

BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

2018-19 Work Programme – Q4 (1 January to 31 March 2019)

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 services² 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.

² 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)
<p>Review the key actions in the Landscape and Biodiversity Action Plans, reporting on progress against actions in Q4 to inform future project work. (LH14)</p>	<p>Sarah Kelly/ Julie Melin-Stubbs</p>	<p><u>Landscape Action Plan</u></p> <p>The LAP maintains its status as an adopted document by the National Park Authority and is a material concern in the planning process. The LAP therefore continues to play its part in protecting the landscape of the NFNP both in the planning process and in giving advice and guidance to landowners and utility companies. The NFNP Landscape Character Assessment plays a similar role. Both documents are often quoted in planning applications and planning responses and there is evidence that Planning Inspectors, at planning appeals, refer to the two documents and give them weight in their planning decisions.</p> <p>The recently updated Local Plan also refers to both documents, so they are effectively imbedded in the suite of documents that support the Authority's first purpose, to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity Action Plan</u></p> <p>The actions laid out in this partnership BAP are still highly relevant and delivery is ongoing on many of the objectives. There is a great breadth of work being carried out across the New Forest by a range of organisations.</p> <p>Discussions are being held within the Authority and with relevant stakeholders about the transition of this current plan into a Biodiversity Framework for the New Forest facilitated by the Authority. This would take the form of a forum set up to include all relevant conservation organisations who would meet regularly to prioritise workstreams, identify overlaps and synergies and co-ordinate to deliver objectives.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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. Targets are to have 10 SINCs, 1200m of hedgerow and 40ha of woodland under active management. (LH1, LH3, LH6, LM5)	Rachael Gallagher	<p>To date the Working Woodlands project has worked with 22 sites and is working to enhance and restore 132 hectares of woodland (project target is 120 hectares by end of OPOF).</p> <p>Natures Stepping Stones has worked with 28 sites and restored 44 hectares of SINCs (project target is 30 sites and restoration of 54 hectares by end of OPOF).</p> <p>The practical work on all these project sites has continued over January till March 2019, this has involved contractors working on a number of areas of private land to restore habitats and volunteer work parties to carry out conservation tasks. Work undertaken during this quarter includes removal of turkey oak at Rockford End to restore to native broadleaved woodland and ensure that turkey oak does not spread onto the adjacent SSSI. Also worked with Pondhead Conservation Trust to complete an inventory of the rides and coppice coups over a 78-hectare area. Area going into this project is approximately 30 hectares. Timber that was felled by volunteers has been extracted by traditional horse logger. This will be repeated in September 2019. The wood gets made into charcoal on site by the volunteers and is sold locally to enable ongoing sustainable management of this woodland. Open day planned in conjunction with the next extraction of the wood. Volunteers have helped to deliver this work.</p> <p>Planning is ongoing for work on other sites within these two projects over the winter season. As reported previously the Better Boundaries project has been completed, although some ongoing maintenance has been undertaken during this period including weeding and gapping up at several sites with the help of volunteers.</p>		<p>Working Woodlands is now on track to deliver targets.</p> <p>The Natures Stepping Stones project is still not on target due to: landowners selling; staff changes; the time taken working with numerous small landholdings versus larger landholdings. However, we anticipate that the project will extend into a 4th year due to underspend in the OPOF budgets in order to attempt to meet the targets by the end of OPOF and therefore the project should be back on track.</p>

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>Three training courses were delivered with a total of 24 attendees: Coppicing Hedgelaying Venison Butchery</p> <p>The 6 mentorees attending year three of the Commoner Mentoring Scheme are half way through their time with their mentors.</p> <p>We completed work with 7 commoners to whom we have given small grants during 2017/18 through the National Trust Small Grants Scheme which we administrate on behalf of the Northern Commons Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.</p> <p>Number of commoners supported this quarter – 27</p> <p>We continued to work very closely with Environment Agency, Natural England (Catchment Sensitive Farming) and the Freshwater Habitats Trust to bring in grants and deliver practical improvements to water quality in streams adjacent to several farms in the area including Norley Farm and Ravensbeck Farm. This is a very good example of how the partnerships can deliver streamlined added value under the New Forest Catchment Partnership and beyond.</p> <p>We are working on three Countryside Stewardship Schemes with farmers.</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	<p>Progress on the Green Halo Project was reported at a well attended Conference in November 2018. Work has continued across the four themes; external partners are leading the four working groups and this work will be drawn together to attempt to identify opportunities for funding during 2019</p>		

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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. (LH4, LH6, LH7, LH8)</p>	<p>Rachael Gallagher/ Julie Melin-Stubbs / Ian Barker/ Sarah Kelly</p>	<p><u>Verderers HLS Scheme</u></p> <p>Large units of SSSI habitat continue to be unfavourable due to ongoing harm which requires wetland restoration. The New Forest Freshwater and Wetland Restoration Strategy group met in March to agree terms of reference for a Restoration Forum which is due to commence in June.</p> <p><u>New Forest Catchment Partnership</u></p> <p>The Partnership has been successful in securing financial resources from Defra and the EA for facilitation of the Partnership in 2019/20. Some of the Partnership’s capital bids to EA have been successful and will build on current work in the Beaulieu, Hatchet and Sowley catchments which included recent installation of 3 eel passes. Opportunities to communicate the work of the Partnership are being planned for the New Forest Show and events linked to ‘Our Past, Our Future’, partners have been working with local filmmakers to try to film elvers migrating upstream on sections of stream which have been restored and improved by the Partnership. The New Forest Land Advice Service have been working with farmers in partnership with others in the Catchment Partnership to target water quality issues by bringing in grants and delivering practical measures with the farmers.</p>		

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		<p><u>New Forest and Solent SPA Mitigation Schemes</u></p> <p>Schemes are in operation and continue to be delivered in line with objectives. Steering Group for the New Forest scheme, which includes representatives of RSPB and Hampshire Wildlife Trust, met in February and generally positive feedback received. Funded projects include seasonal Ranger roles, film footage and signage of public rights of way. Central government funded research work is continuing this summer to inform wider mitigation strategies.</p> <p><u>Franchises Lodge</u></p> <p>The submission of the Expression of Interest (EOI) to National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative fund was completed by the deadline in early February. Confirmation was received in March that the EOI was successful and the National Park and RSPB were invited to submit a full application with a deadline in mid-May. RSPB and the NPA have worked closely on this funding bid. The proposed works to be funded now include rhododendron clearance, improvement of footpaths within the reserve, renovation of 3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Bronze Age burial mounds) and the removal of flytipped building rubble. The aim of these works is to create landscape scale improvements that link with the wider New Forest SPA and nature reserves to the north of Franchises Lodge (Loosehanger Copse and Langley Wood).</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	Work has begun to look at what opportunities there will be after March 2020 for the scheme to continue as an HLS extension or for the Open Forest to go into a Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The final draft of the Natural Capital report is being worked up and due to be published in July.		
<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>Low flying military aircraft (mainly helicopters) still pose a challenge to tranquillity, particularly in the north part of the National Park where National Security issues demand that low flying training of pilots takes place. The no-fly zone around a sensitive nesting site remains in place.</p> <p>In March National Grid gave a press release stating that progress with their planning application for the potential undergrounding of the high voltage pylon line is to be paused.</p>		<p>Risk of disturbance. Advice given to report incidences to MOD low flying hotline.</p> <p>No risk to NPA. Wait to hear from NG if they will re-start the planning process.</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 final Examination hearing session into the draft Local Plan was held in March 2019. The Inspectors have subsequently written to the Authority setting out the required main modifications to the Local Plan and the consultation on these modifications runs until the end of May 2019. We would anticipate receiving the final Inspectors' Report in Summer 2019.		
Review and update the Development Control Charter.	Natalie Walter	Development Control Charter updated to reflect current guidance/procedures, including recent changes to duty officer hours. All statutory consultations on planning applications, including those with parish councils, now undertaken electronically.		
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	Refinements to existing advice ongoing. A more fundamental update will follow adoption of the new Local Plan.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park. (LH10)	Tony Spence	The annual Habitat Mitigation Steering Group meeting – including the NPA, Natural England, the RSPB and the Wildlife Trust – met in February 2019 to review the projects supported over the last year and to agree the priority projects for the next year. The Authority continues to seek contributions towards mitigation measures for both the New Forest and Solent habitats from new development and is also working with neighbouring planning authorities on the development of a more strategic, cross-boundary approach.		

Action/Outcome	Owner	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
Co-ordinate the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The Building Design Awards 2019 were announced at the full Authority meeting in March 2019. Awards were given to the schemes at Lepe Country Park, a converted chapel in Woodgreen, Brockenhurst College and a conservation scheme in the Exbury 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 Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group met on 28 February in Hyde. Discussions focused on the reporting of redundant signage in the Conservation Area (which detracts from the character) and the possible use of Article 4 Directions to help conserve the distinctiveness of the area.		
Devise and implement an enhanced monitoring programme for new development to secure greater compliance with planning consents	Steve Avery	We are currently recruiting to a new post – Compliance and Legal Support Officer - to support our compliance and monitoring work.		

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)
<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, LC1)</p>	<p>Frank Green / James Brown / Lawrence Shaw/ Building Conservation Team</p>	<p>Burley local History Society and Parish took part in Dig Burley. 50 test pits were excavated across Burley and three workshops were delivered by experts on pottery, flint and bone. An evening talk by Tim Taylor producer of Time Team at Burley Manor was attended by 130. Work is now progressing on writing up results.</p> <p>Domesday data has been added to New Forest Knowledge (NFK) mapping. Site statistics for this quarter: 10 Groups, 166 articles, 137 registered users.</p> <p>Jack Brown a placement with us from Bournemouth University has undertaken a research project which looked to record excavations across Roman pottery kilns found in the north of the Park. Using geophysics and volunteers new features, as well as pinning down the locations of scheduled monuments that were excavated nearly 100 years ago. https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/blog/my-placement-discovering-the-new-forest/</p> <p>The NFNPA are working with St Barbe and Milford on Sea Historical Records society on an upcoming exhibition Command of the Seas: The Navy and the New Forest against Napoleon, which will tell the story of the New Forest's use for Navy timber planting and ship building.</p> <p>Data continues to be cleaned and delivered to HCC as part of the HLS survey work. 99% of the survey work is now complete.</p>	<p style="background-color: #92d050;"></p>	

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<p>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)</p>	<p>Lisa Crouch</p>	<p>For the fourth 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> <p>In this quarter one homeowners' course has been held and one professional course has been held on historic masonry.</p> <p>Positive feedback continues to be received for both courses.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

Action/Outcome	Owner	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 / Lawrence Shaw	<p>86 scheduled monument management plans have been completed for the New Forest. These have seen work undertaken across 10 sites by FE volunteers including Iron Age hillforts, Bronze Age barrows and Roman pottery kilns.</p> <p>Excavation work at Matley heath has seen a Neolithic date being identifies which makes the site the oldest confirmed monument in the New Forest National Park. The site is now fully restored after damaged caused by cattle. Work is now commencing to look at the management of the track that runs south of the site to further protect the monument.</p> <p>Jack Brown, archaeology placement student, has completed geophysical surveys of the Roman pottery kilns at Sloden as a result of the vegetation clearance undertaken by volunteers. This work will further feed into the management of the sites.</p>		
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 this year. 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. • three buildings have been removed from the list including two 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>		