

BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021

2019-20 Work Programme – Q4 (1 January to 31 March 2020)

Strategic Themes

Data and Evidence:

Decisions need to be underpinned by sound evidence and informed by reliable data. As we shape our thinking about actions underpinned by natural capital, supporting nature, people and the economy in the National Park we will need to invest with partners in our evidence base. In this way we will be able to monitor progress against key challenges and opportunities and engage people in the case for looking after the National Park. The State of the Park report will be a key focus of this work.

Outcome	Senior Responsible Owner	Objectives/priorities/actions	Quarterly RAG status	Overall RAG	Action to regain (if either RAG Amber or Red)
Updated State of the Park report published	Steve Avery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the headline indicators with partner organisations Collect and commission up-to-date data and evidence Publish updated report (Q3). 			
Shared evidence base developed	Holger Schiller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together data from other partners where we make a financial or resource contribution. e.g. HBIC, Freshwater Habitats Trust and New Forest Knowledge. 			
New data on recreation collected and understood	David Illsley	<p>Primary research on the recreational use of the New Forest's Special Protection Area by local people has been jointly commissioned by six local planning authorities (due to be completed by end 2019). We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advise and contribute to ensure effective join-up with wider recreation management work use results to inform future habitat mitigation strategies. 			
New Forest Knowledge gateway promoted	Paul Walton/ Lawrence Shaw	Work with the New Forest Heritage Centre to develop and promote the New Forest Knowledge gateway as a tool to disseminate cultural heritage data held by partners to the New Forest community and beyond.			Heritage Centre has been closed and staff furloughed. The planned recruitment of the Community Archaeologist will ensure this work continues. OPOF funding provides support for the NF Knowledge website beyond 2020

The future of land management:

The New Forest is a world capital for wildlife with a unique blend of habitats which support many rare species, the result of people managing the area over hundreds of years. As the UK transitions to a new farm support system post-Brexit we are already working with the Verderers, Commoners Defence Association, National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association and other partners in a Future Farming Group. This aims to ensure continued support for the land practices that help deliver environmental enhancement and sustain the practice and culture of commoning. The challenge will be to continue to demonstrate that public investment in the New Forest delivers a high level of benefit and to build on good practice in the Crown Lands and beyond.

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Agreement on the range of public goods provided by the SSSI, Crown lands and commons	Paul Walton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the Forest Farming Group, publish a public document demonstrating a natural capital approach to the management of the Crown Lands and Open Forest • Ensure continued investment in conservation programmes during the Transition period to the introduction of the new Environmental Land Management Scheme. 			
Specific goals and targets for habitat improvement for the National Park identified through an agreed Conservation Framework	Paul Walton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key habitats mapped, • Opportunities for linking fragmented areas identified • Priorities spatially represented and publicised • Key partners working together on the delivery of the Conservation Framework. 			Conservation Framework not agreed in this work programme but key partners are developing this work through the Wildlife Roundtable

Working beyond our boundaries:

Looking beyond our boundaries is vital, as pressures from around the New Forest become increasingly relevant to the state of the National Park.

We know that plans will come forward for significant development around the National Park, particularly along the Waterside and at the redundant Fawley Power Station. There is strong demand for houses and employment opportunities in this area of the south coast, which remains a highly desirable place to live and work – not least because of its high-quality natural environment. Our challenge is to ensure the natural capital of the New Forest National Park and its surrounds is enhanced, ensuring a focus on ‘environmental net gain’ as set out in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan launched by the Prime Minister in January 2018, and creating an environment that helps improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. Within the National Park, much of this will be addressed through our updated suite of planning policies in the new Local Plan whilst our continuing engagement with surrounding authorities through the ‘duty to cooperate’ will address wider strategic cross boundary planning issues, such as the provision of affordable housing. Alongside this work through the planning system, the developing Green Halo Partnership will continue to bring the private, public and third sectors together to ensure the environment, economy and communities thrive.

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Natural capital assets within and beyond the National Park boundary identified and investment framework agreed	Paul Walton	Through the Green Halo Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and map the natural capital assets associated with the Green Halo • Establish risk register to guide investment in natural capital • Develop a suite of natural capital projects for investment • Establish metrics for natural capital assets to reflect the national priorities for the 25 Year Environment Plan. 			
Major development proposals in close proximity to National Park are shown to have regard to the two statutory purposes	Steve Avery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National park objectives and priorities are reflected in emerging and adopted plans of neighbouring authorities • Joint working and close cooperation with neighbouring authorities on major cross boundary planning applications, e.g. Fawley Power Station. 			

People and the National Park:

The government's 25 Year Environment Plan recognises the important link between the quality of the environment and the nation's health and wellbeing, and the importance of young people, education and interpretation which makes nature relevant to people's lives. National parks have a role to play with partners in helping to provide opportunities for people to access the special landscape of the National Park. Yet maintaining the spectacular, wildlife-rich but fragile, working landscape and thriving communities is one of our big collective challenges. Delivering the Recreation Management Strategy action plan with our partners, managing the anticipated England Coast Path and supporting the creation of Franchises Lodge in the north of the Forest will be a prominent part of our work and help us move towards a more sustainable approach.

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Holistic and balanced approach to enabling and managing recreation endorsed by all RMS Steering Group organisations	Nigel Matthews	<p>Ensure we and key partners have an agreed holistic, balanced and evidence-led approach to both enabling people to benefit from the National Park and protecting the special qualities from potential harm. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising awareness of and educating people about the special qualities addressing significant and/or widespread negative impacts caused by recreation reducing the barriers that limit participation among those who need it most, and influencing <i>where</i> recreation takes place through a Local Development Order. 			
Potential impacts of new housing growth within the National Park mitigated	Nigel Matthews	<p>Implement agreed programme of habitat mitigation-funded work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> four seasonal rangers focussed on protecting ground nesting birds awareness raising activities (publications, social media, events, interpretation) improvement to signage on selected rights of way to encourage use of robust routes. 			Signage improvements delayed till 2020-21 but should proceed after C-19 restrictions are lifted.
Activities to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors delivered	Jim Mitchell	<p>Deliver activities to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities and visitors through contact with the natural environment and heritage of the New Forest, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,000 hours spent walking for health Developing networks so that volunteering can fit with social prescribing schemes One new permanent community Wildplay site in Ashurst. 			

Developing partnerships:

While this is a Business Plan for the National Park Authority, much of what needs to be done will be achieved through partnership. Programmes such as the Our Past Our Future Heritage Lottery Fund scheme and Open Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme have transformed the way we work together and we intend to build on their legacies to continue ever-greater partnership working. The Partnership Plan for the National Park will be reviewed by 2020 and will build on the work started in 2015, working together to be greater than the sum of the parts. This is a fresh opportunity for us to combine resources and focus on how we can best deliver for the National Park.

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Partnership Plan updated (2020 – 2025)	Steve Avery	Working closely with partner organisations, review the New Forest National Park Partnership Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise high level vision and objectives (Q1&Q2) • Define objectives and draft new suite of actions (Q2&Q3) • Carry out a public consultation on a revised draft of the Plan (Q4). 			Timetable has slipped due to C-19 but two workshops held in February and March (climate emergency and transport). Remaining two workshops to be rescheduled. Meetings with partners ongoing and public consultation planned for late 2020.
Increased financial sustainability for the Authority and its key partners	Nigel Stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement projects which improve the financial sustainability of the NPA and key partners which we fund. • Support National Parks Partnerships Ltd in their national work to achieve corporate sponsorships. 			We have supported NPPL and partners throughout 2019/20, however C-19 will put significant financial strain on key partners across the Forest.
The Our Past Our Future Programme managed to a successful conclusion	Rachael Gallagher	With the existing OPOF Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the OPOF programme to meet the targets agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund • Identify and resource the key projects that will secure the legacy of the OPOF work. 			Current OPOF LPS was on target to complete all outcomes and outputs by the current end of the scheme in November 2020. There may be impacts on some of the targets due to the Covid 19 restrictions. Possible mitigation measures will be discussed at the next OPOF Board mtg on 22 May. Evaluation of the scheme is underway and discussions are taking place to secure the legacy of the project.

Future generations:

We know the New Forest National Park makes a huge contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of the area, helping to make this part of the south coast one of England's most desirable places in which to live and work. There is an opportunity to ensure that people's experiences of the National Park today inspire them to continue to care for it in the future. In an increasingly digital world there will be challenges in ensuring that communities living and working in the New Forest are not left behind by the speed of technological innovation happening elsewhere. There will also be opportunities to harness this technology to help people engage with and deepen their understanding of the National Park and its special qualities. Over the period of this Business Plan, we intend to explore fresh approaches and innovations to recruit the next generation of champions, to ensure that the unique culture of the Forest remains cherished and relevant.

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A better understanding of the impact on our objectives of technological innovation, land use change and environmental challenges such as climate change and pollution.	Paul Walton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through engagement with businesses, and the education and research sectors, examine ways to facilitate and encourage the application of “Smart Park”¹ technologies to address National Park management challenges. • Aim to host one creative challenge event to promote the Smart Park concept. 			

People Plan:

The New Forest is an exceptional landscape and an inspiring place to work. Recognising people as our biggest asset, the National Park Authority is fortunate to have such a dedicated team which is passionate about making a difference, we are developing a People Plan to help focus our development as an organisation. This will look at how we work (as opposed to the majority of the Business Plan which focusses mainly on what we do) and will set out actions to further improve our working practices and develop a high-performing team.

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People Plan Implemented	Nigel Stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete staff survey, list actions (Q1) • Workforce Planning, including apprenticeship scheme and student placements (Q2/Q3) • Learning and development, including leadership development and project management (Q3/Q4) • Reward and recognition, including recruitment and retention (Q3/Q4) • Wellbeing, including physical and mental health (all year). 			Minimal original work possible in Q4 due to C-19 impacts but lots of H&W support offered to and amongst staff during the last few months within the People Plan ethos. The detailed work has been specifically prioritised within the 20/21 work programme as it is ideal for staff groups to begin consideration of issues & policies involved.
HR service reviewed	Nigel Stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review service delivery methods (Q1/Q2) • Begin reviewing HR policies to ensure they are still 'fit-for-purpose' (Q3/Q4). 			Service has been reviewed but recommendations still need to be actioned. Clear emphasis/precedent currently on HR impacts of C-19.
Working environment reviewed	Steve Avery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing current usage (linking to People Plan) and to seek financial savings. • Establishing future office requirements. 			