

**The National Forest Company**

# **Impact of Sustainability and Greening Issues on Tourism Visits**

**Qualitative Research Findings**



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# 1. Introduction

QA Research (QA) were commissioned by The National Forest Company to conduct qualitative research into the impact of sustainability and greening issues on current and potential visitor's tourism trips.

This report provides details of the aims and objectives, the research methodology and sample, the key research findings and conclusions.

## 2. Aims and objectives

The aim of this research study was:

**“To investigate visitors’ and potential visitors’ attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability and greening issues and the impact they have on leisure day trips and holiday taking.”**

The objectives of the research were to:

- Investigate visitor attitudes towards the environment;
- Look at the impact of environmental attitudes on purchasing holidays / leisure trips;
- Determine what responsibility current and potential visitors feel the tourism industry should have for environmental practices;
- Look at the importance and appeal of sustainable themes and greening issues e.g. transport, food and local produce, walking, environmentally friendly restaurants and accommodation
- Discuss reasons for visiting and potential barriers to visiting the National Forest;
- Examine current perceptions of The National Forest, of visitors and non-visitors;
- Investigate sustainability practices that would appeal visitors to The National Forest;
- Look at additional factors that would encourage day and overnight break visiting.

## 3. Method and sample

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of people's views and opinions on greening issues in relation to visitor motivations and actions, it was recommended that a minimum of two ninety minute qualitative focus groups were undertaken, each comprising of eight respondents.

As Derbyshire is currently a key visitor market for The National Forest, it was suggested that two focus groups be initially conducted within this area. Each group was made up of key market segments, one with Empty Nesters and one with Caring Parents as detailed below:

Group 1: Empty Nesters

- Aged 45 to 65 years
- All social grades ABC1
- Free of children i.e. with no children living at home under 16 years
- Undertake countryside pursuits and activities (e.g. walking, fishing, golfing, cycling).

## Group 2: Caring Parents

- Aged 30 to 45 years old
- All social grades BC1C2
- Parents with children aged between 5 and 15 living with them at home
- Like to take their children to interesting places where fun is combined with educational interest.

To ensure we recruited from target markets, respondents who fulfilled the following criteria were recruited:

- All participants to be non-rejecters of visiting countryside locations and doing rural pursuits
- All participants to regularly take leisure day trips or holidays / short breaks in the UK (at least three times a year)
- A mix of male and female participants

As a high proportion of people living in the Derby area had previously visited an attraction or place of interest on a day trip within The National Forest within the last three years, recruitment was based on a high and low usage of attractions within The National Forest and a mix of those who had a high and low awareness of The National Forest brand.

Respondents received a monetary incentive as a thank you for taking part. A copy of the script can be found in appendix 1.

## 4. Key findings

NB: These findings are based on the reactions and opinions of sixteen respondents from two focus groups. Therefore caution should be taken if using this information in isolation to make any future decisions. Please also note that as a high proportion of respondents lived within close proximity to The National Forest they were more likely to visit on a day trip.

Overall results show differences between the Empty Nesters and Caring Parents groups in the appeal of greening activities. Author's comments and observations can be found in boxes throughout.

### 4.1 Motivations for taking tourism trips

This section of the discussion was important to establish the main motivational factors which influenced the type of trips Empty Nester and Caring Parent markets take.

#### 4.1.1 Types of tourism trips taken

Respondents were asked initially what types of destination they tended to visit on a holiday or short break. A range of destinations were identified, and are summarised below:

- Whitby
- Cornwall
- Durham
- York
- Lincoln
- Scotland
- Yorkshire Dales
- The Lake District
- Northumberland

Few respondents took overseas trips. Longer travel distances seemed to be one of the reasons for this.

The types of short breaks and holidays varied considerably depending on life stage and interests. Empty Nesters in particular listed a number of motivational factors including peace and quiet, a non-commercialised destination, rural countryside, easy access and walking:

*"When you are older you want a different type of holiday, back to nature really." (Empty Nesters, Group 1)*

*"Some of the places (e.g. The Lake District) are too commercialised now." (Empty Nesters, Group 1)*

However, the Caring Parents listed motivational factors relating to the need for activities for their children at a destination, and easy access:

*"Beaches where the kids have got their own amusements." (Caring Parents, Group 2)*

*"Quite activity holidays." (Caring Parents, Group 2)*

Respondents were then asked to comment on which destinations they would consider as a day trip destination in their area. A list of local areas cited follows:

- The Peak District
- Buxton
- Ashborne
- Lincolnshire
- Derbyshire
- Castleton
- Chesterfield
- Calke Abbey
- Foremark Reservoir

The majority of these day trip destinations were within an hour's drive time for respondents. Only two respondents listed locations or places of interest within The National Forest area; Calke Abbey and Foremark Reservoir. Responses suggested that awareness of and profile of The National Forest was low. As one respondent stated:

*"A problem with a lot of these places is that they are under your nose, but you don't notice them." (Empty Nesters, Group 1)*

#### **4.1.2 Influential factors on decision making**

Respondents were asked which key factors influenced an overnight break and leisure day visit. Results showed that responses varied significantly between groups and the type of trip people took i.e. overnight or day trip.

##### **Overnight breaks**

For the majority of Empty Nesters there were four main triggers which influenced a holiday or short break. An 'area for unwinding and relaxation' and 'physical scenery and landscape' were the two main factors which influenced the majority of Empty Nester respondents' decision making. 'Quality accommodation' and 'quaint villages' were referred to by over half of group members.

##### Area for unwinding and relaxation / Physical scenery and landscape

Unwinding and relaxation was considered to be closely linked to physical scenery and landscape. Generally Empty Nesters were influenced by locations that were able to offer rural and quieter breaks:

*"I am knocking on a few years and I want to unwind a bit." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"It would have to be an area for unwinding and relaxing because this is essential." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"An area for unwinding and physical scenery which you can walk and cycle in." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Unwinding and relaxing... I don't like city breaks... I want somewhere I can unwind and look at the scenery and wildlife." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

##### Quality accommodation

Quality accommodation was considered an important aspect for a number of the Empty Nester respondents. The term 'quality' for this group referred to accommodation that was able to offer comfort and a personalised service. A number of respondents stated that they were happy to stay in a B&B or caravan as long the establishment was clean and comfortable:

*"If you go to a B&B you get personalised service and you are well looked after." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"If it is for one night you want somewhere comfortable." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"At B&B's... you get a nice breakfast and receptions... hotels are so impersonalised." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"If we are going for an overnight stay walking or cycling... as long as it is clean and has nice people we would use it as a base." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Hotels tended to be seen as impersonal and only for special occasions.

#### Quaint villages and market towns

A few members of the Empty Nester group also mentioned quaint villages and market towns. These were seen to be part of their rural / relaxation breaks:

*"The quaint has such an appeal for me... It is like going back 100 years." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"I love quaint villages and market towns. I don't like shopping at all. I think walking around for nice coffee and looking at a church is lovely." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Other decision making factors included food and drink, walking and cycling and easy access. Only two respondents from the Empty Nesters group referred to wildlife and conservation as an influential factor, which indicates this was an area lower in priority.

For the Caring Parents group decision making was strongly influenced by what was best for their children:

*"The main consideration of the trip is the children..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

A varied number of influential factors were listed dependent on the age, lifestyle and interests of the children. Key factors included:

- Quality accommodation;
- Outdoor activities e.g. walking, cycling;
- Family activities;
- Safe environment;
- Area for unwinding and relaxation;
- Physical scenery and landscape;
- Quaint villages and market towns;
- Easy access.

There were some similarities with the Empty Nesters group, with an appropriate overnight destination being somewhere to 'unwind and relax' and having 'physical scenery':

*"You want somewhere nice and peaceful... you don't want to stay in a seedy place." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

However for the Caring Parents other factors such as 'outdoor activities', 'family activities' and 'a safe family environment' were considered just as important:

*"Outdoor activities, so they are not on top of each other... they need to have their own space." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Quality accommodation was also rated as an important influencing factor. Mixed responses were given according to the type of accommodation people stayed in, with some members preferring to stay in self-catering accommodation and others a Travelodge because of the cost and convenience:

*"It depends on the trip, if it is for a longer trip a cottage." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Travel Lodges are cheaper... they let us stay in the same room." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Overall there was a general consensus that a holiday break should be somewhere that was safe and had space for children to play and get out and about:

*"They have got to be able to get out and about." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Overall Caring Parents have more complex factors to think about within their decision making compared with the Empty Nesters.

Results suggest that quieter, rural/countryside breaks with some accommodation comforts appealed more to the Empty Nester market. For families countryside breaks with family/outdoor activities, and a safe environment were key considerations. These are factors which The National Forest may want to consider in the marketing of overnight breaks in the area.

### **Leisure day trips**

For the Empty Nesters influencing factors varied slightly for leisure day visits compared with overnight breaks. Easy access was a much stronger decision making factor for the majority of respondents:

*"Easy access because you don't want to be queuing for hours on end for a day trip." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Easy access, I want to get somewhere quick, I don't want to be stressed." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Empty Nesters also discussed the specific activity as a main motivator for a leisure day trip:

*"History and heritage, quaint village and wildlife and conservation, these are the sorts of things I would drive out and specifically see." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Popular activities participated in included:

- History and heritage;
- Walking;
- Wildlife and conservation;
- Quaint villages;

- Events and festivals.

History and heritage and walking were cited as frequent activities participated in by the majority of the group members. A few referred to Calke Abbey and Foremark Reservoir as popular places to walk:

*"At Calke Abbey they do a walk for health." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Walking to the restaurant at Calke Abbey it is just lovely." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Walking and the scenery are my main motivations, you don't want to walk anywhere built up." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Wildlife and conservation was also rated as important for a number of Empty Nesters:

*"I love wildlife... I love to see them in their natural environment." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

A couple of members of the group also rated 'unwinding and relaxation' as an important factor. These respondents were still working and more time precious:

*"Going to an area I can unwind and relax, even if it is to Foremark Reservoir."*

Although not considered an important factor, a number of respondents also referred to food and drink as an activity they undertook within the descriptions of their day trip.

Empty Nesters were mainly influenced by their hobbies and interests for a day visit; main triggers included history, heritage, walking and rural activities such as seeing wildlife and quaint villages. Wildlife and conservation was considered a stronger motivational factor for a day trip for these Empty Nester respondents.

For the Caring Parents group similar factors to the overnight trips remained important, such as 'safety' and 'physical scenery'. But for over half of the members 'easy access' and 'outdoor activities' were also considered main influencing factors for a day trip:

*"It has to be easy access for a day trip." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"If you are going out for a day trip it needs to be somewhere that is going to provide activities." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

One person also made a further comment about events and festivals:

*"I have listed events and festivals... we belong to the National Trust, like Calke Abbey they do treasure trails which the children really enjoy." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

A smaller number of respondents rated other factors as important such as:

- Food and drink;
- Quaint villages and market towns;
- History and heritage;
- Wildlife and conservation.

For Caring Parents things for children to do and a short travel time remained the main motivations for a day trip.

Overall the results suggest that different triggers influence Empty Nester and Caring Parent markets. To encourage these two market types to visit more effectively, two separate campaigns may need to be considered in any future marketing campaigns for overnight and day leisure visits. For example marketing attractions and activities in The National Forest area to children and families and marketing countryside rest and relaxation activities such as short and long walks, places to eat and drink and villages and market towns to Empty Nesters.

## 4.2 Awareness and attitudes towards greening issues and participation

On the whole similar responses were given by both the Empty Nesters and Caring Parent groups about concerns and attitudes towards the environment. Initially both groups stated that they did have strong concerns about the environment:

*"It is very important... I think if I was a single chap I possibly wouldn't be as concerned, but now I have a family you are concerned about how our children are going to grow up."* (Group 2, Caring Parents)

In terms of environmental activities the majority of respondents referred to domestic activities within their daily lives. All participated in some form of recycling:

*"Recycling... cardboard bottles, boxes, you think gosh that used to all go into the normal bin."* (Group 1, Empty Nesters)

*"Where recycling is concerned most people recycle."* (Group 2, Caring Parents)

A number of the Empty Nesters also stated that they switched their lights the TVs off more frequently. One Empty Nester also stated that they used cooking oil in their car.

When asked what additional activities they would like to do more of, a couple Empty Nesters stated that public transport should be used more:

*"Everywhere we should take more advantage of public transport."* (Group 1, Empty Nesters)

*"Park and rides are very good, we ought to leave our cars at home more."* (Group 1, Empty Nesters)

However, for certain Caring Parents there was a level of scepticism about the impact environmental activities had on the environment. For a number of Caring Parents their lifestyle decisions were more important and a higher priority than the environment:

*"There is an environmental angle to a lot of things; I think if you talk about cutting down car usage or not flying I don't think I would."* (Group 2, Caring Parents)

*"I am interested, but I am not sure how far I would go to change our lives."* (Group 2, Caring Parents)

*"I am more interested in renewable energy sources than I am in reducing my travel."* (Group 2, Caring Parents)

One respondent also felt that environmental activities were a way of increasing costs or taxes:

*"I am not really bought in by this environmental thing... we are getting it drilled down our throats... they are trying to get more money out of us." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

On the whole both groups were aware and had concerns about the environment. However for the majority of respondents their concerns for the environment did not motivate lifestyle decisions. Environmental activities were referred to more in relation to domestic activities such as recycling.

There were indications that the Empty Nesters group were more willing to participate in environmental activities. However Caring Parents interest levels remained lower, reasons for this may relate to the higher priority of family demands.

For a small number of participants, some interest was shown in renewable energy sources. This may be a greening angle / activity that The National Forest might consider promoting or undertaking to generate interest from a broader market.

### **4.3. Awareness and attitudes towards green tourism / sustainable tourism**

#### **4.3.1 Awareness and understanding of green tourism/sustainable tourism**

Both groups were asked to comment on what they understood by green tourism or sustainable tourism. The majority of respondents from both groups had a low awareness of what these terms meant. A couple of members related these terms to countryside areas:

*"Going somewhere which is natural rather than a self-contained resort... where real people live, than just a hotel." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Is it an open space that you want to promote for the public?" (Group 1, Empty Nesters)*

One person linked the term sustainability to maintaining a community:

*"More wealth is distributed to the locals... they are then able to stay and maintain the place." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

These results suggest that there is currently a low level of awareness and understanding among potential and current visitors about what green tourism and sustainable tourism means and why it is important. If green / sustainable tourism is an area The National Forest wants to become well known for, an education programme or other methods of raising awareness may need to be undertaken to make people aware of why it is important. Also simple and clear language may need to be used in any marketing materials to ensure effective communication.

#### **4.3.2 Impact on tourism trip decision making**

A summary explanation was provided by the moderator on green tourism and sustainable tourism to each of the groups. Each group was then asked in turn whether green issues impacted on:

- Where they went overseas or in the UK?
- How far they travelled by car for days out?
- Whether they went to a green destination or non-green destination?

For the majority of respondents greening issues did not impact on any of their conscious tourism trip decision making:

*"Not really I never think about it" (All agree) (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"No not really" (All agree) (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Some additional comments were made about their reluctance to use alternative means of transport to a holiday destination:

*"We can't all go backwards and walk or cycle everywhere." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"People are still going to use planes." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

One person did state that they had made a conscious decision to visit an alternative energy attraction:

*"We did go to one place in North Wales that thought about alternative forms of energy." (Group 1, Empty Nesters)*

The results suggest that greening issues and sustainable tourism do not currently have an impact on people's decision making. With only one person in both groups stating they had consciously been to an environmental attraction, results suggest that green tourism is targeted more towards a niche market.

#### **4.3.3 Awareness and perceptions of sustainable destinations**

When asked what UK destinations were noted for their positive attitudes towards green tourism, respondents awareness levels in both groups was low. A few respondents referenced National Park areas such as the Lake District and the Peak District:

*"If you go to the Lake District they are very big on conservation." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Places like the Peak District they tell you to try and not erode the paths..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

A couple of respondents also listed local attractions such as Conkers and Castleton Water:

*"Conkers... they have activities like the climbing frame, but they are also big on conservation... water filters... I quite like it there" (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Castleton Water they have a cycling track and great visitor centre..."(Group 2, Caring Parents)*

For the majority of respondents whether a tourism destination had a positive attitude towards greening issues or sustainable tourism was not seen to be a main decision making factor to visit a destination. Other factors such as activities, physical scenery, rest and relaxation were seen as more important. Respondents perceived greening or sustainable tourism to be part of the general upkeep of an area:

*"I don't necessarily think I am going to take them to the Lake District because they are big on conservation. I go these because it is a lovely day. Part of the reasons it is lovely is because they are big on conservation." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I think any destination or property it is self-perpetuating... to attract people they need to keep it nice and natural." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Results indicate that there is nowhere in the UK with a strong conservation persona. National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were considered to have the strongest personas. Responses suggest that sustainable / green tourism is part of visitors' expectations when visiting a destination and but not a main motivator for visiting.

#### 4.4 Appeal of greening / sustainable tourism actions

Respondents were asked to rate from a list of possible green actions which activities they felt were important to do on a day trip or overnight trip, which activities would make no difference and which activities were unimportant. No one rated anything unimportant, however on a number of activities responses were mixed in terms of their importance levels. The table below summaries the rating of activities in order of importance for each group:

	Group 1, Empty Nesters	Group 2, Caring Parents
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational activities e.g. nature walks, demonstrations, events at attractions</li> <li>• Walking and cycling trails</li> <li>• Conservation activities</li> <li>• Local 'pay back' schemes</li> <li>• Buying local food</li> <li>• Buying locally made goods</li> <li>• Planting tree schemes</li> <li>• Staying in green accommodation</li> <li>• Recycling waste</li> <li>• Avoiding the exploitation of local people</li> <li>• Learning about local cultures / communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking and cycling trails</li> <li>• Buying local food</li> <li>• Buying locally made goods</li> <li>• Educational activities e.g. nature walks, demonstrations, events at attractions</li> </ul>
Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing car use</li> <li>• Carbon off-setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting tree schemes</li> <li>• Staying in green accommodation</li> <li>• Local 'pay back' schemes</li> <li>• Learning about local cultures / communities</li> <li>• Conservation activities</li> <li>• Recycling waste</li> </ul>
Make no difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saving water</li> <li>• Avoiding flying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon off-setting</li> <li>• Avoiding the exploitation of local people</li> <li>• Saving water</li> <li>• Reducing car use</li> <li>• Avoiding flying</li> </ul>
Unimportant	None	None

The table above shows that on the whole the Empty Nesters were more willing to participate in greening actions during a day or overnight break. However, Caring Parents were more reluctant to get involved in activities and indicated that they would need an additional motivation or incentive e.g. part of an admission fee, low in cost , involve children or be more inspiring / creative.

The top four activities both Empty Nesters and Caring Parents considered participating in and regarded as important on a day visitor or overnight break were; 'walking and cycling trails', 'buying local food/local goods' and 'undertaking educational activities'.

Activities which were rated as having no impact for both groups on a day visit or holiday/short break were 'saving water' and 'avoiding flying'.

There were a number of activities which generated mixed responses by the Caring Parents including 'conservation activities', 'local payback schemes', 'planting a tree', 'staying in green accommodation', 'recycling waste' and 'learning about local cultures / communities.'

- **Conservation activities**

Responses to conservation activities were fairly positive from the Empty Nesters, ranking it as one of their top six activities to undertake. For the majority of Caring Parents conservation activities were regarded as an important activity, but not something they were as keen to get involved in:

*"Conservation activities are very important..." (Group 1, Empty Nesters)*

*"I think it is important but I would just not be interested in doing it myself." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I would much rather see people go and do it rather than do it myself..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- **Local 'pay back' schemes**

There were mixed opinions within the Caring Parents group over local payback schemes. For a number, this was not an activity they would consider participating in. Results suggested that this group were much more cost sensitive in comparison with the Empty Nesters group:

*"It annoys me when I see things like that because people only want something." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I think you pay to get into the car park, then the entrance and then they want more." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

In contrast a couple of people in the Caring Parents and the majority of the Empty Nesters group respondents felt that as long as it was clearly indicated who and what the money went towards, they would be willing to participate:

*"I think it is important to put something back if you go to an area of natural beauty and it is reliant on volunteers... you want to go back and for your children to sustain it." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I wouldn't mind that as long as it was a reasonable price, and you know it was going back to the local community." (Group 1, Empty Nesters)*

- **Staying in green accommodation**

Generally both groups were receptive to the idea of staying in green accommodation. However for the Empty Nesters and a couple of the Caring Parent respondents, responses suggested that

if promoted well and there was no additional cost, staying in green accommodation may play a larger part in their decision making:

*"If they publicised it more for example if it was a green B&B people would think about it." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"I think it is important as long as they don't charge a premium for it... if you are in a family you don't want to spend a massive amount." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

However for the majority of Caring Parents, staying in green accommodation would not play a significant part in their decision making on the accommodation they would chose:

*"I wouldn't necessarily look for green accommodation, but I may be impressed if it was advertised." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- **Planting tree schemes**

There was a divide in the Caring Parents group as to whether they would participate in a tree planting scheme. A number of participants stated they would be interested in taking part if it was a local event and made interesting for children:

*"I think it is important because I like trees." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"If they were doing one at Calke Abbey... I might go." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I think it is important... if they made it interesting for children." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

The remaining half of the group felt that they would not take part in a tree planting day. There were indications that they would need a greater incentive for it to impact on their day trip or overnight decision making:

*"I don't think I would plan a trip around a plant a tree day." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I would go to a National Park area, such as the Peak District, but I wouldn't go out of my way to plant a tree..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- **Recycling waste**

In general the majority of Caring Parents felt that recycling waste was an important activity. However it would not impact on their decision making or perception of an area. For the Empty Nesters group there were indications that this type of activity would have a greater impact on their perception levels of a destination.

Within the Caring Parents group there was a greater divide as to whether they would participate in this activity. For some Caring Parents this activity was not something they would consider doing on a day trip. For others this was an activity they have participated in and there was an expectation that areas or accommodation e.g. campsites would have recycling bins in place:

*"If you go for a day out it wouldn't really bother me." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"The majority of places already have bins so you wouldn't really think about it." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- **Learning about local cultures / communities**

Learning about local cultures and communities was considered important by both groups, however there were indications that this would not have a big impact on choosing a destination. The Empty Nesters gave strong indications that this was an activity they would be more likely to take part in compared with the Caring parents group who seemed undecided and possibly less inspired:

*"It depends where you are, if you are on holiday yes, but if you are on are on a day trip somewhere local you are already going to know a bit." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

### **Reducing car use / carbon off-setting**

Reducing car usage and carbon-off setting were activities which generated mixed responses for both Empty Nester and Caring Parent groups:

- **Reducing car use**

For a smaller number of participants reducing their car usage on a day trip or overnight stay is something they currently do or would consider doing more of.

*"When we are away for a night, we tend to walk out to places." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

However for the majority of respondents reducing car usage was not an activity they would consider participating in, particularly for participants in the Caring Parents group:

*"It is just not going to happen." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"It is something I feel guilty about, but would not necessarily do." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Results suggest that greater incentives or easier alternatives would need to be put in place for this to happen.

- **Carbon off-setting**

Both groups expressed pessimistic views about carbon off-setting as an activity. A number of participants felt concerned that this was an activity which aimed to make additional money out of people, and were unsure about its long term impact:

*"In 10 years it will be important because it will be made easier or part of the price." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"How long does it take for the trees to grow... The thing is people are getting the money and it is not having any effect." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"The idea is important but they are going about it the wrong way." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Activities which were considered to have popular appeal for both groups included walking and cycling trials, buying local food/local goods and undertaking educational activities. One reason for choosing these activities may related to the factor that they link closely with main decision making factors listed in section 4.1. In order to attract a broader visitor market to the area, The National Forest may want to consider developing these key activities further.

Results indicate that on the whole greening activities appealed more to the Empty Nesters market compared with Caring Parents. There were strong indications that Caring Parents would need

additional incentives to participate in a number of the greening activities. However it is important to note that at the initial stage of the discussion, for the majority respondents greening issues did not impact on the decision making of a day or overnight trip. Although Empty Nesters' responses were fairly positive towards greening activities, results suggest that this market would also need additional incentives to get involved and engage with The National Forest.

To incentivise these activities one suggestion would be to put together a creative programme of greening events, activities and schemes. Examples may include themed walks or trails relating to e.g. seasons, wildlife, nature, sounds; events with local artists; wood crafts events; community/school performing arts activities; themed tree planting schemes e.g. for new born babies, where people can go back and watch their tree grow in a chosen area. This may support The National Forest to become recognised as a destination for fun, education and learning activities for families, schools, visitors and local communities.

For both groups there were perceptions that some greening activities were more expensive:

*"Why is it when it is green it is always more expensive." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

For target markets like Caring Parents who are more likely to be price sensitive, The National Forest would need to take this into consideration for any activities they were running.

There were also indications from some respondents that further explanations were needed as to why greening activities were important and their immediate and long term impact. The National Forest may consider incorporating educational messages and the development of background knowledge into each of these activities.

## 4.5. Awareness and perceptions of The National Forest

### 4.5.1 Awareness of The National Forest

Initially respondents were all asked to state what key words came to mind when they heard the words 'The National Forest'. A few respondents responded with words such as trees, woodland, wildlife and greenness.

However for the majority of respondents initial reactions to the term The National Forest raised a number of questions. A number of comments were made about whether The National Forest contained any trees. Those who had low awareness levels were unsure of where The National Forest was and what it contained:

*"There are no trees in it." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"...Basically all you see is a whole load of road signs and no trees." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I wouldn't know where it started or finished?" (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I don't know where it is?" (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"I have heard about it... I know it is local and a lot of it is in the Leicestershire area..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Is it free can everyone use it?" (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

On the whole there were low awareness levels of where and what The National Forest contained. Only a minority of respondents who were regular visitors were able to describe the area:

*"I always thought the National Forest was lots of different things like the National Trust. Places such as Calke Abbey, Foremark Reservoir and Conker are all part of The National Forest." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Using an area of land which is not necessarily for farming and for woodland, such as tree planting at Calke etc." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Respondents were then handed out maps detailing the area, attractions and places of interest The National Forest covered. A number of respondents from both groups were surprised about how large the area was and the number of attractions it contained:

*"I didn't realise any of these (attractions) were part of the National Forest." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"It (The National Forest) is huge." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"I didn't realise Snibston was part of the National Forest." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Respondents listed of a range of places they had visited within The National Forest area. These included:

- Calke Abbey;
- Staunton Harold Reservoir;
- Foremark Reservoir;
- Snibston;

- Ingleby;
- Bradgate Park;
- Rosliston Forestry Centre.

When asked about their experience of visiting these places, the feedback was generally positive. The Caring Parents group however commented on Conkers being limited to older age children. Suggestions were made for Conkers to be targeted towards a broader range of young children and having more activities available:

*"I didn't think Conkers was very good for young children... a lot of the activities like the climbing frames were too big... they need more for children aged two to four..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"I had heard it (Conkers) was aimed at older children." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"There are lots of nice walks (at Conkers)... but after 20 minutes they (children) are bored... unlike Elvington Castle where there is lots for them to do." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

The Empty Nesters group also queried the alternative forms of transportation available within the National Forest.

*"If you looked at that area... what other forms of transport are there?" (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"All these nice villages we drive to what about the pollution." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

## 4.5.2 Experience and perception of The National Forest

### Reasons for visiting

Having discussed the area in more detail, respondents were all asked to comment on what aspects of the area were positive, unique and motivated people to visit. The Empty Nesters group listed a number of factors including:

- Easy access;
- Planting trees;
- Wildlife;
- Allowing children to be in a natural environment;
- Learning about the area;
- Walking;
- Getting away from it all;
- Nice place to live;
- Re-planting in old industrial areas e.g. Moira;
- Trees;
- Countryside;
- Untouched;
- Ashfield;
- Variety of things to do in the area.

Their main motivations for visiting the area linked to escapism:

*"Getting out of the rat race, seeing nature as it should be and not lots of people." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Getting away from a built up area" (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"You can find your own space." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

In terms of the atmosphere of the area, Empty Nesters described the area as relaxing and quiet and natural:

*"Relaxing... considering you are close to large city areas you can find areas which are quiet..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Because a lot of it is untouched and natural." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

The Caring Parents comments focused more on the wide range of attractions available in the area, a main motivator and unique aspect of the area:

*"There are a lot of attractions." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

The comments suggested that the two markets would visit The National Forest area for different reasons; the Empty Nesters group for rest and relaxation and the Caring Parents group for variety of attractions.
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### **Areas for improvement**

When asked which aspects of the area were poor and needed improving, respondents mentioned; transport infrastructure, availability of accommodation, cycle hire and the lack of trees. The Empty Nester group raised the issue of no alternative forms of transport being in place such as buses and rail networks:

*"The road systems cannot cope with all these people." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"The road network... there is no rail network." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Most of the villages and towns haven't got buses..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

One person also stated that The National Forest could look to put in more cycle hire options within the area:

*"Cycle hire... not everyone wants to bring their bike with them." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

Also a couple of respondents from each of the groups also felt there was a lack of trees:

*"The thing is - my idea of a forest is a mass of trees." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

There was a perception that there was limited accommodation available within The National Forest area;

*"Accommodation... I don't know if there are many B&B's in that area." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

### **Barriers to visiting**

Main barriers to visiting the area included lack of awareness, being an undefined area and competition from other destinations.

#### Lack of awareness

The main reason for the majority of respondents as to why people did not visit the area was related to lack of awareness:

*"It is all lack of awareness that there are these attractions." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"People just aren't aware." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"We are practically on the door step and we don't know." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"Someone in Yorkshire wouldn't know where the National Forest is?" (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"There is no publicity." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

#### Undefined area

Respondents in the Caring Parents group went on further to describe The National Forest as an unrecognisable or unidentifiable name and area. Currently the area is known for specific attractions rather than being part of The National Forest:

*"It is not a recognisable area when you visit..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"The Cotswolds is a more clearly defined area... the National Forest just isn't." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"It has got the wrong name... it is more a collection of attractions." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"The National Forest you would associate with a group of attractions." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

#### **Competition from other visitor destinations**

A couple of Caring Parents respondents also stated that they felt there were a number of other visitor destinations e.g. the Peak District, which were more appealing:

*"You can get to most places from here on a day trip." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

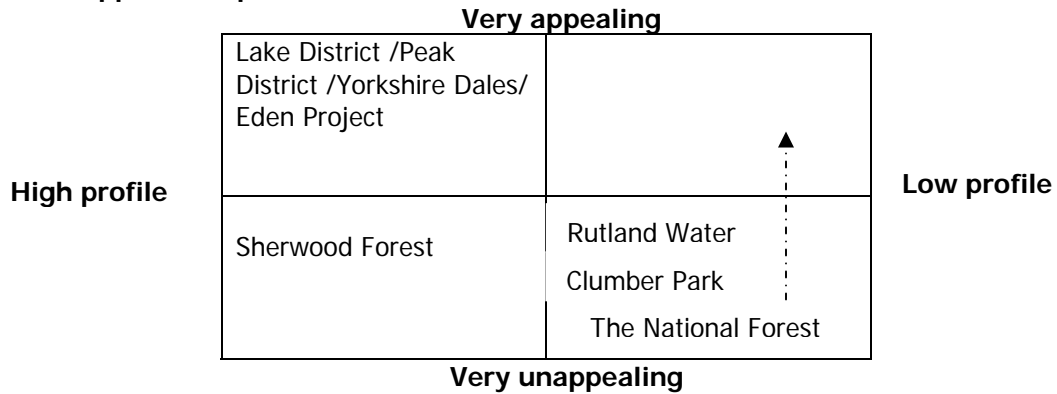
*"The Peak District is not far." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

<p>As a high proportion of visitors are often prompted to visit a destination through a recommendation or word of mouth the results above indicate that more needs to be done to raise awareness of The National Forest as a destination for local residents. These comments suggest there is a need for a more unified and collective approach from the attractions within The National Forest area, to support the development and awareness raising of the brand name. These findings support the need for the current gateway project.</p>
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#### **4.5.3 Current Brand Perception**

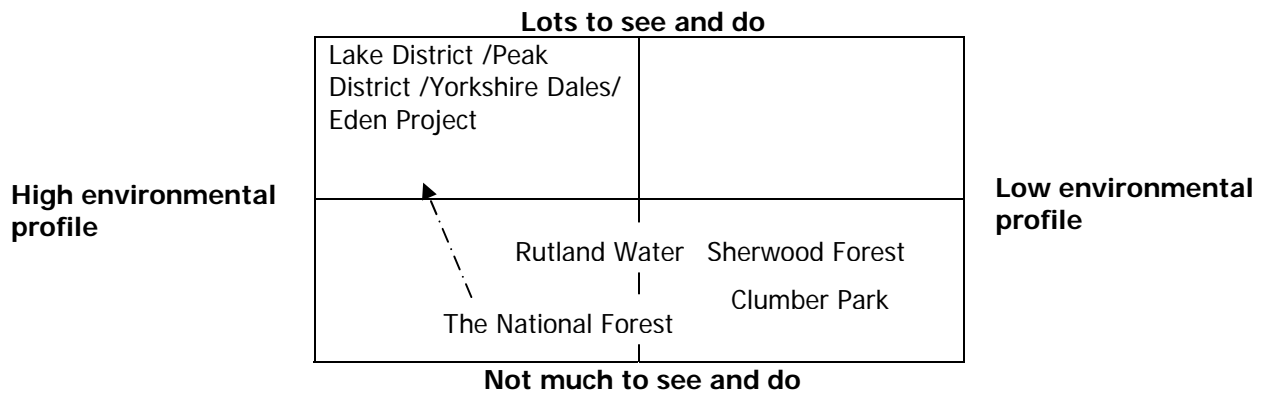
Respondents were asked to compare other UK destinations and location attractions with The National Forest. Destinations were rated on their level of appeal, profile, environmental profile, and lots to see and do, on a scale of high, medium and low. Both groups gave very similar ratings to each of the destinations they were presented with. A summary of the results are detailed in the diagrams below.

**Level of appeal and profile**



The dotted arrow represents the potential line

**Lots to see and do and environmental profile**



The dotted arrow represents the potential line

Destinations which were ranked the highest in terms of appeal, profile, environmental profile and lots to see and do were the Lake District, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and Eden project. All destinations were regarded as familiar, established and defined. These were all regarded as destinations respondents would visit.

Local attractions such as Sherwood Forest, Rutland Water and Clumber Park were ranked lower by comparison. Clumber Park had the lowest destination rating in terms of appeal, profile, lots to see and do and environmental profile.

The National Forest presented mixed opinions. Currently the groups ranked The National Forest lowest in appeal, profile and lots to see in terms of their awareness levels. However respondents stated that if the awareness of The National Forest were raised then potentially its appeal and reputation for lots to see and do would be raised (the dotted arrow represents the potential line). In terms of the environmental profile of The National Forest both the groups rated the National Forest on the same level as top brand destinations such as the Lake District.

However a number of respondents, particularly from the Caring Parents group, did not feel The National Forest had the potential to meet the same profile or appeal levels as established destination brands such as the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Eden Project or Peak District.

## 4.6 Appeal of greening / sustainable tourism theme for The National Forest

Having discussed respondents experiences and perceptions of The National Forest area, respondents were asked in more detail about the impact greening and sustainable tourism activities would have on the appeal of The National Forest as a visitor destination.

On the whole there were current perceptions that The National Forest was an environmentally friendly place to visit. Also there was an expectation that a number of the green activities were already taking place. Preferences for greening activities remained the same as listed in section 4.4.

When asked if a high environmental profile would attract them to visit on a day visit or overnight break a number of respondents felt this was a niche market:

*"You are aiming it at a very small proportion of people... it wouldn't attract me to stay for the weekend and go tree planting." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"If you are trying to get hoards of people I think there are other areas to look at." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

For both the Caring Parents and Empty Nester groups there was a strong feeling that raising awareness of The National Forest brand and area was a higher priority:

*"Within the National Forest... there is no sense of identity." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"It needs an identity which is missing." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

Suggestions for raising awareness included implementing more road and village signs, promoting The National Forest within attractions, re-branding the area, creating a hook for people to visit the area, raising awareness in schools and general advertising in publications and local tourism businesses and organisations:

- Road/village signage

*"There is a road sign that says National Forest... but once you are in it none of the villages say they are part of the National Forest." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- Attractions awareness

*"If you go to Twycross Zoo, you don't know you are in part of the National Forest..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"You don't feel like you would be contributing to the local National Forest economy." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- Re-branding everything – homogenous logo

*"They have a massive re-branding exercise to do... everything is there." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

*"It needs some homogenous logo." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- Hook to attract people to the area

*"There is nothing in the area to make it a big draw..." (Group 2, Caring Parents)*

- Raising awareness in schools

*"The education side... getting the message into schools..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Promoting the educational activities." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

- Advertising

*"Advertising in a lot of pubs, hotels..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"An advert in the paper or TV." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Local radio we use for events..." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"An article in the telegraph" (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

*"Derbyshire Life." (Group 1, Empty Nester)*

As with section 4.4. the appeal for greening activities and sustainable tourism was slightly higher for the Empty Nesters group compared with the Caring Parents group. However for both groups raising the awareness of The National Forest brand was a higher priority.

The National Forest may want to consider ways in which it can create unique experiences and bigger promotional marketing messages as to why The National Forest is National. Suggestions may include looking at National carbon-off setting partnerships with the British Airport Association where all trees get planted in the National Forest; having an area which represents all the type of trees in the UK; holding national wood craft events, holding a record breaking plant a tree event.

## **5. Conclusions**

### **5.1. Empty Nester and Caring Parent motivations differ when taking tourism trips**

Overall the results suggest that different triggers influence Empty Nester and Caring Parent markets. For Empty Nester markets relaxing, quieter, rural/countryside overnight breaks with some accommodation comforts appealed. For Caring Parents children were the main influential factor within their decision making. An area to unwind and relax, and scenery were important, however a destination with family/outdoors activities, and a safe environment were considered just as important.

On a day trip Empty Nesters were mainly influenced by their hobbies and interests for day visits. Main triggers included heritage, walking and rural activities such as seeing wildlife and quaint villages. For Caring Parents things for children to do and a short travel time remained the main motivations for a day trip.

Wildlife and conservation was considered a stronger motivational factor for a day trip by Empty Nesters. No one from the Caring Parent group referred to wildlife and conservation and only two respondents from the Empty Nesters group referred to it for an overnight break. Results indicate that wildlife and conservation was a lower priority for Caring Parents and in overnight break decision making.

To encourage these two market types to visit more frequently two separate targeted campaigns may need to be considered in any future National Forest marketing for overnight and day leisure visits.

### **5.2 Domestic opinions towards greening issues**

On the whole both groups were aware and had concerns about the environment. However for the majority of respondents their concern for the environment was not the main motivator in their lifestyle decisions. Environmental activities were referred to more in relation to domestic activities such as recycling.

There were indications that the Empty Nesters group were more willing to participate in environmental activities. However Caring Parents' interest levels remained lower, reasons for this may relate to the higher priority of family demands.

For a small number of participants, some interest was shown in renewable energy sources. This might be a greening angle / activity from which The National Forest might consider promoting or undertaking to generate interest from a broader market.

### **5.3 Low knowledge of green / sustainable tourism**

Results suggest that there is currently a low level of awareness and understanding among potential and current visitors about what green tourism and sustainable tourism means and why it is important. If green / sustainable tourism is an area The National Forest wants to become well known for, an education programme or other awareness methods may need to be undertaken to make people aware of why it is important. Also simple and clearer language may need to be used in any marketing materials to ensure effective communication.

Results indicate that there is nowhere in the UK with a strong conservation persona. National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were considered to have the strongest personas. Responses reconfirmed that sustainable / green tourism is part of visitors' expectation levels when visiting a destination but not a main motivator for visiting. Other factors such as activities, physical scenery, rest and relaxation were seen as more important. Results suggested that green tourism as a product and marketing theme is targeted more towards a niche market.

## **5.4 Appeal for creative greening activities**

Activities which were considered to have popular appeal for both groups included walking and cycling trails, buying local food/local goods and undertaking educational activities. Other activities which generated a level of appeal included conservation activities, local pay back schemes, planting a tree, staying in green accommodation, recycling waste and learning about local cultures / communities.

Results indicate that on the whole greening activities appealed more to the Empty Nesters market compared with Caring Parents. However for the majority respondents, as stated in 5.1, greening issues did not impact on the decision making of a day or overnight trip. Although Empty Nesters' responses were fairly positive, results suggest that both markets need additional incentives to get involved and engage with The National Forest.

## **5.5 Awareness and perceptions of The National Forest**

For the majority of respondents initial reactions to the term The National Forest raised a number of questions. A number of comments were made about whether The National Forest contained any trees. Those who had low awareness levels were unsure of where The National Forest was and what it contained. When shown a detailed map of the area, a number of respondents from both groups were surprised about how large the area was and the number of attractions it contained.

The majority of respondents had visited the National Forest. When asked about their experience of visiting these places, the feedback was generally positive. The comments suggested that the two markets would visit The National Forest area for different reasons; the Empty Nesters group for rest, relaxation and escapism and the Caring Parents group for variety of attractions.

When asked which aspects of the area were poor and needed improving, transport infrastructures, availability of accommodation, cycle hire and the lack of trees were all cited.

Main barriers to visiting the area included lack of awareness, being an undefined area and competition from other destinations. As a high proportion of visitors are often prompted to visit a destination through a recommendation or word of mouth the results above indicate that more needs to be done to raise awareness of The National Forest destination to local residents. These comments suggest there is a need for a more unified and collective approach from the attractions within The National Forest area, to support the development and awareness raising of the brand name. These findings support the need for the current gateway project.

As a destination brand The National Forest presented mixed opinions. Currently the groups ranked The National Forest lowest in appeal, profile and lots to see in terms of their awareness levels. However respondents stated that if the awareness of The National Forest were raised then potentially its appeal and reputation for lots to see and do would be raised. In terms of the environmental profile of The National Forest both the groups rated The National Forest on the same level as top brand destinations such as the Lake District.

However a number of respondents, particularly from the Caring Parents group, did not feel The National Forest had the potential to meet the same profile or appeal levels as established destination brands such as the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Eden Project or Peak District.

## **5.6 Appeal of greening / sustainable tourism theme for The National Forest**

On the whole there were current perceptions that The National Forest was an environmentally friendly place to visit. Also there was an expectation that a number of green activities were already taking place. When asked if a high environmental profile would attract them to visit on a day visit or overnight break a number of respondents felt this was a niche market.

For both the Caring Parents and Empty Nester groups there was a strong feeling that raising awareness of The National Forest brand and area was a higher priority. Suggestions for raising awareness included implementing more road and village signs, promoting The National Forest within attractions, re-branding the area, creating a hook for people to visit the area, raising awareness in schools and general advertising in publications and local tourism businesses and organisations.

## **6. Recommendations**

- As awareness levels of The National Forest remain low, The National Forest needs to focus on raising its awareness and profile locally and nationally.
- Consideration may need to be given to developing unique activities and events to generate national awareness.
- Greening and sustainable activities are one way of creating awareness, however activities would need to have creative input to make them appeal to a broader family market and encourage participation. It is also important that greening marketing messages are clear and easy to understand.
- To incentivise these greening activities one suggestion would be to put together a creative programme of greening events, activities and schemes. Examples may include; themed walks or trails relating to seasons, wildlife, nature, sounds; events with local artists; wood craft events; community/school performing arts activities; themed tree planting schemes e.g. for new born babies, where people can go back and watch their tree grow in a chosen area. This may support The National Forest to become recognised as a destination for fun, education and learning activities for families, schools, visitors and local communities. Price sensitivity and educational messages would need to be taken into consideration.
- A key strength of The National Forest is its position as a forest nature and wildlife educational tool. With the implementation of the gateway project this could be used as a starting point to strengthen and raise awareness of The National Forest with local residents, where awareness is low. As stated above developing additional activities and events around this educational theme may help to generate greater community ownership, which is low.
- A more unified approach between attractions and tourism businesses / organisations needs to be developed to support and enhance the brand awareness. The gateway project is one step to support this action. However The National Forest may also want to

look at the product development of other popular types of activity such as walking, cycling and local produce. Examples may include The National Forest walking trail, The National Forest cycle way. Consideration could be given to enhancing public transport linkages and cycle hire provision between attractions and walking/cycle tracks.

- The National Forest should consider referring to other successful tourism partnerships such as the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership. This would provide an example of the range of initiatives that were put in place to support brand awareness and product development of a larger destination area. This could be considered within future funding and strategy planning.
- The National Forest needs to consider key greening promotional hooks or unique greening experiences that are going to attract general market appeal. Bigger promotional marketing messages may include looking at national carbon-off setting partnerships with the British Airport Association where all trees get planted in the National Forest. Unique experiences may include having an area which represents all the type of trees grown in the UK, holding national wood craft events, holding a record breaking plant a tree event, or a world Conker tournament.

## Appendix 1. Copy of Focus Group Script

# 'UK days out and short breaks' Research

## *Draft Focus Group Script*

### NOTE

This script provides a guide for the focus group and wherever possible the moderator will seek to keep questions in order. However, feedback from the audience may require him/her to adjust the nature of the questions and the sequence of questioning.

Section 1	Introduction	5 mins
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Welcome & thank

Who I am and QA

Previous groups attendance?

Explain what group focus groups are:

- Confidential
- No right or wrong
- Please do not talk over each other – but feel free to make comments or opinions in response to other people's points
- Leave at any time
- Video/audio – any objections?
- Last no more than 1½ hrs
- Subject is 'UK days out, short breaks and holidays'

### Warm-up exercise

Let's go round the group and please say your name, occupation (if you are working), family and your interests.

Section 2	Past visits (warm-up and to get talking) and decision making	10 mins
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Who would like to start by talking about a recent leisure day out, short break or holiday they took in the UK?

Why did you choice to visit there?

What did you enjoy about the trip?

What are popular days out destinations and attractions in this area?

(Hand out list) When choosing a day trip / overnight trip which of the following factors influence your decision making?

- Quality accommodation
- Area for unwinding and relaxation
- History and heritage
- Outdoor activities e.g. walking, cycling
- Family activities
- Food and drink
- Events and festivals
- Quality shopping outlets
- Quaint villages and market towns
- Easy access
- Physical scenery and landscape
- Night life
- Safe environment
- Wildlife / Conservation

Are there any additional factors to a destination which influence your decision making?

Which are the most important to you and why?

**Section 3 – General green attitudes and participation** **5 mins**

How concerned are you about the environment? In general, locally?

Why are you concerned? Why are you not concerned?

What do you do to help the environment? How long have you been doing this?

What would you like to do – to help the environment – but are not doing?

What do you think of all the current talk of climate change and the importance of reducing our carbon-footprint?

**Section 4 – Green attitudes and tourism** **10 mins**

What do you understand by the description 'Green Tourism'? Or Sustainable tourism?

What does it mean to you?

How important are green issues / care for the environment when you decide on:

Where you go on a short break or holiday?

Going overseas or staying in the UK?

How far you travel by car for days out?

'Greenness' of the destination?

What you do on your trip?

Card sort exercise

I have here a range of possible green actions you could do when on a day out or overnight trip.

Let us as a group rank the following actions in order of 'importance' – what you feel is important to do while on a day out or overnight trip.

- Staying in green accommodation
- Reducing car use
- Avoiding flying
- Carbon off-setting
- Local 'pay back' schemes
- Learning about local cultures / communities
- Saving water
- Recycling waste
- Buying local food
- Buying locally made goods
- Avoiding the exploitation of local people
- Conservation activities
- Educational activities e.g. nature walks, demonstrations, events at attractions
- Planting tree schemes
- Walking and cycling trails

*What other ways have we missed? (write on spare card and ask to rank with others)*

*For each of the aspects noted as high importance or low - ask*

Why have you put that there?

Is this something you would consider while on a UK day trip – or what about overnight trip?

Would this factor play a role in deciding where to visit?

Or just what you would do in any UK destination?

#### **Section 5 – Perception of greenness of destinations and attractions**

**5 mins**

Which UK destinations are noted for it's positive attitude towards green tourism?

What about locally? Are there any destinations or attractions that are noted for their green tourism attitude or positive attitude towards climate change and green issues?

Have you visited there? Why not – or if you have – did it's green reputation / credentials play any part in the decision?

#### **Section 6 – Awareness of the National Forest**

**5 mins**

Now I am going to mention a local destination and attraction. I want you to think of the first word that comes into your mind when I mention this word.

So, when I say to you the National Forest, what is the first word that comes into your mind?

*Go round and ask* – what is your word and why have you thought of that?

What other words come to mind – and why?

Who has visited the National Forest?

*Those that have not visited NF:*

- Why have you never visited?
- What do you expect there to do be there to see and do?
- What images come to mind when I mention the National Forest?

*Those that have visited:*

- How long ago?
- Who with?
- What did you do?
- Why did you go?
- What was good about your visit?
- What could have been improved?

## Section 7 – Perception of the National Forest

20 mins

*(Moderator to show map of area and guides with information on for those who don't know)  
Compare the two sets of perceptions and ask the group to comment on the variations*

What aspects of this area of you feel are very good as a visitor destination? (day / overnight)

Which aspects are very poor as a visitor destination? (day / overnight)

What makes this area a unique visit? What images do you associate with this area?

What is the atmosphere like?

If you had to pick a main motivator why people visit the area, what would it be? Why do you say that?

What do you feel is the biggest barrier to people visiting the area? Why?

### **Brand mapping**

How does the National Forest compare with other places regionally you can visit?

What is better / worse?

Can you recall any advertising or promotion for the National Forest?

Does it have a high profile in this area? Is it well known?

Now we are going to compare the National Forest with other local attractions/destinations: Peak District, Sherwood Forest, Rutland Water, Clumber Park, Yorkshire Dales National Park, Lake District National Park, Eden project.

Here are some aspects and using this grid (high, medium, low) where would we place .....

- Appealing
- Stature / high profile
  
- Environmental
- Lots to see and do

What makes NF unique compared to the others?

Why would people choose to visit NF rather than the other attractions?

If you could visit just one of these attractions/destinations – which one would you visit and why?

## Section 8 – National Forest and green tourism / sustainability

10 mins

Now I want to relate the National Forest to our earlier discussion of green tourism.

How do you feel the National Forest could be more environmentally friendly / greener / sustainable?

Would this attract you to visit?

Could any of these green aspects encourage you to visit the National Forest? or anywhere?  
Looking at the list we used earlier (hand out list).

- Staying in green accommodation
- Reducing car use
- Avoiding flying
- Carbon off-setting
- Local 'pay back' schemes
- Learning about local cultures / communities
- Saving water
- Recycling waste
- Buying local food
- Buying locally made goods
- Avoiding the exploitation of local people
- Conservation activities
- Educational activities e.g. nature walks, demonstrations, events at attractions
- Planting tree schemes
- Walking and cycling trails

Which ones do you feel the NF should be doing? And how could they be doing it at the NF?

Which ones would appeal to you in relation to the NF / or encourage you to visit the NF?

Are there any further green initiatives they should consider?

How can The National Forest encourage visitors to take part in these activities?

## Section 9 – Future visiting of the National Forest

10 min

Will you be visiting the National Forest in the future? Day visit or overnight?

Why / why not?

What would encourage you to visit? (refer to list in Section 1)

How can The National Forest encourage more overnight visitors to the area?

Are there any final comments you would like to make about green issues or the National Forest?

Thank you and close