



New Forest National Park Authority
Local Plan Review 2024 – 2043
Regulation 18 (Part 2) Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – updated 1 December 2025

Q1. What is the New Forest National Park Local Plan?

A1. A Local Plan sets out planning policies and proposals to guide and manage future development in an area. It sets out a vision and framework for how land will be used and developed over a period of time. Every planning authority is required by law to produce a Local Plan. The New Forest National Park Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and addresses a range of issues, including management of the natural environment, design and heritage, housing and employment.

Q2. Why does the existing Local Plan need to be updated?

A2. Government confirms that Local Plans should be reviewed every five years to determine if any updates are required. The New Forest Local Plan was adopted in 2019, and, whilst many aspects of the existing plan are working well and there is much we will retain of the existing Local Plan, some policies would benefit from an update as there have been changes to national policy and guidance.

Q3. What happens if a new Local Plan is not produced?

A3. All local planning authorities are required to publish a long-term Local Plan to meet identified needs for the future. If we don't have an up-to-date Local Plan, development will still take place, but we will not be able to use our own local planning policies to help decide where development should go, and what form that development should take. We will also be less able to require the supporting infrastructure needed to support development.

Q4. How has my previous feedback been used?

A4. There has been one earlier stage of public consultation in the preparation of the Local Plan. A six-week period of consultation was undertaken on the Strategic Direction of Travel document from February to March 2025. Comments received

helped to inform the preparation of the revised Local Plan on which we are now consulting. We have prepared a Consultation Statement summarising the comments received during the Regulation 18 (Part 1) Consultation which provides a summary of the main issues raised and how they have been addressed.

Q5. Why is the Spatial Strategy proposed to be changed?

A5. The review of the Local Plan provides an opportunity to assess the current spatial strategy and distribution of new small-scale development to meet the needs arising in our local communities across the National Park. The current Local Plan identifies those slightly larger villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway which provide some basic services for local communities. This 'spatial strategy' has been in place for decades and in light of updated information on local housing needs we are reviewing the approach. As part of the review we are proposing three other villages which offer a basic range of local facilities and services which can contribute towards meeting the small-scale needs for new development within the National Park. These villages are: Cadnam – Bartley, Landford – Nomansland, and Redlynch.

Q6. Who decides how many new homes need to be built?

A6. Currently national policy requires local authorities – including national park authorities – to identify their local housing needs and meet them where possible within their administrative areas. We commissioned an updated Housing Needs Assessment based on the Government's standard method for calculating housing need, which concluded that over the period 2024 to 2043 the housing need in the National Park is 4,940 new dwellings (circa 260 dwellings per annum). This assessment does not take account of development constraints such as the environment and land availability. The draft Local Plan makes provision for 950 new dwellings over the period 2024 to 2043 and this scale of development is considered deliverable and suitable within the context of a nationally protected landscape.

Q7. How were the proposed site allocations selected?

A7. In February and March 2025, the Authority carried out a 'Call for Sites' exercise. This invited site submissions from landowners, developers and others to be considered as potential development sites supporting the Local Plan Review. National planning guidance sets out a process for consideration of such sites. This is then published in a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA), which is an essential part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review. The SLAA identifies potential land and assesses the availability, suitability and achievability of potential sites. The SLAA does not determine whether a site should be allocated for development. However, it does help identify a potential pool of sites for further consideration through a range of technical work.

Q8. Will the proposed site allocations in the Plan still require planning permission?

A8. Yes, the final, adopted Local Plan site allocation policies will establish the principle of development on a certain site and the criteria that will influence the type of development that occurs, but a planning application will be required to establish the exact details, design of any future development. These detailed planning applications would be subject to consultation and neighbour notifications.

Q9. Why aren't we using Brownfield sites first?

A9. Our priority has always been to develop brownfield sites first. This is reflected in the redevelopment of sites including the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel, surplus land at Ashurst Hospital and the redevelopment of the former Redmayne Engineering site in Brockenhurst. However, the supply of brownfield land in the Park is very limited and will not be sufficient to accommodate many new homes over the Plan period.

Q10. What about the impact of development on the environment and landscape of the New Forest National Park?

A10. It is a legal requirement for Local Plans to be assessed on their environmental impact. These reports are called Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and will form part of the evidence base alongside other detailed analysis of environmental issues. Mitigation measures are also proposed to address potential negative impacts.

Q11. Where can I find out more information about the Local Plan Review?

A11. Details of the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation and relevant documents can be viewed on the Authority's website, as well as physical copies of the documents available to view at our office at Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, SO41 9ZG during normal office hours.

Q12. How should I respond to the consultation?

A12. Representations on the National Local Plan Review should be made during the 6-week consultation period closing on 19 December 2025 using the online consultation platform on our website, or sending written comments by email or post.

Online form: <https://nfnpalocalplan.commonplace.is/>

Email: policy@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Post: Policy Team, New Forest National Park Authority, Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road, Lymington, SO41 9ZG

Q13. What will happen after the consultation?

A13. There is a published timetable - the Local Development Scheme (LDS) - available on the Local Plan website that sets out when the stages in the process, including when consultation is due to take place – see below.

Your comments will help us to further refine the Plan and produce a Submission document (Regulation 19), which will be published for consultation in late Summer 2026 and then be examined in public before an Independent Inspector.

Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 Part 2)	We are here
Pre-submission publication	July – September 2026
Submission	December 2026
Independent examination	January 2027 – June 2027
Inspectors report issued	July 2027
Proposed modifications	August – September 2027
Adoption	December 2027

Q14. What are Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and how do they impact the Local Plan Review?

A14. Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. The Government considers it will ensure that decisions are made closer to the people, communities and businesses they affect. Devolution in Hampshire will be through the election of a Mayor and the new Mayoral Authority (which will assume its responsibilities in 2027) will have some planning powers. However, national park authorities will still be responsible for Local Plan-making and development management decisions so it is important we progress with the review.

Local Government Reorganisation refers to the restructuring from the current two-tier system of district and county councils to create fewer, larger unitary authorities. The Government has indicated that for most areas this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more. The new structure is expected to be in place from April 2028. The Government's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire are due to be published in late 2025. The New Forest National Park Authority will continue to be the statutory planning authority for the National Park area and our Local Plan will continue to guide future development in the National Park. This reaffirms the importance of progressing with the Local Plan review.

Q15. The National Park Authority is holding drop-in sessions to allow members of the public to find out more information about the emerging Local Plan at Regulation 18 Part 2 stage. When and where are these sessions being held?

A15. Please see details below:

- Redlynch Village Hall – Tuesday 2 December, 2pm – 7pm
- Colbury Memorial Hall – Thursday 4 December, 2pm – 7pm
- Sway Village Hall – Friday 5 December, 2pm – 7pm
- Lyndhurst Community Centre – Tuesday 9 December, 2pm – 7pm
- Landford Methodist Hall – Friday 12 December, 2pm – 7pm

Officers from the Authority will be available to answer questions at the sessions being held. There are 'drop-in' sessions, so members of the public are not required to stay for the length of the session and should attend when best suits them.

Local Plan Online Consultation – Wednesday 26 November 2025

On Wednesday 26 November 2025 the National Park Authority held an online Local Plan consultation for those who could not attend the in person drop-in sessions. During the Q&A part of the meeting many questions were raised by participants and answered either verbally or in comments. These are summarised below:

Q16. What is the definition of affordable housing? Where can I find more information on how affordable housing is formally defined?

A16. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) defines affordable housing as, "...housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)". Affordable housing may also fall under the definition of "Social Rent", "Other affordable housing for rent", "Discounted market sales housing" and or "Other affordable routes to home ownership". For the full definition please refer to page 70 of the NPPF at [National Planning Policy Framework - Annex 2: Glossary - Guidance - GOV.UK](#).

Q17. If the proposed housing site allocation policies set a policy target of 50% affordable housing, how do we know that will be stuck to?

A17. Site allocation policies set out a series of requirements that subsequent planning applications should meet and this typically includes a target for affordable housing delivery (note – it is a target, rather than an absolute). There is significant affordable housing need arising within the communities of the New Forest National Park and the evidence on affordable housing need indicates the Authority should be maximising delivery wherever possible. National planning policy confirms that the site-specific viability of development is also a material planning consideration in the final planning decision. Developers are expected to have considered the Local Plan policy requirements before purchasing a site to ensure their schemes are policy

compliant. Any deviation from the main policy requirements – including the target affordable housing provision – will require justification.

Q18. Existing site allocations in the adopted New Forest National Park (2019) set out a quantum of development for each site, but when the subsequent planning applications have been submitted the quantum of development is often higher. Why is this allowed and what is point of the local planning policies if they are not being adhered to?

A18. At the Local Plan-making stage the exact layout of development is not known – instead the Plan establishes the principle of development to then be assessed in more detail at the subsequent planning application stage. The dwelling numbers on site allocations are therefore indicative and in the case of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan the policies are worded as “around XX dwellings”, rather than an absolute. It is only at the detailed planning application stage that the final numbers will be known. If a site can accommodate a higher level of development and still be acceptable in planning terms there is no reason to refuse it. Several of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) site allocations have subsequently be granted planning permission for levels of development very close to the site allocation figures (e.g. land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst is allocated for ‘around 60 dwellings’ and then received planning permission for 62 dwellings; land at Church Lane, Sway is allocated for ‘around 40 dwellings’ and received planning permission for 46 dwellings). In an area of large housing need – and where the need is not being met in full – it would be unreasonable to refuse consent at the detailed planning application stage for a higher quantum of development if all the other policy requirements are being met.

Q19. What are you doing about the protection of back up grazing? Do you have a policy to protect grazing land within the national park, situated around the open access (cattle grid) area? These areas are vital for commoners who are grazing livestock on the open forest. They are also low intensity and probably support biodiversity. If not specifically protected, is there a danger that these areas will be under development pressure?

A19. The existing New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) includes planning policy protection for back up grazing land within the New Forest National Park and it is proposed to retain this policy approach in the revised Local Plan. In relation to the limited number of proposed housing site allocations in the draft Local Plan, the Authority has considered the history of the sites and whether they have been used for back up grazing before deciding whether to put them forward for allocation. Back up grazing land is also located outside the National Park boundary and it is the role of our neighbouring planning authorities to protect this resource through their own local planning policies.

Q20. Several of the proposed site allocations are in areas with limited services (e.g. secondary schools) – how have you selected the sites and proposed new defined villages?

A20. The significant local housing need arising from the communities of the National Park – allied to the national Government's drive to increase housing delivery – means the review of the New Forest National Park Local Plan must consider further development options. As part of this process the National Park Authority carried out a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) which considered areas of the New Forest which could come forward for small-scale development to meet the identified local needs. To support the SLAA, a 'Call for Sites' exercise was undertaken earlier this year and many submissions were received from landowners and individuals who expressed a wish for their site to be considered for development. Using this information, the Authority assessed the sites against criteria designed to filter out sites that would be inappropriate. These criteria considered constraints such as proximity to designated nature conservation sites, impact on landscape character, access to public transport and other public services (please see 'SLAA methodology and report' for full details). We have also prepared a Housing Background Paper and a Settlement Hierarchy Review Background Paper that set out more detail.

The Local Plan Review provided an opportunity to review the existing settlement hierarchy to assess how development is distributed across the National Park, which helps to address housing needs and support local services. The settlement hierarchy ensures that the level of growth reflects the sustainability of settlements, which means that the small-scale development that occurs in the National Park is directed towards settlements that fulfil the most functions and provide the most services.

The availability of suitable sites around the existing defined villages has become more challenging within the context of the national and international environmental designations within the National Park, and over the years the availability of suitable sites that can contribute toward meeting local needs for housing, employment and other services has diminished. It is therefore considered appropriate to review the settlement hierarchy to determine where the limited scale of development that the National Park will accommodate can be focused. As with many rural areas, there is generally a more basic range of local services in the villages and hamlets of the New Forest National Park and communities will continue to look to larger urban areas beyond Park boundary to meet some of their needs.