

## 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 farming, land use and the environment, especially the Agriculture and Environment Bills, the response to the Landscapes Review and the 25 Year Environment Plan. We will then need to establish how this policy agenda can best meet the needs of the New Forest National Park.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end of March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
<b>Nature Recovery – Net Zero with Nature</b>					
A spatial plan for nature recovery for the National Park and immediate surroundings, included in the National Park Partnership Plan. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead stakeholders in the development of a spatial plan for nature, based on Lawton principles of bigger, better, more and more joined up habitats.</li> <li>• With partners, develop a portfolio of integrated projects for identified Nature Recovery Areas (beyond the core designated sites)</li> </ul>				
The range of public goods provided by the National Park supported by the developing Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the work of the Forest Farming Group as the transition from Environmental Stewardship to ELM continues</li> <li>• Examine opportunities for the National Park to be a national pilot for ELM in 2021, ensuring commoning will be supported by the new scheme</li> <li>• Support the collaboration between farmers and landowners around farm clusters and delivery of land advice</li> <li>• Develop programme of communication for stakeholders around “net zero with nature” and “public money for public goods”</li> </ul>				
Measures in place to mitigate, and adapt to, the changing climate. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map current and potential carbon stores</li> <li>• Investigate if carbon offset schemes could deliver environmental benefits in the New Forest</li> <li>• Re focus the SCF to deliver innovative action on climate change and nature recovery</li> </ul>				

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<b>Green Halo – Beyond our Boundaries</b>					
An active, thriving Green Halo Partnership recognised for its catalytic role in enhancing the environment of the National Park hinterland. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the key themes arising from the Green Halo Conference Feb 2020: a National Park City Region / Waterside Vision / Natural Leaders</li> <li>• Coordinate a programme of events (min 4) and a further Conference in early 2021</li> <li>• With partners, identify key Nature Recovery opportunity areas beyond the National Park boundary</li> </ul>			"Greenprint" for South Hampshire resulting from Green Halo Partnership work. Green Halo Conference due June 9th	
<b>Nature Solutions – Delivery and Advice</b>					
NPA resources aligned to respond to opportunities presented by the Agriculture Bill, Environment Bill and Landscapes Review during 2020. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing liaison with Defra through the National Parks Agriculture and Rural Development group</li> <li>• Further develop the 'natural capital' approach to protecting the environment of the National Park</li> <li>• Scope the resource needed to implement the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in response to the Environment Bill</li> <li>• Examine the opportunities for nature recovery presented by the introduction of Conservation Covenants</li> <li>• Post OPOF, identify and plan to secure the resources needed to deliver the nature recovery plan (above)</li> </ul>				

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<p><b>Data and evidence</b></p> <p>A suite of data and evidence sources around climate change identified and reporting methods established. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of baseline datasets identified</li> <li>• Initial list of research opportunities proposed to local Universities</li> </ul>			<p>Some baseline datasets now developed to support the Partnership Plan. Net Zero with Nature Programme Officer now appointed and in post.</p>	

## 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 we have adapted this year's work programme to highlight 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 also to improve routes and information on the ground. Connection to the environment is also key to the 25 Year Environment Plan's goals. Our 2020-21 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.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
Action from a wide variety of individuals, communities and businesses to tackle the nature and climate emergency. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<p>Through direct co-ordination of and facilitation of volunteering activity focused on nature recovery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>• Run 2021 volunteer fair (attended by 40+ volunteering organisations and 400+ prospective volunteers) and produce a guide and online volunteering finder</li> <li>• Work with five existing groups to develop co-ordinated action to improve nature (through Rangers and Land Advice Service)</li> <li>• Deliver two specific outreach projects with underrepresented groups to enable volunteering</li> </ul>			<p>Practical volunteer work greatly limited by C-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Awareness raising of climate and nature emergencies continued through Business Partnership, Green Halo and virtual Awakening Festival</p>	
Through community and individual action. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)	<p>Through community and individual action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with at least five community groups to enable nature recovery, action on climate and related heritage activity</li> <li>• Develop a plan for ambassadors and citizen science initiatives to deliver over the next business plan period</li> <li>• Facilitate action through working groups and liaison with organisations to address litter, animal accidents, feeding of ponies and disturbance of ground nesting birds.</li> </ul>				

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Lead Officer, Paul Walton	<p>Through tourism-related businesses and wider business community:</p> <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 training events.</li> <li>Raise awareness of the Scheme and the benefits it delivers to local organisations/business groups by providing four talks/presentations.</li> </ul>	Red	Amber	Covid-19 restrictions forced many hospitality businesses to close through much of 2020/21. Fund raising for the Love The Forest scheme has continued.	
Understanding of the New Forest's special qualities and how to care for them, by all local people and visitors. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)	<p>Through face to face engagement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ranger engagement with at least 15,000 people on the Forest with mobile information unit, at events and in local communities, specifically targeted at helping people care for the Forest and reduce negative impacts.</li> <li>Delivery of nature recovery and climate emergency themed New Forest Show with over 3,000 people attending our stand</li> <li>Develop and teach curriculum-specific sessions about the National Park, nature recovery and climate emergency reaching 10,000 students from pre-schools, schools and colleges, both in the 'field' and in school</li> <li>Deliver Travel Grant Scheme (3,000 student visits to the New Forest)</li> </ul>	Amber	Amber	As expected, face-to-face contacts much reduced by Covid-19. Effort refocused on patrols in between lockdowns and on online engagement. Degree of normality expected from June 2021	

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Lead Officer, Hilary Makin	<p>Through our communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a campaign with partners about nature recovery and climate emergency in the context of the National Park and surrounding area 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>• Trial with rangers and partners a shorter 'caring for the forest code' and measure if new messages help drive behaviour change.</li> <li>• Increase numbers signing up to receive our communications by 20%</li> </ul>				



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Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell	<p>Through training and on-site interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support organisations with face-to-face public and visitor-facing roles to be ambassadors for the Forest, improving their own sustainability</li> <li>• communicate 'caring for' messages to visitors, including encouraging car-free visits, working directly with 5+ businesses, 5+ accommodation providers, 8+ local information points and visitor centres</li> <li>• Complete Our past, Our Future Historic routes and Past Pathways interpretation</li> </ul>				

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
<p>More people from more diverse backgrounds benefitting from first-hand and meaningful experience of the National Park's nature and landscape. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)</p>	<p>Through sustainable access and transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least four local sites or walking routes to be identified and improved</li> <li>• Deliver guided walking and cycling including 190 cycling sessions for up to 400 participants through PedAll (external funding dependant) and a Walking Festival focussed on understanding the special qualities of the National Park</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 face-to-face engagement by the travel ambassador service (target of 4,000 people spoken with at Brockenhurst station by seasonal travel ambassadors).</li> </ul>				

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Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell	<p>Through a strong partnership with the health sector and local communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate our activities to benefit health: walking, cycling, volunteering, connection to nature and wild play</li> <li>Deliver a regional and a local workshop / conference to raise awareness of the benefit of nature to health and facilitate access to nature-based health solutions</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>				
Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell	<p>Through a better understanding of our existing and potential audiences and methods of delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify which audiences are under-represented among general visitors, those attending our events, activities and volunteering programmes and identify barriers to participation</li> <li>Develop and begin to implement measures to ensure wider engagement with the National Park</li> <li>Develop more accurate measures to evaluate effectiveness of connection and engagement work</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 vitality in communities, a new national landscapes housing association and piloting new approaches to transport. This area of work builds on our new 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.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
<b>Built Environment &amp; Housing</b>					
<p>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)</p>	<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 (Q1)</li> <li>Local Design Awards to recognise and promote sustainable development</li> </ul>	Amber	Amber	<p>Updated Design Guide draft now at an advanced stage with formal public consultation planned over the summer.</p> <p>No Design Awards were made this year.</p>	
<p>20 affordable homes granted planning permission. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p> <p>Two new affordable homes built at Burley. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<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> <p>Tender the building work; appoint contractors; complete development and let properties at an affordable rent</p>	Amber	Red	<p>60 affordable homes approved at Fawley Waterside in Q2 subject to completion of s106 agreement.</p> <p>Two applications for rural exception sites could not be supported.</p> <p>Awaiting probate to complete the lease for the Burley Scheme.</p>	

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
<p>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule approved to fund green infrastructure and support sustainable development.  <b>(Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</b></p>	<p>Complete review of CIL and viability testing; report to Authority meeting for decision on CIL Charging Schedule.</p>			<p>CIL viability work was commissioned from the specialist consultants Three Dragons and this work concluded in early 2020. However, in light of the C-19 pandemic (and impacts on development viability/house prices) work has been paused.</p> <p>In addition the Government's Planning White Paper (August 2019) proposes the replacement of CIL with a 'National Infrastructure Levy'. In light of this work on CIL has paused.</p>	

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<b>National Park of the Future</b>					
<p>The New Forest National Park is relevant to the lives of a broad and diverse range of stakeholders and communities. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore a range of options to encourage greater engagement of underrepresented groups / interests with the work of the Authority.</li> <li>• Agree changes to be implemented at the start of the 2021/22 financial year</li> </ul>				
<b>Local distinctiveness and the ‘working Forest’</b>					
<p>All new development achieves the highest standards of design.</p> <p>The Forest’s built and historic environment is enhanced. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<p>Update Design Guide SPD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Conservation Areas (Burley, Forest South East and Forest North East)</li> <li>• Revise and publish list of non-designated heritage assets</li> <li>• Run training sessions for parish councils re heritage assets</li> <li>• Support community led surveys, e.g. fixed-point photography</li> </ul>				

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<p>Strong community-led approach to conveying sense of place and local pride. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)</p>	<p>Assist communities and local organisations to lead cultural and natural heritage projects that foster identity and sense of place - work with at least four groups in this way (e.g. commoners voices, East Boldre etc)</p>				



## 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. The new 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.

This programme of work will also need to consider our response to increasing 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). (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p> <p>Designated nature conservation sites and habitats are better protected and enhanced through effective management of land use. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p> <p>Nutrient neutrality achieved for all new development in the National Park. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<p>Prepare local guidance for the effective implementation of BNG in the National Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the use of Local Development Orders and Article 4 Directions to manage recreational and visitor impacts.</li> <li>• Implementation of the revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme SPD</li> <li>• Continue to apply the Nitrate Mitigation Checklist for all planning applications proposing a net increase in dwellings or providing overnight accommodation.</li> <li>• Devise a local scheme to reduce nitrate pollution in the Solent (this will allow already consented small-scale housing developments to proceed).</li> </ul>				

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities	Q4 RAG status	Was the action completed by end March 2021 (insert RAG)?	Action to regain (if amber or red)	Communication Actions
Better management and oversight of land use change in the National Park. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<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>	Amber	Amber	Difficulties progressing data base / map of land use change in the National Park as a result of the C-19 restrictions	
A Vision for the Waterside. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	Working with partners and communities, agree and secure a pro-active comprehensive green infrastructure strategy for the Waterside	Green	Green		
<b>Land Use Change Plan &amp; Campaign</b>					
Creation of a Nature Network for the National Park and surrounding areas, using the range of tools available to the NPA. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<p>Encourage and enable positive land use change from highly-managed countryside to one that works with natural processes based on natural capital principles. Key tools that will help achieve this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity Net Gain</li> <li>Environment Net Gain</li> <li>Harnessing stakeholders</li> <li>Land Advice</li> <li>Policy Influencing</li> <li>Co-ordination of land-owners/managers</li> <li>Supporting clusters</li> <li>Funding</li> <li>Working beyond our boundary</li> </ul>	Green	Green		

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<p>Reduced recreational impact on the most vulnerable sites and increased recreational use of countryside locations away from designated sites. (Lead Officer, Nigel Matthews)</p>	<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> </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>Park Authority</b>					
Achieve 'Organisational Net Zero' by 2030 or earlier. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and document indicators &amp; collection methodologies to fully assess our organisational impacts (Q1 &amp; Q2)</li> <li>Develop and publish a full Sustainability Action Plan (Q3 &amp; Q4)</li> <li>Fit for purpose and sustainable procurement practices in place throughout the organisation and its supply chain (Q3 &amp; Q4).</li> </ul>	Green	Yellow	Sustainability Action Plan delayed until September 2021 (included in 2021/22 work programme).	
New Business Plan agreed. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<p>Draft and develop ambitious strategic actions for the Authority over the next three years, as driven by the wider Partnership Plan developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure member and staff ownership of, and engagement with, the developing plan at all stages.</li> </ul>	Yellow	Yellow	New Business Plan to be drafted in 2021 following completion of the Partnership Plan, as agreed by Members.	

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<b>Partnerships</b>					
New Partnership Plan agreed. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	With partners, draft and develop ambitious strategic actions for the next five years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene topic-based workshops with Members, staff and partner organisations (Q1 and Q2)</li> <li>• Carry out a public consultation (Q3) and finalise Plan.</li> </ul>			Draft Plan approved at the Authority meeting on 29 April 2021.	Work now progressing to run a public consultation and engagement programme over the summer.
'Team New Forest' ethos is further developed and embedded in Forest organisations. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	Linked to successful Partnership Plan development above, but also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document and expand shared resources, projects, learning and experiences across organisations.</li> </ul>				
<b>People</b>					
People Plan implemented. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and communication of first years' implementation (Q1)</li> <li>• Particular focus this year on equality, diversity and inclusion, mental health and manager development.</li> </ul>				

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Any staffing changes, due to new prioritisation, successfully implemented and staff upskilled as necessary. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing structure to deliver new work programme agreed &amp; understood by all (Q1)</li> <li>Any specific staff learning and development opportunities identified and actioned.</li> </ul>				
<b>Processes</b>					
New 'Project Development Board' constituted and work begun. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System to prioritise projects agreed and implemented</li> <li>Fundraising requirements clarified, owned/understood and applications underway.</li> </ul>				



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<p>Smart National Park vision set (challenges people to solve problems using latest technology). (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a rural 'Living Lab', taking citizen science to the Forest</li> <li>• Establish a 'Futures Panel' to horizon scan for future issues and potential solutions</li> </ul>	<p>Red</p>	<p>Yellow</p>		<p>Combination of staff changes and C-19 restricting opportunities for engagement in this work has meant this project will need to be revised for 2021/22</p>
<p><b>Promoting</b></p>					
<p>Contact Management System researched, agreed and implementation timetable set. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)</p>	<p>Single system for developing closer, deeper and more productive relationships with those externally which whom we have contact across the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop specification</li> <li>• Research options/costs</li> <li>• Implement system</li> </ul>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Green</p>		

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Communication to our funders and core partners regarding our impact/effect is clear, targeted and successful. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)	Communication of delivery messages to key stakeholders is fully reviewed, covering considerations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are we viewed?</li> <li>• Are our key messages clear?</li> <li>• Do we successfully highlight the impacts and effect of our delivery?</li> <li>• Are we using the 'right language/phrases for the right audience'?</li> </ul>				