Improving transport options in the New Forest

One of the New Forest National Park Authority’s responsibilities is to reduce the impacts of traffic in the New Forest and provide residents and visitors with a range of sustainable transport alternatives.

The National Park Authority recognises cars are often the most practical method of transport for rural journeys, however, both residents and visitors continue to cite traffic as a major issue.

Some areas of the New Forest experience high levels of congestion at peak times, partly because 96% of staying visitors and 94% of non-local day visitors travel to the New Forest by car.

Negative impacts of cars

... CONGESTION
... PARKING PRESSURE
... ANIMAL-RELATED ACCIDENTS
... NOISE
... POLLUTION

In order to minimise the negative impacts of cars travelling around the New Forest, we have been working over the last few years to provide residents and visitors with other sustainable transport options.

For example, the New Forest Tour now offers the choice of three open top hop-on-hop-off routes around the New Forest, while the Beach Bus is in its second season serving a number of destinations between Hythe and Lymington. In 2013 these bus services carried 46,551 passengers around the New Forest.

It is important to offer a range of local travel options, to enable residents and visitors to choose the way of travelling which best suits their own particular needs.

Cycling

Since August 2013 we have been looking at how we can best use a cycling grant received from the Department of Transport to help residents and visitors to travel between the settlements and attractions within the New Forest.

One option is to introduce a self-service bike share system, which would enable residents and visitors to conveniently and cheaply hire a bike for short journeys between the New Forest’s villages and attractions, as well as link with train stations, bus stops and ferry ports.

Traditional cycle hire in the New Forest is already well established, but is targeted at visitors who want to hire a bike for half or full day recreational bike rides (see Fig. 1). It is therefore expensive and impractical for residents and visitors who want to use a bike for shorter or one-way transport journeys.

It is important to offer a range of local travel options, to enable residents and visitors to choose the way of travelling which best suits their own particular needs.
What is Public Bike Share?

Public Bike Share systems are a network of un-manned cycle hire points, where bikes are available for hire by the public.

The user pays at the hire point, takes a bike, uses the bike, and then either returns it to the same location or to a different hire point in the network. Users are charged according to how long they use the bike for; typically 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Typically, hire points are located where lots of people either want to travel from or to (e.g. train stations, settlements, attractions, accommodation). Fig. 2 gives examples of how a Public Bike might be used by a number of different users.

*There are currently over 700 Public Bike Share systems in operation around the world. As yet only a handful are in rural locations and National Parks.*

Fig. 2 Public Bike System example
- **RESIDENT A** cycles to the station to catch a train to work
- **VISITOR B** arrives by train and cycles to an attraction in the Forest
- **RESIDENT C** works at the attraction but leaves to cycle to a meeting at a local hotel
- **VISITOR D** cycles from their hotel to the coast, spending the afternoon at the beach
- **RESIDENT E** cycles to the next village to meet a friend for coffee
The National Park Authority currently has the option to use part of its grant funding from the Department for Transport to set up a Public Bike Share system in the south east corner of the New Forest. The system could be ready for residents and visitors to use from Spring 2015.

It is estimated that up to 20 hire points (hosting a total of 250 bikes) would be required to create a network across the south east of the New Forest; where there is a concentration of train stations, attractions, accommodation, towns and villages all within cycling distance of each other.

These artist’s impressions show how a bike hire point might look and the type of bicycle which could be available for hire. The bikes would be unisex and robust, designed for practicality rather than recreation. All bicycles and hire points would be designed and located to ensure they fit discreetly within the New Forest.

**We are interested in your views on whether residents, businesses and visitors might benefit from a Public Bike Share system and if so, whether one should be set up in the New Forest.**

**Hire point locations**

No hire point locations have been agreed, but a number of local businesses have expressed interest in hosting one. Hire points would be located on private land in settlements, at attractions, or transport links. No hire points would be located on Crown Lands. Hire points would require planning permission so any proposed location would be subject to formal consultation through the statutory planning process.

**We are interested in your views on whether your community or business might be a suitable location for a bike hire point, and if so, where you think it would be best located.**
Tell us what you think

We want to know how you feel about a Public Bike Share system potentially operating in the south east of the New Forest.

Please tell us your thoughts using the comment form and put it in the box provided, or alternatively post it to us.

You can also complete the comment form online at www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/publicbikeshare, where you can download copies of this information.

We will not be able to take into account comment forms returned to us after 5 August 2014.

Transport & Tourism Team
New Forest National Park Authority
Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington
SO41 9ZG

Public Bike Share open house
If you have any questions about Public Bike Share and how it might operate in the New Forest, or would like to speak to us in person about this project then please come to one of our open house sessions:

Monday 28 July, 6pm – 8.30pm
Lyndhurst Community Centre, Lyndhurst

Wednesday 30 July, 6pm – 8.30pm
Brockenhurst Village Hall, Brockenhurst

How we will use your comments
Community feedback will be taken into consideration by the working group of New Forest National Park Authority Members currently reviewing plans for a potential New Forest Public Bike Share system.

This working group will make a recommendation to all New Forest National Park Authority Members in August on whether a Public Bike Share system be introduced to the New Forest or not.

A summary report of the responses received from the public will be made available on our website in mid August 2014.
Public Bike Share: Comments Form

1. Circle the number which most accurately reflects your opinion, where 1 is *not useful at all* and 5 is *very useful*.

How useful do you think a New Forest Public Bike Share system would be for:

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<td>c. Visitors</td>
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2. Circle the number which most accurately reflects your opinion, where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 is *strongly agree*.

I support setting up a Public Bike Share system in the south east of the New Forest.

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3. Circle the number which most accurately reflects your opinion, where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 is *strongly agree*.

My community would be a suitable location for a Public Bike Share hire point.

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<th>No opinion</th>
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</table>

4. Do you have any suggestions for where a bike hire point could be located in your community?


5. In which New Forest Parish do you live?


6. Tell us if you have any other comments about Public Bike Share in the New Forest.


We want to know how you feel about a Public Bike Share system potentially operating in the south east of the New Forest.

Please tell us your thoughts using this comment form and put it in the box provided, or alternatively post it to us:

Transport & Tourism Team
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We will not be able to take into account comment forms returned to us after 5 August 2014.

You can also complete this form online and download the Public Bike Share information sheets.

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/publicbikeshare](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/publicbikeshare)