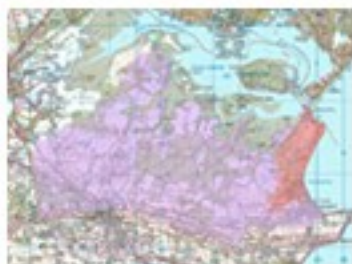


Purbeck Beaver Project: phased project proposal

Wider project vision

The following stages will form part of the Purbeck beaver reintroduction plan:

- Phase 1: Little Sea
- Phase 2: Purbeck Heaths NNR & surrounding land
- Phase 3: Longer-term establishment in the wider landscape



Each phase will be planned in detail in isolation, to include an exit strategy and the criteria required to move to the next phase. A full licence application, detailed catchment-specific management plan and funding plan will also be produced for each phase.

Estimated timescales (subject to criteria being met):

- Phase 1 - Autumn 2021
- Phase 2- TBC: Criteria dependent
- Phase 3 - TBC: Dependent on phase 2 & wider government policy



Phase 1: Little Sea



Geographic boundaries:

The catchment of Little Sea can be defined as illustrated - bordered by natural catchment boundaries and Ferry road, to include Pigley stream & woodland bordering the cricket ground. Any watercourses beyond this boundary would not be included in phase 1 of the project.

Policy:

- 2 or 3 pairs of beavers to be released (subject to availability from other UK projects).
- Beavers will not be allowed to establish anywhere beyond the phase 1 boundaries. Any individuals migrating out-with the project area would be identified by field signs, trapped and relocated to a chosen site within the project scope, or another UK destination.

Benefits:

- Naturally contained catchment bordered by sea and unsuitable habitat, meaning beavers are unlikely to spread easily
- Very few potential conflicts
- Likely increases in biodiversity & carbon storage
- Opportunities for public education
- Opportunities for renewed enjoyment and connections with nature

Criteria:

- License approval by DEFRA
- Funding

Management requirements:

- Ferry roads culverts: Grilles, trash screens and road "beaver crossing" signs
- Deterrent fencing reinforcement at Studland sewage works
- Protection of specified trees at Knoll House Hotel as required
- Public engagement & land user signage
- Ongoing monitoring of habitat impacts, beaver territory & animal welfare to inform Phase 2 & 3
- In the event of any beavers moving beyond the catchment, trapping & relocation



National Trust

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Working in partnership with:



Forestry England

Dorset

Catchment Partnerships



Purbeck Beaver Project: phased project proposal

Phase 2: Purbeck Heaths NNR & surrounding land

Criteria:

- Detailed management plan agreed with landowners: Likely impacts identified on habitats & landscape, Specific feature protection, Research & monitoring programme created with baseline data collected.
- Licence approval by DEFRA
- National management policy in place, identifying who is responsible for beaver management
- Local management policy agreed: Policy for animals migrating beyond project area; Decision-making protocol for management strategies; Agreements of ongoing roles and responsibilities.
- Funding in place to fulfil management requirements
- Project plans communicated with sufficient stakeholder support

Benefits:

- Further increases to biodiversity and carbon storage
- Restoration and naturalisation of the lower Corfe River
- Improved water quality in the lower Corfe River & reduced pollution into Poole Harbour habitats
- Public education and wider community engagement opportunities
- Developing transferrable management learning and research opportunities for national beaver reintroduction strategies
- Eco-tourism opportunities for local businesses
- Opportunities for renewed enjoyment and connections with nature

Exit strategy:

At the end of phase 2 there are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) Proceed to phase 3, subject to criteria being met.
- 2) Do not proceed to phase 3, but beavers are allowed to remain in the phase 2 area, subject to ongoing management & budgetary security.
- 3) Project ends. All beavers are removed.



Geographic boundaries:

The proposed scope of phase two will likely expand the project to cover the Eastern Purbeck Heaths, the Rempstone Estate and land surrounding and including the lower Corfe River. The western boundaries will stretch from the Arne peninsula to the border of Middlebere Heath, and to the Purbeck ridge by Stonehill Down nature reserve.

Management requirements:

Whilst this is in continued development, the phase 2 project area has featured heavily within the feasibility stakeholder engagement process:

- Identify key features needing protection before beavers are released using e.g. screens, flow devices, reinforced fencing, and tree protection (painting or wiring).
- Identify other features that need regular monitoring, with agreed management implemented.
- Provide effective and rapid support to any properties where impacts are experienced.
- Collaboratively create a local management strategy in line with national policy, to include decision-making guidelines and agreed responsibilities.
- Develop community involvement opportunities to expand local management capacity.

Policy: tbc

Phase 3: Wider landscape

Criteria:

- National management policy in place
- Ensure locally adapted management strategies, as tested within phase 2, are agreed and in line with national policy.
- Produce a clear management framework to provide options, aid decision making and ensure a consistent response
- Sufficient trained personnel to reactively respond to impacted landowners & assess situations
- Sufficient financial resources to be able to assist and support where action is required
- Funding available to incentivise landowners to make space for water, beavers & nature, through schemes to offset nutrients & carbon, create biodiversity or ELMs
- Clear agreements on long-term management responsibilities – regional & national
- Public awareness and good communication between parties

Benefits:

- Transition into long-term native species management
- Better connected increases to biodiversity and carbon storage at a landscape scale, contributing to government targets for nature recovery
- Restoration and naturalisation of river processes increasing their resilience i.e. potential reduction in flash flooding and against drought
- Improved water quality filtration for the Corfe River & Poole Harbour habitats
- Public education and wider community engagement opportunities
- Eco-tourism opportunities for diversifying local businesses
- Opportunities for renewed enjoyment and connections with nature