



Hampshire
County Council

*An assessment of countryside recreation
supply and demand in Winchester*

September 2007

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1. Introduction

The aim of the report is to summarise the results and conclusions of the original reports covering the South Hampshire sub region and the Central Hampshire and New Forest area, focusing on the Winchester District Council area. The Central Hampshire report holds a full account of the research, information used and method of assessment and should be read in conjunction with this report if such detail is required. Further information regarding associated plans and policies that have influenced this work, such as The Draft South East Plan, can be found in the Central Hampshire report.

This report is concerned with the current and likely future demand for access to the countryside for informal recreational activities such as walking, walking dogs, cycling and horse riding in the Winchester District. It will assess:-

- The future supply and demand for Countryside Recreation Network
- The future supply and demand for Countryside Recreation Open Space
- Other evidence

2. Brief Overview

Winchester is home to 113,048 people and this is estimated to increase by 17% by the year 2026¹. The district is included in both the Central Hampshire and New Forest area and the South Hampshire sub region. Based on the Draft South East Plan proposals the population within the Central Hampshire and New Forest area is predicted to increase by 1.9% by 2026 and within the South Hampshire sub region by 7% by 2026.

Winchester District is a large and varied area which extends from Winchester to Micheldever in the north, and to Waterlooville in the south-east. The district is mainly rural in character with local countryside providing for a range of contrasting land uses and activities that are important for quality of life and

¹ HCC Long term projections from proposals in the Draft SE Plan

environmental character. The district is well served by the strategic road network with the proximity of the A34 and M3 providing good links to London, airports and the rest of the country.

3. Assessment of Countryside Recreation Supply and Demand

Hampshire County Council has developed an approach to assess the likely future demand for countryside recreation infrastructure utilising relevant research and information, in particular the Mori residents' survey, which provides detailed information on the current use of the countryside.

A total of 841km (Table 1) of rights of way within the Winchester District provide access to the wider countryside for walking, cycling, horse riding and carriage driving but footpaths, allowing pedestrian access only, are far more prevalent than other classifications of rights of way.

3.1 Supply of access network

The total length of rights of way in the county of Hampshire (including Southampton and Portsmouth) is 4,583 km and this can be broken down by rights of way type, or classification, and expressed as metres per hectare. Table 1 shows that the total metres per hectare in Hampshire is on average 12.5. The average amount of rights of way in Winchester District is very slightly higher at 12.7m per ha².

Table 1: Current Supply of Rights of Way

Rights of way type	Hants M	M per ha	Winchester M	M per ha
Footpath	3,337,600	9.1	557773	8.4
Bridleway	745,100	2.0	170395	2.6
Restricted Byway	223,700	0.6	103657	1.6
Byway Open to All Traffic	276,800	0.8	9686	0.1
TOTAL	4,583,200	12.5	841511	12.7

The amount of rights of way in Winchester is comparable to other districts in the county with East Hampshire benefiting from the most comprehensive network. The provision within the county for access on foot only is 73% of the network. Winchester shows a smaller proportion of foot only network compared to the rest of Hampshire, at 66%. This table indicates that there is marginally more opportunity for residents in the Winchester district to undertake activities such as cycling, horse riding and carriage driving, in comparison to the average across the county.

² This figure is not static as the Definitive Map is continually updated.

3.2 Demand for the access network

The Mori residents surveys conducted in 1999, 2002/2003, 2004/2005 and 2006/2007 provide information on the use of footpaths and bridleways by Hampshire residents (Table 2). The figures included in Table 2 are an average taken from the four surveys over the last seven years. On average 33% of the population in Winchester use or benefit from country footpaths and bridleways which is similar to the county average.

Table 2: Use of Rights of Way per District

Local Authority Area	% use of footpaths & bridleways
Basingstoke & Deane	33.50
East Hampshire	40.00
Hart	41.75
New Forest	37.50
Test Valley	33.25
Winchester	33.25
Eastleigh	36.25
Fareham	30.75
Gosport	18.00
Havant	30.75
Rushmoor	25.00
Hampshire	33.50

Extrapolated from the Mori Residents Survey 1999, 2002/2003, 2004/2005 and 2006/2007

When the figures for 04/05 are compared to those published for 06/07 there is an indication of a decline in use of the rights of way network from residents in Winchester. This is a different picture to the rest of the districts in the county which are experiencing an increase in the use of footpaths and bridleways. At this level the sample size is so small it may not be significant, however note should be taken to identify whether this is the beginning of a trend in future surveys.

The Mori residents' survey provides data that can be analysed to give a breakdown of Winchester residents who use footpaths and bridleways by age group. Table 3 indicates the level of demand for footpaths and bridleways by each age group, based on actual numbers. It shows that the greatest demand is generated by residents in the 35-54 age group, followed by those under 16.

Table 3: Use of footpaths & bridleways for 2006 and 2026

Age Group	Figures for each age group that use a footpath & bridleway for 2006 and 2026			
	Winchester 2006	% of total 2006	Winchester 2026	% of total 2026
0-15	5423	19.9	6135	19.4
16-24	2564	9.4	2757	8.7
25-34	2856	10.5	3205	10.1
35-54	8733	32	9113	28.8
55-64	3945	14.5	4747	15
65+	3744	13.7	5720	18
Total	27265	100	31687	100

By examining use by age we are able to utilise population and demographic projection figures to predict the likely future demand for using a footpath and bridleway network in 2026 (Table 3).

Table 3 indicates that the total number of residents within the Winchester district using footpaths and bridleways in 2006 was 27,265 and is predicted to be 31,687 in 2026. The result is an increase in demand for footpaths and bridleways from Winchester residents of 16%.

In terms of actual numbers, the demand from the 35-54 age group is still likely to be the greatest in 2026. This age group currently has the highest propensity to use a footpath and bridleway and will still have the greatest numbers of users; the population changes will have little impact on the increased level of demand from 2006 to 2026.

The demand from those in the under 16 age group has declined whilst that in both the 55-64 and 65+ age groups has increased, with the most significant increase in demand from the 65+ age group. This figure is based on the assumption that the proportion of residents aged 65+ who use a footpath or bridleway will stay the same over the next twenty years. This increase in demand is as a consequence of the demographic changes in the population, however there may be a range of factors that will influence the proportion of users over the next twenty years (more details can be found in the Central Hampshire and New Forest report).

4. Assessment of the future supply and demand for Countryside Recreation Open Space

It was found that the comparison between local generic demand and that for a particular countryside site was not possible using the method developed for the Countryside Recreation Network.

4.1 Demand for visiting a countryside site including country park

The Mori residents' surveys 1999, 2002/2003, 2004/2005, and 2006/7 indicate that 33% of Hampshire residents and 29.25% of Winchester residents use or benefit from a countryside site (including country park). Table 4 shows that generally the use of countryside sites (including country parks) within Winchester is lower than the county average.

Table 4: Visits to countryside sites (including country parks)

Local Authority Area	% use of countryside sites
Basingstoke & Deane	25.25
East Hants	39.5
Hart	36
New Forest	38.5
Test Valley	28.5
Winchester	29.25
Eastleigh	43.25
Fareham	33
Gosport	23
Havant	34.5
Rushmoor	28.75
Hants	33

Extrapolated from the Mori Residents survey 1999, 2002/2003, 2004/2005 and 2006/2007

Table 5 shows the actual number for each age group in Winchester who visit countryside sites (including country parks). This indicates that the greatest level of demand is from residents who are in the 35-54 age groups followed by those under 16.

Table 5: Visits to countryside sites by age group for 2006 and 2026

Age Group	Figures for each age group that visit a countryside site(including country park) for 2006 and 2026			
	Winchester 2006	% of total 2006	Winchester 2026	% of total 2026
0-15	5944	23.9	6724	23.4
16-24	2067	8.3	2222	7.7
25-34	2571	10.3	2885	10
35-54	7877	31.7	8221	28.6
55-64	3298	13.3	3968	13.8
65+	3097	12.5	4732	16.5
Total	24854	100	28752	100

Derived from the Mori Residents Survey 2006/2007

This table illustrates that the total number of residents in Winchester that use or benefit from a countryside site (including country parks) in 2006 is 24,854 and is predicted to be 28,752 in 2026. Therefore, there is likely to be an increase in demand for visits to countryside sites (including country parks) of 15.6% over the next twenty years.

One of the greatest demands for visits to countryside sites and country parks will continue to be from the 35-54 age group. The largest percentage increase in demand will be from the 65+ age group. These calculations are based on proportions of each age group that currently visit countryside sites and parks combined with the projected population figures. As mentioned earlier there could be a number of factors that will influence that proportion thus changing overall demand.

4.2 How current demand is being met through existing provision

We know that 29.25% of the population in Winchester currently visit a countryside site including country park and that this is lower than the average for the county.

To determine how this demand is being met, in other words which countryside sites or parks this 29.25% are visiting, requires information from the relevant sites and parks in the area. Visitor origin data is only available from Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Manor Farm Country Park and Titchfield Haven. From this information the number of visitors from the Winchester district can be determined (Table 6).

Table 6: Visit to country parks from within Winchester

Country Park	Total visits	% visits from Winchester	Number of visits from Winchester	No. of visitors
Queen Elizabeth Country Park	230,907	11.5%	26670	1313
Titchfield Haven Country Park	42,673	9.6%	4096	201
Manor Farm Country Park	155,811	11.59%	18058	889
Total			48824	2403

Visitor surveys inc. postcode analysis: Manor Farm Country Park 2006, Queen Elizabeth Country Park 2005, Staunton Country Park 2004/05, Titchfield Haven 2006

These three parks account for only 2,403 visitors which is approximately 7% of all visitors to countryside sites including country parks. Further data is required to fully understand how demand from Winchester residents for countryside sites and parks is being met by the current provision.

Whilst the total visits made to sites such as Farley Mount Country Park, Lepe Country Park and Itchen Valley are known it is difficult to determine exactly how many of these visits are made by people residing in the Winchester district. The data provided by the New Forest National Park visitor survey does not provide sufficient detail to determine the number of visitors originating from the Winchester district. There may be some assumptions, regarding visitors to sites, considered reasonable to make. For example it could be assumed that, due its location and type of facility, that nearly all the visitors (81,615 per annum) to Farley Mount Country Park originate from the district. Unfortunately there is no evidence at all to support this assumption therefore it has not been included here.

5. Other Evidence

The Countryside Access Plans, together with associated research, provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the current supply and the current demand for countryside recreation. There are three draft plans which affect the Winchester area namely; Forest of Bere, South Downs and Test & Itchen Countryside Access Plans. From these plans the following issues have been identified:

5.1 Sustainable access to the countryside (reducing the reliance on cars)

The Plans recognise that there is a high reliance on the use of private cars to get out into the countryside for recreation across the county.

The factors influencing this high reliance on cars are mainly issues of supply:

- i. A lack of provision of good quality countryside close to where people live.
- ii. A shortage of safe off road routes that link settlements to the countryside.
- iii. Motorways and major roads fragment the access network and create barriers to access.

However there is also an issue of demand:

- iv. High levels of car ownership and preference for travel by car creating pressure for better parking and associated facilities.

5.2 Pressure on the existing network

Reference is made to the current pressure on the existing network in all the Plans but this is given a higher prominence in the Forest of Bere and Test and Itchen CAP. The Forest of Bere CAP is concerned with the network itself and refers to the poor condition of the multi use routes in comparison with elsewhere in the county. This condition is explained in the Plan as a consequence of a limited resource (number of routes) concentrating users onto a small number of paths, together with the prevailing heavy soil conditions in the area.

5.3 Demand for new multi functional off road routes

It has been recognised that in the Forest of Bere area there is a deficit in the number of bridleways and restricted byways allowing for cycling, horse riding and carriage driving. From this report we have established that this is not the case in the Winchester district, however there may still be an issue of demand outstripping supply. There is evidence to show that equestrian activities are popular in the district and the number of new equestrian facilities indicates an increase in diversification into equine business which may result in additional demand for access to the countryside.

6. Summary of findings

a. **The rights of way network in Winchester is slightly more extensive than the county average**

The residents of Winchester benefit from the provision of a rights of way network that is very slightly above the county average. A higher than the county average percentage of this network is available for cycling, horse riding and carriage driving. It has been recognised that in the Forest of Bere area there is a high demand for equestrian access to the countryside and a lack of appropriate rights of way. Whilst only a proportion of the district is within the Forest of Bere there is some evidence to show that there is an increase in equestrian facilities within the district.

b. **There is likely to be an increased in demand for countryside recreation activities from residents of Winchester**

The population in Winchester is predicted to increased by 17% from 2006 to 2026 (based on the recommendations in the draft South East Plan). The demand for access to the countryside via the footpath and bridleway network is likely to increase by 16%, whilst visits to countryside sites (including country parks) will increase by 15.6%.

c. **There is a lower than average propensity for people living in the Winchester area to visit a countryside site (including country parks)**

Currently 29.25% of the population in Winchester District visit a countryside site or park, which is slightly lower than the county average. The survey has shown a decline in both visits to countryside sites and use of footpaths and bridleways from Winchester residents between the 2004/2005 survey and the 2006/2007 survey. This information should be treated with caution, as the sample sizes are small and there is no explanation for this drop, but it is worth noting in case this indicates the start of a trend.

d. **The greatest demand for countryside recreation activities is likely to be from people aged 35+**

Winchester District is likely to experience a significant increase in the population aged 65 and over. This is expected to have an impact on the demand for both visits to countryside sites and parks and the use of footpaths and bridleways, however the predominant users, in terms of numbers, are still predicted to be from the 35-54 age groups.