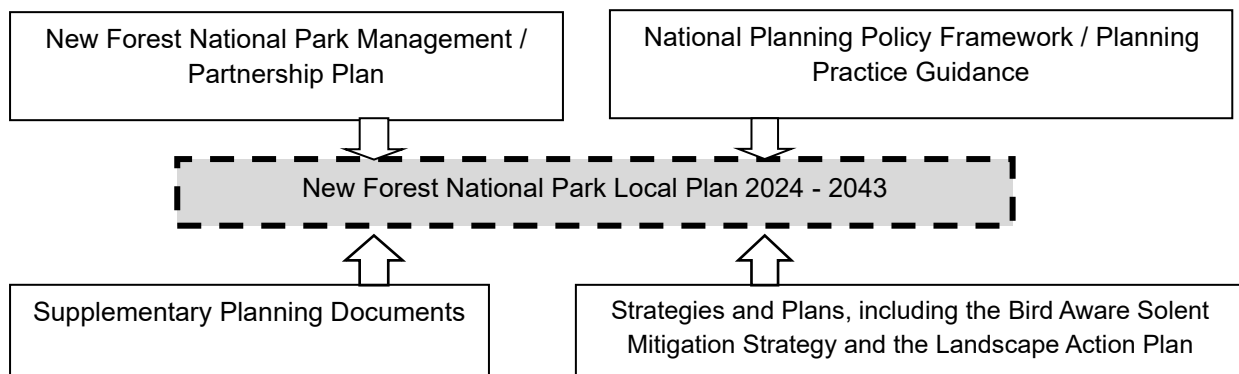
Stage	Timescale
Regulation 18 Consultation on Strategic Direction of Travel	February – March 2025
Regulation 18 Consultation on draft Local Plan Review	November – December 2025
Regulation 19 Consultation on proposed Submission draft Local Plan	July – September 2026
Regulation 22 Submission to Secretary of State for Examination	December 2026
Regulation 24 Independent Examination	January – June 2027
Consultation on proposed Modifications	July – September 2027
Regulation 26 Adoption	December 2027

We are here

Links to other plans and strategies

- 1.9. 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.
- 1.10. The Environment Act 1995 also requires each National Park Authority to prepare a National Park Management Plan. The Management 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 2022 the New Forest National Park Management Plan was updated by the Partnership Plan which sets 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.
- 1.11. In addition to the development plan documents, the Authority can prepare Supplementary Planning Documents which 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.

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- 1.12. 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.
- 1.13. 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 for 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 – typically County Councils. The production of each Local Nature Recovery Strategy 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 Authorities 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.
- 1.14. As the New Forest National Park covers two county council areas, two LNRSs will 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
 - provide a source of evidence for local planning authorities, helping to understand locations important for conserving and restoring biodiversity

- 1.15. The draft [Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire](#) was published for consultation during May – June 2025, with approval of the final document scheduled for December 2025. The [Wiltshire and Swindon LNRs](#) covers the northern part of the national park, this was subject to consultation during March – April 2025 and is due for final sign off in October 2025.
- 1.16. In addition, the review of 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 draft policies in the Local Plan will go through further review, including testing 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).

The New Forest National Park – Overview

- 1.17. 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:
- 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.
- 1.18. 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 wellbeing 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 – the 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.
- 1.19. 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 golden threads running through this Local Plan. The vision for the National Park and strategic objectives (Chapter 3) are drawn from these purposes and 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 Authorities Partnership Plan.

The New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027

- 1.20. The central role of the Partnership Plan (published July 2022) is to guide and co-ordinate the work of all those with an interest and influence in the National Park in delivering the National Park purposes and duty. This includes organisations with statutory responsibilities, land management interests, businesses, local communities and user groups.
- 1.21. 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. It will guide and align the priorities and resources of the National Park Authority with those of partner organisations, businesses and communities.
- 1.22. 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 wellbeing 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.

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1.23. The Partnership Plan goes on to identify five themes based ‘agendas for action’, set below. To ensure that the local plan review 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.

 <p>Re:New Climate</p>	<p>Net Zero with Nature – significant cuts in land-based carbon emissions are secured through restoring natural habitats and enabling carbon capture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a ‘net zero with nature’ programme with partners and communities to ensure the National Park is carbon neutral by 2050. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and develop best practice in nature-based solutions to meet climate and nature goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help communities to take action on the climate emergency.
 <p>Re:New Nature</p>	<p>Nature Recovery – habitats are more resilient, restored, expanded, connected and maintained to enable wildlife to thrive, both within and beyond the National Park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help landowners, farmers and commoners move to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) which rewards working with nature.
 <p>Re:New People</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster a greater appreciation of the New Forest, its landscape and cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
 <p>Re:New Place</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in green skills and jobs, creating a recognised reputation as a centre of excellence for a growing green economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more affordable housing.
 <p>Re:New Partnership</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new ways of engaging with our communities, hearing their ideas and encouraging grassroots action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

1.24. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a legal requirement for planning authorities – including national park authorities - to cooperate on strategic cross boundary planning matters. The ‘duty to cooperate’ aims to ensure that neighbouring authorities continue to engage with each other constructively.

1.25. The New Forest National Park Authority is well placed to fulfil its duty to cooperate duties due to:

- Its coordinating role in the preparation and adoption of the National Park Management Plan. The current 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 have retained their responsibilities for housing, economic development, 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.

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

- Habitat protection – over half of the New Forest National Park is designated as being of international importance for nature conservation. This includes all 26 miles of the New Forest 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 under the 'duty to cooperate'.

1.27. The Authority continues to work closely with its neighbouring planning authorities on the review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan, including on the joint commissioning of evidence base studies. More detail can be found in the accompanying 'Duty to Cooperate Statement'.

National policy and guidance

1.28. The NPPF (2024) 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.

1.29. 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.

- 1.30. The UK Government National Parks Vision and Circular (2010) is cross referenced in both the NPPF and the accompanying NPPG guidance on 'landscape'. It 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.
- 1.31. 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.
- 1.32. The NPPF, National Parks Circular, NPPG and Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework for the New Forest have been taken into account in the review of the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.33. A number of the parishes within the National Park area 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 the 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
- 1.34. As neighbourhood plans are typically parish based, several also cross over into New Forest District Council area or Test Valley Borough Council area:

Neighbourhood Plan	Status
Hythe and Dibden	Made 18 December 2019
New Milton	Made 1 July 2021
Wellow	Made 25 July 2024
Ringwood	Made 25 July 2024
Lymington and Pennington	Submitted for examination March 2025
Milford on Sea	Neighbourhood Plan area designated April 2013
Totton and Eling	Neighbourhood Plan area designated November 2014
Fordingbridge	Neighbourhood Plan area designated April 2020
Fawley	Neighbourhood Plan area designated January 2024

Minerals and waste planning framework

- 1.35. 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 National Park. The Authority works in partnership with the other minerals and waste planning authorities in Hampshire and has adopted the following planning policy documents:
- 1.36. Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (adopted 2013) – forms part of the statutory development plan for the National Park. The revised Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan is currently at Examination and is expected to be adopted in 2026. The Plan covers the whole of the New Forest National Park, including the area within south Wiltshire. The plan is supported by the following SPDs:
- Oil & Gas Development in Hampshire SPD (adopted 2016); and
 - Minerals & Waste Safeguarding in Hampshire (adopted 2016).
- 1.37. With this separate policy framework in place for minerals and waste development in the National Park, the review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan does not cover minerals and waste planning matters.

Planning enforcement

- 1.38. To support the protection afforded to the New Forest as a nationally designated landscape, the Authority has a dedicated planning enforcement team to ensure 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 (adopted 2013 and in the process of being reviewed) that sets out the policy and procedures for enforcing planning control in the National Park.

2. Profile of the New Forest



- 2.1. To support the protection afforded to the New Forest as a nationally designated landscape, the Authority has a dedicated planning enforcement team to ensure 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 (adopted 2013 and in the process of being reviewed) that sets out the policy and procedures for enforcing planning control in the National Park.
- 2.2. 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. 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, natural beauty and wildlife of one of the last ancient, unspoilt and open landscapes in England.

Area and population

- 2.3. The New Forest National Park covers 567 square kilometres (220 square miles).

In 2022 the National Park had a population of 34,931 people² and with around 62 people per square kilometre it is the second most densely populated national park after the South Downs. The housing stock amounts to 15,503 dwellings (New Forest Housing Needs Assessment, Icen, 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

- 2.4. 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 10,509 animals are depastured on the Open Forest by over 700 practising commoners³. This historic form of land management faces threats from the high land and property costs.

Nature conservation

- 2.5. 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

- 2.6. 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 214 scheduled ancient monuments, 624 listed buildings and 17 designated conservation areas, plus three which straddle the National Park boundary with surrounding authorities. In addition to the nationally listed buildings,

² New Forest Housing Needs Assessment, Icen, 2025

³ Verderers of the New Forest data 2024

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*. The cultural heritage of the National Park extends beyond its rich built environment and includes the long history of commoning in the New Forest. Commoners' stock comprising ponies, donkeys, pigs and cattle roam free across the Open Forest and are part of the 'special qualities' of the National Park. 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.

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 authorities⁴ 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.

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.
- 2.10. The review of the Local Plan provides an opportunity to re-assess the settlement hierarchy in the National Park. The larger villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway are currently identified as '*Defined Villages*' 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. The revised draft Local Plan identifies a number of further '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

⁴ Recreation use of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar: Overview of visitor results and implications of housing change on visitor numbers' Footprint Ecology, 2020

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 and currently stands at circa 1.3%. Looking forward, a decline in the working age population is forecast.
- 2.13. In delivering the two statutory National Park purposes, the Authority has an important duty to foster the socio-economic wellbeing of the communities within the National Park. The English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and 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 purposes⁵.

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. 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.

⁵ Paragraph 66, English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular, 2010

- 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. Any future development proposals for the Strategic Land Reserve and Fawley Waterside in particular 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 look 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
 - 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.
- 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 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 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 Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Sway, 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 adaptations, 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 adjoining 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 20 years, including:
- **conserving and enhancing the nationally protected landscape of the New Forest** – 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. 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.
 - **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 declared nature and climate emergency will be on nature-based solutions and local community initiatives.
- **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 an important duty to foster the socio-economic wellbeing 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, in particular quiet recreation and maintaining its tranquillity and dark skies and to ensure that the tradition of communing continues.

3.5. The above challenges 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 the key challenges facing the New Forest over the next twenty years have been translated into nine strategic objectives, which are consistent

with those in the New Forest 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 draft 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 of the policies contained within the Local Plan have equal 'development plan' status within the British Plan-led planning system.

New Forest National Park Local Plan
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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
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	Place Partnership	A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; Strong and distinctive local communities; An historic commoning system; The iconic New Forest pony	DP2, SP23, DP24, DP25, DP26, DP27
3. Plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the landscape, character and special qualities and communities of the New Forest.	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

New Forest National Park Local Plan
Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation

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 recitation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity	SP1, DP2, SP6, DP16, DP25, DP26, DP27, SP29, DP49, DP50, DP51, SP52, DP58, DP59
5.Promote energy efficient housing to meet local needs including affordable housing 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, SP28, SP30, SP31, SP32, SP33, SP34, SP35, SP36, SP37, SP38, SP39, SP40, SP41, SP42, DP43, DP44, DP45, SP46, SP47, SP48
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 communing system.	SP1, DP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP53, DP54, SP55, DP56, DP57, DP58, DP59, SP60, SP62
7.Encourage land management that both promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and	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;	DP17, DP18, DP19, SP55, DP56, DP57,

New Forest National Park Local Plan
Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation

Strategic Objective	Link to National Park Purposes and Duty	Link to Partnership Plan Theme	Link to Special Qualities	Relevant Local Plan Policies
enhance the special qualities of the National Park.			A unique historic cultural and archaeological heritage; A healthy environment; Strong and distinctive local communities; An historic commoning system; Wonderful opportunities for quiet recitation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity.	
8.Support proportionate development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, providing opportunities for enjoying the National Park without harming its special qualities.	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 recitation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity	DP2, DP16, DP17, Dp18, DP19, SP60, DP61

New Forest National Park Local Plan
Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation

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 recitation, learning and discovery; Tranquillity; The iconic New Forest pony	DP2, SP63, SP64

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

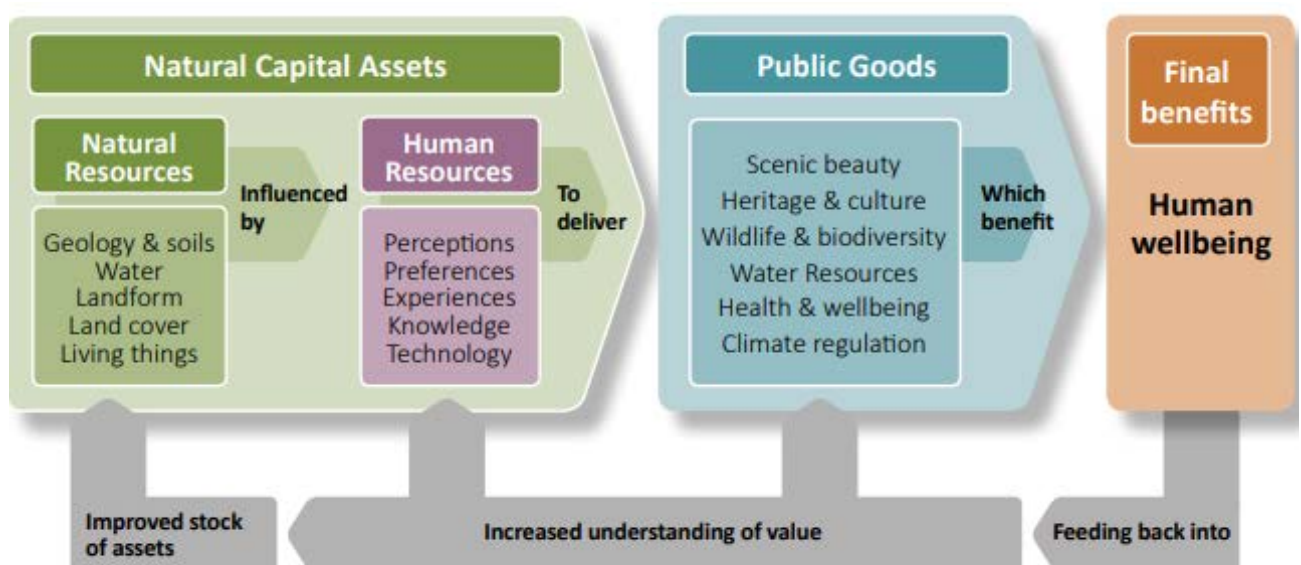
- 4.2. The NPPF states that Local Plans should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should run through both plan making and decision taking. In addition, the National Parks Circular (2010) states that the national park authorities' primary responsibility is to deliver their statutory purposes and duties with a focus on economic and social wellbeing. More recently the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act has the strengthened the protected landscapes⁶ 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 environment and adapting to climate change; 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 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:

⁶ As amended by [Section 245\(Protected Landscapes\)](#) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

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 inclosures 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 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 1995⁷).

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; accessibility to local employment opportunities; improved public transport links; local infrastructure provision including digital connectivity; and enhanced community and recreational facilities;
- b) 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 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

⁷ 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.

g) maximises the use of sustainable building techniques including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), local materials and minimises energy use and waste.

- 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 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 have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services.

This includes, but is not restricted to:

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

- b) proposals incorporate current best practise in energy conservation, such measures should be integral to the layout and building design and minimise impact on the site and its surroundings;
- c) development respects the natural, built and historic environment, landscape character and biodiversity;
- d) development takes 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;
- e) materials and boundary treatments are appropriate to the site and its setting;
- f) development would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity in terms of additional impacts, visual intrusion, overlooking or shading;
- g) development 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;
- h) proposals maximise opportunities to reduce the need to travel and enable active travel;

New development must also comply with required standards for:

- i) car parking (see Annex 3);
- j) open space (as set out in Policy DP16)

Spatial Strategy

- 4.13 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 emphasis 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.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 National policy confirms planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus 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.

- 4.16 The review of the local plan has provided the opportunity to revise the spatial strategy and how new development is to be 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. Smaller, less sustainable, settlements with fewer services and facilities will be towards the bottom of the hierarchy.
- 4.17 Given the range of villages within the New Forest, the larger villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, have in past local plans, provided a focus for new development and currently together these villages provide homes for around one third of all National Park residents.
- 4.18 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 revealed there are other villages which offer a good range of facilities and services, and could offer opportunities for sustainable development, these being Cadnam – Bartley, Landford – Nomansland and Redlynch.
- 4.19 Consequently, together these ‘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 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.
- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 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.

- 4.22 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.
- 4.23 The evidence base⁸ for the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 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, taking into account the environmental designations and revised settlement hierarchy, it is expected that within the plan period 2024 – 2043 that the Local Plan Review will make provision for around 950 homes equivalent to about 50 per annum, taking into account existing commitments and completions since April 2024.
- 4.24 Employment evidence⁹ 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 13,000 square metres and whilst some will be delivered through small-scale redevelopment and intensification schemes, the Local Plan also seeks to allocate part of the Solent Freeport site within the National Park for employment purposes.
- 4.25 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.
- 4.26 The Local Plan review will also seek to make provision for pitches and plots for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling showpeople as evidenced in the updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment¹⁰.
- 4.27 Accordingly the spatial strategy for the plan period 2024 – 2043 is set out below and settlement boundaries have been accordingly amended. The **Key Diagram** that follows illustrates the basic spatial strategy in the New Forest National Park.

⁸ New Forest Housing Needs Assessment - Icení (August 2025).

⁹ New Forest Economic Needs Assessment – Lichfields (August 2025)

¹⁰ New Forest National Park Authority Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – ORS (September 2025)

Policy SP3 Spatial Strategy

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

- Ashurst
- Brockenhurst
- Lyndhurst
- Sway
- 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 provision will be met through the strategic allocation of Land North of Fawley Waterside for about 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 the retention of existing local services and facilities.

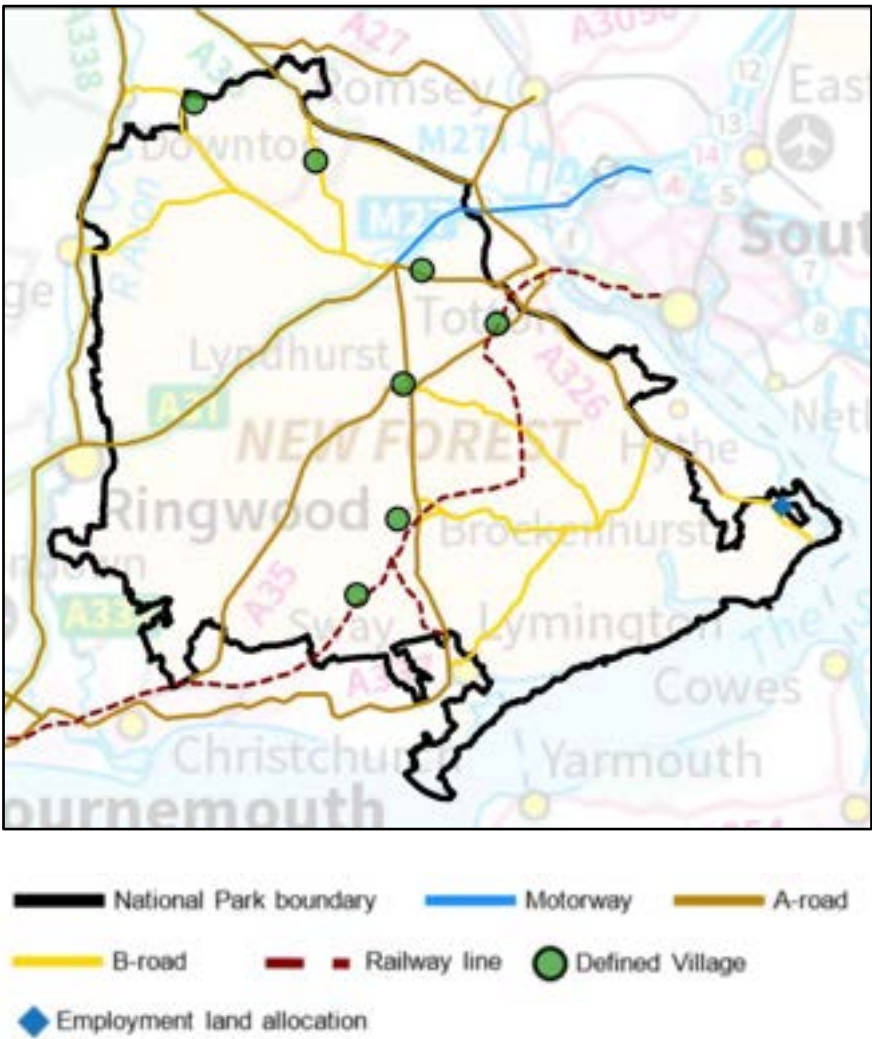
Provision will be made for 9 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 6 plots for Travelling Showpeople. The National Park Authority will seek to make provision for additional pitches and plots by permitting suitable sites.

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 SP42 on Rural Exception Sites; or
- b. it is in accordance with Policy DP54 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 DP57.

Key Diagram:



Major development in the New Forest National Park

- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 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 SP3, 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.

- 4.30 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) 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.
- 4.31 The New Forest is home to a number of large estates, some of which are also key tourist attractions such as Paultons Park, the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu and Exbury Gardens. There are also a number of 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.
- 4.32 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.

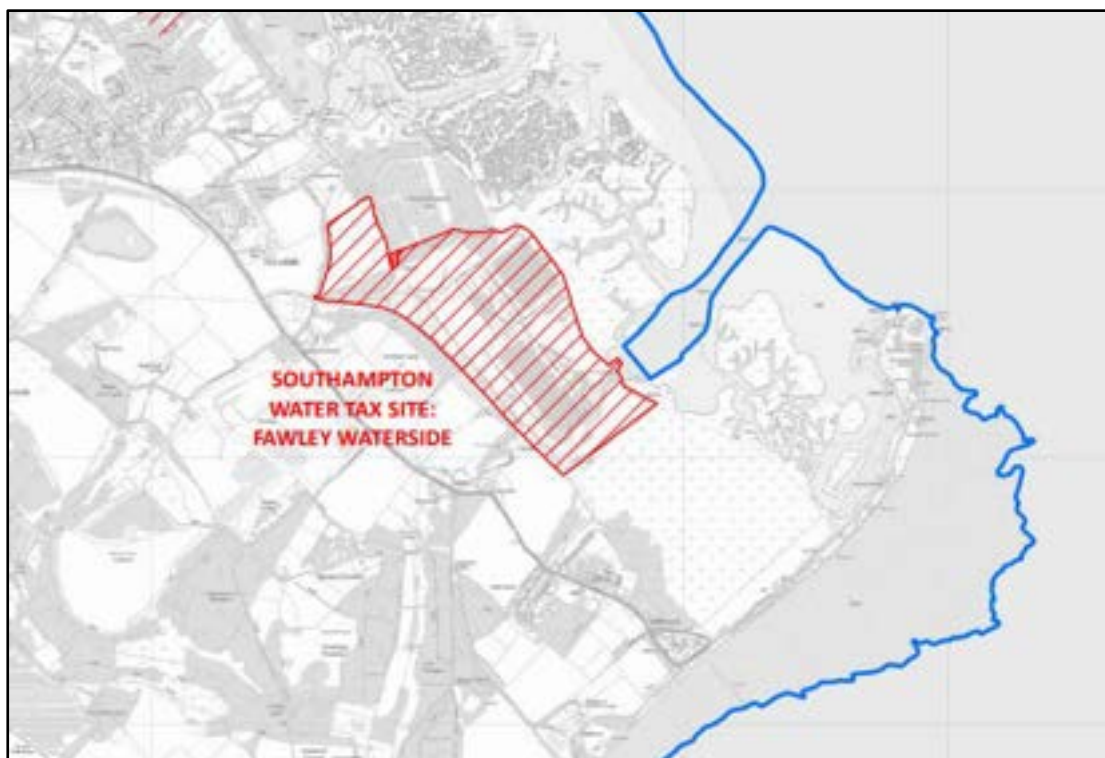
In addition to the above, proposals for the enlargement and diversification of major tourist attractions and sites offering accommodation facilities should be justified and supported by *Whole Estate Plans* to ensure they remain appropriate and proportionate in the context and setting of a National Park, to

include but not limited to an assessment of:-

- i. identification of site opportunities and constraints;
- ii. priority to utilising existing buildings and structures;
- iii. maximising sustainable construction and transport opportunities and how the proposal promotes sustainable development; and
- iv. delivery of national park purposes and related duty.

Solent Freeport

- 4.33 The Solent Freeport was designated by Government in December 2022 and is one of 12 Freeports across the UK. 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.
- 4.34 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.
- 4.35 Land at Fawley Waterside, is one of seven 'tax sites', covering 70 acres of land, described on the [freeport website](#) as "*an exciting developable waterside site in the Solent*", 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](#)

- 4.36 The Employment Needs Assessment commissioned to inform the Local Plan Review has identified a need for an extra 13,000 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 Authority proposes to allocate 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 extended 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.
- 4.37 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 water course 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

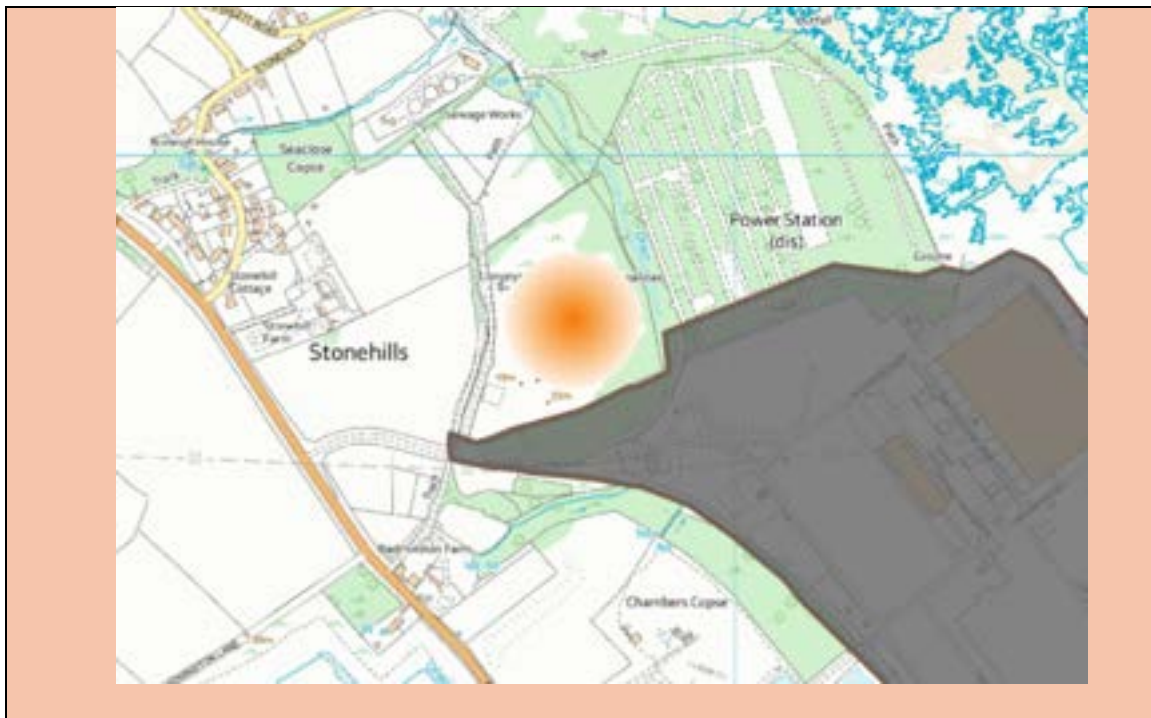
the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area. It also lies beyond areas that fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the vicinity. It does however, fall within the Aerodrome Safeguarding Consultation Zone for Southampton Airport, potentially limiting the height of new buildings and structures.

- 4.38 The site presents an opportunity to achieve sustainable new employment focussed 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.

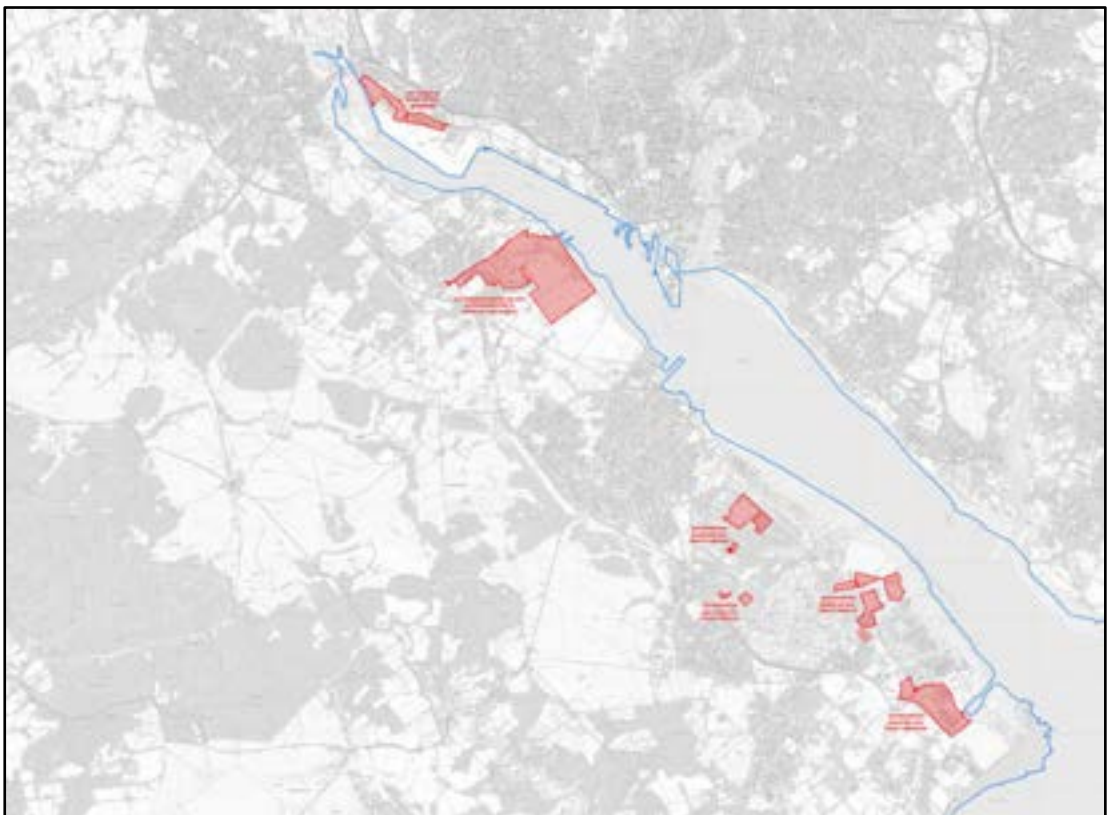
Policy SP5 Land to north of Fawley Waterside

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

- i. The area to be the focus for around 12,000 sq m of new mixed use employment predominantly Use Class E(g) and B2 with limited B8, to coincide with that part of the site that has had previous commercial activity;
- ii. To assess the need for, and to provide where necessary, enhancements to the B3059 and the Northern Access Road junctions to provide safe vehicular access to/from the development;
- iii. To create opportunities for active travel, through the creation of cycle routes and footpaths, to link to surrounding settlements and employment sites;
- iv. To ensure despoiled areas of the site that are not required for built development are subject to comprehensive remediation to positively enhance opportunities for nature recovery and greenspace on the site – through the creation/retention of
 - a. tree belts, hedgerows and woodland;
 - b. new greenspace to connect to existing footpaths and rights of way;
 - c. layout the site to enhance the landscape setting of the National Park and maintain an appropriate transition from the urban form of the site and use of land to the south, to the countryside edge of the New Forest National Park.
- v. To ensure redevelopment is brought forward in a coordinated manner and fully mitigates its impacts, the promoter will prepare a master plan for the whole site.



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



Source: [Map of Solent Freeport](#)

- 4.40 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 (ABP), the port is the UK's number one hub for deep sea trade, processing 900,000 vehicles per year, with more than 100 ha 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 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.

4.41 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.

4.42 Developments within these Solent Freeport Tax sites will still be required to comply with planning and environmental regulations. Depending on the scale of proposals these would likely be of a scale that would 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.

4.43 As these sites are located either within or in close proximity to the National Park, it is appropriate for the Authority's Local Plan Review 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 Natura 2000 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.

4.44 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 its '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 proposals¹¹. In particular the Waterside Green Links Study's aim is to promote anchoring and connecting green spaces within the Waterside area.

4.45 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 purposes and should also take into consideration the following specific factors:

- 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 through the use of tree cover to filter long-distance views of built development;
- d) Reinforce the landscape's wooded character, through the management of existing areas with appropriate species and using traditional techniques such as coppicing and to replant as necessary with native species;

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

- 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 multi-functional green/blue infrastructure links
- h) Protect long distance views of landmark features, such as Calshot Castle

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

- 4.46 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.
- 4.47 The existing system of developer contributions through 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, although it has not to date implemented CIL, this remains an option for the Authority in the future.
- 4.48 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.

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 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 Objectives 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, character and special qualities and communities of the New Forest.

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.
- 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 century¹². Summer rainfall is expected to decrease by around 40% with winter rainfall up by around 20%. Sea level rise may be up by around 50 cm, but possibly even 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.

New Forest National Park Local Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation

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

Source: New Forest Climate Risk & Adaptation Opportunities Assessment 2025

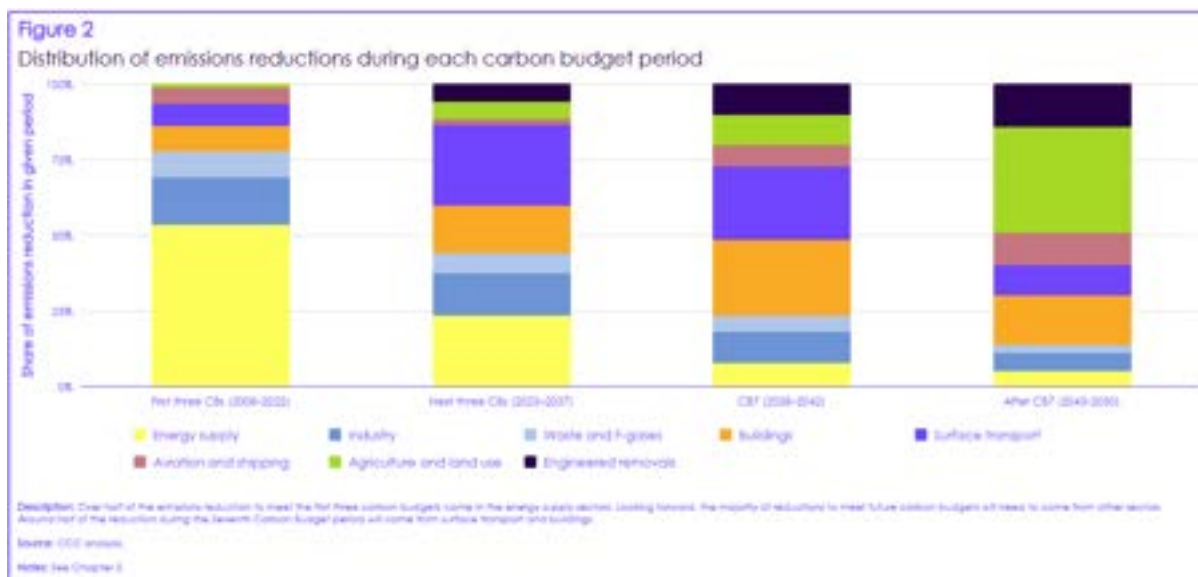
5.3. Mitigation measures can reduce emissions associated with development, reducing the growth of the contribution development has on the root causes of climate change. Adaptive measures can also be put in place to ensure development is resilient to the current and future climate, able to best support people and communities to thrive in challenging conditions. In 2021, the Committee on Climate Change¹³ 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
- 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

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

- risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings
- multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas

- 5.4. Through the Climate Change Act the Government has set 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.
- 5.5. 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 & F-gases, buildings, surface transport, aviation & shipping, agriculture & land use and engineered removals (see Figure below).



Source: Climate Change Committee 2024

- 5.6. Where feasible, it is vital that the planning system can advocate for development that can drive these changes, from more renewable energy sources and energy efficient buildings to waste management and transport infrastructure. The Authority has set out Policy SP10 'Renewable Energy' to inform the application of renewables within the New Forest.
- 5.7. The Authority will anticipate upcoming uplifts in building efficiency through the Future Homes Standard (FHS), which is due for release in 2025. This proposal will seek to reduce carbon emissions from new homes by 75%-80%. Building Regulations remain the primary mechanism in which these changes will come into force and therefore remain outside the scope of the planning system. However, it is worth recognising that planning plays an important role in creating sustainable development that can contribute towards net zero by 2050.
- 5.8. 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, Re: New Forest – Partnership Plan 2022-2027, PfSH (Partnership for South Hampshire), Solent Mitigation Partnership (SMP), the New Forest Catchment Partnership, and wider National Parks UK Partnership.

- 5.9. National Parks UK has committed 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.”¹⁴ This pathway seeks to restore, remediate and create significant areas for nature interest and increase the ability of the land identified to sequester carbon. The built environment is also considered, and the pathway seeks to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy-related emissions from buildings, transport and industrial process to near zero by 2050.
- 5.10. In 2019, the Authority declared a climate and nature emergency with a commitment to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030¹⁵. 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 with nature. Through partnership working and the adoption of documents, such as the Local Plan, the Authority aims to minimise the vulnerability and maximise resilience of the National Park (and its special qualities) to the impacts of climate change.
- 5.11. The New Forest National Park Climate Risk & Opportunities Assessment 2025 details the likely impacts on habitats, species, heritage and landscape, identifying actions across the themes of Lead, Learn, Enable, Protect, Manage and Restore which can help to make the special qualities of the New Forest National Park more resilient to climate change. More detail following the release of this assessment will be provided within a future iteration of the Local Plan.
- 5.12. As a strategic document, there are several opportunities for the Local Plan to address enable development to mitigate/adapt to a changing environment. The policies set out within this chapter have been reviewed and 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 national guidance.

Managing Water Resources and ensuring Water Efficient Development

- 5.13. The Environment Agency (EA) monitor the water quality of a portion of the river network in the National Park, based on both ecological and chemical status. Of the total river length of 482 km, about 280 km are covered by Water Framework Directive monitoring stations. About one quarter of the rivers in the New Forest that are monitored are of ‘good’ ecological status, but the majority are ‘moderate’, while a significant proportion are poor. There has been a decline in the length of

¹⁴ <https://www.nationalparks.uk/2024/07/25/uk-national-parks-become-first-in-world-to-join-race-to-zero/>

¹⁵ <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/climate-and-nature-emergency-and-the-new-forest-national-park/>

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.

- 5.14. 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 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.
- 5.15. The issues and pressures affecting the long-term quality of the region's water resources include abstraction, pesticides, phosphates, nitrates, physical modification and transport pollution¹⁶. 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 any strategic solution to reducing nutrient inputs to the Solent and River Avon internationally designated nature conservation sites from wastewater discharges. Developments that could affect these sites will be considered under Policy SP11.
- 5.16. The EA 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.

Implementing Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 5.17. 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.
- 5.18. Sustainable Drainage Systems (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

¹⁶ Environment Agency, South East River Basin – Significant Water Management Issues 2008

¹⁷ www.apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/37833.aspx

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 PPG is followed to ensure all options for surface water discharge have been considered¹⁸.

- 5.19. In 2013 the Environment Agency looked at the current and future water usage against climate change scenarios to provide an indicative stress situation for each water company. These findings were reviewed in 2021¹⁹ and maintain the previous position that the Southern Water area is in both current and future water stress. The South Hampshire area 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.
- 5.20. 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 have to meet the Building Regulations standard of 125 litres per person per day. Local authorities also have the option require 110 litres per person per day. This was adopted within the previous Local Plan given that part of the National Park's water supply is classed as being 'water stressed'.
- 5.21. In reflection of Southern Water's Target 100 ambition "to reduce average per capita consumption to 100 litres per person per day by 2040" this requirement has been updated and is set out 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 should 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 ponds.

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>

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/>

- 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 re-use/harvesting, green roofs, rain gardens, 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. Proposals must demonstrate that surface water run-off from the development will not adversely affect any designated nature conservation sites.
- 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.

Flood Risk

- 5.22. The Authority has no direct responsibility for flood protection or coastal defence. As the planning authority for the coastline in the National Park, however, it is important that future strategic planning and development management decisions are consistent with the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (2010).
- 5.23. Shoreline Management Plans are non-statutory plans that evaluate the known risks to people, property and the built 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.
- 5.24. Within the National Park the Shoreline Management Plan²¹ 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 '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, even though landowners are advised to contact the Authority before undertaking any works. The Authority will consult New Forest District Council as the Coastal Authority on planning applications where necessary. The Authority will also continue to be a member of the Solent Forum, which considers and provides advice on strategic issues

²¹ See www.northsolentsmp.co.uk/

for authorities involved in planning and management of the coast in the Solent area.

- 5.25. Flood zones have been developed by the Environment Agency and their use is outlined in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)²². 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. The Environment Agency publishes maps of flood risk on its website which shows the location 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 consideration of policy DP12. 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 this Local Plan Review includes an updated Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) commissioned jointly by local planning authorities in South Hampshire in 2024.
- 5.26. National Planning Practice Guidance sets out the ‘sequential test’ that will be used to assess all planning applications (except where NPPF paragraph 175 applies²³) to direct development away from Flood Zones 2 and 3 as the areas at highest risk of flooding²⁴. This will also need to take account of the broader considerations set out in the South Hampshire 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 National Planning Practice Guidance.

Policy SP8: Flood risk

Development proposals will not be permitted if they:

- a) would increase the risk of coastal, fluvial, or surface flooding, or coastal erosion;
- 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 PfSH Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2024; or
- c) are not compatible with the appropriate Shoreline Management Plan and Coastal Defence Strategy.
- d) have not evidenced taking a catchment approach to flood risk management or considered the relevant Catchment Management Plan (CMP) policies.

Relevant developments will require a flood risk assessment.

²² See NPPG at www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance and the Environment Agency’s Flood Maps at www.apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/cy/151263.aspx

²³ See NPPF for more information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

²⁴ See PPG, para 027 at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#the-sequential-approach-to-the-location-of-development>

Sustainable Construction

- 5.27. 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 historic buildings which come in a variety of conditions and have protected features which, in most instances, should be retained. Historic England advise that a 'whole building approach' is used when adapting historic buildings for energy and carbon efficiency²⁵.
- 5.28. As a standard, building regulations provide national requirements all buildings must adhere to. However, where viable, developers may seek to achieve a higher standard of building i.e., LETI, Passivhaus. The Authority advocates for proposals where building performance can be improved and which respond appropriately according to context of each site. This is especially important considering the protected landscape of the National Park which may not be appropriate for certain design layouts or renewable energy sources.
- 5.29. 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 purposes of the National Park. At present the Authority is not proposing to adopt net zero standards for development. This is due to several factors, including but not limited to, the limited scale of development within the National Park, the emerging Future Homes Standard (FHS) and evidence on development viability.
- 5.30. 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 the national Building Regulations and therefore separate from the planning system. The intention is that all new build housing will be zero carbon ready, from the same compliance date. Extensions and thermal upgrades to existing homes will also become subject to improved building standards.
- 5.31. In exceptional circumstances where a developer cannot secure an 80% reduction in carbon emissions it will be possible to explore carbon off-setting as an option. This is most likely to take the form of a financial contribution to local carbon sequestration activities, such as peatland restoration or tree planting.

²⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adapting-historic-buildings-energy-carbon-efficiency-advice-note-18/>

Policy SP9: Sustainable Construction

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

- a) Incorporate energy and water efficiency measures appropriate to the building;
- b) Consider 'small-scale' renewable sources (such as biomass and solar) that respond sensitively to the character of the local area;
- c) Use locally and/or sustainably sourced materials within the design and construction of the development;
- d) Minimise the loss of existing native planting and nature features;
- e) Consider how the layout and orientation of the development can take advantage of solar gain;
- f) Avoid development in places at highest risk of flooding/coastal erosion; and
- g) Include bird bricks across new residential development, including extensions (minimum two per dwelling).

- 5.32. The natural and built environment should work in harmony across all development to ensure climate change can be addressed from all angles. Through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements all development that passes through the planning system must deliver improvements to biodiversity (unless exempt). 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.
- 5.33. 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 by creating and restoring habitat and wildlife networks. The introduction of biodiversity net gain (BNG) and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will enable the planning system to improve nature's resilience to climate change.
- 5.34. Other measures to reduce the National Park's impact upon and vulnerability to climate change include sustainable transport, considering flood risk and supporting energy efficient new development and local food production. These topics are covered within this chapter and other policies within the Local Plan.

Renewable Energy

- 5.35. The NPPF supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure and requires local planning authorities to have a positive

strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon 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 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.

- 5.36. National planning 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.
- 5.37. 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 National 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. The New Forest is not an appropriate location for on-shore 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; and
- 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, heritage assets, 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.

- 5.38. All forms of small-scale energy production will be supported where these meet the criteria set out in Policy SP10. Evidence suggests, however, that the most appropriate forms of renewable energy production in the New Forest are likely to be solar and biomass.
- 5.39. 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.
- 5.40. 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 Authority's Design Guide currently provides advice on the incorporation of energy efficiencies into the design of buildings. Proposals that make use of brownfield land in combination with renewable energy sources, such as found at 'Paultons Park' (solar car ports/solar roof panels on car park), will be supported by the Authority.

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 and addressing climate change. In recent years the importance of biodiversity has been emphasised through the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies; the mandatory requirement for qualifying developments to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain, and a legal Biodiversity Duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. 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 in lowland Britain. The heart of the Forest, with its mosaic of ancient pasture woodland, lowland heath, lawns and wetlands and river systems, are intimately connected to the small-holdings 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. It 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 decisions 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 the 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. In addition, over half of the New Forest National Park is further protected by international nature conservation designations. The New Forest is home to a wide variety of important and often rare wildlife, habitats and species. The importance of these means that large areas of land in the National Park and its coastline have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar sites and 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 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' and contrasts dramatically with the intensively developed residential and industrial environments close to its boundaries. Indeed, the Parliamentary Order²⁶ 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 special²⁷. In the face of these pressures it is essential that the reasons for the designation of the New Forest as

²⁶ Explanatory Memorandum to the New Forest National Park Authority (establishment) Order 2005

²⁷ The special qualities of the National Park are highlighted in the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan and are set out in Annex 1 to 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. 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 in 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 and the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in qualifying new developments, as well as protected 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. 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

- 6.9. Internationally designated nature conservation sites in the National Park are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance) and are shown on the Policies Map. These designated areas are large and incorporate more than 30,000 hectares. These 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 protected by the national designation 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.
- 6.10. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) supported the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) and the current review of the Local Plan is also being informed by an HRA, which will test whether the policies and proposals in the Local Plan Review would affect the integrity of the National Park's internationally designated sites. It assesses 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 SP5 reflects the emerging conclusions of the latest 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 sites. The HRA also supports the 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 that cover the coast. 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 visitor accommodation in the catchments of the internationally designated Solent and the River Avon, which between them cover the whole of the New Forest National Park. As a result, development within the River Avon catchment cover 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 National Park will be required to demonstrate nitrate neutrality 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 no greenfield site allocations of C3 housing are proposed within the review of the Local Plan within 400 metres of these internationally designated sites. This is consistent with the approach taken in the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 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 future strategic mitigation schemes that follow) will enable developers to ensure that mitigation measures are secured 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. This applies to allocated sites and windfall development.

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.

- 6.11. For development to comply with the Habitats Regulations, the Authority will need to be certain that there will be no adverse 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.
- 6.12. The Authority has an adopted Mitigation Scheme which will fully mitigate the lifetime recreational impacts of certain development on the New Forest designated sites. Therefore, to ensure their proposals comply with the Habitats Regulations, developers can make a financial contribution to the Authority's Habitat 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 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.
- 6.13. 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 were to come forward on a single site, or a closely related cluster of sites, within 400 metres of the New Forest SAC and SPA, then the Authority will require the applicant to supply sufficient evidence for an appropriate assessment²⁸ of the urban edge effects.
- 6.14. Applicants are not precluded from assessing the potential impact of their proposals on the designated sites and devising their own appropriate mitigation

²⁸ The applicant will need to provide sufficient evidence for an appropriate assessment (that is informed by the HRA of the 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. Please contact the Authority to discuss the requirements.

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 their proposed mitigation measures to demonstrate conclusively to the Authority that it will comply with the Habitat 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.

- 6.15. Developments covered by prior approval and permitted development, contained 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. These developments, however, must still comply with the Habitats Regulations and therefore must adhere to the principles 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.
- 6.16. 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) sets out a classification of sites and should be referenced in preparing development proposals that could impacts on the Solent coastal designations.

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

- 6.17. 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. This includes development proposals that would 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, geological features and the water environment.

Development which is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) will not be permitted. 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 adversely affect locally designated sites, 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 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.

- 6.18. 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.
- 6.19. 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 Leaflet²⁹ provides advice on how this can be achieved.

- 6.20. 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.
- 6.21. 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.
- 6.22. 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 the local heritage and 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 a better network of hedgerows is an identified action of the Partnership Plan and the landscape and biodiversity value of hedges is outlined in the Authority's Design Guide³⁰, which, together with the New Forest Land Advice Hedgerow guide³¹ provide guidance on how to establish a hedge and what native species can be used. Opportunities to include new hedges in developments will be encouraged through Policy DP2. Hedgerows are protected by the Hedgerows Regulations³² and many require permission from the Authority if removal is being considered.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.23. 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 figure for qualifying developments and local planning authorities can adopt a higher figure where evidenced.
- 6.24. The New Forest National Park is covered by two Local Nature Recovery Strategies prepared by Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council. 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

²⁹ See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/submit-tree-work-application/

³⁰ See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/design-guidance/

³¹ www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/landscape-partnership/projects/better-boundaries/

³² See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/hedgerows/

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 biodiversity metric than they would in other locations. Development should also 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.

Policy SP13: Biodiversity Net Gain

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:

1. Onsite delivery: where delivered on site habitats should be functionally linked to the wider habitat network creating coherent ecological networks.
2. Offsite 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 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 mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, 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. Where this is not feasible alternative provision should be made within the site.

- 6.25. 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 other benefits by management of rivers and wetlands, including restoring natural processes.

- 6.26. 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 in the New Forest given the number of older buildings in the National Park and the areas suitable for foraging. Therefore in addition to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain 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. Bird bricks are a significantly better option than external boxes due to their long lifetime, zero maintenance requirements, improved thermal regulation, and aesthetic integration.

Conserving and enhancing the landscape

- 6.27. 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.
- 6.28. National planning policies and primary legislation through the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949 are particularly important in the New Forest as they provide the highest status of protection to landscape and scenic beauty in national parks. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also given great weight when assessing planning applications. 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 New Forest National Park will be conserved and enhanced.
- 6.29. 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 a wide range of other bodies. It is relevant for planning decisions and also development proposals that come forward in National Parks through other routes (including national permitted development rights and nationally significant infrastructure projects). 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 of the National Parks 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.
- 6.30. 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 in the New 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, condition of the landscape, settlement pattern and land uses, that give a locality its 'sense of place' and pinpoints 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.

- 6.31. 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 for the next 20 years. It offers practical advice and guidance, aimed at both organisations and individuals, to help maintain the special character of the New Forest.
- 6.32. An important aspect of national policy is its recognition that planning should recognise 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 National Park's landscape character special.
- 6.33. The following policy seeks to ensure that development avoids detrimental impacts on the intrinsic landscape character and its key features, in accordance with national planning policy, the statutory National Park purposes and the strengthened legal duty placed on all relevant bodies to seek to further the Park 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 New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment and are compatible with the distinct features and type of landscape in which the development is located;
- 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 and within settlements will not be eroded or have their setting harmed; and
- d) landscape schemes reinforce local landscape or seascape character. Where planting is appropriate, it is consistent with local character and native species are used.

- 6.34. Proposals which are considered to be significant in terms of scale and/or impact

should provide a professional landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) as part of the application submission.

Green & blue infrastructure and open space

- 6.35. Green infrastructure can be defined as a planned and managed network of open spaces that perform a number of functions. It can bring a wide range of benefits to both communities and the natural environment, and particularly has a role to play in providing recreational opportunities, maintaining a good quality of life for local communities, and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Green infrastructure includes such areas as parks and gardens, green corridors, amenity greenspace and allotments.
- 6.36. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework provides standards and tools to support the delivery of high-green infrastructure. Development should adopt an approach that is environment and landscape led so as to maximise the beneficial provision of green and blue infrastructure for people and nature recovery. It can help in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting biodiversity and providing for recreation. 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 be considered at an early stage of design as an integrated by of the design process.
- 6.37. The various recreation mitigation strategies in place in and around the New Forest highlight the importance of open space and recreational facilities within, and close to, the National Park in protecting the internationally designated sites of the New Forest through potentially relieving some of the recreational pressures on it by directing recreation away from such areas and the provision of alternative greenspace in more suitable and robust locations.
- 6.38. Within the National Park, the Authority will continue 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 at open spaces in the main villages, the creation of new wildplay sites and the enhancement of recreational walking routes close to communities. Green 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 measures³³ 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 housing development. SANGs are typically part of the strategic mitigation package for larger scale residential development (typically schemes of at least 50 – 100 dwellings where the required SANG area meet an indicative minimum size area

³³ The Authority will decide what measures are acceptable for a development to comply with the Habitats Regulations – see Policy SP5 and accompanying text.

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.

- 6.39. To deliver its first purpose, the Authority believes that it is important to consider landscapes on a wider scale. The Authority has brought together public, private and third sector organisations into the Green Halo Partnership to recognise the economic and social value of the natural environment – its natural capital and the ecosystem services it provides – and ensure this guides decisions about how we manage or develop our area. This will include exploring opportunities for new green infrastructure.

Policy SP15: Green & Blue Infrastructure

Proposals which create, maintain and enhance green and blue infrastructure will be supported, particularly where they:

- a) encourage connectivity between different habitats and designated sites;
- b) provide opportunities for local communities to access open space and provide for healthy recreation; and
- c) relieve recreational pressure on internationally important nature conservation sites.

Green/blue infrastructure is known to improve mental and physical health by providing areas for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. The Authority will work with other partners and adjoining authorities to develop green/blue infrastructure, and to ensure the impacts of development both within and outside the National Park's boundary do not adversely affect the landscape character of the National Park or 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 National Park is not appropriate, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where very significant benefits for the landscape, biodiversity and internationally designated sites of the National Park can be clearly demonstrated.

- 6.40. 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.
- 6.41. 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 2022 – 2027 identifying a range of priority objective to address these impacts

- 6.42. The National Park Partnership Plan includes a priority objective 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.
- 6.43. National planning policy defines open space as including all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a 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. 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, it is considered that these provision standards remain appropriate. The standard comprises the 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population of designed play spaces for children and young people, 1.25 hectares of formal recreational space per 1,000 population 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.

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.

- 6.44. New housing development should incorporate 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 locality. 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

- 6.45. Horse riding and horse keeping have a long history in the New Forest and are part of the cultural identity of the New Forest. 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 local equine community makes a valuable contribution to the local economy.
- 6.46. 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 also in the few cases when 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.
- 6.47. 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, incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house, in the garden of a domestic dwelling. It will be 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 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.

- 6.48. 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 generally occurs when there is less than 0.5 hectares of land per horse³⁴. Other key indicators can include the existence of stables, other facilities and the condition of the land.
- 6.49. Planning applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to demonstrate that the associated impacts of any new recreational horse keeping

³⁴ 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.

use is positive rather than negative, for example by including details of fencing and landscaping.

- 6.50. The high demand in land for horse keeping can reduce the amount of back-up grazing available for commoners' and there is a need to maintain an adequate supply of back-up grazing land available to commoners. Updated evidence highlights the pressures on back up grazing in and around the New Forest³⁵.
- 6.51. 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.

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.

- 6.52. The Authority seeks to limit the proliferation of buildings in 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 building being 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 DP57 (Re-use of 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.

- 6.53. 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

³⁵ 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

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 landscape.

Coastal Erosion and Development

- 6.54. 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 and 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;
- b) are in keeping with the character of the coast;
- c) will not significantly prejudice 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.

- 6.55. 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.
- 6.56. The England Coast Path (ECP) is a new national trail being created by Natural England through the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and will extend along the coast of the New Forest. It will allow people to gain access along the coast 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.

- 6.57. 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 (maintain existing, or build new flood and coastal erosion risk management infrastructure) for the whole period covered by the shoreline management plan.
- 6.58. 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 coastline of the National Park the policy is 'hold the line'. Since the Plan was published 15 years' ago 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 sustainable future for the coast between Hurst Spit and Lymington to respond to climate change and sea level rise. The aim of the Strategy is to recommend options to manage flood and erosion risk that are sustainable and adaptive in the long term. It will focus on the next 100 years, with the aim of having a completed and approved Strategy by summer 2026. At this stage in the review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan it is considered the designation of a Coastal Change Management Area for the stretch of the National Park coastline between Hurst Spit and Lymington would assist in managing coastal change over the plan-period in an area rich in natural and built environment designations, and which makes a significant contribution to the economy of the area. 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; and
 - e) Temporary uses such as car parks and camping uses may be permitted, subject to time-limited planning permissions.
-

Pollution

- 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.
- The impacts on air quality arising from the increased traffic generated by the development planned in the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (and the neighbouring New Forest District Local Plan) continues to be monitored to determine whether it would raise pollution levels that could affect the integrity of the internationally designated nature conservation sites in and around the New Forest. To date impacts have not been identified and this monitoring work will continue under the revised 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

- 6.61. The NPPF confirms that planning policies should aim to protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their amenity value. The tranquillity that can still be found in many parts of the New Forest National Park is cited as one of its valued 'special qualities' and therefore the Authority will seek to protect it. The tranquillity of the New Forest National Park is described as the relative peace and naturalness, combined with the open and unfenced landscape of much of the area that gives a sense of space, remoteness 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.
- 6.62. Tranquillity can be damaged by intrusive sights and sounds, particularly from man-made structures such as new roads, poorly-designed lighting and overhead power lines and inappropriate development (either by virtue of its design, scale or location). To help protect tranquillity the Authority has developed a map highlighting the tranquil areas of the New Forest³⁶. It identifies areas in the north and south-east of the New Forest as being the most tranquil in the National Park. The key criteria used to determine the levels of tranquillity were the amounts of man-made noise and visual disturbance in the natural environment. In order to retain this special quality for future generations the potential impacts of noise and light pollution will be carefully controlled in Policy SP22. Visual intrusion and landscape character will also be protected through Policy DP2 and Policy SP14. The Authority will aim to acquire International Dark Sky Reserve status from the International Dark Sky Association.

Dark Skies

- 6.63. It is recognised that from a planning policy perspective most forms of minor domestic lighting do not require planning permission. However, where planning permission is required either for the lighting itself or where lighting is proposed as part of a wider development, it is a material planning consideration. There may be some instances where the lighting proposed will impact on the quality of dark skies within the New Forest. Dark skies are one of the New Forest's special qualities and therefore should remain protected from the harm caused by significant lightning installations that can impact on tranquillity, biodiversity, visual amenity and heritage significance.

Policy SP22: Tranquillity and Dark Skies

New development should avoid, or provide mitigation measures, if the proposal will lead to noise, visual intrusion, nuisance and other unacceptable environmental impacts on the National Park and its special qualities.

This should include reducing the impacts of light pollution on the 'dark skies' of the National Park and control of development to prevent artificial lighting from

³⁶ See www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/landscape-policy-documents/

eroding rural darkness and tranquillity. 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 avoided, then adverse impacts are mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent.

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

7. Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Strategic Objectives to enhance the historic and built environment:

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.
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;
- 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 ancient 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 is 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 that many still await identification and recognition.
- 7.4 Small-scale changes to the local 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 2,386 non-designated heritage assets that have been identified as locally important within the National 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 list.
- 7.7 The New Forest National Park Authority has maintained a list of locally important assets for many years and received grant funding from Historic England in 2020/21 to further develop this work. The majority of the local 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. The Authority works with parish and town councils and local residents to identify additional assets of local interest outside conservation areas, for which we are 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 National Park are also at risk of significant change.
- 7.9 In order 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 in order to protect the significance and character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. It is recommended that a “whole building approach” is considered when adapting historic buildings, advocated by Historic England.
- 7.10 This requires analysing and understanding the construction, condition, significance, use and exposure to the environment of any heritage building or structure. A balance must be sought between energy savings, environmental impact, and a comfortable living or working environment.

Policy SP23: 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, including local vernacular buildings, archaeological sites and designed and historic landscapes, and, where appropriate, help secure a sustainable future for those heritage assets at risk.

Initiatives and opportunities to mitigate the effects of climate change by seeking the reuse of historic buildings, and where appropriate, their adaption to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development will be supported where this would not harm the significance of the heritage asset or its setting.

- 7.11 Where proposals for new development may have an impact on a heritage asset, applicants are required to produce a heritage statement setting out the significance of the asset, and justify the development proposals in relation to the character and setting of the heritage asset, in accordance with the NPPF. The more important the asset, the greater the weight, 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 they are undertaking as part of their proposed development, and the likely impact on the heritage assets of the National Park. These measures should aim to preserve and enhance the special interest of the heritage asset and its setting.

Policy DP24: Heritage

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 and 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 in the National 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)
 - **conservation area specific management plan** covering individual conservation areas.
- 7.17 Development to listed buildings and in conservation areas, and their settings, will be carefully controlled to ensure that their character is 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 On the National Heritage List for England there are seven historic parks and gardens in the National Park³⁷, whilst a much longer list of locally important sites is set out on the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Public Green Spaces³⁸.
- 7.19 Where planning applications involve listed buildings Grade I or II*, 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 Societies³⁹, alongside Historic England, where the proposal would include full or partial demolition of a listed building.

Archaeology

- 7.20 There are around 200 scheduled monuments in the National Park, but over 3,700 known non-designated sites recorded on the publicly available Historic Environment Record (HER)⁴⁰ 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.

³⁷ Avon Tyrrell, Brockenhurst Park, Cadland House, Exbury House, Hale Park, Pylewell Park, Rhinefield House.

³⁸ Hampshire Gardens Trust, 2025.

³⁹ See Glossary for full list of societies.

⁴⁰ www.hants.gov.uk/historicenvironmentrecord

- 7.21 Historic England maintains the Heritage at Risk register that identifies sites most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. On the register within the National Park there are currently 5 scheduled monuments and two buildings. We 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 a distinctive character, although they are also all recognisably part of the New Forest, linked by its particular 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 level 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 planning applications per year⁴¹.
- 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 character⁴².
- 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. They are therefore legally protected against damage. In addition, grass verges contribute to the appearance and rural character of the National Park. Parking, driving or storing building materials on the 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 in 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 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

⁴¹ Development management statistics, NFNPA 2025

⁴² National Park Authority's Annual Monitoring Report 2024

vehicles on the protected grass verges.

Policy DP25: 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 no) carbon footprint and all new development should make a positive contribution to the National Park particularly through its design, size, scale, materials and layout.
- 7.29 Sustainable design and construction focusing on maximising a site's natural resources and energy efficiency can include the use of passive design techniques, where this would not be inappropriate due to any impact it may have on the historic environment.
- 7.30 A Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document for the National Park was adopted by the Authority in 2022, which sets out more details on the characteristics of the New Forest and ways of maintaining local distinctiveness and embed the principles of good design into new development. This included a Design Code for the National Park, the key principles of which are set out in 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?

Policy DP26: 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 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; and
- 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.

7.31 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 police 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.

- 7.32 In addition, several communities within the National Park have produced a Village Design Statement which sets 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 2025)

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

Residential character of the Defined Villages

Policy DP27: 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 Defined Villages, their locally distinctive character and location within a nationally protected landscape.

- 7.33 The NPPF highlights the great importance the government attaches to the built environment and the need to plan positively for the achievement 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.
- 7.34 This is particularly pertinent within the Defined Villages of the National Park. The Defined Villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Sway, 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. The built character of these villages is varied. Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway have a more clearly defined village core, which is 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 in a more linear pattern. All of these villages are distinguished by mature trees and gardens, and important open spaces and gaps, which make an important contribution to the quality and character of the settlements.

- 7.35 It is essential that general pressure for development within the National Park does not lead to inappropriate development in the Defined Villages. It is therefore important that proposals for infilling and redevelopment within the defined settlement boundaries respond to the local character and reflect the local development densities where appropriate. This could include relatively high densities within the centre of the Defined Villages, and outside their core's lower density.

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

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.

The history of **Landford** 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 village's rural and wooded character, with a focus on traditional building styles and materials.

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 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 energy efficient housing to meet local needs including affordable housing 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 recitation, 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 their communities. 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 National Park between 2024 and 2043 in a way that is consistent with the two statutory Park purposes and related duty.

National policy context

- 8.3. The Government's National Parks Vision and Circular (2010) – cross-referenced within the NPPF and 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. 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 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.
- 8.5. The NPPF also states that planning authorities should plan for a mix 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 in 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. The Authority considers this evidence to be robust and the best available information on the 'policy off'⁴³ housing needs arising within the National Park. It should be noted that

⁴³ 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.

the New Forest National Park boundary does not align with local authority boundaries (it includes land within New Forest District, 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 SP28 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 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, accessibility 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 of national parks. Of particular 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. The scale of planned new residential development is projected to stabilise the population of the National Park.

Policy SP28: New residential development in the National Park

An additional 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 (315 dwellings);
- b) the implementation of extant planning permissions (which stood at 222 net new dwellings at 31 March 2025);
- c) the development of land previously unallocated or unidentified (windfall development) within the Defined Villages of the National Park (Policy SP3) – estimated at 20 dwellings per annum;
- d) development that comes forward on appropriate rural exception sites (Policy SP42); and
- e) housing for New Forest Commoners (Policy DP43); Estate and tied agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings (Policy DP44).

Proposals for residential development (including small sites) must take account of the housing needs of the local area to ensure a range of house types and tenures are provided.

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 to be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3).

- 8.12. Policy SP28 indicates that about 950 dwellings will be delivered up to 2043. This will be made up of the following components:

Source	No of dwellings
Housing completions in the Plan period to date (April 2024 – March 2025)	59
Extant permissions as at 31 March 2025	222
Proposed site allocations in the Local Plan Review ⁴⁴	315
Windfalls (including rural exception sites, commoners; dwellings, other tied dwellings, redevelopment within the defined villages, dwellings delivered through PD rights)	20 dwellings per annum = 380 over the Plan period

Addressing the needs of an ageing population

- 8.13. The New Forest Housing Needs Assessment (2025) confirms that New Forest has an older age structure than seen regionally or nationally, but lower levels of

⁴⁴ Noting some units will be C2 or extra care, so would not be equivalent to one additional C3 dwelling

disability compared with the national average. Over the Plan period to 2043 it is projected that there will be a 23% increase in the population over 65 in the National Park area (the comparable figure for New Forest District outside the National Park is 30% over the same period) and a decline in the population under 65 in the National Park area.

- 8.14. Within the context of 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 National 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 the Defined 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.
- 8.15. 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 National 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. Furthermore, 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 a proportion of the development is directed towards meeting local housing needs. The local occupancy tie will ensure C2 development addresses the locally arising needs of the National 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.

Policy SP29: 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.

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 new dwellings

- 8.16. 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 as a whole 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 National Park's housing stock by 2043. Policy SP30 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 National Park and a focus on meeting the identified local needs. This broad policy approach has been in place in the New Forest National Park since 2019 and has helped to ensure net new dwellings are tailored towards identified local housing needs.
- 8.17. 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 review identifies a continuing need for smaller homes within the National Park, with the vast majority of local housing need being in the 1 – 3 bedroom dwelling categories.
- 8.18. In response to the clear evidence on local needs relating to smaller dwelling sizes, Policy SP30 sets out a maximum floor area on the size of new dwellings from all sources 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 also reflects that of several other English national parks in response to the finite land resource for new development and the need to target new development towards meeting the identified local housing needs.
- 8.19. 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.

Policy SP30: 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. 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

- 8.20. In response to the requirements of national policy, in updating the local planning policies for the National Park the Authority has undertaken a review of the settlement hierarchy and identified potential housing site allocations.
- 8.21. 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 National 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.
- 8.22. The following section sets out the proposed housing land allocations within the National Park. The distribution of these sites is in accordance with the spatial strategy for the National Park which seeks to direct new development towards the most sustainable locations (the 'Defined Villages') in accordance with the Government's emphasis on sustainable development.

Ashurst

- 8.23. 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.
- 8.24. 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 and West Totton.
- 8.25. 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 of 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 the services in Ashurst and Lyndhurst. The site is 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 draft of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review on the basis that development is not yet completed.

Policy SP31: 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 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; and
- 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

- 8.26. The Ashurst Hospital site comprises previously developed land with access to a range of local services, including the 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.
- 8.27. 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.

- 8.28. The adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 allocates 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. Viability modelling for the Local Plan indicates that the redevelopment of the Ashurst Hospital site (including site clearance costs) is unlikely to achieve the 50% affordable housing policy target.
- 8.29. 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 recreation pressure, urban edge effects including cat predation and the loss or damage to off-site supporting habitats.
- 8.30. Policy SP32 therefore requires development to be confined to the previously developed land to the north of the site and the strengthening of the planted boundary to the adjacent international nature conservation designations. 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 no adverse impact on the adjacent national and internationally protected habitats 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 positive allocates the site for Use Class C2 care home or extra care use. The site allocation is retained in this draft of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review on the basis that full planning permission has not yet been issued for the redevelopment of the site.
- 8.31. 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 SP32 confirms the chapel will be retained as part of the redevelopment of the site.

Policy SP32: 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 for the site 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) the Victorian chapel will be retained as part of the redevelopment. A detailed heritage assessment and structural survey will be required to justify the loss of the former workhouse buildings;
- d) redevelopment proposals must retain the protected trees on the site;
- e) 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;
- f) 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;
- g) all of the dwellings on site will be limited to a maximum total internal floor area of 100 square metres;
- h) 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. 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
- i) 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

- 8.32. Further assessment of the Defined Village boundary, natural and built environment designations indicate 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 National Park, together with its level of services and facilities, lack of environmental constraints to the north east, this local plan review recognises the opportunity to identify further land for allocation around Knellers Lane. This would 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.
- 8.33. The site is in a single ownership and has the potential to deliver wider community benefits (e.g. open space provision) alongside new residential development. Development would be focused on the south west of Knellers Lane given the

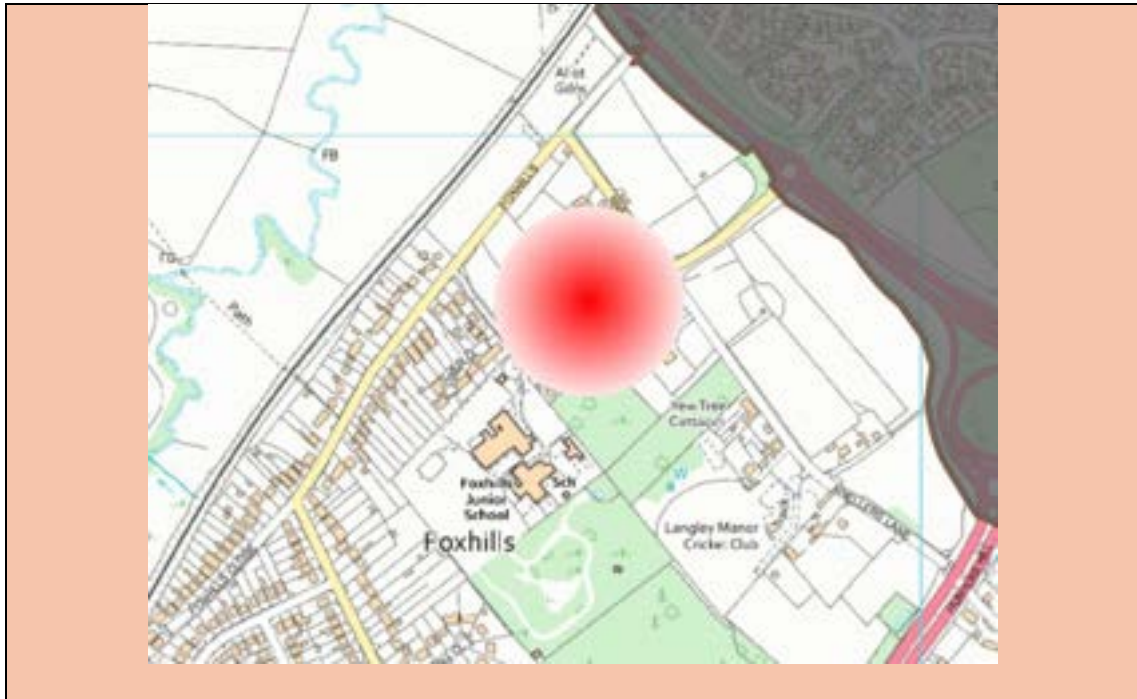
importance attached by the local community to ensuring Ashurst maintains a distinct identity as a New Forest village, separate from the larger urban areas to the east. Further work will be undertaken on the potential of this land to meet some of the identified local needs arising within the National Park, including consideration of the underground pipe route in this area.

Policy SP33: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst

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

Detailed proposals for 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 land outside the National Park;
- b) Traffic assessment to include enhancements to Knellers Lane to ensure safe access to the site, for both vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists;
- c) 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);
- d) Retention and enhancement of existing protected hedgerows and trees belts to be integral to the layout of the site;
- e) The development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and
- f) The retention of the existing sporting facilities in the area centred on Langley Manor Cricket Ground.



Brockenhurst

- 8.34. Despite its size, Brockenhurst is also situated within an area of internationally important nature conservation designations, as illustrated on the extract from the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan Policies Map (2019) illustrated below. Parts of the settlement are also affected by fluvial flood risk. Consequently there are no site allocations in Brockenhurst within the adopted development plan for the National Park area, although windfall development continues to be delivered within the Defined Village boundary.
- 8.35. Through the Local Plan Review the focus will therefore 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

- 8.36. 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'.
- 8.37. 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 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

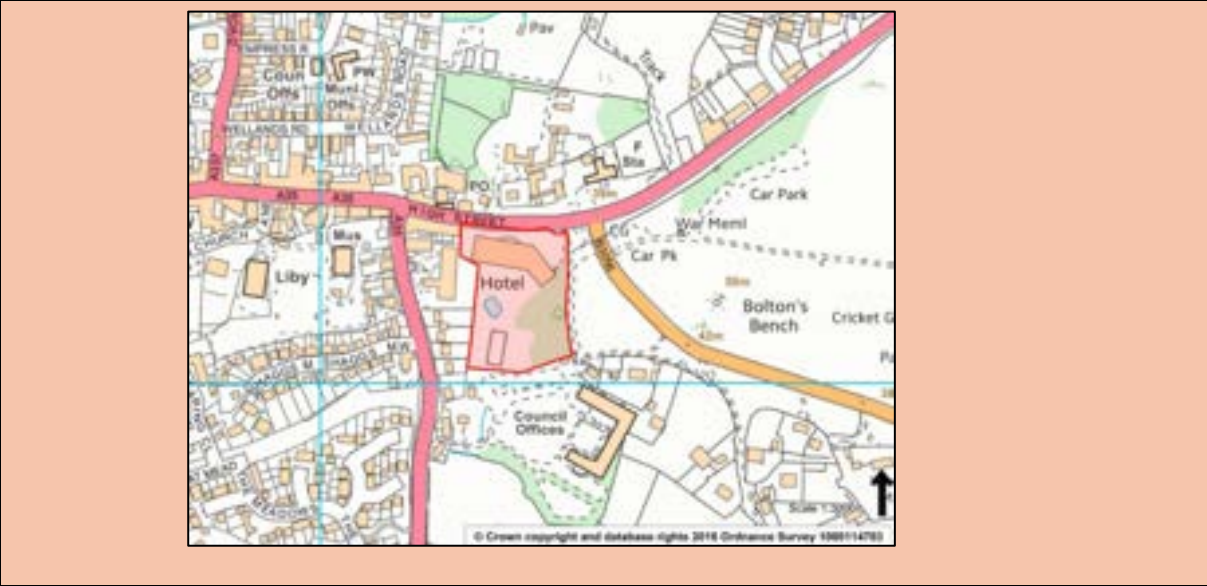
the largest brownfield sites within the National Park, its redevelopment also presents a number of challenges, and future redevelopment of the site would be required to respect site specific factors. Full planning permission has subsequently been granted for the redevelopment of the site for 79 residential units and a number of retail units on the main frontage of the site. Construction is in progression, with the first completions on the site in the 2025/26 monitoring period. The site allocation has been retained in this draft of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review on the basis that although full planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site, development is not yet completed:

- 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
- the core of the hotel building has a historic association with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Historic England have confirmed that the building does not meet the criteria for listing and subsequently planning permission has been granted for the demolition of the non-designated heritage element of the site following the submission of an assessment justifying its loss.
- 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 the potential urban edge impacts (including cat predation 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 SP34: 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 on the site should secure the future conservation of the heritage assets on the site. Detailed proposals for the site 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 harmed 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 dwellings on 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.
- j) development proposals must incorporate measures to mitigate potential significant urban edge impacts on adjacent protected habitats.



- 8.38. Opportunities for further development through the review of the Local Plan 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 be at Appletree Court, currently owned and occupied by New Forest District Council. The site is well located to facilities in the village and has access to the main highway network. The main office building at Appletree Court is locally listed (and so would be considered a non-designated heritage asset) and the site also includes several significant specimen trees. The site is located immediate 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

- 8.39. Land at Calpe Avenue - most recently in use as a Hampshire County Council-owned residential care facility - has been put forward through the call for sites for redevelopment/intensification. 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 draft local plan therefore proposes the allocation of the site accordingly. The proximity of the New Forest's designated sites means that the form of development will be restricted to C2 of 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.

Local Plan 2016 – 2036. With international nature conservation designations adjoining the village boundaries to the north and the east the only 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.

- 8.42. Land to the south of Church Lane in Sway has been identified as suitable to make a significant contribution towards meeting the identified local 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 though the site will be 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 is allocated in the adopted 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 draft Plan retains the site allocation policy.

Policy SP36: 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 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 that 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) 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

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



- 8.43. Given the existing designations and constraints, opportunities for further small-scale site allocations to meet local needs are limited in Sway. A small site has been submitted through the call for sites. 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 what the site could be developed for. Given the fact that the site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Defined Village boundary, the potential for this site should be explored further in the context of the above.

Policy SP37: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway

Land to the west of Brighton Road, Sway is allocated for C2 or extra care units. Subject to further detailed design work, it is considered that the site could accommodate circa 50 C2 or extra care units.

Detailed proposals for the site 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 and to define the extent of the built up area;
- b) Layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the adopted Sway Village Design Statement;

- c) Retention and enhancement of existing protected hedgerows and trees belts to be integral to the layout of the site;
- d) development proposals must be supported by information on how any remaining urban edge impacts on the adjacent internationally protected habitats will be addressed;
- e) development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites;
- f) development must ensure the peace and tranquillity of the adjacent cemetery is respected and safeguarded; and
- g) Identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Land to the south of Fawley Power Station

8.44. 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 & 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 also includes National Grid infrastructure which is expected to remain operational for the next 20 years.
- Land adjoining the site within the National Park is designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Chambers Copse, Tom Tiddler's Ground).

8.45. Land to the south of the former Power Station is allocated in the adopted 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 Local Plan allocation was made the site has also been designated as one of the Solent Freeport tax sites (Southampton Water – Fawley Waterside tax site). 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 on the basis of engagement with the site promoters of the Fawley Waterside site, it is not considered that the existing site allocation is deliverable. Through the review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan it is therefore proposed to remove the existing site allocation.

8.46. 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 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 National Park in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy and Section 245 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023.

Other Villages

8.47. The review of the local plan has provided an opportunity to reassess the existing settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy. This reflects the requirements of national planning policy, as well as the need to consider 'reasonable alternatives' within the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. This review has resulted in a revised draft settlement hierarchy establishing two levels of settlement and identifying in addition to the existing four Defined Villages above, the three smaller villages of Cadnam – Bartley, Landford - Nomansland and Redlynch, where opportunities for proportionate, small-scale development to meet local needs should be explored.

8.48. These settlements have a level of basic services and facilities, together with some public transport links and employment provision that could support some 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 affordable housing to a wider range of settlements within the National Park to encourage families to the area to support local schools and other services. There may also be opportunities for small scale community projects to be supported and funded from any associated development such as improvements to open space and community facilities.

Cadnam – Bartley

- 8.49. Cadnam and Bartley fall within Copythorne parish located to the north east of the National Park adjacent to Totton, with good access to M27, via A336 which serves both villages.
- 8.50. The combined population of both Cadnam and Bartley is over 2000 people, making it comparable to the existing Defined Villages of 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.
- 8.51. Large parts of Copythorne parish fall within the 400 metre buffer of the New Forest SPA and SAC, with the exception of Cadnam, parts of Bartley and Ower. Importantly 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. The factors limit areas of potential search for new development.
- 8.52. However, in response to the call for sites a site has been put forward for consideration for development within Bartley, with access from Winsor Road. This part of the settlement is relatively unconstrained lying beyond the 400 metre SPA buffer, the conservation areas and the area is also not identified as being at risk from surface water or fluvial flooding risk.

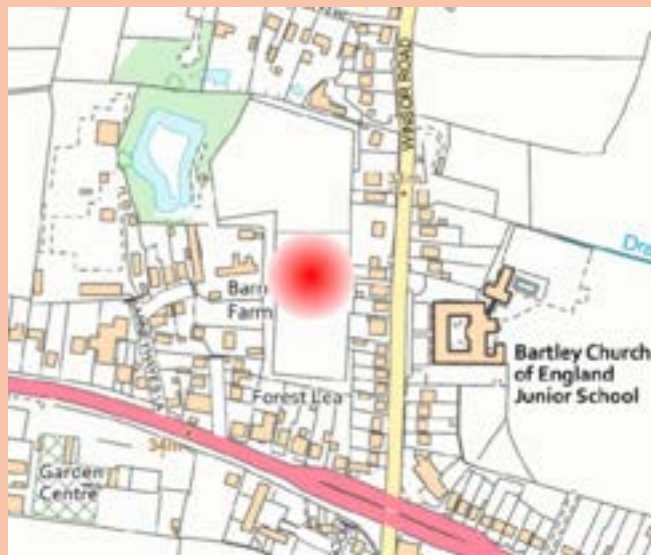
Policy SP38: Land to West of Winsor Road, Bartley

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

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

- a) All of the 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 onto Winsor Road and creation of pedestrian and cycle links and safe crossing points to the nearby primary school;
- c) Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees belts to be integral to the layout of the site;

- d) Layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the adopted Copythorne Village Design Statement (2025);
- e) Development must ensure impacts on the existing residential properties in the area are addressed through the layout and design of the scheme;
- f) Development proposals will be required to consider impacts on the New Forest's internationally designated sites (including urban edge effects) and the Forest North East Conservation Area,
- g) Development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and
- h) Identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Landford – Nomansland

- 8.53. Landford and Nomansland lie within the Wiltshire area of the National Park. The combined settlement of Landford and Nomansland form one of the largest settlements in the north of the New Forest and for many years there was a defined settlement boundary under the planning policies prepared by the predecessor planning authorities in Wiltshire. Whilst being smaller in terms of households and population than the other settlements, the settlement is in close proximity to A36, linking with South Hampshire to the south and Salisbury to the north. It also has a level of local facilities, including basic local transport links, public open space, a local school and village hall.
- 8.54. While 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 unconstrained and offers a potential area of search for some proportionate development to meet local needs arising within the National Park. The village does not include any

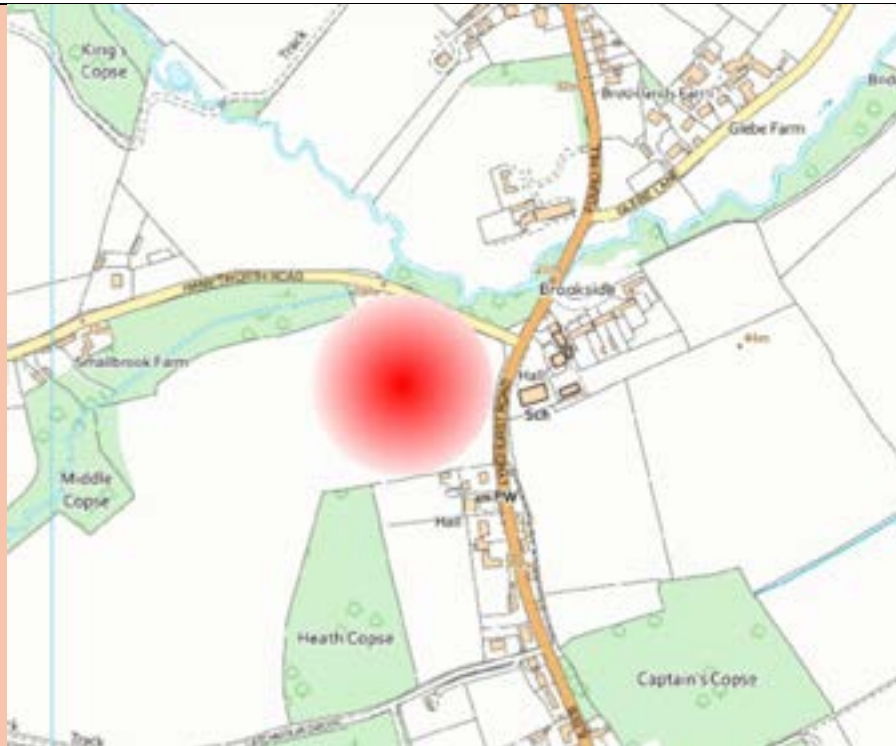
Conservation Areas and the level of flood risk is low. The draft Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan Review highlights that the site is just under 9 kilometres from the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation. Although some distance, the site could be within the range used by foraging bats from Mottisfont. The draft site allocation policy therefore highlights the requirement for further information on the use of the area by Barbastelle Bats to allow an appropriate assessment to be undertaken.

Policy SP39: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford

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

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

- a) All of the 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 Hamptworth Road and Lyndhurst Road and the creation of pedestrian and cycle links and safe crossing points to the nearby primary school;
- c) A landscape-led design and layout that reflects the landscape character of this part of Landford;
- d) Further information is necessary on the use of site and the surrounding area by Barbastelle Bats to allow an appropriate assessment to be undertaken. The development will also be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites;
- e) The layout of the site to reflect the character and appearance of the village in accordance with the adopted Landford Village Design Statement: and
- f) Identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Redlynch

- 8.55. The village of Redlynch lies at the northern tip of the National Park, within Wiltshire. The adjacent settlements of Woodfalls and Morgan's Vale provide a number of local facilities including the primary school and there is a bus service running along Quarry Road through Redlynch. The settlement of Redlynch had a defined settlement boundary in the development plan prepared by the predecessor planning authorities prior to the designation of the National Park.
- 8.56. 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 this offers a potential area of search for some limited proportionate development to meet the socio-economic needs of local communities living with the National Park and help to support local services.

Policy SP40: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch

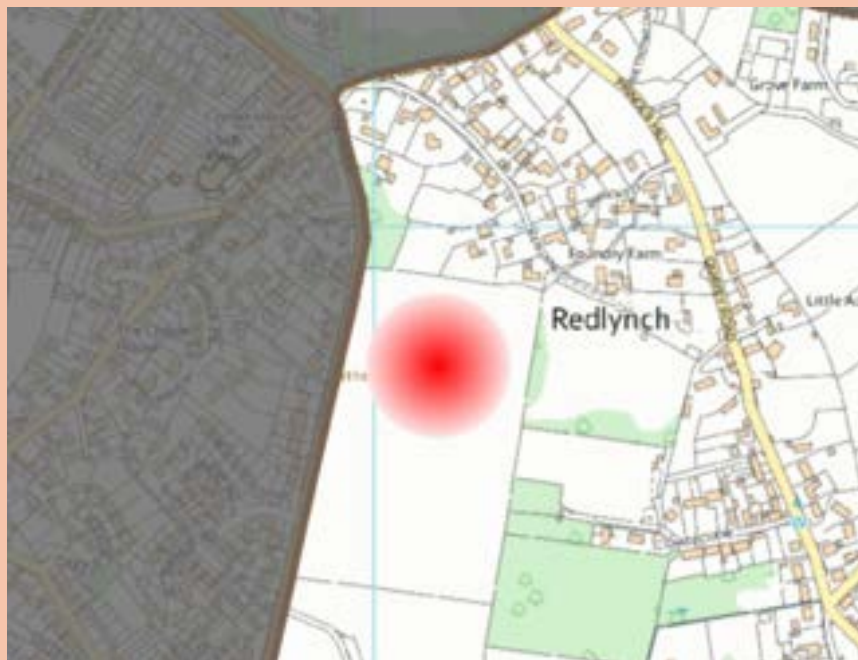
Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch, is allocated for around 50 dwellings, including 50% affordable housing.

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

- a) Provision of suitable vehicular access onto The Ridge, and contribute to any off-site junction improvements necessary;

- b) Create a pedestrian and cycle link to Ken Lane;
- c) Retain existing trees belts and hedgerows;
- d) 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;
- e) Development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent's internationally designated sites; and

Identify and contribute to infrastructure needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms.



Windfall Development

- 8.57. Windfall developments are those that are not specifically allocated for housing within the development plan. These sites come forward through 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). 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.

- 8.58. 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 have been completed within the New Forest 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 the Local Plan.
- 8.59. The Local Plan Review therefore includes a future estimate of 20 dwellings per annum from windfall developments. This is considered to be realistic given the historic level of windfall development within the National Park and the range of routes through which windfall development can be delivered. Windfall development will continue to be an important source of small-scale development within the New Forest National Park.

Affordable housing

- 8.60. 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 National 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 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 review concludes that the level of affordable need justifies the Authority seeking to maximise the delivery of affordable housing at every opportunity.
- 8.61. 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 current advice of New Forest District Council as the housing authority for the majority of the National Park, a strategic policy target of 20% intermediate and 80% 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.
- 8.62. 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 review of the Local Plan, the Authority has commissioned an updated Local Plan Viability Assessment⁴⁵. This assessment considers the proportion of affordable housing that could be sought on windfall and allocated development sites, as well as the approach towards rural exceptions

⁴⁵ Three Dragons, September 2024

sites within the National Park. The emerging viability evidence demonstrates the proposed Local Plan review requirement of 50% affordable housing on allocated sites and windfall development sites within the Defined Villages can be achieved.

- 8.63. In addition, the updated viability evidence assesses 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 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. 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.
- 8.64. 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 SP41: 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. 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.

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 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

- 8.65. 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.
- 8.66. 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 Review. 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 they are viable, and the Local Plan therefore supports an element of shared ownership / intermediate ownership affordable housing (20%) alongside affordable rented housing (80%) on rural exception sites.
- 8.67. The National Park Authority is part of the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH) which seeks to address the need for affordable housing in rural villages across Hampshire. The Authority will continue to work with HARAH and local communities across the National Park to identify suitable affordable housing exception sites.

Policy SP42: 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 that cannot be accommodated in any other way;
- b. be 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;

- c. be capable of management by an appropriate body, for example a Registered Provider, the Authority, a community land trust or similar accredited local organisation;

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 including a school, pub and local shop and access to public transport;
- e. there is an identified local need;
- f. the proposal is small scale and makes a positive contribution to the sustainability of the community

In all circumstances 100% of the housing on rural exception sites will be affordable.

Commoners' dwellings

- 8.68. 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 New 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.
- 8.69. Since its inception in 1992, the CDS has delivered over 20 new homes for commoners across the New Forest, and in most cases this has 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.
- 8.70. 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.

8.71. The Authority will also encourage proposals for commoners' dwellings to consider the re-use of existing buildings where appropriate and support the provision of suitable rented accommodation to better assist commoners on lower incomes.

Policy DP43: 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

8.71 Outside the Crown Lands at the core of the New Forest, the National Park is

characterised by a number of large land-owning estates including Beaulieu, Cadland, Exbury and Meyrick. These estates manage large land holdings in the New Forest and include commercial, social and environmental activities. Between them the larger Estates manage a significant area of the National 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.

- 8.72. The Local Plan recognises the role large landowners play in the delivery of the two statutory National Park purposes and related socio-economic duty. Policy SP30 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.
- 8.73. 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 re-use 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 the use of 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 there is no existing accommodation available and affordable, or that the conversion / change of use of existing buildings is not a viable alternative. In accordance with Policy SP30, the floorspace of new dwellings will be a maximum of 100 square metres.

Agricultural and forestry workers' dwellings

- 8.74. National policy has long acknowledged that certain agricultural and forestry activities may require a worker to live close to the site. Where this is justified, it is crucial that any housing provided is subject to strict criteria and conditions to ensure they are only used for the accommodation of essential workers.
- 8.75. 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.
- 8.76. The size restriction of 100 square metres is consistent with Policy SP30 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.

Policy DP44: New dwellings for estate, agricultural and forestry workers

Proposals for estate, agricultural and forestry workers dwellings, will be supported where:

- a. There is a demonstrate 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 for estate or agricultural/forestry workers, or last employed as estate or agricultural/forestry workers, in perpetuity;
- f. the size of the proposed dwelling would not result in the maximum total internal habitable floor area exceeding 100 square metres; and
- 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.

Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions

- 8.77. 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.
- 8.78. 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. It 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 DP45: 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.

8.79. 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, financially realistic and sustained. 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

8.80. A significant proportion of the housing development that takes place in the National Park is characterised by very small developments within the Defined Villages, which by its nature 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. 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.

8.81. The Government defines custom build housing as either a builder being contracted by a home 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 will be used to help identify and address the local need for housing. Custom / self-build will be considered positively within the Defined Villages of the New Forest National Park

Policy SP46: 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

- 8.82. 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 (December 2024) outlines the 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 permanently or temporarily.
- 8.83. 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, 2025) covers the whole of the New Forest National Park (including the Wiltshire part of the National Park) and is in the process of being finalised. It is the National Park Authority's intention to identify and allocate suitable sites where possible through the Local Plan Review, supported by a criteria-based policy to assess windfall applications. Policy DP47 carries forward the gypsy site allocation from the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan.
- 8.84. Any planning permission granted will include a planning condition or obligation to ensure that the occupancy of the site is limited to persons able to demonstrate an essential need for the accommodation. Policy SP48 also allows for the intensification of an existing traveller site.

Policy SP47: Land at Forest View Landford for gypsies and travellers

Land within the curtilage of the existing gypsy site at 'Forest View' in Landford is allocated for an additional permanent gypsy and traveller pitch (a net gain of one pitch). The site benefits from existing access and site infrastructure. Detailed development proposals for the site must meet the following site specific requirements:

- i. a detailed landscaping plan must be submitted setting out how the site boundaries can be enhanced. To positively enhance the site and its surroundings within the New Forest National Park, high walls and fencing will not be supported;
- ii. occupancy of the site will be restricted to gypsies and travellers with a local connection to the New Forest National Park; and
- iii. due to the proximity of the New Forest SAC, measures must be put in place to adequately mitigate the potential for the introduction of invasive species from fly tipping of garden waste.

Any planning permission will include a planning condition or obligation to ensure that occupancy of the site is limited to persons as defined in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) or any subsequent policy.



Policy SP48: 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:

- 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 and 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 (e.g. shops, schools and public transport); and
- f) the site does not detrimentally affect the amenities of surrounding occupiers.

Replacement dwellings, extensions to dwellings and outbuildings

- 8.85 The following policies on replacement dwellings, extensions to dwellings and outbuildings reflect the local importance of these issues 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

- 8.86 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, impacts on the balance of the housing stock and the loss of heritage assets, successive local plans have sought to limit the impact of replacement dwellings through appropriate planning policies. A tighter approach to replacement dwellings is taken outside the Defined Villages as the landscape impact of replacement dwellings in these more rural locations can be greater.
- 8.87 The Local Plan therefore includes a detailed planning policy stating that, outside the Defined Villages, 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. The Authority will continue to impose planning conditions to

remove permitted development rights to extend and/or alter approved replacement dwellings other than in accordance with Policy DP50 to ensure the range of dwelling sizes in the National Park is maintained.

Policy DP49: 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.

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.

Caravans and mobile homes may not be replaced by permanent dwellings.

In the case of small dwellings and those permitted by Policies SP28 – DP44 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 outside the Defined Villages, the replacement dwelling should be of no greater floorspace than the existing dwelling.

- 8.88 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 re-use 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 technically 'authorised'.

Extensions to dwellings

- 8.89 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 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 considered important that the Local Plan continues to include a clear policy to guide decisions for extensions to dwellings. The extension limits are intended to limit the impact of such extensions on the protected landscape and special qualities of the National Park. The extension limits apply outside the Defined Villages as extensions in these locations are likely to have a greater impact on the protected landscape of the National Park.

- 8.90 The 30% limit set out in Policy DP50 is not an allowance, target or entitlement and it is important to emphasise that although an extension may comply with the criterion on size, there could be other harmful impacts which would make the proposal unacceptable. 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.

Policy DP50: Extensions to dwellings

Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that they are appropriate to the dwelling and its curtilage and do not have a detrimental impact on the locality.

Small dwellings and new dwellings permitted by Policies SP28 to DP44 of this Local Plan, the extension must not result in a total internal habitable floorspace exceeding 100 square metres. In the case of other dwellings (not small dwellings) outside the Defined Villages the extension must not increase the floorspace of the existing dwelling by more than 30%.

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.

In all cases, extensions will not be permitted where the existing dwelling is the result of a temporary or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use.

- 8.91 Where necessary the Authority will use appropriate planning conditions to ensure that permitted extensions are not used in conjunction with national Permitted Development Rights to undermine the aims of policy DP50.
- 8.92 For the purposes of applying Policies DP49 and DP50:

- **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 sq. 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, 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 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.

Residential Outbuildings

- 8.93 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:
- a) impacting on the character of the New Forest;
 - b) increasingly being used to circumvent restrictions on residential extensions and replacement dwellings;
 - c) 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
 - d) resulting in the overdevelopment of sites.

- 8.94 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 home-working 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 DP51: 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; 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.

- 8.95 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

- 8.96 In pursuing the two statutory National Park purposes, the Authority is committed to fostering, ‘...the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Park.’ The special qualities of the New Forest National Park include its strong and distinctive local communities and one of the strategic objectives identified in this Local Plan is to further strengthen the wellbeing and sustainability of local communities.

- 8.97 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.
- 8.98 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 updated, has allowed for various retail and community uses to convert to other uses without the need for planning permission.
- 8.99 Community facilities and key services are essential in sustaining local villages 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 Woodgreen village shop, and this approach will be retained.
- 8.100 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.
- 8.101 Essential local community facilities are facilities that are of direct benefit to the immediate local community that provide an essential service, including 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 SP52: 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.

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.

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 activities such as office and industrial workspace, together with retail activity in the many villages, and tourism. There is also reference to telecommunications and digital infrastructure. A healthy local economy is essential in maintaining the life and vibrancy of the National Park, providing local employment, and sustaining its rural communities.
- 9.2. 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 duty⁴⁶ to foster the social and economic well-being of its local communities.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1: Introduction and the Environment Act 1995.

- 9.3. Maintaining a high-quality natural environment and landscape 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 a National Park designation brings economic benefits for businesses both within a National Park and in the wider region⁴⁷. By successfully pursuing its two statutory purposes, therefore, 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 National Planning Policy (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 Order](#) 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) 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%⁴⁸ for the last three years, with a peak in 2021/22 in response to the covid pandemic, prior to that was about 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 having around 60% of the population being 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 significant growth in the oldest (age 50 and above) age bands. Having an older

⁴⁷ 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: Cumulus Consultants Ltd and ICF GHK – Final Report for National Parks England 2013.

⁴⁸ Unemployment measured by the percentage of the working age population that are claiming Job Seekers Allowance. – source NOMIS

starting point, 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 Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS March 2022) indicates, the following sectors within the National Park:

Broad Industry Group	Number of companies	Total employees
Accommodation and food services	190	3692
Health	115	2823
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	140	1728
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	215	1598
Professional, scientific and technical	465	1508
Education	70	1348
Construction	275	1329
Retail	170	1032
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 Employment Needs Assessment reflects the above, acknowledging that employment opportunities are concentrated in the larger towns and villages, as well as there being distinct business clusters around Sway, Hordle and Tiptoe and Ashurst- Netley Marsh. Dominant sectors being Professional and Other Private Services, Manufacturing, and Administrative and Support Services, and these are distributed across these key employment locations, 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 and 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 there is net out-commuting by residents to these larger centres 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 in the surrounding employment centres in South Hampshire, including 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, indeed the bulk of existing businesses are relatively small (85% of the total):

Size of enterprise	No of enterprises
0-9 micro	2200
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 & fishing sectors amongst others. With a large decline in sectors requiring distribution spaces, such as wholesale and land transport, storage & 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 2024/15 – 2023/24, representing an average of about 680 sq.m per annum.
- 9.14. Accordingly, the Employment Needs Assessment identifies the need for an additional 13,530 sq m (3.3 ha) of employment floorspace over the plan period, taking into consideration existing commitments, this leaves a shortfall of 12,390 sq.m to be allocated through the review of the local plan:

Use Class	Requirement to 2043		With planning permission		Shortfall	
	Sq.m	Ha	Sq.m	Ha	Sq. m	Ha
Offices E(g)(i)/(ii)	1220	0.2	580		640	
Industrial and distribution	4750	1.1	560		3990	

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E(g)(iii)/B2/B8					
E(g)(B1-B8)	7570	3.3			
TOTAL	13,530 sq.m		1,140 sq.m		12,390 sq.m

Source : NFNPA Employment Needs Assessment 2025

- 9.15. Provision of this amount of additional floorspace represents a challenge for the Authority, given the existing employment stock is both varied in terms of size, type, quality and 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 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 in a nationally designated area, throughout the National Park the Local Plan will therefore, support:
- the suitable re-use and extension of existing employment buildings;
 - the retention and redevelopment of existing employment sites for a wider range of employment uses;
 - retain 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 span a wide range of economic sectors, it is anticipated that employment development will continue to come forward that will support both the wellbeing and 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 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 and 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 in 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 employment opportunities for local residents in the future. Proposals to therefore 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 all opportunities to sell/let for a suitable employment use have been explored.

Policy SP53: 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) re- use, 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 start up/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 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 a significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area.

- 9.20. In addition, there are throughout the National Park a number of existing buildings in use for employment⁴⁹ purposes, not within the setting of an employment site. In principle the Authority would encourage proposals to ensure these buildings are retained for an employment activity, in some cases it may be necessary for these to be extended to provide more usable floorspace.

Policy DP54: 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's Partnership Plan outlines the important role these activities play in the rural economy, particularly following the departure of the UK from the EU and changes in funding. Farmers and land managers in protected landscapes (National Parks) can apply for funding from the [Farming in Protected Landscapes \(FiPL\) programme](#) until March 2026. The programme offers 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

⁴⁹ Falling within Class E(g), B2 and B8 of Use Classes Order

- 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 at [Microsoft Word - Final Back up land report 2025.docx](#).
- 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 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 become 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 SP55: 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 DP54); 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 DP56;
 - (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 re-use of farm buildings in line with Policy SP60 or Policy DP57, 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 DP56: 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 re-use of existing buildings and 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 re-use of farm buildings:

Policy DP57: Re-use of farm buildings

The re-use 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 or its surroundings; and
- b) Is structurally sound and capable of re-occupation without re-building.

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.

Where the proposal involves conversion for residential purposes, priority will be for affordable housing for commoners, estate workers and agricultural/forestry workers.

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 re-use or change of use of existing buildings which are appropriate to their New Forest setting, are a re-usable 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 re-use existing farm buildings in accordance with Policies SP55 and DP57, 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 is concerned 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 re-use independently of a farming enterprise.
- 9.31. In the case of buildings whether through new build or re-use, required for pony and horse breeding as part of a commercial operation carried out by commoners in conjunction with grazing the New Forest, the Authority will need to assess the associated impacts of any additional 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 DP57.
- 9.33. The re-use of purpose-built or pre-fabricated 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, 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 DP59.
- 9.38. Successive local plans have sought to safeguard the role of the local shopping frontages in Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, in meeting some of the day-to-day retail needs of local residents and visitors. This has typically been done by setting a proportion of the designated shopping/commercial frontages (as shown on the Policies Map) that should be retained where possible for retail previously Class A uses. However, changes to the [Use Classes Order](#) has 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. Given this it is necessary to revisit how the local plan policies seek to retain active frontages, accordingly:

Policy DP58: Loss of local retail facilities

Within the defined retail frontages (as defined on the Policies Map) in the villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway, where planning permission is required for the change of use of ground floor premises from shopping to other uses, proposals will be supported where they:

- i. Support the vitality and viability of the frontage;

- ii. 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:

- iii. loss of the service or retail facility would cause harm for those living within the village or locality, in terms of its vitality;
- iv. The role that the facility provides – or could provide – within the local community, and
- v. Whether 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 a vital 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 do 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 settlement boundaries. Farm shops which sell goods produced on the farm do not normally require planning permission.

Policy DP59: Retail development outside of the defined settlement boundaries

Outside of the defined settlement 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 many 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 year⁵⁰, which has been increasing year on year since 2013⁵¹ is consequently significant to the National Park, supporting the accommodation, retail and other business sectors, providing employment, and 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 Go New Forest Community Interest Company and will 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 National Park'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 SP60: Sustainable tourism development

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 visitor facilities and accommodation using new or existing buildings within settlement boundaries, as appropriate to the scale and setting of the site;
- b) Outside of the defined villages visitor facilities will be supported through the re-use or extension of existing buildings, and visitor accommodation will be considered as part of a farm diversification scheme as outlined in Policy DP57
- c) retaining where possible, existing serviced visitor accommodation where it contributes to the sustainability of local communities; and
- d) supporting opportunities to relieve visitor pressures where this would assist the conservation or enhancement of internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites.

Extensions to existing tourism developments will be considered in accordance with Policy SP3 with reference to Whole Estate Plans and other development plan policies.

- 9.44 Small-scale development of new visitor facilities - meaning the infrastructure and services/amenities designed to meet the needs of tourists and overnight

⁵⁰ New Forest Partnership Plan 2022.

⁵¹ With the exception of 2020 – Source : STEAM report for New Forest National Park

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 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.
- 9.46 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 facilities⁵² are needed.
- 9.47 The New Forest National Park contains over three times the average number of camping and touring caravan bedspaces per square kilometre 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 unserviced versus serviced visitor accommodation, this amount of unserviced accommodation is in addition to the high number of locations which have licences for seasonal 'pop-up' campsites.

Policy DP61: 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.

- 9.48 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

⁵² Including all forms of self-catering camping and caravan accommodation

to reduce the overall number of camping and caravan pitches in the most sensitive areas.

- 9.49 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.
- 9.50 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 [Habitat Regulations](#).

Telecommunications and digital infrastructure

- 9.51 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.
- 9.52 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. It expressed the following objectives:
- To maximise the delivery of gigabit-capable broadband to rural areas of National Parks in order 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, and 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, to positively enhance the landscapes of National Parks where this is possible
 - Maintaining a positive working relationship at national and local levels between all parties to allow the above to be achieved
- 9.53 The Accord covers a number of detailed points including the consideration of all design options including 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.

- 9.54 It is a requirement for works associated with telecommunications infrastructure implementation to need the agreement of the land owner, 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.
- 9.55 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 SP62: 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 substantial 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

- 9.56 Revised planning policy in NPPF December 2024 makes specific reference to Local Planning Authorities to plan for the growth of the modern economy, sectors and uses, which is referenced 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 a site suitable for the scale of development envisaged with the uses mentioned is likely to come forward during the plan period.

- 9.57 The obvious opportunity locally for such activities is part of the Solent Freeport Fawley Waterside tax site. The Employment Needs Assessment acknowledges, that the whole site, not just the part in the National Park has potential to generate 4000 jobs in research and development and 700 jobs in advanced manufacturing and engineering. With a corresponding increase for both STEM and higher technical skills such as data analytics, AI, cybersecurity and automation.
- 9.58 Policy SP5 Land to north of Fawley Waterside, according allocates land in the National Park for about 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 SP3 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.
- 10.2 Unlike many national parks, the New Forest is easily accessible by train through four railway stations at Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Sway and Beaulieu Road, which are 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. Whilst a number of 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 Park 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 ferry services to the Isle of Wight and Southampton. In 2024 around 35,000 journeys were made by people exploring the National Park on the New Forest Tour during the 11-week summer season – saving an estimated 200,000 private car miles. However, this is in the context of an estimated 15 million day visits to the National Park.
- 10.4 Across the National Park, traffic volumes are high, especially during the summer months, and trends indicate a general increase each year on a number of routes. The National Park receives an estimated 15 million visitor days each year, with only 7% of visitors travelling car free.
- 10.5 National predictions⁵³ cite an increase in total car travel of between 8% and 54%

⁵³ National Road Traffic Projections 2022 (Department for Transport)

(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.

- 10.6 The increase in traffic within and around the National Park raises a number of 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.
- 10.7 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.
- 10.8 Traffic also detracts from the tranquillity of the New Forest, and can conflict with other recreational users, especially on more minor roads. Over the coming decades, with a potential increase in recreation pressure on the New Forest, it will be important to develop further education and traffic management initiatives to ensure quality of life, environmental quality and experience of visitors is not undermined.
- 10.9 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 have recently been adopted by both Hampshire County Council (2024) and Wiltshire Council (2025) with a strong focus on sustainable transport and reducing dependency on the private car.
- 10.10 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. 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. Policy DP62 below supports development that reduces the need to travel and prioritises access for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Policy DP62: 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
 - ii. cycling
 - iii. public transport
 - iv. private car
 - 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 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 historical interest.
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 can be minimised, and sustainable transport and active travel encouraged.

- 10.11 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 development proposed outside the National Park boundaries that require supporting transport infrastructure within, as well as outside, the Park. Such proposals will need to clearly evaluate the potential impact on the National Park and its setting in any planning application.
- 10.12 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 Park under Policy SP6 to help mitigate the likely effects of increased levels of trip generation within the National Park by addressing accessibility, road safety, air quality and traffic congestion.
- 10.13 Of greater concern is the impact of increased trip generation on the National Park arising from development outside the National Park boundary; some 150,000 dwellings are proposed for South Hampshire, Wiltshire and South East Dorset 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.

- 10.14 The National Park Authority will take account of national transport policy and the Hampshire and Wiltshire Local Transport Plans with regard to the consideration of any major new traffic or demand management measures over the longer term of this Local Plan. Any such measures will not be considered without further detailed research and public consultation, and will need to evaluate potential impacts on the National Park, as set out in policy DP62 above. This will apply to any transport infrastructure changes proposed within the National Park in order to support any future development proposals outside the Park boundary, such as the Strategic Land Reserve at Dibden Bay and Fawley Waterside.
- 10.15 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

- 10.16 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.
- 10.17 These standards are set out in Annex 3 of this 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 there is clearly demonstrated alternative capacity. 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 Codes in Annex 2 which sets out general guidance on the design and integration of parking into new development.
- 10.18 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 SP63: 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, where appropriate by supporting:

- a) local 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) community transport initiatives such as the Lymington to Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership;
- d) improvements to make existing paths, tracks and roads safer and more user-friendly;
- e) opportunities for the creation of a more joined-up network of routes for non-motorised transport;
- f) appropriate improvements to public transport facilities;
- g) the safeguarding of disused railway lines and roads from development that would compromise their future reuse as sustainable transport routes; and
- h) appropriate small scale electric vehicle charging facilities, where feasible.

Access

- 10.19 National planning policy and guidance and the local transport plans all emphasise the need to reduce reliance on the car, improve public transport and access to a range of services and community facilities. This will prove beneficial to both residents and visitors alike.
- 10.20 The dispersed nature of settlements in the National Park, 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 in 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.
- 10.21 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 amount 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.

- 10.22 The New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) seeks to identify a utility network with the aim of providing the 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.
- 10.23 Although there are more than 325 kilometres of rights of way within the National Park, outside of the Crown Lands, the draft Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035, together with the Wiltshire Countryside Access Improvement Plan 2015-2025, both 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 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.
- 10.24 The New Forest National Park Partnership Plan (2022) 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.
- 10.25 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.
- 10.26 The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 introduced new powers to improve public access to and enjoyment of the coastline of England. 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. Whilst large parts of the King Charles

III England Coast Path have been completed, the stretch through the New Forest National Park is not yet fully open.

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 consider whether they are achieving the intended objectives and targets, or if trends indicate 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 every five years, 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 limited level of development in the National Park up to 2043 the detailed assessment of infrastructure needs are 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 introduced through the Localism Act 2011. This will continue to facilitate a more integrated approach to a number 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 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, such as air pollution and recreational disturbance, 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		
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 of	NFNPA, NFDC and Natural England

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air quality – including ammonia and acid deposition – on the New Forest's internationally designated sites	pollutants for the New Forest's Natura 2000 sites 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, DP24, DP25, DP26, DP27		
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, character and special qualities and communities of the New Forest.		
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 Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds	Zero applications	NFNPA; Environment Agency
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 wellbeing for all ages, and reducing inequalities related to age, disability, deprivation, and rural isolation.		

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Local Plan Policies: SP1, DP2, SP6, DP16, DP25, DP26, DP27, SP29, DP49, DP50, DP51, SP52, DP58, DP59		
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
Density of new dwellings completed	Not to allow development that would be incompatible with the character of the area	NFNPA; Hampshire County 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 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 retail frontages in Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Ashurst and Sway to ensure they retain retail activities.	NFNPA; Hampshire County Council
OBJECTIVE 5: Promote energy efficient housing to meet local needs including affordable housing 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, SP28, SP30, SP31, SP32, SP33, SP34, SP35, SP36, SP37, SP38, SP39, SP40, SP41, SP42, DP43, DP44, DP45, SP46, SP47, SP48		
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
Location and type of affordable housing permitted and completed	50% on appropriate sites in defined villages; rural exception sites elsewhere	NFNPA
Applications permitted for agricultural or forestry workers dwellings	-	NFNPA
Net additional pitches permitted for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople	9 gypsy and travellers pitch required up to 2043. 6 travelling showpeople plots required up to 2043	NFNPA

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Numbers of self build or custom build housing permitted	To contribute to the list of eligible applicants on the Authorities 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, SP53, DP54, SP55, DP56, DP57, DP58, DP59, SP60, SP62		
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, SP55, DP56, DP57,		
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.		
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.		

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Local Plan Policies: DP2, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP19, SP60, DP61		
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, SP63, SP64		
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

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 this Management Plan.
3. The special qualities of the New Forest, identified through public consultation in 2007⁵⁴, 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 allows 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 ship-building, salt making and 500 years of military coastal defence.

⁵⁴ 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 214 Scheduled Ancient 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 means 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 3,000 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 hoggins or gravel, rather than concrete or brick pavements. 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 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 re-instated, 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 efficient for the use for which they were designed, but conversion may require careful consideration on how this changes the need to develop sustainability.

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 character of Heritage Assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Locally Listed Buildings and Sites should be protected:

- 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 Historic Significance](#);
- as clear justification is required to support any applications for Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission, set out in a Statement of Historic 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
2-3 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	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	Cycle Parking Standard
B1 (a) office	1 space per 30 m ²	1 stand per 150 m ²
B1 (b)(c) high tech/light industry	1 space per 45 m ²	1 stand per 250 m ²
B2 general industrial	1 space per 45 m ²	1 stand per 350 m ²
B8 warehouse	1 space per 90 m ²	1 stand per 500 m ²

Education establishments

Type	Car Parking Standard	Cycle Parking
Schools	1.5 spaces per classroom	*
16+ Colleges and further education	1 space per 2 full time staff	*
Day nurseries / playgroups (private) and	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
Hotels / motels / guest houses / boarding houses	1 space per bedroom	1 stand per 6 staff or 1 per 40m ²
Eating and Drinking	1 space per 5m ² dining area	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

Annex 4: Local connection criteria

1. Policy SP29 (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 SP46 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 SP31 to SP40); windfall sites (Policy SP41); or rural exception sites (Policy SP42) – is provided for local people in housing need. The allocation of affordable housing is managed by the housing authorities in the National Park (currently⁵⁵ 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 New Forest District Council where the main settlements including the defined villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Cadnam – Bartley, Lyndhurst, Sway are 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.

Wiltshire Council

4. The northern extent of the National Park, including the defined villages of Redlynch and Landford – Nomansland, is covered by Wiltshire Council. The

⁵⁵ The situation with regard to the current housing authorities will change in due course as a result of local government reorganisation, 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.

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
- 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 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 in Test Valley's [Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document 2020](#). Details for the allocations of social housing 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 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

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](#) December 2024.

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 or geographical area.

Back-up grazing / back-up land

Enclosed pasture land 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 – Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Cadnam-Bartley, Landford- Nomansland, Lyndhurst, Redlynch and Sway - which provide a range of facilities and services for their surrounding communities.

Depastured stock

Commoners’ stock which are turned out to graze on the Open Forest.

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 the commoners’ stock are 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 Natura 2000 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 and village halls 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 Nature Reserves (NNRs)

Nationally important sites for nature conservation, where conservation is the primary land use. Designated under the National Parks and 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.

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 people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive 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 and 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 and certain areas of road verge and unenclosed land outside the Open Forest.

Permitted development rights

Planning permission is not required for certain minor development. These are called 'permitted development rights' and are more restrictive in certain areas such as National Parks.

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

The urban areas including Christchurch, Poole, Bournemouth and parts of Dorset.

South Hampshire sub-region

The urban areas encompassing the Waterside, southern Test Valley, Southampton, Eastleigh and other settlements west to 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 a separate Annex of the Local Plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive provides high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. In accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment must be carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment, including Local Plans.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)

The name given to new green space 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 (SuDS) 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.