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**Invitation to Tender**

**New Forest National Park off-road cycle network wayfinding plan**

**(NFNPA – 0062)**

Date: 20 December 2024

**New Forest National Park Authority**

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## SUMMARY

The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA or ‘the Authority’), in partnership with Forestry England (FE) and New Forest District Council (NFDC), supported by Hampshire County Council (HCC) are **seeking a consultant / consultancy** to prepare a wayfinding study to enable users to navigate to and around the Forestry England Off-Road Cycle Network (a multi-user trail network) on the Crown Lands (the Forestry England estate) of the New Forest National Park.

The purpose of the feasibility study is to produce a wayfinding plan that will enable users to navigate the cycling network confidently and effectively, ensuring routes are clearly marked and integrated with nearby access points, including car parks, villages, train stations, and key locations on the highway network.

The network primarily consists of wide gravel tracks on Forestry England’s New Forest estate, known locally as the Crown Land. This is supplemented by some bridleways and local highways. Hampshire County Council is the Highway Authority for any roads within this study. The recommended design options on highways will need to be in accordance with their policies and guidance documents.

The **final study should be completed by 30 April 2025**, unless the partners agree to an extension. Regular updates including a written monthly progress report will be provided to the partners throughout the study period.

The contract value is expected to be **in the range of £25,000 to £30,000**. Responses should be broken down into parts to assist evaluation of overall costs to deliver this work, so responses over £30,000 may be considered if appropriately evidenced.

## OVERVIEW

The **New Forest National Park Authority** is the organisation responsible for promoting the two statutory purposes of the National Park as set out in the Environment Act 1995 which are:

■ To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area

■ To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public

The Authority also has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park.The **New Forest National Park** hosts an extraordinary diverse range of species that are rare, uncommon, and declining elsewhere in the UK and Western Europe. It also has wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery. The New Forest National Park receives an estimated 15 million day visits per year.

**Forestry England** is part of the Forestry Commission family. Forestry England look after more land and trees than any other organisation in England. They provide hundreds of car parks, maintain thousands of miles of trails, and plant millions of trees. Forestry England raise most of the money needed for this work themselves, with less than 10% of their funding coming from government.

The Forestry England estate in the New Forest accounts for approximately 50% of the land in the New Forest National Park. The land that Forestry England manage is approximately 85% of the publicly accessible greenspace in the National Park. Forestry England provide over 130 car parks, over a hundred kilometres of off-road cycle routes, many kilometres of walking trails and provide informal access on foot across the estate.

Forestry England manage their estate in the New Forest with the multiple objectives of restoring natural processes through sustainable land management, maintaining and improving rare habitats and species and providing public access to enable health and wellbeing benefits.

**New Forest District Council** is the second most populated district authority in the southeast, with over 175,000 residents, although the population has decreased since the 2011 census. It is home to an increasingly ageing population with 30% of residents over the age of 65 compared to 19% nationally. The District Council is responsible for planning in the areas not covered by the New Forest National Park with an adopted local plan in place covering the period up to 2026. The District Council also have an adopted Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document which sets the strategy for mitigating the impacts of new development on the special protection areas, this can be through onsite ‘Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace’ but also improvements to existing areas of open space and public rights of way.

**Hampshire County Council** is the Highway Authority for the public highway within the New Forest District (excluding the A31 and A36 Strategic Road Network), including the roads being assessed as part of this study. Hampshire has recently adopted its new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which sets out its principles for improving walking and cycling conditions in the County.

[Local Transport Plan | Transport and roads | Hampshire County Council](https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/localtransportplan)

The County Council has a suite of technical guidance notes relating to the design and development of its public highway network. They can be found here: [Technical guidance notes | Transport and roads | Hampshire County Council](https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/developers/technical-guidance)

The County Council, in partnership with NFNPA and other partners, has developed the draft New Forest Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan which recently went out to public consultation. The draft document can be found here: [documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/new-forest-district-lcwip.pdf](https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/new-forest-district-lcwip.pdf) Local Neighbourhood plans such as New Milton and Ringwood are also relevant.

The work will be supported by stakeholder involvement from a sub-group of the independent **Cycle Working Group** (CWG) which includes representation from local cycling clubs and businesses in the area. This group will support the process with stakeholder involvement, including a sub-group to comment on draft proposals.

## WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Any queries may be submitted through our [In-tend supplier portal](https://in-tendhost.co.uk/newforestnpa/aspx/Home) or via the contact details below:

For tender process / procurement queries:

Tom Knott, Finance & Sustainable Procurement Officer - 01590 646678 [tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

For technical queries:

Jim Mitchell, Access and Learning Manager, NFNPA   
[jim.mitchell@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:jim.mitchell@newforestnpa.gov.uk)

Richard Burke, District Recreation Manager, Forestry England  
[richard.burke@forestryengland.uk](mailto:richard.burke@forestryengland.uk)

Dean Brunton, Service Manager – Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery, NFDC  
[Dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:Dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk)

## TENDER SPECIFICATION

**The task**

This task is to design a wayfinding plan that enables users to navigate the cycling network confidently and effectively, ensuring routes are clearly marked and integrated with nearby access points including villages, train stations, and key locations on the on-road network. The wayfinding plan needs to consider potential users of all experience levels, including families, couples, new cyclists and those with additional needs including use of adaptive bikes. The network is also used by walkers, mobility scooters, horse-drawn carriages and horse riders so consideration of these users is also needed. Wayfinding should give confidence to those not familiar with the New Forest, national parks and the countryside, and be easy to use and legible.

Funding for the plan is provided through the NFNPA as part of an award of Active Travel England (ATE) Capability funding. Delivery of the identified wayfinding plan for a full multi-user trail, including production and installation, will be initially funded with £500k from NFDC’s Community Infrastructure Levy (installation delivery is not part of this tender).

The off-road network consists of mostly wide gravel tracks suitable for forestry vehicles along with limited sections with grass and natural gravel base. It is currently marked by 396 waymarker posts, each with an individual number and a QR code. It is approximately 150km long and the majority of it is viewable on [Google Street View](https://www.google.com/maps/@50.8321247,-1.539178,2a,75y,58.39h,80.26t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1sSfsZOZQ3R5jTwe-j2OK-HQ!2e0!6shttps:%2F%2Fstreetviewpixels-pa.googleapis.com%2Fv1%2Fthumbnail%3Fcb_client%3Dmaps_sv.tactile%26w%3D900%26h%3D600%26pitch%3D9.740538063838471%26panoid%3DSfsZOZQ3R5jTwe-j2OK-HQ%26yaw%3D58.387303337253854!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI0MTEyNC4xIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D). Future additions to the network are currently being discussed with partners which could eventually add 60km to the network.

The National Cycle Network crosses the National Park on NCN 2 (Hythe to Christchurch) and partially crosses the National Park on NCN 236 (Totton to Lyndhurst).

The waymarking system needs to be sensitively designed to complement the special qualities of the national park as well as complement existing guidance on national Forestry England signage, NFNPA right-of-way signage and NFDC ‘Green Way’ waymarking (which are a series of onsite spaces and walking routes identified through the NFDC mitigation strategy). It is expected a bespoke ‘New Forest’ approach can be taken, as is the situation with current wayfinding. There are additional stakeholder constraints related to impact of signs on grassland which reduces available grazing for local commoners animals. Any approach will need to take account of this, and guidance will be provided to the successful consultancy.

The best way to understand the study area is via the cycle map for the New Forest National Park available here- [New-Forest\_Cycle-Routes-Map\_2021\_0.pdf](https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf)

This map indicates the off-road network on Crown Lands with dotted green lines and the location and number of some (but not all) waymarker posts are given. In addition, the market towns of New Milton and Ringwood can be seen as well as inset maps for the two villages of Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst. A selection of other on-road routes is also shown (but not to be investigated as part of this study unless to either bridge sections of the off-road network or are part of the wayfinding to / from the two market towns and two villages).

**The service**

The work to be undertaken should include:

* A physical wayfinding audit: what is good and bad about current off-road cycle network wayfinding, both to and around the current network, including consideration of other wayfinding schemes in the New Forest area
* Developing key principles and a methodology to inform the legibility, location and design of wayfinding
* Mapping future waymarkers (to an accurate GPS location) on the whole network on Crown Lands including current proposals for the future network
* Mapping future waymarkers (to an accurate GPS location) to / from the network from the key central locations of Ringwood and New Milton, plus the villages of Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst
* A waymarking design process, influenced by design guides and signage guides of the partners and considering different types of waymarker according to location
* Developing digital recommendations for future investigation and integration
* Design of waymarkers (urban and rural) and estimation of cost of production and installation, in keeping with the landscape. Propose different draft designs and refine to a final waymarking system with preferred waymarker posts / signs that can be installed
* Propose how the waymarkers will be able to accommodate sign elements including, National Cycle Network routes, marked circular loops from travel hubs and navigational / directional / distance information (e.g. nearest village 3 miles)
* Monthly progress meetings with the partners

**Challenges to note**

Design will need to minimise impact on commoning / forestry operations, on habitat and on

landscape designations.

**Key deliverables**

An inception meeting to discuss the programme and the task, including possible site visits.

A wayfinding plan to include:

* Key principles
* Locations of waymarking on the Crown Lands and to / from the network from the two case study market towns and two villages
* Recommendation on future digital wayfinding
* Final agreed design(s) following option appraisal and consultation
* A cost estimate for production and maintenance
* High-level risk register

**The Contract**

The contract is to be completed by 30 April 2025, with a likely start date of late February 2025. Extension into May 2025 is possible on agreement.

**The Supplier**

We are seeking a supplier with:

* experience and understanding of the development, design and delivery of wayfinding plans and systems
* an understanding of the New Forest National Park, roles and responsibilities of Forestry England, the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest District Council, Verderers of the New Forest and Hampshire County Council
* an understanding of the key issues and challenges within in the New Forest
* an understanding of highway technical design guidelines and transport policies with regards to signage
* a strong track record in rural and urban wayfinding design

## EVALUATION OF TENDERS

Suppliers must complete, in full, the Assessment Document which is attached below. This outlines the minimum information required from suppliers and will form the basis upon which your submission will be evaluated. It is envisaged that this scoring and evaluation exercise will take no longer than 5 working days after the ITT response deadline, which is9am Friday 29 January 2025**.** It is envisaged that a decision will then be made 5 February 2025, with work starting in February 2025.

No information contained in this ITT, or in any communication made between the Authority and you in connection with this ITT shall be relied upon as constituting a contract, agreement or representation that any contract shall be offered in accordance with this ITT. The Authority reserves the right, subject to the appropriate procurement regulations, to change without notice the basis of, or the procedures for, the competitive tendering process or to terminate the process at any time. Under no circumstances shall the Authority incur any liability in respect of this ITT or any supporting documentation.

Please answer all questions as accurately and concisely as possible in the same order as the questions are presented. Where a question is not relevant to your organisation, this should be indicated, with an explanation.

***Completeness and Further Information***

The information supplied will be checked for completeness and compliance with the instructions before responses are evaluated.

Failure to provide the required information, make a satisfactory response to any question, or supply documentation referred to in responses, within the specified timescale, may mean that you are not invited to participate further. In the event that none of the responses are deemed satisfactory, the Authority reserves the right to terminate the procurement and where appropriate re-advertise the procurement.

You should be explicit and comprehensive in your responses to this ITT as this will be the single source of information on which responses will be scored and ranked. You are advised neither to make any assumptions about any past or current supplier relationships with the Authority nor to assume that such prior business relationships will be taken into account in the evaluation procedure.

The ITT is provided on the same basis to all tenderers. Please note that to ensure fair and open competition, the responses to any questions raised by interested contractors will be made available to all other contractors, where appropriate. Any such clarifications will be posted on our In-tend portal and you will receive email notification to make you aware of this. If you wish to be updated with any tender clarifications but do not wish to register on our In-tend portal, then you must formally request to receive such clarifications via email, to the contact listed in Section 3 of this ITT. The deadline for receipt of clarifications relating to the specification or any other part of this ITT is 9am Wednesday 15 January 2025.

Please note that the spaces provided in the Assessment Document should not be viewed as an indication of the length and depth of responses we require for a particular section. Suppliers are encouraged to generate as much space as required to answer each section in full, ensuring that any additional pages used are clearly cross-referenced to the relevant section being addressed, where applicable.

It should be noted that whilst some sections of the Assessment Document are not directly scored (e.g. financial information), the Authority reserves the right to take into account supplier responses to these elements when evaluating and awarding the contract.

Supplier responses in the Assessment Document shall form part of the contract, where appropriate, thus the supplier will be legally obliged to comply with the responses provided therein. Should your company be successful and be awarded the contract, any variations to the proposals in the Assessment Document must receive prior written approval from the Authority.

The Authority expressly reserves the right to request you to provide additional information supplementing or clarifying any of the information provided in response to the requests set out in this ITT. The Authority may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.

***Disqualification and selection***

The Authority may disqualify you if you fail to:

1. Provide a satisfactory response to any questions in the ITT or inadequately or incorrectly complete any question or have not provided the required information; and/or
2. Submit the completed ITT before the stated deadline.

The potential providers who are not disqualified in accordance with the above grounds shall be evaluated on the qualification criteria which take into account the economic and financial standing and the technical or professional ability of each.

**The Assessment Document is attached here:**



The Contract will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender to the Authority, based on the evaluation criteria of 30% price and 70% quality. Tenders will be evaluated and assessed using the scoring matrix below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| Price | 30% |
| Quality | 70% |

Sub-weightings for the Quality Criteria are provided below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Quality Heading** | **Sub-Weighting** |
| A | Company Information | 0% |
| B | Your Approach | 40% |
| C | Scope of Services | 30% |
| D | Your Experience / References | 30% |

The following scoring mechanism will be used to allocate points available.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring** | **Points** |
| Response meets the required standard in all material respects and adds value in some or all of the major requirements | 9 – 10 |
| Response meets the required standard in all material respects | 7 – 8 |
| Response meets the required standard in most material respects, but is lacking or inconsistent in others | 5 – 6 |
| Proposal falls short of achieving expected standard in a number of identifiable respects | 3 - 4 |
| Response significantly fails to meet the required standard, contains significant shortcomings or is inconsistent with other responses | 1 - 2 |
| Completely fails to meet required standard or does not provide a response | 0 |

**Price** –with regards to the price evaluation, the lowest accepted (i.e. reasonable) submitted price will be awarded the maximum price score of **30%**. Thereafter, each tender will be ranked and scored in accordance with how much more expensive their respective price is compared to the lowest price (e.g. – if it is 50% more expensive than the lowest price, it will be awarded 50% less price points in comparison to the lowest price tender).

**Quality** - weighted scores will be calculated by multiplying the score for each quality criteria by its weighting. The weighted scores will be totalled for each tender. The totals will be normalised so that the normalised highest total will attract the highest Quality score of **70%**.

There is an overall quality threshold of **6 points**. If the summation of the weighted scores under each quality heading is below this figure, then the tender will no longer be considered, regardless of price.

The Authority reserves the right to withdraw this contract opportunity at any point, without notice, and will not be liable for any costs incurred by suppliers during any stage of the process. Suppliers should also note that, in the event a tender is considered to be fundamentally unacceptable on a key issue, regardless of its other merits, that tender may be rejected.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERERS

The proposed Tender timescales are as follows, however these are subject to change. In such an event, all Tenderers will be informed immediately via our In-tend supplier portal:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tender Process** | **Deadline** |
| Invitation to Tender (ITT) sent out | 6 January 2025 |
| Deadline for ITT clarifications / questions | 9am Friday 17 January 2025 |
| ITT response deadline | 9am Wednesday 29 January 2025 |
| Evaluation of ITT submissions | 29 January to 5 February 2025 |
| Contract award notice | 5 February to 12 February 2025 |
| Standstill Period | One week from award |
| Contract commencement date | Late February 2025 |

Tenders submitted after the stipulated time and date advised will be rejected, unless exceptional circumstances are proven, such as clear evidence of postal guarantee or record of successful submission through In-tend.

Tenderers must ensure that their completed Assessment Document has been returned, by 9pm Friday 24 January 2025 in order for their bids to be evaluated:

1. If your submission is via our [In-tend supplier portal](https://in-tendhost.co.uk/newforestnpa/aspx/Home), then it must be completed by 9am Friday 24 January 2025. Please note that you will have to register on this portal before you can view the Invitation to Tender document and submit a tender
2. If your submission is via email, please return it to: [tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk) - to arrive no later than 9am Friday 24 January 2025.
3. If you wish to post a hard copy reply, it must be marked for the attention of Tom Knott, to arrive no later than 9am Friday 24 January 2025 and sent to:

FAO: Tom Knott, Finance and Sustainable Procurement Officer – [NFNPA 0062]

New Forest National Park Authority

Lymington Town Hall

Avenue Road

Lymington

Hampshire

SO41 9ZG.

Please note that you must ensure that the envelope used must bear **no mark to identify the sender**. Failure to comply with this may result in your tender being excluded from the evaluation process.

Please note that you may use either [In-tend](https://in-tendhost.co.uk/newforestnpa/aspx/Home) or post in submitting your responses, or both should you wish. Posted entries are sent at the risk of the supplier and confirmation of receipt will not be provided by the Authority, unless specifically requested by the supplier; the Authority will not be liable in any way for entries not received or delayed in the post. Furthermore the Authority is unable to return any documentation provided, whether the supplier is successful or not.

The Authority shall keep all tenders received unopened until after the ITT submission deadline of 29 January 2025. Any tenders received after this time shall not be considered for evaluation and shall be returned promptly to the tenderer.

## CONDITIONS OF TENDER

The Terms and Conditions of Contract will be based on the Authority’s General Standard Conditions of Contract, a copy of which can be found below:



The Authority reserves the right to withdraw this contract opportunity without notice and will not be liable for any costs incurred by suppliers during any stage of the process. Suppliers should also note that, in the event a tender is considered to be fundamentally unacceptable on a key issue, regardless of its other merits, that tender may be rejected.

### Representations

A supplier may contact the Authority to obtain any further information about the requirements of the contract or the tendering procedures if these are not evident or clear from the documents supplied to suppliers.

No questions will be answered that provide a competitive advantage to any party interested in tendering.

Should questions arise during the tendering period, which in our judgment are of material significance, we will inform all suppliers to explain the nature of the question, and our formal reply. All suppliers should then take that reply into consideration when preparing their own bids and we will evaluate bids on the assumption that they have done so.

### Specification

For the avoidance of doubt, the contract specification shall include all requirements explicit or implied within this Invitation to Tender.

The Authority reserves the right to withdraw this tender document and all funding contained within it without notice.

### Conflicts of Interest

Tenderers must disclose in their Tender any circumstances, including personal, financial and business activities that will, or might, give rise to a conflict of interest by taking part in this competition, or if awarded any contract as a result of this opportunity. This also applies to any sub-contractors that the Tenderer wishes to employ as part of any contract.

Where Tenderers identify such potential conflicts, they should immediately state these to the Authority and confirm how they intend to avoid such conflicts. The Authority reserves the right to reject any Tender which, in the opinion of the Authority gives rise, or could potentially give rise to, any conflict of interest.

### Tenders Excluded

No tender will be considered for acceptance if the supplier has indulged or attempted to indulge in any corrupt practice or canvassed the tender with an employee of the Authority. If a supplier has indulged or attempted to indulge in such practices and the tender is accepted, then grounds shall exist for the termination of the contract and the claiming of damages from the successful suppliers.

It is unlikely that any tender will be accepted which (a) is incomplete or inaccurately or inadequately completed or which purports to impose conditions other than those provided in the contract documents and (b) is delivered out of time or in a manner other than specified in the specification.

### Collusive Tendering

In submitting a tender against this contract, the supplier confirms that they have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender by or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person.

The supplier also certifies that at no time, before or following the submission of the tender, has the Supplier carried out any of the following acts:

i) communicating to a person other than the person calling for the tenders the amount or approximate amount of the proposed tender, except where such disclosure is required for the purpose of obtaining insurance

ii) entering into any agreement or arrangement with any person that he shall refrain from tendering or as to the amount of any tender to be submitted

iii) offering or paying or giving or agreeing to give any sum of money or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other tender or proposed tender for the said work any act or thing of the sort described above. In the context of this clause the word ‘person’ includes any persons and any body or association, corporate or unincorporated; and ‘any agreement or arrangement’ includes any such transaction, formal or informal, and whether legally binding or not.

### Freedom of Information

The National Park Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and therefore information in relation to this tender may be requested by third parties. Requests for information will be considered on a case-by-case basis and consideration will be given as to whether or not the information is exempt from disclosure under the legislation.

Suppliers should identify if any of the information supplied by them is confidential or commercially sensitive and provide details of why they feel release of the information would prejudice their interests.  This will not guarantee that the information will not be disclosed but your views will be taken into account when considering a request.

It is important to note that information may be commercially sensitive for a time (e.g. during a tender process) but afterwards it may not be.  The timing of any request for information will be taken into account when determining whether or not the information is exempt, however suppliers should note that no information is likely to be regarded as exempt forever.

**Confidentiality**

The Tenderer (whether this Tender is accepted or not) and all other recipients of the Specification and documents (whether they submit a tender or not) shall treat the details of the Specification and the documents attached hereto as private and confidential and shall not disclose the details to any party.