

# **BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018**

## **Draft 2016-17 Work Programme – Fourth Quarter**

### **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	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>Deliver habitat restoration and river catchment enhancement through landscape scale partnerships across the National Park. These include: Our Past Our Future (OPOF), where the NPA is the lead body, the Verderers HLS Scheme, New Forest Catchment Partnership (co-host) and New Forest and Solent SPA (Special Protection Area) Forums. LH4, LH7</p>	<p>Ian Barker, Lawrence Shaw, Rachael Gallagher</p>	<p><u>OPOF Landscape Partnership Scheme</u></p> <p>Key work undertaken by OPOF projects related to habitats conservation includes the following i) A total of 35.28 ha of woodland has been improved at 6 privately owned landholdings, work has included thinning birch, rhododendron removal, creation of glades and rides and has been completed with contractors and volunteer parties. ii) 1958m of hedge has been restored (1,491m in this quarter) through the Better Boundaries project with contractors hedgelaying and volunteer task days. Several hedgerows in the Hyde, Godshill and Linwood areas have been completed so that visible networks of restored hedges are now in place. iii) Contractors and volunteers have removed a significant amount of scrub and trees from a number of wildlife sites in order to start the enhancement restoration process into grassland and heathland habitats. To date 56 advisory visits have been made, 11 sites surveyed, 11 private landowners engaged, a total of 23.68 hectares enhanced. iv) Living Water project (led by the Freshwater Habitats Trust) continues to undertake water quality monitoring of the Beaulieu catchment and water harvesting plants installed in 2 locations, surface water management plan completed for 3 locations and school packs produced. Horse pasture management event took place in January (organised jointly with the Rural Skills project). v) 10,100 trees planted by the National Trust and volunteers at their Foxbury site.</p> <p><u>New Forest Catchment Partnership (co-host)</u></p> <p>Co-hosting work continues to facilitate improvements to the Forest's waterbodies, through our partnership we have secured a £12,000 grant from Defra to facilitate the delivery of the partnership in 2017-18. As well as ongoing work with OPOF's Living Waters work-stream, including monthly water quality testing by a team of volunteers, this quarter saw further delivery of catchment improvement works in the Hatchet catchment. 13 sedimentation ponds have been created throughout the catchment to hold back sediment and nutrients; these will also provide biodiversity benefits, particularly for amphibians. We raised awareness of good septic tank maintenance and domestic sources of phosphate by various media articles and delivering leaflets as well as dissemination via a partnership with a private tank maintenance firm. We are developing plans with local business to install rainwater harvesting system and facilitate better management of potential diffuse pollution sources. We are working with local partners on initiatives to deliver Natural Flood Management.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

Action/Outcome	Officer	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 Natures' Stepping Stones. The targets are 10 SINC's (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation), 1200m of hedgerow and 40 ha of woodland under active management. LH1, LH3, LM5	Julie Melin-Stubbs	<p>This quarter has seen a significant amount of practical conservation work carried out as much of it falls outside the bird breeding season.</p> <p>Better Boundaries – 1,491 metres of hedgerow have had work undertaken on them this quarter, owned by 7 separate landowners. All done by contractors although 5 volunteers helped with one task. Two prominent hedges have been beautifully layed with the one in Hyde receiving a huge amount of positive reaction. A Hedgerow Open Day was held at the Godshill one, attracting over 40 people during the day.</p> <p>Nature's Stepping Stones – 14 volunteers were involved and carried out the equivalent of 27 and a half days work. With the help of contractors and volunteers, 5 sites (15 hectares) were enhanced. Twenty one advice visits were carried out to the various landowners during the quarter.</p> <p>Working Woodlands – 8 sites had work carried out on them, 3 of them by contractors. Eight volunteer work parties were carried out in woodlands with 17 volunteers turning out to help, equating to 28 days of work.</p>		
Identify and secure £60k in grants as match funding to deliver OPOF.	Fiona Wynne	Funds of £1,000 were agreed through the Tesco Bags of Help scheme for the Wildplay project at Holbury Woods. The bid for £15,000 from Arts Council England was unsuccessful. A bid for £13,000 has been submitted to the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative		£65,000 match funding has been found since OPOF began. A further £72k is needed and the funding plan is due for review in Sept 2017.

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Identify the areas of greatest need for back-up grazing for commoning and identify the mechanisms for securing grazing land. LM4	Julie Melin-Stubbs / Paul Walton	This will come through the Green Halo work and the NFLAS will continue to act as facilitators to link commoners with any land available.		Steve Avery to liaise again with the Verderers to agree a set of criteria that might be used to help better define and protect back-up grazing land (as part of the local plan review).
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners.  LM1, LM2	Julie Melin-Stubbs	A new calendar of courses has been produced for the year ahead, advertising nearly 30 courses we will be organising and delivering during 2017.  Six courses were carried out during the quarter including Coppicing, hedge laying, equine pasture management (2 evenings), tractor driving and 2 chainsaw courses. 114 people attended these courses.		

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Work with the New Forest Ecademy (OPOF) and partners to identify the priorities for future surveys on species and habitats. LH14	Ian Barker	This period has seen extensive work through OPOF with the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre to address data issues and enable the Ecademy to map certain datasets without compromising copyright or ability to raise funding for continued operation of the Centre. In addition Q4 saw our annual meeting with the Centre to agree priorities for their habitat survey work in the area which will be focused on OPOF outcomes to enable match funding. A couple of Local Wildlife Sites likely to be affected by major development proposal have also been prioritised for the forthcoming season.		
Seek to reduce impacts from noise, visual disturbance and lighting on the tranquillity of the National Park. The priority is the National Grid Visual Impact Provision project at Hale Purlieu ST1, ST2, ST4	Sarah Kelly	National Grid carried out 8 borehole and 5 trial pit tests in February on the preferred route for undergrounding to assess the underlying geological conditions. Analysis of the results is now taking place and a meeting in the next quarter has been called to discuss the results with the Stakeholder Reference Group (Local main stakeholders).  Ongoing liaison with Forestry Commission and Natural England regarding reporting of low flying training of military helicopters in the National Park. Authority has been forwarding incidences of such reports to MOD. In the next quarter a RAF Wing Commander is coming to the New Forest Consultative Panel (Thursday 1 June) to give a presentation and answer questions on MOD low flying training.		

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Finalise a climate change adaptation plan report and set up New Forest Climate Change group. CC4	Andy Brennan	No progress due to resources being directed to PEDALL – New Forest Inclusive Cycling		Action moved forward to 2017-2018
Coordinate action through the Verderers HLS, OPOF and Western Escarpment Project to reduce verge damage and encroachment. Outcomes will contribute to delivery of the New Forest Site Improvement Plan. LH6, LD7, LD8	Sarah Kelly	FC carrying on with verge protection works, now in Nomansland with car free ditching and sweet chestnut dragons teeth. Authority responded to queries from local residents and liaised with FC accordingly.	green	

## **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	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Lead partners in developing a strategic approach to the provision of green infrastructure and the management of natural capital within the National Park and a surrounding 25km "Green Halo". LM3, LH11	Paul Walton/David Illsley	The Green Halo Steering Group met monthly in the quarter. Financial and in-kind support has been provided by some of the Group members. Work has continued to engage with local authorities and prospective partners from the private sector. A Partnership launch is planned for September 2017		
Undertake a full review of our adopted Core Strategy (2010), taking into account the experiences since the Core Strategy was adopted and changes in national planning policy (introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance). To include public consultation on the draft Local Plan in Autumn 2016 and the preparation of the Submission draft Local Plan by Spring 2017.	David Illsley	Following the conclusion of the 8-week public consultation on the draft Local Plan in late 2016, the Policy team has logged and acknowledged all of the responses received. Copies of the responses received are available to view in the Authority's main reception (with personal details redacted) and a full summary is also available via the website.  A series of informal meetings with members on the Local Plan Review have been set up in 2017 to guide the next steps in the Plan-making process.		



Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Run a series of themed planning workshops for Parish and Town councils, including building design and conservation, planning policy, trees, development control and enforcement.	Steve Avery	The enforcement workshop held on 22 March 2017 (Q4) concluded the series of workshops for this year (building design & conservation and planning policy w/shops were held in Q1, trees w/shop held in Q2 and a development management w/shop in Q3).		
Introduce charging for pre-application advice for certain types of development whilst maintaining an open and accessible planning service.	Steve Avery	Charges for formal written pre-application enquires were successfully introduced in Q3 (from 1 October) and are forecast to generate an additional £21,000 per annum (as reported to the full Authority meeting on 23 March 2017).		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park.	Steve Avery	As of the end of March 2017, the Authority had received circa £65,000 in developer contributions towards habitat mitigation measures focused on the New Forest SPA (as well as separate contributions towards the Solent SPA). Funds are directed towards mitigation measures agreed annually by a steering group of NPA officers and Natural England representatives.		

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Re-visit the merits of introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy for the National Park following enactment of the Housing and Planning Bill and further government planning reforms.	Steve Avery	In February 2017 the Government published the report of the CIL Review team which recommended further reforms to the CIL system. The Government's response to these recommendations is awaited. Consultants have been appointed to undertake CIL viability modelling work in the National Park.		
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	Three new developments in the National Park received their Building Design Awards at the full Authority meeting in March 2017. The award winning schemes are also on display in the Authority's main reception area.		
Support the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan by working with Parish Councils in delivering the actions identified in the Plan. LD8	Lisa Crouch	The Steering Group met in March to discuss the verge protection project within the Western Escarpment and other actions including the NFNPA Local Distinctiveness Project.		

### **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	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Develop period and thematic research strategies to address gaps in the knowledge of specific time periods of the Forest's archaeological record. LD2	Frank Green	<p>Two successful period seminars were held in March to develop research strategies for the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neolithic and Bronze Age: in conjunction with Bournemouth University</li> <li>• The post-Roman and medieval periods: in conjunction with Winchester University</li> </ul> <p>The draft strategies will be made available through the New Forest Community Heritage Forum at future meetings and then posted on the Park's website.</p>		
Establish a New Forest Heritage Forum as part of OPOF LD4	Frank Green/James Brown	The New Forest Community Heritage Forum successfully established.		
Curate the New Forest Remembers Exhibition and Heritage Portal, a WWI & WWII online archive. The WWI exhibition will be shown at five different venues, 12 new articles added to the Portal, 50,000 page views and 5 talks given. LD3	Gareth Owen	<p>New Forest Remembers online archive (the Portal) continues to be well used. During this period three new articles have been added and two updated. The Portal has had 19,513 page views during this period.</p> <p>One outstanding bit of news was the donation, by his grandson Mr P Simmons, of a WWI RFC pilot's (Arthur G Simmons, RFC 4975) photographic archive taken in the New Forest during 1918-1919 whilst at East Boldre (then RAF Beaulieu). Mr Simmons got in touch with us after finding an article on the Portal. The collection is now safe and has now been deposited at the New Forest Centre.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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	Work is routinely undertaken through the HLS Verderers Scheme and in conjunction with the Forestry Commission, 5 monuments have been actively managed		A hiatus in the work programme occasioned by changing personnel with responsibility at the FC and now covered by the Service Level Agreement with the FC managed by Lawrence Shaw