

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	21 September 2015
Title:	New Forest Management Plan
Reference:	6879
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to endorse the New Forest National Park Partnership Management Plan 2015-2020.

1.2. The New Forest National Park was established in 2005. The National Park Authority, as the planning authority and governing body for the National Park, has a statutory duty to publish three key documents:

- a reviewed Management Plan by 2015;
- a Local Plan by 2017;
- a Minerals and Waste Plan (completed, prepared jointly with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan).

1.3. The first New Forest National Park Management Plan was published by the National Park Authority in 2010. The National Park Authority has a statutory duty to publish a reviewed Management Plan by 2015. Following extensive consultation, the National Park Authority has reviewed and approved the New Forest National Park Partnership Management Plan 2015-2020 and is now seeking its partners to endorse the plan.

1.4. The New Forest National Park Management Plan is an important document for the National Park Authority and its partners. It is referred to as a 'Partnership Management Plan', as although it is a statutory document of the National Park Authority, it is a plan for all the partners with an interest in the area of the National Park. There is no requirement for the County Council to formally adopt the plan. The Management Plan will influence and direct all the policies that the National Park Authority and the Local Authorities have for the area of Hampshire covered by the National Park. For the County

Council this will include its statutory responsibilities for Minerals and Waste planning (the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan is a joint document with the National Park Authority), planning for its own estate, and its highways and rights of way duties. It will also have a strong influence on the policy framework of the National Park Authority Local Plan and on District Local Plans outside the boundary of the National Park. The Management Plan is a material planning consideration in the land use planning system.

- 1.5. The Management Plan is required to provide a framework for the delivery of the National Park's two purposes and statutory duty, as follows:

Purpose 1: *To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks;*

Purpose 2: *To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Parks.*

Duty: *In pursuing National Park purposes, the National Park Authorities must seek to foster the economic and social well being of the local communities within the National Park.*

- 1.6. The 2010-2015 Management Plan had been the subject of extensive public consultation and its vision, objectives and descriptions of the various topics are still relevant. The National Park Authority supported by the multi agency Management Plan 'Leadership Group' decided at the outset that the revised 2015-2020 Plan will consist of a new simple update supplementary document that should be read in conjunction with the 2010-2014 Plan that contains much more information about the National Park and its special qualities. The County Council is represented on the Leadership Group in the form of the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Following endorsement of the Plan by partners, the supplementary document will receive design work to create a publishable version.
- 1.7. The supplementary document presents a set of priority actions for the next five years, together with additional information that brings the 2010-2015 Plan up to date, including achievements over the last five years and important recent changes affecting the National Park. The actions focus mainly on new or recent initiatives designed to deliver the objectives of the 2010-2015 Management Plan that are viewed as priorities, for the next five years by partner organisations. The actions do not attempt to include ongoing operational work which is already taking place and will continue, such as highways maintenance and management of the Open Forest.
- 1.8. The National Park Authority has liaised with key County Council officers during the drafting of the new priority actions and the supplementary document, from the outset. The County Council contributed further to the drafting of the supplementary document in its officer technical responses to the National Park Authority's 'Call for Views' consultation between October and December 2014 and the subsequent public consultation in May and June 2015. Members were informed of both consultations separately and as part of a Corporate Member briefing in November 2014. County Council

comments were appropriately considered by the National Park Authority and incorporated into the document.

- 1.9. It is therefore suggested that the County Council should welcome the Management Plan and support the principles it seeks to establish. It is recognised that the challenge for the Management Plan has been to integrate the many different interests across the National Park into a single document and this has generally been achieved successfully.

2. Finance

- 2.1. There are no financial implications for the County Council. All activities relating to the delivery of the Partnership Management Plan will be as part of normal County Council planned and agreed business.

3. Performance

- 3.1. Measurement of performance in the delivery of the Management Plan will be the responsibility of the New Forest National Park Authority. The County Council may be asked to provide information on its activities to enable the National Park Authority to monitor performance of Management Plan delivery.

4. Future direction

- 4.1. The County Council will remain engaged with the New Forest National Park Authority in relation to the delivery of the Management Plan and will continue to influence the future direction of activity through the New Forest National Park Leadership Group, other officer groups and most significantly through County Council Member representation on the National Park Authority.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. That the New Forest National Park Partnership Management Plan 2015-2020 be endorsed.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Draft New Forest National Park Management Plan	<u>Reference</u> 1095	<u>Date</u> 21-12-2009
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> The statutory duties are provided for in Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (National Parks), Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 (The Broads) and Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (AONBs). Specifically, they state that, "in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land" in these areas, relevant authorities "shall have regard" to their purposes.		<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
New Forest National Park Management Plan 2010-2015.	Strategic Planning Group; http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/downloads/download/38/management_plan ; and printed copies available in the Members room.
A Partnership Plan for the New Forest National Park – an update of the National Park Management Plan with actions for 2015-2020.	Printed copies available in the Members' room.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was originally undertaken by the National Park Authority for the 2010 New Forest National Park Management Plan. As the 2015 update supplementary document includes a new set of actions and additional information that brings the 2010 Plan up to date, the National Park Authority has completed an EqIA (August 2015) for this document and its contents. This concluded that the 2015 update to the New Forest National Management Plan would have no impact on the list of statutory considerations / protected characteristics. Considerations / characteristics assessed include: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion and belief; gender; sexual orientation; poverty; and rurality. The list of considerations / characteristics assessed complies fully with Hampshire County Council's EqIA process.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Rural crime is an issue for the New Forest National Park. However, the Partnership Management Plan is not the mechanism for addressing crime

and disorder issues. It is not a requirement within the statutory guidance for its preparation and so is not addressed in this report.

3. Sustainability Appraisal:

- 3.1. A Sustainability Appraisal of the New Forest Partnership Management Plan 2015-2020 has concluded that none of the amendments made, including the introduction of new actions are expected to have a significant adverse impact on the Sustainability Objectives. Indeed, it is expected that many would make a positive contribution to sustainability. There are, however, a few instances where the impact of a proposed new/amended action is considered to be uncertain for specific Sustainability Objectives. These actions will receive particular consideration when specific implementation plans are being prepared, to avoid potential adverse impacts.

4. Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):

- 4.1. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the New Forest National Park Management Plan 2010-2015 concluded that there was no likely significant impact of the Plan on European designated sites. As the New Forest National Park Partnership Management Plan 2015-2020 brings forward and adopts the vision and objectives of the 2010 Plan an assessment of the updated Plan has concluded that there would similarly be no 'likely significant effects' from the objectives and vision. The new actions, however, currently lack sufficient detail to be assessed, but as these actions are developed, they will be adapted to avoid any 'likely significant effects'.

5. Climate Change:

- 5.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The Partnership Management Plan promotes sustainability and would not lead to an increase in carbon footprint or energy consumption.

- 5.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Adaption to climate change and increased resilience in terms of its effects on the natural environment and communities is a key theme in the Partnership Management Plan.