

NFNPA RAPC 463/21

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 NOVEMBER 2021

HALF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT 2021/22

Report by: David Stone, Corporate Services Manager and Nigel Stone, Head of Resources

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present second quarter (July-September) progress against the 2021/22 objectives from the 2018-2021 Business Plan.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Authority has produced a Business Plan for the period 2018-2021 which details the main activity of the Authority during that time and, more specifically, further detail on outcomes for the current year. The Business Plan sets out how we will deliver the Authority's two purposes and duty during these timeframes.
- 2.2 The Authority's Business Plan objectives/outcomes are derived from the Partnership Plan for the New Forest, the current version of which was approved by the Authority in June 2015 and ratified by all the other partner organisations involved; work is currently underway for the updated Partnership Plan for the period 2021-26.
- 2.3 This report comprises the second quarter update on progress against the actions in 2021/22 Work Programme, that being this year's annual programme of work under the current Business Plan.
- 2.4 Members will recall the format whereby 'business as usual' items have been removed from the tables, leaving a smaller number of clearly defined and concise actions to be monitored during the year. Progress against these actions is measured by referring to the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status under the quarterly column. A further column of RAG status' confirms whether the complete objectives are still expected to be achieved by the end of the financial year. An amber or red status for the quarter or year has been addressed through an 'action to regain' column aimed at mitigation or corrective action to bring the status back to green.

- 2.5 The Authority also highlighted key areas of the Authority's work under the seven strategic themes set out in the Business Plan:

Data and evidence
The future of land management
Working beyond our boundaries
People and the National Park
Developing partnerships
Future generations
People Plan

For the current year these themes have been incorporated into the actions and objectives within the programme and are therefore not reported on separately.

3. Progress Reporting

- 3.1 Under the format agreed by the Authority in 2019/20, the Work Programme does not include a column for officers to provide a progress narrative against each of the actions shown as 'green'; however, these narratives will still be available through the Chief Executive's reports which provide a more flexible, detailed and up-to-date account of what has been done.
- 3.2 Members of the Committee can of course question officers in first instance at the meeting, however should they wish to receive further detailed information or clarifications on a specific issue(s) whilst at the meeting, please contact David Stone or an appropriate member of the Executive Leadership Team beforehand and they will endeavour to bring such responses along with them.

4. Performance Indicators

- 4.1 This report also contains the performance indicators for the current year:
- 4.1.1 All national parks in England provide annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under the joint 'Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes' (MEOPL) programme which is coordinated by Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. This consists of a standardised list of KPIs for conservation, cultural heritage, recreation management, promoting understanding and development management. These are shown on pages 8-10.

4.1.2 In addition to this standardised set of ‘national’ statistics, individual National Park Authorities are encouraged to set/monitor further indicators which are derived according to local needs and preferences. Some such indicators appear in our ‘State of the Park’ and Budgetary reports, with the remainder defined as ‘local’ indicators as set out on pages 11–12 of this report.

4.2 The quarterly local KPI figures for July-September indicate:

4.2.1 None of the annually monitored MEOPL indicators have changed since Q1, these will be updated with either 2020 or 2021 data later in the year. However the Natural England MEOPL team have recently completed a draft review of their indicators within all protected landscapes and have recommended the following list of further indicators which they could provide for use from next year:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Land Cover | Land Use Change |
| Agricultural Crop Type | Peat |
| Nature Recovery Network Coverage | Carbon sequestration – soil |
| Carbon sequestration – vegetation | Air Pollution |

Officers will review the report and consider the detail / formulations of the proposed new indicators over the coming weeks.

4.2.2 Within development management, the determination deadlines continue to be met in the vast majority of cases, this does however skew the additional days indicator with all the particularly difficult cases and therefore the figure is very high – we can confirm however that all these older ongoing cases have now been determined and therefore we would expect this figure to drop during the remainder of the year.

4.2.3 The planning appeals lost indicator has risen sharply due to five out of eight appeals being allowed in this quarter, however only one was determined against officer recommendation. All appeal results are closely monitored and reviewed by officers and the Planning Committee.

4.2.4 Our social media reach continues to grow extremely fast, with a 2.7% increased audience within a single quarter.

4.2.5 Initial figures for the New Forest Tour in 2021 show an overall 17% like-for-like increase in passenger numbers in comparison with pre-covid figures of 2019. Figures were particularly high this year for the coastal ‘blue’ route.

4.2.6 Member attendance at Authority and Committee meetings has significantly dropped this quarter and now more closely reflects the figures prior to the introduction of virtual meetings during the pandemic.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report and following discussion, agree any necessary management action.

Papers:

NFNPA/RAPC 463/21 Cover paper
NFNPA/RAPC 463/21 Annex 1: Half Year Work Programme Progress Report 2021/22

Contact:

David Stone
Corporate Services Manager
Email: david.stone@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity Implications:

A number of the work programmes and indicators are directly focussed around improving equality and diversity, for example, our work with the New Forest Voices project, all-ability cycling and by monitoring attendance of under-represented groups at our events.



**Half Year
Progress Report
2021/22**

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The National Park Authority was established in April 2005 and took on its full statutory powers and responsibilities in April 2006. The Authority will champion the New Forest National Park, working in partnership through co-ordinated and innovative policies and actions, focusing on achieving the two National Park purposes to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

National Park Authorities also have a duty, in taking the purposes forward, to:

- seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.

2021/22 Objectives

We will work towards achieving the Vision for the Park through our strategic themes and four main programmes of work that reflect the National Park purposes and duty. These programmes and their outcomes, set out below, will provide the focus for all our future work and will ensure that there are clear and common goals across the organisation.

- **Protect**

We will help to improve the large-scale landscapes and habitats that are characteristic of the New Forest.

- **Enjoy**

We will work to champion the National Park as a place of inspiration, where everyone is able to enjoy, understand and value its special qualities.

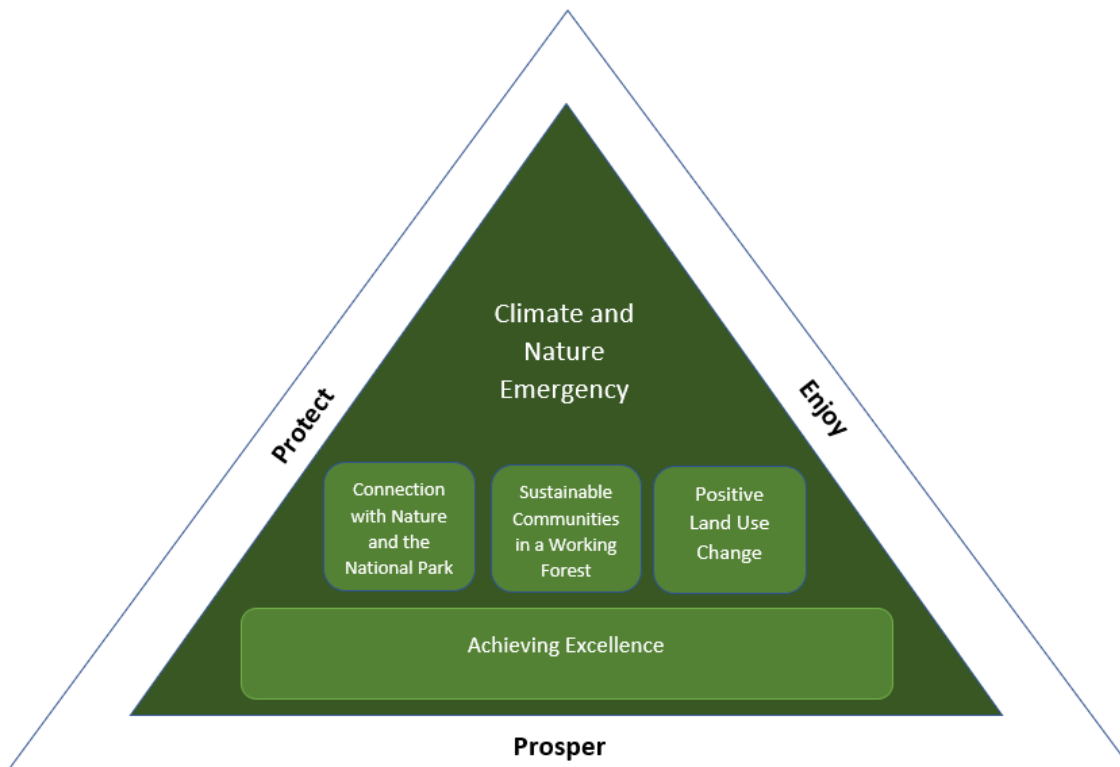
- **Prosper**

We will work to support a way of life in the National Park that continues to centre around strong and distinctive communities with a clear cultural identity and a vibrant local economy.

- **Achieving Excellence**

We will work to champion the highest quality of service for local people and visitors and work closely with organisations and communities in championing the National Park.

Following a full review of priorities for this final year of our current Business Plan, the structure of the 2021/22 Work Programme was changed as shown in the diagram below:



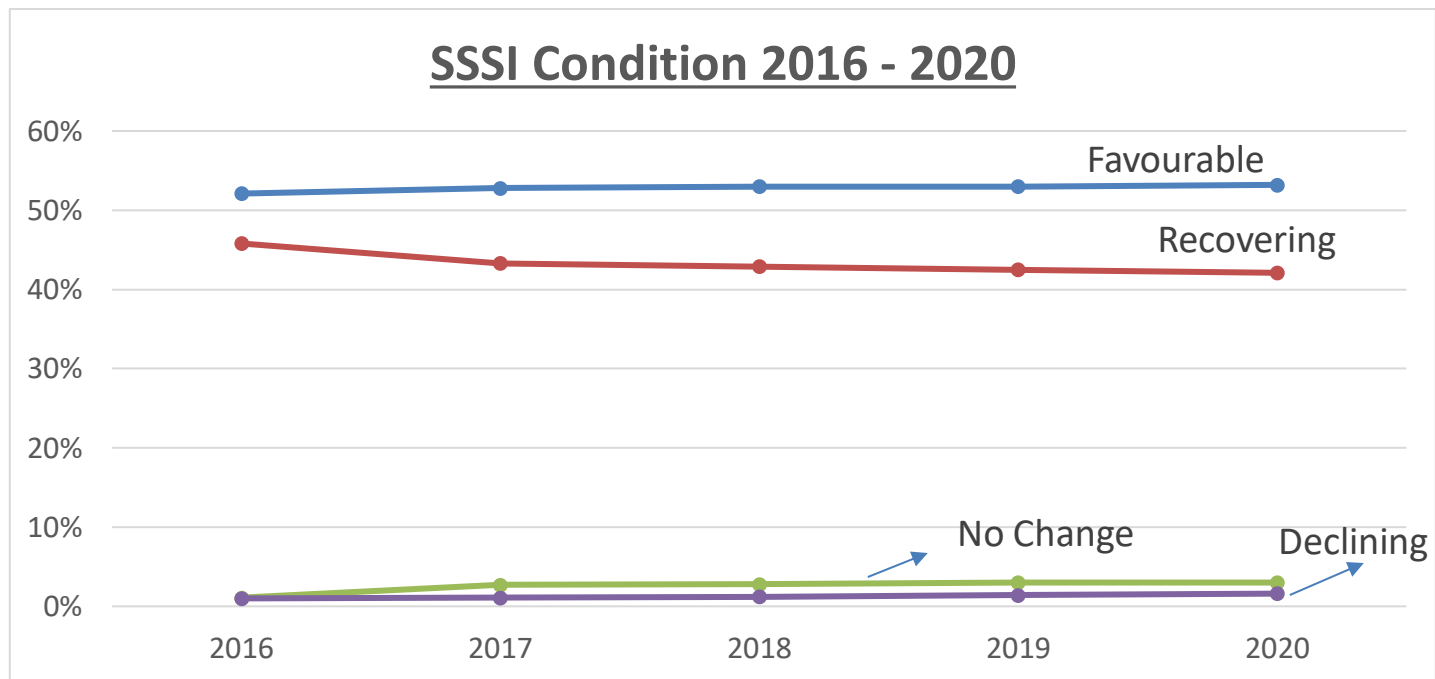
The core headings, within the green part of the diagram, more closely align our objectives/actions with the Strategic Themes and to the section headings from the Glover Review.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

National Indicators

| YE Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | YE | DoT | Comment |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|
|-----------|----|----|----|----|-----|---------|

| Conservation of the Natural Environment | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--|--------------|--|
| Area of SSSI land in the National Park | 32,190ha | | | | Context Data | |
| Area of SSSI land in NPA Management | None | | | | Context Data | |



National Indicators

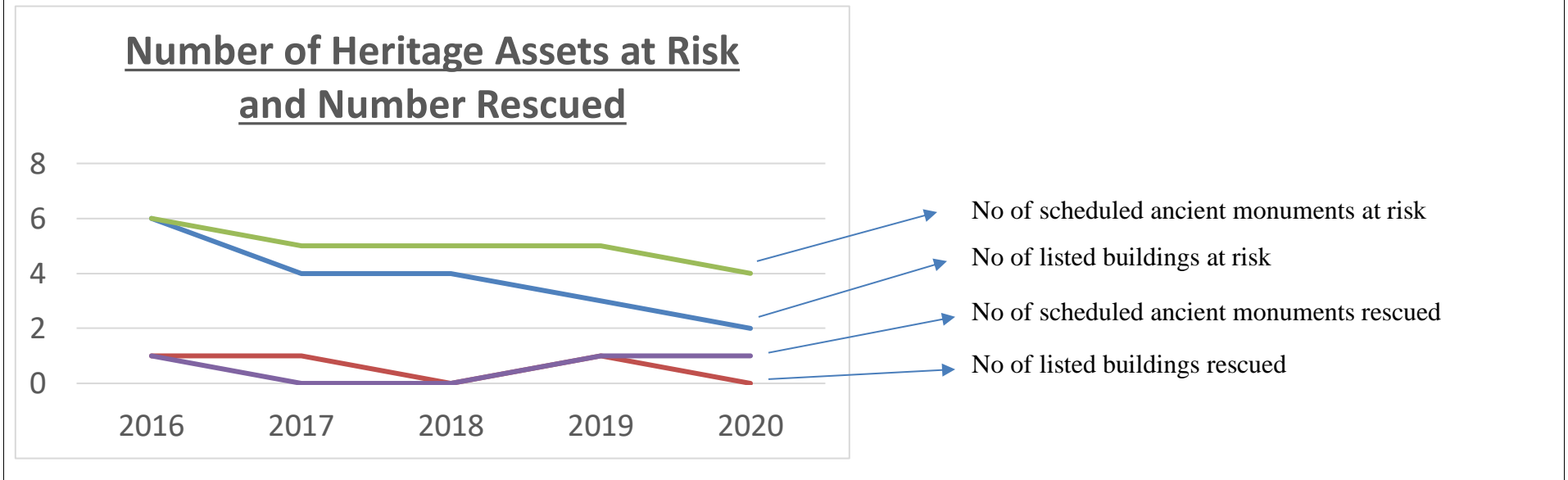
| YE Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | YE | DoT | Comment |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------------|
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------------|

Conservation of the Natural Environment (cont.)

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----|--|--|--|---|
| Total length of regularly monitored water courses | 271km | | | | | Context Data |
| % length of regularly monitored water courses with 'high' or 'good' ecological status | 22% | n/a | | | | Collected annually – unchanged since 2016 |
| % length of regularly monitored water courses with 'moderate' ecological status | 78% | n/a | | | | Collected annually – unchanged since 2016 |

Conservation of the Cultural Heritage

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| No. of Conservation Areas | 20 | | | | | Context Data |
| No. of Listed Buildings | 626 | | | | | Context Data |
| No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments | 186 | | | | | Context Data |



| National Indicators | YE Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | YE | DoT | Comment |
|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|---|
| Recreation Management | | | | | | | |
| Total length of footpaths and other rights of way | 326km | | | | | Context Data | |
| % of total length of footpaths and other rights of way, that were easy to use by members of the public | >75% | n/a | | | | | Collected annually. Last 5 years = risen from 60% to 75%. |
| Estimated total number of visitors to the National Park (STEAM survey data) | 4.4m (2020) | | | | | Risen by c4% in last 5 years | |
| Total No. of volunteer days organised or supported by the NPA | 100 | n/a | | | | | Collected annually |
| % of those days attended by under-represented groups (under 25's, minority ethnic groups and those with a long-term limiting illness or disability) | 2% | n/a | | | | | Collected annually |
| Promoting Understanding | | | | | | | |
| One paragraph (150 words) at year-end on what has been achieved within promoting understanding and with the under-represented groups. | | | | | | | |
| Development Management | | | | | | | |
| No. of planning applications received to date | 438 | | | | | c20% higher than last 2 years | |
| % of planning applications by type dealt with in a timely manner: | | | | | | | |
| Major applications determined within 13 weeks | 60% | 100% | 100% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| Minor applications determined within 8 weeks | 65% | 88% | 88% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| Other applications determined within 8 weeks | 80% | 91% | 92% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| % of planning applications approved | 85% | 90% | 89% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| Additional time for those missing deadlines | 28 days | 69 days | 88 days | | | ↓ | Skewed by 3 difficult cases, now cleared |

| Local Indicators | YE Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | YE | DoT | Comment |
|--|------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|--|
| Protect | | | | | | | |
| Number of planning decisions delegated to officers as a % of all decisions | 90% | 88% | 93% | | | ↑ | Target set locally |
| Appeals allowed against refusal of planning permission by the Authority (% of appeals) | 35% | 22% | 41% | | | ↓ | 7 of 17 appeals allowed - 1 against officer recommendation |
| % of enforcement cases dealt with in a timely manner: | | | | | | | |
| acknowledge complaints within 3 working days | 90% | 96% | 94% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| carry out initial investigation within 15 working days | 90% | 90% | 92% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| check compliance with enforcement notices within 5 working days of the expiry of the compliance period | 100% | 100% | 100% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| initiate action for non-compliance with an enforcement notice within 15 working days | 100% | 100% | 100% | | | ↑ | Target aligned nationally |
| Enjoy | | | | | | | |
| Combined social media audience | 115,000 | 111,386 | 114,421 | | | ↑ | Local target of 6% increase |
| Average weekly total of New Forest Tour passengers | 75% of 2019 | 17% rise on 2019 figures | | | | ↑ | Target set locally |
| Number of promoting understanding face-to-face contacts (education, events, rangers, talks, training) | 8,000 | 1,907 | 3,724 | | | ↔ | Target still lower this year due to C19 impacts |
| Prosper | | | | | | | |
| External / Partner funding committed to projects supported by the Authority | £1.0m | £0.88m | £1.27m | | | ↑ | Target doubled from 2020/21 |

| Local Indicators | YE Target | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | YE | DoT | Comment |
|---|------------------|------|------|----|----|------------|---|
| Achieving Excellence | | | | | | | |
| Information requests processed within statutory deadline | 100% | 100% | 100% | | | ↑ | 74 requests in 2020/21 |
| Complaints processed within 20 working days | 100% | 100% | 100% | | | ↑ | 21 requests in 2020/21 |
| Member participation in attending Authority & Committees | 82% | 88% | 78% | | | ↓ | |
| Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days | 98% | 97% | 98% | | | ↑ | 356 out of 364 Average time to pay = 10 days |
| No of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE | 9 | n/a | | | | | Collected annually – target is public sector average |
| No of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE, not including long-term sickness absence | 6 | n/a | | | | | Collected annually – target is public sector average |
| % CO ₂ reduction from National Park Authority operations per FTE | -3% | n/a | | | | | Collected annually. Further sustainability targets will be established in Authority's Carbon Reduction Plan. |