

Recreation Management Strategy: Strategic Actions – achievements to date (from 2019)

Date of this report: August 2020

Key to shading (green, amber and red) in the right-hand column	Action started / on track / no reason for concern
	Action is difficult / delayed / some cause for concern
	Action failed or likely to fail / review action

Objective 1: Convey the things that make the New Forest National Park special to both visitors and local people in more consistent and effective ways, so that they enjoy it, come to value it, want to care for it and do not inadvertently damage it.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
1.1. Improve the quality and availability of information and interpretation about the special qualities of the New Forest.	<p>We will take every opportunity to ensure that information and interpretation about the New Forest highlights the things that make it unique (its rich wildlife, commoning etc.). Websites, social media posts, leaflets and other publications, posters and signage, exhibitions, film and face-to-face communication are all important.</p> <p>The work will require concerted, coordinated and ongoing effort by multiple organisations, groups, businesses and individuals who either produce their own information or can help inform information produced by others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC Four 'A Year in the Wild Wood' documentary broadcast Jan 2019, repeated later in 2019, and on BBC 2 in August 2020 • Short films (on coast, heathland and commoning) produced, highlighting impacts • 2019 Year of Green Action to celebrate the 70th anniversary of National Parks. www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/YOGA inc. NPA Green Grants • Pocket Guide and Essential Guide produced annually • 2019 Discover National Parks fortnight included Dig Burley and wild play day. • HLS year of celebration campaign throughout 2019, and winter 2019-20 programme of engagement funded by HLS to highlight achievements and the species and habitats that have benefitted • Special issue of Park Life residents' newspaper in May 2019 focussed on wildlife • Joint 2019 New Forest Show stand featured FE exhibition, commoning / Verderers, wildlife, HLS and YOGA activities • 'Special by Design' project started; to review signage and associated infrastructure and messages and see how these can better reflect the New Forest's 'sense of place' • National Forestry England funds made available to install new signage on Crown lands during 20-21. • Planning work underway on redesigning Forestry England information point structures and content for changes to be delivered during 21-22.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>1.2. Increase the number of staff, volunteers and ambassadors 'on the ground' who can encourage people to enjoy recreation responsibly.</p>	<p>We will increase the number of welcoming, helpful and informative people who can engage face-to-face with visitors to help them enjoy and learn about the Forest, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rangers (including apprentices and seasonals) • other staff working 'in the field' • travel ambassadors • trained volunteers • well-informed local people. <p>This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocating additional funding (e.g. from developer contributions) • improved coordination between partner organisations through establishing a new Ranger Forum • providing additional training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from Camping in the Forest, NFDG, FE and NPA for four seasonal rangers in 2019; three in 2020 but one to be retained through autumn/winter • NFDC renewed SLA for NPA to employ People and Wildlife Ranger through their Green Way mitigation scheme • Recruitment and training of FE Volunteer Rangers (current total of 73 active VRs) • Training delivered for Love the Forest scheme businesses and arts and community organisations • Two travel ambassadors employed in 2019 to support the New Forest Tour (especially at Brockenhurst Station). Short notice for Tour start in 2020 precluded recruitment • Training of CDA members to volunteer on Crown Land with their mobile display, and alongside NPA rangers • After lockdown eased: close cooperation between FE, NPA, Police and fire service to engage with unprecedented numbers of visitors • Post-Covid-19 launch of New Forest Ambassadors scheme including support to existing and new litter pickers • Additional FE Seasonal New Forest Ranger in post for summer 2020.
<p>1.3. Encourage organisations involved in promoting recreation and tourism to inspire respect for the special qualities of the National Park by regularly including agreed key messages in their communications.</p>	<p>We will seek the commitment of those who actively promote the New Forest as a destination for holidays, recreation activities, sight-seeing and spending money to include information on how visitors can enjoy the New Forest in beneficial rather than harmful ways.</p> <p>This will include visitor attractions, publishers, accommodation providers and other businesses.</p> <p>An initial joint task is to review the 'caring for the Forest' codes and develop a new, more concise and memorable summary that can be packaged for use in different ways (on-line, posters, leaflets etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice yearly meetings of the New Forest Information Group (attended by New Forest Heritage Centre, Go New Forest, NPA, St. Barbe Museum, Local Information Points and other 'visitor information centres') • Shared Forest Business Group continues through CDA • First business discovery day delivered in May 2019 • Annual training for New Forest Tour drivers • Brilliance in Business Awards include Outstanding Contribution to the National Park category • Annual NPA/CLA awards highlighting best practice in commoning, sustainability, local produce, land management etc • Networking and awareness raising through Green Halo Partnership and Business South Directors Group • Promotion of New Forest Marque produce and support for producers • Green Leaf Scheme being developed with Go New Forest to encourage environmentally friendly practices and promotion of caring for the Forest messages. • Clear and concise New Forest Code agreed between partner organisations and promoted by Go New Forest to tourism businesses • Joint approach to non-opening of campsites in 2020: plan ahead and book in advance

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>1.4. Develop the current programme of guided activities and themed events to give local people and visitors authentic experiences and meaningful connections with the special qualities.</p>	<p>We will ensure there is a range of educational guided walks, public events and other activities for people who visit or live in and around the New Forest. This first-hand contact with passionate and knowledgeable people will inspire respect and a caring attitude towards wildlife and the working Forest.</p> <p>Examples include the autumn walking festival, visits to commoners' landholdings and training courses for people who want to learn about specific topics and improve their chances of employment in the countryside.</p> <p>The activities will be carefully planned to avoid sensitive locations or times of year and to maximise the use of sustainable transport where possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 activities were branded as part of the Defra 'Year of Green Action' including over 20 litter picking events as part of the New Forest Spring Clean, and guided walks for schools (250 children) with Woodlander Hoburne Bashley and a family trees 'seed planting' event in 2019 • Commoners' voices exhibition toured different venues through 2019, including events and activities with schools and youth groups • 2019 'Date with Nature in the New Forest' at the Reptile Centre (April-September); cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19 • Full annual programme of educational public events in 2019, including autumn Walking Festival (2020 walking and cycling festival being planned) • New Forest Tour: 34,511 passenger journeys in 2019. •
<p>1.5. Increase the uptake of formal educational programmes on offer and provide additional supporting resources on New Forest specific topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom sessions, school assemblies and engagement with eco-groups • field trips and residential visits • student work placements and teacher training • the online New Forest Curriculum and Education Toolkit. • the New Forest Educators Forum which brings all education providers together to share expertise and best practice <p>Engagement with schools is mainly through national curriculum links with the New Forest in Key Stage 1 (habitats), KS2 (national park studies) and KS3 (geography). Schools also welcome talks at assemblies on topics such as litter and sustainability to help fulfil their social and environmental commitments. There are further opportunities to work with secondary schools in citizenship and sustainability.</p> <p>We will seek new funding to expand the existing travel grant scheme and to employ additional education staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of 180 local schools (inc. Southampton and Bournemouth) 60-70% regularly feature the National Park in their school curriculum through taught sessions provided by Educators Forum members, or school assemblies focussed on the National Park. • NPA education team teach ca. 2,400 pupils from 50 schools annually (in 'the field'). • Online engagement with school staff during lockdown resulting in teacher training opportunities • Spring litter assembly presentations usually reach about 7000 children (6000 in 2020 before lockdown) • NPA Travel Grant scheme benefits ca. 3000 pupils annually (through subsidised travel to organisations on the Educators Forum); additional £500 funding from the Forest Holidays (through National Parks UK) in 2019 • New Forest Curriculum web pages moved to 'Schools and groups' area of NPA website, together with a review of the Shared Forest Education Toolkit •

Objective 2: Address significant and/or widespread negative impacts caused by recreation in the most appropriate, proportionate and effective ways.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>2.1. Work in partnership to reduce negative impacts of recreation.</p>	<p>We will continue to address the most significant and widespread negative impacts through working groups or other joint initiatives involving relevant local organisations. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disturbance of wildlife such as ground nesting birds • feeding of ponies and donkeys • animal accidents on unfenced roads • out of control dogs • litter • physical erosion of habitats including as a result of parking on protected verges • noise disturbance in the more tranquil areas. <p>This ongoing work will be strengthened by the following toolkit and other actions in this strategy (e.g. increasing the number of rangers and volunteers on the ground).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprecedented numbers of people and vehicles visiting the Forest following relaxation of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions has resulted in some very visible negative impacts. • Increase in pro-active and co-ordinated joint patrols with focus on risk of fires, wild camping, litter, feeding of ponies and verge/gateway parking. Continued 24 hr response to reported incidents by Forestry England. • Additional rotating campaign message signage deployed on Forestry England ladder-board signage – fires, BBQs camping, off by dusk etc during summer 2020. • Campaign against use of disposable BBQs with local retailers (50+ local outlets no longer selling them) • FE and Police using stickers to highlight illegal/harmful parking.(3000 deployed by August 2020) • Ongoing physical work to reduce verge parking at selected locations with oversight by Encroachment Working Group • Long-term solutions to verge parking being explored by RMS Steering Group • FE and NPA: renewed efforts in 2019 to protect ground nesting birds (signage, rangers, seasonal car park closures; social media). 2020 plans for monitoring effectiveness of new ‘stop’ signs at three trial sites disrupted by Covid-19 • More coordinated efforts to reduce feeding of ponies – better monitoring in place; new signage at Hatchet Pond and camp sites; social media; staff patrols • In 2019 the percentage of depastured animals killed fell to all-time lows of 0.38% (all animals) and 0.6% (ponies only). Winter campaigns in 2018-19 and 2019-20 with excellent CDA support for touring animal silhouettes • Successful 2019 Spring Clean; 2020 event cancelled due to Covid-19 • 2019 issues between cattle and people/dogs highlighted by CDA livestock signs

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>2.2. Develop a 'toolkit' to showcase the best ways to influence recreational behaviour.</p>	<p>We will collate examples of techniques that have been found to influence people's behaviour in positive ways. Some will be from the New Forest (e.g. from work done through the Shared Forest project); others will be from elsewhere in the UK or abroad. From this we will create a suite of best practice advice (a toolkit) to guide the work to address specific recreation-related issues.</p> <p>The toolkit will help identify the combination of methods that is most likely to be effective for each issue, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face by rangers or volunteers • nudge techniques (encouraging the right behaviour rather than discouraging the wrong behaviour) • peer pressure • making the right option the easiest one to take • printed materials and signage • websites, digital technology, social media • charters that set high standards of operation for organised activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFDC commissioned £50K contract to work with behavioural insights team to combat littering from cars, 'I look out for our Forest' artwork used for litter picking tabards 2020 • Resources for Change are developing a behaviour change toolkit as part of the OPOF Shared Forest project (due August 2020). To include a summary guidance document and a longer report with case studies • Special by Design project will include recommendations on how the use signs and other means of communication can be improved •

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>2.3. Use appropriate and proportionate enforcement activities to deter illegal use of the Forest.</p>	<p>Organisations with the powers to enforce laws and byelaws (e.g. landowners and managers, the Police and local authorities) will work together to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree when enforcement is appropriate, and by whom • clarify what evidence is needed to achieve a successful outcome • use their enforcement powers to protect the Forest. <p>The current activities that may need to be addressed in this way include: parking on open Forest verges, dropping litter (including from vehicles), flying of drones where this is not allowed, wild camping, lighting fires, commercial fungi picking, parking in car parks overnight, feeding of commoners' animals, cycling off the permitted network and out of control dogs.</p> <p>A clear reporting system will also be developed so that members of the public know what to do and who to tell if they see something illegal going on.</p> <p>The fact that fixed penalty notices or prosecution in the courts is available as the 'ultimate sanction' should act as a powerful deterrent to the vast majority of people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing discussions between FE, Verderers, Police, CPS, NFDC, NPA, HCC and NT, looking at different issues, existing laws/byelaws and options for new legal mechanisms. • Some good examples of work on fly-tipping, lighting fires and commercial fungi picking • NFDC now have powers to prosecute owners of vehicles from which litter is thrown • Significant damage to verges due to overflow parking from popular car parks since travel restrictions removed. 3,000 verge and gateway parking stickers used by FE and Police, some fines issued for obstruction, follow-up with repeat offenders being explored. Long-term options for traffic management being explored by RMSSG • Police launched 'Dog Watch' scheme in 2019 to encourage reporting of illegal activities by walkers etc. • FE looking to develop an 'enforcement policy', including rationale for prioritising different activities, evidence needed, reporting procedures, staff training etc. Increased FE interest nationally may help. • FE exploring the use of body worn cameras by Rangers and Keepers for evidence collecting. •

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>2.4. Manage organised activities and larger events to minimise negative impacts on wildlife, the working Forest and on local people.</p>	<p>Landowners of open Forest and other protected areas will review and update their permissions and licencing systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the way these are administered • the rationale for judging what is and isn't allowed • charges that may be applicable • how they publicise the need for event organisers to register events in advance • information provided to minimise the risk of unintended consequences. <p>Safety Advisory Groups will continue to advise, share best practice and where possible control public events (e.g. in villages and on the roads) to limit any negative impacts. We will continue to encourage full compliance with the Cycle Event Organisers' Charter.</p> <p>A charter will be established to clarify what is expected of commercial dog walkers within the New Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held (FE, HCC, HIWWT, NFDC, NPA, NT, RSPB) to share respective policies, charges, procedures etc. • FE is rolling out new events and activities management framework • Changes to procedures for Duke of Edinburgh Award / outdoor expeditions have reduced disturbance to nesting birds. • Removal of DoE Wild Camp sites across the New Forest • FE has recruited additional staff to further develop approach to managing permits and events • Foxbury is accommodating some events (e.g. orienteering) instead of these happening on the open Forest • Joint working with companies wanting permission to film in the New Forest • Ongoing SAG liaison for cycle events • Launch of Professional Dog Walker's Charter now planned for autumn 2020

Objective 3: Reduce the barriers that limit participation in beneficial outdoor recreation among those who need it most

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>3.1. Inspire more young people to appreciate and understand the special qualities of the New Forest.</p>	<p>By working with a range of organisations, we will create opportunities for young people to get involved with and benefit from the National Park. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wild play sites and events that help children and families gain confidence to explore and be creative in the natural world using low-tech outdoor games and activities. • involving School Councils, Young Farmers Clubs, Young Commoners and Junior Parish Councils in drafting actions for the next National Park Partnership Plan. • offering secondary school, college and university students work placements and work experience opportunities • schemes such as John Muir Award, New Forest Youth Action Partnership, Duke of Edinburgh Award, National Citizenship Service and apprenticeships in countryside services • encouraging local youth groups such as scouts and guides to get involved in practical conservation work • using the 2018 Europarc youth manifesto and the 2019 Year of Green Action to prompt inspirational youth-led projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Wild Play sites established through OPOF (Holbury, Sway and Ashurst) • Local participation in national John Muir Award • Input to Brockenhurst College courses • Sessions delivered for National Citizenship Service • NPA-designed Youth Action Project includes multiple partners e.g.: NPA, FE, Princes Trust, National Trust, Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Lepe Country Park, Pondhead Conservation Trust, RSPB, HCC Countryside Service, New Forest Heritage Centre, OPOF Working Woodlands, Hoburne Bashley and Blackwater Conservation Trust • Week-long Princes Trust 'Get Started in Conservation' course in May 2019. • NPA has up to 10 work experience students and university placements each year • FE has engaged with Duke of Edinburgh Award groups to reduce impacts and increase learning • •
<p>3.2. Develop projects that improve people's health through outdoor activity in and around the New Forest.</p>	<p>We will develop and encourage new and existing schemes with targeted user groups, e.g. walking for health, health volunteering and outdoor therapy.</p> <p>These will be accessible (e.g. close to where people live), at appropriate locations and may be run in partnership with clinical commissioning groups, health and wellbeing groups etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Volunteering Fair in January attracts over 40 groups and over 700 people. Many of the groups focus on outdoor activity and wellbeing. • FOLIO arts organisations activity included new interventions at Foxbury and near Hordle with art in the outdoors for young people from Brockenhurst and Totton College • Training session for new Social Prescribing Link Workers • Nature Health Network set up with Bournemouth University and Public Health England. •

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>3.3. Identify and implement appropriate changes that will increase accessibility.</p>	<p>We will establish more regular liaison between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisations that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation • organisations that represent people with a range of disabilities • people with disabilities <p>A list of costed opportunities to improve access in appropriate locations will be drawn up. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of better information • removal of stiles or other ‘barriers’ • accessible toilets • further development of PEDALL (a local project which provides opportunities for people with disabilities to use adapted bikes) <p>Implementation will follow as resources allow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Forest Access Forum has set up a sub-group to advise and support the work of the RMS regarding accessibility • NPA website updated with better routes and information. • Strong links established with the Disabled Ramblers, New Forest Disability and Open Sight Hampshire • Walking for Health scheme delivered • PEDALL (inclusive cycling project) now well-established at new base at FE’s Burley Yard which gives direct access to the permitted cycle routes • UK National Parks are enhancing the Miles Without Stiles brand to entice corporate sponsorship; NPA has eight Miles Without Stiles routes downloadable from the website. • Programme of familiarisation visits for Open Sight Hampshire held in Autumn 2020

Objective 4: Protect and enhance the New Forest’s working and natural landscape, and improve the recreational experience, by influencing where recreation takes place.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>4.1. Develop a spatial plan for where recreation should be encouraged across the New Forest and surrounding areas and establish procedures to facilitate desirable changes.</p>	<p>The National Park Authority plans to develop a spatial plan, supported by a Local Development Order (LDO), which would be focused on the distribution of visitor facilities, identifying the kinds of places where gateways, key sites and core routes should ideally be located. The spatial plan would complement habitat mitigation strategies of neighbouring planning authorities.</p> <p>In particular, the proposed LDO would provide the rationale and well-considered processes for permitting changes to the distribution and capacity of car parking that would both protect the environment and improve the recreational experience. It would clarify when planning permission is still needed, when consent is required, e.g. from Natural England and the Verderers and when a Habitats Regulations Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary.</p> <p>As with the development of other planning documents, all key stakeholders (the public, local communities, user groups and organisations) would be involved and consulted on the proposed LDO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant appointed to develop an LDO for the NPA. Work ongoing to draft rationale, criteria and thresholds for any changes to distribution of parking and to take account of Habitats Regulations Assessment • Partnership Plan to include maps of current recreation usage and opportunities (alongside maps of other features such as potential wildlife habitat improvements) •

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>4.2. Manage the distribution and type of recreation facilities to protect the Forest, improve people's enjoyment and use resources effectively</p>	<p>Guided by the spatial plan, a range of opportunities will be considered and progressed where appropriate. Some will be dependent on funding being found and some could be phased (e.g. over a number of years and/or on an area basis).</p> <p>Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routes that could be developed to encourage people to travel to or around the New Forest without a car (i.e. on foot, by bicycle or on public transport, including the New Forest Tour) • traffic regulation to reduce verge parking and the harm this causes to protected habitats • changes to car parking distribution and capacity e.g. moving, enlarging or closing some car parks (seasonally or permanently) – whilst maintaining adequate overall capacity • increasing or decreasing the level of associated visitor facilities and/or information • selective improvements to the network of permitted off road routes for cycling, carriage driving and organised events (in particular to address key gaps in the cycle network and thereby reduce the need for people to drive from residential areas or cycle on potentially dangerous roads – or be tempted to use other tracks and trails) • route information on cycle waymarkers to help people navigate on permitted Crown land cycle routes • rights of way where higher levels of maintenance, enhanced signage or interpretation would be useful (e.g. to implement Hampshire County Council's desire for strategic routes or to provide an alternative to walks in the open Forest) • road safety improvements e.g. at junctions that are difficult for cyclists, and where off-road routes have to cross busy roads • new areas in and around the National Park where recreation can take place, including off-lead dog walking and training (e.g. on private land) • charging for parking at some locations where it is currently free, with appropriate concessions (e.g. for regular users or local people) and making it clear that the money would be spent on the Forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial audit of informal parking areas (verge and gateway) across FE-managed land completed • Footprint Ecology counts of parked vehicles completed – very useful in highlighting which car parks are most used by people from different communities and how this changes through the year • Opportunity to redistribute parking being investigated through creation of LDO (see 4.1 above) • HCC officers are assessing traffic management options to better protect verges • NPA mitigation funds being used for improving rights of way signage on selected routes • Proposal for development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (to improve safety, connectivity, sustainable travel) supported by RMSSG – this would include any agreed changes to permitted off-road cycle routes • Potential for significant new areas for recreation (e.g. new country parks) would be increased if local Planning Authorities agree to a coordinated strategic approach to Habitat Mitigation (as recommended by the Footprint Ecology reports)

Objective 5: Increase the level of funding available for recreation management so that it is sufficient to address both existing and future needs.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>5.1. Raise funds and commit other resources towards the creation and maintenance of recreation facilities and the conservation of the wider Forest.</p>	<p>We will continue to allocate core funding and staff resources each year, and work together to maximise beneficial results.</p> <p>A joint projects database will be developed as part of the wider National Park Partnership Plan. This will aid collaboration and reduce competition as we jointly approach potential external funders such as local businesses and charities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, grant making bodies, youth and health-care organisations and clinical commissioning groups.</p> <p>Mechanisms will also be developed to encourage people who enjoy and benefit from recreation facilities, and those who run commercial activities, to make financial contributions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing and promoting the voluntary Love the Forest visitor gift scheme which is becoming more popular with local businesses and helping to fund conservation and education projects • inviting donations from the public to support specific recreation facilities • payments for activities that require permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE investment in staffing to manage permissions and progress other RMS actions • Four-way funding achieved for seasonal NPA rangers in 2019 and 2020 • Scale of charges for organised events and activities reviewed by FE to better reflect costs incurred in managing events and monitoring impacts. • FE investigating how additional donations (e.g. national membership scheme) could be collected to fund facilities at key FE sites • Update of Partnership Plan ongoing till end 2020-21 • The end of austerity and post-Covid-19 recovery plans may mean additional Government funds are available, e.g. to progress recommendations in Landscapes Review
<p>5.2. Develop a coordinated approach among planning authorities in and around the New Forest to mitigate the impacts of new housing on protected areas – and use developer contributions to support work that protects the Forest.</p>	<p>A significant number of new dwellings are proposed in areas surrounding the National Park. In planning for this new development, local authorities are required to develop mitigation strategies to ensure there is no impact on the integrity of the protected habitats and their associated wildlife species.</p> <p>Hitherto, this has largely happened independently in local authorities around the New Forest, but the benefits of a more coordinated, strategic approach are acknowledged. This will deliver a consistent approach and enable contributions to be pooled to be spent on an agreed set of mitigation measures.</p> <p>This joint working should boost awareness raising initiatives (including rangers) and support the creation of significant new recreation sites outside of protected areas. Research being undertaken on behalf of several of the planning authorities, and due to be completed in late 2019, will support the implementation of a joint approach to the long-term protection of the Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprint Ecology researched patterns of recreational visits to the open Forest from areas of planned development • Good synergy with RMS work established and excellent evidence collated • Recommended that local planning authorities should develop a coordinated strategic approach to mitigation. Discussion about this to be progressed later in 2020 •

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>5.3. Work with Defra and Natural England to include incentives for access improvements on private land including future environmental land management grants, where these would benefit the public and reduce (or not increase) pressure on nearby sensitive areas.</p>	<p>A consortium of New Forest organisations has asked that post Brexit funding for managing land should include options to recover costs of providing increased access. This fits well with the Government’s stated aims of encouraging ‘natural capital’ and ‘public benefit’.</p> <p>Where there is no conflict with wildlife habitats and species, planning policies or other important constraints, we will then help landowners consider whether new walking, cycling and horse riding routes could fit with their plans for their land. This concept of drawing recreation away from designated areas could be extended to include campsites and other recreation facilities.</p> <p>Grants could also fund the removal or downgrading of tracks or car parks that are no longer needed.</p> <p>Funding to implement the England Coast Path within the New Forest has already been set aside, as has some provision for maintenance. We aim to establish the Path as an exemplar new route that encourages healthy walking, boosts the local economy and avoids impacts on wildlife, the working Forest and local residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Farming Group asked that access should be included in post Brexit funding • Awaiting Government decisions about Brexit and environmental land management scheme (the types of activities that would be funded may not be known till 2021 and the new scheme may not start till 2024) • England Coast Path route north from Calshot to be established by March 2021. Route between Milford-on-Sea and Calshot being reassessed for Habitats Regulations

Objective 6: Collate data and evidence to help inform the ongoing management of recreation

There is ample evidence of the benefits of quiet outdoor recreation to our health and wellbeing. It is also clear that people sometimes impact in negative ways on each other, on sensitive wildlife habitats and species and on important aspects of the working New Forest. The actions in this strategy should therefore be progressed without delay.

However, more data and evidence would help target resources more effectively and efficiently, clarify trends in recreation, help predict which interventions are most likely to work and monitor the success of different recreation management initiatives.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>6.1. Collect data about recreation, its benefits, and its impacts on the special qualities of the New Forest.</p>	<p>We will continue to work together to gather data and evidence, especially where important gaps in our knowledge are identified.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work by rangers who routinely monitor the effectiveness of their engagement with visitors through feedback received, questionnaires and watching whether people take notice of information provided. • citizen science projects both to gather new data and to raise awareness among participants of the things that make the New Forest unique • extensive research into how visitors from planned new development could affect the protected habitats of the New Forest National Park • monitoring the quality of habitats and the populations of selected wildlife species • use of the new RSPB Franchises Lodge nature reserve as a base for research, including visiting university students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New calculations suggest there were 15.2 million recreation and leisure day visits by 1.4 million people to the National Park in 2017 (12% up on 2004) • Range of related data included in the report • Footprint Ecology research and analysis for planning authorities (face to face interviews, telephone interviews and car park counts) completed. Significant quantity of data and evidence to inform management of recreation by visitors and existing local people (as well as people moving into new development for which the research was commissioned) • RSPB is progressing plans for a research base for young people within Franchises Lodge • HLS-funded surveys of woodlark, curlew, lapwing and redshank completed in 2019 • FE-funded surveys (2020 and 2021) of ground nesting birds and vegetation to detect and impacts of Covid-19. • Footfall sensors deployed on the Hale and Woodgreen promoted route. Working with Daizy to develop better ways of measuring levels of use. • Tracking function added to NPA Walking App to calculate the number of people completing each walk.

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>6.2. Analyse, publish and use data to improve the management of recreation across the New Forest.</p>	<p>Key facts and figures about recreation will be made available to the public in the State of the Park Report, showing trends over time, and guiding work to manage recreation. The Report also includes information about many other aspects of the National Park and forms an important part of the background evidence for the wider Partnership Plan.</p> <p>All planning authorities also produce Annual Monitoring Reports for their local plans, providing another place for recreation-related data to be collated and made public.</p> <p>The various working groups and other joint initiatives that aim to address specific issues will monitor the success of their efforts. In practice it is rarely possible to prove that a specific intervention has had a specific and measurable effect, but it's important to focus efforts on what is most likely to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated State of the Park Report published by NPA and will inform Partnership Plan update • Working groups continue to monitor their respective topics and extend their evidence-base where possible • Footprint Ecology Reports published (see 6.1 above)

Objective 7: Regularly review progress against agreed recreation management actions and adapt forward plans to protect the special qualities of the National Park and enable people to enjoy and benefit from them

Strategic action	What will be done?	Achievements since 2019
<p>7.1 Regularly review the implementation of the actions in this strategy and the degree to which they achieve the desired outcomes.</p>	<p>We will gauge success through a range of mechanisms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data and evidence collected • feedback from lead organisations • reports from joint forums • feedback from user groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most actions have live work programmes to progress them • Ongoing assessment of success
<p>7.2 Where actions are not progressed or finalised, consider what could be done to redress the situation and gain agreement for revised actions where possible.</p>	<p>This action will depend on which actions need to be addressed. It may be that new resources need to be found or that a shift in priorities towards the most important actions is necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No actions are currently in need of being revised •
<p>7.3 Review the Recreation Management Strategy to ensure the management of recreation remains a high priority into the future.</p>	<p>A formal review of the Recreation Management Strategy actions will be due in 2024.</p> <p>In the meantime, we will incorporate the most significant areas of work within the wider Partnership Plan for the National Park. This statutory document describes how multiple organisations are jointly committed to all aspects of the National Park, including recreation, so it is the most effective document to achieve maximum buy-in for joint working on the management of recreation.</p> <p>Whether the Recreation Management Strategy remains a stand-alone document or not, we will ensure that any significant changes are subject to appropriate consultation with user groups, local organisations and the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Group supports concept of integrating key aspects of the RMS into the updated Partnership Plan • Draft list prepared of actions to be included in the Partnership Plan