

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

2017-18 Work Programme – Q2 (1 July to 30 September 2017)

Protect

We will endeavour to ensure the qualities that make the National Park a unique and special place are conserved, enhanced and resilient.

Protect Priority 1: Enhancing the New Forest's landscapes and habitats

We will work with land managers, land owners and commoners to enhance the New Forest's landscapes and wildlife habitats, by:

- giving clear advice and guidance, using the Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Action Plan and tranquillity mapping
- developing and delivering projects which restore, enhance and maintain important wildlife sites
- offering support, advice and training
- working with partners to enhance the New Forest at a 'landscape scale'.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation(if amber or red)
Enhance important wildlife sites with active management delivered through 3 OPOF projects: Working Woodlands, Better Boundaries and Nature's Stepping Stones. The NPA leads on this work with projects delivered through the NFLAS. Targets are to have 10 SINCs, 1200m of hedgerow and 40ha of woodland under active management. LH1, LH3, LM5	Julie Melin-Stubbs	The bird breeding season has limited practical work to fencing, follow up spraying and survey and monitoring. The project officers have been applying for felling licences, putting out tender documents setting out a framework for works to be carried out over the autumn and winter and spending time with the landowners to agree work to be carried out over the next phase. They have also been planning volunteer work parties ready to promote in the autumn.		
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners. LM1, LM2	Julie Melin-Stubbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We organised and delivered the following courses, training 87 people including 44 commoners. • Management of Flower Rich Grasslands • Level One Deerstalking • Hedgerow Management • Heathland Management • Cross compliance and NVZ • Flower Rich Grasslands (second course) <p>Thirteen commoners and 3 equine owners requested advice and were visited and given advice on their holdings plus.</p> <p>Worked with 4 commoners turning out on the Northern Commons to access the National Trust small grants to assist their sustainable commoning practices.</p> <p>Countryside Stewardship grant advice, facilitation visits and support with writing applications carried out on 10 holdings.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>With partners, facilitate the delivery of landscape scale enhancement, habitat restoration and river catchment enhancement through key schemes: the Verderers HLS Scheme, New Forest Catchment Partnership and New Forest and Solent SPA (Special Protection Area) Forums. Outcomes include: providing advice to the Forestry Commission on the delivery of the programme of wetland restoration and habitat management to enhance the SAC. Review opportunities to mitigate the impacts of new development on the SPA's Support measures to engage the public in activity aimed at reducing diffuse pollution and enhancing "flagship" ponds. LH4, LH6, LH7, LH8</p>	<p>Ian Barker</p>	<p><i>Verderers HLS Scheme</i></p> <p>Restoration has been taking place at Wootton (Phase 2), Pondhead, Allum Green, Ferny Crofts and Norely Mire. Phase 1 of Wootton has been successfully completed. Due to the early autumn wet weather, works stopped at sites when there became a risk of harm to the ground. Works will recommence next year when conditions are suitable. Mire restoration is planned at Widden Bottom and The Noads later in the autumn weather permitting. We supported consultation site visits with the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders during the period.</p> <p>The quality of the habitat restorations works, the careful planning that goes into them, and the benefits they bring for wildlife and people was recognised in July when the works on the Avon Water were shortlisted for a national award for excellence from the Royal Town Planning Institute.</p> <p>Recent work with the Authority's Communications team has led to articles covering the benefits of restorations for Lapwing. The team has also assisted communication of the extensive monitoring work linked to restorations which is showing the benefits of the schemes.</p> <p><i>New Forest Catchment Partnership</i></p> <p>The first New Forest Water Forum was held in September to highlight the special value of the New Forest's freshwater environment and the work the Catchment Partnership, partners and volunteers are undertaking to enhance, conserve and monitor it. The event was aimed at a range of local stakeholders including volunteers and parish councils. It was organised by our co-host the Freshwater Habitats Trust and the Authority. Over 80 people attended and we received some very positive feedback.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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		<p>A range of work continues, particularly through the 'Living Waters' project which forms part of the Our Past, Our Future HLS Landscape programme. We have also been working with Southern Water to plan a campaign on avoiding sewage blockages which will complement other issues we have been raising awareness of locally, including septic tank maintenance and avoiding phosphate pollution from domestic sources. We have successfully secured additional match funding from the Environment Agency for HLF works and we continue to work with the Agency to develop new project bids.</p> <p><i>New Forest and Solent Special Protection Areas (SPA)</i></p> <p>The Steering Group of the Authority's New Forest SPA mitigation scheme met at the end of July, facilitated by the Authority's Policy Team. The group includes representatives of NFDC, RSPB, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust. A revised mitigation scheme is in preparation to accompany the higher level of development likely to be required by the new Local Plan. This will be tested as part of the plan adoption process and Examination in Public.</p> <p>We have also been supporting the work of the Solent SPA Mitigation Scheme which is also undergoing review. The scheme is adopting a 'Bird Aware' branding to assist communication across the wide Solent area. Permanent Rangers and seasonal staff have been secured for the forthcoming autumn/winter when thousands of migratory waterfowl return to the Solent from their summer breeding grounds. They will be working with local communities and visitors to raise awareness of the harm disturbance can cause to the birds. The final mitigation scheme will be adopted by planning authorities later in the year.</p>		

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<p>Implement actions from the Landscape Action Plan. The priorities are to reduce impacts from noise, visual disturbance and lighting on the tranquillity of the National Park. Targets include: Working with National Grid to progress proposals for undergrounding power lines at Hale Purlieu. Develop a “pipeline” of projects for Landscape Enhancement Initiative funding, aiming to submit 2 projects a year to the scheme. Maintain dialogue with the MoD and CAA to identify ways of reducing the impact of low flying across the National Park. LH6, ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4</p>	Sarah Kelly	<p>A joint site visit with NPA officers and the RSPB was made to Hale Purlieu on 5 July to discuss in detail the potential impact on ground nesting birds of burying the high voltage cables. National Grid continued to hold meetings to update stakeholders on the progress of the site investigation works and the implications of disturbance to the SSSI of undergrounding the overhead wires.</p> <p>Work continues on developing projects that could be submitted to the National Grid LEI fund. This includes a possible ‘wish list’ of improvements to Landford Bog (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust) and improvements to Waterside rights of way. The next window for expressions of interest is Spring 2018.</p> <p>Disturbance to ground nesting birds from low flying helicopters was discussed at a meeting with Natural England, the lead MoD Ecologist, Hampshire Ornithological Group, the NPA Ecologist and Landscape Officer. A widening of an existing “local avoid” location to restrict activity by low flying helicopters was agreed to protect a specific bird species in the National Park.</p>		
<p>Engage specialist staff (NPA and key partners) on the impact of climate change, identifying risks and future actions to inform a climate change adaptation plan for the National Park. CC4</p>	Andy Brennan	<p>Climate change specialists have been contracted to compile an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the special qualities, this will be shared with NPA staff in Q3.</p>		
<p>Work with partners to secure the post-EU exit policies for land management that enable farmers and land managers to enhance the natural capital of the National Park.</p> <p>Work with local stakeholders to agree key outcomes and champion the needs of the National Park collectively to Defra, Ministers and National Parks England.</p>	Paul Walton	<p>Following submission of the Future Farming paper to Lord Gardiner work has begun to consider the evidence needed to support future investment in the environment of the National Park. A joint approach by key agencies within the National Park – Natural England, RSPB, National Trust and Forestry Commission and HIWWT – is being developed.</p>		

Protect Priority 2: Ensuring new development is sympathetic and in keeping with its surroundings

We will seek the highest quality of development in the New Forest to minimise impacts on its special qualities and deliver enhancements by:

- providing clear National Park planning policies and a high quality planning service
- working with neighbouring authorities in the development of their planning policies and proposals that may affect the National Park
- increasing knowledge and evidence about changes to the special qualities of the National Park
- supporting delivery of green infrastructure plans within and outside the National Park to reduce pressure on the most sensitive areas.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>Work with partners to develop a strategic approach to the management of natural capital and provision of ecosystem services within the National Park and surrounding "Green Halo".</p> <p>Establish and support the work of a cross-sectoral Green Halo Partnership which will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coordinate the delivery of a programme of projects and activity, supported by Partnership members, aimed at enhancing the Green Halo ▪ seek additional resources to support the Green Halo work <p>LM3, LH11</p>	Paul Walton	Work on developing the Green Halo partnership continued with briefings to NFDC Members, the NW Parish quadrant and 2 meetings of the Steering group. A launch event for the Green Halo Partnership is set for 22 November.		
<p>Progress the review of our adopted Core Strategy (2010), taking into account the representations received following publication of the first consultation draft last year. Include a further round of public consultation on a revised (Submission) draft Local Plan in Autumn 2017 and thereafter onward submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.</p>	David Illsley	The Local Plan review remains on schedule to be submitted to the Government for independent Examination in Spring 2018. The original intention to publish an updated draft Local Plan in Autumn 2017 for a final 6-week period of public consultation has slipped by about 3 months due to the need for further consultation on housing sites in Summer 2017; and the receipt of various evidence base studies (e.g. flood risk, viability, air quality assessment). A paper updating the timetable for the Local Plan review will be considered at the October 2017 full Authority meeting.		Further revisions to national planning policy remain a risk, although these are not now expected until later into 2018. Work is well advanced on the review and the potential for further slippage is not considered to be significant.

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Review level of habitat contributions (currently £1,250 per new residential unit) required to mitigate the impacts of new development.	Steve Avery	The level of habitat contributions is being reviewed in parallel to the Local Plan review and the revised levels will feed into the Local Plan viability testing currently being undertaken.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park. LH10	Tony Spence	Another successful period of work has been completed by the seasonal rangers, and a review of this will be completed. There has been early investigation into the possibility of influencing the content of a nature film about the New Forest.		
Progress the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy for the National Park, taking into account the Government's anticipated response to the CIL Review in the Housing White Paper.	Steve Avery	Specialist viability work has been commissioned on the scope for introducing CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) within the National Park. The Government's response to the CIL Review Panel Report (2016) is still awaited and this may lead to the implementation of a national CIL system.		The Government's response to the CIL Review Team's Report (submitted October 2016) is still awaited. Consequently there is a question mark over the whole national system of CIL and the future approach to rate setting.
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The 2017 Building Design Awards nomination period opened earlier this year with a higher profile social media campaign. The closing date was mid-October 2017 and the level of responses has been encouraging.		

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Support the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan by working with Parish Councils in delivering the actions identified in the Plan. LD8	Pauline Megson	The Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group met in September 2017 to discuss the update to the Action Plan and a further meeting is scheduled for November 2017. A paper highlighting the work of the Steering Group on verge protection in the Conservation Area is being considered at the October 2017 full Authority meeting.		

Protect Priority 3: Conserving the historic environment and local way of life

We will support the conservation of features that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the New Forest, by:

- enabling local people to retain and promote traditional building skills and crafts
- developing initiatives that encourage recording and celebration of features of interest to local communities
- providing advice and resources for specific community-led projects that promote local distinctiveness and cultural heritage
- improving knowledge and skills amongst the public to further protect the archaeology of the National Park.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>Through the OPOF and HLS schemes deliver a range to projects to encourage volunteer involvement in the local heritage, history and archaeology of the New Forest. Aim to involve 240 volunteers and hold two meetings of the Community Heritage Forum. LD1, LD2</p>	<p>Frank Green / James Brown / Lawrence Shaw</p>	<p>Archaeological volunteer survey activity is restricted to work outside ground nesting bird areas.</p> <p>During this period training in the use of archives has been provided with regular visits to the National Archives (NA) in London and additional training visits are to be arranged with the NA and the County Record Office. Social Media training, interpretation training and training events with sessions in archaeological soil sample analysis and artefact recovery have also been provided.</p> <p>A training session on the use of lime mortars, in relation to the conservation and study of the Beaulieu ice house, will be followed up by a further training session on the site.</p> <p>Training in photogrammetry and Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) photography has been undertaken; specifically in relation to the recording of monuments in churchyards. These techniques help reveal information that is otherwise obscured by vegetation or erosion of stonework.</p> <p>All training reported on has been provided within the OPOF heritage projects.</p> <p>A lot of this quarter has been taken up with organising the New Forest Knowledge Archaeology Conference, on the 27 & 28 October featuring papers, posters and stands from local groups, professionals and academics. The New Forest Heritage Community website is in final testing stage.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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Deliver a programme of training in traditional building skills as part of OPOF, with 175 people participating in 8 courses (5 professional and 3 householder). EW8, LD5	Pauline Megson	Part 2 of the Homeowners Course was delivered in Beaulieu on 15 July. The course was well-received with positive feedback, though the numbers were lower than expected with 10 participants. The course on Cob Structures for professionals, agents and builders was held on 29 September at Buckler's Hard and was fully subscribed with 26 people booked though attendance on the day was lower. The course, which was a combination of classroom and practical building techniques, was very well received. Courses are continuing.		Better promotion, reminders and effecting waiting list system required to ensure full courses. Poster to be reissued and courses promoted on social media.
Actively manage scheduled and unscheduled ancient monuments on the Crown Lands and Open Forest. Improve the condition of at least 10 sites on the Crown Lands. LD6	Frank Green / Lawrence Shaw	Work is ongoing with Natural England, Historic England the Forestry Commission, the Verderers and the National Trust. Appropriate methodologies to manage the different risks associated with sites of differing character, date and extent are to be agreed between the various stakeholders.		