



# New Forest National Park Authority BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2015

## 2011-12 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Agree a response to The Natural Environment white paper, including progressing a Landscape and Biodiversity Action Plan, with partner organisations	Specialist Services/ Project Delivery	March 2012
Assess the feasibility of a project to screen parts of the A31	Specialist Services	Higher Level Stewardship Board decision on whether to proceed, July 2011
Carry out a LIDAR survey of the Crown Lands, funded through the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme	Specialist Services	March 2012 to complete year 1

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Develop a Second World War documentation project	Specialist Services/ Project Delivery	March 2012 to complete year 1
Establish a SINC owners club for Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, to raise awareness, encourage good management and create better links between both sites and owners	Specialist Services	March 2012 to complete year 1
Develop a 'Better Boundaries' project to provide resources and guidance for visual improvements to domestic boundaries and the connection of hedgerow habitats, targeting particular geographical areas within the National Park and across the boundary	Specialist Services/ Project Delivery	March 2012 to complete year 1
Carry out an assessment of external funding available for biodiversity and landscape enhancement projects, and agree a list of possible projects for further discussion with partners	Project Delivery	October 2011
Develop a wildlife best practice award and charter	Specialist Services	March 2012
Promote the Festival of British Archaeology through on-site excavation	Specialist Services	July 2011
Review the Burley and Beaulieu historic rural settlement data and documentation to enhance the archaeological evidence base	Specialist Services	March 2012
Carry out woodland archaeological surveys as opportunities arise	Specialist Services	March 2012
Complete the climate change adaptation plan	To be confirmed	October 2012

## 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Deliver a Design Guide SPD for the National Park	Specialist Services/ Policy	January 2012
Consult on and adopt a Horse-related Development SPD	Policy	October 2011
Prepare a Development Standards SPD	Policy	April 2012
Respond to consultations on neighbouring Planning Authority's planning documents	Policy	On-going
Facilitate 3 quadrant meetings with parishes	Policy	March 2012
Develop a set of indicators to monitor the special qualities of the Park and publish a State of the Park Report	Policy	March 2012
Establish a Community Infrastructure Levy for developer contributions	Policy	April 2014
Set fees for planning applications and pre-application advice and thereafter, update Development Control Charter	Development Control	January 2012
Prepare a revised Enforcement Charter to reflect the outcomes of 2010-2011 Enforcement Review	Development Control	October 2011
Carry out and report on planning applicant satisfaction survey	Development Control	December 2011

### 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Deliver a Conservation Area Management Plan for the Western Escarpment	Specialist Services	Development of plan to delivery commencing September 2011
Support village design statements (Hordle, Hyde, others as requested)	Specialist Services/ Policy	On-going
Implement a traditional building skills project with LEADER funding	Project Delivery / Specialist Services	March 2012
Reduce the number of listed buildings on the 'At Risk' register	Specialist Services	March 2011
Develop an agreed framework for cultural heritage in the National Park, involving all relevant stakeholders	Specialist Services	March 2011
Develop and promote a New Forest Ancient Tree Hunt in partnership with the Forestry Commission	Policy/ Specialist Services	On-going

## 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Guide and play a key role in the New Forest Higher level Stewardship Scheme, working with partners to ensure delivery of objectives.	Project Delivery	March 2012
Deliver agreed New Forest Higher level Stewardship Scheme archaeology projects	Specialist Services	March 2012
Provide advice on all Forestry Commission tree work plans and proposals (Felling Licences England Woodland Grant Schemes, Forest Design Plans)	Specialist Services	Responses within 4 weeks
Provide specialist advice on Farm Environment Plans and Higher Level Stewardship proposals	Specialist Services	Responses within 4 weeks
Provide input and advice for relevant New Forest Higher Level Stewardship projects	Specialist Services	On-going
Help land managers to seek funding for environmental enhancements on their land	Project Delivery	March 2012
Deliver land management advice through the New Forest Land Advice Service	Project Delivery	March 2012
Work with partners to secure additional land for back up grazing	Project Delivery	March 2012
Support young commoners in their commoning activities	Project Delivery	March 2012

# 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 at 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Undertake an initial assessment and establish the consultation process for the Core Routes project	Specialist Services	March 2012
Deliver specific projects to improve and promote public access	Specialist Services	March 2012
Facilitate the New Forest Access Forum	Specialist Services	March 2012
Establish new National Park-led volunteer initiatives to support key areas of work, backed by effective administrative systems and a plan for future development	Community and Visitor Services / Project Delivery / Specialist Services	Ongoing
Facilitate effective dissemination of information to visitors through visitor centres, Local Information Points (LIPs) and visitor attractions.	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Develop and launch 'New Forest Inclusive Cycling' for young people with disabilities to experience cycling in the National Park	Project Delivery	June 2011 to March 2012
Produce co-ordinated information and maps on existing walking and cycling routes in the National Park	ICT	March 2012

## 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Arrange or support a series of major public events to raise awareness about the special qualities of the Park	Community and Visitor Services / Communications	March 2012
Increase the number of people having face to face contact with the National Park rangers during the year by 60% (to 11,000 people)	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Attend 50 local shows and community events	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Work in partnership with the New Forest Centre to develop a series of awareness-raising events with both local and national themes	Community and Visitor Services / Specialist Services	Ongoing
With communities and other organisations develop information and interpretive resources that increase understanding of the New Forest	Community and Visitor Services	Ongoing
Facilitate working groups to take discuss issues and forward educational campaigns about litter, animal accidents, feeding of animals and dogs	Community and Visitor Services	Ongoing
Complete education and outreach elements of Coastal Heritage Project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and take opportunities for ongoing benefits	Community and Visitor Services	September 2011



### 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Initiate desk-based research into factors affecting heathland bird species, particularly the effects of new developments	Specialist Services	Work completed by Dec 2011
Commission joint visitor survey work with New Forest District Council and other partners to inform visitor management	Project Delivery	Survey completed and analysed December 2011
Continue to work with local residents on existing projects at Tiptoe, Landford and Holbury, and build a network of local contacts in other parishes	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Convene RMS working group meetings and subgroup meetings	Specialist Services	March 2012

## 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Enable local schools to feature the National Park in their curriculum	Community and Visitor Services	Ongoing
Reach 4,000 school pupils through direct contact with National Park Authority staff	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Enable 2,000 young people from deprived areas within and around the Park to access environmental education facilities through the travel grant scheme	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Co-ordinate at least one major National Park-wide education project every year involving the New Forest Educators Forum	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012
Develop at least one new informal learning initiative	Community and Visitor Services	March 2012

# 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Commission & publish research showing economic benefits of National Park designation	Project Delivery	March 2012
Support Hampshire County Council in seeking effective broadband access across all parts of the National Park	Project Delivery	May 2011
Engage with other partners in the Solent LEP and the Enterprise M3 LEP, supporting a strong and sustainable local economy	Community and Visitor Services	On-going
Support New Forest Produce Ltd to promote the New Forest Marque	Project Delivery	On-going
Develop a programme of sustainable short breaks for visitors as part of Rural Development Program for England project	Project Delivery	March 2012
Support the Forest Watch initiative in reducing rural crime for the target areas of rural theft, poaching, fly tipping and unlawful use of the Forest	Forest Watch	On-going

## 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
- continuing to implement the Commoners Housing Scheme for the benefit of commoning in the National Park
- providing additional resources where necessary to aid high quality design of new housing
- maximising the proportion of affordable housing gained through the planning process

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Finalise review of Commoners Housing Scheme	Project Delivery	September 2011
Agree criteria for releasing developer contributions towards affordable housing	Policy	March 2012
Identify priority parishes for local housing needs surveys and undertake new survey work	Policy	March 2012
Continue to support the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing partnership and influence the delivery of rural exception sites within the National Park	Policy	On-going

### 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Support and lead further development of the New Forest Tour	Project Delivery	March 2012
Develop a range of opportunities for safe and responsible cycling	Project Delivery	On-going
Establish at least four public charging points for electric vehicles	Project Delivery	March 2012
Develop a joint vision for sustainable transport in the National Park	Project Delivery	March 2012

## 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

Action	Owner	Target delivery date
Provide funding for 10 new community projects that improve local sustainability	Project Delivery	March 2012
Support New Forest Transition	Project Delivery	On-going
Hold one major public event annually to showcase practical ideas for sustainable living	Project Delivery	May 2012
Establish a renewable energy advice project and supply advice and training to businesses, land managers and residents	Project Delivery	On-going

# Achieving Excellence

We will work to ensure that

**we provide the highest quality of service for local people and visitors and work closely with organisations and communities in championing the National Park.**

- We will continue to develop strong and effective partnership working.
- We will encourage ways of working that bring us together as a high performing team. The aim will be to achieve a smooth-running organisation where everyone contributes in different ways to our priorities and continually aims to improve our efficiency and capacity to deliver.
- We will actively promote our core values of enthusiasm, achievement, integrity, openness, teamwork and care.

Action	How we will achieve this
Working with and through local communities	Parish quadrant meetings and regular engagement with individual parishes. Assigned rangers for geographical areas of the National Park and its surrounds. Sustainable Development Fund and support of community-led initiatives. Consultations on planning applications and emerging draft policies/documents.
Strong collaboration with partner organisations	Working closely with partners throughout the Forest and wider area in pursuit of positive outcomes for the Forest. Assigned officer attendance / liaison with key partners. Inclusive approach to dealing with issues such as litter and animal accidents. Development of joint projects within our three key programmes.
Inclusion of a diverse range of people, especially the younger generation	Mosaic project. Educational work with schools and local community groups. Youth Mosaic project.

Action	How we will achieve this
Openness, transparency and good governance in all our work	<p>Working closely with the Audit Commission and internal audit team to ensure governance arrangements are in place and functioning properly.</p> <p>Presentation of regular finance, audit and performance information to members. Publication of annual finance, audit and performance reports.</p> <p>Publication of Local Development Control and Enforcement Charters.</p> <p>Making information widely available on the Authority's website.</p> <p>Audit workshop for members led by the Audit Commission.</p> <p>Committee terms of reference review.</p>
Effective communication	<p>Ensuring transparent and timely communication through all media – local and national press, website, printed publications.</p> <p>Effective internal communication through meetings, email, intranet etc.</p>
Improving knowledge and evidence about the Park	<p>There are a whole range of projects that help us build our specialist knowledge for sound decision making including the State of the Park reporting and WWII project.</p> <p>Working with academic institutions.</p>
Strong customer focus and value for money	<p>Keeping the customer (local communities and visitors) at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>Seeking best value in all procurement undertaken.</p> <p>Focus on cost reduction and efficiency in all activities.</p> <p>Carry out a bi-annual planning applicant and access forum member's satisfaction survey.</p> <p>Convene annual planning agents' meeting.</p> <p>Gathering and valuing feedback to assist with continuous review and improvement.</p>
Securing external funding for Forest projects	<p>Seeking and developing income generation opportunities across all our work including successful applications for external funding.</p>