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Latchmore Wetland Restoration Planning Application: Consultation and Communication Strategy

Prepared by LUC
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Planning & EIA
Design
Landscape Planning
Landscape Management
Ecology
Mapping & Visualisation

LUC BRISTOL
14 Great George Street
Bristol BS1 5RH
Tel: 0117 929 1997
Fax: 0117 929 1998
bristol@landuse.co.uk

Offices also in:
London
Glasgow
Edinburgh



FS 566056
EMS 566057

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number: 2549296
Registered Office:
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD

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1 Introduction

Background to the scheme

- 1.1 LUC has been commissioned by the Forestry Commission to prepare a Planning Application and supporting Environmental Statement for the Latchmore Wetland Restoration project, located in the northwest of New Forest National Park.
- 1.2 Due to the effects of artificial drainage, which is causing increased erosion within the mire systems, woodland, wet heath and grassland habitats, the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) units within the Catchment are currently in unfavourable condition.
- 1.3 The restoration works are likely to include a combination of:
 - Meander restoration along sections of the Latchmore Brook.
 - Bed level raising of main channel, tributaries and side drains.
 - Complete infill of certain sections of the existing main channel, tributaries or side drains.
 - Use of debris dams where agreement can be reached.
 - Repair of nick points and drain infill within mires to restore and stabilise water levels.
 - Removal of spoil banks.
 - Tree felling, scrub and vegetation clearance.
 - Replacement, maintenance or relocation of access structures (fords, culverts, bridges).

Aims of stakeholder engagement and key principles to be followed

- 1.4 This document outlines how LUC will engage with stakeholders during the preparation of the planning application and as part of the EIA process. It will remain a 'live' document and will be updated as the project proceeds. Proactively engaging with stakeholders, as set out in this document, will generate significant benefits for the process, including:
 - Developing a preferred option for the restoration scheme that best reflects the views and aspirations of stakeholders, while taking into account any technical constraints.
 - Improving the quality and efficiency of decisions by drawing on local knowledge.
 - Minimising unnecessary and costly conflict.
- 1.5 The following principles will guide our approach:
 - **Accessibility:** The context, proposals, potential impacts and the roles of different parties will be clearly explained in plain English throughout the process.
 - **Transparency:** Being clear about the purpose of the scheme, the options available (as well as the options which are not) and the role which the engagement process will play in the planning decision.
 - **Accountability:** Stakeholders will be kept up to date throughout the consultation process, informed of the outcomes of the process and shown how their views have been taken in to account.

2 Stakeholders

Role of the New Forest National Park Authority and statutory consultees

- 2.1 As the determining body for the planning application, the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) is a key stakeholder and will be kept informed throughout the process. The NFNPA is required to inform 'consultation bodies' once they have been notified that a developer intends to submit an Environmental Statement. It is also the responsibility of the local authority to consult the consultation bodies and developer before adopting its EIA scoping opinion and once the Planning Application has been submitted. The principal consultation bodies in this case are:
- Environment Agency.
 - English Heritage.
 - Hampshire County Council (Highways and Rights of Way).
 - Hyde Parish Council.
 - Natural England.
 - The Verderers of the New Forest.
 - Any principal council for the area in which the land is situated (other than the local planning authority) e.g. New Forest District Council.
- 2.2 The NFNPA and the consultation bodies will also be consulted on technical aspects of the EIA as it proceeds.

Stakeholder mapping

- 2.3 Government policy requires that stakeholder engagement is 'front-loaded', as part of the initial stages of the planning application process. This will help to ensure that the design of the project is informed, practicable alternatives (or options) are properly considered, and delay due to redesign requirements is avoided.
- 2.4 A 'stakeholder mapping' exercise has been undertaken to identify the key stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory, who will be informed and consulted throughout the planning and EIA process for the Latchmore Wetland Restoration. The identified stakeholders are listed in **Tables 2.1 and 2.2**.

Table 2.1: Statutory stakeholders

Statutory stakeholders	
English Heritage	New Forest District Council
Environment Agency	New Forest National Park Authority
Hampshire County Council	The Verderers of the New Forest
Natural England	

Table 2.2: Non-statutory stakeholders

Non-statutory stakeholders	
British Dragonfly Society	New Forest Access Forum
Commoners Defence Association	New Forest Association
Dragonfly Society	New Forest Consultative Panel
MP New Forest West (Mr Desmond Swayne MP)	New Forest Dog Owners Association
Freshwater Habitats Trust	New Forest Equestrian Association
Friends of Latchmore	New Forest History & Archaeology Group
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	New Forest Land Advice Service
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council	Ringwood Natural History Society
Hyde Parish Council	RSPB
Bramshaw Parish Council	Southampton University

2.5 Stakeholders (as identified in **Tables 2.1** and **2.2**) will be consulted at the following stages:

- Preliminary/Pre-application consultation (including the EIA scoping stage) – The NFNPA states that pre-application discussions with prospective applicants is positively encouraged by the Authority. LUC will engage in pre-application discussions with the authority as these are deemed to be beneficial for all parties involved, as well as pre-application meetings with other stakeholders. The EIA scoping stage¹ can also act as an effective vehicle through which key stakeholders and local communities can be actively engaged with at the outset of a development proposal.
- Consultation during the EIA process – Consultation throughout the EIA process is critical to ensure that information can be shared and that stakeholders are aware of when they can input into the process.
- Formal consultation – Once the Environmental Statement is submitted with the application for development, then the formal consultation can begin, which is undertaken by the determining authority.

¹ Scoping is the way in which key issues are identified from a broad range of potential concerns for inclusion in EIA studies, the areas affected, and the level to which they should be studied. A Scoping Report is often submitted to the determining authority with a request for obtaining a formal 'Scoping Opinion'.

3 Approach to consultation and communications

- 3.1 Consultation with the stakeholders identified in **Chapter 2** will be undertaken throughout the key stages of the EIA process. **Table 3.1** identifies how stakeholders will be consulted, and **Figure 3.1** illustrates when the consultation will occur during the EIA process in 2014/2015.
- 3.2 **Table 3.1** identifies a variety of consultation methods that will be used to engage with stakeholders, including:
- **Stakeholder meetings:** Stakeholders will be met with to inform them of the EIA process, the approach being adopted and proposed methodologies. Stakeholder meetings will also be used as an opportunity to collate comments and information from the stakeholders to inform the EIA process. Examples include meetings with Parish Councils. Stakeholders who are listed in **Table 3.1** as being consulted with via stakeholder meetings have requested these and have already been met with, or have expressed interest in being met with. This does not mean that other stakeholders will not be met with, as if requested meetings can be arranged with other stakeholders.
 - **Public exhibitions:** Two public exhibitions will be held; one at the EIA scoping stage and one at the draft Environmental Statement / options evaluation stage. The exhibitions will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to meet members of the EIA team at local venues and find out more about the scheme, and provide comments, opinions, and information that will be considered in and inform the EIA process.
 - **Detailed, technical stakeholder consultations:** These will be undertaken with statutory bodies, such as the Environment Agency, to help collate relevant data and information, agree proposed methodologies and discuss any licences that are required.
 - **EIA Scoping Report consultation:** Statutory consultees will be consulted on the EIA Scoping Report to get early agreement on the impacts to be considered in the Environmental Statement. Statutory and non-statutory consultees will be invited to identify any concerns that they might have in relation to the scheme, to comment on the proposed methodologies, and to provide and receive information relevant to the scheme
 - **Planning Application consultation:** All consultees will be able to respond to the planning application consultation that the NFNPA undertakes.
- 3.3 A **website** will be the main tool for communications in relation to the project and the consultation strategy. A web page <http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore> has been set up which will hold key information in relation to the EIA process, including project updates and this consultation strategy.
- 3.4 In addition to the website, use will be made of local media, including local newspapers, parish magazines and Neighbourhood Watch Publications. Public Events will also be advertised by notices placed at key access points around the Latchmore catchment.

Table 3.1: Techniques for consulting stakeholders

Stakeholder	Website	Stakeholder meetings	Public exhibitions	Detailed, technical stakeholder consultations	EIA Scoping Report consultation	Planning Application consultation
English Heritage	✓			✓	✓	✓
Environment Agency	✓			✓	✓	✓
Hampshire County Council	✓			✓	✓	✓
Natural England	✓			✓	✓	✓
New Forest District Council	✓			✓	✓	✓
New Forest National Park Authority	✓			✓	✓	✓
The Verderers of the New Forest	✓		✓		✓	✓
British Dragonfly Society	✓		✓		✓	✓
Commoners Defence Association	✓		✓		✓	✓
Dragonfly Society	✓		✓		✓	✓
MP New Forest West (Mr Desmond Swayne MP)	✓		✓		✓	✓
Fresh Waters Trust	✓		✓		✓	✓
Freshwater Habitats	✓		✓		✓	✓

Stakeholder	Website	Stakeholder meetings	Public exhibitions	Detailed, technical stakeholder consultations	EIA Scoping Report consultation	Planning Application consultation
Trust						
Friends of Latchmore	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	✓		✓		✓	✓
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Hyde Parish Council	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Bramshaw Parish Council	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
New Forest Access Forum	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest Association	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest Consultative Panel	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest Dog Owners Association	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest Equestrian Association	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest History & Archaeology Group	✓		✓		✓	✓
New Forest Land Advice Service	✓		✓		✓	✓

Stakeholder	Website	Stakeholder meetings	Public exhibitions	Detailed, technical stakeholder consultations	EIA Scoping Report consultation	Planning Application consultation
Ringwood Natural History Society	✓		✓		✓	✓
RSPB	✓		✓		✓	✓
Southampton University	✓		✓		✓	✓
Public	✓		✓		✓	✓

Figure 3.1: Consultation timetable

Consultation	Feb-14				Mar-14				Apr-14				May-14				Jun-14				Jul-14				Aug-14				Sep-14				Oct-14				Nov-14				Dec-14				Early 2015		
	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1		8	15
Website	[Green shaded]																																														
Stakeholder meetings	[Green shaded]																																														
Public exhibitions	[Green shaded]																																														
Detailed, technical stakeholder consultations	[Green shaded]																																														
EIA Scoping Report consultation	[Green shaded]																																														
Planning Application consultation	[Green shaded]																																														

4 Contact details

- 4.1 For further information regarding the consultation being undertaken for the Latchmore Brook Restoration EIA, or the EIA process itself. Please contact **Sarah Young**, **Ben Miller** or **Lisa Pearce** on the contact details below.

LUC

Sarah Young – Associate Environmental Planner

Email: sarah.young@landuse.co.uk

Ben Miller – Consultant Environmental Planner

Email: ben.miller@landuse.co.uk

Telephone: 0117 929 1997

Address: LUC, 14 Great George Street, Bristol, BS1 5RH.

Forestry Commission

Lisa Pearce – Communications Manager

Email: lisa.pearce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 023 8028 6832

Address: Forestry Commission, South England Forest District, The Queen's House, Lyndhurst, Hampshire, SO43 7NH.