

From: Lord, Thomas
Sent: 26 October 2021 14:38
To: LSmith@fareham.gov.uk
Cc: Aziz, Rebecca <Rebecca.Aziz@naturalengland.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Potential Recreational Impacts upon the New Forest

Dear Mr Smith,

Many thanks for your letter to Allison Potts of the 6th October which sets out some of your concerns about the approach Natural England is taking to the new Zone of Influence (ZOI) around the New Forest. I am responding as Manager with oversight of Sustainable Development in the Thames Solent Area Team.

As you will be aware, Natural England is required to form a view as to the most appropriate implementation of advice received from, amongst others, Footprint Ecology and our own internal experts. You are right to say that the advice from Footprint Ecology recommended that the ZOI should exclude the borough of Fareham and others and that we initially supported that recommendation. However, after further consideration as to the difficulties and potential for confusion in deploying the recommendation, Natural England have taken a precautionary approach and have applied a straight line distance or 'as the crow flies' from the New Forest.

Although the average visit rate for the borough is lower than that for neighbouring Eastleigh, it is notable that postcode data resulting from the telephone survey show visit frequencies in the western parts of Fareham are similar to those in the neighbouring borough of Eastleigh, suggesting the visit rate from these areas are higher than the average visit rate applied to the whole borough. Clearly, visitors do originate from areas of Fareham and it is Natural England's view that they are likely to contribute to an in-combination effect on the sites. Therefore, to ensure the necessary certainty required under the Habitats Regulations that the Plan will appropriately address the impact, and taking into account the need for a precautionary approach, it is advised that the ZOI is applied across the whole borough of Fareham.

As such Fareham Borough, like others included in the ZOI, will be required to provide mitigation likely to be in the form of financial contributions to help reduce the expected impact of new residents on sensitive areas of the New Forest. This, at its simplest, could be a contribution towards wardening or a similar Strategic Access Management scheme such as applies to new development in proximity to the Thames Basin Heaths complex of sites. We are not yet in a position to determine exactly what level of contribution will be applied to developments within Fareham Borough.

This new advice and the associated mitigation scheme may take some time to bed in and, while we are short of precise details at the moment in terms of expected contribution, we would be very happy to work with Fareham Borough Council on an Interim strategy, as we have done with other Local Planning Authorities in the affected area, or perhaps through engagement with the New Forest Steering Group.

Please do let me know if a call would help to run through your concerns. I'd be happy to speak to you directly.

Tom Lord

Manager
Thames Solent

Please note I do not work on Thursday afternoons

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