

# BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

## 2018-19 Work Programme – Q2 (1 July to 30 September 2018)

### 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:** Protecting and growing the natural capital across the New Forest National Park landscape, connecting with surrounding areas to ensure habitats and wildlife are sustainable

- Provide clear advice, guidance and training to deliver the Landscape Action Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan and Cultural Heritage Plan
- Lead a co-ordinated approach to strengthen natural capital<sup>1</sup> and ecological networks within and beyond the National Park boundary, supporting Government's ambition for a 'Nature Recovery Network'
- Deliver landscape enhancement in the National Park and maintain and enhance the ecosystem services<sup>2</sup> on which the Park depends
- Identify the key evidence and data requirements needed to inform the conservation of the National Park's special qualities

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<sup>1</sup> Natural capital is the world's stocks of natural assets or resources (including geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms) which have a value.

<sup>2</sup> Ecosystem services can be described as the benefits people obtain from the environment, ranging from physical benefits such as clean air, water and food to aesthetic and cultural benefits that improve our quality of life.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Review the key actions in the Landscape and Biodiversity Action Plans, reporting on progress against actions in Q4 to inform future project work. (LH14)	Sarah Kelly/ Julie Melin-Stubbs	<p><u>Landscape Action Plan</u> The information, advice and guidance given in the LAP is used continually in Development Control and also with partner organisations and utility companies ie: those that have an impact on the landscape of the National Park.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity Action Plan</u> No further update since last quarter – target delivery Q4.</p>		
Enhance important wildlife sites with active management delivered through 3 OPOF projects: Working Woodlands, Better Boundaries and Nature's Stepping Stones. Targets are to have 10 SINC's, 1200m of hedgerow and 40ha of woodland under active management. (LH1, LH3, LH6, LM5)	Rachael Gallagher	<p>Work during this quarter has been mainly around planning for the practical work season which will start in October 2018, this has involved liaison with landowners, arranging contractors and planning volunteer conservation tasks.</p> <p>Two private woodlands near Pilley have had the timber that was felled last year extracted by heavy horses. The trees were taken out of the woodland in order to open up the canopy to let more light in and encourage a more diverse flora and fauna. Due to the small size, hydrology and lack of accessibility of these particular woodlands the best way to take the timber out was using this more traditional method rather than machinery. Woodland owners and project volunteers were invited to watch the process during an organised event that was run during the three weeks that the horses were on site. A short 3 minute film has been made - see <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=324HO-vetNM&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=324HO-vetNM&amp;feature=youtu.be</a></p> <p>Better boundaries project was successfully completed earlier in the year, work now only involves ongoing maintenance. The project was shortlisted and then judged as a finalist for the Hampshire Campaign for Rural England Countryside Awards. Although they did not win the award they were presented with a finalist certificate.</p>		Currently behind target for Working Woodlands and Natures Stepping Stones projects, due to: landowners selling; staff changes; the time taken working with numerous small landholdings versus larger landholdings. Projects will extend into a 4 <sup>th</sup> year in order to meet the targets by the end of OPOF.

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners. (LM1, LM2)	Julie Melin-Stubbs	<p><u>Commoning support – total of 40 commoners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 commoners were given advice on agricultural regulations and land management</li> <li>▪ 11 commoners were given advice and support applying for grants to support sustainable and best practice land management</li> <li>▪ 7 commoners were given advice on Basic Payment Scheme</li> <li>▪ 4 commoners were assisted in finding back up grazing land</li> <li>▪ The third year of the Commoning Mentor Scheme started with 6 new mentorees paired up with our mentors. Last year's 9 mentorees have now finished their year with a mentor.</li> </ul> <p>In the first two quarters of the year we have worked with a total of 140 commoners plus many other landowners, exceeding our target of 100 for the year.</p>		
With Green Halo forum leads identify and map a suite of projects that will strengthen natural capital, reporting outcomes to the Green Halo Partnership conference in November 2018 (LH11, LM3)	Paul Walton	Work has continued to promote the Green Halo Partnership with a presentation to a Natural Capital seminar in London which looked at the business opportunities for landowners in relation to natural capital and the presenting of a webinar on the work of the Partnership to the Europarc network. A meeting of the Green Halo steering group was held in August and work has begun on a Green Halo event at Ordnance Survey in November to mark the first year of the Partnership.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>With partners, continue support for 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.</p> <p>Outcomes include: providing advice to the Forestry Commission on the delivery of the programme of wetland restoration and habitat management to enhance the SAC.</p> <p>Review opportunities to mitigate the impacts of new development on the SPAs</p> <p>Support measures to engage the public in activity aimed at reducing diffuse pollution and enhancing “flagship” ponds.</p> <p>(LH4, LH6, LH7, LH8)</p>	<p>Rachael Gallagher/ Julie Melin-Stubbs / Ian Barker</p>	<p><u>Verderers HLS scheme</u></p> <p>The Verderers HLS Scheme has continued a successful programme of habitat restoration albeit at a smaller scale than is deemed necessary by the unfavourable condition of the habitats. Partners are currently developing a strategy for engaging stakeholders and managing wetland restorations and a workshop is planned for Q3. Specialist professional historic environment advice continues to be successfully provided as part of projects.</p> <p><u>New Forest Catchment Partnership</u></p> <p>Successful Partnership Steering Group held in July. The Catchment Partnership benefited from partnership with the Beaulieu Estate who kindly worked with the partners to host attendance at the New Forest show as part of their Estate stand. This showcased the work of the Catchment Partnership around the Park and in particular the ongoing work to deliver ‘Living Waters’ element of the HLF OPOF work. Outcome of Defra grant applications still awaited. Work on further public engagement in addition to Living Waters will be likely to be targeted at Q4.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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		<p><u>New Forest and Solent SPA Mitigation Schemes</u></p> <p>Schemes continue to be delivered appropriately to support development whilst protecting special wildlife interests. Planning Policy officers have contributed to management of new research work being undertaken by partners and led by Test Valley Borough Council as a result of government funding. We have also supported stakeholder meetings held by Bird Aware Mitigation Partnership which has successfully recruited and trained seasonal staff to engage with the public this autumn and winter at sensitive coastal sites.</p> <p><u>Franchises Lodge</u></p> <p>A large funding bid to National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative is being drawn up with RSPB to fund rhododendron removal within Franchises Lodge.</p>		

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Work with the Forest Farming Group (FFG) to establish a set of agreed objectives and potential mechanisms for achieving them, for land management and rural development in and around the New Forest following Brexit. (LM8)	Julie Melin-Stubbs	The Forest Farming Group met in September to consider an early draft of a report that will present the Public benefits that the New Forest provides. This will be an important evidence base when making the case for future financial support for farming in the New Forest post Brexit. The report was well received and the consultant continues to develop the project.		
<p>Safeguard the tranquillity of the National Park through reducing visual intrusion and disturbance from low flying aircraft. (ST1, ST2)</p> <p>Continue involvement with the National Grid Visual Improvement Project (VIP) – responding to proposals undergrounding at Hale Purlieu and representing National Parks on the national VIP steering group. (ST3, ST4, ST5)</p> <p>Maintain liaison with the MoD and civil aviation bodies to reduce incidence of low flying.</p>	Sarah Kelly	<p>Attendance of NPA officers at National Grid's (NG's) Stakeholder Reference Group meetings, held locally, have continued as well as attendance at NG's exhibitions and meetings with local Parishes and residents over the summer period. One National Grid Stakeholder Advisory Group (national VIP steering group) meeting was held in Peak District National Park where a NPA officer attended, representing National Parks England.</p> <p>Protection from low flying military helicopters in one of the most sensitive parts of the Open Forest for a rare bird species continues with a no fly zone agreed and in place.</p>		

**Protect Priority 2:** Ensuring new development is sympathetic and in keeping with the National Park, promoting high quality design and environmental net gain

- Provide a long-term planning vision for the National Park informed by the special qualities
- Deliver a high quality, proactive planning service that is focussed on securing the best possible outcomes for the National Park and its communities
- Work with neighbouring authorities in the development and implementation of their planning policies and proposals that may affect the National Park, taking forward the principle of environmental net gain<sup>3</sup> in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan

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<sup>3</sup> The environmental net gain principle expands on the net gain approach used for biodiversity to include wider natural capital benefits, such as flood protection, recreation and improved water and air quality.

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Secure the adoption of a new Local Plan to guide new development in the National Park	David Illsley	The Submission draft Local Plan 2016 – 2036 was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in May 2018. The hearing sessions are scheduled to take place in November 2018 and to date the Authority has responded to all of the queries raised by the appointed Inspectors in a timely manner and ensured the requirements of the relevant planning regulations have been met.		
Review and update the Development Control Charter.	Natalie Walter	We have now started to scope out the review and this is being progressed during Q3.		
Review standing pre-application advice on the Authority's website to assist the pre-application process and to secure the best possible planning outcomes	Steve Avery	We have now started to scope out the review and this is being progressed during Q3.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park. (LH10)	Tony Spence	Work has started on the design of new signage for some rights of way routes which are outside the internationally designated areas.		
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The Building Design Awards for this year have been promoted at the latest round of Parish Quadrant meetings and awareness has also been raised through a Parklife article in Autumn 2018.		



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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)	Lisa Crouch	The Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group met on 24 September. The meeting included an update from the Forestry Commission on its work on verge protection in the Western Escarpment and the wider New Forest; discussion around the potential use of Article 4 Directions to conserve local character where particular issues have been identified; and how the Steering Group can work with Hampshire County Council to address the matter of sign clutter and its impacts on the character of the Conservation Area.		
Devise and implement an enhanced monitoring programme for new development to secure greater compliance with planning consents	Steve Avery	How we resource an enhanced monitoring programme is being considered as part of the current review of recruitment to vacated posts in the enforcement team.		The two vacant posts in the enforcement team have been re-advertised. In the meantime, we have employed a contract planner to help support to team.

**Protect Priority 3:** Conserving the historic and built heritage; supporting local culture with continued focus on commoning

- Direct the management of scheduled and unscheduled monuments to bring them into good condition
- Work with property owners to improve the condition of historic buildings and heritage features by encouraging repair and renovation, re-use and appropriate management
- Foster greater knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage of the National Park
- Provide advice and support to secure resources for community-led projects that promote local distinctiveness and commoning way of life

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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, LC1)	Frank Green / James Brown / Lawrence Shaw/ Building Conservation Team	<p>Work with volunteers has resulted in trips to the British Museum stores to record Roman pottery that was excavated in the New Forest 170 years ago and make them available online as interactive 3D models</p> <p>Work continues in supporting the FC with the delivery of the New Forest HLS and wetland restorations. As well as this a large number of site data sets were recently deposited with the Hampshire HER. November sees the start of the new field work season which will result in a number of volunteer days.</p> <p>A one day Community Heritage fair in place of an evening Heritage Forum has been organised to take place on 6 November and some 20 groups will be represented and take part in the day.</p>		
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)	Lisa Crouch/Warren Lever	<p>For the third year, the Building Conservation Team have been leading on the Building Skills Project as part of the wider OPOF project.</p> <p>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.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
		<p>Training has taken place so far this year for homeowners of historic buildings with a further set of courses planned for late Autumn.</p> <p>Several courses have also been held for professionals and agents who work regularly within the National Park. In September a cob course was held at Bucklers Hard and allowed participants to get physically involved in building a cob wall in two different traditional methods.</p> <p>Positive feedback continues to be received for both courses.</p>		
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	£15,000 worth of funds to bring an ancient monument at Matley, back into good condition. This site has been on the Heritage At Risk Register since 2016, but now, thanks to funding secured through Historic England, archaeologists will be undertaking an investigatory excavation of the site before restoring the monuments earth works that have been damaged by livestock. The work is being undertaken as part of an agreed Monument Management Plan that was produced as part of the archaeology Service Level Agreement.		

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Undertake a review of the Historic Buildings at Risk (LD5)	Lisa Crouch	<p>A partial survey of the National Park's Buildings at Risk has taken place. The remainder of the survey will take place shortly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 13 extra buildings have been added to the list due to the recent survey.</li> <li>▪ 3 buildings have been removed from the list including 2 chest tombs within the Lyndhurst Churchyard and the Beaulieu Ice House.</li> </ul> <p>This gives a revised figure of 22 Buildings at Risk.</p> <p>It is hoped the Ha-Ha at Moyles Court can be removed shortly with repair work expected to commence soon.</p>		