

# **BUSINESS PLAN 2011-2015**

## **2014-15 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.

#### **Protect 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Carry out survey, consultation and landowner liaison in order to prioritise sites where habitat enhancements will make most impact for wildlife in the National Park. Produce maps, a list of proposed sites with landowners on board and of proposed works.	Julie Melin-Stubbs			
Host New Forest Catchment project; work in partnership to co-ordinate Catchment based water quality and biodiversity improvements of the Forest's freshwater habitats.	Julie Melin-Stubbs			
Identify and secure partnership with two new communities in order to increase biodiversity engagement and habitat improvements through the Community Wildlife Plans project.	Angela Peters			
Deliver specific New Forest Higher Level Scheme agreement objectives, including bringing a minimum of 10 monuments into favourable condition, continuation of LIDAR data verification and completion of heathland bird surveys.	Lawrence Shaw/Ian Barker/Frank Green			

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
<p>Form and co-ordinate the Landscape Action Plan Group to take recommendations forward and instigate the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with the electricity board to secure undergrounding of overhead electricity cables and undergrounding of these cables.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of dark night skies and associated advice and guidance on external lighting for residents.</li> <li>• Undertake a community based project using photography to assess changes to the landscape.</li> </ul>	Sarah Kelly			
Develop tranquillity mapping and ground truthing with strategic partners; complete an agreed tranquillity map for the New Forest National Park.	Sarah Kelly / Nick Evans			
Develop and incorporate the ecosystem approach in relevant projects, including the Management Plan, green infrastructure plans and long term land use strategies.	Paul Walton			

## **Protect 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Commence review of the Authority's adopted Core Strategy (2010), taking into account recent changes in Government planning policy.	David Illsley			
Work with the other Hampshire minerals and waste authorities to prepare an Oil & Gas Supplementary Planning Document (which will cover fracking).	Sarah Applegate			
Develop a green infrastructure plan for the National Park, linking with the plans of neighbouring local authorities and identifying joint projects and opportunities.	David Illsley			
Launch a local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	Steve Avery / Paul James			
Complete the suite of on-line planning guidance notes to aid residents and developers with pre-application enquiries.	Steve Avery			

### **Protect 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Support requests from Parish Councils for the production and adoption of two further Village Design Statements during 2014-15 to help conserve local distinctiveness.	Paula Freeland / Nick Evans			
Support the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan by working with parish councils to identify specific problems of parking on verges within the Conservation Area and notify the necessary authorities and agree the most appropriate solutions.	Paula Freeland			
Identify and prioritise sites and structures of archaeological significance within the National Park to create a list of recommended works that will inform future conservation requirements.	Frank Green			
Develop and facilitate activities to commemorate WWI, including a volunteer mapping project of wartime locations and associated interpretation	Frank Green / Jim Mitchell / Lawrence Shaw			
Secure improved understanding of the role of the New Forest during World War II by delivering a project legacy of onsite and online interpretation and education resources.	Gareth Owen			

## **Protect 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:**

- deliver good quality land management advice to at least 100 land managers on their holdings
- have a better understanding of the land management related training needs of land managers in the New Forest



Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Carry out comprehensive consultation with landowners, farmers and commoners to inform focused delivery of training needs to establish sustainable land management skills.	Julie Melin-Stubbs			
Work with partners to develop Rockford Farm as a best practice commoners holding including development of management plan	Kathryn Boler			
Engage with key stakeholders and policy makers, working with the other National Parks, as a champion for the New Forest in national discussions which affect rural development and agricultural policy.	Paul Walton			

## **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.

### **Enjoy 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.

**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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Work with partners to improve at least five existing routes and rights of way through access grants and sustainable transport funding.	Mark Holroyd / Gillie Hayball			
Work with partners and communities to develop and deliver visitor information opportunities through visitor centres, 8+ local information points, wider networks and online.	Jim Mitchell			
Support volunteering in the New Forest through specific projects and an annual volunteer fair and guide, attended by 25+ volunteering organisations and attended by 200+ prospective volunteers.	Jim Mitchell			
Engage with groups usually thought to be underrepresented through projects including Mosaic Youth, Healthy Walks and Inclusive Cycling.	Gillie Hayball			
Develop and share ways that the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest can benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors, engaging health providers and practitioners in promoting these benefits.	Jim Mitchell / Gillie Hayball			

## **Enjoy 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).

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Deliver 30 advertised public events led or co-led by the Authority, including the New Forest Show reaching local people and visitors with topics engaging them with the special qualities, the work of the Authority and key messages.	Gillie Hayball / Jim Mitchell			
Secure 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			
Develop interpretive resources with partners and communities which promote the Forest's special qualities including self-guided trails, the New Forest Tour commentary, and permanent and touring exhibitions.	Jim Mitchell			
Lead coordinated, targeted educational campaigns about key issues leading to more responsible behaviour and reduced conflict between user groups, e.g. cycling, animal accidents, litter and feeding of ponies.	Nigel Matthews			
Deliver a communications service of the highest standard with 12 national articles / year; 9,000 Twitter followers; 2,500 Facebook likes; new online innovations; publications reviewed; 10 film clips produced to promote events and projects.	Hilary Makin			

### **Enjoy 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Develop an evidence base relating to recreation and visitors to provide meaningful data to inform decision making and communications e.g. value and volume of the visitor economy, visitor surveys, recreation management information.	Shona Marsh / Mark Holroyd			
Facilitate forums to enable stakeholders and user groups to promote responsible recreation in coordinated ways, e.g. Recreation Management Strategy groups, Access Forum, Dogs Forum and Cycling Liaison Group.	Nigel Matthews			
Support for 4 local communities with projects which enhance access to and information about local sites.	Gillie Hayball			

## **Enjoy 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.
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**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.



Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Develop new national curriculum-specific sessions for schools and work with HCC and local headteachers to develop a New Forest Curriculum website.	Sue Palma			
Lead high quality curriculum sessions for 8,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school.	Sue Palma / Claire Sherwood / Helen Robinson			
Lead 12 visits for non-curriculum groups such as cubs/brownies, coach trips, and societies.	Gillie Hayball			
Develop and deliver informal learning such as Wild Play activities, including a Wild Play Day event in partnership with members of New Forest Educators Forum.	Helen Robinson / 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.

### **Prosper 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Work with landowners and partners to develop management plans for private woodlands to increase production of woodland products and biodiversity. Bring 50 hectares into management and provide advice to improve the management of a further 30 hectares.	Georgianna Watson			
Aim to increase membership numbers by 10% in 2014/15 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the New Forest Marque and local food issues at 14 events using the Tasting stand.</li> <li>Surveying at least 500 people to increase awareness, and increase sales of Marque produce.</li> <li>Strengthening the appeal of membership of the New Forest Marque by improving the tangible benefits to member through collective purchasing</li> </ul>	Jenna Bessant/Sarah Hunt			
Work with the Local Economic Partnerships to ensure the economic value of the National Park is recognised and that the Park's businesses and communities can benefit from the work and funding streams of the LEPs.	Tony Spence			
Run at least 4 training events for tourism businesses, inspiring and enabling them to become more sustainable and to benefit from and convey the National Park's special qualities.	Shona Marsh			
Secure wider understanding of the value of New Forest's natural capital and resulting economy; promote opportunities for investment in this economy to the LEPs.	Paul Walton			

## **Prosper 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Allocate at least 20% of the collected affordable housing contributions to support the delivery of new affordable housing for local people on sites within the National Park.	Steve Avery			
Ensure the HARA partnership takes full account of issues and opportunities in the New Forest to help support the delivery of affordable housing on rural exceptions sites within the Park.	Nick Evans			
Work with the rural housing enabler to produce at least one detailed housing needs survey for a parish within the Park to help justify the development of rural exceptions sites for affordable housing.	Nick Evans			

### **Prosper 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Deliver the New Forest elements of the Two National Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).	Mark Holroyd			
Complete the New Forest Family Cycling Experiences (NFFCE).	Mark Holroyd /John Lynn			
Develop plans to ensure a sustainable legacy for transport experiences developed through LSTF and NFFCE programmes to date, ready for the end of current funding in March 2015.	Mark Holroyd			
Deliver the three New Forest Tour routes and the Beach Bus with overall increased passenger journeys (from 46,500 in 2013), new commentary, high satisfaction ratings and new link with Hythe Ferry.	Nat Taplin			

## **Prosper 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 20 new community projects that improve local sustainability
- Provide information and training about sustainable living
- Reduce the carbon footprint of the National Park Authority by at least 10%



Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Deliver the new Sustainable Communities Fund, including a focus on sustainable transport projects; support 20 projects overall within the first year.	Fiona Wynne			
Deliver the Corporate Sustainability Plan and travel plan, reducing the NPA's business mileage by 10%.	Andy Brennan			
Lead and support communities to become more sustainable through the delivery of projects within the National Park, including 4 targeted training events.	Andy Brennan			

## **Aiming for 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.

### **Achieving Excellence 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Improve the availability of planning applications available to view online to 50% by implementation of a back scanning project and improvement to the planning application online web pages.	Ann Wood			
Plan and prepare an electronic records management system for the NPA which takes account of best practice in respect of records management and document retention as well as the specific requirements of the Authority's work.	David Stone			

## **Achieving Excellence 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Update the National Park Management Plan for 2015 – 2020 following public consultation. Work in partnership to secure endorsement of actions and engagement in their delivery by the key statutory bodies in the Forest.	Nick Evans			
Deliver the development phase for the New Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme, including a wide range of project development work. Submit the final application for the Heritage Lottery Fund following delivery of a community engagement programme and consultation process.	Rachael Gallagher /James Brown			
Provide funding support to 25 community group/partner organisations (advice, proofed applications, funding updates etc).	Kathryn Boler			
Establish new corporate partnerships with 4 business partners and support national initiatives.	Helen O' Brien			

### **Achieving Excellence 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.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress	Risks and mitigation	RAG status
Continue to respond to all relevant national and local consultations to ensure the needs of the New Forest are considered, and share the Authority's consultation responses with local bodies.	Helen Patton			
Make improvements to the website informed by customer surveys, aiming for 90% of respondents being satisfied with the service provided and a 10% increase in unique visitors (from 222,000).	Hilary Makin			
Review internal communications by conducting a staff survey and agreeing and applying actions to improve staff engagement, joined-up working and communication styles.	Hilary Makin			