

# **Southern Area Committee**

19 May 2005

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# **REPORT**

**Cllr Mrs Peach : Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Development**

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## **New Forest National Park – Exercise of Planning Functions**

The Council has received a letter from the Interim Chief Executive of the National Park Authority seeking the position on how far this authority might wish to work with the park authority on delivering a planning service in the future.

### **Planning Functions:**

As from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, the National Park Authority will assume responsibility for all planning matters within the Park boundary. This includes the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF), development control including listed building applications, enforcement and tree matters.

#### **a) The LDF**

The letter is seeking to establish whether SDC want to participate in a joint arrangement for the preparation of a New Forest National Park LDF. Officers have considered this proposal and consider that given the small area of the District that this will affect, that the National Park authority should carry out this function in its entirety. Salisbury District Council will be a statutory consultee in the preparation of the New Forest LDF and detailed arrangements concerning participation and consultation by members and officers can be agreed in further discussions.

#### **b) Development Control**

The situation regarding Development Control is similar. There are less than 200 applications in the part of our District that the Park Authority will be taking over, which include all types of planning applications and enforcement. It does not however include the function of Building Control. If the service provision were to be integrated into the existing Development Services Unit, a separate and compatible registration process would have to be devised to cater for any applications registered under the administrative authority of the National Park. For the number of applications received this is not considered to be a realistic or cost effective option. The applications would have to be determined in accordance with the LDF of the Park Authority, and for consistency and policy interpretation, there is no advantage to this authority to undertake this work. Therefore it is concluded that the National Park authority should carry out this function in its entirety.

**Recommendation:**

That the Southern Area Committee recommends to Cabinet that a letter be sent to the Interim Chief Executive of the New Forest National Park Authority stating that Salisbury District thank the authority for their invitation to comment. The letter should conclude that the planning functions of that part of the district to be embraced within the National Park area be carried out by that authority in their entirety, when the function devolves to them, subject to appropriate consultative mechanisms being put in place.

**Background Papers:**

Letter from New Forest National Park Authority 5.04.05

**Implications:**

<b>Legal</b>	: None
<b>Financial</b>	: None
<b>Personnel</b>	: None
<b>Environmental</b>	: None
<b>Human Rights</b>	: None at this stage
<b>Council's Core values</b>	: Excellent Service; Fairness and Equality; open, learning Council and a willing partner; communicating with the public; supporting the disadvantaged.
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>	: None
<b>Parish Affected</b>	: Redlynch, Whiteparish and Landford.

**Extract Minute from the Southern Area Committee meeting held on  
19 May 2005**

**434. New Forest National Park – Exercise of Planning Functions:**

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning). During consideration, the following comments were made:

- Salisbury District Council has always believed in local engagement, and our Area Committees are an important way in which this is achieved.
- By having one planning committee meet in Lyndhurst discourages public involvement as the communication links are poor.
- This Council should be asking the New Forest National Park Authority how they plan to encourage public involvement in the planning process.
- If planning decisions were to be delegated down to the Southern Area Committee then an officer from the National Park Authority could attend the meeting.
- Also, if planning decisions were delegated to the Southern Area Committee then members of the public have direct access to their councillor. If the National park Authority undertakes this function this democratic relationship is lost.
- Cost alone should not be the major determining factor. If that were the case, Area Committees would not be used.
- Those parishes which straddle the boundary of the New Forest will now have two planning authorities to deal with
- Whiteparish, Redlynch and Landford Parish Councils strongly urge that planning decisions are devolved to Salisbury District Council so that there can be representations made by the Parish Council.
  
- It is premature to take a decision today. At the very least we should wait until the New Forest national Park Authority has appointed a Chief Executive and Head of Development Control. Perhaps they will have proposals we can work with.
- If the New Forest National Park Authority takeover the planning process then local people will not have democratic representation on that authority.
- Dealing with different policies should not be a major concern, our own local plan has special policies specific to the New Forest.

Councillor Randall, who is the member on the New Forest National Park Authority from Salisbury District Council advised the Committee of the following:

- The National Park Authority has not yet discussed planning so no decisions have been made on this matter yet.
- Only now is a Chief Executive being appointed after which senior officers will be put in place (including a Chief Planning Officer).
- If Salisbury District Council decides that it does not want to undertake the planning function in the affected areas it is feasible that it will be devolved to New Forest District Council.

**Resolved** – that the Southern Area Committee recommends that Cabinet responds to the New Forest National Park Authority as follows:

- I. Salisbury District Council would like to take an active role in planning matters, and ideally, continue to make planning decisions related to the district locally.

2. Salisbury District Council reaffirms it is ready to co-operate with the New Forest National Park Authority to ensure the maximum engagement with local residents and local representatives within the Salisbury district.
3. Salisbury District Council is ready to discuss making available the facilities of its Development Control department for registering and providing access to the public to review and comment on planning applications.
4. Salisbury District Council recommends that planning decisions be delegated to the most local level and in particular, commend the system of area committees for making minor planning decisions.
5. If a way could be found to make local decisions as an established way of involving local residents and representatives we would particularly develop this as a way forward.