

RAPC 476-22

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 7 MARCH 2022**

INTERIM WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Report by: Alison Barnes, Chief Executive and Nigel Stone, Head of Resources (CFO)

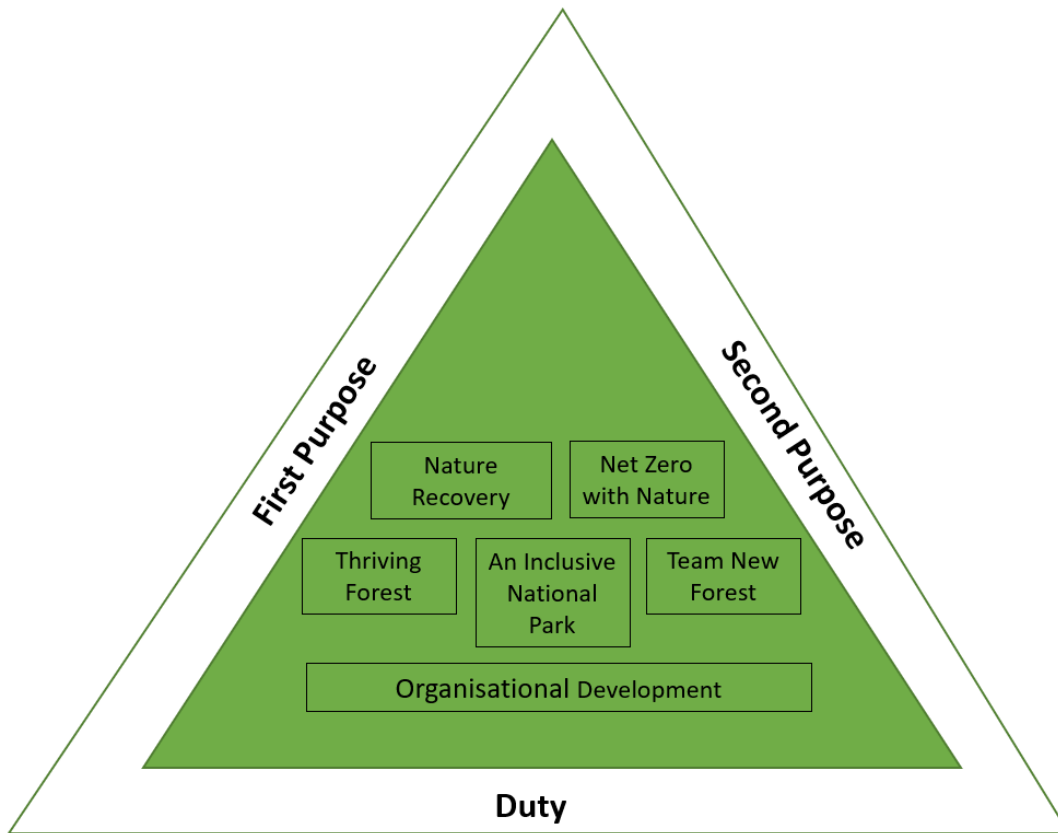
1 Business Plan and Work Programme Development

- 1.1 Following the discussion and agreement by this Committee in February 2022, officers will soon begin the task of updating our own Business Plan in light of the new Partnership (Management) Plan due to be adopted at the full Authority meeting later this month. Within this work we will not only be looking at our specific outcomes and the actions with which deliver them, but also the performance mechanisms required to implement them efficiently & effectively and a clear monitoring framework for officers and members to review / amend as necessary along the way.
- 1.2 As an Authority we are now entering a new phase where our mission must be renewed around our core Purposes and Duty, and in light of the Climate & Nature Emergency, Landscapes Review recommendations and as we move past the covid pandemic.
- 1.3 Whilst this key strategic work is underway, we want to make clear that delivery will continue on the ground for the Forest and its communities. We have therefore drafted an 'Interim Work Programme' to reflect the core Authority structures and outcomes expected over the coming months as we start the 2022/23 financial year. For this we have mirrored the five strategic themes from the Partnership Plan (the 'what') and then added a sixth heading to cover governance, performance management, support services and staffing strategy (the 'how').

These heading are:

- Nature Recovery
- Net Zero with Nature
- Thriving Forest
- An Inclusive National Park
- Team New Forest
- Organisational Development

As in previous years this can easily be shown as our 'green triangle':



2 Draft Business Plan Performance Mechanisms

- 2.1 The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) are likely to propose that internal 'Programme Boards' be established to oversee each of the six themes. These would have clearly defined Terms of Reference and Responsibilities. The membership of these Boards, likely to be 6-10 officers, would be taken from across all the teams of the Authority, have Programme Leads (the SLT member and/or officers whose roles closest fit the theme) but also a further 'independent' SLT member sitting as the most Senior Responsible Officer.
- 2.2 The boards would clearly interact with each other and then SLT would provide an oversight of the overall performance. Actions would be considered both by outcome(s)/project(s) and spatially – we have initially considered/termed this spatial consideration as "4+Core" i.e. the four quarters of the Forest plus the centre. This would allow us to consider not only whether overall outcomes are being achieved but how a range of outcomes are making a difference within a geographic area.
- 2.3 These initial ideas will be developed further with members and staff over the coming months, with a new Business Plan presented to the June/July member meetings alongside our final Work Programme for 2022/23.

3 Interim Work Programme

3.1 As stated, as an interim measure to guide staff, members, partners and our communities on our current priorities for 2022/23, we have initially drafted the following high-level summary within the new themes:

Nature Recovery

Nature Recovery is at the forefront of the Government's agenda for National Parks. The National Park Partnership Plan aims to achieve an outcome where habitats are more resilient, restored, expanded, connected and maintained to enable wildlife to thrive, both within and beyond the National Park.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
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"> • Prepare and publish a spatial plan for nature, based on Lawton principles of bigger, better, more and more joined up habitats and opportunities for species recovery • With partners, identify and cost out a portfolio of integrated projects for identified Nature Recovery Areas • Support the delivery of priority projects with the New Forest Catchment Partnership.
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"> • Ensure the National Park's spatial plan for nature is supported by the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset • Work with neighbouring and regional National Landscapes to develop the 'backbone' of a Nature Recovery Network in the wider region.
Sustainable farm businesses contributing to our environmental goals and National Park purposes. (Lead Officer, Julie Melin-Stubbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Forest Farming Group to ensure continued financial support from the future ELM Scheme to maintain and enhance the public goods provided by the New Forest • Deliver Year 2 of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme in the National Park • Through the Land Advice Service, support the collaboration between farmers and landowners around farm clusters and delivery of land advice • 20ha of open habitats and 2km of hedgerows restored as part of the Green Blue Horizons Project • Support the development of 5 farm clusters.

<p>More opportunities for increased investment in the natural capital of the National Park. (Lead Officer, Olivia McGregor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the NEIRF project <i>Investment Models for Nature Restoration</i> (Aug 2022) • Investigate opportunities for mapping the extent, depth and condition of peat in need of restoration.
<p>All new development provides, as an absolute minimum, the mandated level of BNG set out in the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>Nutrient neutrality achieved for all new development in the National Park.</p> <p>The recreational impacts arising from planned new development are fully mitigated.</p> <p>(Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare local guidance for the effective implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain in the National Park by Autumn 2023 • The provision of temporary campsites within the National Park is managed through the appropriate use of the Authority’s planning remit, including the use of Article 4 powers, the production of supporting guidance and applying a mitigation framework • Continue to apply the Nitrate Mitigation Checklist for all planning applications proposing a net increase in dwellings or providing overnight accommodation • The Authority’s habitat mitigation scheme operates effectively; and a strategic approach to mitigating impacts is developed, working with neighbouring authorities within the identified ‘zone of influence’.

Net Zero with Nature

Climate change, along with biodiversity loss, is the greatest long-term challenge of the present day. The impact of climate change on the New Forest is likely to be wide reaching and the National Park Authority declared a climate and nature emergency in January 2020. The National Park Partnership Plan aims to contribute towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, through significant cuts in land-based emissions and the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, to both reduce emissions production and remove emissions from the atmosphere.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
A robust and consistent evidence base for climate action to deliver a net zero National Park by 2050. (Lead officer, Olivia McGregor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the carbon storage and sequestration rates of the Park's habitats • Assist the preparation of a consumption-based emissions report for the National Park, (July 2022) • Lead on the development of ambitious targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the National Park.
Enhanced public engagement with action on climate change amongst National Park communities and businesses. (Lead Officer, Olivia McGregor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local businesses to engage with the Net Zero agenda • Promote community action to reduce carbon emissions • Engage Visitors with the Net Zero agenda.
New development incorporates sustainable construction standards and techniques and delivers a range of environmental benefits. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the implementation of the revised National Park Design Guide SPD (2022), which includes guidance on sustainability • Promote environmental construction, e.g. use of Bee Bricks, grey water harvesting, swift nest boxes etc • National Park Building Design Awards recognise the best green building projects in the National Park.
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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With partners, complete a New Forest-wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and identify priority improvements to be made • 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 • Encourage use of the train, bus, cycling, walking and the New Forest Tour as alternatives to driving - through site / route improvements (e.g. new signs, surface improvements), walking festival, online communications, app and via partners.

Thriving Forest

The National Park Authority has a statutory duty to foster the socio-economic well-being of local communities within the National Park in taking forward the two purposes. The National Park Partnership Plan aims sustain a living, working Forest through its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty and support for commoning. There is a vibrant local produce market, access to affordable homes, sustainable tourism and high-value businesses and employees are attracted.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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.
People have more opportunity to follow careers in the environment and outdoor learning sector. (Lead Officer Helen Robinson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ three six-month Kickstart-type trainee placements • Deliver two 'Generation Green' Ranger Apprenticeships in partnership with six New Forest organisations • Explore options for other green skills and jobs / apprenticeships across the Authority and with partner organisations.
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)	Deliver face-to-face engagement, training and online activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000+ Ranger engagement throughout the National Park during patrols, with mobile information unit, at events and in local communities • Training and support to 5+ businesses, 5+ accommodation providers, 8+ local information points and visitor centres.
Long-term coordinated behaviour change initiatives that reduce the impacts of traffic and recreation on National Park residents, commoning and wildlife. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal accidents (focusing on driver awareness, especially at night) • litter (including New Forest Ambassadors and the annual spring clean) • feeding/petting of ponies (including onsite presence at hotspots) • fire risk (including campaign against use of disposable BBQs) • disturbance of ground nesting birds (focused on agreed priority

	locations). Relaunch 'Care for the Forest, Care for Each Other'
Increase the availability of affordable housing for local people. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying more opportunities for rural exception sites; liaising with local communities / Homes England / Hampshire Homes Hub on site finding Securing an appropriate level of on-site affordable housing provision for local people on allocated sites Monitor the availability of the existing stock of affordable and occupancy restricted housing.
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.
Residents within the National Park served by effective and appropriate digital infrastructure i.e. broadband and mobile communications. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	Work with Hampshire County Council, BT Openreach and Natural England to assist the roll out of new digital infrastructure in the Forest.
Continuity of the landscape-scale collaboration demonstrated by the Our Past, Our Future scheme. (Lead Officer, Paul Walton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Legacy Landscape Partnership, identifying actions to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan priorities Seek funding opportunities to continue the valuable work of the Partnership (engaging / adding new partners as necessary).
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"> With NF Business Partnership and Solent LEP, develop the Authority contribution to a green skills and training hub Work with New Forest Produce Ltd to reinforce the value of the New Forest Marque to primary producers, including commoners.
Improved management and oversight of land use change in the National Park. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring new development and change of use of land to ensure compliance with new Local Plan Continue to support the Encroachment Working Party Develop a data base / map of land use change in the National Park.
The Forest's built and historic environment is enhanced. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the three identified Conservation Area Character Appraisals undertaken 'Local List' of non-designated heritage assets within the National Park kept under regular review and updated where appropriate.

<p>Lead and develop archaeology service to protect cultural heritage and enhance understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Heritage higher lever stewardship projects including... • Deliver effective planning and advice service including delivery of service to partners (FE and NFDC), building a more complete picture of heritage assets • Working with communities, volunteers and landowners to engage with the public and improve scheduled ancient monuments (at least 20 improved) and expand 'New Forest Knowledge' users.
<p>Reduce recreational impacts on the most vulnerable sites. (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the condition of promoted walking routes to encourage recreation outside designated land, including more informative signage, so that they are used more often • Establish the Calshot to Ashlett Creek section of the England Coast Path • Work with partners, communities and landowners to progress a spatial plan which helps to identify more appropriate locations for recreation and associated infrastructure • Address illegal use and activities on the Forest.

An Inclusive National Park

The Government’s national landscapes review highlights the opportunities for protected landscapes to deliver for everyone, so that the benefits for health and wellbeing are available to all parts of society. Linked to the second statutory purpose, the National Park Partnership Plan sets out a vision that people within reach of the New Forest, of all backgrounds, abilities and socio-economic groups, value the National Park as an important part of their lives and seek to care for it.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
Volunteer action from individuals, communities and businesses to tackle the nature and climate emergency and care for the National Park. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)	Through direct co-ordination and facilitation of volunteering activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the number of New Forest Ambassadors who carry out litter picking, reporting problems, recording verge parking and sharing the New Forest Code to over 1,000 • Deliver 20+ volunteering days directly to restore habitats and enhance nature and 20+ volunteer days to improve access to and understanding of the special qualities, involving a minimum of 100 volunteers • Work with at least eight community groups to enable nature recovery, action on climate and related heritage activity • Run 2023 volunteer fair (attended by 40+ volunteering organisations and 400+ prospective volunteers) and produce a guide and online volunteering finder.
Improved engagement with new audiences through a stronger partnership approach. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse existing local and national surveys and datasets to understand current, new and potential audiences and demographics • Support the Southampton National Park City and deliver at least 5 bespoke engagement sessions in the city to new audiences to build relationships • Deliver two month-long National Park artist in residency programmes in partnership with local charity SPUD.
Enable people to connect with nature and the National Park landscape to benefit their health and wellbeing. (Lead Officer, Jim Mitchell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver guided walking and cycling, including 190 cycling sessions for up to 400 participants through PedALL • Deliver an online ‘Green Health Hub’ with partners to enable people and help social prescribers, community representatives and individuals to find new opportunities • Support New Forest walking for health scheme enabling 10,000 hours to be spent walking for health.

Team New Forest

The successful delivery of the statutory National Park purposes relies heavily on partnership working and this is fundamental to the Authority's work in and around the New Forest. The National Park Partnership Plan sets out a desired outcome that communities, businesses and organisations work together as a team to deliver the vision of the Partnership Plan, sharing knowledge, ideas and resources to deliver the best for the Forest. The National Park Authority plays a key role in this in helping to co-ordinate and, where appropriate, lead the work of partners.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
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"> • Review and refresh our own Performance Monitoring / Key Performance Indicators within the new Business Plan and Work Programme (working with the Programme Boards) • Propose initial list of research opportunities to local Universities
New Partnership Plan finalised, approved by partner organisations and implemented (Lead Officer, Steve Avery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all delivery partners approve and ratify the final draft of the new Partnership Plan • Ensure clear monitoring mechanisms are established to ensure Plan delivery & impacts over its lifespan • Conclude work on the feasibility of establishing a new Partnership Board and thereafter progress as appropriate.
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"> • In partnership with the New Forest Trust, increase the number of businesses engaged in the 'Love the Forest' Visitor Giving Scheme by 10% from 2018/19 baseline • Support current/new businesses in the scheme by providing four talks/presentations and four training events.
Far-reaching communications activities that increase awareness and engagement with the National Park. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Continue to deliver wildlife campaign to highlight biodiversity and special qualities of the Forest engaging 100,000 in our messages • 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 • Increase numbers signing up to receive our communications by 10%.

Organisational Development

Through the Organisational Development 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.

Outcomes	Actions / Priorities
Achieve 'Organisational Net Zero' by 2030 or earlier. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Authority's Carbon Reduction Plan (published in February 2022), through development of specific actions to achieve the overall targeted reductions • Fit for purpose and sustainable carbon reduction practices in place throughout the organisation and its supply chain.
New Authority Business Plan agreed. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following adoption of the updated Partnership Plan, to draft and publish ambitious strategic actions for the Authority to deliver. Ensure full member and staff engagement and clear, adequate and appropriate monitoring mechanisms for the life of the Plan.
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"> • 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 • Deliver equality, diversity and inclusion training for all staff and members • Ensure our policies, procedures and governance is open, transparent and available to all.
People Plan reviewed and implementation successfully continued. (Lead Officer, Nigel Stone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the three-year review of Plan (Q1) • Continued focus throughout this year on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, leadership of the Climate & Nature Emergency and staff covid-recovery • Update HR policies & procedures in light of new home & flexible working practices (Q2 & Q3)
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"> • Enact the six 'Programme Boards' within the Authority (one for each theme), with clear direction / priorities and links to the Strategic Leadership Team • Review staff resourcing and/or structures in light of new Partnership Plan and Business Plan priorities and actions • Any specific staff learning and development opportunities identified and actioned.

<p>Significant fundraising for existing and new projects undertaken and successful. (Lead Officer, Hilary Makin)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key fundraising requirements clarified, owned/understood and applications underway• Limited Authority resources maximised by using our core funding to leverage further funding into the Forest.
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4 Recommendation

That the Committee endorse the report.

Papers:

RAPC 476/22 – Interim Work Programme 2022/23

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising out of this report

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