

25 JULY 2019

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a special meeting of the Community & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in The Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 25 July 2019

- * Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (Chairman)
- * Cllr Neville Penman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Steve Clarke
- * Keith Craze
- Arthur Davis
- * Barry Dunning

Councillors:

- * David Hawkins
- * Caroline Rackham
- * David Russell
- Alex Wade

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel Members:

Councillors:

- Ann Bellows
- * Sue Bennison
- * Allan Glass
- * Andrew Gossage
- * Stephanie Osborne

Councillors:

- Tony Ring
- * Steve Rippon-Swaine
- * Derek Tipp
- * Malcolm Wade

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Barry Rickman, Leader & Corporate Affairs Portfolio Holder
Diane Andrews, Community Affairs Portfolio Holder
Alison Hoare, Environment & Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder
Mark Steele, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Alan O'Sullivan

Also In Attendance:

Steve Avery, New Forest National Park Authority
Nigel Matthews, New Forest National Park Authority

Officers Attending:

Claire Upton-Brown, Louise Evans and Andy Rogers

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Davis, A Wade, Bellows and Ring.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Bennison, Penman and Rackham all declared interests as members of the National Park Authority and who had voted on the document.

Cllrs Rackham and Bennison did not participate in the debate or vote on the matter. Cllr Penman made a short statement but did not vote.

14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation session.

15 NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY (NPA) - RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY TOWARDS A SPATIAL VISION

Cllrs Bennison, Penman and Rackham all declared interests as members of the National Park Authority and who had voted on the document.

Cllrs Rackham and Bennison did not participate in the debate or vote on the matter. Cllr Penman made a short statement but did not vote.

The meeting noted the findings from the National Park Authority 2018 Future Forest Consultation on Recreation Management, the Strategic Actions compiled by the NPA's Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group together with the NPA's intention to undertake further investigation into the feasibility of a Local Development Order.

It was explained that the District Council was a consultee on the document, though the Council's representatives had been involved throughout the preparation process, the Council's stance was already known on the issues and it was supportive. It was explained that the Strategic Actions included a review of car park locations to manage visitor activity and protect the National Park.

It was noted that increase in recreational pressure resulting from development in Test Valley, the New Forest District and National Park Authority area meant the increase in activity needed to be addressed. The actions had been drawn up in consultation with Forestry England, Hampshire County Council, Natural England, National Park Authority and the New Forest Verderers, and had been a collaborative approach.

Members raised the following concerns in the context of the Strategy.

- The need to mitigate road safety issues in the area and take account of the impact of cyclists
- The need to consider closure of certain car parks during the nesting season
- Parking charges and the effect on local residents
- Educating the public to stay on appropriate roads and drive safely around animals
- The need to ensure that any measures did not displace parking onto verges
- Provision of information on parking to be clearly available, and good signage
- The need to engage with younger age groups on the use of the Forest and in surveys
- Consideration of the reduction of speed limits

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that car parks could be closed temporarily or permanently without a need for permission, but switching location of car parks would need permission. The Local Development Order was a mechanism to set out guiding principles to ensure the locations of new car parks was considered holistically and dealt with appropriately for sensitive areas. Forestry England would apply through the National Park Authority for changes where appropriate.

The National Park Authority representative thanked members for the valid points raised and emphasised that this was an iterative process, there was a lot of work behind the Strategy to cover the points made, and these would be taken into account.

CHAIRMAN