

NFDC Local Plan Review

Brockenhurst Parish Council's Response

7th September 2016

Brockenhurst Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper entitled Local Plan Review 2016-2036, Part One: Planning Strategy.

Brockenhurst Parish Council represents 3500 residents who have an interest in the proposals as they indirectly affect the village.

Firstly, we object to the consultation being issued and run through the summer holiday period when many Parish Councils do not meet. This does not assist open dialogue. We see no reason why the consultation could not have been delayed or extended in view of this well known issue.

Secondly, we would ask that New Forest District Council work with the New Forest National Park Authority, who we understand will be issuing their own review in the Autumn. It is our view that the two Local Planning Authorities should have issued their Plans simultaneously in order to work in parallel and to harmonise them.

We have considered the issues raised in the document itself and the consensus view of the Councillors is:-

1. The plan does not adequately address the effects of a primarily elderly migration to the area. It is not clear how it is proposed that new housing on the edge of town sites will meet the needs of this group.
2. If the forecasts are accurate, to maintain a demographically realistic housing stock across the district, infill with control on the size of homes is preferred to planning for settlement edge sites, often green belt. This Plan needs to actively encourage the building of high quality, spacious flats and serviced buildings plus care homes on sites in settlement centres. Developers should be encouraged to recycle large houses in spacious grounds and thereby exploit existing housing stock to better meet housing needs
3. There is a severe risk that the National Park will be damaged by additional significant pressures over the period if such large numbers of additional housing are sought in and around the edge of the New Forest. The District Council should through the "duty to co-operate" ask Government and other Authorities to look for new housing in other areas of the country that have more space which is not near National Parks or within the Green Belt.
4. It makes little sense placing large numbers of new houses in locations that will be mostly accessed by commuting through the National Park, particularly if the expected occupants are elderly. There is already much pressure on the Park from traffic with concerns ranging from animal accidents and noise pollution to a loss of wilderness characteristics which define

this special area. We anticipate negative impacts on the A337, B3055 and B3056. Accordingly, we believe much of the proposed housing to the South West should be accommodated in the North East of the area and consideration should be given to the A36 corridor, albeit within Test Valley District.

5. The Fawley Power station and disused 400 acre Dean Hill military site, just outside the northern edge of the National Park sites should be brought into the Plan.
6. There will be an impact on wildlife and nature within the Forest. Brockenhurst Parish Council welcomes the provision of the Landscape Framework policy to ensure the integrity of Natura New Forest 2000 sites.
7. The Parish Council welcomes para 5.75 in that walking and cycling routes are not forgotten. It is essential that new neighbourhoods should also be in keeping with the local character and developed organically to maintain social cohesion.
8. The Parish Council welcomes para 5.85 in that pedestrians should not become secondary to vehicles, the avoidance of insufficient off-street parking and acceptance of the number of vehicles that households actually have.
9. Residents and businesses south of Brockenhurst, both now and in the future, will need to use the A337, A35 and the railway to move through this Parish and out of their area. These proposals place additional pressure on that infrastructure.
10. We anticipate that there will be a moderate increase in traffic movement rather less than the percentage increase in population. This could be in train, bus and coach movements in addition to the impact of increased leisure travel to forest car parks. It is important that Network Rail become engaged as they plan to close the signal box in Brockenhurst with traffic control monitored by staff using remote cameras. We anticipate that this will result in longer railway crossing closures, for safety reasons, leading to extended traffic queues.
11. The Parish Council formally requests inclusion as a consultee with the infrastructure providers to support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in view of the potential increase in traffic movement.
12. The document appears to contradict itself in that para 3.20 "a high proportion of the new homes should be built as affordable homes for younger first time buyers". Yet in para 5.108 "employment growth will not be sought". The population growth suggests that the new homes are required for downsizing the ageing population.