

AM 728/25

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING – 16 OCTOBER 2025

New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Report by Jim Mitchell, Access and Learning Manager

1 Summary:

- 1.1 The New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been produced by Hampshire County Council (Lead Partner) and supported by the New Forest NPA, New Forest District Council, and Forestry England. It was approved by HCC at the Executive Members for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services Decision Day on 18 September 2025. The Plan is a shared ambition for walking and cycling and covers much of the National Park and will inform both our Local Plan and our work on Active Travel.
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper is to seek adoption of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) by the New Forest National Park Authority.

2 Recommendation:

Members are asked to formally adopt the New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

3 Background

- 3.1 Since 2017, the Government's recommended way of planning and prioritising walking and cycling infrastructure at the local level has been through the preparation of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). An LCWIP covers a 10-year period. The key outputs of LCWIPs are:
 - a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development
 - a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
 - a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network
- 3.3 We have been working with Hampshire County Council, New Forest District Council and Forestry England on a New Forest LCWIP since 2021. Collaboration among these partners has ensured that proposals align with the special qualities and protections of the National Park and its recreational management.
- 3.4 Delivery of the New Forest LCWIP is a key action in the Re:New Forest, New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022-27, under 'Increasing Sustainable Travel', in the Net Zero with Nature Theme. Delivery will also link to actions on 'Promoting health and wellbeing' in the Inclusive National Park theme.

3.4 The full LCWIP is over 200 pages and is [available to view here](#). **Annex 1** includes key pages from the document which summarise its ambition.

4. New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

4.1 The National Park and wider New Forest District areas are split between the Waterside and New Forest LCWIPs. The Waterside LCWIP covers the area on Southampton Water from Totton to Calshot, bounded by the A326 in the west, and was adopted by HCC in November 2022. The New Forest LCWIP covers the remainder of the New Forest District and National Park (in Hampshire) areas, bounded by Wiltshire and BCP Council in the west. The New Forest LCWIP was developed in order to complete the coverage of LCWIPs across Hampshire, and to support walking and cycling for utility and leisure trips in the New Forest area.

4.2 For the area of the National Park within Wiltshire we are continuing to work with Wiltshire Council on improving active travel opportunities and links with the National Park, to ensure connectivity. An example is the Downton to Nomansland potential route which is identified in the Wiltshire Draft LCWIP. Conversations will also continue with Test Valley Borough Council.

4.3 The New Forest LCWIP has utilised a combination of desktop assessment, route audits, stakeholder workshops and feedback from members of the public and local organisations to build a picture of the current state of walking and cycling infrastructure across the district.

4.4 In line with the Government guidance, the information gathered was used to inform the development of a network of cycling routes and core walking zones where improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure should be focused.

4.5 The cycle network in the New Forest was split into four categories: Primary Utility, Secondary Utility, Leisure off highway and Leisure on highway. Primary utility routes are those which are strategically important, connecting people to places they need to get to. Secondary routes are often locally important but serve less of a strategic function and can help to join parts of the primary network.

4.6 Leisure routes have been included in the LCWIP due to the unique travel patterns within the National Park and large numbers of visitors in the summer months and at weekends.

4.7 The following Primary and Secondary utility routes in the National Park (either wholly or in part) have been identified in the New Forest LCWIP:

- 100: Downton to Bransgore
- 110: New Milton to Brockenhurst via Sway
- 120: Totton to Lymington
- 130: Calmore to Bartley
- 120: Beaulieu to Walhampton
- 160: Applemore to Beaulieu

- 170: Poulner to North Kingston
- 180: Pennington to Lower Pennington
- 200: Somerford to Portmore via New Milton, Hordle, Everton, Pennington and Lymington
- 210: Ringwood to Ivy Lane
- 230: Cadnam to Netley Marsh
- 240: Sandleheath to Godshill via Fordingbridge
- 250: Beaulieu to Holbury
- 260: Hurn to Braggers Lane, Bransgore

4.8 The Core Walking Zones (CWZ) identified within the LCWIP are areas with a number of key facilities within close proximity, such as village or local centres. The Walking Zones set out areas where investment in walking infrastructure could be focused and include walking routes where specific improvement measures are proposed. The following CWZs have been identified within the National Park:

- Lyndhurst
- Brockenhurst.

5. Consultation

5.1 During the early stages of the development of the LCWIP workshops were held with local stakeholders to gather their views on the current state of walking and cycling infrastructure across the district, and to understand where they would like to see improvements. The feedback from stakeholders was then used to develop a draft cycling network as well as core walking zones. Once the draft cycling network and core walking zones were identified and audited, a public consultation was held from 9th September 2024 to 3rd November 2024 to seek the views of the wider public. The consultation was hosted online, allowing respondents to provide comments on the proposed routes, and to add pins to maps to make location-specific suggestions.

5.2 The consultation received 260 responses to the cycling survey and 258 responses to the walking survey. Respondents to the cycling survey felt the most common barriers to cycling were concerns about road safety (79%), a lack of safe or suitable routes (76%), busy roads (66%) and poor-quality cycle routes (64%). Similarly, respondents to the walking survey also cited a lack of suitable routes (76%) and busy roads (66%) as barriers to walking. More information on the consultation is available on HCC's record of the [Decision Day here](#).

5.4 A consultation response from Natural England cited potential significant effects on European Sites such as the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Ramsar and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) as well as the New Forest National Park itself. The response stated that a Habitat Regulations Assessment should be conducted, which has since been undertaken by HCC. The results of this assessment have led to changes to the potential options taken forward in the New Forest LCWIP so that impacts on European sites are either no longer present or sufficiently mitigated.

5.5 Following the Habitat Regulations Assessment, it is possible to conclude that the policies outlined in the Plan will have no adverse effect on the integrity of National Site

Network sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. However, this conclusion is based on the level of information available at the time of assessment and acknowledges that depending on the scope and scale of projects which come forward, that individual projects could have adverse effects.

5.6 Individual schemes which result from the LCWIP will be assessed at the feasibility study stage to determine what the potential ecological impact of their implementation may be.

6. Delivery and implementation

6.1 We will continue to work with HCC and NFDC (and Wiltshire Council for areas of the National Park in Wiltshire) to seek funding to deliver routes and walking zones within the Park. There are a variety of sources of funding for active travel including Active Travel England Capability Funds, Department for Transport Active Travel Funds, Section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy and other capital funds.

6.2 HCC and NFDC will have access to the largest funding opportunities. In 2024/25 we received £100k of capability funds from Active Travel England which helped develop our capacity and also carry out feasibility on route 120 in the New Forest LCWIP. We are expecting an announcement on 2026/27 Active Travel England funding soon, and if received this will help us further develop the priority routes in partnership with HCC and NFDC.

6.3 The LCWIP provides a strategic framework to identify and prioritise infrastructure improvements for active travel across the National Park which will help inform the emerging New Forest National Park Local Plan, and those of adjacent authorities. In addition, it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications ensuring that new developments support and contribute to the identified cycling and walking networks where appropriate.

6.4 Adopting the LCWIP at this time is beneficial as it will help us feed into any future local government arrangements and will be a focal point for any future local authorities and the future Hampshire Mayoral Combined County Authority.

7. Next steps

7.1 The New Forest NPA, supported by HCC, NFDC and Go New Forest are planning a New Forest National Park Transport Summit, to take place in Brockenhurst Village Hall on 20 November. It will be a flagship event for community groups, businesses, public transport industry leads, elected representatives and local organisations to help create a vision and strategy for how people move around the National Park in ways that protect and enhance our special, working landscape. Active Travel and the LCWIP will be highlighted at the event and will form a vital part of our collective sustainable transport vision.

7.2 The summit and other stakeholder engagement will continue to inform our plans for the Active Travel England Capability Funding for 2026/27.

7.3 The New Forest LCWIP is a plan for 10 years and will be reviewed after five years. It is a working document and can be adapted as needs arise over the timeline of the plan.

Recommendation

Members are asked to formally adopt the New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

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Equality Impact Assessment:

The following impact assessment accompanied the report to HCC's Decision Day meeting on 18 September:

- An overall neutral impact on people with protected characteristics has been identified from this decision. Regarding the protected characteristic of poverty, delivery of the network identified in the LCWIP would provide increased mobility opportunities for those who cannot afford to run a car or use public transport. As the New Forest LCWIP covers a predominantly rural area, delivery of the proposals within the LCWIP would improve mobility options for rural communities, impacting the protected characteristic of rurality.
- The LCWIP is expected to have a neutral impact with respect to disability, although it is possible that measures developed using the LCWIP could improve accessibility to the highway network for people with physical disabilities. The LCWIP would also benefit the elderly by making footways and cycleways easier and safer to use. Similarly, the impact on pregnancy and maternity resulting from the New Forest LCWIP was neutral, although there may be a minor positive impact from measures resulting from the LCWIP where those measures provide additional walking space for people with buggies. The LCWIP was determined to have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics of Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation and Marriage and Civil Partnership, as the LCWIP considered the quality of the walking, wheeling and cycling network for all users.
- Whilst the New Forest LCWIP provides a policy basis for improving relevant infrastructure, it does not deliver change itself. Therefore, whilst any transport schemes that are identified in the LCWIPs are expected to have positive impacts on a range of protected characteristics such as age, disability, pregnancy & maternity, poverty and rurality by providing improved access and connectivity by non-motorised transport, they will be subject to their own Equalities Impact Assessment as schemes progress to delivery