

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN 2016 - 2036

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The New Forest National Park Authority is reviewing the Local Plan it adopted in 2010. The plan review covers the period 2016 to 2036. Following the earlier stages of the review process which commenced in summer 2015, the New Forest National Park Authority has published its proposed Submission draft Local Plan 2016 – 2036 for a final 6-week period of public consultation. This runs from 17 January to 28 February 2018. Following this representation period the National Park Authority will submit their plan to the Secretary of State for public Examination.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council and the National Park Authority (NPA) have enjoyed extensive co-operation and close working relationships throughout the process of preparing our Local Plans. Co-operation has included joint commissioning of studies forming part of the respective evidence base for both of our Plans, monthly officer liaison meetings, and informal joint Member steering group meetings. There has been particular co-operation on issues relating to the protection of internationally important habitats within the district and National Park, and on the future of the former Fawley Power Station site. The joint evidence base studies have included the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the 2017 Objectively Assessed Housing Need Update, the Habitats Regulation Assessment Scoping Report, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Air Quality Study, a Business Needs and Commercial Market Study and the Fawley Power Station Site Viability Study.
- 2.2 As a land owner, during earlier stages in preparation of the National Park's plan, the Council put forward for consideration a number of possible sites for future housing development. Further, the successful implementation of this Council's Housing Strategy and Economic Development Strategy within the National Park will require a suite of appropriate and compatible planning policies in the National Park's Local Plan to enable the successful implementation of these strategies. The Council's work on these strategies recognises the special characteristics and sensitivities within the National Park area.

3. MAIN FEATURES OF THE NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

HOUSING

- 3.1 There have been significant changes in National Planning Policy since the National Park's Local Plan was adopted in 2010. The review is needed to take into account these policy changes. The change having most impact is national policy relating to how the housing requirement for a plan area is set (no longer strategically in Regional Plans) and the presumption in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that, in principle, local planning authorities should look to cater for the needs of the local population within their plan area.

- 3.2 As a consequence of the above, the National Park’s new Local Plan proposes to allow an increase in housing development within the National Park. It proposes 800 dwellings be built within the National Park between 2016 and 2036 (40 dwellings per annum). This compares with an ‘objectively assessed need’ for 63 dwellings per annum, or 1,260 dwellings in total. The National Park’s Plan does not address how the ‘shortfall’ of provision is to be addressed. However, it is noted that the National Park Authority have not asked the District Council to address the ‘shortfall’ of 460 dwellings in the district outside the National Park.
- 3.3 The plan allocates five specific sites for new housing development which, between them, will provide 300 new dwellings. These are:

Policy No.	Location	No. of dwellings
SP22	Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst	60
SP23	Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel	50
SP24	Land south of Church Lane, Sway	40
SP25	Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station	120
SP26	Land at Calshot Village	30

The plan sets a target for 50% affordable housing on these sites (Policy SP27) with, as a starting point, 75% for social/affordable rent and 25% for shared ownership/intermediate housing.

- 3.4 The remaining 500 dwellings will be achieved on small unidentified sites, on rural exception sites, on sites which already have planning permission, and through enabling policies for New Forest Commoners, Estate workers, and agricultural workers dwellings. (Policies SP19, SP28, SP29, SP30 and SP31)
- 3.5 Each housing allocation identifies a fixed number of homes to be provided. Given the shortfall in housing provision to be made and the lack of sustainable development sites identified in the National Park’s Plan, it would be appropriate to make best use of these allocated sites. It is considered that the housing numbers set out in the policies should be regarded by the NPA as an indicative assessment of the site’s capacity rather than a maximum dwelling number.
- 3.6 Recommended representations on Housing Policies

Policy SP25 – Land adjacent to the former Fawley Power Station – The Council welcomes the inclusion of this policy in the National Park’s Local Plan and strongly supports the policy. The two planning authorities have worked closely together to address the future of the former Fawley Power Station site, and the opportunities for the beneficial use of this very significant brownfield site. The inclusion of policy SP25 is essential for the delivery of this major development in terms of supporting the viability of the overall scheme which between the two plan areas will provide around 1500 dwellings, 46,000sq.m. employment development, and around 10,500sq.m of associated retail and community uses, together with habitat mitigation land to address recreational impacts arising from the development.

Policy SP26 – Land at Calshot Village – The Council welcomes and supports the allocation of this site for residential and cemetery use. However, the capacity of the site should not be limited to 30 dwellings if at detailed planning stage it can be shown that a suitable scheme with an increased number of dwellings can be satisfactorily achieved. The wording of the policy should be amended to read: “Land at Calshot Village is allocated for the development of around 30 residential dwellings.....”,

Policy SP27 – Affordable Housing Provision within the Defined Villages and on Allocated Sites – The Council strongly support the policy which seeks 50% of new dwellings to be affordable dwellings, and that it will liaise with the District Council as Housing Authority to determine a suitable mix of affordable tenures, based on evidence of needs.

Policy SP28 – Rural Exception Sites – The Council strongly support the policy and recognition that shared ownership and affordable rented housing, as well as social rented housing, will assist in addressing local housing needs, and encourages the NPA to work closely with the District Council, as Housing Authority, to deliver appropriate schemes.

Overall housing provision – The Council strongly support the approach taken by the National Park Authority in seeking to accommodate new residential development where it can be achieved in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The Council welcomes the recognition by the NPA in the joint working between the two authorities, and under the Duty to Co-operate, that environmental constraints within the district outside the National Park, mean that it is not appropriate to seek to address any shortfall in housing provision arising within the National Park, within the district outside the National Park.

LOCAL ECONOMY

- 3.7 Policies for a Sustainable Local Economy (Chapter 8) aim to “support a sustainable local economy which provides business and employment opportunities that benefit the National Park’s communities without compromising the special qualities and rural character of the area”. It states that:

“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.”

- 3.8 Policies seek to retain existing employment sites (Policy SP43) and encourage the redevelopment of redundant brownfield employment sites for employment use (DP44). Para. 8.18 states that “Proposals for small scale starter units/offices, rural business units and easy in/out units, will be considered favourably.” This statement is strongly supported and it is considered that it should be included as part of Policy DP44, rather than being part of supporting text.
- 3.9 Policy DP49 deals with the re-use of buildings outside the defined villages. While part a) of the policy resists the loss of employment use, it would also be helpful and accord with the Council’s Economic Development Strategy, if the policy recognised the importance of sustaining the quality of employment offered as part of the proposals.

3.10 Recommended representations on Local Economy Policies

Policy SP43 – Existing Employment Sites – The Council welcomes the policy to retain and make best use of existing employment sites.

Policy DP44 – Redevelopment of Existing Employment Sites – The Council welcomes the policy but suggests it is amended by the inclusion of “Proposals for small scale

starter units/offices, rural business units and easy in/out units, will be considered favourably” (as stated in the supporting text) as a final paragraph to the policy.

Policy DP49 – Re-use of Existing Buildings outside the Defined Villages – The Council welcomes the policy, but suggests part a) is revised to read:

“a) the proposal would not result in the loss of an employment use or community facility *nor the depreciation of employment quality offered*, and accord with Policy SP39 and Policy SP43” to recognise that the quality of employment provision is important in an environmentally sensitive area where development opportunities are limited.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Local Plan for the National Park continues the strategy of their current Local Plan and takes forward many of the existing policy approaches. The NPA have addressed the challenge of national planning policy in relation to housing delivery, and have responded positively by seeking to accommodate additional new housing development. This report has highlighted the main policies of direct interest to this Authority, and sets out the matters to be addressed in representations to be considered at Examination.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No direct implications.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Local Plan for the National Park has sustainability and conservation of the area at the heart of its proposals.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The plan contains policies which will assist local people to access affordable housing within the National Park, and support the local economy of New Forest villages.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that New Forest District submit representations on the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036, as set out in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.10 of this report.

10. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder has declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Hampshire County Council appointed member of the New Forest National Park Authority. He has

concluded that there are no grounds under common law to prevent him from taking this decision.

11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

I agree the recommendations contained within paragraph 9.1 of this report.

Signed:	E J Heron
Date:	22 February 2018
Date notice of decision given:	23 February 2018
Last Date for Call in:	2 March 2018

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

Published documents