

Portfolio holder decision – Portfolio holder for Planning and Economy – 25 November 2025

Adoption of Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the adoption of the 2025-30 Management Plan for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape in accordance with the requirements of Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000.</p> <p>Approval of this Management Plan will enable the council to meet its statutory responsibility as a 'relevant local authority' to review, produce and publish strategic land management plans for National Landscapes within its geographic area and help in delivering its Local Plan. The statutory responsibility applies equally to all other relevant local authorities within the National Landscape.</p>
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That approval is given for the adoption of the 2025-30 Management Plan for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, and the documents are published in accordance with the requirements of Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. 2. That authority is delegated to the Assistant Director for Place Development to approve minor amendments (factual and typographical elements) to the Management Plan prior to publication.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Management Plan contains aims, objectives and policies intended to maintain and improve the environment within the National Landscape (formally referred to as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) set within the statutory</p>

	requirement to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
Ward(s)	Downlands & Forest North
Portfolio Holders	Councillor Derek Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Directors	James Carpenter – Strategic Director Place Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	Keith Baker Senior Landscape Architect 023 8028 5047 Keith.baker@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. The Management Plan for the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) 2019 - 2024 has been reviewed to cover the period 2025-2030. The Management Plan sets out objectives and policies for the plan period.
2. This report recommends that the Council approves the Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Section 89 of the CROW Act requires local authorities with an AONB (now rebranded as 'National Landscape') in their area to publish a management plan and review it every five years.

Background

3. The CROW Act 2000 places a statutory duty on constituent local authorities of National Landscapes (NLs) to prepare, publish and review a management plan. In 2002 the Council committed to joining the NL Partnership and to share in the preparation of a Management Plan for the NL with its other constituent authorities. As part of the partnership agreement, an NL Team was formed with the task of formulating and reviewing the Management Plan. This is the fourth review of the Plan.
4. Included within New Forest District is the Cranborne Chase part of the NL which includes the parishes and villages of Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne and Whitsbury.

5. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 also requires authorities to “seek to further” the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of National Landscapes.

Management Plan

6. Although there is a statutory duty on relevant local authorities to review National Landscape Management Plans on a five-yearly basis, the advice from Natural England is that this should constitute a ‘light touch’ review only.
7. Initial reviews of current National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 reflected the national guidance approach that substantial re-drafting is not required. In this plan, the overall visions, objectives and policies remain broadly relevant, but the plan required updating to take account of changing national and local policy, new legislation, and the publication of the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan, to ensure that the policies and actions for the next five years will be fit for purpose.

Changes to the 2025-2030 Plan include:

- a much tighter focus on nature recovery and the need for adaptation and mitigation of climate change alongside the ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area’; its primary purpose. Therefore, Climate Change now has its own, additional chapter
- Defra has given each Protected Landscape (National Parks and National Landscapes) targets within their Protected Area Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF). These are now included in the Management Plan
- Defra requires National Landscapes to recognise and highlight outcomes and policies that target their four primary criteria of ‘Nature, Climate, People and Place’. Icons have been used beside each Outcome in the Plan indicating which of these criteria it targets
- As the Management Plan outcomes should be delivered by all partners and parties working within the National Landscape, the Delivery Plan will require consultation with all those parties to enable it to be produced. The Delivery Plan will therefore follow this Plan.

Options appraisal

8. Section 89 of the CRow Act places a statutory duty on relevant local authorities to review, prepare and publish Management Plans for National Landscapes within their geographic areas, collectively with other relevant local authorities, at five yearly intervals. Management Plans for Hampshire's National Landscapes were first published in 2004 and following 'light-touch' reviews, published again in 2009, 2014 and 2019. The current plans have again undergone light-touch reviews, following advice from Natural England, to update them for the plan period 2025-2030.
9. Failure to adopt a management plan could mean non-compliance with statutory obligations, potentially exposing the council to legal challenge. Additionally, without adopting the Management Plan the council may struggle to demonstrate how its decisions align with national policy and statutory duties, especially under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Consultation undertaken

10. Formal public consultation was undertaken by the Cranborne Chase National Landscape for the required minimum period of six weeks, and the draft plans amended as a result of comments received. Public consultation followed internal consultations with National Landscape Partnership Members, officers and other stakeholders.
11. The key points raised by New Forest District Council were:
 - The council encouraged Cranborne Chase National Landscape to engage with the local plan consultation as part of the review, to ensure alignment with National Landscape objectives.
 - The council noted tension between Policy PT6 and its own Local Plan Policy DM20, which allows a 30% increase in floor area.
 - Policy PT7 – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): The council did not support increasing BNG to 20% for all developments, and whilst this policy has remained in the Management Plan, the wording now is such that proposals should *aim* to provide a 20% net gain.
 - The council supported PT9's (housing variety and affordability) emphasis on affordable housing and suggested the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Plan consider demographic trends, including population decline in some parishes.

12. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken by the National Landscape Partnership. This concluded that, due to the inclusive nature of the Management Plan and its purpose in conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape, its objectives and policies would have a neutral impact on those groups of people identified in law as being at risk of discrimination, or on poverty or rurality.

Financial and resource implications

13. As a signatory to the Partnership Agreement, New Forest District Council makes a financial contribution to the work of the National Landscape. Natural England funds 75% of costs of preparing the Management Plan and contributes to the costs of projects within the National Landscape. Contributions are apportioned amongst the constituent local authorities according to the proportion of the National Landscape area falling in each authority. About 6.8% of the National Landscape falls within New Forest District and Hampshire County. This contribution is shared between the District and County, which means the District Council's share of the cost is relatively small at 3.4%. This contribution amounts to £2,560.36 for the current financial year.

Legal implications

14. Under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, all local authorities with land within a National Landscape have a statutory duty to prepare and review a management plan every five years. This duty is reinforced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, which requires authorities to "seek to further" the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of National Landscapes. Failure to adopt a management plan could mean non-compliance with statutory obligations, potentially exposing the council to legal challenge. Additionally, without adopting the Management Plan the council may struggle to demonstrate how its decisions align with national policy and statutory duties, especially under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Risk assessment

15. There is no requirement for a risk assessment relating to this report.

Environmental Implications / Crime And Disorder Implications / Equalities And Diversity Implications

16. The Management Plan contains aims, objectives and policies intended to maintain and improve the environment within the NL set within the statutory requirement to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications

17. None

New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

18. The Management Plan involves collaboration with the New Forest Park Authority, which promotes the conserving and enhancing of natural beauty within the New Forest National Park.

19. These recommendations meet the council's management plan responsibilities, as part of its statutory duty as a local authority with a National Landscape, to conserve and enhance the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape.

Conclusion

20. It is considered that the amendments introduced to the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 enable the council to meet its statutory responsibility.

Portfolio holder endorsement

21. I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.

Signed: Cllr Derek Tipp

Dated: 25 November 2025

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030

Background Papers:

None.

Date on which notice given of this decision – 25 November 2025

Last date for call in – 2 December 2025