



New Forest National Park Authority
BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2015
2013-14 Operational Plan



Protect

We will work to ensure that **the qualities that make the National Park a unique and special place are strengthened and made more resilient, bringing benefits for both people and wildlife.**

Priority 1: Enhancing the Forest’s landscapes and habitats

We will help to improve the large-scale landscapes and habitats that are characteristic of the New Forest, by:

- Prioritising the areas where action is most needed to ensure the integrity and quality of the landscape and biodiversity of the Park
- supporting Natural England and local landowners / occupiers in restoring and continuing to maintain the quality of locally, nationally and internationally important wildlife sites
- supporting the Forestry Commission, Verderers and Commoners in delivering long-term management of the Open Forest.

As measures of success, we will:

- Help to deliver at least two large-scale landscape or biodiversity enhancement projects that provide connection and resilience for the Forest
- complete a Landscape and Biodiversity Action Plan for the National Park, supported by a broad partnership to enable the delivery of specific actions
- agree a framework for identifying gaps in our knowledge about the historic and cultural landscape.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Deliver Community Wildlife Plan to enable seven pilot communities to successfully engage with and manage wildlife areas in their Parish; run 12 events and 15 training courses.	Angela Peters
Growing the Forest Partnership developed and delivering projects across the five themes : Growing habitat quality, Growing landscape connections, Growing the green economy, Growing awareness and Growing understanding.	Ian Barker
Clear understanding of the existing evidence base available for the natural environment and work in progress to facilitate or develop data to fill gaps.	Ian Barker, Sarah Kelly (tranquillity)
Landscape character of the Forest is preserved or enhanced through progressing opportunities for undergrounding cables.	Sarah Kelly

Priority 2: Achieving excellence in development and planning

We will seek the highest quality of new development within and around the National Park and minimise any impacts on its special qualities, by:

- Providing clear planning policies and a high quality planning service
- working closely with neighbouring authorities as they develop planning policies and proposals for their area
- adding to knowledge of all aspects of the National Park, including assessing and taking action to address any changes in its special qualities
- supporting the delivery of green infrastructure plans, both within and outside the National Park to reduce pressure on the most sensitive areas.

As measures of success, we will:

- Produce supplementary planning documents and guidance notes as an aid to residents and developers, covering design guidance, recreational horse keeping, boundary treatments and open space standards
- ensure all Core Strategies and other relevant planning policy documents adopted for neighbouring areas reflect the special qualities of the National Park
- establish condition indicators and a system of data collection to monitor the special qualities of the Park.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Ensure all appeal administration targets meet government set deadlines.	Appeals Team
Adoption of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan during 2013, to provide a consistent planning framework for the whole of the National Park and ensuring development has due regard to the statutory Park purposes.	Sarah Applegate
By April 2014 the Authority will have adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for the National Park to ensure that new development makes an appropriate contribution to local infrastructure (with an emphasis on green infrastructure and habitat mitigation measures).	David Illsley
Adopt and publish the Local Enforcement Plan which sets out policies and procedures for resolving breaches in planning permissions.	Paul Hocking
Specialist services on trees and ecology which are provided to partner organisations are delivered to agreed standards.	Paula Freeland
Increase approval rate of planning applications by building up a suite of guidance notes for applicants/pre-application advice.	Rob Ainslie
Develop a local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	Steve Avery, Paul James

Priority 3: Conserving strong local distinctiveness and the character of the historic environment

We will support communities, businesses and residents in conserving the many features that contribute to the local distinctiveness of their area, by:

- Enabling local people to safeguard and promote the character of their area, including support for local traditional building and craft skills
- developing Forest-wide initiatives of interest to local communities, including those that record or celebrate features of value
- providing advice and resources for specific community-led projects that add to local distinctiveness
- continuing to improve our knowledge of the history and archaeology of the National Park, increasing public awareness of its importance.

As measures of success, we will:

- Support at least eight local communities in producing a Village Design Statement for their area
- help in the design and successful implementation of at least five projects to conserve local distinctiveness involving communities in the Park
- support 20 local businesses in developing skills in conservation building.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Delivered HLS New Forest LiDAR analysis, mapping the archaeological heritage of a section of the Crown lands (10% of study area), data provision and monument protection (10 'at risk' monuments restored), involve minimum 50 volunteers in community archaeology schemes.	Lawrence Shaw
Scale and condition of World War II archaeological features mapped and field survey completed, recorded and condition verified; oral histories recorded and transcribed (all involving volunteers).	James Brown
Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan projects are supported, improving the environment of these villages in the area around Ringwood/Fordingbridge.	Anne-Marie Lomax
Clear understanding of the existing evidence base available for cultural heritage and work in progress to facilitate or develop data to fill gaps.	Paula Freeland

Priority 4: Encouraging environmentally sustainable land management

We will work with land managers and private estates to encourage environmentally friendly farming, commoning and woodland management, by:

- Developing the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and other initiatives that will enhance the landscape of the National Park and support the commoning community
- offering support, advice and training to local landowners, commoners and private land managers in the National Park and adjoining areas through the New Forest Land Advice Service.

As measures of success, we will:

- Help at least 150 land managers to seek or renew funding for environmental enhancements on their land
- deliver good quality land management advice to at least 400 land managers on their holdings
- work with our partners to support at least 25 young commoners in their commoning activities.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Land management advice provided to 100 land managers and commoners; training delivered to 100 people in at least five events, to increase biodiversity, landscape and business benefits.	Julie Stubbs
Working in partnership to lead coordination of catchment-based water quality and biodiversity improvements of the Forest's rivers and streams.	Julie Stubbs
Develop joint action plan for securing back up grazing for commoners when animals are taken off the open forest; work with the partnership to develop a management plan for Rockford Farm as a best practice holding.	Kathryn Boler
NPA plays a key role in the successful implementation of the New Forest Higher level Stewardship Scheme – Europe's largest agri-environment scheme worth £16m over 10 years, working to improve habitats and support commoning.	Paula Freeland

Enjoy

We will work to champion **the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities.**

Priority 1: Enabling high quality experiences of the National Park

We will add to people's experience and enjoyment of the National Park through better access, information and interpretation, by:

- Identifying a network of core routes within and around the National Park, working with land managers, highway authorities and user groups
- continuing to facilitate the work of the New Forest Access Forum in advising on all aspects of access, providing advice and resources for specific local projects that improve public access
- developing projects that enable people with particular needs to experience the New Forest first-hand
- working with partners and local businesses to improve visitor facilities within and around the National Park
- encouraging people to volunteer their time and skills in ways which benefit the New Forest.

As measures of success, we will:

- Assess a potential network of core routes, involving all local interests
- enable the delivery of at least five access improvement projects annually
- establish at least four major volunteer initiatives and an annual event to promote volunteering in the Forest.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Stakeholders have agreed an inspirational yet deliverable network of Community Routes and an implementation and marketing programme has been agreed.	Mark Holroyd
Enable delivery of at least four access improvement and/or promotion projects to increase people's enjoyment of the National Park.	Sarah Manchester
An annual volunteer fair is attended by 25+ volunteering organisations and 200+ prospective volunteers.	Gillie Hayball
Proactive programmes which engage with groups usually thought to be under-represented.	Gillie Hayball

Priority 2: Improving understanding of the special qualities of the National Park

We will help to further people's understanding of the special qualities of the Park, by:

- Expanding the Authority's public events programme and face-to-face communication through the ranger service
- continuing to develop public awareness campaigns with partner organisations on issues such as litter, feeding of ponies, disturbance of ground nesting birds and animal accidents
- supporting the New Forest Centre and other key visitor locations in reaching a wider audience and providing innovative interpretation and information.

As measures of success, we will:

- Arrange or support a series of awareness-raising events each year, in partnership with other organisations, reaching at least 8,000 local people and visitors
- work with partners to achieve a year-on-year reduction in the number of fatalities to commoners stock as a result of traffic accidents
- increase the number of visits made to the New Forest Centre's museum by 50% (30,000 people each year).

Outcome / Output	Owner
Improved understanding of the role of the New Forest during World War II through education, events, exhibitions, interactive website and mobile app.	Gareth Owen
30 advertised public events led or co-led by the Authority, reaching local people and visitors with topics reflecting the special qualities, the work of the Authority and key messages.	Natalie Fisher, Gillie Hayball
Face to face contact with 11,000 people at 50 events and shows run by other organisations and through opportunistic use of mobile unit.	Gillie Hayball
Development of interpretive resources which promote the special qualities and encourage community involvement and partnership working.	Natalie Fisher
Coordinated, targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups.	Nigel Matthews
Press office service of the highest standard provided with at least six national articles / year.	Karen Evans-McDaid, Sion Donovan

Priority 3: Agreeing positive recreation management

We will work closely with land managers, local residents and user groups to agree positive recreation management, by:

- Bringing together all interested stakeholders to agree the direction for recreation management
- undertaking and supporting further research to clarify the trends and impacts of recreation locally
- helping local communities to design and implement practical recreation projects.

As measures of success, we will:

- Commission joint visitor survey work with the Forestry Commission, New Forest District Council and other partners to inform recreation management
- facilitate at least four meetings of the Recreation Management Strategy Working Group to agree and take forward priority work for positive recreation management
- support at least four new community-based recreation initiatives.

Outcome / Output	Owner
An evidence base which provides meaningful data to inform decision making and communications e.g. value and volume of the visitor economy, visitor surveys etc.	Paul McDaid
Facilitated forums to enable stakeholders and user groups to agree policies on issues such as recreation management, dog walking and horse riding.	Nigel Matthews
Support for five local communities with practical projects which enhance access to and information about local recreation sites.	Gillie Hayball
Successful facilitation and support to the statutory New Forest Access Forum to enable the Forum to deliver its functions.	Sarah Manchester

Priority 4: Leading on education about the New Forest

We will provide and support educational activities that, in particular, involve and engage young people, by:

- Developing educational programmes that link the special qualities of the New Forest with school, college and university curricula
- leading outdoor educational visits for schools, colleges and groups at key locations within the National Park
- co-ordinating educational activities in the National Park through the New Forest Educators Forum
- expanding the range of informal learning activities, for all ages, including developing mechanisms for skills and knowledge transfer for the benefit of the Forest.

As measures of success, we will:

- Ensure 50% of local schools feature the National Park in their curriculum
- reach at least 4,000 school pupils annually through direct contact with National Park Authority staff
- co-ordinate at least one major National Park-wide education/skills exchange project every year involving the New Forest Educators Forum and other partners.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Support HCC Geography Advisor in the launch of the New Forest Curriculum project and develop curriculum-specific sessions for schools.	Sue Palma
Lead high quality sessions for 8,000 students from schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school.	Leanne Atkinson, Claire Sherwood
Lead visits for non-curriculum groups such as cubs/brownies, coach trips, Mosaic champions and societies.	Gillie Hayball

Prosper

We will work to support **a way of life in the National Park that continues to centre around strong and distinctive communities with a clear cultural identity and a vibrant local economy.**

Priority 1: Supporting a distinctive local economy

We will encourage a strong and distinctive local economy that benefits the communities of the National Park, by:

- Actively participating in a partnership approach to sustaining the economy of the area and, in particular, championing the rural economy of the New Forest
- providing support for local producers, particularly members of the New Forest Marque, focusing on high quality products, promotion, marketing and access to local outlets
- strengthening the New Forest's role at the forefront of sustainable tourism
- supporting the police and other partners in tackling rural crime that affects local businesses, communities and individuals.

As measures of success, we will:

- Fully engage with other partners in the Local Enterprise Partnerships relevant to the National Park
- support New Forest Produce Ltd in increasing membership of the New Forest Marque and developing a long term development plan for the scheme
- develop a programme that offers sustainable short breaks for visitors, focused on the special qualities of the National Park.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Rural economy: Assist with superfast broadband rollout across Park by using Rural Communities Broadband Fund to help reach the last 10% of properties.	Jim Mitchell
200 New Forest accommodation and activity providers are live on www.our-land.co.uk sustainable tourism website and generating clear economic benefits and responsible visitors.	Paul McDaid
The National Park is embraced and recognised as a key part of the New Forest tourism destination management partnership.	Paul McDaid
The NPA will continue to engage with the work of the Local Economic Partnerships to ensure the economic value of the National Park is recognised and that the Park's communities can benefit from the work being undertaken by the LEPs wherever possible.	Tony Spence
Work with interested parties to develop a plan for wood fuel and private woodland management; investigate a pilot wood fuel project to demonstrate benefits.	Georgianna Watson

Priority 2: Improving affordable housing provision

We will help improve affordable housing provision for local people, by:

- Working closely with rural housing enablers, local communities, housing authorities, landowners and registered housing providers to identify sites and prioritise the delivery of affordable housing schemes in the National Park
- explore ways to increase the number of Commoners Housing Scheme dwellings in the rental sector providing additional resources where necessary to aid high quality design of new housing
- maximising the proportion of affordable housing gained through the planning process.

As measures of success, we will:

- Provide specialist advice and support to ensure all new affordable housing schemes are of the highest quality in terms of design and sustainability
- work with the rural housing enablers to produce at least three detailed housing needs surveys for parishes within the National Park
- ensure that, wherever possible, affordable housing comprises 50% of new housing development in the main villages.

Outcome / Output	Owner
A clear plan for spending developer contributions on affordable housing is agreed and under way to support the delivery of new affordable housing for local people on sites within the National Park.	Steve Avery

Priority 3: Promoting sustainable transport

We will promote sustainable transport for the benefit of residents and visitors, by:

- Working with other authorities in the National Park to develop a joint vision for sustainable transport
- supporting the operation and further development of the New Forest Tour
- developing a range of opportunities for safe and responsible cycling
- working with partners to assess the feasibility of new forms of transport such as electric and eco vehicles.

As measures of success, we will:

- Increase the number of journeys made on the New Forest Tour by 100% (currently 18,000 annually)
- establish at least 20 public charging points for electric vehicles
- work with Hampshire County Council and other stakeholders to review and update the New Forest Transport Strategy and identify joint projects for delivery.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Delivery, management, monitoring and evaluation of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme is as agreed by the governance structure and decision making processes, promoting green transport alternatives.	Chris Gregory
New Forest Tour passenger journey numbers increase by 50% on 2012 figures.	Nat Taplin
A new Travel Plan for the Lymington Town Hall site is agreed which showcases the Authority as a beacon for sustainable business travel.	Nat Taplin

Priority 4: Encouraging sustainable living

We will support new local initiatives that create more self-sufficient and resilient communities, by:

- Providing advice and resources for specific projects that incorporate energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation or re-use / recycling
- promoting sustainable living and good environmental practice to residents and businesses
- supporting the sharing of innovative ideas and local action through New Forest Transition and Sustainable Development Fund partners
- showing leadership in reducing the carbon footprint of the National Park.

As measures of success, we will:

- Provide support for 40 new community projects that improve local sustainability
- establish a renewable energy project to provide advice and training to at least eight local organisations in the initial year
- reduce the carbon footprint of the National Park Authority by at least 10%.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Authority grant funds are transparent, marketed effectively, and are used to further National Park purposes and the duty.	Andy Brennan
Sustainable living is showcased to residents and visitors through events, networking and creative marketing.	Andy Brennan

Achieving Excellence

We will work to champion the highest quality of service for local people and visitors and work closely with organisations and communities in championing the National Park.

Priority 1: Seek to provide the highest quality of service*

We will provide the highest quality of service through:

- Openness, transparency and good governance in all our work
- effective communication
- strong customer focus and value for money.

*Many actions to achieve this priority are contained within the other programmes in the operational plan.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Review of Planning Administration Procedures in line with DC Procedure Review and produce a set of written standards.	Validation Team
Carry out a bi-annual Planning Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Ann Wood
1APP review of validation requirements with each planning application and implementation of amended local lists.	Rob Ainslie
Build up a suite of internal development control procedure notes.	Rob Ainslie
80% of householder/other applications processed within eight weeks; 65% of minor applications within eight weeks; 60% of small scale major applications within 13 weeks; 60% of large scale major applications within 16 weeks.	Rob Ainslie
Register all planning applications within five working days (inc scanning/indexing).	Ann Wood
Initiate action for non-compliance with an Enforcement Notice on 75% of cases within 15 working days.	Rob Aldred, Lucie Cooper
Carry out initial investigation on 90% of cases within 15 working days.	Rob Aldred, Lucie Cooper

Outcome / Output	Owner
90% of staff are satisfied with the levels of IT Technical and GIS support provided.	Paul Fleetwood
Publication of Enforcement Register on NPA website.	Paul Hocking
All Authority meetings, Committee and Panel meetings and member events are managed to a level consistent with the Standing Orders and relevant statutory responsibilities.	David Stone
The NPA complies with FOI, EIR and DP requirements and that all Freedom of Information requests and Complaints are processed and responded to within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.	David Stone
Website reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of customers and generates 100% increased web visits.	Hilary Makin

Priority 2: Working closely with others in championing the National Park*

We will work closely with others in championing the National Park, by:

- Working with and through local communities
- strong collaboration with partner organisations
- inclusion of a diverse range of people, especially the younger generation.

*Many actions to achieve this priority are contained within the other programmes in the operational plan.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Developed and submitted Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership application, started development phase if successful.	Kathryn Boler
Assist partners to develop at least three key projects and secure funding.	Kathryn Boler
Funding support provided for 25 community groups / partner organisations (signposted to appropriate funding sources, proofed applications, provided regular funding updates).	Kathryn Boler
The Management Plan Leadership Group plays an active part in steering the review process and developing a 'partnership plan' endorsed by the key statutory organisations.	Nick Evans

Priority 3: Achieving an efficient and high performing organisation

We will achieve an efficient and high performing organisation by:

- Continually looking to reduce costs and improve income
- develop staff and members to increase their skills and abilities
- continually seek to improve processes and procedures to increase performance.

Outcome / Output	Owner
Authority's corporate identity and branding is adhered to and developed, ensuring consistency & quality.	Lucy Page
Provide, as a statutory consultee, responses on all relevant national and local consultations to ensure that national and local decision makers reflects the needs of the National Park in their policies and plans.	Helen Patton, Sarah Manchester
The adopted Corporate Sustainability Plan is on course with implementation, and that there is shared ownership from Authority staff and members.	Andy Brennan
Undertake review of geographical systems and requirements and produce GI Strategy for 2014/15 (and beyond).	Paul Fleetwood
Undertake technical review of Authority's ICT systems and requirements, and produce technical strategy for 2014/15 (and beyond).	Paul Fleetwood
Build and expand on the level of support provided internally to teams through programmed and structured admin support which achieves the best and effective use of the team's resources.	David Stone
90% of staff are satisfied with the level of HR support provided.	Arrwinder Sandhu
Review of Planning Administration Procedures in line with DC Procedure Review and produce a set of written standards.	Claire Baker, Julie Blake
There is continued monitoring of equality statistics and full implementation of all Equality Impact Assessments.	Heleana Aylett
A staff survey is carried out which shows an improvement on the previous year, and all actions arising have been undertaken.	Oliver Reichardt

Budget 2013-14

2013/14 Budget (£3.83m) in line with the priorities of the Authority: 'Protect, Enjoy, Prosper & Aiming for Excellence'	Protect* (£000)	Enjoy (£000)	Prosper (£000)	Aiming for Excellence (£000)
Employee Costs (allocated)	1,542	470	216	202
Programme Fund	100	194	52	-
Sustainable Development Fund (approximation)	90	33	17	-
Strategy & Planning	96	-	-	-
Central Costs (allocated)	515	157	73	68
Total	2,343	854	358	270

* Includes up to £1m of costs directly related to the Planning Service.

