

# **BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018**

## **2017-18 Work Programme – Q3 (1 October to 31 December 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 SINC's, 1200m of hedgerow and 40ha of woodland under active management. LH1, LH3, LM5	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Contractors are currently working on sites for all three projects for example, Working Woodlands; thinning of woodlands, removal of conifer and estimation of timber value across several of our woodland sites. Nature's Stepping Stones; contractors have finished clearing dense willow scrub on two SINC's at Emery Down as part of the large grassland restoration project. Better Boundaries; several hedgerows are being restored by contractors and the practical part of the project will be finished by the end of February. A large number of volunteers have been hard at work clearing rhododendron and other scrub on several of the project sites. For example, in the Working Woodlands project, 30 individual volunteers have worked for 93 days on 5 sites this quarter.	<b>Changed from Green in Q2</b>	Working Woodlands and Nature's Stepping Stones are behind schedule re the number of hectares that we set as our targets. We will be working this spring and summer to find more landowners interested in taking part in the projects.
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners. LM1, LM2	Julie Melin-Stubbs	During this quarter our work with commoners has included giving advice to about 30 people on a range of issues including grants, subsidies, land based regulations and subsidies. Courses this quarter included woodland management, tractor driving and chainsaw.		

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> – the Authority was represented through members and officers at a workshop in December covering the principles and approach to wetland restoration on Forestry Commission land. The strategy for restoring wetland that have been damaged by human activity is being reviewed and views are being sought from local stakeholders.</p> <p>A range of small scale restoration works were the subject of site visits in December with key regulatory bodies to establish potential options for solutions. These are required due to straightened drains affecting catchment hydrology, resulting in erosion of peat in mire wetland systems and harm to wildlife and heritage interests. Plans for implementation are ongoing and will be subject to local consents and consultation. In addition opportunities for restoration of Forest Lawns, used by Commoners grazing stock were identified and agreed.</p> <p><i>New Forest Catchment Partnership</i> – we contributed to the New Forest Walking Festival and raised awareness of the Partnership's work and uniqueness of the Forest's Freshwater wildlife as part of a guided walk 'Pond-ering and Wandering' which was well attended. Practical schemes with landowners are being progressed and several projects to improve water quality through rainwater harvesting, pollution trapping ponds and other features are now awaiting the decision of regulators prior to being implemented. These will also provide new ponds and wetland features offering new habitat for freshwater wildlife. We have also been liaising with the Environment Agency and other partners to prepare bids for potential national funding for Catchment Partnerships which will be finalised in spring 2018.</p> <p><i>Solent SPA Mitigation</i> – At the December meeting of PUSH, including Authority input, the full final mitigation scheme was approved for implementation across the area of impact in the Solent. This replaces the interim scheme and provides greater certainty the measures will help conserve the coast's important migratory wildlife throughout the lifetime of new development, whilst providing certainty and a streamlined planning process for developers.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<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:</p> <p>Working with National Grid to progress proposals for undergrounding power lines at Hale Purlieu.</p> <p>Develop a “pipeline” of projects for Landscape Enhancement Initiative funding, aiming to submit 2 projects a year to the scheme.</p> <p>Maintain dialogue with the MoD and CAA to identify ways of reducing the impact of low flying across the National Park.</p> <p>LH6, ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4</p>	Sarah Kelly	<p>National Grid and their consultants continue to prepare information for the Environmental Impact Assessment that they will submit as part of the Planning application for undergrounding the high voltage power line at Hale Purlieu. Meetings with National Grid, Natural England and NPA officers have taken place to discuss potential disturbance of birds in particular.</p> <p>The LEI funding for Warrens Copse woodland management and wildplay, in Fawley Parish, has been confirmed and work will start in February.</p> <p>A draft application for LEI funding for Landford Bog has been completed and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is helping to refine the application which will be submitted to National Grid in the next window for Expressions of Interest in Spring 2018.</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>Key NPA staff have been involved in the preparation of the Climate change adaptation plan in Q3. The report remains on schedule to be completed by the end of Q4</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>The New Forest Farming Group (chaired by the NPA) are due to host a visit to the New Forest by Defra officials at the end of January. This is in response to the Future Farming paper submitted to the Minister in 2017. The possibility of securing consultancy support to explore the design and structure of a bespoke scheme for the New Forest and countryside around the National Park is being examined with partners.</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)
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". Establish and support the work of a cross-sectoral Green Halo Partnership which will; 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 LM3, LH11	Paul Walton	Almost 100 people attended the launch of the Green Halo Partnership in November. Forums have been established under the key themes of Building the Local Economy, Improving Health & Wellbeing, Sustainable Living and Protecting the Natural Environment. A Green Halo website is under construction and businesses are coming forward to join the Partnership and promote the work they are doing in support of the Halo aims. The 25 Year Environment Plan launched by the Prime Minister in January has natural capital at its heart, providing the national context for our Green Halo initiative.		
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.	David Illsley	The Authority's proposed Submission draft Local Plan 2016 – 2036 was considered by members at the full Authority meeting in December 2017. The document was approved for the purposes of a final 6-week period of public consultation which commenced in mid-January 2018. The draft Local Plan has been the subject of regular liaison meetings with members throughout 2017.	<b>Changed from Amber in Q2</b>	

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Review level of habitat contributions (currently £1,250 per new residential unit) required to mitigate the impacts of new development.	Steve Avery	The review of the Authority's habitat mitigation scheme (and the level of financial contributions sought) has been undertaken alongside the work on the Local Plan review. It is proposed to increase the level of contributions to circa £3,000 per dwelling.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park. LH10	Tony Spence	The Authority continues to release developer contributions to a range of mitigation measures in the National Park. This work is overseen by a steering group including representatives of Natural England, RSPB and the Wildlife Trust.		
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	Viability evidence commissioned in 2017 from Three Dragons indicates CIL could be sustained within the National Park. At this point there remains significant uncertainty at a national level regarding the long terms future of CIL, with proposed for an alternative Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT) being considered.		Given the uncertainty at a national level regarding the future of CIL, work is currently on hold regarding its implementation. This will be reviewed when the national picture is clearer.
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The Building Design Awards review panel met in January 2018 with officers to consider the schemes nominated for this year's awards. The awards themselves are due to be presented in March 2018.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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 November 2017 and updated the Action Plan, placing actions in order of priority and reducing the number to provide focus on actions achievable by the group. A method of recording local distinctiveness and changes to the conservation area was demonstrated using Google Maps and is to be adopted by the Steering Group. A meeting has been arranged for January with the Forestry Commission's new Verge Restoration Officer to plan ways of working together to address verge damage and protection.		



### **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/ Building Conservation Team</p>	<p><i>Building Skills Training</i></p> <p>For the second year the Building Conservation Team have been leading on the Building Skills Project as part of the wider OPOF project. The project involves promoting the conservation and enhancement of the historic built environment of the National Park, through raising awareness, developing specialist building skills, encouraging sensitive management and promoting availability and access to these skills. Training has taken place so far for homeowners of historic buildings. These courses have been run in Beaulieu and have covered local traditional building materials, techniques and sympathetic repair methods. Several courses have also been held for professionals and agents who work regularly within the National Park. These courses have included specialist areas such as, historic masonry structures, timber framing and lime mortars, renders and plasters at Buckler's Hard, other topics are planned for across the remainder of the year. Positive feedback continues to be received for both courses.</p> <p>December marked the end of the HLS year. 2017 saw a successful survey season with the target coverage of 2,013 hectares reached. This work involved 131 volunteer days. During these days the volunteers helped to record archaeological sites, undertake detailed geophysical surveys of specific sites identified during the Lidar surveys and clear vegetation from scheduled monuments. Work also continued to clean survey data and submit records to the County Historic Environment Records Office.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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	Building skills training for Homeowners was delivered in Beaulieu in November and December. The course was well-received with very positive feedback. Numbers were middling with 12 participants on each course. Training on Historic Joinery for professionals, agents and builders was held on 20 October at Buckler's Hard and was fully subscribed with 26 people booked though attendance on the day was slightly lower. The course, which was a combination of classroom and practical building techniques, was very well received. Courses will continue in 2018 and we have reviewed the year's progress and revised the invitation letter, including a flyer with images, to attract more participants for 2018. We have also secured involvement of other NFNPA staff to deliver additional short talks on their area of expertise e.g. bats in buildings and preparing heritage statements.	<b>Changed from Amber in Q2</b>	
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 has been undertaken to remove gorse and bracken coverage across 4 Bronze Age barrows in the last quarter. As well as this, a collaboration between the NPA, FC, Natural England, Historic England and Bournemouth archaeology has seen a wide range of work take place across Home Farm Iron Age Hillfort including the removal of scrub, the felling of young trees and silver birch, badger surveys, bracken spraying and geophysical surveys, all of which has been done to remove the site from the Monuments at Risk register.		