

Individual Cabinet Member Delegated Decision

Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management & Strategic Planning - Cllr Nick Botterill

Service: Spatial Planning

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Reference: (*Democratic Services will insert this*)

New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022-2027

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the final draft version of the New Forest Partnership Plan 2022-2027 (the Plan), attached at **Appendix 1**.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The Partnership Plan aligns with the council's Business Plan 2022 to 2032. It contains five interlinked themes: Nature Recovery; Net Zero with Nature; Thriving Forest; an inclusive National Park and Team New Forest. These cut across the four themes in the Business Plan of Thriving Economy, Resilient Society, Sustainable Environment and Empowered People.

Background

3. All National Parks are required by statute to have a management plan, often known as a partnership plan for their area, to help guide the work of those with responsibilities or an interest in the National Park.
4. Wiltshire Council is responsible for delivering services in its part of the New Forest National Park (around Landford and Redlynch) including roads, public rights of way, waste collection and disposal, and as housing authority. The council is also involved in the New Forest Leadership Group, which has been involved in the preparation of the Partnership Plan.
5. The new Plan will replace the Partnership Plan published in November 2015 covering the period 2015-2020, which was endorsed by Wiltshire Council as a partner authority in September 2015.
6. The New Forest National Park Authority approved the final version of the 'New Forest Partnership Plan 2022 - 2027' and accompanying action plan at its meeting on 24 March 2022 and has invited all the principal partner

organisations¹ to approve the Plan. It is expected that the Plan will be 'adopted' and published in its final form once partnership organisations have approved it.

7. The Plan has been prepared with support from the principal partner organisations. Its scope was informed by a widely advertised call for views at the New Forest Show in 2019, followed by a public snapshot survey in 2020. The resulting draft partnership plan was consulted on widely by the New Forest National Park Authority during summer 2021. Wiltshire Council's communications team provided support to help raise awareness locally. This final draft of the plan takes into consideration consultation feedback.
8. Officers have also provided technical comments to help shape the Plan and the Southern Area Board Councillors were notified of the consultation and invited to comment.

Main Considerations for the Council

9. The New Forest Partnership Plan 2022 - 2027 sets out a refreshed Vision for the New Forest National Park in the context of the climate crisis, pandemic and related green recovery. It also sets out an overall approach to managing the National Park for the next five years, which will frame more detailed policies and actions over the period.
10. The Plan outlines the qualities that make the New Forest special and major issues it faces including recreational pressures, climate and nature emergencies, affordable housing, traffic and transport. It sets out outcomes to be achieved in five interlinked themes as follows:
 - *Nature Recovery - habitats are more resilient, restored and expanded, connected, and maintained to enable wildlife to thrive, both within and beyond the National Park.*
 - *Net Zero with Nature – [by 2050] significant cuts in land-based carbon emissions are secured through restoring national habitats and enabling carbon capture.*
 - *Thriving Forest - a living, working Forest is sustained through its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and support for commoning. There is a vibrant local produce market, access to affordable homes and a growing green economy featuring sustainable tourism and green businesses.*
 - *An inclusive National Park - people within reach of the New Forest of all backgrounds, abilities and social economic groups value the National Park as an important part of their lives and seek to care for it.*

¹ Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire Council New Forest District Council, Test Valley Borough Council, the Verderers, Forestry England / Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Natural England

- *Team New Forest - communities, businesses and organisations work together as a team to deliver the vision of the Partnership Plan, sharing knowledge, ideas and resources to deliver the best for the Forest.*

11. In addition, the Plan is accompanied by an Annex which contains actions to deliver against the five themes. A new partnership group is being established to oversee its implementation and monitor delivery.

12. The Partnership Plan will need to be taken into consideration in the council's decision making where relevant.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

13. The Chairman of Environment Select Committee (ESC) and the Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group have been briefed on the Plan and welcomes its endorsement. It was recommended that officers from the New Forest National Park Authority be invited to attend a meeting of ESC to understand more about the implementation of the Plan

Safeguarding Implications

14. There are no direct safeguarding issues arising directly from this report.

Public Health Implications

15. One of the two statutory purposes of National Parks is to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public. In addition, National Park Authorities have a duty in taking forward the purposes of the National Park is to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the park. This purpose and the duty have public health and wellbeing at their core and are embedded within the Plan.

Procurement Implications

16. There are no corporate procurement implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

17. There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

18. Environmental and climate change considerations are at the core of the Plan, as illustrated through the themes Nature Recovery and Net Zero for Nature. Overall, the Plan is seeking to ensure the statutory purpose of the National Park, to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, is respected.

Workforce Implications

19. Given the alignment of the Plan with the council's Business Plan and work the council is undertaking as part of its business, it is not anticipated that there will be any new workforce implications.

Options Considered

20. The options are either to endorse or not to endorse the management plan. However, as a partner organisation which has been involved in its development the latter course of action carries reputational risks.

Proposal

21. That Cabinet endorses the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022-2027 as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Reason for Proposal

22. The New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022-2027 aligns with the Council's Business Plan. Wiltshire Council has contributed to its development and as one of the main partner organisations involved in the National Park will contribute to its delivery.

Report Author:

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7 June 2022

Appendices

Appendix 1: New Forest National Park Partnership Plan 2022 - 2027
Final Draft for Authority Approval and accompanying Annex
Annex

Background Papers

None