

BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

2018-19 Work Programme – Q1 (1 April to 30 June 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 capital¹ 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 services¹ on which the Park depends
- Identify the key evidence and data requirements needed to inform the conservation of the National Park's special qualities

¹ 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.

¹ 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> Many of the actions in the LAP are continually acted upon with landscape advice given to planning officers and planning applicants with two large scale projects, Fawley Power Station redevelopment and National Grid potential undergrounding at Hale Purlieu, being current examples. Future project work includes working with local communities and businesses to reduce light pollution and Highways England (HE) to promote the installation of whisper tarmac to the A31 as it passes through the New Forest. The former is aspirational and dependent on staff resources, the latter has now been agreed by HE when they are next due to re-surface the A31 as part of their normal maintenance cycle.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity Action Plan</u> The actions have gone through an initial review process and we are in discussions about how the BAP could sit as part of the Partnership Plan in future.</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	The recent mid-term evaluation of OPOF concluded that the Scheme is achieving real practical results for heritage. When people surveyed were asked "What difference do you think OPOF is making for the New Forest?", 'Improving heritage features' was seen as the biggest difference that participants felt had occurred to date, reiterating the value people place on seeing physical improvements. Most people surveyed also felt that the Heritage is better managed, identified/recorded and in better condition, as a result of OPOF. Some key headline figures: 85 hectares of woodland, grassland and heathland have been restored or enhanced at 22 privately owned sites across the Forest; 4km of boundary features such as hedgerows have been restored or created. The bio-diversity monitoring project has generated 4,759 new records, including Barbastelle (a rare woodland bat), nine protected and/or notable birds including bullfinch, cuckoo and kingfisher; and 10 of the 24 UK bumblebee species.		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 th year in order to meet the targets by the end of OPOF.

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		The monitoring has also noted the first signs of success such as a newly planted hedgerow being used for the first time by common pipistrelle when previously this area was not used by bats, highlighting the importance of hedgerow in the landscape as connecting habitat. The monitoring has also recorded the reduction in rhododendron in the woodlands. This information will provide baseline data to inform future management decisions and helps to demonstrate to landowners the importance of the habitats and why they should be managed. Volunteers have had a massive input to these projects either through practical conservation work or surveys. The projects now have a steady team of volunteers who regularly attend task days as well as attracting others on an ad hoc basis. Some volunteers had already volunteered in the Forest but many have been recruited specifically for the projects and have worked on various projects across the Scheme.		
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners. (LM1, LM2)	Julie Melin-Stubbs	101 commoners were supported, advised and helped with their Basic Payment Scheme applications. This was mainly done through one to one meetings to fill in paperwork and liaise with the Rural Payments agency by telephone. 8 courses were run for the rural community including lambing, pig breeding, woodland plant identification, safe use of pesticides and tree surveying.		
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 identify potential Green Halo projects across four themes: Economy, Natural Environment, Health & Wellbeing and Sustainable living. The map of projects is due to be uploaded to the Green Halo website in September.		

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<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> Staff continue to provide valuable archaeological support to the HSL scheme and ecology staff have been involved in consultations relating to wetland restoration schemes as well as liaising with FC regarding bird surveys for this season.</p> <p><u>New Forest Catchment Partnership</u> The Partnership has been successful in securing funding from Defra, via the Environment Agency for hosting and delivering operation of the Partnership this year. Bids have also been made for capital funding available through the Water Environment Grants (WEG) and Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) for projects including feasibility study and management of Hatchet Pond and improvements within the Sowley and Hatchet catchment in conjunction with landowners. ‘Living Waters’, the water based project which forms part of the ‘Our Past, Our future’ HLF project continues to successfully meet its targets for delivery including involvement of volunteers in water quality testing and match funding. Project communication and campaign later in Q3/4 will seek to engage public in addressing causes of sewage blockages and pollution.</p> <p><u>New Forest and Solent SPA Mitigation Schemes</u> Following review, the revised Solent scheme was adopted by local planning authorities in April and Authority processes have been successfully updated.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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		<p><u>Franchises Lodge</u> Assisted the RSPB to carry out a programme of walks and talks for members of the public living close to the new reserve. Continued to work with the RSPB to introduce them to key people and organisations in the New Forest and assist in the shaping of the restoration and enhancement of the site.</p> <p><u>Nature's Stepping Stones</u> Work has continued on a landholding in Emery Down to restore a valley grassland/fen habitat, Emery Down Meadows. Over the last two winters we have removed large swathes of willow scrub and this quarter we have fenced the site, removed old fencelines and found a local commoner to introduce grazing by native breed cattle this autumn.</p>		
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	A consultant has been engaged by the FFG to work with stakeholders to develop a natural capital approach to future support for the New Forest commons and commoning. This is the first step required for developing requirements for the new scheme and to prepare a case for DEFRA.		
<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>Liaison with MOD reached a peak in 2016/17 and helicopter training has been adjusted to avoid the most sensitive location.</p> <p>Liaison with National Grid continues with regular Stakeholder Advisory Meetings and attendance at their public exhibitions, the latter to respond to queries from local residents and members of the public regarding the role and responsibilities of the NFNP as the local planning authority.</p> <p>Attendance also continues at National Grid's Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings for the VIP projects across the country, representing National Parks England.</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 gain³ in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan

³ 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, supporting documents and all of the representations received during the final public consultation were formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in May 2018. The timetable for the examination is now in the hands of the two appointed Planning Inspectors and the examination hearing sessions are likely to take place in November 2018.		
Review and update the Development Control Charter.	Natalie Walter	No action has been taken as yet but review planned during Q2 and 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	No action has been taken as yet but review planned during Q2 and Q3.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park. (LH10)	Tony Spence	During the Spring, three seasonal rangers were employed to provide guidance and messages to protect ground nesting birds during the key breeding season. Production of two short educational films about the protected birds and their habitats has also been started and will deliver key mitigation messages. When completed, they will be used by the rangers and education teams on social media, and at shows and visitor locations.		
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	This year's scheme is now open for nominations and further publicity is planned for the September round of quadrant meetings (Q2) and agents' meeting later in Q3.		

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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 in early June 2018 to discuss the potential use of Article 4 Directions in the Conservation Area and matters relating to highways design. The updated Conservation Area Action Plan to guide work in the area between 2018 and 2023 was commended and formally endorsed at the full Authority meeting in June 2018.		
Devise and implement an enhanced monitoring programme for new development to secure greater compliance with planning consents	Paul Hocking	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.		

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

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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>43 volunteer days undertaken for the OPOF projects. The New Forest Knowledge website is up and running with 9 groups registered and 42 new articles added.</p> <p>Dissemination projects with Lepe, Milford on Sea, Minstead, Friends of New Forest Airfields and Hurst. 6th trip to National Archives attended by 33 people from local groups and volunteers.</p> <p>HLS has seen 14 volunteer days undertaken in the office as part of data cleaning. As well as this, two volunteers visited the British Museum to record some Roman pots excavated nearly 170 years go in the New Forest. One of these, Hannah Makin, is a college student who also spent a day in the NPA offices to help process the images after the visit.</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	For the third 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.		

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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	52 scheduled monument management plans have now been produced for sites managed by the Forestry Commission (FC). This work has resulted in external funding from Historic England to undertake work at Home Farm Iron Age enclosure which is on the monuments at risk register. A number of sites have also been identified to be worked by the FC Two Trees volunteers in the coming months.		
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"> • 13 extra buildings have been added to the list due to the recent survey. • 3 buildings have been removed from the list including 2 chest tombs within the Lyndhurst Churchyard and the Beaulieu Ice House. <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>		