

## MAKING NEW FRIENDS

*“This new Forest is a piece of property as much belonging to the public as the Custom House in London is. There is no man, however poor, who has not a right in it. Every man is owner of a part of the deer, the game and of the money that goes to the keepers.”*

William Cobbet, 1830.

Through the operation of its tourism service, the District Council has learnt a great deal about the nature of local tourism and what we believe are the key issues. We have prepared this strategy to tackle those issues and safeguard both the tourism industry and the place in which it operates. The broad aim is to provide a plan to ensure that all tourism and visitor activity becomes ecologically sustainable, economically viable and ethically and socially fair for all on a long term basis. A well planned and prosperous tourism industry we believe, will be a major catalyst for revitalising the amenity of the whole district. In seeking to achieve all this, we will always apply “Forest First”; that is to put the needs of the special qualities of the District before all tourism activity, after all it is that on which all local tourism relies.

By nature tourism is extremely complex. This strategy document is therefore structured into five chapters that are as simple and concise as possible. Each chapter contains sections which we start with a policy statement, followed by text and information explaining issues and proposing solutions, action is presented by key objectives. Much of what is included in this document is guided by the very positive feedback to our 1994 public consultation exercise: ‘Living with the Enemy?’. As with that exercise we want to hear what people think about what we have to say and what we plan to do.

**WE NEED YOUR VIEWS!**

## **1: INTRODUCTION**

In the next millennium when everyone will have more leisure time, tourism will become the world's largest industry. No longer can it be regarded solely as a local, regional or even national issues, it is global. The implications of this for New Forest District are profound. On the one hand we need a prosperous tourism industry to sustain jobs and the local economy, on the other, environmental and social pressure from increased numbers of visitors could undermine the quality of life and the resources on which the industry itself depends.

If tourism is poorly managed or left to market demand, the District and its communities could lose their local identities and become dominated by visitors and the industry that serves them. Visitor pressure could strangle otherwise peaceful communities and, in the case of sensitive landscapes and habitats, the sheer weight of numbers could damage and even destroy the very things visitors have come to enjoy. In recognising tourism as such a dynamic and powerful activity, now more than ever, a long term plan is needed to guide its development.

By its nature our strategy is focused on New Forest District, but to be successful it will also have to relate to a regional, national, European and world-wide stage. Tourism will only ever be effectively managed through partnership at all levels, so we hope the strategy will also positively influence all decisions as and where they affect tourism in our District.

Although New Forest District has a very strong collective identity, for the purpose of managing tourism we propose to work in four geographic areas. The Waterside, Coastal Towns and the Avon Valley and Downlands are all linked and influenced the New Forest but have particular characteristics of their own. To the wider world, the whole district must act as one, but if the strategy is to work at a local level we must recognise the differences in these four areas.

There has been a tendency in the past to focus on the issues that surround tourism in the New Forest, rather than recognise and develop the undoubted opportunities presented by the other three areas of the District. One of the main aims of "Making New Friends" is to develop these opportunities and spread the benefits throughout the District. As most tourism businesses are sited in and around the main settlements we propose to base the framework of the strategy on the following four areas and the constituent settlement groupings:

### **The Waterside**

- Totton
- Hythe

### **The New Forest**

- Lyndhurst/Ashurst
- Brockenhurst/Beaulieu

- Burley/Bransgrove
- Sway
- Fritham/Bramshaw/Copythorne/Cadnam/Minstead.

### **The Coastal Towns**

- Lymington
- Milford On Sea
- New Milton/Barton

### **The Avon Valley & Downlands**

- Fordingbridge
- Ringwood.

### **Tourism & New Forest District**

**“OUR AIM IS FOR NEW FOREST DISTRICT TO BECOME A TOURISM DESTINATION WHERE THE VISITOR, TOURISM INDUSTRY, LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT ARE IN COMPLETE HARMONY, AND THUS MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ALL LIFE .”**

Until the council established its tourism service a decade ago, no other organisation had taken an overview of tourism as a management issue. Since then a lot has been done to establish the basic framework of services, activities and relationships that are needed for positive tourism management. Our goal is to bring the whole community together and share in a successful long term plan for tourism.

We have been committed to a sustainable approach to tourism for sometime. Put simply, this is tourism that does not prejudice the future quality of life and the natural and cultural resources of the District. Our task is to create an equilibrium between the needs of the visitor, the tourism industry, the community and, most importantly, the Districts special environment.

In ‘Living with the Enemy?’ we suggested that tourism should not take more than it puts back. We now believe that properly planned tourism could put back a lot more than it takes out. Local communities should be the beneficiaries of tourism development. We want to get the quality and operation of the industry to work in harmony with its setting and user this to drive all tourism.

Good planning for tourism will also lead to a change in the way visitors travel around the District, reducing the need to use cars by improving alternative transport opportunities between settlements, visitor facilities and existing links with the outside world. Walks, rides and cycle routes will be planned to create a safe and comprehensive network linking settlements and sites throughout the District also attaching to neighbouring networks, to encourage local as well as visitor use away from the car.

By channelling visitors to appropriate locations and settlements we will also seek to improve visitor spending, create more local jobs and help divert pressure away from more sensitive settings.

The Council acknowledge the District already has tourism related development which was not initially planned. Proper planning and infrastructure, even when achieved are not infallible and circumstances change. The strategy will, therefore, be flexible and reviewed on a regular basis to take account of such changes.

## **Partnerships**

### **Policy**

- **To work in partnership with all agencies, organisations and individuals to promote the interests of tourism, particularly in maintaining an effective local tourism association.**

Managing tourism through partnership is at the core of our approach. To make tourism work for the whole district, to a greater or lesser extent everybody has a part to play, everyone is involved. Perhaps the Council's most important partnership is with New Forest Tourism Association (NFTA), the District's tourism trade organisation which the Authority were instrumental in establishing in 1988. The Association represents all sectors of the local industry with a current membership of the top 250 tourism and visitor businesses in the District.

#### **New Forest Tourism**

The local tourism trade association; its membership currently stands at nearly 250 and represents business from the following groups:

- Hotels, Guest Houses and Inns
- Bed & Breakfast and Farmhouses
- Self Catering Houses, Cottages & Flats
- Holiday Parks
- Camping and Caravan sites
- Pubs, Restaurants, Coffee & Tea Shops
- Visitor Attractions
- Ferry, Bus and Transport Operators
- Retailers and Service Providers

Without the partnership of the local industry no strategy for tourism can be successful. It is the best way to provide a consistent quality of service and experience for the visitor, and

a sense of purpose and co-ordination to the industry. Other important partnerships are with the New Forest Committee, Forestry commission as Recreation Manager of the Crown Lands, Hampshire County Council and Southern tourist board.

### **New Forest Committee**

The body that co-ordinates the management of the New Forest Heritage Area. The Committee comprises of representatives from:  
Countryside Commission • English Nature • forestry Commission • Hampshire County Council • New Forest District Council • Salisbury District Council • Test Valley Borough Council • The court Of Verderers • Wiltshire County Council • The Country Landowners Association/ National Farmers Union •

The key to achieving wider partnerships for tourism in the community will lie in building up the larger picture from a local perspective. We have already done a lot to establish Town and Village tourism groups in the main settlement areas. These groups act as a catalyst for determining local tourism issues and solutions. The groups meet regularly and their membership is drawn from New Forest Tourism Association, town and Parish councils, Chambers of Trade, community and other interest groups.

Within the context of “Greenprint”, the Council’s Local Agenda for the twenty first century, we are also developing a series of partnerships projects with other service areas of the Authority. Community involvement in tourism is a perfect example of LA21 partnership themes.

In making choices of destination areas, visitors do not necessarily recognise local authority boundaries so it is important that local management and marketing activities are closely linked with those of neighbouring council tourism services and trade associations. In recognition of the visitor flows between New Forest District and Bournemouth/East Dorset, we have already established close working ties with Bournemouth Tourism and the other Dorset Local Authorities. In developing “Making New Friends” we will seek to establish closer working partnerships with all appropriate neighbouring and regional tourism interests.

## **National & Regional Tourism Development Policies**

### **Policy**

- **To lobby Central Government and all national and regional tourism organisations to ensure local tourism needs are reflected in their policies and actions.**

### National Policies

One of the historic problems for tourism in this country has been the lack of any national vision or strategy for its wider management or development. It has therefore grown in a haphazard and piecemeal way. In the series 'Competing with the Best', the Department of National Heritage has set out its future approach for tourism in England. The recent document "Success through Partnership" is not a comprehensive development strategy for the tourism, it is the beginning of the process of identifying some of the key issues which the Government, Tourist boards and Industry can work together on.

Similarly the English Tourist Board/British Tourist Authority (ETB/BTA) is working towards a national strategy. Although, individual documents have been published, there is no comprehensive plan bringing all aspects of tourism together which would enable the Industry and especially Local Government to plan local development within a national context. This situation is currently being addressed by both the DNH and ETB/BTA and we look forward to a national agreed tourism development strategy being forthcoming shortly. In 1995 the Department of the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food published six objectives for sustainable development which have been incorporated into all aspects of our approach. Many of the themes published in the 1991 document "Maintaining the Balance" are also taken up and included in this strategy as are the relevant DoE planning policy guidance notes.

### **Regional & Local Policies**

At a regional level, Hampshire County Council's Structure Plan gives general guidance and policy on tourism and economic development. At a local level New Forest District Council's Local Plan contains detailed sections on tourism which provide the planning framework and policies for this strategy (see appendix 1).

#### **New Forest District Local Plan**

##### Objective 21: Tourism

To support a viable and prosperous tourist industry to the continued benefit of the interests of the environment, in particular the New Forest and the undeveloped coast, are safeguarded and protected.

Other important policies are those proposed in the New Forest Committee’s “A Strategy for the New Forest”, (see appendix 2) the New Forest Transportation Strategy, NFDC’s Local Agenda 21; “Greenprint” and the Council’s Corporate Plan. The Policies and objectives of the Tourism and Visitor Strategy are linked to these local policy documents. “Making New Friends” also seeks to reflect the aims of many other local organisations and provide opportunities to formalise more such partnerships in the future.

## 2: FOUR CORNERSTONES

### Visitors

#### Policy

- **To encourage all partners to welcome all visitors and provide them with a high quality experience and a better understanding of the needs of local people and the environment.**

All visitors are guests. As such they have the right to experience and enjoy the District.

For visitors, local tourism should be an interesting, good value, satisfying and high quality experience. Host and visitor should be on equal terms. Through successful tourism, visitors gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the area, its special way of life and unique landscapes. Welcomed visitors are more likely to become involved and through their enjoyment, develop a sense of responsibility and stewardship for the District.

The three general groups of visitor to the District are:

- **the staying visitor**, who stays in the District for one night or more.
- **the day visitor**, who travels from outside the District from home or from a holiday elsewhere, returning the same day;
- **the local visitor**, who lives within the District but visits another part for leisure and recreation.

<b>Number of Visits</b>	
No of days visiting	Spend per visitor day
Staying visitor serviced accom 0.5million	£ 37.50
Staying visitor self serviced accom 2.25million	£12.60
Day visitors 2.2million	£5.50
Local Visitors 2.2million	£3.10
<i>Source: NFDC/Ecotec Survey 1992</i>	

The recent New Forest sport and Recreation Study, suggests very many more local visitors (possibly accounting for more than 18 million visits per year) use the New Forest than was previously estimated by earlier surveys. This finding is important in influencing the recreation and access policies and actions required in the New Forest.

## Industry

### Policies

- **To encourage the tourism and visitor industry to work together in providing excellent services and facilities for visitors which respect the needs of the community and environment both now and in the future.**
- **To retain a viable and prosperous tourism industry throughout the year.**

New Forest District Council's Economic Strategy suggests a prosperous local economy should not be incompatible with high environmental standards and quality of life and seeks to ensure that adequate job opportunities exist for local people. In this context it is essential that we make the best use of tourism. Research has shown that it is not just the obvious businesses that can create new jobs from increased visitor spending.

The main issue for the industry is how to improve its performance while protecting the environmental quality of the District on which the industry depends. The majority of existing businesses have had to struggle to stay viable in recent years, because they need the right economies of scale, infrastructure and market conditions in which to operate successfully in a highly competitive world. Large scale development would be inappropriate in such an environmentally sensitive setting, our strategy is therefore directed at getting better use made of what facilities we have already, particularly in the serviced accommodation sector.

Through our partnership with NFTA we have achieved a better understanding of critical issues for the industry such as planning and transportation matters. We also believe a visit to our District should be synonymous with quality, it is a special place, and should be served by a special quality of industry.

<b>Number of Bedspaces</b>	
Hotels & Inns	2706
Bed & Breakfast	1417
Self Catering Cottages/Houses/Flats	661
Holiday Parks	5500
Campsites	16030
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26314</b>
<i>Source: New Forest District Council Accommodation Survey 1996</i>	

We have been working for some time with NFTA to promote environmental awareness and are currently establishing the New Forest Green Tourism programme to stimulate improvements in the industry's environmental performance, promote good practice in planning development and create industry support for conservation activities that also help visitors develop a sense of stewardship for the District ( see Operations Section).

## **Community**

### **Policy**

- **To involve the local community in its tourism activities and encourage partners to do likewise.**

The special character of the District is inextricably linked to the traditions and activities of the people who live and work here. Visitors who are given a warm welcome by the host community rarely create problems and are more likely to develop a respect for the place and its people.

Without the spending and jobs brought by tourism, the community would lose many of its services and small businesses. When visitors trade with local businesses they purchase supplies and services. Local business in turn purchase the supplies and services they need to operate and through successive rounds of purchase the initial direct spend of a visitor multiplies throughout the local and regional economy.

Tourism has a major part to play in supporting the skills and economic activities that are traditional to the District. We want to help the industry find ways of increasing this support by using employees, produce and services from the locality. Tourism can also benefit the community by providing improved infrastructure, improved recreation and cultural facilities, increased local authority revenues and greater local awareness, all helping to foster pride in the District's natural and cultural heritage.

### **The Resident**

The interaction between local residents and visitors is very important. Visitors are guests in the local community but as the New Forest Sport and Recreation Study has shown, residents themselves make the vast majority of all visits to the District at any one time. Residents must therefore start to take more personal responsibility in making a positive contribution to the situation than simply suggesting that day and staying visitors create the problems. Residents will therefore be important players in the town and village tourism groups.

### **The Business Community**

Most businesses in the District directly or indirectly derive some benefit from visitor expenditure. Many people in this group already recognise the value of visitors and are generally supportive of their needs. We want to continue developing this wider business support for tourism through the town and village tourism groups.

## **The Political Community**

Getting the needs of tourism incorporated into all relevant political decisions is crucial to the success of this strategy. We will continue to promote those needs to executive agencies and elected representatives at every opportunity.

## **The Commoning Community**

In the New Forest the small number of practising commoners are an essential component in maintaining its ancient traditions of free roaming animals. As a unique way of life, commoning is under threat. This simple fact has drastic implications for the future life cycle of the New Forest itself. Some commoners are turning to tourism to provide the essential extra income needed to keep the practice going. The commoning community can provide valuable resources for developing interpretative work such as the New Forest Encounter. We will continue to develop ideas on how tourism's support of commoning can be improved, especially for younger members of commoning families.

## **Town and Village Tourism Groups**

Perhaps the most effective way that any member of the community can have an input to local tourism will be through the town and village tourism groups. Working with our partners we are establishing groups in all the settlement areas listed in the Introduction.

## **The Environment**

### **Policy**

- **To ensure that all tourism is managed in order to control its impact and where possible, achieve a positive effect on the environment.**

Without the unique quality of the New Forest, its Coastline and the Avon Valley there would be little to attract visitors. The need for sustainability is well documented; existing plans stress the landscape, cultural and nature conservation importance of the District and contain policies which aim to protect it.

There are many agencies involved in caring for the local environment, most notably English Nature, the Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council, the District Council and Parish Councils. There are also many land owners such as the National Trust and private estates. It is important that all these organisations and individuals work together to make a more positive environmental contribution to managing land that is used by visitors.

As Crown land managers, the Forestry Commission have produced a "Framework for Recreation" which picks up many of the themes contained in this tourism and visitor management strategy and the District Local Plan. It is hoped that all other local land owners will follow the lead taken by Forestry Commission and produce their own

recreation plans which also link into the aims, policies and objectives of all other appropriate management strategies.

Carrying capacity is fundamental to good environmental management and sustainable development in visitor destinations. Establishing the level of carrying capacities can be difficult, but they are essential in effective planning for tourism and recreation that is environmentally sustainable.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CARRYING CAPACITY is the level of visiting beyond which unacceptable environmental impacts and physical wear will occur.
The visitor carrying capacity is the level of visiting beyond which visitor satisfaction drops unacceptably
The community carrying capacity is the level of visiting beyond which the local quality of life drops unacceptably.

Carrying capacities can vary over time and be affected by factors such as visitor behaviour patterns, facility design and management, the character of the environment, access and transportation arrangements as well as the changing attitudes of the host community. As previously emphasised, if the tourism product declines in quality and value, this will result in a decline in the local tourism and visitor economy.

Some areas of the District are valued for being wild and remote and should remain so. If the New Forest is to retain its integrity its needs must come first, before all visitor considerations. Areas of the forest have been identified as having a particular integrity. We would like to see a “Forest First” zoning principle applied to manage these areas. We believe these areas should remain free of all visitor infrastructures and, adjacent car parks and vehicular access should be removed. The zones surrounding the “Forest First” areas would, where appropriate, provide for walking, cycling, riding and access for people with disabilities, all other forms of traffic being removed where possible.

The areas outside of the two levels of zone would be subject to the appropriate provision of car parks and vehicular access. The New Forest Committee’s Sport & Recreation Sub Committee is currently developing policies and action to implement this approach. The Forestry Commission document “A Framework for Recreation” is an important part of this process. It is possible other parts of the District’s environment would benefit from similar arrangements. In managing tourism in the District we will assess the opportunities and capacity of each site/area to absorb visitors. By further focusing on towns and villages and their communities, it will be possible to build up a detailed idea of where tourism development can take place throughout the district.

### 3: MAKING IT WORK

#### Managing Tourism

In the previous chapters we have outlined the nature of local tourism. Making tourism work to benefit the whole District is the purpose of the strategy. The following chapter describes the key areas of work that make up the ongoing management contribution of the Council's tourism service and its partners in helping to deliver successful tourism throughout the District.

#### Research

#### Policy

- **To maintain an effective programme of research to inform all tourism management and development decisions.**

Recent research has provided a lot of information and data about local tourism which has given us much of the raw material necessary for our strategy. However, there are still many things to understand and it is important that a comprehensive programme of research is developed. It is essential that we work with partners to improve understanding of the economic, physical and social impact of all visitors in the countryside, coast and towns throughout the year. Research is crucial in helping to inform action that is appropriate and fair for all.

The Council's tourism and visitor research programme provides the baseline facts to inform decision making for development and marketing as well as ongoing management. In order to monitor and manage tourism, it is essential to know how to make the most of opportunities and minimise problems in a systematic and comprehensive manner. We are currently working with Bournemouth University's International Tourism Centre to develop a destination research model to do just this.

#### **NFDC'S TOURISM AND VISITOR RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

**Visitors:** Where they come from and why, market profiles

**Accommodation:** Locations, capacities and occupancy rates

**Attractions and Facilities:** Locations, capacities and usage patterns

**Spending:** How much visitors spend and where

In seeking to achieve a regular collection of data we must be realistic and recognise our resources do simply not allow us to do all the necessary research. We therefore have to

rely on surveys undertaken by our partners that often do not use the same fields and structures. We will continue to promote the collection of appropriate information with all our partners especially the Forestry Commission, New Forest Tourist Association, and the New Forest Committee to improve the effectiveness of all tourism and visitor research. Programme.

***Objectives:***

- ***To maintain the annual collection of information for the Council's tourism and visitor research programme.***
- ***To have devised a comprehensive destination research programme including appropriate data collection by partners by September 1999.***
- ***To continue work with partners especially the new Forest Committee to establish a comprehensive annual programme of environmental research and assessment of visitor and recreation activities throughout the District by September 1999.***

**Information**

**Policies**

- **To provide consistent, well communicated information services for the benefit of all visitors and local people throughout the year that convey the special nature of the District and contribute to effective visitor management.**
- **To provide a strategic network of staffed Visitor Information Centres as the main points of contact with visitors and local people.**
- **To provide in partnership with other agencies, unmanned Visitor Information Points at agreed locations throughout the District to provide 24 hour information and support the main provision of staffed Visitor Information Centres.**

An effective network of visitor information provision is an essential part of tourism and visitor management. The Council operates one all year and two seasonally staffed Visitor Information Centres (VICs), supported by Visitor Information Points (VIPs) in larger settlements of the District.

The aim of the service is to provide 24 hour information to local people and visitors enabling them to enjoy a high quality experience during their visit or excursion. The service also seeks to gain everybody's understanding and support for the conservation of the Destination and its heritage. The staffed information service gives us the opportunity to get our messages across personally and provide a warm welcome at the same time.

We constantly strive to improve the high quality and effectiveness of the Council's visitor information network. We have recently renewed and increased the number of our VIPs and the quality of the information they provide 24 hours a day. We have also updated the services' computer network, to utilise the latest advances in electronic

information management. This will allow us to develop a commissionable pre-visit booking service for accommodation and excursions and improve our use of the Internet. To stimulate out of season business and spread the benefits of tourism throughout the year, we now want to operate all our staffed Visitor Information Centres all year round. All our staffed centres are used by local and staying visitors to buy bus and coach, day and season tickets. The current seasonal closing of our centres at Lymington and Ringwood therefore limits our ability to promote year round take up of public transport to visitors and local people, especially senior citizens.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES			
<i>Visitor per year</i>			
<i>Lyndhurst</i>	<i>Open all year</i>	<i>350,000</i>	<i>NFDC funded and managed</i>
<i>Ringwood</i>	<i>Easter – Sept</i>	<i>70,000</i>	<i>NFDC funded and managed</i>
<i>Lymington</i>	<i>Easter – Sept</i>	<i>70,000</i>	<i>NFDC funded and managed</i>
<i>Fordingbridge</i>	<i>Easter- Sept</i>	<i>21,000</i>	<i>Parish/commercial funded, STB managed</i>

We have recently reviewed our visitor Information Centre network and we do not want to add to it. The exception to this is the investigation of the opportunities for interceptor information provision. The idea being to channel visitors on arrival to help reduce the length of car journeys and promote alternative methods of transport, we will therefore work with partners to provide point of entry information and investigate the possibility of a new gateway VIC.

From white on brown road signs, visitor information services to publications and marketing the co-ordination of all efforts to communicate information consistently with visitors however they travel is one of the strategy's most important tasks. More importantly, if we can communicate key messages at source we can also seek to influence a shift towards alternative travel arrangements to cars, before visitors leave home.

**Objectives:**

- *To improve the quality and services provided by the council's Visitor Information Service and review annually.*
- *To provide all year opening at all the Council's Visitor Information Centres by April 2000.*
- *to maintain and improve the Council's network of Visitor Information Points by establishing new sites in Hythe, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu in 1997.*
- *To investigate the provision of a new gateway Visitor Information Centre at a main point of entry to New Forest District and determine by May 1998.*

**Signing**

SIGNING

## Policy

- **To recognise that good tourism sign posting and routing is an essential part of effective management and will in partnership with the Highway Authority and other interested parties actively encourage, establish and maintain a comprehensive tourism and visitor signing system throughout the District without compromising the conservation of the New Forest.**

Visitors need well defined routes and points of access to find their way around and enjoy our District. In conjunction with the Highway Authority, NFTA, and others, we will actively encourage good tourism and visitor traffic management and sign posting. The deregulation of white on brown visitor signs has provided an opportunity to review their use in our District.

We have developed a joint White on Brown Tourism Signing Strategy with NFTA, which has the support of Hampshire County Council and the New Forest Committee:

- a) Point of entry information - at strategic points of entry and/or in association with existing visitor information applicable to the whole District should be available.
- b) Town and Village information – centrally located visitor Information Points adjacent/in car parks providing information about facilities/visitor attractions within each settlement or settlement cluster.
- c) Individual signing within settlements – only for harder to find establishments on the edge of settlements on a single or limited number of signs per facility basis.
- d) White on Brown signs for harder to find establishments – which are not adequately served by the above arrangements.

Visitor Information Points currently exist in Lyndhurst (2), Burley, Ringwood, Fordingbridge, New Milton and Lymington (2). The Brockenhurst VIP will be resited at the station in early 1997 in a programme which will also site a new VIP's in Hythe and Beaulieu. It is hoped to attach paid for leaflet dispensers for the relevant Town and Village guide leaflet to each VIP when funds allow.

### ***Objective:***

- ***To limit proliferation of White on Brown tourism Signs and to work within the framework and policies of “A Strategy for the New Forest” and the New Forest Transportation Strategy, to establish a comprehensive white on brown tourism signing system throughout the District by April 1999.***

## Interpretation

### Policy

- **To work with partners to enable the messages in all interpretative and educational activities are consistent and reflect the Council's policies.**

As already outlined, if visitors adopt a sense of stewardship during their visit then they are far more likely to behave in an appropriate manner. Interpretation and Education play an important part in developing this process.

We work in partnership with many interests to create the appropriate delivery and consistency of interpretation for visitors and local people. The most important are with the New Forest Committee, Ninth Centenary Trust, the Forestry Commission and New Forest Tourism Association. The role of the industry and the community as a whole can be greatly improved to help explain the special nature and needs of the Destination's landscape and cultural heritage. There is much unknown heritage and culture to be uncovered in every settlement area throughout the District.

We will continue to develop the New Forest Encounter, where local people who have spent their working life in the forest, introduce visitors to its beauties and secrets. By doing this we not only create local jobs and enjoyment for visitors, but also make sure that there is a better understanding of how special the District is and why we all need to look after it. This is of great benefit when working with journalists and broadcasters. By influencing how they report on the Destination, we can encourage them to include the messages we, and our partners, are working hard to establish.

Similar interpretative opportunities can be developed throughout the District and we will investigate through the town and village tourism groups how the idea can develop into action. Interpretative work in the education sector also contributes to getting our messages across to future generations. We will therefore work to improve our student and education service in partnership with the New Forest Committee and Ninth Centenary Trust to ensure a consistency in all educational activity.

The Council believes there are opportunities for visitors to make a contribution to the improvement of the destination. One way we plan to do this is by building on local artist and author Simon Chadwick's "New Forest Friends" children's storybook characters. The Council will investigate and make proposals for a "New Forest Friends" merchandising strategy to raise funds to support interpretation and education activities and at the same time promote the key issues surrounding visitors and the New Forest District.

### ***Objectives***

- ***To develop the New Forest Encounter into a regular activity throughout the year by April 1998.***
- ***To work with partners, especially the New Forest Committee and the Ninth Centenary Trust to improve the content and consistency of all interpretation and education services and facilities by April 1998.***
- ***To investigate and make proposals for a "New Forest Friends" merchandising strategy by July 1997.***

## Quality Standards

### Polices

- **To support the efforts of all national agencies to develop a national scheme for the compulsory registration, classification and quality grading of all sectors of the tourism industry and ensure its use in all activities.**
- **To works with all interests to improve Quality Standards in all sectors of the local tourism industry.**

Creating customer confidence is one of the most important elements of tourism. In a special place such as the New Forest District, customer expectations are quite rightly high. Visitors expect the quality and standards of local services and facilities to match those of the place itself.

The proposed introduction of registration for all visitor businesses, accompanied by a nationally agreed scheme of classification and grading, which harmonises all existing grading schemes in a way that is understood by customers, will benefit the industry greatly. Whether the new system will also include an effective method of dealing with complaints is still unknown. At a local the role of NFTA can be developed to establish a system to deal effectively with all customer complaints and we will play our part in helping to bring this about.

### *Objective:*

- *To work with New Forest Tourism Association to establish an effective local complaints scheme for all sectors of the tourism industry for implementation in 1998/9 and review its effectiveness annually.*

### Training

#### Policy:

- **To work with all interests to establish excellent levels of training in all sectors of the tourism industry in order to support the drive towards a quality destination.**

The quality standards issue is further compounded by the limited level of training throughout the nation's tourism industry.

In the UK there is a much lower proportion of vocationally qualified staff in tourism than those of our main European competitors.

Within the District, NFTA have started to address this situation by organising training in partnership with the Southern Tourist Board through the Welcome Host programme especially for smaller operators such as B&B businesses.

By working with NFTA we will seek to create a much greater access to and take up of staff training for all tourism businesses by developing relationships with Hampshire Training & Enterprise Council, other organisations and local educational establishments. We will also continue our work on visitor related training development with Brockenhurst and Totton Colleges providing greater opportunities for members of local communities, especially young people, to enter the industry. There is also a role for NFTA in raising the local profile of careers in tourism and visitor industry and creating more availability of in house training programmes for existing staff.

***Objective:***

- ***To work with the Southern Tourist Board, Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council, Brockenhurst and Totton Colleges, NFTA and other organisations to agree a framework for a comprehensive training programme for the local tourism industry by June 1999.***

**Operations**

**Policy**

- **To work with all interests to improve the environmental performance of all sectors of the tourism and visitor industry through the adoption of agreed standards and methods.**

We have persuaded the majority of the local industry that taking a green approach to their business will not only save money, improve efficiency and support the environment – it will also give them a key selling point to potential customers, especially those that are targeted by our joint marketing activities.

Under the umbrella of the Council's Local Agenda 21; "Greenprint" we have initiated a number of different interservice projects that will build into a practical work book and guide to provide opportunities for the industry to improve its environmental performance. By building on the framework established by the Rural Development Commission's Green Audit Kit we will produce a New Forest version which focuses on the special needs of visitors, local businesses and their operational environment.

The New Forest Green Tourism Kit will suggest Practical solutions on energy conservation, health promotion, environmental standards and ideas on how businesses can create their own green areas on site. Programmes for recycling and composting waste materials will be developed along with ideas on how packaging for local produce could become reusable. There will also be a section on alternative transport to the car for

visitor activities and ideas on developing interpretation projects and environmental training throughout the local visitor industry.

**Objective:**

- ***To publish the New Forest Green Tourism Kit by January 1998 and assist NFTA in encouraging all its members to sign up to its principles by January 1999.***

**Marketing**

**Policies**

- **That all marketing activities convey the special nature of the District and contribute to effective management by regulating and attracting target audiences in appropriate numbers to the right place at the right time.**
- **To develop an all year destination, especially for serviced accommodation, increase length of stay and spend per capita, thereby increasing full time employment and consistency of income.**
- **To undertake all marketing activity in partnership with New Forest Tourism Association and all other interested parties.**
- **To secure additional resources and support for the Council's marketing activities through new partnerships, sponsorship and other forms of appropriate revenue raising.**
- **To develop and improve the range and quality of all the Council's published tourism material.**

Marketing is an essential aspect of good management as it helps to regulate and attract the right type and number of visitors to the right place at the right time especially during the Spring, Autumn and Winter, and influence them to behave in an appropriate manner during their visit before they leave home. By targeting those people we know are interested in the area and who will spend the most within the District, we can also increase the economic benefits per visit. The promotion of appropriate towns and villages will help reduce pressure on sensitive areas, bringing people to places where they can spend money at the same time. The properly planned operation of commercial attractions can have a similar function in diverting visitor pressure in economically beneficial ways.

If we are to sustain a viable and prosperous tourism industry in the increasingly competitive world of tourism, we must have an effective marketing programme. We must endeavour to control the marketplace rather than let it control us. The District is a destination which has an unchanging value rather than one driven by fashionable themes in the marketplace. . The industry must market to stay in business, but do it in a way that is best for the long term interests of all and not the short term economic gains of a few.

Why people travel is only part of the picture. How visitors make travel decisions is also important. The various sources of information and advice – guide books, friends and relatives, or stories in the media, all affect visitor perception and choice of destination.

The Council has done much to present a special and unique quality branding to all its tourism actions. The NFDC's New Forest graphic device and NFTA's acorn and oak leaf symbol are becoming synonymous with quality along with key messages included in all joint marketing activity.

Emphasis is placed on selling the District's unique environmental and cultural qualities. By stressing this special nature in all our activities, we try to create a feeling of respect and stewardship before visitors arrive. We are selective in our external marketing partnerships and only work with those media tour operators, travel companies and neighbouring local authorities who understand our position and are sympathetic to our goals. The strength of our relationship with NFTA enables us to act in a united and cohesive manner to protect and develop this approach.

For the last five years we have successfully operated a joint "Little Acorns" Marketing Programme in partnership with New Forest Tourism Association. The aim is to advertise the District to appropriate targeted audiences, especially out of season and midweek.

New Forest Bed Occupancy By Sector 1995												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hotels												
%	29	44	41	53	54	53	66	73	71	61	49	47
Bed & Breakfast												
%	7	14	16	40	45	49	61	68	58	39	24	15
Self Catering Cottages & Flats												
%	34	39	50	84	82	98	96	96	94	84	60	59
Holiday Parks - Touring Pitches												
%	4	7	4	26	32	41	64	73	32	40	11	17

As a result, attendance and occupancy levels have been maintained and in some cases improved. Nevertheless, there is spare capacity before full efficiency is achieved. In the short term, our aim is to increase bed occupancy, which is crucial for serviced accommodation where it is low – particularly in mid week.

The "Little Acorns" marketing programme therefore also supports the important role of business tourism in improving serviced accommodation occupancy, especially midweek and generating return holiday visits from delegates. Whilst we have been extremely successful in improving occupancy and attendance from our domestic markets, limited economics of scale and resources have made it virtually impossible to break into the huge potential of overseas visitors. In recognising this and the undoubted circulation of visitors (especially overseas) between the New Forest and East Dorset, the Council has joined with all Dorset's destinations to market the "Dorset and New Forest" holiday brand overseas.

Throughout our work we place major emphasis on producing our own printed material. We publish over a million pieces of print a year in a wide range of leaflets, brochures, maps and guide books to support our marketing efforts, all with the same consistency of quality and message and contributing to overall visitor management aims and actions.

**Objectives:**

- *To manage the “Little Acorns” joint marketing programme in partnership with New Forest Tourism Association and review annually.*
- *To secure additional resources and support for the Council’s marketing activities through new partnerships, sponsorship and other forms of appropriate revenue raising activities and double the size of the fund by the end of 2000.*

**Planning**

**Policies:**

- **To guide all tourism development within the policies of the Hampshire County Structure Plan, the New Forest District Local Plan and to work within the framework of “A strategy for the New Forest”.**
- **To recognise the needs of all tourism businesses to adapt to change within the constraints of the District.**
- **To resist the loss of existing serviced accommodation especially Hotels.**
- **To discourage proposals for new time share and self catering accommodation, except for small scale proposals which relate to the diversification of existing businesses and the re-use of redundant buildings.**
- **To promote tourism’s role in the regeneration of local settlements, especially Ringwood, Fordingbridge Hythe and Totton.**
- **To promote good practice in the best use of existing and redundant buildings for tourism and visitor purposes.**
- **To work with partners especially Town and Parish Councils to improve the quality of the visitor environment in settlements.**

Tourism activities and development should always respect the scale, nature and character of the place in which they are sited. Proposals for development should be tempered by the suitability and capacity of the site and the surrounding area to absorb visitors. In our towns and countryside, tourism can assist conservation by bringing sympathetic new uses to existing and redundant buildings.

The New Forest District Local Plan provides the policies that guide all local tourism development (see appendix 1). Protecting existing Hotel bedstock is an important feature of the Local Plan. It recognises the pivotal role of the serviced accommodation sector as income generator and job provider, and accordingly gives this sector the greatest flexibility. However there is a continued need to create a far more detailed idea of where tourism development can take place, directing pressures away from particularly sensitive areas to those more able to absorb growth without damage. By paralleling this with local

transportation strategies, an infrastructure and planning framework will emerge which can guide all future tourism development in detail.

The main towns and villages in the New Forest are already visitor honeypots but could benefit from improvement to their visitor environment. But in the rest of the District, particularly Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Totton and Hythe visitor numbers are particularly low. We are already working with partners especially through the Town and Village Councils and Chambers of Trade to define exactly what can be done to improve numbers in such locations. Visitors need to have a reason to visit, each place needs a special selling point. This means not only quality or unique retailing and services but visitor attractions; commercial and amenity. We will actively seek local stakeholders to develop these ideas.

The main problem in achieving appropriate tourism development has tended to be the gap between planning applicant's aspirations and the Council's planning policies. In recent years the gulf between the Industry and the Local Planning Authority has closed considerably through the existence of our partnership with NFTA. We will continue to develop our liaison role in tourism related planning matters to improve mutual understanding between the industry and planners and thus reduce the cost of wasted applications by the Industry and the fighting of appeals by the Authority. We will also continue to advise and assist the Local Planning Authority to produce a detailed planning framework to guide all tourism development throughout the District.

#### ***Objectives:***

- ***To provide research and advice to help the Local Planning Authority produce a detailed planning framework to guide all development of the District's tourism infrastructure by January 2000.***
- ***To establish a close liaison between the Local Planning Authority and the visitor industry especially NFTA on all tourism related development ideas and planning applications and create an agreed system by January 1999***

#### **Transportation**

##### **Policies**

- **To ensure that all tourism activity and development in the District has regard to the appropriate Highway Authority Transportation Strategy.**
- **To recognise that within the District there are potentially perfect Car Free areas and where appropriate all tourism activity should utilise alternative modes of transport especially walking and cycling.**
- **To work with partners to establish coach, rail and air links to the District from target UK markets and ports of entry.**
- **To work with Hampshire County Council/New Forest Tourism Association and other partners to establish public transport links between all settlements and visitor attractions in the District.**

Traffic levels nationally are predicted to rise by nearly 50% within the next twenty years. This is the biggest threat to the District as an area of international importance for wildlife, a place to live and as a tourism destination.

The way local people and visitors gain access to and get around the District for leisure purposes and their effect on the road network is one of the very basic issues for local tourism. The forest's road system has been under pressure from through and local traffic movements for a long time, there have been calls for a by-pass at Lyndhurst for over half a century.

Visitor traffic is only a real problem at particular weekends and during the school holidays. A lot of work has already been done over the last thirty years by various agencies, especially the Forestry Commission, to physically regulate visitors and access within the Crown Lands. It is now time for these regulations and those of other agencies to be increased if the integrity of the whole District and its values as a unique destination is to survive in the future. The hardening of access measures will have a knock on effect throughout the District and beyond, however it is crucial that these are linked with proposals for zoning recreational activities, visitor routing systems and proposals for integrated visitor transport.

The mode of visitor transport, how visitors get to and around the District, is therefore a major issue. There are many ideas on options of what could be done. As over 90% of visits are made by private car, park and ride sounds an attractive concept, but within the District it is hard to see how this could work because of the size of car parks needed and the lack of public bus services and connections.

However, with a mainline rail network linking three of the main visitor catchment/generators (Bournemouth, Southampton and London) a lot more visitor use must be made of the train and this will be encouraged.

We will continue to work with South West Trains, Wilts and Dorset Buses and other local transport operators to improve visitor use of public transport in an attempt to reduce car use by all groups of visitor. Many national and local coach companies operate tours of the District, and we will work to create designated coach routes and parking facilities that only use appropriate roads/destinations and contribute to the aim of the tourism and visitor management strategy. We already promote car free holidays and we will find ways to include the New Forest Encounter idea in the process.

We are currently working with partners to create a network of cycle routes and long-distance walks to create further alternatives to car use and improve visitor management. We will also continue to work with Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset County Councils, the New Forest Committee, and New Forest Tourism Association to ensure that all tourism and visitor activity is properly linked to the appropriate Transportation Strategy.

The New Forest Transportation Strategy will provide a comprehensive plan to manage through traffic and local transportation activities. There are a wide range of measures

available, relying on incentives and disincentives to drivers and other travellers. These include restrictions to vehicle access but improved public and alternative transport opportunities.

The locations of existing walks, rides, cycle ways, car parks, campsites and other visitor facilities will be re-planned where possible to minimise traffic within the forest whilst also providing for increased visitor capacity in other appropriate locations. Tourism can be the catalyst and incentive to create a far better integration of all transport throughout the District and beyond.

The area covered by the New Forest Transportation Strategy is the New Forest Heritage Area and Avon Valley. The towns of Lymington and New Milton lie outside the designated strategy area and will be subject to a separate Coastal Towns Transportation Strategy. Totton, Hythe and the Waterside lie within the area covered by Southampton Area Transportation Strategy and there will also be links with Wiltshire and Dorset Council's proposals for our western and borders. The visitor transport needs of all these communities and the transport needs of the New Forest do overlap and impinge upon each other. This wider "area of influence" will need to be considered when evolving strategic tourism and visitor transportation initiatives. Tourism can be the catalyst and incentive to create a far better integration of all transport throughout the District and beyond. Consultation with neighbouring Highway Authorities will play an important role in this.

***Objectives:***

- ***To work with HCC/NFTA and tour operators to improve the management of local coach and car routing and parking arrangements and establish an integrated visitor routing system for the whole District by January 1999.***
- ***To work with HCC to provide transportation information and associated ticketing services through the Council's Visitor Information services by April 1999.***
- ***To work with HCC, the Forestry Commission and others to investigate the use of car park and other transportation charging mechanisms for visitors and establish an agreed strategy by January 1999.***
- ***To work with HCC , the Forest Commission and others to establish a comprehensive District wide on road and off road cycling network by March 1998.***

**4: SUMMARY & ACTION PLAN**

Tourism is a complex and emotive subject. In this strategy we explain our role as the District's tourism managers and identify what we believe needs to be achieved to start to make a success of tourism on a long term basis for all.

A prosperous tourism industry need not lead to more visitor numbers. Effective and imaginative management might even reduce numbers. Successful tourism will be about

being strategic and flexible in planning terms, working in partnership and co-ordinating action in its development. Most importantly it will be about adapting and evolving our approach to ensure that the needs and demands of the visitor, industry, community and environment are all kept in equilibrium.

There is no doubt that the forest and the District must come first; without its quality there would be little tourism. One thing is clear - whatever we do visitors will continue to come in their millions every year. Much has already been done to promote the idea that what is good for tourism can also be good for the local quality of life and vice-versa. The two are inextricably linked and how we choose to manage this complex relationship will be a test of courage, foresight and co-operation.

A considerable amount has already been achieved in establishing the building blocks needed for sustainable tourism in the District. The success and coherence of our marketing and media work with NFTA is the envy of many other UK destinations.

The working partnership has also benefited tourism management; agreements on a white on brown signing strategy and the lead NFTA are taking in helping establish the town and village tourism groups are just two examples. The Council's family of print has become a benchmark in quality and effectiveness throughout the industry. Its visitor information centres win awards and continually receives plaudits from satisfied customers.

However there is still much to be achieved. We must improve the generation and delivery of information to all visitors. The community must become more involved in tourism matters. There must also be even greater integration in the planning and transportation issues that surround positive tourism development.

But perhaps most of all there needs to be a better understanding between all the interests that make up such a special and unique visitor destination, because it is only when everyone is working to a common aim that real success in local tourism will be achieved. We hope this strategy will be a catalyst to motivate everyone to that success.

#### **TOURISM & WHAT "MAKING NEW FRIENDS" AIMS TO ACHIEVE**

**Visitors are:**

- A attracted by marketing and communication
- B delivered by transportation
- C managed by information
- D served by industry
- E welcomed by the local community
- F recreated by the quality of environment
- G benefited by well planned facilities and infrastructure

**The strategy will:**

- A target and regulate visitor flow through appropriate marketing
- B integrate all tourism and transportation
- C research and ensure strategic information is correct and communicated to visitors
- D achieve the best quality of service, facility and value for money
- E involve the local community
- F protect and enhance the quality of the environment
- G provide the right experience in the right place

<b>Research</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To maintain the annual collection of information for the Council's tourism and visitor research programme					New Forest District Council	Southern Tourist Board New Forest Tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission New Forest Committee
<b>Objective 2:</b> To have devised a tourism and visitor research programme including appropriate data collection by partners by Sept 1999						
<b>Objective 3:</b> to continue work with partners especially the New Forest Committee to establish a comprehensive annual programme of environmental research and assessment of visitor and recreation activities throughout the District by Sept 1999					New Forest Committee	New Forest District Council English Nature Forestry Commission Southern Tourist board New Forest tourism Assoc.

<b>Information</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> to improve the quality and services provided by the Council's Visitor Information Service and review annually					New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission
<b>Objective 2:</b> To provide all year opening at all the Council's VIC by April 2000						
<b>Objective 3:</b> To maintain and improve the Council's network of VIP by establishing new sites in Hythe, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu					New Forest District Council	New Forest Committee
<b>Objective 4:</b> To investigate the provision of a new gateway VIC at a main point of entry to New Forest District and determine by May 1998						

<b>Signing</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To limit proliferation of White on Brown Tourism Signs and to establish a comprehensive white on brown tourism signing system throughout the District by April 1998					Hampshire County council	New Forest District Council New Forest Tourism Assoc. New Forest Committee Forestry Commission

<b>Information</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To develop the New Forest Encounter into a regular activity throughout the year by April 1998	■				New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission
<b>Objective 2:</b> to work with partners, especially the New Forest Committee and Ninth Centenary Trust to improve the content and consistency of all interpretation and education services and facilities by April 1998	■				New Forest Committee	New Forest District Council Ninth Centenary Trust Forestry Commission Hampshire County Council
<b>Objective 3:</b> To investigate and make proposals for a “New Forest Friends” merchandising strategy by July 1997	■				New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc.

<b>Quality Standards</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective :</b> To work with NFTA to establish an effective local complaints scheme for all sectors of the tourism industry for implementation in 1998/9	■				New Forest Tourism Assoc.	New Forest District Council

<b>Training</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective:</b> To work with the STB, Hampshire TEC, Brockenhurst College, NFTA and other organisation to agree a framework for a comprehensive vocational training programme for the local tourism industry by June 1998.	■				Brockenhurst College	New Forest District Council New Forest Tourism Assoc. Hampshire TEC Southern Tourist Board

<b>Operations</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective:</b> to publish the New Forest Green Tourism Kit by January 1998 and assist NFTA in encouraging all it members to sign up by January 1999	■				New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc.

<b>Marketing</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To manage the annual "Little Acorns" joint marketing programme in partnership with New Forest Tourism Association and improve serviced accommodation occupancy 5 percent points by the end of 1998 <b>Objective 2:</b> To secure additional resources and support for the Council's marketing activities through new partnerships, sponsorships and other forms of appropriate revenue raising activities and double the size of the fund by the end of 2000					New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc.
					New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. Town & Parish Councils Chambers of Trade

<b>Planning</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To provide research and advice to help the Local Planning Authority produce a detailed planning framework to guide all development of the District's tourism infrastructure by 1st January 2000 <b>Objective 2:</b> To establish a close liaison between the Local Planning Authority and the visitor industry especially NFTA on all tourism related development ideas and planning applications and create an agreed system by 1st January 1999.					New Forest District Council	New Forest tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission Town & Parish councils
					New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission Town & Parish Councils

<b>Transportation</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners</b>
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> to work with HCC/NFTA and tour operators to improve the management of local coach and car routing and parking arrangements and establish routing systems for the whole District by January 1999.</p>					Hampshire County Council New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. Forestry Commission Town & Parish Councils Chamber of Trade & Bus.
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> To work with HCC to provide public transportation information and associated ticketing services through the Council's Visitor Information Services by April 1999</p>					Hampshire County Council New Forest District Council	New Forest Tourism Assoc. New Forest Committee
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> To work with HCC, the forestry Commission and others to investigate the use of car park and other transportation charging mechanisms for visitors and establish an agreed strategy by 1 January 1999</p>					Hampshire County Council New Forest District Council Forestry Commission	New Forest Tourism Assoc. New Forest Committee Town & Parish Councils Chambers of Trade
<p><b>Objective 4:</b> To work with HCC, the Forestry Commission and others to establish a comprehensive District wide on road and off road network by 1 March 1998</p>					Hampshire County Council	New Forest District council Forestry Commission New Forest Committee New Forest Tourism Assoc. Town & Parish Councils

## APPENDIX 1: DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN TOURISM POLICIES

### Chapter 5

**The New Forest District Local Plan, Prepared by New Forest District Council, provides detailed planning policies to guide and control the use of land, against which applications for planning permission will be determined.**

Although not yet adopted as a statutory local plan, it provides the most up-to-date expression of the Local Planning Authority's planning policies for tourism within the New Forest District.

When finally adopted, the District Local Plan will replace the current local plans – Forest and Downlands Villages Local Plan, the Avon Valley Local Plan, The coastal Towns Local Plan and the New Forest District East Local Plan. A brief summary of the New Forest District Local Plan tourism policies is as follows:

#### **The New Forest**

##### **In the New Forest the tourism policies of the New Forest District Local Plan:-**

- only allow new hotels or guest houses through the change of use of existing buildings in Lyndhurst, Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Bransgore and Sway;
- allow minor extensions to existing hotel and guest houses to help maintain an existing business;
- seek to retain the existing stock of hotel and guest house accommodation;
- allow small scale bed and breakfast accommodation to be provided in private dwellings;
- do not allow new holiday parks, or caravan and camping sites, but allow up-grading of facilities on existing holiday parks, and more limited up-grading on existing caravan and camping sites;
- do not allow the establishment of new visitor attractions, but allow minor enhancements to be made to existing facilities providing they do not significantly increase the visitor capacity.

#### **The Countryside**

##### **In the countryside outside the New Forest the tourism policies the New Forest District Local Plan:-**

- allow the change of use of existing buildings in the countryside to hotel, guest house, and bed and breakfast accommodation;
- seek to retain the existing stock of hotel and guest house accommodation;
- do not allow new holiday parks, caravan or camping sites, except for the relocation of an existing site from within the New Forest;

- encourage the relocation of pitches from sensitive areas in holiday parks, caravan and camping sites;
- so not allow extensions or an increase in pitches on holiday parks, caravan and camping sites, but allow up-grading of facilities on existing holiday parks and caravan sites, and more limited up-grading of camping sites;
- allow new visitor attractions through the change of use or conversion of an existing building;
- allow limited extensions or alterations to existing visitor attractions.

### **Towns & Villages**

#### **In the main towns and villages outside the New Forest the tourism policies of the New Forest District Local Plan:-**

- allow the development of new hotels, guest houses and other tourist accommodation;
- allow new visitor attractions and the extension of existing facilities.

## APPENDIX 2: A STRATEGY FOR THE NEW FOREST

**A Strategy For The New Forest, was published by the new Forest Committee in April 1996 and sets out a policy framework to ensure that the New Forest remains a special area. It represents the commitment of all the members of the New Forest Committee to achieve what is best for the forest and draws on local opinion resulting from public consultation carried out in 1995. the Strategy contains a range of strategic objectives and recommended actions which are grouped under four main themes:**

### Working Together

The New Forest Committee is an independent non-statutory body set up to co-ordinate the work of the various Central and Local Government organisations with responsibilities for the management of the Forest. We are committed to working together for the protection and long term conservation and enhancement of the New Forest. Working Together identifies a range of actions to maintain and improve the close co-ordination of work in the Forest.

### Conserving The Forest

Ask a resident or visitor to the New Forest what makes the area unique, and you may receive a wide range of replies. The character of the Forest stirs people in different ways, but all will agree it is a very special place. We believe that the traditional character of the New Forest is the sum of many elements including landscape, history, archaeological remains, sense of place, cultural associations, traditional practices such as farming, forestry and commoning, environmental quality, wildlife communities and species and the built environment. Conserving The Forest identifies a range of actions to conserve and enhance the traditional character of the New Forest.

### Living In The Forest

The traditional character of the area is inextricably linked with the activities and traditions of the people who live here. The New Forest heritage Area boundary reflects this relationship and has been drawn up to include essential grazing land which is used in association with the common lands of the New Forest. In particular, farming, forestry, and commoning are three key tools for managing the New Forest landscape. Tourism is also vital to the economy of the New Forest. It is important to harness the elements of these activities which can bring most benefit to the Forest.

Living In The Forest identifies a range of actions to maintain and develop activities which both support the local economy and conserve and enhance the Forest's traditional character.

### Enjoying The Forest

Millions of people come to enjoy the New Forest each year. As a recreational resource it provides a wonderful variety of attractions, facilities and experiences. The New Forest is more intensively visited than five of the National Parks and the huge numbers of visitors bring with them pressures on the road system, wildlife and traditional management activities of the Forest. We believe that a policy of meeting all recreational demand would not be in keeping with the priority that must be given to the conservation of the Forest.

Traffic levels are continually rising, with large volumes of traffic crossing the Forest each day. During peak holiday times traffic congestion in the New Forest is intense, and there is growing concern about the effects of traffic on Forest residents, wildlife, air pollution and noise levels, and Commoners' livestock.

Enjoying The Forest identifies a framework for recreation and transportation which balances these needs with the conservation of the traditional character of the New Forest, so that future generations may also be able to enjoy the special qualities of the New Forest.

**The strategy identifies three strategic objectives and three recommendations specifically relating to tourism:**

**Strategic Objective SO4.5i**

To foster the concept that the New Forest is a special place devoted to conservation and quiet enjoyment.

**Strategic Objective SO4.5ii**

To ensure that tourism remains an important but not dominant component of the New Forest economy and makes a positive contribution to the conservation of the New Forest.

**Strategic Objective SO4.5iii**

To ensure that the marketing and management of tourism reflects the objectives of the strategy for recreation.

**Recommended Action:**

RA4.5a Identify good practice in sustainable tourism and foster partnership in its development through liaison with commercial interests and the local community.

RA4.5b Undertake environmental studies of major campsites and self-catering accommodation provision within the New Forest.

RA4.5c Ensure that a New Forest Tourism and Visitor Strategy is prepared, within the framework of A Strategy for the New Forest.