

New Forest Rural Pathfinder Project: Stakeholder Involvement in the New Forest



Final Report

January 2007

Prepared for the Forestry Commission

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Founded by William the Conqueror, the New Forest National Park is a significant natural asset brimming with national and international nature designations that offers a profound historical and cultural experience. Many interest groups (ranging from international to local levels) have a vested interest in the New Forest for these reasons and land ownership rights.

1.2 Stakeholder and public involvement has become a key process for organisations involved in a wide range of environmental plans (e.g. Environment Agency, 2004; Forestry Commission, 2004). The desire to move away from the old “decide, announce, defend” method of decision making has largely become redundant in favour of a more co-operative approach. This has been fuelled both by negative experiences with the former (e.g. Brent Spar), and a positive vision of sustainable development of the latter; as presented at the Rio Convention (1992), Principle 10 of the Rio declaration on environment and development “*Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level...*”.

1.3 Recent debate concerning the role of science within policy, and in general, within the public arena, has also played a part in the increased use and awareness of stakeholder involvement. This is especially true of environmental decision-making, where science is often the basis for decisions. The relevance of science is now diluted and, as Beck (1992)

terms it, we live in the ‘risk society’, “a society increasingly preoccupied with the future (and also with safety) which generates a notion of risk.” (Giddens, 1999). Beck (1992) suggests that old methods of managing risks via specific institutions and through science are no longer appropriate. People are wary of evidence, and knowledge is no longer considered uncritically. In areas such as risk assessment there has been an opening up and management of engagement in science as one way of combining the rigour of the scientific process with the scrutiny of public and stakeholder deliberation (e.g. Petts *et al*, 2003).

Definitions

In this document the following definitions are used:

Stakeholder – This refers to anyone who thinks they have a stake or is thought to have a stake in a specific issue or activity. It is used in this research to cover representatives of groups or interests.

Public / citizens - The ‘public’ is usually taken to mean the whole population, and public involvement tends to mean people are involved to represent their own individual interests; ‘citizens’ carries meanings of people acting in the wider interests of society, and citizen involvement tends to mean people acting out of a sense of wider rights and responsibilities (legal, moral etc).

Stakeholder and public Involvement – Used in this research as a generic term for any contact with stakeholders. This encompasses ‘traditional consultation’, information gathering / provision, education, awareness-raising, dialogue and partnership working.

- 1.4 In terms of public institutions and their adoption of stakeholder involvement methods there has been debate around the “democratic deficit”, that less people are voting and are therefore being represented through the democratic process. As a way to redress that balance, and to gain some engagement with local people, many local councils for example now have “Citizen's Panels” where a group of volunteers (usually up to 1000 and representing the demography and geography of the local authority) answer questionnaires or participate in focus groups to help councils understand the views and opinions of the electorate. In addition, within the spatial planning system, local councils have to provide a “Statement of Community Involvement” which states how they propose to engage with the community around the full range of planning issues (from consultation on the Local Development Documents through to dealing with planning permission).
- 1.5 Developments in terms of practice and capacity building have been drivers for change and the result of changed perceptions. Currently there are a number of people who have mature skills and experience in designing and facilitating participatory events (e.g. InterAct network) and who have played a huge role in developing the field. This has also manifested itself through the number of guidance documents both for general application and for specifically environmental application (e.g. Wilcox, 1994; Audit Commission, 1999; The Environment Council, 2003; Forestry Commission, 2004; Environment Agency, 2004; Involve, 2005).
- 1.6 Finally, many of the key principles of participation are being enshrined into the legal system. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) was adopted on 25 June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus (Århus) at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the "Environment for Europe" process. It entered into force on 30 October 2001. The convention establishes a number of rights of the public (citizens and their associations) with regard to the environment. Public authorities (at national, regional or local level) are to contribute to allowing these rights to become effective. The Convention provides for:
- 1) right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities ("**access to environmental information**");
 - 2) right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision-making. ("**public participation in environmental decision-making**"); and
 - 3) right to challenge, in a court of law, public decisions that have been made without respecting the two above rights or environmental law in general ("**access to justice**").
- 1.7 Within the EU the “Public Participation” Directive (Directive 2003/35/EC) puts into force the second pillar of the Århus Convention. It has been discussed as being a “most unconventional convention” (Wates, 2004), specifically because it is unique

amongst multilateral environmental agreements in that it focuses on process and therefore “seeks to secure the procedural rights of the public: addressing the environment/human rights interface” (Wates, 2004). In addition, NGOs have had an “unprecedented involvement... both in the negotiation and implementation of the convention” and finally, it takes steps “in promoting environmental transparency and accountability norms beyond the nation state” (Petkova, 2000).

- 1.8 As the practice of stakeholder and public involvement develops, the emphasis is being shifted away from just methods for engagement towards the whole process of planning, engaging and evaluating. This has come with the realisation that the contexts in terms of people, events, organisations, and issues are crucial to understand when planning any stakeholder involvement. Together with that understanding it is vital to be clear about the objectives and outcomes of the engagement before deciding which method might be most appropriate to use.
- 1.9 However, formal evaluations of participation have been patchy, with work on how to ensure success in participation projects often being learnt from hard won experience. This is beginning to change, with evaluation methods developing fast, and it is expected that this project will feed into this continuing development.
- 1.10 There are some key benefits from evaluating participatory processes and they include:
 - Improving the practice of participatory working by capturing, analysing and sharing experience of good practice, and what works in different circumstances.
 - Building support for participatory ways of working, by providing evidence of effectiveness and achievement, and learning processes to support often isolated workers.
 - Contributing to the development of the theory and analysis of participatory working, including creating new theoretical models, methodologies and criteria for success which cover process outcomes (e.g. trust, ownership, understanding) as well as product outcomes (e.g. physical improvements, better air quality or greater biodiversity).
 - Helping develop the sophisticated social science methodologies which are needed for sustainable development. The social science perspective explicitly recognises the particularity of context (including constantly shifting policy and political contexts and resource constraints), the complex dynamics of the social world (including human motivations as well as social institutions) and the heterogeneity of settings for sustainable development decision making. Social science methodologies have helped transform the way sustainable development is understood by introducing issues which were barely recognised ten years ago including:
 - uncertainty and complexity;
 - recognition of a diversity of 'publics' with diverse values, knowledges, cultural identities;

- creating different ways of framing environmental risks and potential strategies to resolve problems;
- recognition that different sectors have different abilities to tackle problems; and
- recognition that trust is a vital element in public perceptions of science and institutions, and that the development of inclusionary processes can help revitalise trust in science and policy.
- Helping develop new measures of processes to improve governance, an essential element of sustainable development. Conventional measures of performance, value for money etc in public services tend to be restricted to terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, but governance issues can introduce three additional e's: excellence, equity and empowerment (Jackson 1991).
- Going beyond 'consumerist' measures of quality to identifying 'social' measures e.g. of environmental goods, which are not just to do with consumption but also to do with altruism (or at least enlightened self interest).
- Valuing other forms of knowledge beyond the quantitative, technical and scientific.

1.11 There are also some limitations of evaluating participation which may include:

- Evaluating participation can be costly in terms of time and money, in the short term (although they should save resources in the long term by increasing effectiveness). Participatory programmes are often run by organisations with limited resources, such as NGOs and community bodies (and some local authorities), who can barely fund programmes let alone research.
- New methods of working may be required which that are unfamiliar even to experienced social researchers. New methods always take more time, and will need to be developed and honed before they are fully effective.
- There are particular problems in evaluating any 'human service' programmes, as these never exist in isolation and it is therefore extremely difficult to assess the specific contribution of a particular programme to any given outcome (direct cause and effect), especially in view of the constantly changing policy and political contexts. Alcock et al suggest that the best that can be hoped for is to articulate what else is going on which may affect (or have affected) outcomes by using various methods of data collection and ensuring a range of perspectives is trawled (Alcock et al 2000).

1.12 With specific regard to stakeholder involvement in Forestry Commission activities in the New Forest the following issues / concerns have been raised:

- inadequate representation of social and economic groups in Forestry Commission consultations;
- overlap of membership on Forestry Commission stakeholder lists – this increases the demands placed on some individuals to attend events and / or meetings. There is also the associated risk that individuals will become confused by the

different and / or similar methods and forums used by different agencies in consultation and of consultation fatigue;

- capacity to understand and apply different techniques required for different levels of working, for example, from a local to a strategic level;
- the views of the visiting public, local residents, tourism businesses and land management contractors are not sought or incorporated into Forestry Commission processes effectively, if at all, whereas nature conservation interests are now well-represented and involved;
- a drop-off in attendance at recent consultation events and forums;
- the level of engagement required is gauged differently by different organisations;
- limited resource availability; and
- little evidence of evaluation and monitoring of existing Forestry Commission their consultation processes.

1.13 This study evaluates stakeholder involvement by the Forestry Commission (and others with whom the Forestry Commission works closely) in the New Forest. It builds upon the earlier work of Tabbush (2005) which focussed upon the stakeholder involvement in the Forest Design Plan Forum and takes a qualitative and quantitative approach and a learning dimension (identifying lessons rather than simply judging success and failure) to the evaluation of stakeholder involvement in the New Forest.

1.14 The work was carried out in two phases. The phases were:

- Phase I: to review and evaluate existing stakeholder involvement in Forestry Commission consultation forums on land management in the New Forest.
- Phase II: to review and evaluate methods that other key statutory agencies use to conduct stakeholder involvement in consultation for land management works in the New Forest. The objective being to identify any potential for agencies to work together to deliver stakeholder involvement. .

1.15 This document reports on the research for the evaluation, analyses and findings and makes recommendations as required in the brief.

2. METHOD AND ANALYSIS

Development of evaluation criteria

- 2.1 In order to carry out the evaluation it was important to develop a set of evaluation criteria which would run through all the different data collection exercises. These criteria were drawn from :
- The issues raised in the brief, based on previous research by Tabbush (2005) for the Forestry Commission.
 - The questions identified in the brief for the different phases of work
 - The issues for evaluation of participatory working InterAct (2001) and Webler (1995)
 - The basic formula for evaluation of participation being used in this process: purpose + process + context = outcome.
 - Principles for stakeholder involvement developed by the Environment Agency based on research by University College London's Environment and Social Research Unit (Environment Agency, 2000).
 - Principles of good practice in stakeholder dialogue developed by The Environment Council (TEC) (see Appendix 1). The work here by the Forestry - Commission is not stakeholder dialogue as defined by TEC, but the principles provide a useful framework for identifying evaluation issues.
- 2.2 In addition, the participation spectrum from the International Association of Public Participation was used to classify each of the groups/events evaluated. It is presented below in Table 1.

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:	Example Techniques to Consider:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fact sheets ● Web sites ● Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public comment ● Focus groups ● Surveys ● Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops ● Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen Advisory Committees ● Consensus-building ● Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen juries ● Ballots ● Delegated decisions

Table 1: IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (IAPP, 2006)

2.3 A list of questions was generated, each linked to specific criteria but also classified according to which part of the data collection they would be used in. This list was then sent to the project board in order to ensure that the questions were covering all that was anticipated by the project board members. The final version of the evaluation questions are in Appendix 2. Interview questions for the different groups draw on these evaluation questions. A list of all the staff who took part in the interviews and the workshop can be found in Appendix 3.

Phase 1- Part A: Formally convened groups

Interviews with convenors

2.4 Telephone interviews with convenors of five formally convened groups in the New Forest were carried out. The five groups chosen by the Forestry Commission are ones which the Forestry Commission (FC) play a substantial role in. Four of the groups are convened and managed by the FC and one is convened and managed by the National Park Authority. This project focussed on providing advice and guidance

to the FC on how they carry out their stakeholder involvement, and given that it was appropriate to focus on these five groups. They were:

- (1) The New Forest Consultative Panel (previously the New Forest Committee)
- (2) The Open Forest Advisory Committee
- (3) The Forest Design Plan Forum
- (4) The Water Basin Management Forum (Life 3 project)
- (5) The PROGRESS (Promotion and Guidance for Recreation on Ecologically Sensitive Sites) project

2.5 Each interview took between forty and ninety minutes. The interview schedule covered the evaluation criteria and can be found in Appendix 4. For each of the interviews notes were taken by both the interviewer, and a second team member who was listening on another phone. The notes were then typed up and sent to the interviewees for them to amend, clarify, expand as they saw necessary so that there was an agreed final set of notes.

Interviews with members of the Forest Design Plan Forum

2.6 Five interviews were carried out with members of the Forest Design Plan Forum. The members were chosen using the following criteria so as to get a range of views and perspectives.

- Number of other groups the interviewee was part of: from just the FDP through to all five of the groups sampled in the first part of the research
- Rate of attendance: high or medium
- Length of involvement: whether or not the interviewee had been involved with the forum from the start or not.

2.7 The convenor of the FDP provided a list of people together with an assessment of against those criteria. The sample had the following profile against those criteria:

Member	OFAC	NFCP	WBMF	Progress	Attendance rate	Length of involvement
1	N	N	N	N	High	From start
2	N	N	N	Y	Medium	From start
3	N	Y	Y	Y	Medium	From review period
4	Y	Y	Y	Y	High	From start
5	Y	Y	Y	Y	High	From start

2.8 The interviews were carried out face to face with four of the FDP members and by telephone with one of the members. They lasted between one to two hours. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 5.

- 2.9 For each of the interviews, notes were taken by the interviewer, typed up and sent to the interviewees for them to amend, clarify, expand as they saw necessary so that there was an agreed final set of notes.
- 2.10 A set of questions were also asked (via e-mail) of five FDP members that were considered to have infrequent attendance records at FDP meetings. A copy of the questions asked can be found in Appendix 5.

Phase 1 – Part B: General Public and Community Engagement

Event Evaluation

- 2.11 A public event entitled 'Wet and Wild' was held on Friday 02 June 2006 (11.00am – 3.00pm) at Blackwater Arboretum (Rhinefield) to celebrate the end of the LIFE3 Project. It was advertised in the New Forest Focus magazine, the Forestry Commission website, the New Forest District Council magazine and the partnership New Forest LIFE website.
- 2.12 Five members of the public were interviewed at the event to evaluate the success of the event and the services that the Forestry Commission is perceived to offer in terms of public activities in the New Forest (see Appendix 6 for interview questions). The interviews were conducted between 2.00pm and 3.00pm to ensure that guests had experienced the event and were therefore able to answer the questions. Members of the public were selected on their availability to talk.

Stakeholder Analysis Workshop

- 2.13 A workshop was convened with five staff from the Forestry Commission and the National Park. The workshop took place on 1st June, 2006 between 2 – 5 pm in the New Forest Museum in Lyndhurst.
- 2.14 The aims of the workshop were
- To encourage a systematic analysis of stakeholders in and around the New Forest (using the National Park boundary) by detailing who the stakeholders are, what their interests are, what relationships there are between stakeholders etc. and considering what types of engagement might be appropriate across a range of situations.
 - To introduce a simple stakeholder analysis process for staff to apply in different situations and use beyond the workshop itself.
- 2.15 The workshop was split into two sessions:
- i) Mapping the stakeholders and understanding the FC and NPA links with those stakeholders
 - ii) Future engagement processes

- 2.16 In Session One the participants brainstormed all the stakeholders that they are currently working with in some engagement/consultation capacity. They wrote their names onto post-it[®] notes which were colour coded to represent social, economic and environmental interests. Following that, the relationships that the NPA and the FC have with those interests were categorised as formal (i.e. through a convened group or formal consultation) or informal.
- 2.17 Once the mapping exercise had been carried out then the participants were asked to discuss where they felt there were gaps, that is, which stakeholders they felt that they would like to engage with but were currently not engaging with.
- 2.18 In Session Two the participants focussed on discussing changes that were likely to impact on the relationships the organisations have with their stakeholders. They went on to discuss what might be the priorities for them in terms of stakeholder involvement in the future, given the changes that had been discussed and finally current ways of working with these groups were discussed. The outputs from the workshop can be found in Appendix 7.

Phase II: Other Agencies stakeholder/public involvement in the New Forest

Interviews with other Agencies

- 2.19 Five interviews with the other Agencies were carried out. Specifically, staff were interviewed from:
- i) The Environment Agency
 - ii) The National Trust
 - iii) The Verderers
 - iv) The New Forest District Council
 - v) The Forestry Commission – South East England Conservancy (regulatory part of the FC)
- 2.20 The interviews were carried out face to face and lasted between forty and ninety minutes. The evaluation criteria were used to design the questions and a copy of those questions can be found in Appendix 8.

Analysis of information

- 2.21 A mixture of quantitative (e.g. number of members, date of establishment, number of meetings a year) and qualitative information was collected via the interviews. It was supplemented by information from various documents and websites (e.g. Forestry Commission website; Verderers website).

- 2.22 The data were analysed by reading through the interview notes in detail to understand the range of responses from each interviewees. The notes of each question for each interviewee were then put into a table to enable a comparison between each interviewee across each question. For each question the range of answers was noted and summarised and then within each set of questions wider themes were explored.
- 2.23 There is an issue with qualitative data in terms of what might be agreed and what might be contested. There will be certain aspects of the findings that are held as fact because everyone agrees on them and they are readily observable. There will be other aspects that are contested, i.e. not agreed upon and also not readily observable from an external perspective.
- 2.24 In the examination of the different forums only the convenors were interviewed. although we do have some limited additional information from others . Therefore it should be understood that what is presented is based largely on those convenor's interviews. The information might be more contested if it had been discussed with a wide range of people from those groups. The aim of gathering views from convenors was to enable a comparison across the groups and the analysis has endeavoured not go to further than the data allowed. The Environment Council stakeholder dialogue principles have been used to provide a structure for that comparison.
- 2.25 With respect to the FDP member interviews, collecting a range of perspectives was the focus of the data collection. he aim of the analysis of that material is to show where there are areas of agreement and disagreement, as in doing so that should help to focus where change might need to happen.
- 2.26 For the stakeholder analysis information we have examined what was produced at the workshop and considered it in relation to the other data collected.
- 2.27 The event was examined in terms of whether it met its own objectives and in terms of where it was on the participation spectrum.
- 2.28 For the interviews with people from other organisations our focus was on understanding the different approaches to stakeholder involvement, looking for similarities and differences and also for areas of joint working.

3. PHASE I – PART A: FINDINGS FROM THE CONVENOR INTERVIEWS PHASE I

New Forest Consultative Panel (NFCP)

Established:	1971
Number of members:	76 – 77 each representing an organisation
Frequency of meetings:	Every two months
Permanent or time limited:	Permanent
Topic of focus:	Wide range of issues concerning the New Forest
Role:	Forum for a wide range of views to be heard and made known to statutory agencies
Convened by:	The National Park Authority. The Panel has an independent Chair (not connected to the National Park Authority) who is elected annually by vote of the membership, from nominations put forward by the membership.
Funded by:	The National Park Authority

Key issues for the NFCP

3.1 The NFCP is a large forum that prides itself on being an independent voice for the New Forest. It was described as a popular forum with two thirds of its membership attending each meeting. However, it is a large forum and considered perhaps to lack clear focus. There was a sense though, of it being important as a place to hear about what is happening in the New Forest.

3.2 In terms of levels of engagement it would be categorised as nearer the “consult” end of the participation spectrum (see table above) in the sense that it functions to keep people informed about what the statutory Agencies are doing in the Forest and is a forum for views on issues to be aired:

“The ‘top table’ consists of the NPA, FC, District and Borough Councils, Verderers, English Nature and Hampshire County Council. These bodies answer questions from the rest of the Panel members”

3.3 However, it is clear that those who attend the NFCP, although only there in an advisory capacity, do have a weight and that their views are made known at the meetings. In addition the NFCP although run by the NPA, is regarded as independent and that is seen as a strength.

“The NFCP is an independent Panel – it can take initiative e.g. write to other bodies. This independence is something they hold close to their hearts. The NPA happen to support/facilitate it at the moment but it is not the NPA’s body”

3.4 It is a longstanding forum and

“It has remained a primary ‘sounding board’ for the statutory bodies for 35 years”

What are considered the most effective aspects of the forum?

3.5 The following were considered to be the most effective aspects of the forum by the convenor:

3.6 The NFCP has:

- *“Influenced the direction that Statutory Bodies have taken*
- *Forced attention on specific issues*
- *Raised the profile of the New Forest both within and outside the area*
- *Provided a networking mechanism between members*
- *Improved understanding between organisations with often different agendas”*

What are considered the least effective aspects of the forum?

3.7 The following were considered the least effective aspects of the forum by the convenor:

“Some members feel we have moved away from addressing practical forest management activities towards more strategic/ policy questions. Some feel this is a loss.”

Open Forest Advisory Committee (OFAC)

Established:	1970s
Number of members:	25 representing 10 organisations
Frequency of meetings:	Every six months
Permanent or time limited:	Permanent
Topic of focus:	Management of the open forest
Role:	Forum for the Forestry Commission to inform about actions taken in the New Forest
Convened by:	The Forestry Commission
Funded by:	The Forestry Commission

Key issues for OFAC

- 3.8 OFAC is a long standing committee. It was started in the 1970s and it was commented that

“it is part of the fabric of the forest”

- 3.9 It has a specific focus on the Open Forest and on its management by the Forestry Commission. It is focussed on the practical work that is being carried out in the forest. There are three sub groups, and site visits to see what is happening on the ground are a key part of the way the committee works.

- 3.10 It is regarded as predominantly representing the interests of *“conservation and welfare of the commoning stock”*, and on the committee are representatives from the Verderers, the Commoners Defence Association, English Nature, Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

- 3.11 In terms of its focus it is clear that OFAC is practically focussed, rather than strategic and focussed on the Open Forest and not the inclosures. In this way then it is quite a specific committee with a specific remit.

- 3.12 In terms of the spectrum of participation (see Table 1), it is located on the consultation column as it is very much about communicating what the FC is doing:

“Communication is the key. It is just to keep people aware of what is being/ will be done by the FC in terms of Open Forest management.”

- 3.13 Clearly although the FC sets the agenda the members do have an influence on management and there is a flexibility within the group to accommodate specific issues:

“If we have projects coming up then the discussions are quite lively the views of the members are taken on board. If there is a specific issue then a sub-committee might be set up to deal with that issue”.

What are considered the most effective aspects of the forum?

- 3.14 The following were considered to be the most effective aspects of the forum by the convenor:

- *“People being informed about what the FC and others do and leaving them with a more positive outlook on management in the forest.*
- *There has been success in getting people involved in decision processes.*
- *There is a lack of conflict in meetings and over the last 10 – 15 years that has improved together with the FCs ability to get people involved and to give out information.”*

What are considered the least effective aspects of the forum?

- 3.15 The following were considered the least effective aspects of the forum by the convenor:
- 3.16 *"[Lack of] Attendance of certain groups e.g. RSPB who are not based locally so it might be the distance that is an issue"*

Water Basin Management Forum

Established:	2002
Number of members:	19 organisations are represented
Frequency of meetings:	Every 3 – 4 months
Permanent or time limited:	Time limited – funded Summer 2006
Topic of focus:	Sustainable Wetland Restoration in the New Forest
Role:	To facilitate a more integrated planning and management of catchments within the Life III project To assist the partners in delivery of the Life III project
Convened by:	Bruce Rothnie, Forestry Commission but independently chaired by Alan Drinkwater
Funded by:	EU and the partners: English Nature, Environment Agency, National Trust, Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council and the RSPB

Key issues for the Water Basin Management Forum (WBMF)

- 3.17 The WBMF was set up specifically around the European Union Funded LIFE3 Sustainable Wetland Restoration in the New Forest Project. The project is a four year project looking at habitat restoration, specifically working on the wetland habitats of riverine and bog woodland and valley mires.
- 3.18 The WBMF was set up after the objectives and aims of the project had been established and to that extent there is some constraint on the level of influence that participants have in the forum. .
- 3.19 In terms of the participation spectrum (see Table 1) it is in the consultation column as:

"The role of the WBMF is to engage a group of stakeholders... in the work of the project - partly to engage them in the work of the project and for them to raise issues and concerns prior to action taking place. The WBMF can not influence the contractual commitments with the EU, but could influence the methods of delivery and the way the information are communicated."

- 3.20 The WBMF is a time limited forum and is funded by a partnership of local government, NGOs and statutory organisations together with EU funding. It has a specific remit and is regarded as successful in achieving its objectives.

PROGRESS Stakeholder Forum

Established:	2003
Number of members:	24 organisations are represented
Frequency of meetings:	Every 3 – 4 months
Permanent or time limited:	Time limited – funded till 2007
Topic of focus:	To reconcile recreation and conservation interests in the New Forest
Role:	To represent the variety of interests in the New Forest. Statutory agencies, forest user groups and local to guide the future direction of the PROGRESS project and its actions
Convened by:	Forestry Commission as lead partner
Funded by:	E.U. Interreg IIIB Programme, the UK's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the project partners: The Forestry Commission, the Office National des Forets, Alterra, The Countryside Agency, Comité Départemental du Tourisme – Pole Sud Seine et Marne

Key issues for the PROGRESS stakeholder forum

- 3.21 The PROGRESS stakeholder forum was set up to around the PROGRESS project in order to support the project and to get stakeholder involvement and approval for actions.
- 3.22 The PROGRESS forum like the WBMF is time limited, set up for a period of 4 years and with a focus on recreation and conservation, and understanding how those two, sometimes conflicting aims can be realised within the New Forest.
- 3.23 With respect to the participation spectrum it is in the consultation column because:
- “The Progress Forum has a similar role as the WBMF”*
- 3.24 Like the WBMF the PROGRESS forum objectives were set for the project before the group was constituted.
- 3.25 The WBMF and the PROGRESS forums have the same convenor and what was considered more and less effective was discussed in relation to both forums.

What are considered the most effective aspects of the WBMF and the PROGRESS forums?

3.26 The convenor for both the projects felt that these were the most effective aspects of the forums:

- *“A better understanding of what we [the Forestry Commission] do, why we do it and how we do it*
- *Rebuilding of trust of the FC*
- *Increased understanding regarding what the FC is about*
- *No longer see the FC as a faceless organisation - the ability to meet people face-to-face*
- *Allowed the FC to do things that people previously did not allow the FC to do – for example, the thinning of oak trees*
- *Open people’s eyes to a greater range of issues*
- *Benefits for staff – some staff are involved with stakeholders that they previously would no have been involved with*
- *Get more of a feel what stakeholders want from the FC and vice versa*
- *Staff are more confident at communicating etc*
- *[FC has become] more canny at methods of communication*
- *[FC is] more proactive (than reactive), than before, at information campaigning etc – anticipate concern”*

What are considered the least effective aspects of the WBMF and PROGRESS forums?

- *“Anticipated that the Forum members would network and take the information from projects to other networks – not sure whether this has happened*
- *The FC is relying on members to network the Forum further, but the FC does not have the power to insist that their members do this*
- *There are not the funds to resource further communication to others*
- *Expect people to write things in their own organisations’ newsletters – either they don’t or they put across the message incorrectly – now the FC just asked organisations to link to the FC website for the project or to ask the FC to write something for the newsletter”*

Forest Design Plan Forum

Established:	1998
Number of members:	33 members representing 20 organisations
Frequency of meetings:	Every 6 months in revision phase at present
Permanent or time limited:	Permanent but cyclical and currently in a review period
Topic of focus:	Production of the Forest Design Plan which focuses on the New Forest inclosures
Role:	<i>“The role is to assist the FC in drawing together plans for the New Forest inclosures and to bring their expertise into that process and to consultations, and to produce consensual plans.”</i>
Convened by:	Forestry Commission
Funded by:	Forestry Commission

Key issues for the FDP forum

3.27 The FDP forum was set up in order to carry out a specific task and it focuses on specific part of the New Forest, the inclosures which are the area where there are trees that the FC manages. It focuses on the detail of the practical management of those area (e.g. tree felling) but looks over a long time period. In this sense it is strategic in time but not so much in terms of content.

3.28 The FDP, partly because of its objectives is conservation focussed although they are trying to encourage a wider range of stakeholders.

“Review of groups is done at each stage and to see if other groups should be included. The forum had a session on this and as a result the Ramblers’ Association was invited. The Timber industry is underrepresented and the Public access is slightly under represented because there is a very strong conservation lobby that always turns up and is very vocal in meetings whereas the attendance of the other organisations has been more sporadic and tends to be less vocal”

3.29 On the participation continuum (see Table 1) the FDP forum is in the Involve column. It is there because there is more emphasis on working with the stakeholders and having a plan that the stakeholders have ownership over than in the other forums. The convenor suggested that these were the implicit objectives of the forum:

“The overriding objective is to produce plans that carry the highest level of support from FC stakeholders and plans that allow the FC to operate without high levels of conflict. - that the FDP is accepted as a consensus plan through engagement with the statutory stakeholders..... Everything may not be agreed by everyone, but the process is important for getting to a point where you can implement plans without constant problems on the ground with objectors, as experienced in the past.”

- 3.30 From this quote it is clear that there is emphasis and effort being put into developing a process for plan making that everyone can agree on even if they do not agree completely with the final outcome. This indicates a level of involvement of the stakeholders beyond consultation.

What are considered the positive impacts of the forum?

- 3.31 The convenor considered the following to be the positive impacts of the forum:

“Better relationships between FC and its stakeholders

Ability for the FC to work in the forest, which was not easy previously as we were losing it by being too caught up in issues, and staff lost confidence in what they were doing

Development of a long term shared vision 50 – 100 years that is robust in terms of staff moving on etc”

What are considered the least effective aspects of the forum?

- 3.32 The convenor considered the following to be the least effective aspects of the forum:

“Balance of representation on the forum has not been quite as good as FC would like. The attendance at public events has not been so good in some places but the FC understands why that might be”

Evaluating the forums against the Environment Council Stakeholder Dialogue principles

- 3.33 These forums are not intended to be stakeholder dialogue processes in the terms envisaged by the Environment Council, but the Stakeholder Dialogue Principles are a useful way of analysing the nature of the different forums according to general principles of stakeholder involvement.
- 3.34 The following table presents the different forums in relation to each of the stakeholder dialogue principles, and quotes from the interviews are used to illustrate points throughout the table.

<p>1. Stakeholder Dialogue is an inclusive process, involving all interest groups that have a concern about the outcome. This includes the decision-makers, those directly affected by the decision and those who could support or obstruct its implementation. Dialogue will often include those who are usually excluded.</p>	
New Forest Consultative Panel	<p>The membership is a large one (up to 76-77). Membership is selective, i.e. organisations have to apply to become members and there are criteria for that membership (see Appendix 9 for details). In the notes on membership selection it does discuss recruiting members from groups that are not well represented e.g. young people</p> <p><i>“Members have to fulfil certain criteria – see Constitution document. Potential members submit an application to the Panel Chairman. The Panel as a whole decides whether to ‘accept’ the potential member, judged against the criteria. NFCP do not actively look for members, however, if there was a group that one thought could benefit the NFCP by becoming a member, one might suggest it”</i></p>
Open Forest Advisory Group	<p>The membership has grown organically and regarded as involving all the relevant groups. It is a selective membership and up to the FC to decide who is on the committee. There are 25 people on 3 committees representing 10 organisations</p> <p><i>“In the original set up groups who had an active interest in the open forest were invited and to ensure that the group was representative of all those interests.”</i></p>
Water Basin Management Forum and PROGRESS stakeholder forum	<p>The membership was determined by the partners of the project <i>“FC / Partners decide from statutory point of view and other groups FC know would be interested in the work of the project. FC would know from experience who the key groups/bodies are. Individual parishes would not be invited due to the numbers involved, but someone from the Association of Town and Parish Councils may attend to represent them collectively. People we know could contribute to the running of the Forum. Use local expertise groups”</i></p>
Forest Design Plan Forum	<p>The <i>“FC decided who to invite – both specific individuals as well as groups. In the past the FC more actively specified which individuals from organisations they would invite – those they felt they could work productively with. More recently we just ask organisations to send someone”</i></p>
<p>2. Dialogue meetings are designed and facilitated by independent professional facilitators who have no vested interest in the final outcome. The facilitator will not take a position on the substantive issues. Their role is to ensure that the process is even handed and that meetings are as productive as possible – for example, avoiding domination by particular individuals or interest groups. The facilitator will also control the destructive behaviour that often undermines the value of typical 'town hall' meetings on difficult issues</p>	
New Forest Consultative Panel	<p>No, but there is an independent chairman who is elected annually by vote of the membership, from nominations put forward by the membership.</p>
Open Forest Advisory Group	<p>No</p>
Water Basin Management Forum	<p>No, but there is an independent chairman <i>“It was felt necessary to have an Independent Chairman so that members did not feel / think that the FC were driving the whole project in the direction that they desired. The Chairman was ‘found’ by looking for people that were interested and with a background in the work covered by the Forum. The Chair is an ex-county councillor and former Chair of the EA Flood Defence Committee for many years. He is now retired. He is paid for his time at the meetings.”</i></p>

PROGRESS stakeholder forum	No
FDP forum	No
3. Responsibility for the agenda and the process is shared among all stakeholders. Many processes fail from the outset because the agenda does not meet the needs of participants. In a dialogue process, the facilitator will help the participants to develop an agenda and work programme that addresses the issues of real concern.[Here we have looked at the role the stakeholders played in setting the objectives of the forum and their role in setting meeting objectives]	
New Forest Consultative Panel	The original objectives as enshrined in the constitution are being updated and that is a process that starts with the NPA who have worked with the panel to get a consensus. The new constitution then goes back to the NPA for approval. So, members have been consulted on the constitution. With respect to the meeting agendas, <i>“The agenda is based on matters arising from the last meeting, a standing item from the FC, reports back from the NPA previous meeting, other fixed items, suggestions by members and a range of topical issues.....Items can be added to the agenda under A.O.B at any time up to the day of the meeting. Even if the item is not on the agenda it can be brought up at the meeting”</i> .
Open Forest Advisory Group	OFAC was <i>“originally set up by groups who had an active interest in the forest, to be representative of those interests”</i> , so original members of the committee would have had input into its objectives. With respect to meeting agendas they are written by the FC, and build on the minutes from the previous meeting.
Water Basin Management Forum	The objectives of both the WB Life 3 project and the PROGRESS project were established prior to the forum being constituted, when it was submitted as a proposal to the EU for funding: <i>“The objectives are stated in the bid for externally funded projects”</i> but <i>“stakeholders did have an opportunity at the first meeting, to review the terms of reference which were not clearly defined in the bids for EC funding”</i>
PROGRESS stakeholder forum	With respect to the meeting agendas whilst there is room for discussion of issues the agendas are largely fixed: <i>“The forum has evolved a structure consistent at most meetings: Information/Education.....Review of work completed since last meeting.....Discussion of proposals for next stage of work.....Longer term management plans”</i>
FDP forum	The objectives of the forum were developed in consultation with the original members of the FDP forum <i>“The FC drafted a set of objectives for consultation with the FDP forum.....Current objectives were developed five years ago. They are now being revisited and fleshed out in the current round of revisions to the plan”</i> With respect to the meeting agendas there is a clear format where update information is presented which is followed by break out groups to discuss that information and feedback comments and then there will be a discussion of next steps. In this sense then there is not a space for members to add issues to the agenda as it is largely following the same format each time.
4. Dialogue delivers practical solutions to real problems – and solutions that often stick, since the process maximises stakeholder buy-in. It is particularly appropriate for high-conflict or complex issues	
New Forest Consultative Panel	Not sure, but within the positive impacts were a number areas where the NFCP had had a key influence.
Open Forest Advisory Committee	Yes given that it deals with practical management of the Open Forest and is a direct link between the Forestry Commission and the other key organisations in the New Forest.

Water Basin Management Forum	Yes as with OFAC the forum is part of the Life project which has delivered practical river restoration on the ground
PROGRESS management forum	Yes – although it is perhaps too early to know what the practical outcomes of the forum will be.
FDP forum	Yes as the FDP is a long term plan for managing the inclosures and is very detailed.
5. People attend as equals. Stakeholder dialogue aims to create a level playing field for participation.	
New Forest Consultative Panel	<i>“Some speak more than others in meetings, however they all have an equal right to speak”</i>
Open Forest Advisory Committee	<i>They “all sit as representatives. They don’t take part equally and some don’t say anything but are involved. The FC gives the most input”</i>
Water Basin Management Forum	<i>“The FC are very committed to ensure that everyone is listened to equally. It is hoped that members feel the same. It is expected that there is a mix of expertise and strengths in the way that different members deliver their points of view therefore people who are perceived to have a very strong knowledge may be perceived to have a greater influence than other members and therefore put some members off saying something - it is difficult to judge”</i>
PROGRESS management forum	
FDP forum	
6. Dialogue is a two-way process. Traditional, pre-prepared presentations will be kept to an absolute minimum in the interest of allowing more time for two-way communication	
New Forest Consultative Panel	All use the traditional method of presentations followed by question and answer sessions, with chairs and minutes. However, site visits are an integral part of all these forums, providing important opportunities for discussion and two-way communication.
Open Forest Advisory Committee	
Water Basin Management Forum	
PROGRESS management forum	
FDP forum	The FDP forum has made very good use of small group sessions so that all participants have a chance to discuss the plans in detail.
7. The process allows for interests, values, feelings, needs and fears. Unlike some consultation processes, stakeholder dialogue values everything that is said without pre-judging what is 'real', or 'important', or 'rational'	
New Forest Consultative Panel	All the forums have stakeholders who are very knowledgeable and given the topic areas of the forums it is not surprising that the discussions tend to focus on technical, evidence based issues. However, it is clear that people feel very passionately about the New Forest and so whilst the language might be that of fact it is clear that feelings, needs and fears underlie those discussions.
Open Forest Advisory Committee	
Water Basin Management Forum	
PROGRESS management forum	
FDP forum	

8. The process seeks to encourage new understanding and improved relationships. These 'invisible products' are often crucial in enabling participants to move forward together or to implement the outcome of the process.	
New Forest Consultative Panel	Yes <i>“Provided a networking mechanism between members” “The Panel enables/advises the statutory bodies and lets them know “grassroots” views”</i>
Open Forest Advisory Committee	Yes
Water Basin Management Forum	Yes
PROGRESS management forum	Yes
FDP forum	Yes <i>“Better relationships between FC and its stakeholders”</i>
9. Stakeholder dialogue processes are recorded visibly and transparently, with stakeholders having control over the content and accuracy of the recording. Facilitators normally record meetings on large sheets of paper, and produce a record in the form of photographs or an exact transcription of what has been publicly recorded.	
New Forest Consultative Panel	All meetings are minuted in the traditional manner, and participants are circulated with those minutes and given opportunity to amend or change the minutes, so whilst the record is not public as the meeting unfolds there is a process by which the participants have some control over content and accuracy of the recording.
Open Forest Advisory Committee	
Water Basin Management Forum	
PROGRESS management forum	
FDP forum	
10. Dialogue processes seek to identify and build on common ground. Traditional processes, by contrast, tend to focus on (and therefore magnify) disagreement, to the extent that participants frequently do not realise there are significant areas on which they may already agree.	
New Forest Consultative Panel	The NFCP operates in a traditional manner
Open Forest Advisory Committee	Yes – these forums are all focussed on practical management of the New Forest and for work to happen on the ground it is necessary to have a degree of consensus about what is being carried out.
Water Basin Management Forum	
PROGRESS management forum	
FDP forum	
11. The process will seek to move the focus from the past to the future. This helps to avoid unproductive blaming and creates a shared responsibility for the way forward. (However, there will often be a need for an initial period in which past grievances, real or imagined, can be aired.)	
New Forest Consultative Panel	Present-future focussed
Open Forest Advisory Committee	Past – present focussed but with a view to short term future

Water Basin Management Forum	Yes
PROGRESS management forum	Yes
FDP forum	Yes – the forest design plan is planning for between 50 – 100 years.
12. Dialogue processes are iterative in their approach. The same issues may need to be addressed more than once to allow for the development of shared solutions. Traditional methods, on the other hand, tend to rely on 'snapshot' consultations or set-piece events that do not encourage participants to move away from the initial negotiating positions	
New Forest Consultative Panel	Yes - probably
Open Forest Advisory Committee	Yes given this is a permanent committee issues will be “ <i>chewed over</i> ”
Water Basin Management Forum	Yes
PROGRESS management forum	Yes
FDP forum	Yes

Summary of evaluation against stakeholder dialogue criteria

- 3.35 These forums were not set up using stakeholder dialogue criteria but do stand up quite well to being evaluated against those criteria. In carrying out this evaluation it is possible to see that the distinctions between different approaches to engagement are not so clear cut as might at first seem. This is positive in the sense that often there is the basis on which a principle might be more fully developed, but care needs to be paid to the detail to ensure that key issues are not assumed to be in place when they are not.
- 3.36 Overall, all these forums are selective in their membership with selection being by criteria (e.g. NFCP), or invitation. There is an awareness of the potential for excluding key stakeholders and reflection on the constitution of the forums and currently there is under-representation of social and economic interests. All the groups are attended by representatives of groups or known individual experts.
- 3.37 None of the meetings are independently facilitated, rather meetings are run as traditional committee meetings. The comments associated with Principle 5 (People attend as equals) suggest that the familiar issue of personalities dominating groups is an issue for all these forums. Having independent facilitators is useful if there is conflict in a forum. In addition, having convenors with facilitation experience would be useful as the emphasis would be on making the forum a space where all felt able to contribute equally and that would be done through a variety of facilitation techniques. The fact that the NFCP and the WBMF have an independent chair is interesting as it raises issues of trust and, similarly, having an independent facilitator

can increase trust in the fairness of the process and there will be times when that will be important.

- 3.38 Clearly there is evidence of some engagement of members with the setting of the objectives for the NFCP and the FDP members specifically being consulted on revisions of the objectives. OFAC, WBMF and PROGRESS are all working with objectives set by people other than the forum members.
- 3.39 With respect to the fourth principle (Dialogue delivers practical solutions to real problems) these forums are in the unusual position of being focussed on a specific geographical place and on specific practical actions. This means that there is direct feedback to members as to whether discussions are implemented, literally, on the ground. The role of site visits was emphasised as a vital way in which members of the forums can see if what has been decided is being implemented in the forest. It may mean that discussions do remain very focussed at that practical level because that is where any changes can be readily seen.
- 3.40 As to whether the forums provide opportunities for dialogue to be a two way process, it is possibly to say that there is space for dialogue within meetings. However, dialogue within the meetings is very structured and led clearly by those convening the meeting. Within the FDP there has been good use of small groups which does facilitate more dialogue and discussion. In addition, there are site visits which allow for informal discussion. Certainly given the nature of the communications within the New Forest, if views were not being listened to in meetings then they are likely to be voiced elsewhere e.g. in the local press or at another meeting. However, access to those alternative methods of communication is not available to anyone. It is only available to those people who are “known” for making a point and to those people who sit on many different forums. In addition, and in relation to Principle 9 (Stakeholder dialogue processes are recorded visibly and transparently, with stakeholders having control over the content and accuracy of the recording), the minutes (a fundamental form of communication) are controlled by those who take them and amend them and in this way the members have limited control over them.
- 3.41 It is our impression that the “currency” at these forums is knowledge, be it scientific, historic etc and therefore there is little discussion about values, feelings, needs and fears unless they are expressed in this manner. However, all the convenors expressed the view that the forums produce new understandings and improved relationships, which suggested that there is an exchange of values and needs at some level. Networking and increased trust were cited as benefits of the forums suggesting that these forums are working well in many ways. The FDP and the WBMF were especially mentioned as being successes in bringing people together who had not worked together before (and may have been relatively suspicious - even antagonistic - to each other), and thus improving the reputation of the FC.

- 3.42 It was clear that those forums which have specific practical tasks to carry out have to work in a consensual manner otherwise work could not be carried out. All with possibly the exception of the NFCP have that focus making the drive to seek common ground and to work towards consensus a necessity. It was suggested that the NFCP had changed its focus towards more strategic issues which may make the focus on consensus less important.
- 3.43 Three of the four forums are clearly future focussed: WBMF, PROGRESS and the FDP since they are all dealing with putting in place changes within the forest now and into the future. OFAC is more focussed on the present, and the convenor regarded it as practically rather than strategically focussed. The NFCP does not have a specific project or plan to develop and functions as a place for the giving and receiving of information and so it is hard to say whether or not it is focussed on the past, present or future. In general, the New Forest is a place where the past is very important and where many people have a clear sense of how it should be managed based on what has been done for many years. This is a valuable resource.
- 3.44 Finally, all the forums are positive in terms of being able to be iterative in their approach because even the time limited ones are over four years. Having time for the forums to develop and re-visit decisions is vitally important for good stakeholder involvement.
- 3.45 However, a number of issues have emerged clearly from these interviews:
- There is a significant overlap of membership between the forums, so demands on the time of a few key stakeholders can become intense.
 - There is an over-representation of conservation and wildlife interests which, although a positive development of strong joint working, can result in other issues and interests being under-represented in discussions.
 - No clear formal relationships between forums, or between these forums and other planning and conservation forums in the New Forest, reducing the potential for streamlining some discussions by referring to work elsewhere.
 - Little ongoing evaluation and monitoring of effectiveness of the different forums, reducing the potential for tackling problems or picking up opportunities as soon as they arise.

4. PHASE 1 - PART A: FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE FOREST DESIGN PLAN FORUM MEMBERS

4.1 This section presents the findings from the interviews with the Forest Design Plan forum members. The reason for interviewing these members was to obtain more detail on how the FDP is perceived to be working.

4.2 The findings from these interviews have been analysed in terms of each of the questions that were asked in the interviews. The questions were grouped under the following main questions:

- i) Are the right stakeholders involved?
- ii) Are the roles of stakeholders fully understood by them?
- iii) What is considered to be the role of the FDP forum in relation to other forums?
- iv) Are the objectives of the FDP forum clear, transparent and acceptable to stakeholders?
- v) What level of involvement is expected (from information provision, through consultation to partnership and devolved decision-making) of the stakeholders
- vi) Are the methods / techniques used in the forum meetings appropriate to the circumstances (purpose and context)?
- vii) Is the FDP forum perceived as effective?

4.3 The findings from the five interviews with the FDP forum members are presented using the above headings.

4.4 Findings from the questions sets asked of those who infrequently attend FDP members are also presented below, under the heading, members less involved in the FDP meetings.

Are the right stakeholders involved?

4.5 This set of questions focussed on the balance of stakeholders involved in the FDP forum and how inclusive the forum was considered to be.

4.6 With respect to whether or not the interviewees regard the FDP forum as including all the “right people” the responses ranged from “*No one missing*” through to “*The FDP was conceived as a large scale landscaping exercise. In a sense it should be about broader interests*”

4.7 Others mentioned who could be involved included:

- Commoners Defence Association,
- New Forest Cattle and pony breeders
- Horse riders
- Cyclists

4.8 The balance of stakeholders was discussed in terms of interest:

“Conservation interests are too strong; industry interests are not strong enough “

“,,, suggested that in the forest there are people you don’t catch and so it is quite hard to get a collective view.”

“The role of the FDP is to assemble a wide range of interests to reflect different perspectives and demands on the Forest. Not necessarily in a 'balanced' way (which it may need to be if they were voting). But the FDP Forum does have representatives from a whole range of interests”

4.9 It was also considered in terms of knowledge:

“There is a balance but there are people on the forum who don’t have a clue about what is being talked about”

4.10 Overall, the interviewees conveyed a mixture of views with respect to inclusivity and balance of interests with strong views at both ends of the spectrum. Views about balance and inclusivity are intimately tied to the perception of the objectives of the forum.

Are the roles of stakeholders fully understood by them?

4.11 Interviewees were asked what they considered their roles to, the extent to which those roles were made explicit to them by the convenor, whether or not they were happy with their roles and their level of involvement in the forum.

4.12 When discussing the extent to which roles had been formally agreed, interviewees were vague with a sense that the roles probably had been agreed at one time but not formally

“Probably at the beginning that was done”

“Not formally agreed”

4.13 All felt that their roles were appropriate, and one interviewee commented

“The point was that the focus of the Forum was everyone working for the right FDP for the area. Wider objective than personal priorities. If on every occasion people won’t move an inch – get nowhere. There was a shared mentality: this was a

national statutory plan which gave it a purpose above personal and organisational interest.

- 4.14 The range of reasons expressed by the interviewees as to their perceptions of their roles varied from: being an interested individual, being a representative of an organised group, to being a lead partner in developing the forum

“... EN took quite a leading role in the setting up of the FDP and discussed things with the FC beforehand”

“... role is to understand what the FC is trying to do and how they are trying to do it and to make some constructive comments – both in general and in the specific.”

“... role is to do the best for the forum.”

What is considered to be the role of the FDP forum in relation to other forums?

- 4.15 This section covers what participants considered to be the role of the FDP forum in relation to the other forums, how it relates to other forums, what its role is, any overlaps between forums, and the clarity of roles between the different groups.

- 4.16 The FDP forum was considered to be quite separate from that of other groups in terms of role and contact:

“Not much contact between Forums except for FC staff. A riverine forum started and the Environment Agency has since joined the FDP Forum.”

“Mass of different groups which are fairly specialised and long term unlike the NFCP which is eclectic, amorphous and short term and therefore less useful. Life3 is similar but with a shorter time scale and is complementary as is the WBMF. Not much is heard about OFAC but there might possibly be overlaps with the FDP.”

“The FDP Forum doesn’t relate to other groups. At odd moments the NFCP has been advised of the state of progress, and the NFCP may also have received drafts for comment.”

“There is no relation to the other groups. The other groups have other tasks to do and there is no point trying to cover everything.”

- 4.17 The FDP forum is regarded as having a unique contribution to the work of the New Forest in three ways:

- it is focussed on a long term view of the inclosures

“The FDP takes a longer term view than the other groups”.

- it is focussed on a specific part of forest: the inclosures

“The specific difference about the FDP is that it deals with inclosures rather than with the open forest”

- it involved a lot of people in planning important changes in the forest

“ what it did was involve people in planning the most significant changes in the forest. There was a real opportunity for people to make a difference. It is very wide ranging”

- 4.18 For those who are on more than one group the management of the groups are seen as similar and seems to be appropriate to what is being discussed. The usefulness of site visits was highlighted.

“Similar in format – big table, presentations; sub groups; visits”

- 4.19 The only one that was considered to be different was the NFCP.

“Pretty similar – except the NFCP which is large and amorphous – it is a different sort of animal a bit of a “forum for griping” – a bit like a consultative panel for a utility”

- 4.20 In terms of whether there was considered to be overlap between the groups its was suggest that there was a little overlap in terms of topic and also in terms of people, but it was not seen as a problem.

“Certain amount [of overlap] - of people and sometimes of interest but each group focuses on specific actions.”

“... also felt that there is overlap between FDP and WBMF but because of time frames it is not excessive.”

- 4.21 There was little consensus on whether the roles of each of the different groups are clear to the stakeholders:

“They are clear to me but not sure if they are clear to all individuals.”

“X has worked it out as he has gone along but has not found it terribly clear”.

“Yes absolutely [clear] – there are some elements of overlap e.g. where there are cycle routes in the inclosures and trees need to be chopped down – then there can be an issue over how that is done, but there are not big issues. “

Are the objectives of the FDP forum clear, transparent and acceptable to stakeholders?

- 4.22 Interviewees were clear that they knew what the objectives of the FDP forum were. The following were their statements of what they considered the objectives to be:

“– to try to forward plan the NF for the next 100 years: which areas are replanted or not, where car parks should be etc”

“To produce a plan for all the FC inclosures - time limited in some way - actually produces a vision together with a 5 year plan to be signed off by the FC in their statutory capacity”

“To enable the FC to come up with a long term landscape plan for the forest that is acceptable, and, more cynically, to enable the FC to say that it has consulted and ticked the boxes”

“To advise the FC on how inclosures will be managed/not managed”

4.23 It was known that there were written objectives but it was clear that people did not refer (not surprisingly) to their copies frequently.

4.24 Interviewees had been variously involved with setting the objectives from no involvement through to full involvement:

4.25 The objectives were variously regarded:

“... the objectives have perhaps been too narrowly construed and set out. The objectives could have been more positive in terms of recreation.... after all the New Forest started out as a giant recreation area for kings...”

“. FDP forum is achieving a lot and going in the right direction, ensuring the nature conservation role.”

What level of involvement is expected (from information provision, through consultation to partnership and devolved decision-making) of the stakeholders?

4.26 This section covered both what was expected of interviewees in terms of involvement and also in terms of what level of involvement they experience with respect to their level of influence on decisions, and how decisions are made within the forum.

4.27 In terms of how clear their level of involvement was made to members, there was broad agreement across the interviewees that it was fairly clear and what is expected is appropriate and accepted.

“and ... does not feel that what is expected of the members is onerous”

“People knew what they were in for. It was well planned and well organised so no nasty surprises for members”

“Yes, OK. Still go to meetings”

“The level of involvement is not made specifically clear but that is not how it works in the forest, people get involved depending on their level of knowledge”

- 1.28 There were two perspectives on how decisions are made within the forum, that decisions were made by consensus,

“Decisions taken in the meeting, quite naturally, by consensus.”

and that no decisions are made, rather members come up with ideas and then the FC puts those into proposals which are then presented back to the group for approval

“FC presents ideas or members come up with ideas and then the FC go away and absorb information and then come back with the proposals. It is quite easy to see if they have taken them on board, quite tangible.”

No decisions are made just vague recommendations.....“We feed comments into the process. It is possible to check everyday to see whether or not the plan is being implemented in the forest”

- 4.29 Members’ perceptions of their degree of influence over the decision-making at the forum meetings fell into four categories:

- Not knowing how much influence

“Don’t know.....doesn’t know what is decided beforehand”

- Marginal/some influence

“...thought that his/her level of influence was probably marginal, ...has some influence but not an enormous amount. ... suggested that other people have a bigger influence e.g. the commoners who are vocal and have a lot of knowledge of the detail. Some of the conservation people also know a lot about the detail.”

“The process was led by FC. Ideas and proposals were put to the group who discussed, debated, decided. People more or less respected it was the FC trees – for the nation – etc....Needed that; not a blank sheet of paper. ... felt s/he did have influence in relation to features of the design plan e.g. it is right in enclosures to treat amenity value and attractiveness to visiting as a proper factor. It is right to consider access as a design issue. Those issues were taken on board”

- Joint decision making

“Joint decision making – but loaded to conservation bodies because there are more of them and they make more noise

- High level of influence

“EN has quite a high level of influence. For others it is not so high but when a group has a strong view they had a bit influence”

- 4.30 Members’ perceptions of their influence over the plan fell into two categories:

- clear sense that they had influence the plan, with examples

“Yes – for example.....feels strongly about the noise from the A31 and a lot of the work that is proposed will affect the noise since much of the work is clearing trees

which reduces screening for noise.has tried to get some trees retained for noise and visual pollution screening and that is being reflected to the point where it has been said that there should be a small group convened to look at noise and visual pollution”

- lack of clarity over whether their views had influenced the plan.

“A little. The issue of accessibility has been raised but not 100% sure how it has been taken on board. “

- 4.31 In terms of the range of responses around the interviewees’ perceptions of whether they were clear about the level of influence they could have over activities discussed at the forum, again there were a range of responses.

“Yes”. [clear about level of influence]

“Not explicitly”

“No, not really clear – suspects because he/she is on other groups then they might think he/she will make a fuss in other places if he is not listened to.... you can’t be a shrinking violet on these groups. ... would like more influence but understands, given the process why that might not be possible”

- 4.32 Interviewees expressed a range of reasons for being involved in the forum:

- Interest

...”was interested and the recreation interests needed a representative”

- to have a voice

“To have say.”

- because it was recognized as important

“Obvious from the start that this was a major strategic structural exercise – not just tinkering around with a few trees. Major design impact on forest landscape but also significant impacts on leisure, tourism etc because enclosures less exciting for 'biosphere' but tremendous asset for recreation.”

- had something to offer

“Interested in the Forest and have a great many years of experience and the plan has a key role to play for the future”

Are the methods / techniques used in the forum meetings appropriate to the circumstances (purpose and context)?

- 4.33 This set of questions focussed on how the meetings of the FDP forum are run in terms of what is done in the meetings and the success or otherwise of that and how communications are managed at and between the meetings.

4.34 The FDP forum meetings have a fairly standard format:

“Introduction to the meeting followed by initial presentation which varies from the general to the specific. Groups breakout with maps and photos and there is an opportunity to fully discuss options, plenty of opportunity to feed back – sometimes an outside speaker – very successful meetings.”

4.35 All the interviewees were positive about the meetings and felt that they were successful and well managed with just one concern about the speed at which this revision phase was taking.

“Reasonably successful. On most occasions things are explained and there is sufficient time to get a word in if you want to. The meetings are well managed”

“Information was given in advance of the meetings so by the time got to the meetings already knew what needed to say. Organisation of that phase was very good. Everything worked at the appropriate level and right amount of information”

“FC put a lot of resources in to that – an important success factor. It was a big subject – they had local ranger and managers, area, national, consultants plus other peopleand rangers and public meetings – all the maps, re-draft, detail. Massive amount of resource, meals, rooms. Not a cheap exercise. Important consideration. FC is a large organisation – this was a big deal – local office could not have done it on own”

“Fine”

“Efficient and successful in so far as they have gone – no results so far for this round – no FC response to what has been discussed. It seems to be going remarkably slowly, the next meeting keeps being postponed.”

4.36 Communication was felt to be effective in the meetings:

“Meetings are managed well – format is communicated”

4.37 Irrelevant issues were felt to be managed well by the convenor, not ignored but not allowed to take over a meeting.

“Managed very well – for example – when we get out on site it can turn into a meeting about cyclists using the open forest. They are polite and listen to arguments and look for ways of dealing with the issue outside the meeting.”

Is the FDP forum perceived as effective?

4.38 This final set of questions included whether the interviewees felt the forum met its objectives and individual’s objectives, whether interviewees felt they were clear about how their input is used in the FDP process, whether they feel members of the forum

participate as equals, whether they feel they have enough information, if they communicate with others about the forum and the effectiveness of that communication, whether there is still a role for the forum and generally what was considered most/least effective about the forum.

4.39 All very positive about the FDP forum meeting its objectives with some questions around

- the extent to which it has reached a wide range of people

“Yes although it hasn’t reached all the people in the forestnot sure how you do that, but FDP has done a very good job trying to involve people”

- de-emphasis of the idea of a “working forest”

“Yes, but weakened on commercial woodland; the pro-working forest arguments are not strong enough”

- the efficacy of this revision phase

“The first one did definitely but with this second one it is too early to tell”

4.40 There was a general consensus that members of the forum are able to have their say.

4.41 A range of perspectives were expressed on whether or not the process of influencing the plan was made clear to the members

- it is quite clear

“Yes – FC makes it pretty clear what the outcomes are – usually do get the outcomes of the meetings”

- it could be clearer

“It could be clearer. It comes back to the objectives. Is what we are trying to do the right thing? “

- not very clear

“No –...X suggested that the input is fed into the mill and then gets churned around in SS’s office and then a result comes out..... it is not possible or sensible to have everyone involved at every stage of the process.”

4.42 Two perspectives were expressed as to whether members participated as equals:

- that all members do participate as equals

“Yes, in principle, there is no overt pecking order”.

“Equals. Didn’t think people being left out. Does rely on the facilitation skills especially in subject area with strong views. FC facilitated it themselves and well”

- that people did not participate as equals because some people are more dominant than others, though it was felt that the FC did well in facilitating the meetings

“Not really – it is to do with the individuals themselves – those who dominate have specific personalities.....there are the opportunities there for everyone to have their say and although there are different levels of participation she does not feel that some people have more weight in terms of decisions than others”

Members less involved in the FDP meetings

- 4.43 Four of the five members contacted responded to the request for information. These members were involved in the FDP as representatives of their organisations and did note that their attendance was not as high as it could be. Meetings were generally considered helpful, however, there was a mixed response as to whether attendance could / should be improved. Some believed it should be, whereas others believed their level of attendance was all they could manage / all they considered necessary.

“Other officers have generally taken the lead”

“Generally yes [meetings are useful] – as overview – I am least concerned with the detailed meetings”

“Try to go to all meetings”

- 4.44 One newly appointed member, who had missed the one and only meeting since being appointed, noted that

“It has taken me a few months to get up to speed with New Forest issues although I will be attending all meetings in the Future. The major issue with meetings in the Forest is the sheer number of panels and meetings to attend. It does place a huge burden on officers of other organisations, as it does the FC I’m sure.”

Summary

- 4.45 Overall the FDP forum can be considered quite successful, both in its own terms and when evaluated in terms of key participation criteria. From all the people we interviewed, and others we spoke to informally, it is clear that the FDP process represents a step change in the way the FC works with its stakeholders in the New Forest, and as such has changed, positively, the way planning for the inclosures is carried out. As a process much resource and thought has been put into it and that has been rewarded by the production of a very useful and useable plan together with improved relationships between stakeholders and the FC in the New Forest.
- 4.46 However, there is a sense from our interviews that whilst the first round of work by the FDP forum was a great success there is perhaps less urgency and clarity around

the part of the forum within this revision phase coupled with a sense that the forum is not as inclusive as it should be.

- 4.47 In wanting to widen the membership of the FDP forum inevitably there will be some questioning of its objectives and the plan's objectives. From our interviews it would seem that the forum is perceived as conservation focussed and that could be to do with who contributes most in meetings, the nature of the objectives or a combination of the two. However if it is perceived as such then it will be harder to hold the attention of those who represent other interests such as recreation and these factors will need to be addressed if the wider representation is to be successful.
- 4.48 A final issue with respect to the FDP forum is that the roles of the members are clearly as experts be it technically e.g. conservation; geographically e.g. knowledge of specific inclosures or historically e.g. knowledge of what has been done in the New Forest for the last seven generations. This is another, perhaps implicit, criteria for membership. The level of detail of the FDP is undoubtedly necessary but if the membership is to become more inclusive and include people who don't have that detailed knowledge but still have a general stake in how the New Forest landscape is managed then a different process of engagement might need to be developed.

5. PHASE 1 – PART B: FINDINGS FROM THE EVENT EVALUATION

Event Description

- 5.1 Approaching the Arboretum from Blackwater car park, there were large, clearly visible, signs that introduced the project and agencies involved. Rangers were at hand to welcome guests and inform them about the LIFE3 Project if they were not aware about it / wanted further information.
- 5.2 A welcome desk was located at the entrance to the main events area, manned by Forestry Commission staff, hosting an array of leaflets associated with Forestry Commission as well as the LIFE3 Project leaflet “Sustainable Wetland Restoration in the New Forest”. Event Feedback forms were also located on the table. A large black-board noting the time of the next ranger-guided walk to show-off the works of the project was also located next to the welcome area; there was one morning and one afternoon walk for the public. It is estimated that the event attracted over 100 guests throughout the day.
- 5.3 The main events area comprised of an educational jigsaw puzzle (animal footprints), pond dipping (supervised by the Environment Agency) and willow weaving (led by an external contractor) and an area shaded from the sun where a TV screen displayed a DVD on ‘continuous loop’ of project work-in-action. There were no specific timings to the start and end of the activities so that guests could access the activities as and when they chose. A speech was delivered later on in the day (2.00pm) by Chris Packham.
- 5.4 Local stakeholders involved with the LIFE3 Project also attended a celebratory event on 02 June. This was an all day event consisting of presentations by English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust and RSPB in the morning at the New Park Manor Hotel in Brockenhurst and a site visit in the afternoon. The afternoon comprised of the (aforementioned) talk by Chris Packham at Blackwater Arboretum which was pitched at the public, and a guided walk (separate to the public) to see the restoration work under the LIFE3 project at Black Water river. The purpose of bringing the delegates to the site at the same time as the public was to show them how the public were being educated and informed about the LIFE3 Project.
- 5.5 The aims of the public event were:
- to fulfil European funding objectives under the LIFE3 project;
 - to show the public what had been achieved as a result of the river restoration project;
 - to share knowledge and inform about the LIFE3 Project; and

- to attract a ‘new audience’ into the forest (the event was primarily targeted at children).

Evaluation

Interview Responses

5.6 Respondents had come varying distances to attend the event; some were local (from Brockenhurst) some semi-local (from north Hampshire) and some from further afield (Essex, Bournemouth and Lemington). All had heard about the event through the New Forest Focus or the internet, with one exception where the party had initially heard about it via a friend. Some guests had previous knowledge of the LIFE3 project, some had none. No respondents deemed themselves to have regular contact with the Forestry Commission; though one respondent did ‘confess’ that they received the New Forest magazine.

5.7 Findings from the interviews showed that all guests, adults and children, thoroughly enjoyed the event, were impressed by the range of activities that were offered and deemed them suitable for children (and adults), felt that they had learned something about the Forest and the LIFE3 project, would come to a similar event and would recommend Forestry Commission events to others.

5.8 There was variation in the number of people who had previously attended an organised Forestry Commission event. Respondents that had been to other events, noted that the event was

“more orientated towards children than others [they had attended] for this time of year”;

that all the events they had attended were

“completely different from each other”

(however these events had been in the past two consecutive days); and that

“all Forestry Commission events are excellent ... [and that] the Forestry Commission administration is extremely good”.

5.9 Suggestions as to what the Forestry Commission could include in future events included:

- *“more environmental education events”;*
- *“more wildflower events with folk law”;*
- *“activities for artists such as carving, painting and drawing”;* and
- *“led walks that are suitable for people with pushchairs and prams”.*

- 5.10 Respondents were impressed by the educational value of the walk and appreciated the opportunity to ask questions of the Rangers. In general, it was felt that it was *“nice that the event [was] informal and not structured so that one can dip in and out of the different activities and that [the event was] not commercialised”*.

The Forestry Commission Perspective¹

- 5.11 The event fulfilled its objectives. It was aimed at children to attract and inform a ‘new audience’ and as a result

“attracted a different audience to usual for events explaining conservation projects and works on the forest...people...had a fun and informative day out”

- 5.12 It was felt that the objectives were clear, to all staff involved in organising and all the public attending the event.

- 5.13 Basing the event on children’s activities was decidedly successful; considerably more so than the launch event as

“there was more to attract people than just finding out about the project...over 100 [guests attended the ‘Wet and Wild’ event] compared to about 40 [guests who attended the launch event] over two days”

- 5.14 On the organisational side, the most positive aspects of the event were the low level of organisation required and the ability to ‘buy in’ external expertise for the willow weaving. The only negative aspect was that the environmental / science educator employed was superfluous to requirements as there were sufficient Forestry Commission staff to rally people for walks / activities and deliver ad hoc science based talks.

- 5.15 The speech by Chris Packham was mainly attended by local stakeholders (delegates), although it was intended to as

“more a way of attracting the public than for the delegates but in the end Hampshire County Council put the press release [for the event] out too late for it to go in the papers and so the public were unaware of the fact that he was going to be there so it was mainly delegates who were present for the speech”

- 5.16 Public feedback from the event was positive, *“the walks were very popular but...the willow weaving and pond dipping attracted the biggest numbers. It was also good to have the project video going on a constant loop as it allowed parents to watch it while the kids were doing the activities”*.

¹ All quotes in this section are from the Forestry Commission member of staff at the event

Satisfaction of Event Objectives

- 5.17 With respect to the objectives of the event, all four objectives have clearly been satisfied. The event took place and informed the public of all the partners involved in the LIFE3 project and what work had been done in the New Forest as part of the project; with the ranger-led walk and the TV documentary being the main factors aiding the objective fulfilment. It is also apparent that a new audience was reached since not all interviewees had previously attended a New Forest public event. It could further be argued that a repeat audience had been reached as local residents (Brockenhurst) attended three events in the New Forest, that week.
- 5.18 There was one activity, storytelling, that was advertised on the Forestry Commission website that did not take place on the day. There was no clear indication at the event as to why this activity was not available. However, the guests did not notice / comment on this in the interviews and it did not appear to impact on their enjoyment of the event.

Level of Participation

- 5.19 With reference to the IAP2 Public Participation spectrum (International Association for Public Participation) it is evident that 'Wet and Wild' was an information giving event. There was the opportunity to ask questions and express opinions during the guided walk (which not all guests participated in), but this was intended purely as an information giving experience to 'show-off' the achievements of the project, rather than to obtain formal feedback.
- 5.20 The only attempt at retrieving public opinion formally was through the "What's On Events 2006 Feedback Form" (Appendix 10) which is identical for every "What's On" event held in the New Forest and contained no specific questions of direct relevance to the LIFE3 project. No forms were returned either at or after the event. It did not appear as if there was any active encouragement for the public to complete or take away these feedback forms (to complete and return), however, it should be noted that obtaining public feedback was not an objective of the event. It should also be recognised that due to the completion of the LIFE3 project there was limited scope to do much more than inform the public. Additionally, it should be acknowledged that the public were able to express their views through the interviews conducted as part of this project and may therefore not have had the desire to complete the feedback forms.
- 5.21 However, this event was relatively resource intensive in terms of planning and delivery (staff time in planning, staff attendance on the day, display materials, other activities). Given the desire of the Forestry Commission to work more effectively with the public (including especially visitors), this event could possibly have made better use of the resources expended to help build longer term relationships that could contribute to greater trust, legitimacy etc (e.g. getting contact details of visitors to add

to a mailing list so these people could be invited to other events; or possibly having exhibitions or materials on other current developments in the new Forest and providing information and inviting comments on those).

6. PHASE 1 – PART B: FINDINGS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Session One – Mapping the stakeholders and understanding the FC and NPA links with those stakeholders

6.1 In this session the participants brainstormed all the stakeholders that they are currently working with in some engagement/consultation capacity. They wrote them onto post-its which were colour coded to represent social, economic and environmental interests. Following that, the relationships that the NPA and the FC have with those interests were categorised as formal (i.e. through a convened group or formal consultation) or informal.

Tables 1 - 3 provide the information that came from those post-its.

Table 2: List of stakeholders with social interests

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
Commoners Defence Association	Formal	Both
New Forest Access for All	Formal	Both
New Forest Livery Yards	Formal	Both
Camping and Caravanning Club	Formal	Both
Caravan Club Ltd	Formal	Both
The Ramblers Association	Formal	Both
New Forest Equestrian Association	Formal	Both
British Horse Society	Formal	Both
New Forest District Council Tourism	Formal	Both
Government Office for the South East	Formal	Both
New Forest Dog Owner's Group	Formal	Both
New Forest Community First	Formal	NPA
SERAF	Formal	NPA
Pony Publicity Group	Formal (Local Action Group)	NPA
Northern Commoners Defence Association	Formal	NPA
Minstead Manor Waste Commoners	Formal	NPA
New Forest Trust	Informal	Both
Hampshire Field Club (archaeology)	Informal	Both
New Forest Disability Information Service	Informal	Both
Ninth Centenary Trust	Informal	Both

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
Disabled Ramblers	Informal	FC
CTC	Informal	FC
Riding for the Disabled	Informal	FC
Prime Groups	Informal	FC
BDS carriages	Informal	FC
Scouts	Informal	NPA
New Forest Pony and Cattle breeders	Informal	NPA
Women's Institute	Informal	NPA
Community Action Hampshire	Informal	NPA

Table 3: List of stakeholders with economic interests

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
SEEDA	Formal	Both
New Forest Tourism Association	Formal	Both
Giddings Sawmill	Formal	Both
New Forest Business Association	Formal	Both
Leader and Local Action Group	Formal	NPA
Lymington Harbour Commissioners	Formal	NPA
VIRSA (village shops)	Formal (through Local Action Group)	NPA
South Hants Enterprise Agency	Formal (LAG)	NPA
National Farmers Union	Formal (LAG)	NPA
Hampshire Fayre	Formal (LAG)	NPA
Forest Holidays	Formal	FC
Local estates	Informal	Both
Brockenhurst business association	Informal	Both
Tourism South East	Informal	Both
Organic farmers	Informal	NPA
Countryside Landowners and Business Association	Informal	NPA
Chambers of commerce	Informal	NPA
Business link	Informal	NPA
Euroforest	Informal	FC
Holmsely Sawmill	Informal	FC
Soffe Sawmill	Informal	FC

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
East Brothers Sawmill	Informal	FC
Forest Contractors Association	Informal	FC

Table 4: List of stakeholders with environmental interests

	Formal/Informal	Links with NPA, FC or both
Environment Agency	Formal	Both
English Nature	Formal	Both
National Trust	Formal	Both
Hampshire County Council – countryside services	Formal	Both
English Heritage	Formal	Both
New Forest Association	Formal	Both
Verderers	Formal	Both
Countryside Agency/Natural England/Rural Development Service	Formal	Both
Deer Management Groups	Formal	Both
Wildlife Trusts – mainly Hampshire	Formal	Both
Association of National Park Authorities	Formal	NPA
	Informal	FC
RSPCA	Formal	NPA
	Informal	FC
Friends of the Earth	Formal	NPA
CPRE	Formal	NPA
Solent Forum	Formal	NPA
RSPB	Formal	FC
Neil Sanderson	Formal	FC
CNP	Informal	Both
Deer Society	Informal	Both
Bat Group	Informal	Both
Butterfly conservation	Informal	Both
HCT (reptiles)	Informal	Both
Farming and wildlife advisory group	Informal	NPA
Civic societies	Informal	NPA
New Forest Bird Group	Informal	FC
RSPB	Informal	NPA

- 6.2 Once the mapping exercise had been carried out then the participants were asked to discuss where they felt there were gaps, that is, which stakeholders they felt that they would like to engage with but were currently not engaging with. The gaps identified can be summarised as the following:
- a. Ordinary people who live in the area but are not affiliated to any interest group.
 - b. Businesses in general, and specifically tourism businesses.
 - c. Different ages specifically under 24 year and between 24 – 50 years.
 - d. Visitors – both those from within the UK and those from outside the UK.

Session Two: Future engagement processes

- 6.3 In this session the participants focussed on discussing changes that are likely to impact on the relationships the organisations have with their stakeholders. The notes from this session are included in Annex 3. The key changes discussed were:
- i) The creation of the National Park which will mean the production of a range of strategies to be consulted on given its wider remit
 - i) Regional links becoming more important and therefore increased engagement with regional bodies/partners
 - ii) Partnership delivery becoming very important as funding declines
 - iii) With the National Park objectives putting access and nature conservation side by side there may be impacts on Forestry Commission forums
 - iv) Impact of Freedom of Information, pressure for organisations to be transparent and open.
- 6.4 Finally, the participants discussed what might be the priorities for them in terms of stakeholder involvement in the future, given the changes that had been discussed. Notes from this session are included in Annex 3. It was agreed that a joint approach between the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission should be developed to work with two key groups:
- i) Visitors
 - ii) Young people
- 6.5 Current ways of working with these groups were discussed e.g. the Forestry Commission is putting a pack of information into all B&Bs, Hotels which will give more information about the New Forest and the Forestry Commission's work.

Summary

- 6.6 The workshop was valuable in identifying the wide range of stakeholders involved with the New Forest and specifically those that the National Park and the Forestry Commission are engaged with.

7. PHASE 2 – FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

7.1 This section presents the findings from the interviews members of staff from the other organisations. These people were interviewed in order to gain more detail on what other organisations are doing in terms of stakeholder involvement in the New Forest. Staff from the Verderers, the New Forest District Council, the Environment Agency, National Trust and the regulatory part of the Forestry Commission.

7.2 The findings from these interviews have been analysed in terms of each of the questions that were asked in the interviews. These questions were grouped into four areas.

- i) What is their definition of stakeholder?
- ii) What are other organisations doing on stakeholder involvement?
- iii) How effective is their stakeholder involvement
- iv) What potential is there for joint future work on stakeholder involvement?

What is their definition of stakeholder?

7.3 The questions here were focussed on whether the term stakeholder was used by the interviewees and if their organisations have definitions of the term. The view that “stakeholder” could be an unhelpful term was expressed:

“...avoids using the term because it is over-used and no-one seems to agree on what it means.”

“Use of the term stakeholder depends on the audience....this was a Best Value terminology. Don’t use it so much now. Turns off” some people immediately”.

7.4 In terms of how it was defined, the following comments were expressed:

“those with an interest in your service - pay (council tax payer), users e.g. recreation centre users, members, other services, partners. Always had to list them so avoid the term now / not as much used.”

“Stakeholder – anyone: formal consultees, general public, anyone who has an interest in the land”

“Stakeholder – generic – people have a direct link in forest by using it or an organisation”

What are other organisations doing on stakeholder involvement?

7.5 Within this section of the interview questions were focussed on whether the organisations have a philosophy about stakeholder involvement and what that might be, whether they have statutory engagement in the New Forest, in what ways they are currently engaging and if there are any plans to change that engagement in the future.

7.6 In terms of a philosophy of engagement all interviewees said that there was some sort of philosophy about stakeholder involvement and some had written policies on it:

“Philosophy is giving people who are affected by an issue an opportunity to shape outcomes. Opportunities for people to influence – whoever is affected by it. Using different techniques to encourage participation – never one technique - needs a package”

“Open governance.”

“.. thought they probably did have a policy on stakeholder involvement and it is on a website. There is certainly a lot of information on stakeholder involvement on our website. A key objective for the FC includes community engagement.”

“...[stakeholder involvement is] vitally important and the written policy has been around for a while (Building Trust with Communities) - it acts as a guiding framework as it recognises that is no one way of doing things....Have stakeholder strategy and consultation plan.”

“Yes, we have the New Forest prospectus – identifies value of partnerships and how better partnerships can sustain commoning and grazing”

7.7 It was clear that these organisations are carrying out quite a lot of stakeholder involvement, both generally and specifically in the New Forest. The table below shows some of the issues that organisations are engaged with.

	Awareness raising	Public involvement	Engagement with representatives of groups	Statutory engagement
Environment Agency	Going to the New Forest show; Fly tipping campaigns; part of the CAMs process – leaflets etc.	CAMs, CFMPs, SMPs, issuing consents	Life3 WBMF; Rural Pathfinder, EA has a list of twenty key stakeholders and land managers and they engage with them on a regular basis.	Catchment abstraction management plans; Planning issues with Hampshire County Council
The Verderers		Presentments to the Verderers court	WBMF; Progress	

	Awareness raising	Public involvement	Engagement with representatives of groups	Statutory engagement
National Trust		Around specific sites e.g. Foxbury EIA	WBMF; Progress;	EIA
Forestry Commission (regulatory)	Going to New Forest Show; liaising with landowners	FDP plans, EIA		Felling licences, Environmental Impact Assessment
New Forest District council		Use of citizen's panels	Local Strategic Partnership	Community Strategy; Local Development Framework

7.8 These activities range from ad hoc meetings and conversations with key stakeholders, appearances at local agricultural shows, through to structured engagement processes around projects, plans and strategies

7.9 In terms of resources to carry out stakeholder involvement the FC has two members of staff who work on the regulatory side of the New Forest and that includes stakeholder involvement. It was thought to be adequate at the moment but if any more stakeholder involvement is required then it won't be. The Environment Agency have started time recording for stakeholder involvement so it will be possible to see how much time is spent. It was thought that increasingly more time will need to be invested in stakeholder involvement.

How effective is the stakeholder involvement of other organisations?

7.10 All engagement is seen to be making a difference in the following ways:

i) Justifying work

"Makes it a lot easier to justify work being carried out."

ii) Getting the message across

"It gets the message across about woodland management"

iii) Efficiency

"Working with EN to deal with customers increased efficiency"

"With respect to EN, they help us carry out work and provide funding."

iv) Reducing conflict

“From a habitat management / operations side if they don’t bring public with them then they would be fighting angry people

v) Increasing trust

“If work is shown by example then there is quite a bit of trust, not 100% but not bad”

vi) Understanding public opinion

“It is very difficult to have a complete picture of what the public thinks but panels give a good indication of public’s view. This can be a reality check. Could identify options.....Consultation results can help resolve the battle between cost and quality. We can’t assume the public always want to pay less; sometimes they want more quality even if it is at a higher price. Very useful to test the water.”

7.11 A range of initiatives were considered to be going well:

i) the research/consultation focused panels at the NFDC,

“Citizen Panel – well-used by services; credence with politicians; been there for some time. May need to introduce new concepts.....Young peoples’ Panel...Focus groups more satisfactory than surveys because face-to-face. Two way dialogue and developing ideas and giving ideas to the Council

ii) presentments and public meetings

“The idea of 'presentments' to the Court are good for the soul of the forest. Allows people to speak their mind. Get it off their chest.”

“Public meetings – tend to be positive – public are happy once they understand what is being done.”

iii) three research projects: Rural Pathfinder , Life 3/WBMF and to some degree the Progress project.

“Rural Pathfinder – working well – there is a coherent plan of initiatives with clear milestones so that they are confident as a group that will be able to deliver on it.”

7.12 The National Trust consultation over the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Foxbury area was also considered to be working well.

7.13 In terms of what was considered to be going not so well the following were mentioned:

*“Public register is not working and very few people know about it. The FC rely on LAs **which does not always work either**”*

“Communications review at NFDC concluded face to face contact was essential. Need to communicate with people in a way they want to be communicated with. Need to understand different groups communication needs. Email organisationally efficient but not very effective at getting responses/ inputs.”

“The LIFE2 Water Basin Forum was an FC body that from commoners’ perspective didn’t work very well.”

“There are also some examples of where working separately from EN was not a good idea – it is critical to work together, not just enjoyable or a “nice to have”

“All levels of local authorities are dealing with the same communities. There are 37 different parish councils. Find different levels of local authorities are trying to engage with the same community at the same time (or close to). Need to join that up. Parish / district / county councils need to work together more

- 7.14 As well as asking participants what aspects of their work they felt to be effective they were also asked if they evaluated their stakeholder involvement in any way, suggesting that overall the organisations do not have systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their stakeholder involvement .

“We generally do not have a system in place to assess our effectiveness on a day to day basis or the staff to administer one – we rely on feedback when we get it. We occasionally provide feedback forms at important meetings (something we could do more often).”

“... not sure if they do assess effectiveness.... do review the stakeholder plan taking on board comments; have feedback forms at events. “

“Good question! The NT doesn’t!don’t know but in terms of successful partnerships the NT is seen as a good partner and a bit more ‘off the wall’ than government organisations”

- 7.15 However, when questioned about how these organisations learn from their experiences it is clear that for two that they do have processes in place to share and reflect on good practice in stakeholder involvement:

“Post project appraisals – review how a project has gone – every project has a communications plan which includes internal communications – share good practice within the region and nationally through quarterly reviews and that could include stakeholder engagement . Last month their communications plan was taken on board by neighbouring area”

“Technical meetings and meetings on a national basis where good practice is shared – stakeholder engagement is discussed share informally with volunteer groups as well e.g. NT”

What potential is there for joint future work on stakeholder involvement?

- 7.16 In general joint working was considered to be a good thing with comments varying from general endorsement through to the naming of specific initiatives where joint working would be useful:

“Yes it [joint working] is the way forward”

“Nice if it was more joint working so that people are not re-inventing the wheel especially for SE England and getting invited to things.”

Flood Maintenance; CFMPs; WLMPs. Local land management frameworks – Countryside Agency/Natural England - have not been piloted in New Forest”

“Heritage Lottery Fund bid – FC leading with NT; Pathfinder Project; Single Farm Payment – Countryside Stewardship. Schemes – the NT expects Natural England involvement, there will be significant funding for restoration work and management of commons.”

“Want the LDF to be positive tool for helping to deliver the Community Strategy. That could be an opportunity to work with the FC, if they might get involved in LDF outcomes? The FC could be more active on the LSP.”

“Naturally we are keen to do more joint working if it is going to achieve a target....Deer control..”

Summary

- 7.17 The interviews with staff from other organisations provide a useful perspective on engagement activities across the New Forest. It is clear that there is a wide range of stakeholder involvement activities being carried out with a wide range of stakeholders. The types of activities range from provision of information through to dialogue (e.g. talking with landowners). Activities that enable people to be heard e.g. public meetings and presentations are also considered useful.
- 7.18 Inevitably, different organisations are likely to be engaging with many of the same stakeholders. However, many of the engagement activities are carried out around specific plans and projects, making the engagement purposeful but making joint working less straightforward and not taking advantage of the potential to reduce duplication.
- 7.19 Each of the organisations interviewed were familiar with the term stakeholder and it is clear that whilst not all of them have written policies, stakeholder involvement is clearly part of their processes and ways of working. With respect to evaluation, although there are few formal systems of stakeholder involvement evaluation in place

most organisations have project review processes and structures for sharing good practice within their organisations.

- 7.20 All those interviewed were already working with the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders and there is clearly potential for streamlining external consultations and contacts, and some specific opportunities.

8. DISCUSSION

Summary of findings

- 8.1 It is clear that there is a wide range of stakeholder forums in the New Forest, each with quite specific focus, either in terms of what type of forest is under discussion e.g. inclosures or Open Forest (FDP and OFAC) or in terms of what activities are being managed e.g. recreation and conservation (PROGRESS).
- 8.2 These forums are mixed in terms of whether they are permanent or temporary. There are no formal links between these groups although there are many informal links as there is overlap in terms of personnel i.e. some people sit on many groups.
- 8.3 Forums have grown up organically, some have a very long history e.g. NFCP, with newer ones developing around specific projects and issues e.g. WBMF.
- 8.4 In terms of structure and process these forums are largely towards the consultation end of the participation spectrum. This in itself should not be seen as a criticism especially as for four of the five groups the objectives are clearly specified and what is expected of members appears to be quite clear. Membership is by invitation only and focuses on stakeholders only, not members of the public.
- 8.5 The process of meetings again is largely a traditional one with agendas set by a few key people, meetings chaired, minutes circulated and designated time for discussion. Small groups are used specifically within the FDP process but within quite a clear overall structure. One interesting unique aspect to these groups is that these meetings are complemented by site visits. This enables members to be able to see what is happening, literally, on the ground and provides opportunities for informal discussions of issues. These visits act as an invaluable check on the extent to which what is discussed and decided within meetings is being implemented.
- 8.6 Forums appear to be well focussed, to deliver against their objectives and to be effective in their own terms. Meetings are well run and well attended in the main. There was no sense of dissatisfaction about the way the current forums work other than a sense that there was some overlap and some interests missing.
- 8.7 However, it is clear that there is little relationship between these different groups and this increases the danger of duplication. In addition, reporting back to other organisations is not planned or systematic and this limits their contribution to the wider governance of the New Forest. There is no obvious overall strategy which they are part of, either in terms of a strategy to engage with the full range of stakeholders within the New Forest or in terms of a strategy that covers the whole of the New Forest both in geography and in content. While the areas that are focussed on are well covered this means that there are gaps in terms of coverage. For example as far as we have been able to ascertain there is no long term strategy for land

management in the Open Forest that might be comparable to the Forest Design Plan which focuses on the inclosures. Also, whilst the FDP is strategic in the sense of it covering a longer time frame (50 – 100 years) it remains focussed at the local level in terms of scale, with each inclosure being discussed at a detailed level.

- 8.8 The specific nature of the FDP is a positive attribute as it means that the objectives of the forum are very clear and achievable, but this specificity is also a limiting factor. The convenor of the FDP forum and some of the interviewed members felt that there needed to be a better “balance” in terms of representation on the forum and for that reason one member had been recruited to represent recreation interests. However, the nature of the objectives (focussed) coupled with the level of detail of the plan means that it is not really possible to satisfactorily include new interests or rather their inclusion may cause the forum to question the initial objective of the FDP, which could be creative and enable the FDP to further evolve whilst building on the good work of its development.
- 8.9 The other forums seem to function similarly, relying on the expert knowledge of the constituent stakeholders, making them expert advisory groups, with the possible exception of the NFCP. New groups that develop have taken on the same format and structure.
- 8.10 So many of the same stakeholders are involved in the various forums, there is a danger (and it is already happening to some extent) that some members will drop out and/or express 'consultation fatigue' at being involved in so many different meetings.
- 8.11 Some interests are clearly missing, and some of the key issues of sustainable development are not fully covered. At present, wildlife and conservation interests appear to predominate and that is affecting the way the forums are perceived as well as influencing the priorities the forums agree upon.
- 8.12 Things are changing in the New Forest but also in the wider national context, as public and stakeholder involvement becomes more important and more widespread. As a result, there are various other engagement structures being developed locally (including the LSP and other local authority initiatives, and the New Forest National Park consultation plans). It is important that this changing context is recognised in anything the Forestry Commission does to make plans for the future.

Improving current practice

- 8.13 Throughout the research the view has been expressed that although the forums work fairly well on their own terms there is a sense that the “same old faces” are seen at all the meetings and that key interests are not represented or their views heard and the forums are currently at the “consultation” end of the participation scale. The forums work pretty well but they are not maximising the benefits that the Forestry Commission could get for a similar outlay of resources if they had a more strategic approach that minimised overlap, got a wider range of local interest involved. In this

section the issues around increasing participation of stakeholders and members of the public are discussed.

8.14 To begin with there are two main circumstances under which there may be a case for moving up the participation spectrum:

- i) If it were felt that there were a need to encourage others, currently not involved, to start to get involved as it is generally recognised that 'level of influence' is one of the main factors that affect people's willingness to get, and stay, involved.
- ii) Longer term relationships are usually improved by greater sharing of power and responsibility, moving towards a much more 'partnership' approach, which would have benefits in terms of sharing responsibilities.

8.15 From discussions through the project it would seem that there is certainly a desire amongst some of those interviewed to encourage more people in the New Forest to be involved with its management and activities. Given this it is useful to consider the pros and cons of being more participative

8.16 In general we would suggest that the “pros” of being more participative would include:

- i) Greater input and willingness of others to join in with / share responsibility for the work that needs to be done
- ii) Wider legitimacy for the work the Forestry Commission wants to do, because it would involve a wide range of others who are affected by what is done and thus they would share in arguing the case for what is done / needs to be done
- iii) A mechanism for local accountability
- iv) Access to more expert knowledge (including on local social and economic issues which will be currently not taken into account - and need to be in working towards sustainable development of the first); could include all the social, cultural, political issues etc etc (which would include values)
- v) Conflict could be minimised by discussion that identifies potential areas of disagreement early on and tackling those and thus avoiding these issues growing into major problems
- vi) Good reputation for listening and being sensitive to the full range of interests in the forest.

8.17 The “cons” might include:

- i) The need for resources to manage greater participation (people to organise meetings, make new contacts, feedback to people, meeting costs, publicity etc etc
- ii) The need for training for Forestry Commission staff in a wider range of participatory techniques
- iii) The Forestry Commission would be held to account, and questioned, by a wider range of interests than currently
- iv) The Forestry Commission would have to be more transparent about how it sets priorities, makes decisions etc

8.18 However, the possible reasons for changing towards a more participative approach would need to be clearly examined and discussed through the development of a coherent strategy for stakeholder and public engagement in the management of the New Forest to be developed by the Forestry Commission in conjunction, where appropriate, with key organisations in the New Forest. This strategy should be developed with the participation of stakeholders and its aim would be to enable joined-up thinking and working in the New Forest.

8.19 If a stakeholder and public engagement strategy were to be developed, the key issue to be considered is the objectives. Understanding the objectives of stakeholder and public involvement is considered the most important factor in whether the involvement is successful or not.

“Although there are many good reasons for doing participation, the most important factor for practitioners is to be clear about why they are doing it in a particular instance, to communicate that to all participants and to agree it with them. Lack of clarity is one of the biggest causes of participation failure.....” (Involve, 2005, p 20)

8.20 Five main objectives for stakeholder and public involvement in current public policy circles have been identified (Involve, 2005)

- i) Governance – e.g. strengthening democratic legitimacy, accountability, stimulating active citizenship;
- ii) Social cohesion and social justice – e.g. building relationships, ownership and social capital, equity, empowerment
- iii) Improved quality of services – more efficient and better services, especially public services, that meet real needs and reflect community values
- iv) Capacity building and learning – for individuals and organisations, to provide a basis for future growth and development and, especially, to help build stronger communities;

v) Response to demand from the public

8.21 The forums examined in this research have some of these as their objectives, but only in a very limited way. Currently, we would suggest, the primary reason across all the forums for involvement of stakeholders is best captured by Objective 3, that is, to assist the various statutory organisations in carrying out their work effectively. Objective 1 to some extent is also pertinent as the issue of accountability is one that also concerns the Forestry Commission.

8.22 It is vital for the Forestry Commission to consider the reasons for the involvement of the different stakeholders across these forums, and to consider what involvement members of the public might have in any of these processes. Once this has been debated in general terms it will be important to consider objectives for stakeholder and public involvement across the many forums of the New Forest.

8.23 As a strategy for stakeholder and public engagement is developed there are some key questions that need to be considered. These include:

- i) **Who is excluded?** It is important to consider if there are stakeholders who are excluded from current processes. This could be from the perception of those within and outwith the organisation. Currently none of the forums examined in the research include members of the public. Indeed given the largely specialist nature of the different groups it would be impossible for an “ordinary” member of the public to engage effectively with the business of those groups. The stakeholder analysis workshop identified several groups who are currently not involved: young people. Visitors to the New Forest, and local businesses.

NFCP – this research did not find that there were any organisations who wanted to be part of the NFCP and who are currently excluded, but as noted, membership is not open to all, organisations must fulfil certain criteria and be approved by the NPA, so in that sense it is exclusive.

OFAC – this has a very narrow membership and from within there was no concern that any other organisations should be involved. However, we did not talk to people who are not involved with OFAC, and we do not have information about how that committee is perceived.

FDP forum – there was a sense that there was not enough involvement of social and economic interests (specifically, forestry businesses). However, as noted the narrow specialist focus of the FDP makes it harder to be inclusive as members are required to have detailed knowledge of the issues in order to contribute. For the FDP forum to become more inclusive, it will need to change its objectives.

WBMF and Progress – again there was not a sense from those involved in the forums that there were people excluded from the forums.

- ii) **Who sets the agendas?** Currently the agendas for each of the forums are set by the institutions running the forums rather than the participants and therefore do not necessarily meet their needs. This was clear in the FDP forum from the interviewee who represented recreation interests. Although he considered the FDP to be a good process and plan, if recreation was to be integrated fully into the plan then the objectives would have to change. Agenda setting by those who run the forums can be a positive for the institutions as they retain control over the forums and the involvement of stakeholders is there to help them do their job well. However, it will lead to the exclusion of stakeholders who feel that the forums do not meet their needs.
- iii) **Is there potential for conflict between stakeholders?** A more participative approach would ensure that conflict was examined and worked with such that any solution would have the buy in of a wide number of stakeholders. From our research it is clear that the New Forest elicits strong passions amongst people but within the forums it seems to be contained. We did not look at how those forums are perceived by people who are not members so we do not have evidence to make a judgement on, but from what we understand of past issues it might be that there will be issues where it is beneficial to use a more participative approach in order to manage conflict constructively.
- iv) **Do all stakeholders participate as equals?** It was clear from the comments from convenors that although stakeholders attend forums as equals, they do not participate equally. This is not surprising where the currency is knowledge, and the processes are not designed to share that knowledge, rather it becomes as one participant described a “knowledge Olympics”.
- v) **What can stakeholders influence?** It is vital that there is a discussion of what is open to influence within each strategy and plan so that engagement processes are meaningful and transparent, otherwise participants will very soon lose interest and consider the activity of little value. This is one of the factors in “consultation fatigue”. The box below provides some information on how to prevent consultation fatigue.

How to avoid consultation fatigue

- Be clear about why you are involving stakeholders in a process, so that they know why they are at the forum
- Be clear over what can and can't be influenced by stakeholders. If there is little to be directly influenced then make sure that what can be influenced is clear to participants.
- Make sure the process of involvement shows how stakeholders' input to outcomes and processes makes a difference
- Talk to stakeholders about why and how they want to be involved, is this the right forum for them?

- Link time limited forums to longer term ones so that there is continuity with wider issues
- Use key specialists to lead working groups that report back to wider forums e.g. link the FDP forum and OFAC more closely to the NFCP.
- Make what is being discussed of interest to all those involved. That might not be possible all the time, but if it is not possible any of the time then it is time to ask why those issues are being discussed and/or why certain stakeholders are being involved.
- Make stakeholders' involvement time limited e.g. 5 years on a forum at a time, with people having a break of a year before they come onto a forum again. This can involve a wider range of people as if they know how long it for that may make involvement seem less onerous. Also, it can avoid "capture" of forums by people who want to be involved over very long periods of time. This issue would need full discussion as it could be interpreted as an organisation being exclusive.

vi) **What methods would be best for carrying out engagement?**

"Every practitioner interviewed for this research agreed that the choice of method is less important in determining the success or failure of a process than the institutional context, the resources committed, and the detailed design. All methods have their strengths and weaknesses and the key is to select the right one for the particular purpose and context, rather than to choosing one method as a 'favourite' and using it all the time" Involve, p 50.

8.24 Consideration of the methods of each of the forum can be useful, but any improvements have to be seen in context, as often concerns about how meetings are run reflect wider issues. As noted earlier, the forums all use presentations with question and answer sessions and site visits. In addition, the FDP forum uses discussion groups to focus on maps which helps ensure that participants are able to fully discuss proposals. This method is very useful to help those less confident about speaking in large forums to have their say, and should thus encourage them to stay with the process and make a positive input. Involve (2005) discuss a range of participatory processes together with case studies and review them against the following questions:

- (1) How many participants can the method involve effectively?
- (2) What type of participant does the method require?
- (3) How much does a process of this type typically cost?
- (4) How much time does this method require to be used effectively?

(5) Does the method match the outputs and outcomes required?

(6) Where on the spectrum of participation the method works best.

It is useful to read through what processes might be appropriate for different issues and objectives.(Involve, 2005). In addition, some examples of good practice stakeholder and public involvement are included in Appendix 12. These are from the Interact website (www.interactnetworks.co.uk/casestudies.htm)

8.25 It is clear that there are many enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable stakeholders involved with the New Forest and its management. As noted earlier it is a place that arouses strong passions and reactions. This is a key strength. Any changes that might be suggested with respect to stakeholder and public involvement will need to be carried out in partnership with these stakeholders. If radical change is to take place in terms of the Forestry Commission's structure of stakeholder and public involvement and plan making in the New Forest then it will have to be done sensitively and professionally.

Next steps

8.26 These next steps focus on how the Forestry Commission might improve its approach to, and practice of stakeholder and public involvement in the New Forest.

Develop a stakeholder and public involvement strategy for the New Forest

8.27 A strategy for involving stakeholders and members of the public either from the perspective of just the Forestry Commission and its activities or from the wider perspective of all the key actors in the New Forest (NPA, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and English Nature) should be developed. This would ensure that people are involved effectively, inclusively and appropriately across the wide range of activities that are carried out in the New Forest. It would ensure that all the forums are considered in terms of their objectives for involving stakeholders currently and in the future as well as considering which groups might currently be excluded and how they could be included. The previous section provides a starting point for how that strategy could be developed.

8.28 One focus for the development of a forest wide stakeholder and public engagement strategy could be the **National Park Management Plan**. A stakeholder and public involvement strategy for this plan which focussed on why, who, and when in terms of involvement could take into account existing forums and what they might bring to the management plan as well as considering what new approaches might be needed to draw in key excluded groups e.g. young people, visitors (groups mentioned in the stakeholder analysis workshop)

8.29 The interim National Park Management Plan adopted by the NPA is a strategic plan that covers the New Forest National Park and covers land management,

conservation, recreation and access issues. This is currently being revised and will involve all major stakeholders in producing the first National Park Management Plan by 2009. This will link, as far as possible, with other processes such as Crown Lands Management Plan, SAC Management Plan, Verderers Policies, Community Strategy and LDF Core Strategy and ensure consistent strategic policies across the area.

- 8.30 In the revision of this, effort should be put into understanding how current and future plans could and do complement and overlap with each other, which plans have to be done and which do not, and where there is flexibility in what a plan can look like (e.g. FDP does not have to focus only on the inclosures). Any such changes will affect what are the most appropriate arrangements for stakeholder and public involvement.
- 8.31 The Forest of Dean has a strategic plan for the woodlands and they have developed a process to engage stakeholders, Forestry Commission staff and members of the public. A workshop design has been developed, the outputs of which then feed into the development of the strategic plan. It would be useful to examine how that process has worked and to see what might be applicable to the New Forest situation (see Appendix 11 for details)

Streamline activities in the New Forest

- 8.32 The development of a Forest Design Plan that covers the whole of the New Forest National Park area: inclosures and Open Forest, land that is managed by the Forestry Commission and land that is managed by other land owners (including privately owned land) would be a step towards streamlining forum activities in the New Forest This would be led by the Forestry Commission but developed with the other key stakeholders. This could help address the need expressed by some interviewees for a forum that brings together land managers across the whole of the New Forest.
- 8.33 Project forums e.g. 'Life 3' and 'Progress' that are time limited should be linked directly to a permanent forum so that the learning from that project forum in terms of partnership building and relationship development can be built upon. Project ideas can then be developed within a permanent forum enabling greater input of stakeholders to project aims and objectives before funding is agreed thereby ensuring a greater project ownership by the stakeholders of the project once it is started.
- 8.34 As an example, the box below provides a description of how consultation has worked in the Forest of Dean over the last decade:

*“Over the last decade significant consultation with stakeholders has taken place within the Dean in a number of ways. There is a broad scale **Forest Forum** that discusses issues across the forest. This meets twice per year. Specialist interests are dealt with through individual panels covering areas such as **conservation, archaeology and recreation**. In addition to this general an ongoing consultation Individual management plans covering geographical areas (Forest Design Plans) have a separate and formal consultation procedure that identifies a range of stakeholders for each plan and which forms part of the Forestry Commission assessment of the plans in a regulatory sense. The general public are also invited to comment on these. While Forest Design Plans (FDPs) show how the areas of the forest will change over time; it is difficult for stakeholders to ascertain what the larger scale impacts area across the entire forest as a whole. Nor are they entirely sure what the main drivers are for the development of FDPs or recreational expansion, etc. “Description of consultation with stakeholders in the Forest of Dean from a note on the Strategic Planning Exercise, 2006 (Appendix 11).*

- 8.35 Work with existing groups and organisations, specifically with respect to social and economic interests. For example, the Forestry Commission should form a link with the appropriate Community Action Network (CAN) / working group on the New Forest Local Strategic Partnership; CANS are often chaired by organisations outside the New Forest District Council (NFDC provides the secretariat for the LSP).

Improve practice within current forums

- 8.36 Review the objectives of each of the forums with the participants. Specifically, consider the lifecycle of the FDP forum and whether it needs to change its focus in this revision phase.
- 8.37 Each forum led by the Forestry Commission should put in place a review of its activities and processes so that it can be monitored by its members. This would not have to be onerous, and might involve a reflection / review session at one meeting each year (covering, for example, what is working well, and what needs to change), and possibly a questionnaire to all members once a year to ensure a wider range of views is canvassed than can be achieved at a single meeting.

“Coverage of the review

Success criteria for the review will need to be developed. These are likely to include:

- Whether the process met its own objectives and originally agreed purpose / aims;
- Whether the process met explicit and implicit demands from participants;
- Whether the process met standards of good practice in participatory working.

In addition, the review may wish to cover:

- Whether the level of participation (e.g. consultation or partnership) was appropriate;
- Whether the methods and techniques were appropriate and worked as expected;
- Whether the level and range of responses from participants legitimised the exercise;
- Whether the costs were as expected and reasonable (staff time, money etc);
- Whether what was produced and organised (outputs e.g. documents, meetings) was appropriate and worked well;
- Whether the ways in which the responses from the process (e.g. recommendations) were dealt with were appropriate and effective;
- What was achieved during and after the process (outcomes).” (p. 48 Involve, 2005)

8.38 Convenors of Forestry Commission forums should be given some training in the processes of stakeholder and public involvement, and in facilitation skills to enable them to use a wider range of methods for running meetings, workshops and other events. The Forestry Commission should consider the use of independent facilitators for particularly contentious issues or where trust needs to be built between stakeholders.

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APPENDIX 1: THE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL PRINCIPLES OF STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

The Environment Council (TEC) has developed a model of stakeholder dialogue over the past decade, both through practice (of designing and running stakeholder dialogue processes for public, private and voluntary sector sponsors) and through the development of a successful facilitation training course. TEC's training manual for stakeholder dialogue outlines 12 principles for stakeholder dialogue. These principles are given below.

- **Stakeholder Dialogue is an inclusive process, involving all interest groups that have a concern about the outcome.** This includes the decision-makers, those directly affected by the decision and those who could support or obstruct its implementation. Dialogue will often include those who are usually excluded.
- **Dialogue meetings are designed and facilitated by independent professional facilitators who have no vested interest in the final outcome.** The facilitator will not take a position on the substantive issues. Their role is to ensure that the process is even handed and that meetings are as productive as possible – for example, avoiding domination by particular individuals or interest groups. The facilitator will also control the destructive behaviour that often undermines the value of typical 'town hall' meetings on difficult issues.
- **Responsibility for the agenda and the process is shared among all stakeholders.** Many processes fail from the outset because the agenda does not meet the needs of participants. In a dialogue process, the facilitator will help the participants to develop an agenda and work programme that addresses the issues of real concern.
- **Dialogue delivers practical solutions to real problems** – and solutions that often stick, since the process maximises stakeholder buy-in. It is particularly appropriate for high-conflict or complex issues.
- **People attend as equals.** Stakeholder dialogue aims to create a level playing field for participation.
- **Dialogue is a two-way process.** Traditional, pre-prepared presentations will be kept to an absolute minimum in the interest of allowing more time for two-way communication.
- **The process allows for interests, values, feelings, needs and fears.** Unlike some consultation processes, stakeholder dialogue values everything that is said without pre-judging what is 'real', or 'important', or 'rational'.
- **The process seeks to encourage new understanding and improved relationships.** These 'invisible products' are often crucial in enabling participants to move forward together or to implement the outcome of the process.
- **Stakeholder dialogue processes are recorded visibly and transparently, with stakeholders having control over the content and accuracy of the recording.**

Facilitators normally record meetings on large sheets of paper, and produce a record in the form of photographs or an exact transcription of what has been publicly recorded.

- **Dialogue processes seek to identify and build on common ground.** Traditional processes, by contrast, tend to focus on (and therefore magnify) disagreement, to the extent that participants frequently do not realise there are significant areas on which they may already agree.
- **The process will seek to move the focus from the past to the future.** This helps to avoid unproductive blaming and creates a shared responsibility for the way forward. (However, there will often be a need for an initial period in which past grievances, real or imagined, can be aired.)
- **Dialogue processes are iterative in their approach.** The same issues may need to be addressed more than once to allow for the development of shared solutions. Traditional methods, on the other hand, tend to rely on 'snapshot' consultations or set-piece events that do not encourage participants to move away from the initial negotiating positions.

APPENDIX 2: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Phase 1, Part A

1. Are the right stakeholders involved?

- how are stakeholders identified and selected (and who does the selection?)
- what are the key interest groups?
- who is involved in the forums
- is the balance of interests in the group right; if not, what is wrong / missing (and how could this be resolved)
- who else should be involved but are not; why should they be involved

2. Are the roles of stakeholders fully understood by them and by convenors?

- what are the roles of the stakeholders
- do the stakeholders formally agree the roles and are these recorded
- do stakeholders agree those are the right roles, for others and for them
- what needs to change to improve understanding and agreement on roles

3. What is the role of the forum in relation to other forums?

- If this question is put to stakeholders who attend more than one consultation group, could we ask them to compare and contrast the different groups and whether the style is appropriate to the area of discussion.
- how does the role of the forum fit in with the roles of the other NF consultation groups
- With which other forums does the forum interact most
- how successful is that interaction

4. Are the objectives of the forum clear, transparent and acceptable to stakeholders?

- what are the stated objectives
- are there any other objectives that exist that have not been explicitly stated (e.g. hopes / aspirations)
- who set the objectives and how
- what role did the stakeholders have in setting objectives
- do stakeholders understand and agree the objectives
- do stakeholders share the objectives
- is the work of the forum consistently linked back to the overall objectives
- do they have different motivations; if so, what are they

5. What level of involvement is expected (from information provision, through consultation to partnership and devolved decision-making) of the stakeholders?

- is the level of involvement required by the convenor clear to stakeholders
- do the stakeholders agree this is an appropriate level; if not, what would work better
- if stakeholders have a decision making influence, by what method is a group decision agreed
- do stakeholders know the extent of their influence in the process

6. Are the methods / techniques used in the forum meetings appropriate to the circumstances (purpose and context)?

- how are the meetings run: what was done and what was produced (e.g.information provision, brainstorming, etc)
- how are decisions made in the forum and subsequently (and by whom)
- who writes the agenda
- what worked well, and why
- what worked less well, and why
- what changes are needed / gaps that need to be filled / other methods that would work better
- how is communication managed within the forum and between meetings

7. Are the stakeholder forums effective?

- do they meet their stated and implicit objectives; if not, what has not been achieved
- do they satisfy the objectives / motivations of the stakeholders; if not, in what ways
- what do stakeholders get out of being involved in the forums (specifics e.g. contacts, better relationships, knowing what is going on, networking)
- do stakeholders feel able to have their say; what helps / hinders this
- do stakeholder views influence policy / activities under discussion; if so, how; if not, what stops this happening
- are stakeholders clear about level of influence they have on the policies / activities under discussion and are they happy with it
- do the forums continue to make positive progress on issues of shared concern
- do all stakeholders participate as equals and if not why
- do stakeholders have sufficient information and resources to participate fully (or perhaps there is too much)
- do the forums duplicate activity elsewhere (details needed)
- are sufficient numbers of stakeholder regularly involved to make the forums operate effectively:
 - how many stakeholders attend regularly and what prevents regular attendance
 - what methods are used to encourage regular attendance
 - what is done to ensure adequate representation if attendance is low
- how many / different interests are needed; why are these not involved now

- if there are not sufficient numbers, why not (e.g. have people dropped out - if so, why; not enough people invited etc)
- what have been the positive impacts of the forums (what has worked well)
- what have been the least effective aspects of the forums (what did not work well)
- are there any gaps in what forums do that could be filled (what could they do that they currently do not do)
- what other changes need to be made to make the forums more effective
- does the forum communicate with people outside of its forum. For example, members of the public, representatives of other forums. Why/Why not?
- how is that communication carried out?
- does the forum have a plan of engagement? Is it reviewed?
- does the forum have named members that are responsible for consultation? Are they trained? How?

8. Are adequate resources available for the forums?

- what resources are given to this (e.g. staff time, funding)
- are payments made to encourage attendance
- are more resources needed; if so, for what
- what specific additional value would be achieved by increased investment of time or money
- are there ways of making better use of existing resources

9. What are the lessons overall from the forums

- what specific and actionable recommendations can be made for the future
- how will action be ensured

Phase 1, Part B

1. Are the objectives of the event clear, transparent and acceptable to all participants

- what are the stated objectives and are they recorded and distributed
- are there any other objectives that exist that have not been explicitly stated (e.g. hopes / aspirations)
- who set the objectives and how
- what role did the participants have in setting objectives
- did participants agree the objectives
- do participants share the objectives
- do they have different motivations for getting involved; if so, what are they

2. How effective was the event

- do organisers / participants think were the objectives met (stated, implicit and desired)
- what has the event given participants (specifics e.g. information, better understanding, new contacts, networking)
- were participants satisfied with the event (very, quite, not very, not at all); why / why not
- what were the most positive aspects of the event (what worked best) - according to organisers and participants
- what were the least positive aspects (what worked least well) - according to organisers and participants
- what was needed but did not happen (gaps) - according to organisers and participants
- how does this event compare with similar activities run by others:
- what is the best thing about this event
- what is the best thing about those events run by others
- what lessons can be drawn from this

Phase 2

1. What are other agencies doing on stakeholder involvement?

- what is the philosophy of stakeholder involvement used by other statutory agencies
- do they have any statutory requirements in addition to that
- what stakeholder involvement initiatives are they running; plan to run in the near future
- what level of resources do they have to do this work (e.g. staff, funding)
- what methods of stakeholder involvement do they use
- how might their work in this field evolve in

2. How effective is their stakeholder involvement

- what is working well, and why
- what is working less well, and why
- how do they assess the effectiveness of their current work on stakeholder involvement
- how do they learn from and develop their work in this field

3. What potential is there for joint future work on stakeholder involvement?

- do they currently work with other agencies on stakeholder involvement
- are they interested in joint future work
- are there any specific initiatives that could lead to future joint work with FC.

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Name	Position	Organisation
Alan Adams	Forestry Contractor	Independent
Anthony Pasmore	Elected Verderer	Independent
Bruce Rothnie	Head of Recreation and Strategy	Forestry Commission
Bryan Boulton	Head of Environment Futures and Sustainability	Hampshire County Council
Dave Morris	Open Forest Planning Officer	Forestry Commission
Diana Westerhoff	Conservation Officer	English Nature
Emma Rigglesworth	Head of Sustainable Development	New Forest National Park Authority
John Durnell	Head of Conservation	Wildlife Trust
Russell Wright	Deputy Team Manager Hampshire & Isle of Wight Team	English Nature
Helen Wood	Recreation and Community Manager	Forestry Commission
John Thackray	Member	Ramblers Association
Keith Smith	Head of Performance and Strategic Development	New Forest District Council
Martin Devine	Assistant Director Leisure Services	New Forest District Council
Michael Seddon	Deputy Surveyor	Forestry Commission
Nick Evans	Senior Planning Officer (Management Plan)	New Forest New Parks Authority
Oliver Crossthwaite-Eyre	Official Verderer	Verderers of the New Forest
Patrick Stephens	Area Manager Hampshire, Surrey & West Sussex	Forestry Commission
Paul Batty	Planning and Corporate Services Manager	Environment Agency
Phil Marshall	Countryside Manager	National Trust
Simon Smith	Planning Officer	Forestry Commission

APPENDIX 4: CONVENOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Role of the Forum

1. What is the role of your Forum within the New Forest?
2. How does the role of the Forum fit in with the roles of the other New Forest consultation groups, such as, OFAC and FDPF?
3. With which other fora does the Forum interact most?
 - a. How do you interact?
 - b. How successful is that interaction(s)?
4. What are the stated objectives of your Forum?
5. Are there any other objectives that exist that have not been explicitly stated? For example, hopes / aspirations
6. Who set the stated objectives?
 - a. How?
7. What role did the members have in setting objectives?
8. Is the work of the Forum consistently linked back to the overall objectives?
 - a. If yes, how?
 - b. If not, why not?
9. Would you say that the Forum meets the stated and implicit objectives in the work of the past 6 months?
 - e. If yes, please describe
 - f. If not, what has not been achieved?
10. In general would you say that the Forum meets it's stated and implicit objectives?
 - a. Please explain
 - b. If not, why not?
11. In general, do you think that the Forum performs well?

Members

12. Who belongs to the Forum?
13. How are members identified and selected?

- a. Who does the selection?
 - b. How?
14. What are the key interest groups / sectors represented on the Forum? For example, environment, local community, local business
15. In your opinion, are there other groups that should be involved in the Forum, but currently are not?
16. Are there groups were previously involved in the Forum but are currently not?
17. Do you feel that there are any interests that are under-represented in terms of the Forum?
- a. If yes, why?
 - b. If yes, what can be done to address this?
18. What are the main roles of the members in terms of the Forum? For example, giving information, sharing / providing information, feeding back information from the Forum to other organisations.
- a. Are these roles formally agreed and recorded?
 - b. Do you feel all members are clear about their own and other member's roles?
 - c. Do you feel that the members are happy with these roles?
 - d. If not, what do you think needs to change?
19. What do you think members get out of being involved in the Forum? Specifics, for example, contacts, better relationships, knowing what is going on, networking.
20. Do you feel that members feel able to have their say in the running of the Forum?
- a. What helps / hinders this?
21. Would you say that members' views influence policy / activities under discussion?
- a. If so, how?
 - b. If not, what stops this happening?
22. Are members clear about the level of influence they have on the policies / activities under discussion?
- a. Are they happy with it?
23. Would you say that all members participate as equals?
- a. If not why?

24. Do you feel that members have sufficient information and resources to participate fully in debate? (or perhaps there is too much)
25. Do you think that members get what they want from the Forum in terms of their own objectives / motivations for being part of the Forum?
- a. If not, in what ways?

Attendance at Meetings and Involvement

26. How often do you hold meetings?
27. Who typically attends meetings?
28. What is the proportion of members regularly involved in terms of attendance at meetings?
- a. Do you feel that the proportion attending is sufficient to operate the meeting effectively?
 - b. If no, what is the proportion required to operate effectively?
 - c. If not, why not? have people dropped out - if so, why; not enough people invited etc?
29. What prevents regular attendance?
30. What methods are used to encourage regular attendance? For examples, reminders sent, payment for attendance and / or travel
31. Do you expect members to attend every meeting?
32. Is the level of attendance expected clear to your members?
33. Do your members think that this is an appropriate level of attendance?
- If not, what do they think would work better?

Communication at Forum Meetings

34. How are the meetings run: what is done and what is produced in a typical meeting? For example, information provision, brainstorming, agenda
- a. How are meetings called?
 - b. Who writes the agenda?
 - c. How is communication managed within the meeting?
35. How are decisions made within a Forum meeting?
- a. How well does that work as a way of making decisions?

- b. Are there any changes that you think could be made to improve this process?
For example, gaps to be filled, other methods that might work better

Communication outside Forum Meetings

- 36. How is communication managed / information disseminated between Forum members between Forum meetings?
- 37. Do members communicate about the Forum with people outside the Forum. For example, members of the public, representatives of other fora.
 - a. Why/Why not?
 - b. How?
- 38. How is that communication carried out? With outside organisations, for example the general public
- 39. Does the Forum have a plan of engagement?
 - a. If yes, who does the Forum consult with?
 - b. If yes, is it reviewed?
 - c. If yes, how often?
 - d. If yes, does this plan of engagement work well?
 - e. If not, why not?
- 40. How is the Forum consultation process...
 - a. Involving?
 - b. Transparent?
 - c. Iterative?
 - d. Responsive?
- 41. Does the forum have named members that are responsible for consultation?
 - a. Are they trained?
 - b. How?
- 42. Do you think that the Forums duplicate activity elsewhere? (details needed) In terms of money and timing
- 43. Do you think that there are benefits to be gained from working with other Forums / consultation groups etc?
 - a. If yes, which groups?
 - b. If yes, in what areas would joint-working benefit your Forum?

Resources

44. What resources are given to / used by Forum? For example, staff time, funding
45. Are more resources needed?
 - a. If yes, for what?
46. What specific additional value would be achieved by increased investment of time or money?
47. Are there ways of making better use of existing resources?

Overall Effectiveness of the Forum: Lessons Learned

48. What have been the positive impacts of the Forum (what has worked well)?
49. What have been the least effective aspects of the Forum (what did not work well)?
50. Are there any gaps in what Forum(s) do that could be filled (what could they do that they currently do not do)?
51. What other changes need to be made to make the Forum(s) more effective?
 - a. If there are changes suggested, is it likely that these changes will be made?
52. More generally, do you see the role of your Forum changing in the Future? For example:
Are there any challenges that may affect the role of your Forum?

Any other comments?

53. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

APPENDIX 5: FDP MEMBER INTERVIEW (AND E-MAIL) QUESTIONS

Balance of stakeholders and interests

1. Are there other stakeholder interests you feel should be involved in the FDP forum but are not? Who? And why should they be involved?
2. Do you feel that the balance of interests in the group is right? If not, what is wrong / missing and how could this be resolved?

Roles of stakeholders

3. What do you see as your role, and that of the other stakeholders?
4. Have you and the other stakeholders formally agreed those roles and are these recorded?
5. Do you feel that these are the right roles, for others and for you? Can you say why?
6. What level of involvement do you feel is expected from you? Is that made clear to you by the convenor?
7. Do you feel that this is an appropriate level? If not, what would work better?

The role of the forum in relation to other NF groups/forums

8. What do you see as the role of the forum in relation to other consultation groups in the New Forest?
9. I understand that you are a member of more than one NF group:
 - a. What is the special contribution of the FDP, that no other groups provide?
 - b. How do the different groups compare (e.g. is the style is appropriate to the area of discussion)?
 - c. Do you feel that there is overlap between the different groups? If so, in what way?
10. Are the relationships between the different groups clear, and what are they?

Objectives

11. What do you understand are the objectives of the FDP? Do you have a copy?
12. What role did you have in setting the objectives?
13. What do you think of the objectives?

14. What are your reasons for being a member of the FDP? Does it work on those terms?
15. What do you get out of being a member of the FDP?
16. Do you feel that the forum meets its stated objectives? If not, what has not been achieved?

Meetings

17. How do the meetings work? How successful/unsuccessful would you say they are? If successful – why? If unsuccessful, why and what would improve the meetings?
18. How are decisions made in the forum? How are they followed up (e.g. to check action has been taken)?
19. What level of influence would you say you and the other members have in the decision making at the meetings?
20. How is communication managed at the meetings and between meetings?
21. Do you feel able to have your say - Yes/ No? What helps / hinders this?
22. How are issues that are regarded as not directly relevant to the FDP process managed?
23. Are you clear about how your input to the FDP process is used? What helps to use your input effectively / what causes problems?
24. Do you feel that your views influence the plan; if so, how; if not, what stops this happening?
25. Are you clear about the level of influence you have on the policies / activities under discussion? Yes/No Are you happy with that? Why/why not?
26. Do you feel that all the members participate as equals? If no, then why not?
27. Do you feel that you have sufficient information and resources to participate fully (or perhaps there is too much). What helps/hinders this?

Communication issues

28. Do you communicate about what happens in the forum to other people? Who with (e.g. members of the public, representatives of other forums)? How does that communication work?
29. Do you think the forum is effective in its communication with other stakeholders outside of the forum ... and members of the public?

General evaluation of the forum

30. Does the forum still have a valid role (e.g. continues to make useful progress on issues of shared concern)?
31. What would you say are the most effective aspects of the forum (what works well)?
32. What would you say are the least effective aspects of the forum (what does not work well)?
33. Are there any gaps in what the forum does that could be filled (what could they do that they currently do not do)? What are those? What could be done to address those?
34. Are there any other changes that you think could be make to make the forum more effective?
35. Is there anything else you want to say about how the FDP forum works?

Any other comments?

36. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

FDP Member E-mail Questions

The following questions were asked (via e-mail) of five FDP members that were considered to have infrequent attendance records at FDP meetings.

1. Please could you explain how and why you become involved with the Forest Design Plan Forum?
2. How often do you attend meetings and why? Is there anything that prevents you from attending more regularly?
3. Do you find the content of the meetings helpful? Is there anything that could be improved about the meetings? For example, format, style, content.

APPENDIX 6: 'WET AND WILD' PUBLIC EVENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 02 JUNE 2006

1. How did you find out about today's event?
2. What did you expect of the event? / What did you hope to experience? Is the event as you expected it to be?
3. Do you think that the activities offered are suitable / appropriately pitched?
4. What have your children got out of today?
5. Did you feel there were sufficient activities / things for you to do whilst your children were participating in activities?
6. Where have you come from to be here today? Would you say you are "local"?
7. Have you been to a similar or any FC event before?
8. Do you regularly attend Forestry Commission events? If yes, how does this event compare to other events you have attended?
9. Are there any events / type of events that the FC could offer that it currently does not?
10. Do you have any / any regular contact with / from the FC? If yes, what contact?
11. Do you feel you have learnt more about the Forest and the LIFE project today? If yes, what?
12. Would you come to another FC event?
13. Would you come to another similar FC event?
14. Would you recommend FC events to others?

APPENDIX 7: FORESTRY COMMISSION STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS WORKSHOP 01 JUNE 2006

Aims

The aims of the workshop were the following:

- To encourage a systematic analysis of stakeholders in and around the New Forest (using the National Park boundary) by detailing the stakeholders are, what their interests are, what relationships there are between stakeholders etc. and considering what types of engagement might be appropriate across a range of situations.
- To introduce a simple stakeholder analysis process that staff can apply in different situations and use beyond the workshop itself.

Agenda

- i) Welcome and introduction to the afternoon the wider stakeholder project, and to each other
- v) Mapping the stakeholders –who are they?
- vi) Linking the stakeholders – what are their relationships with the FC and NPA?
- vii) Future engagement processes

Session One – Mapping the stakeholders and understanding the FC and NPA links with those stakeholders

In this session the participants brainstormed all the stakeholders that they are currently working with in some engagement/consultation capacity. They wrote them onto post-its which were colour coded to represent social, economic and environmental interests. Following that, the relationships that the NPA and the FC have with those interests were categorised as formal (i.e. through a convened group or formal consultation) or informal.

These were photographed (see Annex 1). Tables 1 - 3 provide the information that came from those post-its.

Table 1: List of stakeholders with social interests

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
Commoners Defence Association	Formal	Both
New Forest Access for All	Formal	Both
New Forest Livery Yards	Formal	Both
Camping and Caravanning Club	Formal	Both
Caravan Club Ltd	Formal	Both
The Ramblers Association	Formal	Both
New Forest Equestrian Association	Formal	Both
British Horse Society	Formal	Both
New Forest District Council Tourism	Formal	Both
Government Office for the South East	Formal	Both
New Forest Dog Owner's Group	Formal	FC
New Forest Community First	Formal	NPA
SERAF	Formal	NPA
Pony Publicity Group	Formal (Local Action Group)	NPA
Northern Commoners Defence Association	Formal	NPA
Minstead Manor Waste Commoners	Formal	NPA
New Forest Trust	Informal	Both
Hampshire Field Club (archaeology)	Informal	Both
New Forest Disability Information Service	Informal	Both
Ninth Centenary Trust	Informal	Both
Disabled Ramblers	Informal	FC
CTC	Informal	FC
Riding for the Disabled	Informal	FC
Prime Groups (Informal	FC
BDS carriages	Informal	FC
Scouts	Informal	NPA
New Forest Pony and Cattle breeders	Informal	NPA
Women's Institute	Informal	NPA
Community Action Hampshire	Informal	NPA

Table 2: List of stakeholders with economic interests

	Formal/Informal	Link with NPA, FC or both
SEEDA	Formal	Both
New Forest Tourism Association	Formal	Both
Giddings Sawmill	Formal	Both
New Forest Business Association	Formal	Both
Leader and Local Action Group	Formal	NPA
Lymington Harbour Commissioners	Formal	NPA
VIRSA (village shops)	Formal (through Local Action Group)	NPA
South Hants Enterprise Agency	Formal (LAG)	NPA
National Farmers Union	Formal (LAG)	NPA
Hampshire Fayre	Formal (LAG)	NPA
Forest Holidays	Formal	FC
Local estates	Informal	Both
Brockenhurst business association	Informal	Both
Tourism South East	Informal	Both
Organic farmers	Informal	NPA
Countryside Landowners and Business Association	Informal	NPA
Chambers of commerce	Informal	NPA
Business link	Informal	NPA
Euroforest	Informal	FC
Holmsely Sawmill	Informal	FC
Soffe Sawmill	Informal	FC
East Brothers Sawmill	Informal	FC
Forest Contractors Association	Informal	FC

Table 3: List of stakeholders with environmental interests

	Formal/Informal	Links with NPA, FC or both
Environment Agency	Formal	Both
English Nature	Formal	Both
National Trust	Formal	Both
Hampshire County Council – countryside services	Formal	Both
English Heritage	Formal	Both
New Forest Association	Formal	Both
Verderers	Formal	Both
Countryside Agency/Natural England/Rural Development Service	Formal	Both
Deer Management Groups	Formal	Both
Wildlife Trusts – mainly Hampshire	Formal	Both
Association of National Park Authorities	Formal	NPA
	Informal	FC
RSPCA	Formal	NPA
	Informal	FC
Friends of the Earth	Formal	NPA
CPRE	Formal	NPA
Solent Forum	Formal	NPA
RSPB	Formal	FC
Neil Sanderson	Formal	FC
CNP	Informal	Both
Deer Society	Informal	Both
Bat Group	Informal	Both
Butterfly conservation	Informal	Both
HCT (reptiles)	Informal	Both
Farming and wildlife advisory group	Informal	NPA
Civic societies	Informal	NPA
New Forest Bird Group	Informal	FC

Once the mapping exercise had been carried out then the participants were asked to discuss where they felt there were gaps, that is, which stakeholders they felt that they would like to engage with but were currently not engaging with. The notes from the flipcharts are included in Annex 2. The gaps identified can be summarised as the following:

- i) Ordinary people who live in the area but are not affiliated to any interest group.
- ii) Businesses in general, and specifically tourism businesses.
- iii) Different ages specifically under 24 year and between 24 – 50 years.
- iv) Visitors – both those from within the UK and those from outside the UK.

Session Two: Future engagement processes

In this session the participants focussed on discussing changes that are likely to impact on the relationships the organisations have with their stakeholders. The notes from this session are included in Annex 3. The key changes discussed were:

- i) The creation of the National Park which will mean the production of a range of strategies to be consulted on given its wider remit
- ii) Regional links becoming more important and therefore increased engagement with regional bodies/partners
- iii) Partnership delivery becoming very important as funding declines
- iv) With the National Park objectives putting access and nature conservation side by side there may be impacts on Forestry Commission forums
- v) Impact of Freedom of Information, pressure for organisations to be transparent and open.

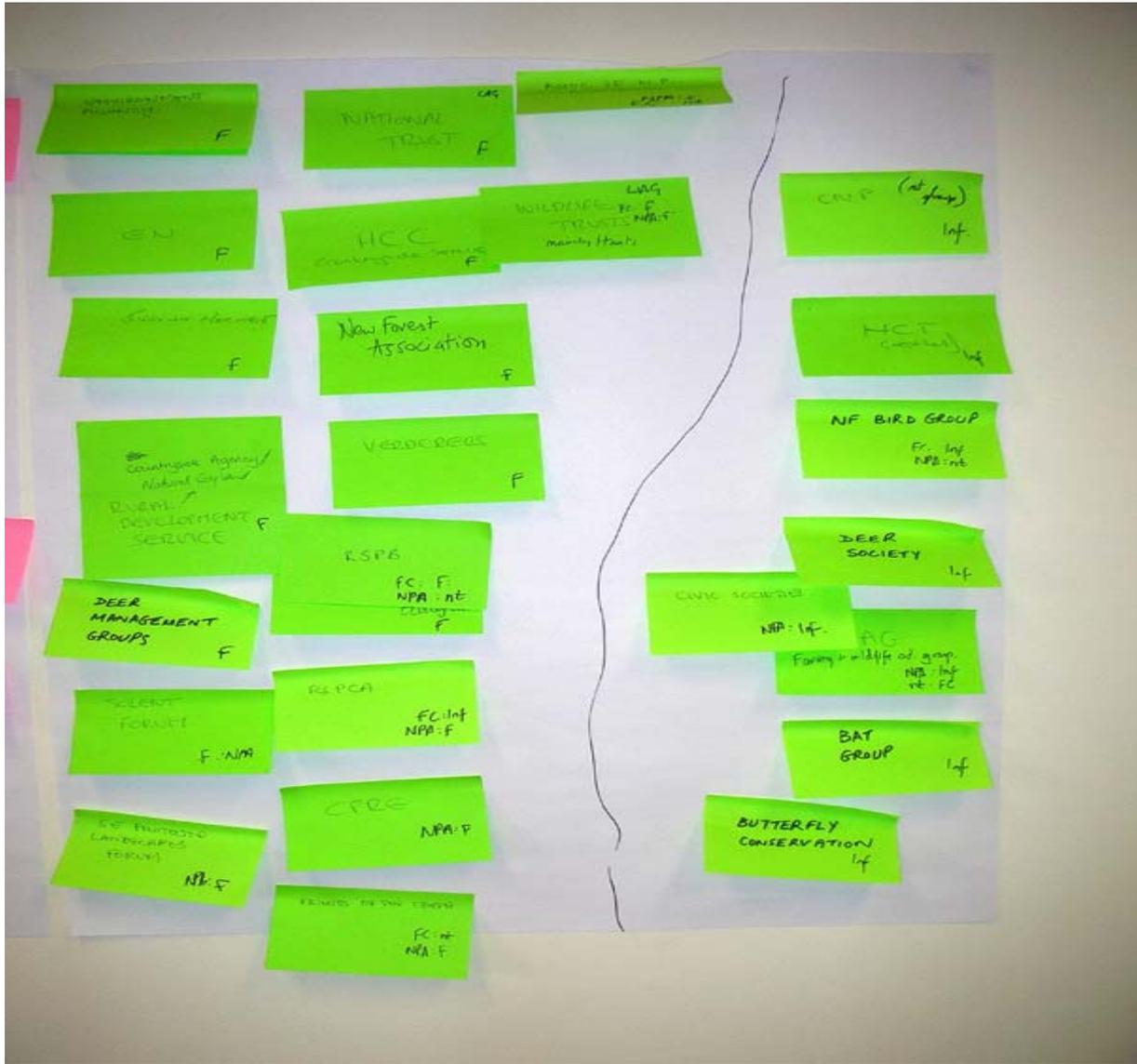
Finally, the participants discussed what might be the priorities for them in terms of stakeholder engagement in the future, given the changes that had been discussed. Notes from this session are included in Annex 3. It was agreed that a joint approach between the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission should be developed to work with two key groups:

- i) Visitors
- ii) Young people

Current ways of working with these groups were discussed e.g. the Forestry Commission is putting a pack of information into all B&Bs, Hotels which will give more information about the New Forest and the Forestry Commission's work.



Map of stakeholders with economic interests



Map of stakeholders with environmental interests

Annex 2 – Gaps in current stakeholder engagement

Organisation	Gaps
NPA	We do talk to the same people all the time, not so much the ordinary people who live and work in the areas – panels? Rather than resident groups.
FC	Same: People not in groups but are interested.
NPA	Achieve? Eg. Darker skies policy - need to consult people. Through parish councils? Also direct / education.
FC	Democratic reps don't necessarily represent wider view – including parish councils.
FC	Environmental lobby overwhelming, difficult to get the 'social' or the economics perspective to have their say however don't seem to fit the purpose of the group.
FC	Do want to talk to the public – PROGRESS project but also other activities on site e.g. surgeries, or to village halls (where they are).
FC	Tourism businesses (- actually all small and large businesses) hard to get them involved – they don't see connection to improvements in land management in the forest. Visitors are important to the NF. Issue of treating some businesses with special favour – need to be seen to be fair – wider sustainability issues. Concern that only reach tiny minority and can give wrong messages.
NPA	'Young' (up to age 24) but also 25-40, most of those involved 'older'. Get organisations for young people (e.g. education) but not the young people themselves. Tomorrow unusual NFDC Youth Panel / Youth Day a while ago.
NP	More on young people engaged in decision-making processes.
NP	Visitors 'close' non-residents and tourists.
FC	Do have events and newspaper. Get feedback. Actually want that 'weight of opinion' into policy and decision-making. Easter – end of October. That would be seen as 'radical' and important 'local' ownership dismiss the visitors, but visitors contribute to economic sustainability.

Annex 3 – Changes (policy, structural) that may affect stakeholder engagement in the New Forest

Organisation	Changes
NP	Whole range of 'strategies' that will need consultation
NP	Commoners will stay
NP	Visitors
NP	Nearby communities
NP	Regional links will become more important
FC and NP	How do the FC and NP fit into the regional?
FC and NP	Partnership delivery will be more important. To make delivery more efficient and not overlap. Core funding declining so need to work with others and access other funds. Understanding others' agendas.
FC	Will need to be seen to be clear about FC and NPA roles to be seen to be efficient.
NP	Has wider boundary – beyond FC Natural England, NPA and FC all need to be working closely and clear about roles: clarify for the public. Has always been less than clear?
FC	Outside FC land – e.g. recreation strategy wider
NP	More 'social' than FC. Will that affect the stakeholders on the FC Forums? Conservation and access: side by side objectives? Social benefits may become more important as a result of national policy changes.
FC and NPA	Culture of 'freedom of information' = more pressure on bodies like FC to become to be more open and transparent.
NP	It is the planning authority with all statutory consultation requirements and possibly other stakeholders.
	Management plan for NP and LDF and CS and FC management plan

Priorities for future stakeholder engagement

- Joint consultation between FC and NP on some of the 'gaps' (esp. visitors)
- How?
- Do talk to them (surveys etc)
- Difficult to manage visitor input alongside others
- Do need to represent visitor views
- Regular and other visitors / group visits
- Do have a database of visitors who have been to events
- Campsite bookings so know their contact details: Forest Holidays
- FC pack to go into B and B's etc. with contact details – taster of forest issues.
- Dog group; NF Equestrian Association: huge active groups
- Young people

- sixth form colleges on planning – ‘be radical’ on planning
- Youth Panels
- Different from kids
- Community first could have links
- e.g. Southampton water should directly affect them. Can do these specifics.
- Wider consultation not worked well so far
- Web stuff – blogs, chat rooms etc ‘My space’ could be a method for reaching young people
- E-mails allow informal interaction e.g. when foot and mouth was happening there was an informal discussion between farmers, commoners etc – not public.
- Forums work when there is some controversy
- District Council has done some work on reaching young people - Community First, Community Action Hampshire

APPENDIX 8: OTHER AGENCY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Your organisation / role

1. What is the main role / activities of your organisation?
2. What is your role in that?

Definition of stakeholder

3. Do you use the word stakeholder?
 - a. If yes, what does it mean to your organisation, do you have a definition?
 - b. If no, what term do you use and why?

What are other agencies doing on stakeholder engagement?

4. What is your current philosophy of stakeholder/public engagement in general? Do you have a written policy on it?
5. What is your current philosophy of stakeholder/public engagement relation to the New Forest? Do you have a written policy on it?
6. Does your organisation have any statutory requirements in relation to the New Forest in addition to that?
7. How do you work with stakeholders/members of the public in the New Forest at the moment e.g.
 - a. specific initiatives
 - b. formal structures (forums, networks etc)
 - c. ad hoc events
 - d. other methods
8. Do you have any specific plans for the near future?
9. What level of resources do you have to do this work (e.g. staff, funding). Is that sufficient (why/why not)?
10. What are the main issues you work with stakeholders/members of the public on in the New Forest?
11. Which stakeholders/members of the public do you work with most in the New Forest? Do you have any plans to change / add to those?
12. How do you think your work in this field might evolve?

How effective is your stakeholder engagement

13. What difference does your stakeholder/public engagement make to your work in the New Forest? What do you hope to get from working with them?
14. What is working most successfully at the moment, and why?
15. What is working least successfully at the moment, and why?
16. How do you assess the effectiveness of your current work on stakeholder/public engagement in the New Forest(for you - for them)?
17. How do you learn from and develop your work in this field internally; and do you get any help from outside for this work (e.g. training, advice, guidelines)?

What potential is there for joint future work on stakeholder engagement?

18. Do you currently work with any other agencies on stakeholder/public engagement in the New Forest?
19. Are you interested in joint work in future?
20. Are there any specific initiatives that could lead to future joint work with the Forestry Commission in the New Forest?

Any other comments?

21. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?

APPENDIX 9: MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA FOR THE NEW FOREST CONSULTATIVE PANEL (FROM THE OLD CONSTITUTION)

Membership

3.1 Membership is open to all organisations and groups with a clear involvement in the New Forest, which can demonstrate that they meet all the following criteria:

3.1.1 An organisation which has a genuine interest in contributing to the overall purpose of the Panel and working within its Terms of Reference;

3.1.2 A recognised self-sustaining organisation with regular meetings and an active membership;

3.1.3 An organisation with interests which cannot adequately be represented by an existing Panel member organisation;

3.1.4 An organisation which falls within one of the categories below:

3.1.4.1 Local authorities, including County, District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils with any land within the Panel's remit area;

3.1.4.2 National or regional organisations with a significant interest or role in conservation, land management, leisure or other aspects of the New Forest, which may be affected by, or affect, conservation policies;

3.1.4.3 Member organisations of the New Forest Committee or any successor authority;

3.1.4.4 Local groups and voluntary organisations with an interest in amenity, conservation, land management, sport, recreation, planning and cultural heritage in the New Forest, which may be affected by, or affect, conservation policies;

3.1.4.5 An organisation from sectors not included above (such as business or education) which can demonstrate a particular interest in the conservation of the New Forest, and whose views cannot adequately be represented through at least one of the existing member organisations;

3.2 New applications for membership of the Panel, submitted in writing to the Chairman, will be dealt with as they arise, using the above criteria. Applicants will be expected to show how their organisation meets the membership criteria, and undertake to follow the procedures within the Constitution. The New Forest Committee, or successor authority, will be advised of and asked to endorse the Panel's views on applications for membership.

3.3 The range of member organisations should be such that an overall balance is maintained between all the various Forest interests. The Panel may therefore specifically invite membership applications from groups with particular interests (such as young people) where these are currently under-represented.

3.4 Each member organisation should nominate one official representative to attend Panel meetings. Member organisations with similar interests may be asked to consider joint membership.

3.5 The Panel reserves the right to introduce more stringent criteria for assessing membership applicants in the future, should the number of applications increase substantially. This may include a stricter requirement for joint representation of similar interests.

3.6 A review of the Panel membership will take place at regular intervals to ensure member organisations continue to meet the criteria given above.

APPENDIX 10: WHAT'S ON 2006 FEEDBACK FORM

We are always trying to monitor and improve our events programme and would appreciate your comments to help us achieve this. Please take a few minutes to fill in this form and hand it to the event leader. Alternatively, you can post it back to us by folding this side inward to show the freepost address overleaf and stick down to secure – no stamp required! At the end of the year there will be a random draw of these forms, 2 free tickets (to a maximum value of £16) will be sent out for the 2007 programme.

Event Name: _____ Event Date: _____

1. How efficiently was your booking dealt with by the administration staff?
very poorly - 1 2 3 4 5 very efficiently
2. How enjoyable was the event?
not enjoyable at all - 1 2 3 4 5 -very enjoyable
3. What did you enjoy most about the event? _____

4. What did you enjoy least about the event? _____

5. Do you think this event was
 over priced under priced priced just right
6. Have you been on a Forestry Commission event before? Yes No
7. Would you come on another Forestry Commission event? Yes No
8. What event would you be most likely to come on next? _____

9. What event would you like to see included in future events programmes? _____

10. Any further comments or suggestions? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME,
The Rangers



Alexis Reeve
Forestry Commission
The Queen's House
FREEPOST SO3765
Lyndhurst
Hampshire SO43 7PF

...Fold Here.....

Would you like to be sent our 2007 events programme and other information about the work of the Forestry Commission in the New Forest but aren't on our marketing list?

Under the Data Protection Act laws, the Forestry Commission must gain 'informed consent' from everyone whose details are held on its mailing list. This list is now called our 'marketing list' but we will only use it to keep you informed or our own work and events. If you are not already on our list, please fill in the details below if you would like to join this list.

...Fold Here.....

I agree to have my details placed on the Forestry Commission marketing list (you may stick your address label her if you want but please ensure you sign this form).

SIGNATURE:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Fold this section
inwards before posting

APPENDIX 11: FOREST OF DEAN FOREST DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISE SUMMARY (2006)

The process of consultation and plan production was developed over a number of months in consultation with FC staff at FD and national level and has been considered and approved by the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC).

Guided Public Participation: Stakeholder groups are invited into a workshop. The background history of the forest and current constraints under which operate are outlined from the beginning. The broad headings are given for consideration and a list of suggested things that people might want to take into consideration. The broad headings might link with Regional or National Forestry Strategies.

A member of FC staff sits with each Working Group and acts as an advisory advocate and facilitator to guide the process, but not to influence the outcomes. They would effectively be able to answer questions, e.g. Why do the FC do that? What is the implication of doing this? How much money does this cost?

This model can be carried out on broad-ranging existing consultative groups such as the FC Forest District staff and the Forest Forum. It will not be carried out within specialist panels such as the Archaeological Panel or the Conservation Panel, whose sole focus would be on single issues. The strength of this type of working is that stakeholders with a diverse range of views are brought together to develop and appreciation of alternative viewpoints. The results of the plan are used by FC staff in order to formulate a draft strategic document that can be commented on by all stakeholders concerned.

Stakeholder Groups: Three major groups of stakeholders have been identified that could contribute in the various workshops: Forest of Dean Forestry Commission Staff, Members of the Forest of Dean Forum and General Public

The majority of Forestry Commission staff live and work in an around the Forest. Their livelihoods are dependent on the forest environment and many have a long ancestral associations with the forest or have chosen to live here and raise families locally. This group will be considered together as an individual workshop. Daytime event tied in with Communications and Safety meeting.

The Forest of Dean Forum is a broad ranging consultative group brought together by Forestry Commission in order to discuss areas of common interest or conflict on Forestry Commission land. This group meets once or twice per year and comprises members from Parish Councils, District Council, Conservation bodies (e.g. GWT, RSPB), local interest groups (e.g. FoD Commoners Association, Free miners, Friends of...groups), sawmillers and contractors, recreation, tourism and access groups, etc. As the constitution of this group is wide ranging this group can be considered within one workshop as this will bring together groups of individuals from disparate backgrounds, interests and agendas. Evening meeting at usual time of year as Forum meetings.

Considering the general public as a single stakeholder group is an opportunity to bring together people from potentially diverse backgrounds and opinions that are drawn together by an interest in influencing the forest environment. Due to the geographic spread of the Forest there will need to be at least three workshops around the forest in order to encourage people to participate. These will be located around Coleford, Cinderford and Lydney as a series of evening events.

Workshop Design: Within workshops individuals will be invited to work in groups of around 6 people. Within the staff workshop and the Forest Forum Workshop the groups will be pre-selected in order to ensure that a diverse range of views are distributed within each group. Within the general public workshop stickers are handed out on entry to ensure a random mixture of people.

The workshop has four stages each with specific activities:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Stage 1: | Brainstorm; 3 likes, 3 dislikes |
| Stage 2 | Introduction to the project
Background, history and context |
| Stage 3 | Group working to identify main suggestions
Groups work through costs, benefits, implications etc
Select 2 suggestions for each heading and pin to wall |
| Stage 4 | Final round-up and vote on exit |

APPENDIX 12: CASE STUDIES FROM INTERACT

LONG EXAMPLES: 1 KENNET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Project Leader: Jeff Bishop

Client: Kennet District Council Planning Department

Times/Dates: Almost 1 year: Summer 1998 to summer 1999

Description:

Why Initiated

The first Local Plan had taken considerable time and, in the judgement of all, was less than successful in resolving conflicts. For the review, the planners wished (as part of Best Value and Local Agenda 21) to take an innovative, consensus building approach from 'day one'. The aims were to highlight key issues and deal with them up-front, engage groups who traditionally fail to get involved in policy, and to develop the basis for a plan that contributed positively to sustainable development.

Process Followed

After some overall project planning and training for Planning and other staff, a Core Group of stakeholders met to finalise the process and agree main Focus Groups. Focus Groups (eg. on housing) met three times, each with Core Group and other invited participants, ending with clear, agreed policy proposals. In parallel a number of 'outreach' events (including a DIY 'Action Pack') targeted other groups and hard-to-reach members of the public. After further Core Group meetings and related events on possible development sites (with public, landowners and developers), results were pulled together for an open access, weekend event. Many people attended this interactive event (which included workshops specially for Parish Councillors) and all results were then finalised into agreed Issues and Options papers.

Outcomes/Effect

On the basis of informal evaluation, the style and degree of participation were welcomed by all and considerable trust built up. Many previous conflicts were either resolved or clarified, the planning team gained in confidence and skill, and there is general confidence that the next stages will ease and speed the overall plan process. Similar work is now underway on other related issues in the area. The project was well received by staff at the Government Office South West, who have recommended it to others as a model of potential good practice.

Distinctive Features

This is one of the first fully developed examples of coherent and wide-ranging participation and consensus processes in development plan preparation; (many others remaining focused on consultation after a draft has been prepared internally). As such, it is consistent with developing practice in local transport planning and air quality management (also advanced through InterAct members). [See Case Studies for next stage work on national guidance for DETR.]

LONG EXAMPLES: 2 IMAGINE LAMBETH

Project Leaders: Lindsey Colbourne, Pippa Hyam

Client: London Borough of Lambeth (Chris Lee, Chief Executive's Department)

Description:

Why Initiated

The programme was designed as part of a fundamental corporate shift towards increased public involvement and consultation in the workings of the council. The aim was to engage a 'meaningful sample' of the Lambeth population in describing their vision/aspirations for Lambeth in the next 10 -20 years, in order to understand better the priorities of the people of Lambeth, add to the findings of a 1999 Mori survey and 'get under the skin' of some of the messages that came out from that survey. It was also hoped to demonstrate new methods and begin to support new groups (e.g. a Youth Forum).

Process Followed

First stages involved a corporate 'away day', comprehensive stakeholder analysis and mapping of existing initiatives in the area; all followed with careful recruitment of participants from widely varying backgrounds. The 'Imagine Lambeth Community Visioning Programme' then involved 200 people in interactive events at community venues and estates. Events used a unique combination of '2020 reportage' visioning and collaborative strategic and action planning techniques. One event, for young and old on an estate in Brixton, used video to record outcomes and inform the use of a major grant awarded to the area. There was also an artwork competition with local schools.

Outcomes/Effect

The results have been used in many different ways: by Town Centre Managers (in deciding priorities), by the Chief Executive's Department and Members (in finalising the overall priorities aims and objectives of the Council), and by officers (in developing the Community Planning strategy). The results have also been shared with key partners such as the Metropolitan Police, Health Providers and Lambeth College. Many other local groups,

organisations and projects have also built on the outcomes. All evaluations were extremely positive.

Distinctive features

Innovation in this example lay not only in the techniques used (helping decision-making in the council and increasing confidence in such methods), but also in bringing together 'usual' and 'unusual' suspects to address strategic questions. The work was also part of a radical change in the Borough's culture, helping to ensure that community involvement and consultation are looked at corporately.

LONG EXAMPLES: 3 BRIGHTON AND HOVE LOCAL PLAN COMMUNITY VISIONING

Project Leaders: Lindsey Colbourne, Pippa Hyam

Client: Brighton and Hove Council (Martin Randall, Planning Policy Team)

Description:

Why Initiated

To engage socially excluded groups in establishing a context or 'vision' and a set of objectives for the local plan. It was also designed to inform the preparation of land-use policies and the preparation of site specific land use proposals and to inform other areas of the Council's activity especially transport planning, social services, arts and leisure, community planning, and to raise awareness and understanding of the council's planning processes.

Process Followed

- Consultation strategy produced by University of Westminster.
- A cross-sectoral steering group was used to oversee the integrity of the whole consultation process.
- Internal coordination group helped ensure cross-departmental 'buy in'.
- PIP delivered briefings and then the community visioning programme to engage socially excluded groups.
- 100 people in 8 workshops, almost all of whom hadn't been involved in anything like this before. Workshops for: older people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes, lesbian and gay people, women, black and minority ethnic groups Also two 'random sample' workshops against which results could be compared.
- Used community visioning techniques (3 wishes).

- Compact between participants and council outlining respective responsibilities. 'Action Sheet' encouraging people to join local groups on issues of concern to them.
- Final workshop, bringing participants back together to look at how the council had responded to their ideas, and work further on issues that were still unresolved.

Outcomes/Effect

The results of consultation have already made and will continue to make a real difference to preparation of the Plan and its content. The formulation of a 'vision' has helped to establish a context for the Local Plan. Compared with traditional approaches to Local Plan preparation, the 'vision' is more robust:

- It benefits from the views of people from socially excluded groups who would not have previously been heard;
- It was not 'led' by a draft Plan i.e. participants were not reacting to a Plan that had already been drafted by the Council – therefore the vision is a truer representation of people's aspirations for Brighton and Hove.
- The vision has been incorporated into the Plan both in terms of setting the context and in justifying individual policies. The draft plan will include policies justified with specific (written) reference to the consultation process – this has not happened before;
- Pre-deposit policies set out in a working document have been tested alongside the results of consultation and amended to reflect the views of people who have maintained their involvement in the plan preparation process;
- The consultation exercise has yielded a wealth of information that could have been missed and areas of contention that the Plan needs to address.
- For the first time preparation of the Plan has been informed by the 'relative weight' attached by people from under-represented groups to different priorities. Relative priorities help to add emphasis in key areas will give the resultant policies greater 'weight' when they are implemented. As a consequence, many of the emerging policies of the Plan will include direct references to the consultation exercises.

Independent evaluation of the process, including interviews with participants is being carried out by the University of Westminster. Evaluation forms used for participant feedback at each event.

Distinctive features

- Very strategic and integrated approach to consultation, which drew on academics and process practitioners, as well as the local authority officers
- Use of random samples as a 'control' against which to compare views of socially excluded groups

- Use of visioning techniques with people who haven't before been 'consulted', to enable them to input strategically
- Use of written 'compact' between participants and council
- Internal capacity building to deal with results, not just 'doing it out there'
- Involvement right from the beginning to the end, including checking back how consultation findings have been used with participants, and asking them for further help on difficult issues
- Use of written justification of policies against results of consultation.