

BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2018

Second 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)
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.	Rachael Gallagher	<p>HLF have awarded the grant for the Our Past, Our Future LPS.</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>Work has been progressed for a Launch event and Press Release to be held in October, recruitment and work programme.</p>		

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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. In this quarter the Partnership has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progressed plans with landowners to implement measures to control diffuse pollution in the Sowley Catchment, work has taken place to secure consents required for the works which are due to be completed by end of Q4 ▪ Met with the Environment Agency to facilitate new staff working in the area and contribute evidence to their local work plans ▪ Represented the New Forest at a South-east Regional Catchment meeting held by the Agency ▪ Worked with partners to analyse areas in the New Forest catchment threatened by septic tank discharges and developed materials to provide information to owners of septic tanks, work is underway to communicate this to owners of tanks. 		
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 Q2 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting requests for information and attendance at Solent recreation mitigation meetings. ▪ We facilitated local partners to identify opportunities for local coastal mitigation projects and produce a bid for resources 		

		<p>from the regional mitigation fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We finalised a report on evidence and research to inform consideration of future action by the Recreation Management Strategy group. ▪ We have initiated liaison with Natural England to develop local approaches to coastal access which have regard to the Solent protected areas. 		
Develop a Green Infrastructure Plan for the National Park, linking with plans and strategies of neighbouring authorities.	Paul Walton/David Illsley	Meeting with stakeholders organised for October – further reporting in Q3		
Establish the scope and means of monitoring the status of priority habitats and wildlife species to help inform future management decisions.	Ian Barker	<p>Work on this to be initiated and reported in Q4. Associated work in Q2 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful start of smooth snake survey by over 20 volunteers led by Amphibian And Reptile Conservation, funded by the Authority's Sustainable Communities Fund. ▪ Input to the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre's Steering Group ▪ Input to Defra/NPE initiative to define extent of priority habitat in appropriate management. 		
Provide a programme of land management support, advice and training for landowners, farmers and commoners.	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Both reactive and proactive work being undertaken through NFLAS and the Community Wildlife Plans Project to deliver advice and support to land managers. Training being planned for later in the year across two days aimed at needs of commoners. First edition of new newsletter designed and written and sent out to nearly 600 commoner addresses. Working with the National Trust to deliver small grants on the National Trust commons. Following the success of the HLF bid, the Restoring Lost Landscapes Project and Rural Skills Project are		

		due to start as part of OPOF and these projects will deliver a significant amount of this element of the Protect programme.		
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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	Defra report on the extent and condition of New Forest ecosystem services delayed to October – further report in Q3		
Work with public and voluntary sector to identify and safeguard land for use as back-up grazing for commoning.	Julie Melin-Stubbs	Ongoing work with all landowners to identify grazing sites which could be let as back up grazing for commoners. Working to identify a grazier for one site in the Avon Valley at present		Finding sites which landowners are willing to let to commoners rather than to much higher paying recreational equine owners is very difficult. Land is more and more likely to be let to recreational horse owners. Equally when sites come up they are often poor quality grazing or in geographical locations unsuitable for commoners requiring land either due to distance or issues with TB if the land is for cattle. Sometimes when

				we introduce people to each other they cannot reach a deal due to price or longevity of the tenure the landowner is willing to give.
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 work finished in May 2015 and submitted as part of the bid. The 1.5 days a week biodiversity element of the project will begin in 2016. Alison Barnes and Paul Walton have been liaising with different staff members at FC to explore linking this project with the project they have submitted to the M3 LEP and if that bid is successful we aim to bid to that fund to extend the WW project. Andy Brennan is due to carry out some work on this area of the project starting from April 2016.		Funding for the economic side of this project is unknown at present and reliant upon FC and the M3 LEP although Andy Brennan has been able to put aside some time in his work programme during 16/17 to do some work on this.
Complete and publish a tranquillity map for the National Park and identify actions needed to ensure tranquil areas can be enhanced.	Sarah Kelly	Tranquillity mapping complete and on NPA website with explanatory page.		
Seek support for the undergrounding of high voltage electricity cables in the north of the Forest.	Sarah Kelly	High voltage line at Hale Purlieu shortlisted by National Grid in September for further feasibility work over the next 12 months.		
Complete a climate change adaptation plan for the National Park.	Andy Brennan	Risk assessment drafted for sea level change, biodiversity and agriculture		

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.

Action/Outcome	Officer	Progress during the Quarter	RAG status	Risks and mitigation (if amber or red)
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 initial public consultation on the review of the Authority's local planning policies was launched in September 2015. This was preceded by awareness raising meetings with local town and parish councils and other representative groups. Meetings continue to take place with surrounding planning authorities to discuss cross-boundary issues including habitat mitigation and housing numbers.		
Co-ordinate the use and distribution of developer contributions to support habitat mitigation measures within the National Park.	Steve Avery	The Authority has successfully negotiated financial contributions towards habitat mitigation measures within the Park and along the Solent coastline from new developments. To date over £16,000 has been collected and all of the funding has been allocated to specific projects in the New Forest and the Solent coastline.		
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	Following the High Court's decision in July 2015 to quash the Government's amendments to S106 agreements, there is uncertainty over the national framework for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 agreements. In the short term it appears that the Authority will be able to continue to negotiate S106 financial contributions from new developments. It remains to be seen if this option will be available in the medium term should the Government challenge the High Court's decision or introduce their amendments through another route (e.g. primary legislation).		The Authority will need to assess the implications of the Government's response to the High Court's decision on S106 agreements. If further restrictions on the use of S106 agreements are brought in, the Authority will need to decide whether to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
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	Public consultation on the two draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) ran from June – August 2015. The consultation comments received have now been considered and the final versions of the SPDs will be presented to the full Authority meeting in January 2016 for adoption.		

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Launch the local design awards scheme to recognise and promote exemplary development in the National Park.	David Illsley	The Building Design Awards were successfully launched in July 2015, with nominations sought by the end of October 2015. A number of nominations were received in each category from the public, architects and local parish councils. A Member Panel met on 23 November 2015 to consider the nominations. The awards are to be presented at the Authority meeting on 21 January 2016.		
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 work of Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group. The Group has made good progress with their verge damage project and in Q2 this has included a follow up meeting with the statutory bodies of the New Forest and a commitment to trial a number of measures to reduce the impacts of verge damage on specific sites within the Conservation Area.		

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	<p>Since July 2015 the project has been working on data cleaning and management. Work has also been undertaken to prepare the 1,285ha. of analysis and survey to reach the yearly target.</p> <p>On the 17 September the HLS Lidar temporary exhibition was launched. Running until 24 January 2016, at the New Forest Centre in Lyndhurst, this free exhibition looks at the role the Lidar mapping and survey work has played in the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme. It is hoped that the exhibition will be seen by thousands of visitors and teach people about the important landscape, habitats and heritage of the New Forest open Crown Land. A press release linked to the exhibition saw articles on the BBC News website, an interview on Radio Solent, a guest article on the Ordnance Survey website and an article in the Lymington Times.</p>		
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		