

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

2017-18 Work Programme – Q4 (1 January to 31 March 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: 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	<p>Working Woodlands – A new project coordinator was recruited in March. This is a part-time post for 13 months on secondment, ending May 2019.</p> <p>It was a busy quarter for the project as we funded contractors to carry out woodland management on several sites; Warren's Copse (thinning of mature trees to encourage growth of hazel coppice understorey), Turkey Oak removal at Rockford End adjacent to National Trust commons, thinning at Lucky wood and Jordans Wood (to be followed up with removal of timber using heavy horses in summer), rhododendron removal at Walhampton School, conifer removal at Newlease Copse.</p> <p>We also ran several volunteer work parties to remove rhododendron at Pleasure Copse and young birch regrowth at Harrow Wood.</p> <p>Nature's Stepping Stones – The main three SINCs where we have been working are owned by one landowner in Emery Down where we are in the process of contracting the large and complex fencing work to follow up from extensive scrub removal carried out over the past two winters.</p>		<p>The working woodlands project is at full capacity working at 18 woodlands to date (with most ongoing) and with at least 6 new ones in the pipeline for the coming year. The target hectarage will not be met as we can't control the size of woodlands that come into the project; we are working on a large number of small sites as is the nature of the New Forest privately owned woodlands.</p> <p>We currently need to find more sites to put into the Nature's Stepping Stones project. This will be carried out over the summer, landowner approval permitting.</p>

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation(if amber or red)
		Better Boundaries – on schedule and almost completed, this project has been a great success and the target of 4km of boundaries have been restored, enhanced and created. We now have a programme of follow up work to carry out on some of the hedgerows such as weed management and whip replacement, some of which can be done by volunteers, others by contractors over the next year but this project is almost completed, on time and within budget.		
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for 100 landowners, farmers and commoners. LM1, LM2	Julie Melin-Stubbs	<p>During this quarter the Rural Skills Project delivered 3 courses, training 26 people in hedgelaying and transporting livestock by road. We are developing a range of new courses with various specialists for the coming year. NFLAS advisors worked on 45 requests from commoners during this quarter to help with the usual range of support and advice.</p> <p>The mentoring scheme is ongoing with 8 people being mentored. We organised a visit for mentorees and young commoners to the Stallion Scheme, hosted by the Agisters.</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> Officers have supported HLS partners in respect of Cultural Heritage and wildlife aspects of ongoing works including habitat restoration and monument condition. Ad hoc liaison to monitor the wildlife of the Open Forest's area (bird surveys and restoration monitoring) has been ongoing. A more formal briefing with Authority staff is planned for the next reporting quarter and the Forestry Commission are leading on management of survey for nightjars this spring and summer. The HLS Partners have sought to engage key stakeholders in visits to restoration sites and have offered to explain the reasons why these schemes enhance the New Forest's wildlife resource now and for the future to wider stakeholders.</p> <p><i>New Forest Catchment Partnership</i> Consents have been secured to implement improvements to mitigate diffuse pollution and create new waterbodies. The work of the Partnership to deliver the 'Living Waters' thread of the HLF funded 'Our Past, Our Future' continues to be successful and has been securing external match funding.</p> <p>There was a well-supported stakeholder meeting of the Partnership in February. We also met with Southern Water and surrounding catchments across Hampshire to scope a campaign to help local communities avoid pollution and blockages from the waste water network. This is likely to be rolled out later in the year with the help of other teams in the Authority.</p>		

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		<p>A key emerging project is work to address deteriorating water quality and biological quality at Hatchet Pond. The pond is one of the most important for wildlife in the UK. Its high water quality appears to be in decline and discussions are taking place with a variety of user groups and those with management responsibility to address this. Consultation events took place in the quarter, facilitated by an independent consultancy and wildlife charities and supported by statutory agencies. Early indications are that solutions can be found that are broadly acceptable to local stakeholders and that encompass a range of activities. An action plan is being formulated to be agreed with stakeholders.</p> <p>We continue to prepare plans for funding bids including a new government water grant expected to be announced in April. Whilst it had been hoped that this could fund a wide range of work, it is increasingly likely that targets will be tight and the national budget constrained. Work at Hatchet Pond is most likely to be suitable for the criteria and this has been supported as a priority by our partners</p> <p><i>Solent SPA Mitigation</i> The Bird Aware mitigation scheme has been undertaking valuable public engagement during the period, including key sites for migratory birds on the New Forest coast. This work is funded through development and represents a saving to developers compared to providing their own mitigation packages to offset the adverse effects of development. The final contribution strategy was adopted by partners and is now being implemented by all planning authorities across the Solent from the end of March.</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:</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 aircraft across the National Park.</p> <p>LH6, ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4</p>	<p>Sarah Kelly</p>	<p>National Grid and their consultants continued working on the EIA that they plan to submit in Autumn 2018 as part of the planning application to the Authority for the undergrounding of the high voltage power line across Hale Purlieu. National Grid held a Stakeholder Reference Group meeting in February with all partner organisations present (NT, NE, FC, Verderers, NPA) to discuss routes for the undergrounding across Hale Purlieu.</p> <p>Work at Warrens Copse, Fawley has commenced, part funded by National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI), including the Wild Play area, woodland safety audit and woodland management. Minor footpath work (replacement of culverts, timber bridges and steps) will be carried out in September 2018 to avoid the bird breeding season and also very wet ground.</p> <p>The application for LEI funding for Landford Bog has passed the Expression of Interest stage and National Grid have invited a full application which Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the NPA will work on together to produce by the deadline of 23 May.</p>		

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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	Andy Brennan	Finalised report has been delayed due to consultant staff changes and illness but is due at the end of May.	Changed from green in Q3	Report expected by the end of May
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. Work with local stakeholders to agree key outcomes and champion the needs of the National Park collectively to Defra, Ministers and National Parks England.	Paul Walton	This quarter saw the publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the consultation on the Agriculture Command Paper (Health & Harmony). Work has continued with the Forest Farming Group and with Natural Parks England to develop a New Forest approach to the changing agri-environment policies.		

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	Following the successful launch of the Green Halo Partnership in Q3, work has continued to consolidate the Partnership. There are 45 confirmed partners from across a range of sectors and four theme groups established, each chaired by representatives from outside the NPA. The creation of the Green Halo Partnership was showcased in February at the inaugural Geovation 2018 conference organised by Ordnance Survey. A woodland owners seminar in March, arising from the Halo launch event, highlighted the opportunities to develop the use of timber in construction and promote the commercial management of neglected woodlands around the New Forest area.		
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 final 6-week public consultation on the NPA's proposed Submission draft Local Plan took place between mid January – end of February 2018. During this consultation the NPA received representations from just under 200 individual respondents. The timetable is to submit the draft Local Plan (and all of the representation received) to the Secretary of State for independent examination in early May 2018.		

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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 Authority's draft revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme (2018) – which proposes an increase in the level of habitat contributions – was published alongside the Submission draft Local Plan in January 2018. The intention is to finalise this document and implement the revised financial contributions in 2018 – 19.	Changed from Green in Q3	The revised financial contribution towards habitat mitigation measures is based on the planned level of development in the Local Plan review and will therefore be implemented in 2018-19.
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 implement a range of mitigation measures in the National Park. This work is informed by the steering group, which includes representatives from RSPB, Natural England and Hampshire 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	The Government is in the process of reviewing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), with further proposals published in March 2018. Currently the NPA is not progressing with introducing CIL given the uncertainties at the national level. To date only one of the ten English NPAs have implemented CIL, which remains discretionary.	Changed from Amber in Q3	The outcome of the current national review of CIL is expected in 2018-19 and the implications for the NPA arising from this will be assessed then.
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The NPA's Annual Building Design Awards were presented at the full Authority meeting in March 2018. The successful schemes were in Burley and Stuckton and this year the Authority received more nominations from the public than other years which is positive.		

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 continues to meet regularly, with the support of NPA officers. The constituent town and parish councils have prepared an updated Action Plan for the 2018 – 2021 period and this will be presented at the full NPA meeting in July 2018 for endorsement.		

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)
Through the OPOF and HLS schemes deliver a range of 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	Frank Green / James Brown / Lawrence Shaw/ Building Conservation Team	The community projects within the OPOF programme in the Heritage on My Doorstep programme continue to be well supported with 70 volunteer days by 40 volunteers recorded this quarter. In addition there was 25 volunteer days through Verderers HLS scheme and a further 30 volunteer days recorded as part of a heritage project between the National Park and Bournemouth University. A successful community Heritage Forum was held on 25 January at Fordingbridge.		
Deliver a programme of training in traditional building skills as part of OPOF, with 175 people participating in eight courses (five professional and three householder). EW8, LD5	Georgia Foy	The NPA held a Traditional Building Skills course for homeowners over two weekends in February and March in Beaulieu. A separate course for builders, architects, surveyors and agents was held in March on historic masonry structures, including brick, stone and flint. Both events were well attended and the feedback received from attendees has been very positive.		
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	Seven monuments have been improved. Eighty nine monuments have been surveyed resulting in Management plans for 25 monuments developed for future improvements to take place.		Essential surveys undertaken to identify monuments requiring improvement