



New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan Review 2025-2043

This is a summary of the Regulation 18 public consultation document, a response to which must be provided by 18 March 2025. The full document can be found at

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/news/planning-for-the-future-of-the-new-forest-national-park-have-your-say-on-the-local-plan-review/>

1. Introduction

Along with the two statutory purposes of the National Park designation, the National Park Authority (N.P.A.) have a duty to 'foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.' The first Local Plan to cover the entire N.P.A. area after its designation in 2005 was in 2010. The current one was adopted in 2019. The most recent National Planning Policy Framework (N.P.P.F.) states that local planning authorities should review their local plans every five years. The two statutory purposes of the N.P.A. provide the key thread through each planning policy, and a key driver of policies is to ensure the 50% of the N.P.A. area covered in environmental designations (Special area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and RAMSAR) are not impacted.

It is expected that the newly drafted local plan will be ready for submission in January 2027, with adoption later that year. There is a Duty to Cooperate and N.P.A. will be taking part in discussions with neighbouring authorities and organisations such as Partnership for South Hampshire, on cross boundary issues such as identified housing needs, at the appropriate points in the timescales set.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 is introducing a new layer of policies, 'National Development Management Policies', to be drawn up by the Secretary of State. They will carry the same weight as local plan policies and if there is conflict between the two, will override the local plan policies. The detail on this will be published by central government later in the year and may require this local plan draft to be altered as the process continues. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 abolishes the need for Supplementary Planning Documents. This situation has not been made clear yet but there may be a need to incorporate sections of S.P.D. into local plans in the near future.

2. Strategic policies and development principles

Climate change - Since the last local plan in 2019, the NPA have declared a climate and nature emergency so this topic is placed significantly higher in priority. A report was commissioned in 2022 entitled 'A greenhouse gas emissions assessment and target scenario for the New Forest N.P.A.' and provides robust evidence for mitigation measures and land use considerations.

Health and well-being – Since 2020 there has been a greater focus on access to nature for physical and mental health, and this has been weaved into the most recent version of the N.P.P.F.

Vision and objectives – It is considered the original vision and objectives remain the same now as in 2019, but there is a requirement for adjustment to take account of the most recent NPPF published in December 2024.

A full list of strategic objectives is found on page 9 of the full document.

Spatial Strategy – It is considered the four main villages in the N.P.A. area, Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway remain the most sustainable due to their range of facilities, transport links and employment opportunities. This already aligns with the N.P.P.F. so will be the focus for most housing development in the next 20 years. The Sustainability Appraisal or Strategic Environmental Assessment process will consider potential realistic alternatives.

3. The Natural Environment

The first statutory purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. If there is conflict between the first and second purpose, relevant bodies should work hard to resolve it but the Sandford Principle confirms if that fails, the first purpose is paramount. National planning policy is that the ‘intrinsic’ character and beauty of the countryside is recognised in planning; landscape character is not simply determined by the vista from public access points.

56% of the area is specifically of international importance, on top of the regional and national importance, being the highest proportion of designations nationally. In the last (current) local plan the Inspector concluded that policies regarding nature conservation (SP5, SP6 and SP7) were justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Data from monitoring reports is provided in the full document.

Headline conclusions of the self-assessment –

- that climate change is pushed higher in priority;
- Preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Wiltshire and Hampshire will provide weight for the local plan. It will also provide the required Biodiversity Net Gain target.
- The sphere of influence for recreational pressures has been determined as 13.8km so reaffirms the need for mitigation from all relevant development and Habitat Regs issues such as water and air quality.

Evidence base studies to inform the Review – Habitats Regulations Assessments are required on the local plan as it is considered by the NPPF as a ‘plan or project’ that could impact on internationally designated conservation interests. It will look at recreational impacts, water and air quality, loss of supporting habitats etc.

4. Protecting and enhancing the historic and built environment

The full document details certain facts about the area including number of scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings etc which all contribute to make its unique character. The N.P.P.F. considers heritage assets to be irreplaceable, so they can contribute to the lives of future generations. A Design Guide was produced in 2022 by N.P.A., plus Village Design Statements and appraisals to provide worthy information for each of the Conservation Areas.

The Partnership Plan 2022-2027 contains actions to protect cultural heritage assets, support commoning and local produce, to help maintain these unique impacts to the natural beauty.

The revised local plan will aim to address concerns about impact on distinctiveness from new development; provide appropriate protection for designated and non-designated heritage assets; balance efficient use of land with conserving the rural character, including on scale of development; high quality design and construction materials need.

5. Vibrant Communities (including housing)

Various information from the Census dated 2021 is provided in the full document, with 14,393 dwellings in the New Forest with over 75% being 3 bed or larger. This is the highest proportion of all UK National Parks. The most recent NPPF refers to the National Parks Vision and Circular, which states that many thousands of people live and work in them and these communities shape the purposes, are a critical ingredient to sustainability of the parks as the communities are a fundamental character point. Therefore, national park authorities need to deliver affordable housing but government will not provide general housing targets, the expectation is to meet affordable housing requirements that support local employment and key services.

From the 2019 local plan inspection, it was concluded that restricting occupancy of specialist housing for older people and dependents was justified, as was restricting size of new dwellings to rebalance the housing stock. Monitoring reports state that between 2016 and 2024, 213 dwellings were built, all on windfall sites which is broadly in line with the allowance set per annum. In this time 14 affordable homes have been built. This will increase significantly in coming years as the projects at Lyndhurst, Ashurst and Sway are completed. The NPA currently has a 6.6year supply of housing land.

Headline conclusion of the self-assessment – As the N.P.A. is not subject to government's housing delivery test it will continue to use a local methodology via a housing and economic needs assessment. The outcome of an updated housing assessment may require land availability review to identify new opportunities. Policies do not refer to government space standards nor provide minimum densities, but state that density should reflect the character of said defined village or location within a nationally protected landscape.

Evidence base studies to inform the review – Updated housing needs assessment (joint with N.F.D.C.), assessment of Gypsy and traveller needs, Call for Sites exercise to take place, Infrastructure Delivery Plan to be created in conjunction with N.F.D.C. , Test Valley and others.

6. Local Economy

The most recent N.P.P.F. states that while safeguarding the statutory purposes, the N.P.A. must seek to maximise the socio-economic benefits available from the areas activities. Only a small amount of rural land-based activities remain but are vital to land management practices to conserve and enhance the area. The area doesn't form part of South Hampshire Economic Market Area based on various recent studies, due to being materially different from the rest of South Hampshire. In the current plan all employment land is from windfall or change of use applications.

Data from the monitoring report is provided in the full document.

Headline conclusion of the self-assessment – The decision to not allocate employment land but solely rely on windfall guided by criteria-based policies is appropriate. However, permitted development now allows offices to become residential use so is of concern and this will be relayed in the draft plan.

Evidence base studies to inform the review – Quality of existing employment sites will be assessed in a qualitative assessment, and an economic needs assessment will take place in collaboration with N.F.D.C. due later this year. It will include recommendations on likely need for employment land and potential site allocations, plus planning policies supportive to local economy.

7. Sustainable transport and access

The strategic roads of M27, A31 and A36 provide strong links with Wiltshire, Bournemouth and Poole. There are 4 mainline train stations, regular scheduled bus services and community schemes, plus open top services for the summer season. Hampshire County and Wiltshire Councils, responsible for maintenance of the road network have Local Transport Schemes that plan away from vehicles; people and places come first, in line with governments 'Decarbonising Transport Strategy' (2020) with a target of 2050. Cycling and walking takes precedent, with LCWIP proposals in the New Forest area already underway.

Policies within the draft plan represent the limited scope that NPA have over the highway but have discussed issues with Hampshire County Council so that policies are broadly aligned and will continue to do so for monitoring. Policies currently safeguard disused rail lines and roads for future sustainable travel routes. Traffic seasonal congestion remains a concern and total carbon footprint was 522 kilo tonnes with the greatest proportion from road use. Only 7% of national park visitors are car free. The area has very high car ownership and due to lack of connectivity and ageing population, sustainable travel options are limited. Although there are over 100km of off-road cycle paths these are not always connected or give destination trips, LCWIP plans look to better connect these, but many are also used by walkers and horses and potentially free-roaming stock. There were 92 deaths of commoner's animals on the roads in 2023. Development outside of the national park area is considered to be a major implication for greater traffic issues.

Headline conclusions of the self-assessment – Sustainable transport modes, particularly by active travel (cycling and walking) are consistent with national and local transport policy, which benefits the climate need, mental and physical health of all. The limited development expectation over the next 20 years will not require major infrastructure upgrades, however out of park sites are expected to have an impact. Policies will be reviewed with this in mind.

Appendix 1 on the full document shows a list of current policies and their deemed effectiveness.

Now follows the draft responses to specific questions posed, which form the basis of recommended consultation response.



**New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan Review
February 2025**

Comments Form

**Consultation on Scope of the New Forest National Park Local
Plan Review**

(Reg 18 Part 1)

This comments form relates to the review of the emerging Local Plan for the New Forest National Park following the adoption of the previous document in 2019. The consultation period will be open for 6 weeks from **Tuesday 4 February 2025 until Tuesday 18 March 2025**. Before completing this form please take the opportunity to read the 'Direction of Travel' document (702/25) available here: [New Forest National Park Authority Meeting 23/01/25 - New Forest National Park Authority](#) and returning it to the Policy Team by email via policy@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

Or by post to:

Policy Team
Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington
SO41 9ZG

Comments need to be received by 5pm Tuesday 18 March 2025

To keep up to date on this consultation and others relating to the local plan review please visit our consultations page here: [Consultations - New Forest National Park Authority](#).

Your Details

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*If you are completing this form as an agent, please make this clear and ensure contact information is correct.

DATA PROTECTION

We will process personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Your response(s) will be used to inform subsequent reports to inform the Local Plan Review process and anonymised comments may be shared online, on our website, or within material documents as part of this process. However, your personal data will not be published and will be redacted from public facing documents, this includes personal email addresses home addresses and personal phone numbers.

More details on how we hold personal information can be found at: <http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/privacyandcookies>. Should you require any further information about how your details will be used or stored and/or would like to access any information we hold about you, please email our Information & Data Protection Officer at: dpo@newforestnpa.gov.uk.

Please note that all information held by public authorities is subject to the Freedom of information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and may be disclosed upon request.

Feedback

Would you like us to keep your contact details so we can inform you about the next stages in the progress of preparing the Local Plan?

Yes

Please write your comments in the sections provided below

*Before providing us with your comments, please ensure you have read and consulted the ['Direction of Travel'](#) Document.

1. Introduction

n/a Please comment below:

The purpose of National Development Management Policies seem to contradict local plan making, as local authorities know their area far better than that of a nationally made template. Government should be simplifying this already overcomplicated system, not making it worse.

2. Strategic policies & development principles

Q1 Do you consider the current Local Plan Vision is still broadly appropriate? Please comment below:

Yes

Q2 Do the existing Strategic Objectives still represent the main considerations for development in the National Park? Please comment below:

Yes

Q3 Is the Spatial Strategy the most sustainable way to deliver new development over the next 20 years? Please comment below:

Yes

3. The natural environment

Q4 Do you consider the current Local Plan policies on the natural environment still broadly align with national policy? Please comment below:

Yes

Q5 Are there any additional key issues that we may have missed? Please comment below:

No

Q6 Do you have views on the planning policy approach to climate change and are there areas we should look to go further on? Please comment below:

No comment

Q7 How can we use local planning policies to protect the relative tranquillity of large areas of the New Forest National Park? Please comment below:

Continuation of current actions

4. Protecting and enhancing the historic and built environment

Q8 Do you consider the current Local Plan policies on the historic and built environment still broadly align with national policy? Please comment below:

Yes

Q9 Are there any additional key issues that we may have missed? Please comment below:

No

5. Vibrant Communities (including housing)

Q10 Pending the conclusions of the current evidence base work on local housing needs, what do you consider to be the best approach to meeting needs in a way that is compatible with the statutory National Park purposes? Options include site allocations, revisions to the Defined Village boundaries and other alternatives that will be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal/SEA process. Please comment below:

Site allocations are useful for the public, as over time it becomes recognised and accepted by a majority that a certain site will be developed for housing.

Q11 Should the revised Local Plan identify specific settlements where rural exception sites would be supported in principle? Please comment below:

No – unless a thorough written response is provided so its fully understood which aspects are acceptable in principle.

Q12 Do you agree with our intentions to retain policies focusing on commoners' dwellings and Estate workers' dwellings? Please comment below:

Absolutely

Q13 What is the best policy approach to protecting the character of the National Park from incremental change from proposals for replacement dwellings, extensions to dwellings and outbuildings? Please comment below:

The current 30% rule is a helpful cap to inappropriate development.

Q14 Are there any additional key issues that we have missed? Please comment below:

Any development with solar panels should take account of the setting. They are highly visible and although supported in principle, can often blight an otherwise fantastic landscape. Alternative methods could be sought for similar climate change mitigation.

6. Local economy

Q15 Do you consider the current Local Plan policies on the local economy still broadly align with national policy? Please comment below:

Yes

Q16 Are there any additional key issues that we may have missed? Please comment below:

Not that we can see.

Q17 Do you have views on the planning policy approach to the range of uses within the defined shopping areas of the National Park? Please comment below:

No

Q18 Do you support our proposed approach to campsite development and continued use of Article 4 Directions? Please comment below:

Yes

Q19 What should be the local planning policy approach to the impacts of national permitted development rights on the local economy (e.g., office to residential)? Please comment below:

Use of Article 4 directives in areas where office placement is key to that village.

7. Sustainable transport and access

Q20 Do you consider the current Local Plan transport policies still broadly align with local and national policy? Please comment below:

Yes

Q21 Are there any additional key issues that we may have missed? Please comment below:

There is a major gap in education for drivers in how they drive around cyclists. Since 2020 lockdown traffic easing, there has been a greater polarisation of attitudes towards cyclists which must not be disregarded due to the high stakes.

Q22 Do you have views on whether the current transport policies adequately respond to the climate emergency? Please comment below:

Yes – its for central government to set the pace so long as considered realistic for communities.

Q23 Do you support the current cycle and car parking standards, or consider that they should be reviewed to support sustainable transport? Please comment below:

Yes