

## **WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

### **Climate and Nature Emergency**

As agreed at the January 2020 Authority meeting, the climate and nature emergencies have created a renewed sense of urgency to stem the decline in biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our response – Net Zero with Nature – will be informed by government policy towards agriculture, land use and the environment, the response to the Landscapes Review and the 25 Year Environment Plan. Working beyond our boundaries is a key part of this programme, encouraging a green economic recovery, a natural capital led approach to development and the creation of a resilient nature recovery network.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Quarterly RAG status	On target for March 2022?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Particular Points to Note
<b>Nature Recovery</b>					
A spatial plan for nature recovery for the National Park and immediate surroundings, delivered through the National Park Partnership Plan. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and publish a spatial plan for nature, based on Lawton principles of bigger, better, more and more joined up habitats</li> <li>• With partners, identify and cost out a portfolio of integrated projects for identified Nature Recovery Areas (beyond the core designated sites)</li> <li>• Host the Wildlife Roundtable, the formal advisory group to the NPA on nature recovery.</li> </ul>				
A coherent, joined up nature recovery network linking the National Park with neighbouring and regional National Landscapes. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the National Park's spatial plan for nature is supported by the development of Local Nature Strategies for Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset</li> <li>• Work with neighbouring and regional National Landscapes to develop the 'backbone' of a Nature Recovery Network in the wider region</li> <li>• Support the delivery of priority projects with the New Forest Catchment Partnership (<i>detail of projects awaited from NFCP – add to final version of programme</i>).</li> </ul>				
An agreed strategic approach to inform species recovery and potential reintroductions in the National Park. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and develop a forum and work programme to lead species recovery within the National Park</li> <li>• Work with partners on the creation of a local partnership to complement the work of the national Curlew Recovery Partnership.</li> </ul>				

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<b>Beyond our Boundaries</b>					
An active, thriving Green Halo Partnership recognised for its catalytic role in enhancing the environment of the National Park vicinity. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate a programme of events (minimum of 4) and an online Conference in June 2021, reflecting the themes of the Greenprint for recovery</li> <li>• Investigate potential models for financing for green infrastructure investment.</li> </ul>				
<b>Net Zero with Nature Programme</b>					
A programme of nature-based solutions identified to mitigate climate change and enhance the special qualities of the National Park. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a NZWN financing facility in partnership with Palladium and National Parks Partnership (subject to NEIRF grant)</li> <li>• Initiate a project to map areas of deep peat in the New Forest, to add to the understanding of the Park's natural capital assets.</li> </ul>				

## Connection with Nature and the New Forest National Park

We will champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone can enjoy, understand, value and care for its special qualities. The Landscapes Review proposes that we need a stronger mission to connect people to National Parks and this work programme reflects this. Other proposals in the Landscapes Review include increased inclusivity and diversity in National Parks, partnership working with the health sector, greater access for young people and improvements to routes and information on the ground. Connection to the environment is also key to the 25 Year Environment Plan's goals. Our 2021/22 programme will engender care and action to help the Forest and enable people to take action to tackle the nature and climate emergency. We will also carry out important research to inform delivery of the Partnership Plan and the next Business Plan.

While Covid-19 restrictions continue to cause unusually large numbers of people to visit the Open Forest, we will work with partner organisations to manage demand and address negative impacts.

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<b>Response to wellbeing and visitor impacts of Covid-19</b>					
<p>Enable people to recover from the impacts Covid-19 and benefit from nature and the National Park landscape. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a programme of activities to enable people affected by Covid-19 to benefit from nature in and adjacent to the National Park</li> <li>• Deliver guided walking and cycling, including 190 cycling sessions for up to 400 participants through PedALL</li> <li>• Develop the Nature Health Network with Bournemouth University, PHE and other National Parks to raise awareness of the benefit of nature to health and facilitate access to nature-based health solutions regionally</li> <li>• Facilitate a health fellowship with Health Education England to develop initiatives to benefit young people's health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Support New Forest walking for health scheme enabling 10,000 hours to be spent walking for health.</li> </ul>				
<p>The increased demand for exercise and recreation as lockdown restrictions ease is managed to limit harm and yet maintain welcome for responsible recreation. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)</p>	<p>Ensure delivery of 'Care for the Forest, Care for each other' action plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint patrols with Forestry England, Police, Fire Service and other organisations</li> <li>• Signage and information to spread demand away from full car parks</li> <li>• Measures to address verge parking and impacts of camping</li> <li>• Strong promotion of New Forest Code online, in printed materials and face-to-face.</li> </ul>				

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Quarterly RAG status	On target for March 2022?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Particular Points to Note
Improved engagement with new audiences through a stronger partnership approach. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse existing local and national surveys and datasets to understand current, new and potential audiences and demographics</li> <li>• Use new local and national surveys to understand Covid-19 impacts</li> <li>• Develop partnerships to enable new activity with new audiences.</li> </ul>				
<b>Increasing public understanding and support for the National Park special qualities</b>					
Long-term coordinated behaviour change initiatives that reduce the impacts of traffic and recreation on National Park residents, commoning and wildlife. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)	<p>Facilitate action (including online campaigns, signage, printed materials and face-to-face engagement), working directly and through working groups and liaison with organisations. Priority topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal accidents (focusing on driver awareness, especially at night)</li> <li>• litter (including New Forest Ambassadors and the annual spring clean)</li> <li>• feeding/petting of ponies (including onsite presence at hotspots)</li> <li>• fire risk (including campaign against use of disposable BBQs)</li> <li>• disturbance of ground nesting birds (focused on agreed priority locations).</li> </ul>				

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<p>Improved understanding of the New Forest's special qualities and how to care for them, by local people and visitors through direct engagement. (Lead Officer, Gillie Molland)</p>	<p>Deliver face-to-face engagement, training and online activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10,000+ Ranger engagement throughout the National Park during patrols, with mobile information unit, at events and in local communities</li> <li>• Training and support to 5+ businesses, 5+ accommodation providers, 8+ local information points and visitor centres.</li> </ul>				
<p>Volunteer action from individuals, communities and businesses to tackle the nature and climate emergency and care for the National Park. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)</p>	<p>Through direct co-ordination and facilitation of volunteering activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow the number of New Forest Ambassadors who carry out litter picking, reporting problems, recording verge parking and sharing the New Forest Code</li> <li>• Deliver 20+ volunteering days directly to restore habitats and enhance nature and 10+ volunteer days to improve access to and understanding of the special qualities, involving a minimum of 100 volunteers</li> <li>• Work with at least eight community groups to enable nature recovery, action on climate and related heritage activity</li> <li>• Run 2022 volunteer fair (attended by 40+ volunteering organisations and 400+ prospective volunteers) and produce a guide and online volunteering finder</li> <li>• Develop a partnership volunteer project for submission to the National Grid LEI funding scheme (September 2021).</li> </ul>				

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<p>Children and young people have improved understanding of the National Park and the climate and nature emergency so that they can take positive action in response. (Lead Officer, Helen Robinson)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach sessions in and about the National Park, in schools and colleges and through youth activities, providing meaningful connection to nature, meeting curriculum aims where appropriate and addressing social and mental wellbeing needs post-Covid</li> <li>• Deliver travel grant scheme enabling a diverse range of school and young people's groups to access the New Forest with a range of providers.</li> </ul>				
<p>People have more opportunity to follow careers in the environment and outdoor learning sector. (Lead Officer Helen Robinson)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ three six-month Kickstart trainee placements</li> <li>• Deliver two 'Generation Green' Ranger Apprenticeships in partnership with six New Forest organisations</li> <li>• Explore options for other green skills and jobs / apprenticeships across the Authority and with partner organisations.</li> </ul>				
<b>Sustainable travel</b>					
<p>Enhanced walking, cycling and sustainable transport in and around the National Park to reduce carbon emissions, improve experience and help manage recreation. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With partners, develop a New Forest-wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and identify priority improvements to be made</li> <li>• Identify and improve at least three sites or walking/cycling routes</li> <li>• Work with the bus operator and drivers to manage and promote the three New Forest Tour routes, maintaining satisfaction ratings of at least 4.5 out of 5 and overall financial viability</li> <li>• Encourage use of the train, bus, cycling, walking and the New Forest Tour as alternatives to driving - through a walking festival, online communications, app and via partners.</li> </ul>				



## **Sustainable Communities in a Working Forest**

The Landscapes Review asks ‘how do we make sure both natural beauty and society benefit from change rather than suffer?’ There are three proposals in the report, around strengthening the duty to foster economic and community vitality, a new national landscapes housing association and piloting new approaches to transport. This area of work builds on our Local Plan (with a range of policies supporting sustainable development) and our experience of working with communities over the last decade, looking where we can make the biggest difference with our resources. Focus will be given to projects to promote local distinctiveness and the commoning way of life.

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<b>Built Environment &amp; Housing</b>					
All new development incorporates sustainable construction standards and techniques in accordance with national planning policy and the new Local Plan (DP18). (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Design Guide SPD with reference to climate change and sustainability; prepare and issue informal planning guidance in the short term</li> <li>Local Design Awards to recognise and promote sustainable development.</li> </ul>				
More affordable homes are granted planning permission. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying more opportunities for rural exception sites; liaising with local communities / Homes England / Hampshire Homes Hub</li> <li>Securing the appropriate level of provision of on-site affordable housing for local people on allocated sites.</li> </ul>				
Two new affordable homes built by the Authority at Burley. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	Tender the building work; appoint contractors; complete development and let properties at an affordable rent.				

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<b>National Park of the Future</b>					
Enhanced public engagement with action on climate change amongst National Park communities and businesses. (Lead Officer, Olivia McGregor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead on the development of ambitious targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the National Park</li> <li>• Work with businesses to identify economic growth opportunities aligned to net zero carbon emissions</li> <li>• Support the New Forest Zero Carbon Alliance in promoting community action to achieve Net Zero by 2040</li> <li>• Work with NPUK on a National Park presence at COP26 (November 2021).</li> </ul>				
Residents within the National Park served by effective and appropriate digital infrastructure i.e. broadband and mobile communications. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the Government's 'Project Gigabit' to enable 'hard to reach homes and businesses' to have next generation gigabit broadband built to them.</li> </ul>				
Continuity of the landscape-scale collaboration demonstrated by the Our Past, Our Future scheme. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Legacy Landscape Partnership, identifying actions to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan priorities</li> <li>• Seek funding opportunities to continue the valuable work of the Partnership (engaging / adding new partners as necessary).</li> </ul>				

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<b>Local distinctiveness and the ‘working Forest’</b>					
All new development achieves the highest standards of design. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	Agree update to the Design Guide SPD, taking into account the Government’s emerging National Model Design Code.				
The Forest’s built and historic environment is enhanced. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<p>Review of identified Conservation Area Character Appraisals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run training sessions for parish councils re non-designated heritage assets following adoption of related guidance note and ‘local list’ of assets</li> <li>• Following the receipt of Government funding, coordinate the work of local volunteers and community groups to update the list of local heritage assets in the National Park to support the delivery of the Authority’s planning function</li> <li>• Support community led surveys, e.g. fixed-point photography.</li> </ul>				
Economic activity benefitting from, and contributing to, National Park purposes and the Greenprint for South Hampshire. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With NF Business Partnership and Solent LEP, develop the Authority contribution to a green skills and training hub.</li> <li>• Work with New Forest Produce Ltd to reinforce the value of the New Forest Marque to primary producers, including commoners.</li> </ul>				
Strong community-led approach to conveying sense of place and local pride. (Lead Officer, Gareth Owen)	Assist communities and local organisations to lead cultural and linked natural heritage projects that foster identity and sense of place - work with at least four groups in this way.				

## Positive Land Use Change

Enabling the National Park to be richer for wildlife, resilient to climate change and deliver benefits for people such as flood alleviation and recreational opportunities. The Authority is in a position to influence positive land use change through its role as the local planning authority, by working with farmers and landowners and showing the leadership to develop a nature network for the National Park and its surroundings. Our Local Plan includes a number of land use based policies in relation to agriculture, green infrastructure, tourism and other leisure uses such as recreational horse keeping.

The current restrictions on the number of new homes that can be built in South Hampshire due to excessive nutrients (mainly nitrogen and phosphates) entering the Solent is an opportunity to incentivise better management of land in the catchment which is currently releasing nitrates, such as fertilised arable land, in order to reduce nitrate pollution reaching the Solent.

The Environment Bill will put biodiversity at the top of the environmental agenda with a requirement for almost all developments to provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Developers, consultants and local planning authorities involved in the preparation and approval of planning applications will need to be ready for the changes. The Agriculture Transition Plan 2021-2024 sets out the national approach to achieving a sustainable farming industry that delivers environmental outcomes. We will work with farmers and landowners to ensure the National Park benefits from these changes.

This programme of work will also need to consider our response to long-term increases in recreational and visitor pressures on land use.

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<b>In our role as the local planning authority</b>					
<p>All new development provides, as an absolute minimum, the mandated level of BNG (following enactment of the Environment Bill).</p> <p>Designated nature conservation sites and habitats are better protected and enhanced through effective management of land use.</p> <p>Nutrient neutrality achieved for all new development in the National Park.</p> <p>(Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<p>Prepare local guidance for the effective implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in the National Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a guidance note and mitigation framework to assist temporary campsites.</li> <li>• Progress the Article 4 Direction for larger and all new temporary campsites, to take effect no earlier than 1 June 2022, supported by new policy/guidance against which future applications would be assessed.</li> <li>• Continue to apply the Nitrate Mitigation Checklist for all planning applications proposing a net increase in dwellings or providing overnight accommodation.</li> </ul>				
<p>Improved management and oversight of land use change in the National Park. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring new development and change of use of land to ensure compliance with new Local Plan</li> <li>• Continue to support the Encroachment Working Party</li> <li>• Develop a data base / map of land use change in the National Park.</li> </ul>				

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<b>Agricultural Transition</b>					
Sustainable farm businesses contributing to our environmental goals and National Park purposes. (Lead Officer, Julie Melin-Stubbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Forest Farming Group to ensure continued financial support from the future ELM Scheme and other sources of funding to maintain and enhance the public goods provided by the New Forest</li> <li>• Plan and deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme in the National Park (more details Q1)</li> <li>• Through the Land Advice Service, support the collaboration between farmers and landowners around farm clusters and delivery of land advice.</li> </ul>				
Long-term trend towards reduced recreational impact on the most vulnerable sites and increased recreational use of countryside locations away from designated sites. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the condition of rights of way, including more informative signage, so that they are used more often</li> <li>• Work with landowners to establish sections of the England Coast Path as they are confirmed, providing clear signage and desire lines that ensure walkers enjoy and stay on the path</li> <li>• Work with partners, communities and landowners to identify where increased recreation could be enabled on robust sites alongside nature recovery and sustainable transport</li> <li>• Progress the Local Development Order to facilitate plans to redistribute parking on the Open Forest and reduce verge parking on protected verges.</li> </ul>				

## Achieving Excellence

Through the Achieving Excellence theme of our work we measure progress on objectives designed to achieve the highest quality of service and delivery across the organisation. We also recognise that excellence means reacting quickly and efficiently to emerging issues and operating fairly and sustainably in everything we do.

The section is structured into 'five P's'; Park Authority, Partnerships, People, Processes and Promotion.



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<b>National Park Authority</b>					
Achieve 'Organisational Net Zero' by 2030 or earlier. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and publish a full NFNPA Sustainability Action Plan (Q1 &amp; Q2) – to establish a clear baseline for our current emissions/impacts and a monitorable route to achieve Net Zero as an organisation by the end of the decade</li> <li>• Fit for purpose and sustainable procurement practices in place throughout the organisation and its supply chain (Q1 &amp; Q2).</li> </ul>				
New Authority Business Plan agreed. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	Following adoption of the updated Partnership Plan, to draft and publish ambitious strategic actions for the Authority. Ensure full member and staff engagement and clear, adequate and appropriate monitoring mechanisms for the life of the Plan.				
A suite of data and evidence sources is collated, analysed and published to inform NPA and partner organisation decision-making. (Lead Officer, Holger Schiller)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of baseline datasets identified</li> <li>• Review and refresh our own Key Performance Indicators (for Q1 Committee reporting)</li> <li>• Initial list of research opportunities proposed to local Universities</li> <li>• State of the Park Report updated.</li> </ul>				

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<b>Partnerships</b>					
New Partnership Plan finalised. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all delivery partners approve and ratify the final draft of the new Partnership Plan</li> <li>• Ensure clear monitoring mechanisms are established to ensure Plan delivery &amp; impacts over its lifespan</li> <li>• Conclude work on the feasibility of establishing a new Partnership Board and thereafter progress as appropriate.</li> </ul>				
The 'New Forest Voices' programme, to encourage diversity and inclusion, is further developed and embedded across the organisation (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and enact an Action Plan to aid the understanding of opportunities for, and reduced impediments against, improved diversity and inclusion for people from all communities and backgrounds in and around the Forest.</li> </ul>				
<b>People</b>					
People Plan implementation successfully continued. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus throughout this year on Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion, leadership of the Climate &amp; Nature Emergency and staff covid-recovery</li> <li>• Undertake biennial staff survey (Q1)</li> <li>• Particular focus this year on updating policies &amp; procedures in light of new home &amp; flexible working practices (Q2 &amp; Q3)</li> <li>• Update Safeguarding Policy (Q4) Establish and undertake a 3-year review process for the People Plan (Q4).</li> </ul>				

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Succession planning further developed, empowering the next generation of managers and leaders from across the organisation. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinvigorate and strengthen the 'Managers Network' forum within the Authority with clear direction / priorities and links to the Strategic Leadership Team</li> <li>Review staff resourcing and/or structures in light of new Partnership Plan and Business Plan priorities and actions</li> <li>Any specific staff learning and development opportunities identified and actioned.</li> </ul>				
<b>Processes</b>					
Significant fundraising for existing and new projects undertaken and successful. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold Members Day to discuss the work of the Fundraising Group and priorities for the period ahead (Q1 or Q2)</li> <li>Key fundraising requirements clarified, owned/understood and applications underway</li> <li>Limited Authority resources maximised by using our core funding to leverage further funding into the Forest.</li> </ul>				
Effective partnerships with tourism-related businesses, including through the 'Love the Forest' Visitor Giving Scheme. (Lead Officer Hilary Makin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with the New Forest Trust, increase the number of businesses engaged in the 'Love the Forest' Visitor Giving Scheme by 10% from 2018 baseline</li> <li>Support current/new businesses in the scheme by providing four talks/presentations and four training events.</li> <li>Coordinate a New Forest offer to the Discover England 'National Park Experiences' programme, with a car-free focus.</li> </ul>				

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<b>Promoting</b>					
Far-reaching communications activities that increase awareness and engagement with the National Park. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the New Forest Awakening Festival and New Forest nature and climate emergency campaign with partners, with 2,000+ people/organisations pledging to take action for nature/climate change</li> <li>• Continue to deliver wildlife campaign to highlight biodiversity and special qualities of the Forest engaging 100,000 in our messages</li> <li>• Amplify New Forest Code messages and individual campaigns about caring for the Forest, with an overall reach of 2,000,000 and engagement of 500,000</li> <li>• Increase numbers signing up to receive our communications by 10%</li> <li>• Deliver high quality publications including the Annual Review and Park Life newspaper.</li> </ul>				