



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: 18 June 2018

### **Have your say on proposals for managing recreation**

People are invited to comment on draft plans to both protect the New Forest and cater for residents and visitors enjoying the area.

The second stage of the Future Forest consultation runs for eight weeks from today (**18 June – 12 August**).

The proposals have been designed to update the actions in the existing Recreation Management Strategy and:

- protect the spectacular, yet fragile, wildlife-rich landscape that people come to see
- manage recreation for local people and visitors
- use limited resources wisely.

The consultation and online survey have been developed by the Recreation Management Strategy Steering Group which comprises the main organisations with a remit for managing recreation in the New Forest: the Forestry Commission, Verderers, National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and New Forest District Council.

Eleven other groups and organisations on the wider Recreation Management Strategy Advisory Group also inputted to the draft proposals.

With the help of feedback received in a first round of consultation last year, seven distinct objectives for managing recreation in the New Forest have been identified by the group:

- Convey the things that make the New Forest special to both visitors and local people in more consistent and effective ways, so that they understand the importance of making responsible recreation choices.
- Address significant and/or widespread negative impacts caused by recreation in the most appropriate, proportionate and effective ways.
- Reduce the barriers that limit participation in beneficial outdoor recreation among those who need it most.

- Achieve a net gain for the New Forest's working and natural landscape and for the recreational experience by influencing where recreation takes place.
- Increase the level of funding available for recreation management so that it is sufficient to address both existing and upcoming needs.
- Collate data and evidence to help inform the ongoing management of recreation.
- Regularly review progress against agreed recreation management actions and adapt forward plans to protect the special qualities of the National Park and enable people to enjoy and benefit from them.

Now the steering group is asking for views on how to put these into practice with a set of 25 draft actions.

The 25 actions drafted to achieve these objectives range from developing an agreed New Forest-wide network of key visitor sites and core walking and cycling routes; to measures to protect against specific activities that have impact on the Forest; and increasing the range of initiatives designed to help people understand why the Forest is so special.

**New Forest National Park Authority Chairman Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre** said: 'All the main organisations tasked with looking after the Forest are supporting this process and have recognised that it's time to take bold steps to ensure the New Forest survives for future generations to enjoy. Our joint aim is to achieve a net environmental gain for the Forest, we are taking the long-term view on this. Last year's consultation was really helpful in highlighting the things that matter most to local people and visitors. Now we want their feedback on our suggested actions, so we need as many people as possible to complete the online survey.'

**Deputy Surveyor Bruce Rothnie, of the Forestry Commission,** said: 'The Forestry Commission provides many of the existing opportunities for people to enjoy the Forest and we want to do that in ways that protect the Forest for future generations. This consultation provides a great chance for people who love the Forest to share that responsibility and help us shape actions that make us all proud to pass on a Forest in good health.'

**The online survey and background information are at:**  
[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/futureforest](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/futureforest).

Find out more and visit the steering group partners on the National Park Authority stand at the New Forest Show, 24-26 July.

### **Timetable**

- 18 June 2018 – 12 August 2018: Public consultation on the draft actions
- Autumn 2018: analysis of responses
- Early 2019: publish Recreation Management Strategy update with lead organisations for agreed actions
- 2019/2020: progress with actions.

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**Notes to editor:**

Recreation Management Strategy **Steering Group** members:

- The Forestry Commission
- Verderers
- New Forest National Park Authority
- Hampshire County Council
- Natural England
- New Forest District Council.

Recreation Management Strategy **Advisory Group** members include the above Steering Group members and:

- Commoners Defence Association
- Equine Forum
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- National Trust
- New Forest Association
- New Forest Dog Owners Group
- New Forest Access Forum
- Go New Forest CIC
- Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society
- Cycle Working Group
- RSPB.