

NFAF 34/3

Item 10: Department for Transport (DfT) Funded Programmes

Introduction

This paper provides New Forest Access Forum members with an update on progress with delivery of two major sustainable transport programmes:-

- [Sustainable Transport Solutions for England Two Newest National Parks](#), funded through the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Programme.
- [New Forest Family Cycling Experiences](#) (NFFCE), funded through the DfT Linking Communities Programme.

This paper focuses solely on progress since the 9 September New Forest Access Forum meeting. For background, programme objectives and delivery highlights prior to 9 September, please see paper 33/3 as presented at the September meeting.

LSTF Update

The New Forest Tour completed its 2013 operation on 15 September. The service performed strongly, generating over 40000 passenger journeys, an increase of 32% of 2012 figures. This was helped by the introduction of the new blue route, serving the coast and south west of the National Park. It is estimated that the Tour contributed over £600k to the local economy during its period of operation, and saved over 350k private car miles.

The new Beach Bus service, operating between Hythe and Lymington via Lepe, also performed well for year one, generating nearly 6000 passenger journeys, and receiving positive feedback from customers and business en route.

The Community Routes project continues to gather pace. An extensive consultation exercise with Parish Councils, forest organisations and user groups has now been completed. Feedback received through the consultation is informing the map of Community Routes, which will be finalised soon.

Other recent highlights include:-

- An LSTF stakeholder conference in Brockenhurst on 12 September, attended by over 80 delegates from across the programme area (New Forest and South Downs National Parks). The event attracted significant media coverage, including local TV and radio.
- Completion of improvements to the Bucklers Hard to Beaulieu path, including an agreement to secure permissive rights for cycling for a minimum period of 10 years.

- The New Forest Travel Concierge service, operating at Brockenhurst Station, achieved nearly 4000 meaningful engagements during the summer months.
- Delivery of the New Forest Walking Festival, a series of eleven guided walks aimed at visitors and residents. The Festival attracted over 100 participants, with 80% arriving by sustainable modes.
- Completion of a series of five videos, showcasing the sustainable transport 'experiences' on offer in the National Park. Example [here](#).
- Ongoing work on monitoring and evaluation.

NFFCE Update

Programme management, governance and financial processes to support the NFFCE programme are nearing completion. These include an agreement between the New Forest National Park Authority and Hampshire County Council (as accountable body) which sets out the detail of how programme funding will flow from the DfT to the National Park Authority, via Hampshire County Council.

Resources to deliver the five projects continue to be recruited. A Project Manager is now in post and external expertise covering legal and procurement processes is being secured.

Individual project updates as follows:-

Project 1 - Family Cycling Centre

The Brockenhurst site has now been purchased by the private sector consortium and a planning application is being prepared.

Project 2 - Bike Docking Station Network

Informal discussions have taken place with a range of potential suppliers, operators, and landowners. A study has been commissioned which will recommend strategies for delivering a financially viable scheme beyond March 2015. It is likely that an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for design, build and operation of the Bike Docking Station Network will be issued early in 2014.

Project 3 - Pedal Bus Network

Informal discussions have taken place with potential suppliers of pedal buses. It is likely that an ITT for design and manufacture will be issued early in 2014. A separate ITT for operation of the pedal buses from April 2015 is likely to be issued in autumn 2014.

Project 4 – Signing

Officers are liaising with highway authorities regarding the nature and extent of additional cycle route signing away from the Crown lands. Signing using new technologies is also being explored.

Project 5 – Cycle Facilities Fund

From January 2014, the National Park Authority will consolidate its existing grant funding streams into one new fund, known as the Sustainable Communities Fund. This will include the £250k Cycling Facilities Fund, which businesses and communities can apply to in order to secure funding for their own cycling projects which link to the objectives of the programme. Highway authorities will be eligible to apply to the fund to seek funding for cycle infrastructure which is deliverable before March 2015.