

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

First Quarter, 2015-16 Work Programme

Protect

We will endeavour to ensure the qualities that make the National Park a unique and special place are conserved, enhanced and resilient.

Protect Priority 1: Enhancing the New Forest's landscapes and habitats

We will work with land managers, land owners and commoners to enhance the New Forest's landscapes and wildlife habitats, by:

- giving clear advice and guidance, using the Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Action Plan and tranquillity mapping
- developing and delivering projects which restore, enhance and maintain important wildlife sites
- offering support, advice and training
- working with partners to enhance the New Forest at a 'landscape scale'.

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
<p>Complete the Our Past Our Future Landscape Partnership bid for submission. Maintain the partnerships concerned with the Restoring Lost landscapes element of the programme which will deliver landscape and habitat enhancements, enabling work to begin once the outcome of the submission is known.</p>	<p>Rachael Gallagher</p>	<p>Final development work was undertaken to compile the final documents for the Our Past, Our Future LPS submission. This included production of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan which included detailed project plans for each of the 22 projects, budgets and income, partnership agreement, application form and other supporting documents. The final round 2 application was submitted to HLF on 22 May 2015. A decision will be made at a HLF committee meeting on 22 September 2015.</p> <p>Ongoing liaison with key partners has taken place including the partners involved in the Restoring Lost Landscapes theme of the scheme.</p> <p>Queries from HLF have been dealt with and a presentation given to a HLF seminar for new Landscape Partnership Scheme project manager to share the experience of developing a scheme.</p> <p>Fifth claim and progress report has been submitted to HLF and an evaluation report has been written.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

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Continue our representation on the New Forest Catchment Partnership to maintain effective management of the whole river system.	Ian Barker	<p>The Authority co-hosts the New Forest Catchment with our partner The Freshwater Habitats Trust. Our Partnership has secured funding of over £37,000 for activity this year including specific schemes to assist landowners and businesses on the Sowley Catchment to improve the water environment, as well as other partnership projects. In this quarter the Partnership has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ responded to the South East River Basin Management Plan consultation by the Environment Agency on behalf of the Partnership. ▪ provided information on the New Forest Catchment work as part of a conference with Danish Water Environment experts and local partners including the Avon Catchment ▪ supported proposals for stream restoration, the outcomes of which support the vision of the Catchment Partnership and help meet those of the Water Framework Directive 		
Continue representation on the Solent and New Forest Special Protection Area groups.	Ian Barker	<p>Officers within the Policy Team and Environment & Rural Economy support the Solent Partnership and lead activity on the Authority's own mitigation plan for the New Forest SPA. Activity in Q1 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a meeting with Natural England to establish joint position on impacts of development within the New Forest; ▪ supported partnership requests for input to the developing work on the Solent SPA ▪ initiated an SLA with NFDC for a People & Wildlife Ranger to assist delivery of their own New Forest SPA mitigation scheme 		

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Develop a Green Infrastructure Plan for the National Park, linking with plans and strategies of neighbouring authorities.	Paul Walton/David Illsley	No work scheduled on this in Q1 Meeting of external partners scheduled for September to consider how a Green Infrastructure Plan can be developed and how it might link with the review of the Core Strategy		
Establish the scope and means of monitoring the status of priority habitats and wildlife species to help inform future management decisions.	Ian Barker	Work on this to be initiated and reported in Q4. Associated monitoring work in Q1 included: Support for the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) to establish a New Forest survey for smooth snake with input from volunteers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a meeting with local experts to investigate the findings of HLS bird surveys ▪ commissioning advice on the scope of research required to understand factors affecting key heathland ground nesting birds 		
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for landowners, farmers and commoners.	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Assisted over 200 commoners with Basic Payment Scheme claims by the mid June deadline. Organised an event with the RPA and NFU to explain Basic Payments Scheme to commoners. Also worked with farmers and landowners on their farms and holdings to offer advice. Worked with councils who own land to support their management. Completed development phase of three Our Past, Our Future projects relating to land management enhancements and rural skills.		

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Establish a 'Growing the Forest' forum to identify and take forward landscape scale enhancements in the Forest and its 20km 'halo', using the ecosystem services maps as an evidence base for future partnership working.	Paul Walton	No work scheduled for Q1. The National Park is a pilot area for a Defra led project to quantify the extent and condition of the ecosystem assets within the Park boundary. This work is due to report in September.		
Work with public and voluntary sector to identify and safeguard land for use as back-up grazing for commoning.	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Continue to graze Barton Common, owned by New Milton Town Council, with New Forest ponies owned by young commoners and their family. Working with two private landowners to facilitate grazing agreements with commoners on their land, one in Wellow and one on the Avon Valley.		
Continue the development of the Working Woodlands project as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund submission and link with emerging plans for the development of a woodfuel hub network in the Enterprise M3 LEP area.	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Development stage of Working Woodlands project completed by May deadline for OPOF submission. Development of the economic side of this project will continue through the three years of the OPOF project.		
Complete and publish a tranquillity map for the National Park and identify actions needed to ensure tranquil areas can be enhanced.	Sarah Kelly	Tranquillity Map completed and on NPA website. Actions being identified to enhance tranquil areas.		
Seek support for the undergrounding of high voltage electricity cables in the north of the Forest.	Sarah Kelly	National Grid working on technical feasibility study for line at Hale Purlieu. Further reporting in Q2 on progress of feasibility report and shortlisting.		
Complete a climate change adaptation plan for the National Park.	Andy Brennan	Work underway on climate change risk assessment, identify threats and opportunities.		

Protect Priority 2: Ensuring new development is sympathetic and in keeping with its surroundings

We will seek the highest quality of development in the New Forest to minimise impacts on its special qualities and deliver enhancements by:

- providing clear National Park planning policies and a high quality planning service
- working with neighbouring authorities in the development of their planning policies and proposals that may affect the National Park
- increasing knowledge and evidence about changes to the special qualities of the National Park
- supporting delivery of green infrastructure plans within and outside the National Park to reduce pressure on the most sensitive areas.

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Undertake a full review of our adopted Core Strategy (2010), taking into account the experiences of the last four years and changes in national planning policy (introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance).	David Illsley	The Authority's Planning Development Control Committee approved an initial consultation document in June 2015, marking the first stage in reviewing the Authority's local planning policies. Awareness raising of the review in Q1 included presentations to the Consultative Panel; the Parish Quadrant meetings; and the annual Planning Agent's meeting. The formal public consultation will commence in September 2015.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park.	Steve Avery	The Authority has continued to successfully negotiate financial contributions towards habitat mitigation measures within the Park from new developments. To date over £10,000 has been collected and all of the funding has been allocated to specific projects in the New Forest.		
Re-visit the merits of introducing Community Infrastructure Levies for the National Park (now that in most cases we are unable to collect developer contributions for the provision of 'off site' affordable housing and public open space).	Steve Avery	There remains considerable uncertainty regarding the national framework for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements. The Government's November 2014 changes to the process for seeking developer contributions was legally challenged and in July 2015 the High Court found in favour of the challenge and quashed the Government's amendments.		The Authority will need to assess the implications of the High Court's decision in July 2015 to quash the Government's amendments to the S106 system. The Government has appealed the Court's decision and it is unclear if they will look to implement the changes in a revised form.
Work with the other Hampshire minerals and waste planning authorities to prepare additional planning guidance on the safeguarding of minerals resources and oil and gas development.	David Illsley	The Authority's Planning Development Control Committee approved the two consultation draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in May 2015, prior to a six-week public consultation starting in June. A stakeholder event on the two draft SPDs was arranged for July 2015.		

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Launch the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	Hilary Makin/David Illsley	Following endorsement of the principles behind the awards at the March 2015 Planning Development Control Committee meeting, presentations were given at the Parish Quadrant meetings in Spring 2015 and the annual Planning Agent's meeting in June 2015 to raise awareness of the awards and what they are looking to achieve. The awards were launched on 1 July 2015.		
Support the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Action Plan by working with parish councils in delivering the actions identified in the Plan.	Lisa Crouch	The Authority continues to support the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group. A meeting was held with external statutory bodies to discuss the Verge Protection Project in March and the group has been following up these actions throughout the spring and summer months. A further meeting with the statutory bodies is to be held in September to discuss progress. A Verge Protection Leaflet has also been produced to draft stage.		

Protect Priority 3: Conserving the historic environment and local way of life

We will support the conservation of features that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the New Forest, by:

- enabling local people to retain and promote traditional building skills and crafts
- developing initiatives that encourage recording and celebration of features of interest to local communities
- providing advice and resources for specific community-led projects that promote local distinctiveness and cultural heritage
- improving knowledge and skills amongst the public to further protect the archaeology of the National Park.

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Deliver specific New Forest Higher Level Scheme agreement objectives, including bringing a minimum of 10 monuments into favourable condition and continuation of LIDAR data verification.	Lawrence Shaw	No field work has been undertaken during Q1 due to allow for ground nesting birds. Lidar analysis continues restoration on two monuments including the clearance of a Bronze Age barrow at East Boldre and the installation of a gate on a World War II bunker near Holmsley		
From a completed scoping exercise, identify the initial phase of work required to address gaps in the knowledge of specific time periods of the Forest's archaeological record.	Frank Green	Scoping exercise to commence in Q3		