



LIFE Project Number
LIFE13NAT/UK/000451

Inception Report
Covering the project activities from 01/07/2014 to 31/03/2015

Reporting Date
31/03/2015

LIFE+ PROJECT NAME or Acronym

Restoring Humberhead Peatlands: LIFE+ Project

Data Project

Project location	England
Project start date:	01/07/2014
Project end date:	30/06/2017
Total budget	€ 5,592,243
EC contribution:	€ 2,638,276
(%) of eligible costs	48.01%

Data Beneficiary

Name Beneficiary	Natural England
Contact person	Mr Julian Small
Postal address	4th Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX
Telephone	447770 408259
Fax:	N/A
E-mail	Julian.Small@naturalengland.org.uk
Project Website	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/humberhead-peatlands-restoration-life-project

Table of Contents

2. List of abbreviations	3
3. Executive summary	3
3.1 General progress	3
3.2 Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable	4
3.3 Problems encountered	4
4. Administrative part	4
4.1 Description of project management	4
4.2 Organogram of the project team and the project management structure	5
4.3 Partnership agreements status (incl. signature) and key content	5
5. Technical part	5
5.1 Actions	6
5.1.1 Action A1 (Project Establishment)	6
5.1.2 Action A2 (Review Thorne and Hatfield Moors Site Management Plan)	7
5.1.3 Action A3 (Re-confirm all required consents and licenses in place).....	8
5.1.4 Action C1 (Evapotranspiration reduction (scrub removal) on Hatfield Moors)...	8
5.1.5 Action C2 (Evapotranspiration reduction (scrub removal) on Thorne Moors)....	9
5.1.6 Action C3 (Control rhododendron regrowth using herbicide on Thorne Moors). 9	
5.1.7 ActionC4 (Install weirs on arterial ditches, install peat plugs/plastic dams on compartments with cutting and baulk technology topography, and internal bunding on drained, but uncut, areas of peatland on Hatfield Moors)	10
5.1.8 Action C5 (Peat plugs, bunds and weirs to optimise water levels for bog restoration on milled areas of Thorne Moors).....	10
5.1.9 Action C6 (Construction of a pumping station on Thorne Moors SAC)	11
5.1.10 Action D1 (Radio-tracking study of nightjars, to investigate response to peatland restoration works)	11
5.1.11 Action D2 (Use of Common Standards Monitoring and the assessment of invertebrate assemblages populations in response to the large-scale peatland restoration works)	12
5.1.12 Action D3 (Supply and installation of additional water-level data-loggers to monitor water levels across the SACs)	12
5.1.13 Action D4 (Socio-economic impact and ecosystem function investigation/report)	13
5.1.14 Action E1 (Engagement with local communities, to ensure that there is an understanding of the works involved with landscape-scale bog restoration).....	13
5.1.15 Action E2 (Networking with Other Projects).....	14
5.1.16 Action E3 (End of Project Conference and on-site mid-project workshop)	15
5.1.17 Action E4 (Project website and publications).....	15

5.1.18 Action F1 (Project supervision and oversight (Project management)).....	17
5.1.19 Action F2 (Purchase of equipment and vehicles)	17
5.1.20 Action F3 (Audit).....	18
5.1.21 Action F4 (AfterLIFE Plan)	18
5.2 Availability of appropriate licenses and authorisations	18
5.3 Envisaged progress until next report	18
6. Financial part	18
6.1 Putting in place the accounting system	18
6.2 Continued availability of co-financing	19
6.3.Costs incurred	19
7. Annexes	21
7.1 Partnership agreements	21
7.2 Deliverables	21
7.3 Maps, drawing, technical memos etc. as appropriate	21
7.4 Output indicators. Definition (attached to main report)	21
7.5 Other	21

2. List of abbreviations

DE IDB	Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
NE	Natural England
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
NCA	Humberhead Levels National Character Area
NIA	Nature Improvement Area
NNR	National Nature Reserves
WLMP	Water Level Management Plan (WLMP)

3. Executive summary

3.1 General progress

There has been steady progress made to date. Key achievements include the following:

- A full project team recruited and in post, along with systems and processes to ensure the smooth running of the project. These include the steering group and establishing a partnership agreement between Natural England (NE) and Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board (DE IDB) (see Annex 7.1).
- The successful launch of the project on 17th October 2014 attended and endorsed by local councillors, stakeholders, National and European politicians.
- The clearance of 46 ha of scrub, dense rhododendron and less dense small birch, and repair to the very wet areas on Middle Moors Tram, required for access to undertake works and improve access for local communities. The installation of 88 small plastic on New Moors and the first telemetry enabling the operation of a tilting weir controlled automatically through water level sensors within the bog. In addition,

2000m of peat bunding completed on Green Belt, along with trackside bunds/dams and ancillary track repairs (see Annex 7.3.1)

- A web page dedicated to the project on GOV.uk website, including a downloadable project leaflet used to publicise the project (see Annex 7.2.1)

3.2 Assessment as to whether the project objectives and work plan are still viable

The objectives and work plan are still viable and there have not been any substantive changes since the bid was written. There have been some delays in recruiting staff and in starting some actions. It is possible that this time can be made up by the end of the project. This situation will be reviewed at the Mid Terms report stage and the Commission advised accordingly.

3.3 Problems encountered

- **Recruitment delays** - the project is currently behind schedule by approximately six months due to delays in recruitment. NE is bound by strict Cabinet Office rules which mean recruitment must go through several internal recruitment stages before it can be advertised externally. This has meant a delay in recruiting key project positions, with the Project Manager initially starting part-time on the 25th February 2015 and the final member of staff joining the project team on the 2nd March 2015.
- **Scrub clearance** - existing NE staff, alongside direct delivery by the first arriving members of the Project Team from 15th December 2014, have organised the removal of 46 ha of scrub. Scrub cannot be cleared during the bird nesting season, i.e. April to late August, due to the risk of disturbing the nests of wild birds, thus restricting scrub clearance activity. The clearance of 572 ha of scrub on Hatfield and Thorne Moors remains the objective. We are examining all possible means of delivering the objective within the original timescale.
- **Thorne Moors Water Level Management Plan Audit** – The Associated Beneficiary has had an audit carried out of the Thorne Moors WLMP. This identified a number of unsatisfactory governance features. An Action Plan to address these failings is in process of implementation. No adverse impact on the delivery of the project is anticipated.
- **NE Head Office relocation** - as part of rationalisation under the Defra estates strategy, and identifying costs savings for NE, the Sheffield office closed in March 2015. This means that the correspondence address for the LIFE+ project is now the York office, as detailed on the first page of this Inception Report.
- **Engagement with local community** – the plans to engage the local community, specifically through the ‘Planning for Real’ events have been delayed due to issues recruiting the project team and with existing members of NE staff being focused on other LIFE+ project actions. Works is now taking place to deliver the first community event in Thorne in June, followed by a further two events in Crowle and Hatfield Woodhouse, by the end of September 2015.

4 Administrative part

4.1 Description of project management

A detailed description of the project set up and management can be found under Actions A1 (section 5.1.1) and F1 (section 5.1.18).

4.2 Organogram of the project team and the project management structure

See Annex 7.5.1

4.3 Partnership agreements status (incl. date of signature) and key content

A Partnership Agreement with the DE IDB is in place and was signed in March 2015 (see Annex 7.1). This Agreement outlines the roles and obligations of NE and the DE IDB in terms of delivery of the project and associated communications activity as well as financial aspects including the payment terms and financial reporting.

5 Technical part

The Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve (NNR) consists of two neighbouring sites, Thorne Moors (including subsets of Goole & Crowle Moors) and Hatfield Moors, both to the north-east of Doncaster on the border of South Yorkshire/North Lincolnshire. It is the UK's largest lowland raised bog complex and is a Natura 2000 site:

- Thorne Moors SAC (1909.38ha) – degraded lowland raised mire with potential for restoration;
- Hatfield Moors SAC (1363.55 ha) – degraded lowland raised mire with potential for restoration;
- Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA (2449.2ha) – breeding European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*.

Peat was extracted commercially from the 1870s until 2004, with surface milling taking place from the late 1980s, typically only leaving 50cm depth of peat. The centre of the 2 sites had larger amounts of peat removed than the edges. The resulting topography is opposite to that found in an undamaged ombrotrophic bog, which traditionally would be dome-shape, highest in the centre. Peat-forming vegetation will grow if water levels are within +/- 20cm of the peat's surface. However, the topographic changes mean achieving such a hydrological balance is a challenge. The Moors are divided into SAC/SSSI Units and none are currently in favourable condition. Water needs to be more efficiently drained from the milled areas during peak rainfall. Conversely, there is the need for terracing across the peatlands to retain water during dry periods, in order to keep water levels within restoration targets. On older cuttings not subjected to surface milling, and with a baulk and cutting topography, substantial works are required to remove scrub and raise water levels to around ground level.

The project's main objectives are:

1. Lowland Raised Bog Restoration

To undertake conservation actions to establish a stable water table within +/- 20cm of ground level across the 3273ha SAC. This will enable peat-forming vegetation to re-establish on the degraded peat bog surface and ensure both Moors achieve favourable condition.

2. European nightjar

Increase European nightjar population by 15% from current population of 80-88 territorial males.

3. Monitoring

Monitor bog recovery via:

- Water-level data-logger recording;
- recording the re-establishment of peat-forming vegetation;
- monitoring the effects the bog restoration on the breeding European nightjar;
- assess bog restoration on key invertebrate assemblages.

4. Dissemination, communication & engagement

Increase awareness amongst local communities, visitors and key scientific audiences.

5.1. Actions

This section provides detailed information on each sub action, including a description of what has been done, problems encountered, mitigation (where appropriate) and achievement of objectives. The progress of each sub action is presented in a Gantt chart (see Annex 7.5.4).

5.1.1. Action A1 (Project Establishment)

This action relates to recruiting the project team, establishing the Project Steering Group and initiating procurement processes.

EU LIFE+ contract signed

This sub-action was completed more quickly than anticipated. The signed grant agreement is dated 24 June 2014 (see Annex 7.2.2).

Establishment of a Project Steering Group

The project steering group was established in July 2014 when an initial project planning meeting was held with relevant partners. Thereafter eight steering group meetings have been held with the most recent held on 23rd March 2015.

The group comprises nine members including NE, DE IDB, North Lincolnshire Council, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Thorne and Hatfield Conservation Forum and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. The attached Terms of Reference outlines the detail and has been agreed by the steering group (see Annex 7.5.2).

The group has met every month as the project has taken longer than anticipated to establish, mainly due to delays to recruitment. However, it is expected that meetings will be held quarterly from June 2015 onwards. NE staff who have been covering the Project Manager post have presented regular progress reports against a summary of the project milestones with partners providing regular expertise and feedback. Minutes of the meetings are attached (see annex 7.5.3).

Arrangements are being made for the Project Managers for this and the Cumbrian Peatland Restoration LIFE+ Project to attend the steering group meetings of each other's projects, to encourage information flow and lessons learned between the two projects.

Project indicators

A project indicator report has been completed (see annex 7.4).

Recruitment of the Project Team

This was completed on 2nd March 2015, when the final member of the Project Team's contract started. The project team consists of 11, all these appointments were recruited externally.

- Project Manager – David Hargreaves
- Monitoring Officer – Dr Richard Smith
- Administrative Officer – Amanda Lane
- Project Foreman – Mark Outhwaite and Edward Brightman
- Estate Workers – Charlotte Dooley, James Roberts, Brad Carpenter, Gareth Trewick, Lukas Rowe and Benjamin Senior

Problems encountered

- Recruitment - This has been completed a great deal more slowly than anticipated. The reason for this is UK Cabinet Office rules on recruitment into the public sector, which necessitates a multi-stage process to recruitment. This process entailed jobs being advertised in the following areas sequentially:
 - within the Civil Service redeployment pool
 - internally within the Civil Service
 - internally within NE
 - external advertising.

The Project did obtain permission, in the case of the Estate Worker and Project Foreman roles, to advertise within the Civil Service and within NE simultaneously, since it was considered unlikely that there would be suitable candidates within the Civil Service due to the specific practical skills required for the roles. Additional delays were caused by a candidate for the Administrator role and a candidate for the Foreman role declining their offers at the Civil Service redeployment pool and the external stages respectively. The start dates for the various post-holders have therefore been;

- Project Manager – 25th February 2015
- Project Administrator – 16th February 2015
- Project Monitoring Officer – 9th February 2015
- Project Foreman – 15th December 2014 and 2nd March 2015
- Project Estate Workers – 15th December 2014 to 2nd February 2015.

Although existing NE staff, Julian Small, Senior NNR Manager and Sue Plaxton, Lead Adviser, the Humberhead Levels Partnership, have devoted considerable time to the Project hitherto, the delays in recruitment have led to the delivery of other actions being delayed, as will be discussed. The original date for completing recruitment was 30th September 2014. However, the last appointment was not made until 15th December 2014.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Establishment of a Project Steering Group	Complete
Signing of the Grant Agreement	Complete
Recruitment of the Project Team	Complete

5.1.2. Action A2 (Review Thorne and Hatfield Moors Site Management Plan)

Some individual elements of the site management plan have been reviewed, to ensure that the plan reflects both lessons learned since the LIFE+ application was submitted, and to ensure that the plan integrates the LIFE+ actions fully with the totality of the management of the protected areas, specifically:

- identification of the key areas for scrub clearance (evapo-transpiration reduction)
- detail of hydrological infra-structure to be delivered through actions C4 and C5 during the period 1/10/14 to 31/3/15.

Problems encountered

- This Action is not fully complete, due directly to the recruitment delays leading to a re-prioritisation by existing NE staff towards direct project delivery against other project actions. It is not envisaged that this will have an impact on any other project deliverables.

Achieving the action objective

Action objective	Progress
Management Site Plan Reviewed	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 September 2015.

5.1.3. Action A3 (Re-confirm all required consents and licenses in place)

Consideration was given to the requirement for a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the works, but as all the works are necessary for the management of the site it was agreed that they fell outside the scope of the regulations. All SSSI consents for all the LIFE+ Project actions are in place. However, once the detailed methodology for the construction of the pumping station is completed, it is likely that we will need to request specific consent to cover elements such as the moving and storage of materials around the protected area. This is because this is a particularly large project, and although the pumping station is consented, the construction works has the potential to damage the site unless planned carefully.

Clarification was obtained from the Forestry Commission concerning any consents/licences required for the 2014/15 winter works for actions C1 and C2, and these were obtained where necessary. All mapping and mensuration work for felling licence applications for actions C1 and C2 for the remainder of the project is complete. Detailed discussions have taken place with the Forestry Commission over the scope of the consents needed for the remainder of actions C1 and C2, culminating with a site visit by the regional Forestry and Woodland Advisory Council on 11th March 2015. This could include an EIA under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. A timetable has been agreed to ensure that all consents necessary for remainder of actions C1 and C2 are in place by September 2015

Problems encountered

- This Action is not fully complete, due directly to the recruitment delays leading to a re-prioritisation by existing NE staff towards direct project delivery against other project actions. However, a timetable has been agreed with the regional Forestry and Woodland Advisory Council to ensure that all consents necessary for remainder of actions C1 and C2 are in place by September 2015. It is not envisaged that this will have an impact on any other project deliverables.

Achieving the action objective

Action objective	Progress
Confirmation that all necessary consents are in place	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 September 2015.

5.1.4. Action C1 (Evapotranspiration reduction (scrub removal) on Hatfield Moors)

Due to the delays in recruitment of the Project staff existing NE staff had organised the removal of 14.3ha of scrub in late 2014, using contractors (external assistance).

It is not clear whether the clearance of 234ha of scrub is feasible within the existing Project timescale. Scrub cannot be removed during the bird nesting season, i.e. April to late August, due to the risk of disturbing the nests of wild birds, and therefore contravening the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), thus restricting period of activity. The clearance of 234 ha of scrub on Hatfield Moors remains the objective. We are examining all possible means of delivering the objective within the original timescale. The intention is to clear 120ha of scrub on Hatfield Moors between August 2015 and 31st March 2016, in order to achieve the original year 2 milestone.

Problems encountered

- Due to delays in recruitment of the Project staff, the removal of 54 ha of scrub by the 31 March 2015 is behind schedule. The revised milestone date for the removal of 54 ha of scrub to get this action back on track is outlined below.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Scrub Removal of 54 ha on Hatfield Moors SAC	Delayed but expected to complete by 31 March 2016
Scrub Removal of 134 ha on Hatfield Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2016
Scrub Removal of 234 ha on Hatfield Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2017

5.1.5. Action C2 (Evapotranspiration reduction (scrub removal) on Thorne Moors)

Existing NE staff, alongside direct delivery by the first arriving members of the Project Team from 15th December 2014, have organised the removal of 32ha of scrub. Whether the clearance of the full 338ha of scrub is feasible within the existing Project timescale is unclear. Scrub cannot be cleared during the bird nesting season, i.e. April to late August, due to the risk of disturbing the nests of wild birds, and therefore contravening the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), thus restricting period of activity. The clearance of 338 ha of scrub on Thorne Moors remains the objective. The intention is to clear 156ha of scrub on Thorne Moors between August 2015 and 31st March 2016, in order to achieve the original year 2 milestone.

Problems encountered

- Due to delays in recruitment of the Project staff, this action is behind schedule. The revised milestone date for the removal of 130 ha of scrub is outlined below to get this action back on track.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Scrub Removal of 130 ha on Thorne Moors SAC	Delayed but expected to complete by 31 March 2016
Scrub Removal of 188 ha on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2016
Scrub Removal of 338 ha on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2017

5.1.6. Action C3 (Control rhododendron regrowth using herbicide on Thorne Moors)

The first part of this action to control/eradicate 5 ha of the 96 ha is not due to start until April 2015. We will deliver this Action to schedule.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Control/Eradicate 5 ha rhododendron on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 September 2015
Control/Eradicate 92 ha rhododendron on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 September 2016
Control/Eradicate 96 ha rhododendron on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 July 2017

5.1.7 Action C4 (Install weirs on arterial ditches, install peat/plugs/plastic dams on compartments with cutting and baulk technology topography, and internal bunding on drained, but uncut, areas of peatland on Hatfield Moors)

This action relates to Hydrological Infra-structure on Hatfield Moors SAC

To date a total of 76 weirs and dams have been installed. This includes 65 weirs, two of which are larger weirs, one of which is of steel construction, and 11 dams. These works have been delivered by existing NE reserve staff.

In practice, the exact specifications for the plastic weirs, dams, and larger dams are more varied than described during the project application. The reason is that each structure is being designed to the exact requirements of the location and hydrological purpose on the Moors. It is anticipated that the Project will deliver more than 132 structures in total to deliver the stated objectives of the action, but that a greater proportion of them will be constructed of peat or plastic piling and correspondingly fewer will require fabricating from steel. We anticipate no significant change to the overall cost of this action.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Install 65 weirs on Hatfield Moors SAC ditch system	Complete
Install 67 peat plugs/plastic pile dams on Hatfield Moors SAC	On track to achieve this objective Scheduled 31 March 2016
Install 5800m bunds on Hatfield Moors SAC	On track to achieve this objective Scheduled 31 March 2017

5.1.8. Action C5 (Peat plugs, bunds and weirs to optimise water levels for bog restoration on milled areas of Thorne Moors)

This Action is being delivered by the associated beneficiary DE IDB. There are no project milestones until 2016 for this action, but a considerable amount of work has taken place:

- 2000m of peat bunds have been constructed, to impede the lateral loss of water
- The project design has been completed for the large weirs
- Project design has commenced for the bunding and damming scheduled for construction in project year 2
- The first telemetry has been installed, whereby the operation of a tilting weir will be controlled automatically through water level sensors within the bog. This will enable more finely tuned control over water levels, than manual operation on a remote site.
- 830m of plastic pile dams have been installed.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
16 weirs installed on Thorne Moors SAC ditch system	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
7900m bunds installed on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
225 peat plus/plastic pile dams installed on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
2300m peat 'cliff' reprofiled on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016

5.1.9. Action C6 (Construction of a pumping station on Thorne Moors SAC)

This action relates to the installation of a pumping station on Thorne Moors SAC. The design of the pumping station is not due to start until spring 2015 with construction scheduled for autumn/winter 2015/16.

Achieving the action objective

Action objective	Progress
Pumping Station on Thorne Moors SAC	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016

5.1.10 Action D1 (Radio-tracking study of nightjars, to investigate response to peatland restoration works)

The programme of nightjar tracking for the entire LIFE+ project is being planned in partnership with the University of York. The plan to study nightjar is based on two options, the first being the core study to track foraging birds. The second option is an extended project, to identify nightjar diet and population size using faecal DNA analysis, plus a study of nesting success. The University of York, in partnership with NE has now secured a PhD studentship and a student to study nightjar from October 2015 to March 2019. Data collected during the life time of this project will be used to determine response of nightjars to peatland restoration works. Post project data will be used as part of the AfterLIFE Plan.

In the 2015 field season, May to August, nightjar tracking will be conducted by the University of York, with assistance from NE staff and ornithologists local to Thorne and Hatfield SACs. The aim is to train local ornithologists so that they can perform monitoring independently. The success of this approach will depend on how many ornithologists participate and their involvement is now being assessed.

Six nightjar tracking tags have been ordered for the 2015 field season. These tags operate by automatically recording and storing GPS fixes, rather than requiring radio-tracking by personnel in the field. This approach will achieve substantially higher temporal and spatial resolution in determining nightjar foraging. It will also greatly reduce the safety risks to personnel, by decreasing the number of hours required in the field at night.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
6 nightjars tagged and tracked	On track to achieve this objectives. Scheduled 30 September 2015 The nightjar study for the 2015 season will take place May to August. Habitat use and foraging behaviour of nightjar will be analysed, in relation to habitat composition and

	vegetation structure, during autumn and winter 2015. The results from these analyses will inform the study programme for 2016
12 nightjars tagged and tracked	On track to achieve this objectives. Scheduled 30 September 2016
18 nightjars tagged and tracked	On track to achieve this objectives. Scheduled 31 July 2017

5.1.11 Action D2 (Use Common Standards Monitoring and the assessment of invertebrate assemblages populations in response to the large-scale peatland restoration works)

Survey and sampling programmes for water levels, vegetation and invertebrate assemblages are being prepared. Historic research and surveys of water levels, vegetation and invertebrates are being collated and reviewed. Water level monitoring is being conducted in partnership with our associated beneficiary on Thorne Moors, as part of the Water Level Management Plan (WLMP). On Hatfield Moors, initial water level monitoring is using NE's existing network of dip-wells and data-loggers. Vegetation monitoring will build on the framework of Common Standards Monitoring for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is already in place on Thorne and Hatfield Moors. It will incorporate sampling at appropriate resolutions to detect changes in indicator plant species composition and cover, vegetation structure and micro-habitat composition. Sampling with pitfall and water traps is a standard approach for invertebrate survey. It will be adopted alongside other, specific sampling protocols for certain invertebrate indicator species, based on historic surveys on the NNR.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Baseline survey of invertebrate assemblages, water levels and vegetation	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2016 Representative sampling techniques will be used to inform the baseline survey.
Final survey of invertebrate assemblages, water levels and vegetation	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 August 2017 Invertebrates will be sampled between April and September, while vegetation sampling will run from May onwards, in 2015. Water level monitoring is ongoing but the extent of coverage will partly depend on D.3 (see below).

5.1.12 Action D3 (Supply and installation of additional water-level data-loggers to monitor water levels across the SACs)

The water level survey programme is being prepared for the duration of the LIFE+ project, 2015-17 (see D.2 above), and this partly depends on the installation of 60 automatic data-loggers across Thorne and Hatfield SACs. The required distribution and location of the additional data-loggers is currently being assessed in relation to the existing water-level monitoring network.

Problems encountered

- The target for the installation of 60 data-loggers across Thorne and Hatfield Moors, by 31 Dec 2014, has not been met. The data-loggers have not yet been supplied because

the LIFE+ Biodiversity Monitoring Officer entered post only in February 2015. There are no foreseen obstacles to achieving the target for baseline water level monitoring by 31st March 2016 (D.2) because the method for installing data-loggers is a standard technique and a good relationship exists with the project partner for water level monitoring. An existing set of manual and automatic water level sensors have and continue to be used to determine water level management. Water level monitoring will be augmented by an additional 60 devices to fine tune and focus monitoring. These will be installed between May and October 2015.

Achieving the action objectives

Objective	Progress
Additional water loggers installed and operational	Delayed but expected to complete by 31 October 2015

5.1.13 Action D4 (Socio-economic impact and ecosystem function investigation/report)

The assessment and reporting of socio-economic impacts and ecosystem function, for the entire LIFE+ project, is being planned in partnership with the University of York. A schedule and budget for socio-economic study: how local community attitudes to the SACs change as a result of the project; how local and regional public use of the SACs is affected; how anti-social behaviour on the SACs is impacted; and how cultural heritage is enhanced. In terms of ecosystem function, we will develop, in partnership with the university a study of how the project will reduce carbon emissions.

The target for the socio-economic and ecosystem function assessment to be procured, by 30th June 2015, is on course to be met. This external assistance was procured using NE internal procurement processes.

Achieving the action objective

Action objective	Progress
Socio-economic and ecosystem service assessment procured	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2015

5.1.14 Action E1 (Engagement with local communities, to ensure that there is an understanding of the works involved with landscape-scale bog restoration)

Given the history of the Moors and their connection with local people, raising public awareness and engaging the local community in the work taking place to restore the Peatlands is an important part of this project. A range of activities are underway to engage local people, groups and schools, and details are provided below.

The project was officially launched at an event on 17th October 2014. It was attended by over 40 people including the project partners', local councillors, MPs and MEP (see Annex 7.2.3). It was chaired by NE's Area Manager, David Shaw and included presentations about the unique flora and fauna found on Thorne and Hatfield Moors, an overview of the Thorne Water Level Management Plan (Associated Beneficiary project) and the LIFE project. In the afternoon, the delegates were taken on to Thorne Moors for a tour showing what the Water Level Management Plan had already achieved on the site by comparison with the further work to be undertaken. The launch event was a collaboration between the partners who provided their logos and narrative about their organisations to support the production of an information leaflet promoted on the day and now available online from the project webpage (see Annex 7.2.1). A local feature in the Thorne Times was published to celebrate the launch (see Annex 7.2.4).

The first press release was completed on 5th August 2014 (see Annex 7.2.5). This was also available online from NE's website resulting in further local coverage in the Yorkshire Post, the BBC and The Star and a feature in the local paper, the Thorne Times.

'Planning for Real' community engagement events held

Plans are in place to host the first 'Planning for Real' community engagement event in June. This will take place in Thorne and will provide local residents with an introduction to the Moors and raise their awareness about the LIFE+ project, including how they can get involved. A further two 'Planning for Real' events will take place before the 30th September, helping to engage the communities of Crowle and Hatfield Woodhouse.

Working with the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve staff, Doncaster Metropolitan District Council and Doncaster National Health Service, a year's programme of guided walks have been planned as part of 'Get Doncaster Walking' (see Annex 7.2.6). Guided walks across both Hatfield and Thorne Moors have taken place engaging local people in the Life+ project. These walks have included 'Hatfield Moors Reptile Spotting' and 'Thorne Moors – Buds and Bird Song'. In addition, a health walk takes place every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, where volunteers talk to visitors about the restoration work taking place on the Moors through the LIFE+ project.

There are currently 3 school visits booked in June, where presentations will be made to local school children. These presentations will explain the work taking place to restore the Moors, their importance to local habitat and the role children can play in the future restoration of the Peatlands.

Problems encountered

- Existing NE staff have conducted the guided walks and will make the school visits. However, due to delays in recruiting the project team the 'Planning for Real' community events are behind schedule. The first event is scheduled to take place in June and a further two events will take place by the end of September 2015. No adverse impact on the delivery of the project is anticipated.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
3 'Planning for Real' community engagement events held	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 September 2015
6 'Planning for Real' community engagement events held	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
9 'Planning for Real' community engagement events held	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2017

5.1.15 Action E2 (Networking with Other projects)

Informal contacts have been made with the Cumbrian Bogs Life Project (LIFE13NAT/UK/000443) and a meeting with that project is scheduled for the 13th April 2015. It is hoped reciprocal arrangements for that project's manager to attend this project's steering group will be agreed on the 23rd March 2015. Contact has also been made with the MoorsLife Project (LIFE08 NAT/UK/000202), hosted by (Moors for the Future) which is drawing to a close to gather information regarding communications strategy, administrations and lessons learnt as that project is virtually completed. It is proposed to visit Moors for the Future in April.

Problems encountered

- There is no doubt that delays in recruitment have affected the ability to fully engage with this action. However contacts and progress is being made to ensure that this action is back on target by 30th September 2015.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
2 peatland projects visited/hosted and 2 scientific events attended	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 September 2015
5 peatland projects visited/hosted and 5 scientific events attended	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
8 peatland projects visited/hosted and 8 scientific events attended	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2017

5.1.16 Action E3 (End of Project Conference and on-site mid-project workshop)

Work on these objectives is not due to start until spring 2016. Discussions are scheduled to take place with the Project Manager of the Cumbrian LIFE+ project to explore possible joint workshops and input at the end of project conference, where best practice and lessons learned can be shared.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Mid-term site workshop held	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 November 2016
End of project conference procured and advertised	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 March 2017
End of project conference held	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 August 2017

5.1.17. Action E4 (Project website and publications)

Communicating the project both externally and internally is an important aspect of this project. There are a range of activities that are underway to publicise the restoration work taking place across the Humberhead Peatlands.

A project webpage has been created but due to Cabinet Office rules it has not been possible to create a separate/bespoke website for the Humberhead Peatlands project. NE is required to use the GOV.uk website where information about the portfolio of externally-funded EU projects is placed. Utilising the Government's website, GOV.uk, the Project's webpage can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/humberhead-peatlands-restoration-life-project>. The page provides a summary of the project, its aims, progress and links to the Project leaflet. There are also further links to partner projects and images of the Humberhead Peatlands. The GOV.uk website is limited in terms of style and accessibility. However, we are in the process of establishing a website together with the Humberhead Levels Partnership (HLP) as there are synergies between the two projects. In addition, the HLP will continue to exist after the LIFE+ project has finished, helping to support the AfterLIFE Plan. The website will have distinct and separate pages for the LIFE+ project. It

will be less formal than GOV.uk in written style and support electronic newsletters, Twitter and a calendar of events.

Notice Boards

Delays in recruiting the project team have meant that this objective has not yet been met. However, work is currently taking place to design and produce collapsible banners and notice boards. The collapsible banners will be ready for the end of April and the location boards will be erected at the six main entrances to the Thorne and Hatfield Moors by the end of June.

Newsletters

The first project newsletter is currently being written and designed. It is scheduled for distribution in April. Called '*MoorSpace*' the newsletter will include information about all the work taking place across Hatfield and Thorne Moors and will help to set the scene for the LIFE+ project. There will be a section in the newsletter detailing the aims and objectives of the Project and how people can find out more and get involved. It will clearly feature the LIFE+ project logo and will be available in local outlets, including local Post Offices, libraries and other community buildings. Two further newsletters will be written and distributed by the end of September 2015 charting the progress of the project over the summer months and looking forward to the 2016. It is envisaged that these newsletters will be emailed to local landowners and community Parish Councils for inclusion in their newsletters to local residents. These newsletters and subsequent newsletters will solely focus on the LIFE+ project.

To raise awareness of the project internally the NE Area newsletter has featured two articles on the project, along with an introduction to the project team.

Produce Layman's Report and Technical Activity Report

These two reports are not due to be produced until August 2017. Work is currently taking place to look at how we can capitalise on existing publication and distribution routes to minimise the number of hardcopies required.

Problems encountered

- Delays in recruitment have impacted on producing the notice boards and newsletters. However, work is currently taking place to have these completed by the end of June and September respectively.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
On-site boards, office and collapsible event boards ready/installed	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 June 2015 Scheduled 31 December 2014
3 Project newsletters circulated	Delayed but expected to complete by 30 September 2015 Scheduled 30 June 2015
6 Project newsletters circulated	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2016
9 Project newsletters circulated	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 30 June 2017
Produce Layman's Report and Technical Activity Report	On track to achieve objective These reports are not due to be produced until 2017.

5.1.18 Action F1 (Project supervision and oversight (Project management))

This action relates to having in place the appropriate project supervision and oversight, including the project management processes to ensure the smooth monitoring and running of the project, including funding and delivery of the milestones and objectives. The following have been put in place:

- Weekly Project meetings – started in March 2015 to discuss and monitor progress against actions.
- Steering Group Meetings in place, monthly but moving to quarterly in June 2015. Terms of reference agreed, eight steering group meetings held.

A Project Performance report (including risks and mitigation) has been produced to monitor action and deliverables on a monthly and quarterly basis, and will include reporting to the Project Steering Group (See annex 7.2.7). This responds fully to the requirements stipulated in the annex attached to the letter received from the EU Commission on 5th December 2014.

The full project team members are now in post, with the last member of staff arriving on the 2nd March 2015. Financial management processes are in place and include an annual budget forecast, monthly monitoring of expenditure and the implementation of procurement processes according to the NE rules and EU requirements. All staff involved in the LIFE+ project who are contributing time to the project are recording and completing timesheets according to the guidance issued by the EU.

5.1.19 Action F2 (Purchase of equipment and vehicles)

A range of vehicles and equipment are required to assist with the delivery of the project objectives. The major purchases, such as utility vehicles required for accessing the Moors, data loggers for water level monitoring and the saws to deal with the vast hectares of scrub clearance have been purchased. These purchases include:

- 2 light 4x4 utility vehicles - Toyota Hilux Active
- 6 chainsaws
- 2 clearing saws

We have decided that it would be more prudent to hire the chippers for the individual periods of scrub clearance each winter rather than purchasing outright. The cost for the hire are accounted for as equipment rather than against the action (i.e. C1 for which the hire is procured).

Problems encountered

- With the delay in recruiting all staff a decision was made to delay the purchase of the third vehicle until it was clear that it was required. This will be revisited during the next quarter period. Also a decision was made to hire in a chipper rather than purchase because the use was seasonal and the equipment would be standing idle for six months in every year and hiring was likely to be more cost effective. Neither of these decisions has compromised the delivery of any of the projects objectives.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Purchase of equipment and vehicles	Delayed but expected to be completed by 30 th June 2015

5.1.20 Action F3 (Audit)

This action is not scheduled for delivery until August 2017 but initial discussions with the project manager delivering the Life+ IPENS project have taken place to share knowledge and practice. This information will be used to secure a suitably qualified auditor.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
Appoint auditor	On track to achieve objective Scheduled June 2016
Final audit of accounts	On track to achieve objective Scheduled August 2017

5.1.21 Action F4 (AfterLIFE Plan)

This action relates to how the project will be taken forward after the end of the project and is not due to start until early 2017.

Achieving the action objectives

Action objective	Progress
AfterLIFE Plan	On track to achieve objective Scheduled 31 August 2017

5.2 Availability of appropriate licences and authorisations

A number of consents are required to carry out this project. All but one consent is in place or can be done as permitted developments. The only outstanding consent is the felling licence and the possible requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment regarding the felling/clearance of the large area of trees/scrub. Preliminary meetings and discussions have taken place and a schedule for determination has been agreed with the regulating authority. This will enable clearance work to restart as scheduled in September 2015.

5.3 Envisaged progress until next report.

The details on the progress that will be achieved from April 2015 to the mid-term report, due on the 1st June 2016, can be viewed in the Gantt chart (see Annex 7.5.5.).

6. Financial part

6.1 Putting in place the accounting system

Resource accounting – NE, in accordance with industry best practice, operates its accounts on a Resource Accounting basis. This means we account for all goods and services when we have received them, rather than when we have paid for them (i.e. accruals based account).

Coding and the Chart of Accounts – budget reporting, purchasing, recording expenditure, monitoring and reports are all reliant on the use of the Chart of Accounts (our ‘coding’ list). This helps us identify which team is incurring the expenditure, the type of expenditure, and which project is incurring the expenditure. The following codes have been established for this project:

- **Cost Centre – 72007** (for all expenditure directly spent by the core project team).
- **Objective code –various** (defines the theme of work and target being delivered).

- **Account code** – using the standard NE codes to describe the type of expenditure.
- **Sub-account** - using the standard NE codes to allow extra details about the account but used only for Travel and Subsistence.
- **Project code** – **Y0000344** (to identify all external assistance work that is being undertaken in relation to the project)

6.2 Continued availability of co-financing

The project has no co-financiers.

6.3 Costs incurred

Budget breakdown categories	Total cost in €	Costs incurred from the start date to 28.02.2015 in €	% of total costs
1. Personnel	1,076,836	86,697	8.05
2. Travel and subsistence	16,360	22	0.14
3. External assistance	3,704,872	129,605	3.5
Infrastructure	266,500	0	0
Equipment	98,235	25,007	25.46
Prototype			
5. Land purchase / long-term lease			
6. Consumables	90,220	896	1.00
7. Other Costs			
8. Overheads	242,000	11,767	4.86
TOTAL	5,495,023	253,994	4.62

- **Personnel**
These costs are below what was expected because of the delays in recruitment, hopefully with a full project the shortfall will not increase.
- **Travel and Subsistence**
Below the anticipated level, mirroring the delay in staff recruitment. It is envisaged that this expenditure will increase once staff begin to network with other projects.
- **External assistance**
Major expenditure is anticipated this year on the pumping station and weir etc. which will make major inroads in this expenditure heading.
- **Infrastructure**
The costs are associated with the pumping station and weirs, although one weirs been constructed it is not connected for telemetry purposes. Once the pumping station and second weir are constructed the infrastructure costs will incurred.
- **Equipment**
This is below the level anticipated. Currently a third vehicle has not been purchased and more significantly two chippers have not been purchased. The chippers have been

hired rather than purchase. Guidance is sought as to the need to possible transfer the hire to external costs rather than sitting in equipment. As it is hire costs it is below the level of outright purchase.

- **Consumables**

These are below predicted levels and the delay in recruitment is primarily responsible for the reduced costs to date

- **Overheads**

Slightly below what was expected but full recruitment of staff is likely to bring this back into expected spending.

The overall spend of €253,994, is well below the spending level anticipated €858,598 on a straight % basis against time since effective start, however significant expenditure on the pump (€923,000) and a full complement of staff will bring expenditure back into line within a further 12 months

- **Total Budget**

We do anticipate some budget modifications to some of the categories our expectation is that the total budget for the project will remain the same.

- **30% threshold value** – we expect to reach the 30% threshold value of total costs (€1,648,506) in quarter I 2016

Action number and name	Foreseen costs	Spent so far	Remaining	Projected final cost
Action A1 Project Establishment	0	0	0	0
Action A2 Review Thorne & Hatfield Site Management Plan	0	668	0	668
Action A3 Re-confirm all required consents and licenses in place	852	641	211	852
Action B1 Land purchase	N/A		0	0
Action C1 Scrub control on Hatfield Moors	507,551	4,261	503,290	507,551
Action C2 Scrub control on Thorne Moors	1,101,613	86,625	1,014,988	1,101,613
Action C3 Control rhododendron regrowth on Thorne Moors	60,060	0	60,060	60,060
Action C4 Install weirs on Hatfield Moors	327,971	19,699	308,272	327,971
Action C5 Peat bogs, weirs and bunds on Thorne Moors	1,344,433	62,506	1,281,927	1,344,433
Action C6 Construction of pumping station Thorne Moors	1,197,435	0	1,197,435	1,197,435
Action D1 Radio tracking study of Nightjars	58,024	2,339	55,685	58,024
Action D2 Common Standards Monitoring invertebrate assemblage	124,032	790	123,242	124,032
Action D3 Supply/install additional water-level data loggers	42,214	790	41,424	42,214
Action D4 Socio-economic impact	66,456	627	65,829	66,456

and ecosystem investigation/report				
Action E1 Engagement with local communities	128,661	4,107	124,554	128,661
Action E2 Networking with other projects	22,971	0	22,971	22,971
Action E3 Project conference and workshops	82,451	0	82,451	82,451
Action E4 Project website and publication	95,361	960	94,401	95,361
Action F1 Project Management	14,859	26,044	0	26,044
Action F2 Purchase of equipment and vehicles	160,848	28,635	132,213	160,848
Action F3 Audit	14,451	0	14,451	14,451
Action F4 AfterLIFE Plan	9	0	9	9
TOTAL	5,350,252	239,986	5,135,607	5,361,437

7. Annexes

7.1 Partnership agreements

Restoring the Humberhead Peatlands LIFE+ Project (LIFE13NAT/UK/000451)
Partnership Agreement

7.2 Deliverables (if relevant, e.g. management plans)

- 7.2.1. LIFE+ Restoring the Humberhead Peatlands Project Leaflet (Action E4)
- 7.2.2. European Union LIFE+ Contract (Action A1)
- 7.2.3. Project Launch Programme and delegate list (Action E1)
- 7.2.4. Project Launch Press News Article – Nov 2014 (Action E1)
- 7.2.5. NE Media Release and Project Press News Release – Sept 2014 (Action E1)
- 7.2.6. Guided Walks Leaflet (Action E1)

7.3 Maps, drawings, technical designs, technical memos etc. as appropriate.

- 7.3.1. Map of Scrub Clearance (Action C1 and C2)

7.4 Output indicators. Definition.

7.5 Other

- 7.5.1. Project Organogram
- 7.5.2. Steering Group Terms of Reference
- 7.5.3. Steering Group Minutes
- 7.5.4. Sub Action Progress Gantt chart
- 7.5.5. Envisaged Progress Gantt chart