

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**

# **Partnership Management Plan 2020–2025**



# PARTNERS HELPING TO DELIVER THE SOUTH DOWNS PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Below is a list of all of the partners so far committed to delivering the shared objectives set out in this Partnership Management Plan for the South Downs National Park.** This list is by no means exhaustive, and we hope it will continue to grow as our partnerships strengthen and grow and our delivery plan incorporates more projects.

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
- Archaeology Groups
- Arts Council England (ACE)
- British Library
- Butterfly Conservation
- Catchment Partnerships
- Churches Conservation Trust
- Community groups
- Community Rail Partnerships
- Council for British Archaeology (CBA)
- County Garden History Societies
- Crafts Council
- Duke of Edinburgh Award groups
- English Folkdance and Song Society
- Environment Agency
- Experience West Sussex
- Farmers
- Foresters
- Forestry England
- Gatwick Airport
- Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Heritage Crafts Association
- Heritage owners
- Historic England
- Historical Societies
- Land managers
- Large estates
- Local and regional museum networks
- Local authorities
- Local business organisations
- Local communities
- Local health providers
- Lynchmere Society
- MOD
- National Citizens Service
- National Park Experience Collection Partners (UK National Parks)
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Natural Partnerships CIC
- NHS Clinical Commissioners
- Parish Councils
- Portsmouth Water
- Primary Care Networks
- Rivers Trusts
- RSPB
- South Downs National Park Volunteer Network
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
- South Downs Forestry Partnership
- South Downs Learning Network
- South Downs National Park Trust
- South East Historic Environment Research Framework Partnership (SERF)
- South East Museum Development (SEMD)
- South East Water
- Southern Water
- Sussex Heritage Trust
- Sussex Modern
- Sussex Police
- Sussex Wildlife Trust
- The Keep, Brighton
- The Living Coast
- U3A
- Uniformed Groups
- Universities in the South Downs Learning Partnership
- Visit Hampshire
- Woodland Trust

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# Foreword

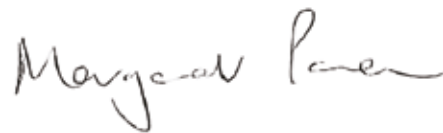
Virginia Woolf once wrote of the South Downs “Too much for one pair of eyes, enough to float a whole population in happiness, if only they would look. To look is to see freedom.”

The iconic South Downs National Park celebrates its ten year anniversary in 2020. In 2014 its first National Park Partnership Management Plan (the Plan) was launched to provide “a vision, framework and rallying point for all those who derive their livelihoods and their inspiration from Britain’s newest and most populated National Park, and who are committed to making it a better place in the future”. Since then, an impressive amount has been achieved by the many people and organisations who are passionate about and have a stake in this very special corner of Southern England.

Positive action in support of the National Park continues to grow, but in a rapidly changing world so too do the pressures and challenges of maintaining its special qualities – the aim is managing change rather than trying to fossilise the landscape. With such a large population in and around it there is a wealth of talent, resources, ideas and commitment to draw upon, and there is

a growing list of powerful case studies of farmers, conservation groups, volunteer organisations, businesses, communities and individuals making a positive difference. This first review of the Plan builds on that positive momentum for the next five years: increasing the ambition, deepening the partnerships, and delivering more for nature and people.

The South Downs National Park Authority looks forward to working with partners both big and small and the communities of, and visitors to, the National Park to bring this ambitious Plan to reality, to ensure that the South Downs National Park continues to become an even better home for nature and people.



**Margaret Paren**  
**Chair, South Downs National Park**  
**Authority**





# 1. INTRODUCTION: PEOPLE, PRESSURE AND POSSIBILITY

## The South Downs National Park (National Park) covers over 1,600<sup>km2</sup> of England's most valued lowland landscapes shaped, over millennia, by the people who have lived and worked here.

**1.1** Its inspirational and varied landscapes, internationally important wildlife, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant market towns and villages hold a special place in the hearts of many millions. During both World Wars the area became symbolic of an England that was worth fighting for. But, situated as it is in the most crowded corner of Britain, it is also under intense pressure.

**1.2** Most of the South Downs is privately owned and farmed. It is heavily populated compared to other National Parks with 117,000 residents. Its future, like its past, is interdependent with the communities that surround it. More than 2.2 million people – including those in Chichester, Winchester, Worthing, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Alton – live on its doorstep, and London is just over an hour away. Wildlife, the visual landscape, and water know no boundaries.

They bridge the National Park and neighbouring administrative areas, requiring a joined-up approach and strong partnerships to help maintain what is valued.

**1.3** Millions depend on the National Park's water, benefit from its wildlife, use its timber and enjoy food and drink produced from its soils. It offers wonderful opportunities for outdoor learning and improves the health of all who simply enjoy fresh air, exercise and the tranquillity which can be found amongst its chalk Downland, farms, heaths, villages, woods and river valleys. These assets or natural capital of the National Park therefore underpin the economy and quality of life in this part of southern England **[FIGURE 1.1]**.

**1.4** But there is no room for complacency. It is remarkable, given the pressures, that the

special qualities of this National Park have remained sufficiently intact to merit its designation alongside other nationally iconic landscapes such as the Cairngorms, Snowdonia or the Lake District. But these qualities cannot be taken for granted, nor, sadly, are they always in the best condition. Challenges include: habitat fragmentation; erosion of landscape quality; loss of built heritage; changes to farming; loss of public services; and lack of affordable housing. Most significant of all, climate change is having fundamental effects on biodiversity, agriculture and water resources. Adapting to it and other pressures will require a post-Brexit deal that supports the rural economy through a major transition.

### A SPECIAL PLACE

**1.5** Over 1,000 residents, visitors, landowners, farmers, businesses, school pupils and parish councils helped us to define the 7 special qualities of the National Park. These are the 'stocks' we have inherited and which we need to nurture and enhance over time **[FIGURE 1.2]**.

FIGURE 1.1 NATIONAL PARK IN A NUTSHELL





FIGURE 1.2: SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

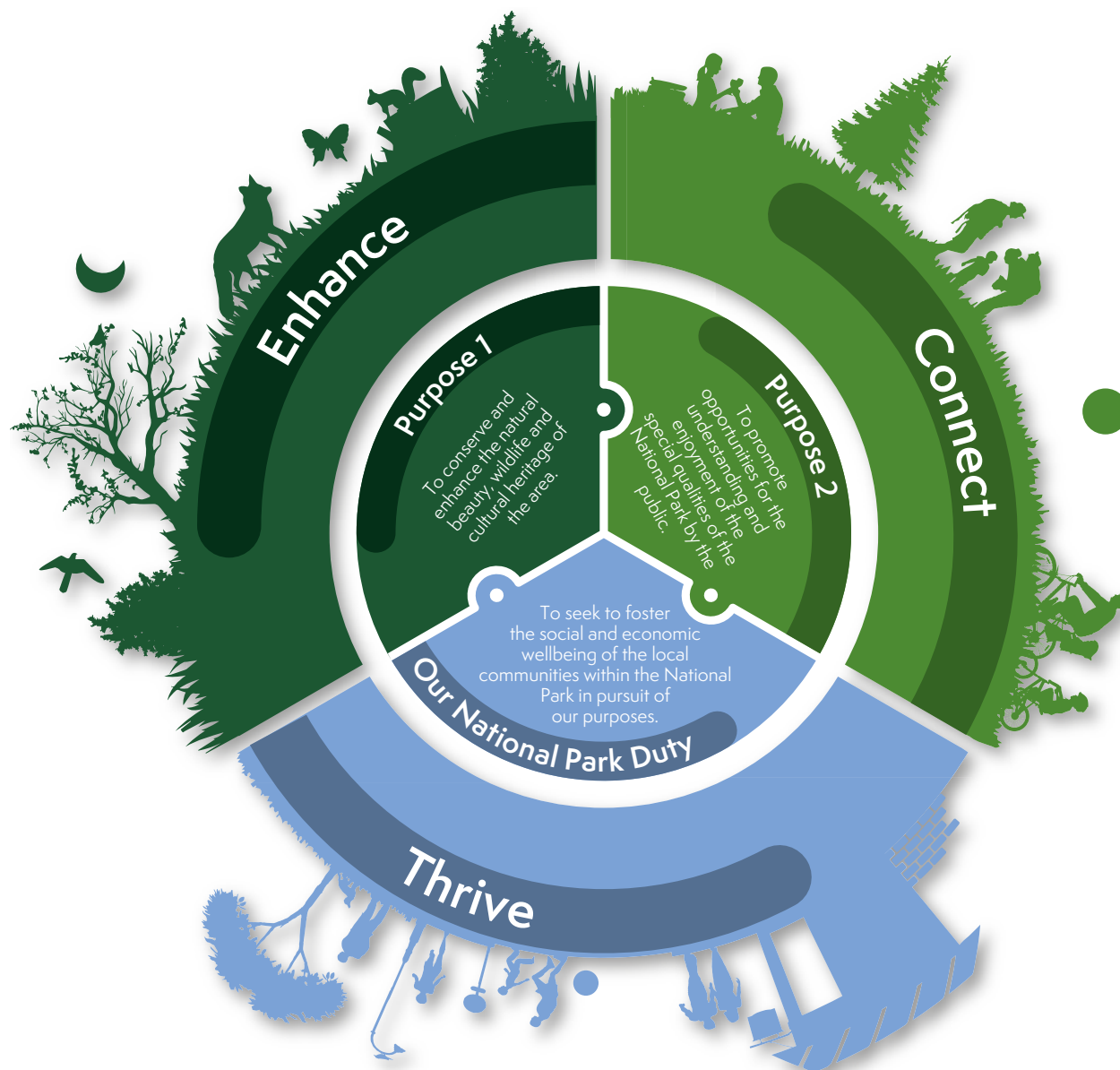


# DELIVERING FOR THE NATION

## NATIONAL PARK PURPOSES

**1.6** Public bodies, and statutory undertakers such as utility companies, when undertaking any activity which may have an impact on the designated area, have a duty to have regard to these purposes:

FIGURE 1.3: THE PURPOSES AND DUTY OF NATIONAL PARKS IN ENGLAND





# OUR VISION

## THRIVING COMMUNITIES IN INSPIRATIONAL LANDSCAPES

1.7 If we want the South Downs to remain a special place in 2050, we need to make sure that its landscapes can provide more benefits to more people, who can enjoy, understand and take action to support it.

# BY 2050 IN THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

- The iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational and distinctive places, where people live, work, farm and relax, are adapting well to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.
- People will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides. Large areas of high-quality and well-managed habitat will form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape.
- Opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities. The relationship between people and landscape will enhance their lives and inspire them to become actively involved in caring for it and using its resources more responsibly.
- Its special qualities will underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the communities in and around it, which will be more self-sustaining and empowered to shape their own future. Its villages and market towns will be thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses and supporting the wider rural community.
- Successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to, and derive economic benefit from, its unique identity and special qualities.



# THE FIRST 10 YEARS

## HOW HAVE WE DONE

**The South Downs National Park includes breathtaking inspirational landscapes, internationally important wildlife, cultural heritage and lively market towns and villages.**

**1.8** As the National Park celebrates its 10th Anniversary it has grown into an innovative, partnership based National Park, supported by thousands of volunteers, with a powerful identity of its own, helping to lead the way among our protected landscapes. Our shared successes have been both at the landscape-wide and local scale.







# MAJOR ISSUES

The landscapes of the National Park are living, changing landscapes that have been shaped by people over millennia. This Plan is a shared endeavour to *positively* shape the future of the National Park in order that its special qualities endure rather than to fossilise them in time.

## THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The National Park is already experiencing more unpredictable weather events causing drought, soil erosion and flooding. This is changing the landscapes as habitats come under pressure and agricultural systems and infrastructure struggle to adapt. The 2019 report of the Climate Change Committee sets a radical target of achieving a zero carbon UK by 2050 and like all parts of society, National Parks must up their game now to meet this challenge:

- **Planning must work to combat climate change:** The *South Downs Local Plan*, adopted in July 2019, creates a single overarching policy framework for new development. By taking an eco-system services approach to development, the Local Plan seeks to improve the National Park's resilience to and mitigation of climate change.
- **We must change the way we travel and live:** There is an urgent need to decarbonise transport, and to roll out energy efficiency and renewable energy in ways that are appropriate in these special landscapes.
- **We must change the way we manage land:** Radical changes will be needed to enable the landscape to combat climate change through carbon capture, reduced emissions and by creating more space for nature so that species and habitat can grow and move.





## ECONOMY

The National Park is home to more than 8,000 businesses, and a thriving economy is essential if our landscapes are to be sustainably managed.

- **When the UK leaves the EU, a major transition will take place:** subsidy regimes, commodity tariffs and the availability of seasonal labour will all be impacted.
- **The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be replaced by an Environmental Land Management System (ELMS):** which will use public money to pay farmers for public goods such as clean water, better soils, wildlife or access. Working through farm clusters, many farmers in the South Downs have already agreed to be part of the national pilot for this new scheme.
- **A large proportion of National Park rural businesses are not land based:** Mobile phone signal coverage, broadband connectivity and speeds are limiting factors, and will require new forms of Government support for rural development.
- **Tourism and the visitor economy will change:** This Plan sets out a shared vision for how the National Park and its place brand, is central to sustainable tourism and the visitor economy, encouraging people to stay longer, do more and spend locally.



© Peter Robinson

## WELLBEING

Evidence of the physical and mental health benefits of connection with nature continues to grow, yet the national trends are still largely in the wrong direction. This Plan introduces a new priority on health and wellbeing which aims to involve communities in and around the boundary who suffer from poor health.

- **Increasing use:** Much has been done to increase use of the National Park by schools, support volunteering and to improve access for walkers, cyclists and equestrians via the South Downs Way, the wider Rights of Way network and new dedicated routes.

At the same time, cuts in public transport have increased car dependency and many sectors of society, including many who would benefit the most, still face barriers to using the National Park.



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## BIODIVERSITY

Nature is increasingly under pressure, with growing national evidence about decline in insect populations, soils, water and air quality, and the onset of new pests and diseases (such as Ash Dieback) becoming evident. It is hard to state with confidence whether wildlife in the South Downs is yet bucking national trends of decline.

- **We must reverse the decline of nature:** Despite many impressive actions by: farm clusters; estates; environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs); conservation groups and communities; and despite individual success stories such as the reintroduction of the water vole and the red kite, increasing numbers of some farmland birds, and the recovery of the Duke of Burgundy butterfly; the challenge remains huge.
- **We must give nature a chance to recover:** Rewilding projects, such as that at the nearby Knepp Estate, reveal just how much wildlife had already been lost from our landscapes by the early 20th century, but also show how quickly nature can recover if given the chance.
- **Our precious landscapes are managed landscapes:** Our most precious habitats – such as chalk grassland, heathland or coppice woodland – arose from lowland mixed farming and forestry systems, so wholesale abandonment of farming could be ecologically, as well as culturally and economically, undesirable.
- **This Plan aims** to build consensus among land managers about how to use agriculture, forestry and rewilding approaches together to rebuild our natural capital alongside not instead of producing food.



© Dick Hawkes



## NEW HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Working with neighbouring authorities:** Situated in the heavily populated South East, the National Park is already experiencing major housing development around its borders. These new communities will inevitably have a significant impact; for example, on water abstraction and treatment, transport systems and because people will want to and should have access to enjoy the South Downs. This Plan therefore includes commitments to work with neighbouring local authorities to develop people and nature networks across boundaries.
- **National infrastructure schemes must take far better account of protected landscapes:** There are an increasing number of proposals for new national infrastructure including road and rail schemes, pipelines and cable routes that could cut through the National Park. Solutions must be found to avoid or reduce the impact of such schemes and to achieve net gain for the environment.
- **Water under pressure:** The South Downs is a living reservoir providing freshwater for important species and habitats and over 1.2m people.
  - **Over abstraction:** Although abstraction has been reduced on some vulnerable and important catchments like the Itchen, both the aquifers and river flows remain vulnerable to over use, and household per capita consumption is still higher than the national average. Growing pressure on water resources has implications for biodiversity and agriculture, resulting in the need to further reduce abstraction and to increase availability through rainwater harvesting schemes or new reservoirs.
  - **Poor water quality:** Despite significant projects with water companies during the five years of the first Plan, the status of these freshwater resources is still often poor, with low flows, increasing nitrate levels and pollution incidents from sewage treatment. In parts of the National Park, including behind Brighton, on the Rother valley and above Portsmouth, there have been some very innovative pilot projects by water companies, working with the Authority, farmers, NGOs and government bodies to change land use and reduce nitrates at source. This often has other benefits, for example, to biodiversity and soil carbon, and this Plan includes commitments to mainstream these successful approaches.



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# OUR AMBITIONS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The Outcomes and Priorities set out in the following pages are what partners across the National Park together hope to achieve by 2050.



## OUTCOME 1: LANDSCAPE & NATURAL BEAUTY

The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities, natural beauty and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by avoiding or mitigating the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.

**For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:**

### 1.1 PROTECT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

To protect and enhance the natural beauty and character of the National Park and seek environmental net-gain from any infrastructure projects

### 1.2 CREATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

To improve green and blue infrastructure to deliver nature recovery networks and connect people to nature within and around the National Park

### 1.3 TARGET NEW PAYMENTS

To maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the National Park



Harling Sunset © Warren Peters

## OUTCOME 2: INCREASING RESILIENCE

There is increased resilience within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

**For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:**

### 2.1 IMPROVE SOIL AND WATER

To improve soil and water by reducing soil erosion, improving carbon capture and filtration and reconnecting wetland habitats

### 2.2 IMPROVE TREES AND WOODLAND

To improve the resilience, quality and quantity of trees and woodlands in the National Park, and ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place



Queen Elizabeth Country Park © Sam Moore

## OUTCOME 3: HABITATS & SPECIES

A thriving and connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species now exist in the National Park

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

### 3.1 JOIN UP HABITATS

To create, restore and improve areas of priority habitat to be more, bigger, better, and joined up at a landscape scale.

### 3.2 MANAGE PRIORITY AND INVASIVE SPECIES

To increase the genetic diversity and resilience of target species and implement a landscape scale strategy for tackling invasive species, pests and diseases.



Adonis blue © SDNPA/Daniel Greenwood

## OUTCOME 4: ARTS & HERITAGE

Cultural heritage of the National Park is enhanced and widely understood and enjoyed

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

### 4.1 CONSERVE HERITAGE

To increase conservation, awareness, access to and understanding of South Downs cultural heritage.

### 4.2 PROMOTE CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND CRAFTS

To promote creativity and understanding of the landscape and traditions of the South Downs through contemporary arts and crafts.



© SDNPA/Mischa Haller



## OUTCOME 5: OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high quality access and sustainable transport networks.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

### 5.1 A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL

To enable everyone to experience the National Park and widen participation for under-represented groups through targeted activities and promotion.

### 5.2 IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

To improve accessibility through a network of high quality routes connecting communities with the landscape, heritage, attractions and transport hubs and gateways.

### 5.3 ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

To encourage sustainable access into and around the National Park, encouraging the retention and expansion of rural transport services.



© Matt Pitts

## OUTCOME 6: LIFELONG LEARNING

There is widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

### 6.1 PROVIDE OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

To provide high-quality outdoor learning opportunities as part of a locally relevant curriculum.



© Nick Robinson

# OUTCOME 7: HEALTH & WELLBEING

The National Park is a well-used and recognised asset for sustaining mental and physical health and wellbeing.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

## 7.1 IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

To develop initiatives which enable local communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing.



© SDNPA/Anne Purkiss

# OUTCOME 8: CREATING CUSTODIANS

More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, communities and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

## 8.1 INCREASE VOLUNTEERING

To increase and diversify volunteering opportunities that support the National Park.



© SDNPA/Daniel Greenwood



## OUTCOME 9: GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

**Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to address local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities.**

**For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:**

### 9.1 INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To increase affordable housing stock in the National Park, with focus on exemplary design and using local sustainable materials.

### 9.2 SUPPORT VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

To support community-led initiatives which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park.

### 9.3 IMPROVE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

To support improvement in digital infrastructure, speed and coverage throughout the National Park



© SDNPA/Mischa Haller

## OUTCOME 10: GREAT PLACES TO WORK

**A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park**

**For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:**

### 10.1: STRENGTHEN ENTERPRISE

To strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise.

### 10.2: INCREASE DESTINATION AWARENESS

To increase awareness and desirability of the South Downs as a special place to visit.

### 10.3: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

To establish the South Downs as an exemplar in sustainable tourism.



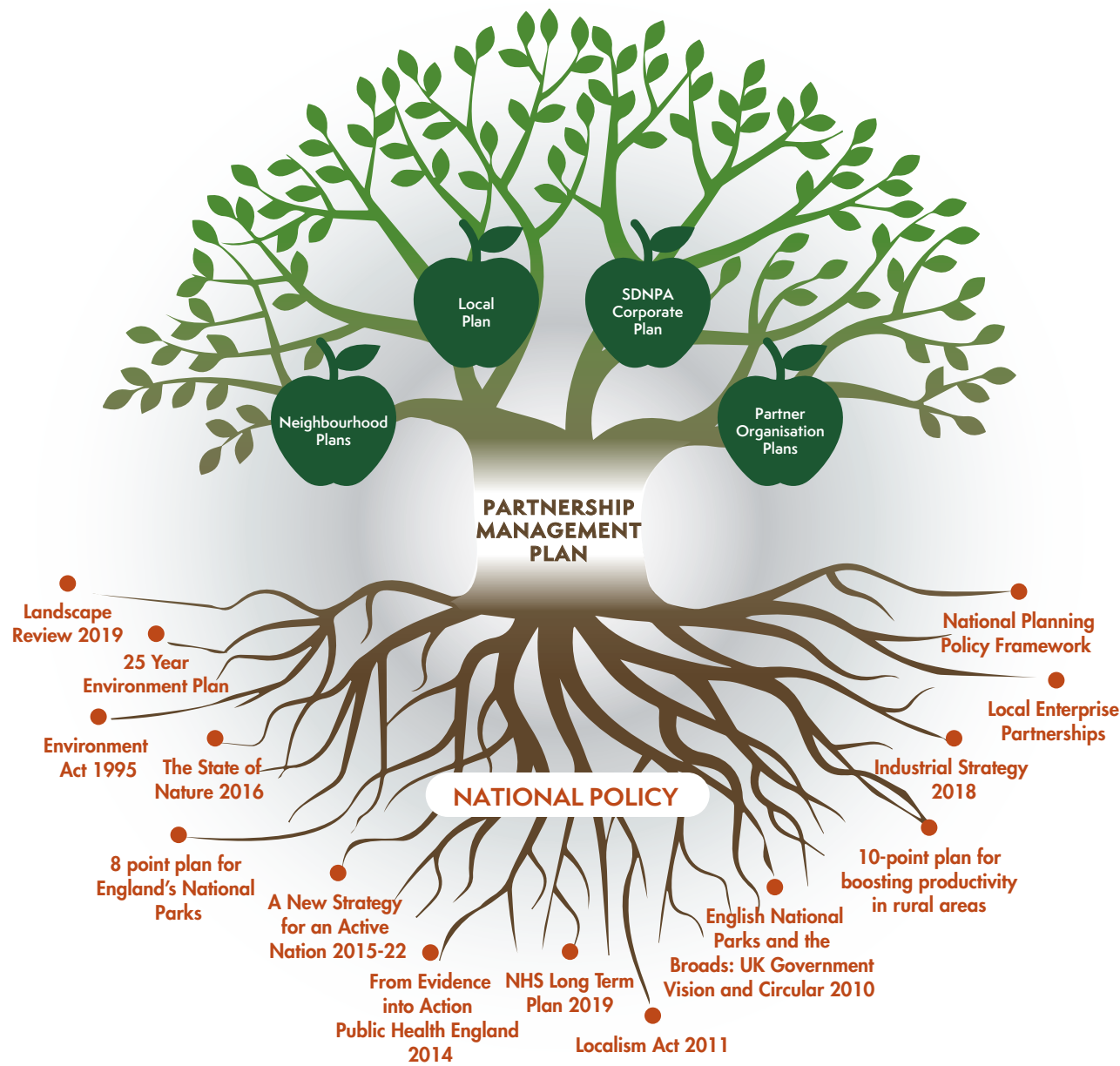
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# HOW THIS PLAN DELIVERS NATIONAL POLICY

## POLICIES

1.9 As part of the first Plan in 2014, in line with Defra guidance, a set of 57 policies were created. Even with the subsequent adoption of the South Downs Local Plan and its policies, the 57 policies continue to provide an important foundation for our shared future plans. They are set out in Appendix 1. General policies apply to a wide range of partners and stakeholders, others are more relevant to a particular ‘industry’ or specific interest. For example, those on water are most relevant to the water companies, Environment Agency and local abstractors, whereas those for education and lifelong learning are most relevant to local authorities, learning providers and education charities.

FIGURE 1.4 HOW THIS PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN DELIVERS NATIONAL POLICY





# HOW THIS PLAN WAS MADE AND REVIEWED

**1.10** In 2014 the first Partnership Management Plan (Plan) for the National Park was published following three years of joint working with a wide range of people and organisations, facilitated by the Authority and with great effort to ensure that a wide range of consultees had the opportunity to have significant input. The contributors included representatives from key sectors such as tourism, farming and forestry, environmental NGOs, several thousand individuals via public events and the online South Downs Forum. Many more specific groups such as the South Downs Partnership, technical working groups, local authorities and parish councils also participated. As a result, the Plan was shared by many and included commitments from land managers, communities, businesses, statutory agencies. It drove the corporate plans of the Authority itself, but was also reflected in the plans of many other organisations.

**1.11** Both Authority members and key partners agreed that the Plan 2014–19 framework remained largely sound and that the emphasis in reviewing and updating the Plan should be on upping the level of ambition and doing more on the ground. The review has been undertaken on behalf of many stakeholders by Authority officers overseen by its Members, with strategic advice from the South Downs Partnership. Building on the very extensive engagement process conducted from 2011-2014, consultation has involved parish workshops, and a variety of stakeholder groups. The technical working groups built up for the original Plan have evolved into a variety of delivery networks such as the South Downs Forestry Partnership, the Learning Partnership and the grouping of environmental NGOs. These networks have been very influential in shaping future ambitions for the National Park and will play a major role in making them happen.

**1.12** The first Plan also provided the foundation for the South Downs Local Plan. Planning is a key means by which we can deliver some of the outcomes, for example, on ecosystem services and affordable housing. However, it is also important to remember that many of the factors influencing the wider National Park landscapes have nothing to do with the planning system.

**1.13** The first Plan took account of a range of national and EU policies, for example, the *National Parks Vision and Circular 2010*, the *Natural Environment White Paper*, the EU Water Framework Directive and European Landscape Convention. Since then there has been a raft of new policy – important examples for the National Park being the Defra 25 Year Strategy, National Planning Policy Framework, Localism Act and the Industrial Strategy. Most recently, the Landscapes Review (authored by Julian Glover) sets out a series of challenges for National Parks and AONBs going forward. **FIGURE 1.4** shows how this Plan will help deliver a wide range of Government objectives within this area.

# HOW WE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN



**1.14** The Partnership Management Plan is a collective vision for the future of the South Downs National Park. Its 10 Outcomes can only be delivered by joint working between land managers, communities, NGOs, volunteers, businesses and a wide range of other partners and individuals.

**1.15** Together, the Authority and its partners will work in the following ways to deliver this Plan. Some projects will be led by the Authority and some by other partners:



**Use the best evidence and support new research.** Using the most up to date evidence and data, for example the latest technology to monitor landscape change, sharing data and evidence among the partners.



**Make best practice, common practice:** Share best practice between partners, whether land managers, communities, local authorities and agencies, businesses or NGOs.



**Build skills for the future:** For example by equipping the farmers and foresters of today to make the best plans and decisions for tomorrow, and investing in the future by bringing new entrants into the profession



**Network to form partnerships:** Create Joint Accords and work collaboratively with expertise from across sectors.



**Empower communities:** Help individuals, parishes and communities to take action locally on the issues which matter to them – for example climate change, wildlife, affordable housing, dark skies, urban trees, and tranquil places.



**Develop ways to evaluate the benefit of all projects in terms of natural capital, social and community value**



**Reach out to new audiences.** Use communication channels across many organisations to ensure full and active participation for all in this National Park.



**Develop the National Park as a national hub of excellence.**



**Ensure support for creative engagement with the landscape and its heritage.**



**Build on existing successful pilot initiatives and scale them up.**



**Engage new volunteers from underrepresented groups** and provide a cohesive volunteering offer that supports innovation and training.



**Support individuals to make small changes and incremental difference** through behaviour change campaigns and promoting micro-volunteering ideas

Specifically, the Authority will:



**Work to get net gain from major infrastructure:** work with utility companies, developers and their agents to develop high-quality schemes that go beyond avoiding damage and instead improve the landscape and biodiversity of the National Park.



**Add value through the planning system:** use the South Downs Local Plan and development management service, and those of partner local authorities, to achieve net environmental gain from developers.



**Support the creation of resilient markets and sustainable supply chains:** work with the supply chain to maximise the value of, for example, sustainably produced timber and forest products, thereby increasing the economic value of our woodlands.

# MONITORING AND REVIEW

**1.16** Delivery of the Partnership Management Plan (the Plan) will be monitored by tracking the progress against a set of overarching indicators and by annual reporting by partners against the projects they have committed to the Plan.

**1.17** The Authority and partners have agreed an initial list of projects and other work they will deliver towards achievement of the Plan outcomes and priorities over the next five years. The list of projects for each priority is set out in full on the Authority website. This project list will continue to evolve over the five year Plan period as new projects are developed by partners.

**1.18** On behalf of all involved, the Authority will write to partners annually, asking for a RAG (red/amber/green) status and description of progress. Every year the Authority will produce an annual Partnership Management Plan Report which will be a high level update detailing key outputs and case studies from projects and other activities. This information will then be published, and shared with the Authority and the South Downs Partnership, as well as the sector groups helping to deliver the work.

**1.19** In addition to monitoring project delivery we have updated the set of indicators against the Outcomes – these monitor overall progress towards the 2050 vision. Where possible we have retained indicators from the previous Plan to enable long term trends to be identified.

**1.20** Progress against all of the Plan indicators will be collected annually where it is possible to do so. It is likely that some of the indicators will not show change as frequently as every year, but will need to be measured over a longer time period, possibly even at five or ten year intervals. Significant changes and updates to indicators will be included in the Annual Partnership Management Plan Report.

**1.21** Periodically, we will arrange for an independent review of how well the activities of the National Park Authority and its partners are delivering the long-term vision. This will help us understand whether we need to change what we are doing or how we are doing it.

**1.22** Further information can be found on our website [southdowns.gov.uk/PartnershipManagementPlan](https://southdowns.gov.uk/PartnershipManagementPlan)



## 2. ENHANCE







# OUTCOME 1

## LANDSCAPE & NATURAL BEAUTY

The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities, natural beauty and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by avoiding or mitigating the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**2.1** The South Downs National Park (National Park) is not just stunning views, it is made up of a variety of complex landscapes – a rich tapestry reflecting its underlying geology and centuries of human influence.

**2.2** The eastern Downs have an open and expansive character, with scenic views across the Weald and out to sea, and include the Heritage Coast around Cuckmere Haven and the Seven Sisters. In the central and western Downs, woodland is a more characteristic feature. North of the chalk Downs, the Wealden clay and greensand is more enclosed and intimate, with its remnant heathland and sunken lanes.

**2.3** But pressures upon these landscapes are many and varied and they continue to be shaped by land use, agriculture and the many impacts of human settlement from small-scale clutter to large-scale infrastructure such as new roads, pipelines or cable routes. Over time cumulative impact could be to erode its special qualities.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

### 1.1 PROTECT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

#### TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND CHARACTER OF THE NATIONAL PARK AND SEEK ENVIRONMENTAL NET-GAIN FROM ANY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**2.4** It is important that the qualities of the landscape are conserved and enhanced for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Land management, large-scale infrastructure and development schemes can all have a significant impact on the landscape and visual amenity.

**2.5** The South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) will continue to develop ground-breaking evidence and understanding about the landscape and natural beauty of the National Park in order to effectively predict, manage and monitor threats from a range of issues such as climate change, agricultural methods, development and recreational pressures.

**2.6** Infrastructure providers will be encouraged to identify the potential for harm to the National Park through an evidence-based approach and to following the mitigation hierarchy in the development and evolution of their proposals. The Defra Environmental metrics to achieve

environmental net gain will be applied, where possible, to any proposals for new infrastructure and major development within the setting of and in the National Park.

### 1.2 CREATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

#### TO IMPROVE GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE TO DELIVER NATURE RECOVERY NETWORKS AND CONNECT PEOPLE TO NATURE WITHIN AND AROUND THE NATIONAL PARK

**2.7** Green Infrastructure planning is an international approach that incorporates natural solutions and strategic investment in the natural environment to deliver a wide range of benefits. These include: water & flood risk management, the economy, biodiversity, access, health & wellbeing, resources (food, fuel) and climate change adaptation. It can be thought of as creating a “people and nature network”

**2.8** Work is underway between a range of partners to create a “people and nature network” in and around the National Park by targeting the areas that can offer the greatest benefits, establishing a series of pilot projects and setting out some common principles for the planning, delivery and management of natural capital assets in the area.

### 1.3 TARGET NEW PAYMENTS TO MAXIMISE ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AGRI-ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTRY SCHEMES ACROSS THE NATIONAL PARK

**2.9** Over the next five years a major transition will start to take place toward a new post-EU, farming and forestry support scheme regime for England. The aim is to provide public money for public benefits like better soils, clean water, access or wildlife.

**2.10** The Authority will bring farmers, foresters, estates, other land managers and water companies together with Defra and Natural England to pilot the New Environmental Land Management System (NELMS) for the South Downs and other lowland mixed-farming landscapes. See the following example project.

## TRULEIGH HILL

At 216 metres, Truleigh Hill is a high point on the South Downs, with the South Downs Way National Trail running across it.

This landscape-based project involves working with a wide range of local stakeholder groups to develop a landscape management plan for Truleigh Hill to enhance the area for the immediate and long term.

An important aspect of the project will be to link with surrounding schools and colleges in order to educate and engage with young people in the surrounding communities. It is hoped that by learning about the geography, history and evolution of the landscape they will treat it with regard in the future.







## OUTCOME 2 INCREASING RESILIENCE

There is increased resilience within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.



**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

**2.11** Climate change is having fundamental impacts upon the National Park, with more unpredictable and more extreme weather events. This will lead to changes in landscape, habitats and crops, and increase soil erosion and flooding.

**PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

**2.1 IMPROVE SOIL AND WATER  
TO IMPROVE SOIL AND WATER BY  
REDUCING SOIL EROSION, IMPROVING  
CARBON CAPTURE AND FILTRATION AND  
RECONNECTING WETLAND HABITATS**

**2.12** Over the last 50 years there has been a national decline in soil health leading, locally, to erosion and increased sediment and pesticides in our rivers. Water quality has also declined as a result of increased fertilisers and nitrates from agriculture, roads and sewage, and other chemicals appearing in our water sources. Climate change and population increases are adding pressure on a limited natural resource, meaning that the South East of England has been designated a region of severe water stress. At the same time, extreme weather events are increasing flood risk, often exacerbated by the use of non-porous surfacing and changes in vegetation cover.

**2.13** Increased understanding of land management impact from pilots developed during the last Plan, are being actively used to change practices. These changes often have multiple ecosystem benefits – for example, the use of winter cover crops can reduce nitrate leaching by 90%, keep nitrogen in the soil for the following crop, provide excellent winter habitat for farmland birds, stabilise soil, add humus and fix carbon.

**2.14** New initiatives are also underway to scale up the use of natural habitats to alleviate flooding, reconnecting rivers to their floodplains so they can adapt naturally as water levels continue to rise. Making more room for water will also enable the restoration of wetland habitats such as floodplain meadows, reed beds and marshes, and take the pressure off urban areas.

**2.2 IMPROVE TREES AND  
WOODLAND  
TO IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE AND  
QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF TREES AND  
WOODLANDS IN THE NATIONAL PARK  
AND ENSURE THAT THE RIGHT TREE IS  
PLANTED IN THE RIGHT PLACE**

**2.15** Over one-fifth of the National Park is woodland. This locks up thousands of tonnes of carbon, slows water flows, provides valuable

habitat and is a sustainable source of home grown timber. The good news is that these multiple benefits are now better understood, the need for action is well integrated into national policy, and there is also better scientific data available to help those who are managing and planting trees. But, as with all habitats, our trees and woodlands are under an unprecedented threat from the effects of climate change, damage from browsing animals pests and disease and poor management.

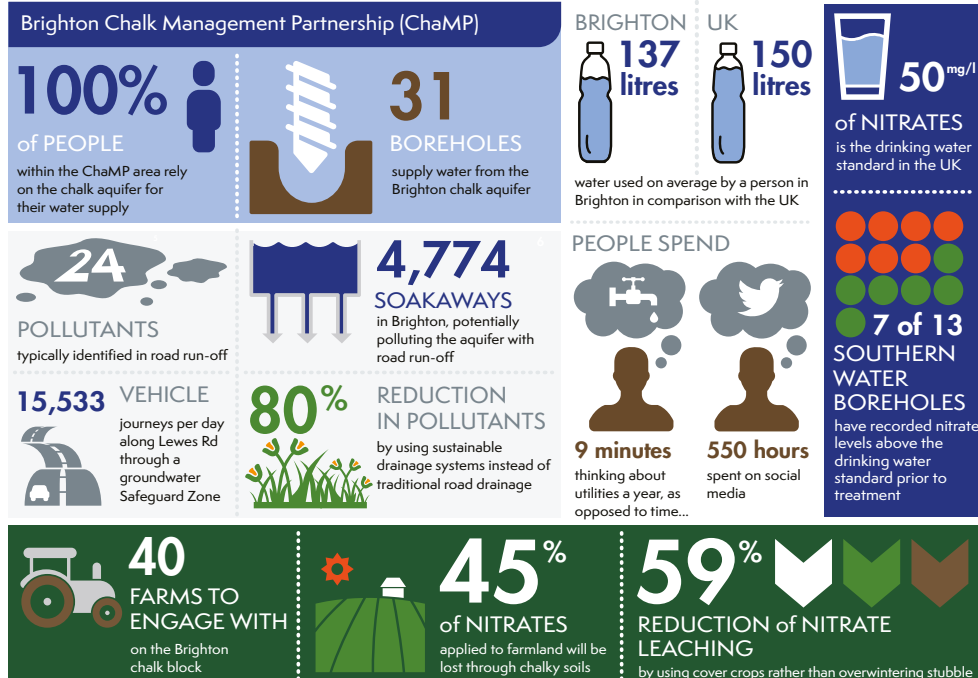
**2.16** In the National Park a wider range of species and provenances will be used to increase resilience, creating greater diversity of age structure within our woodlands and creating conditions for woodlands to regenerate naturally so they can evolve with the changing climate. Careful, targeted planting of new trees able to adapt, thrive and enhance their urban or rural surroundings, will also be used. See the following example projects.



## BRIGHTON CHALK MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP (ChaMP)

The chalk aquifer of the South Downs stores drinking water for 1.2 million people in the south east and feeds local streams and rivers. But, like many aquifers and rivers across the world, it is polluted with nitrates – from fertilisers, manure heaps and road run-off. The ChaMP project aims to protect and improve the quality of groundwater in the Brighton Chalk, to ensure it remains a sustainable resource for public water supply. In addition interventions have benefits for soil health and wildlife.

ChaMP provides practical advice and improvements to land management in the urban and rural area. It undertakes research to increase knowledge of the issues and to monitor success, through a series of trials for different types of interventions.



White letter hairstreak © SDNPA/Tim Squire

## BRINGING BACK ELM

English elm was an iconic landscape tree, provided hard, rot resistant timber, and was an important habitat for key species such as the white letter hairstreak butterfly. Dutch Elm Disease has almost destroyed English elm populations across the UK landscape, killing an estimated 60 million trees since its outbreak in the late 1960s. Parts of the eastern Downs and Brighton & Hove are the last remaining refuges for mature English elm. In recent years, elm breeding trials in America and the continent have successfully reared highly resistant cultivars of elm. The project seeks to raise awareness of these and to facilitate the growing of more suitable cultivars to bring elms and the wildlife that relies on them back to the National Park.



## OUTCOME 3

## HABITATS & SPECIES

A thriving and connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species now exist in the National Park



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**2.17** The National Park has a high proportion of sites designated for their wildlife value, including nationally and internationally important sites and over 800 locally designated wildlife sites. Habitats include chalk grassland, lowland heathland, ancient woodland, farmland, rivers and other wetland habitats, coastal and adjacent marine habitats. There are also two neighbouring Marine Conservation Zones.

**2.18** But these ecosystems have, as elsewhere, suffered significant damage over the last 150 years through loss of habitats, their fragmentation and degradation. Factors such as climate change, new diseases and invasive species are adding to this pressure. In order to create more resilience, urgent action is being taken to ensure that habitats are better managed, bigger and more joined up. This is essential because species will need to be able to move through the landscape if they are to adapt to change, this means looking well beyond nature reserves and working across the wider farmed countryside.

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

### 3.1 JOIN UP HABITATS

#### TO CREATE, RESTORE AND IMPROVE AREAS OF PRIORITY HABITAT TO BE MORE, BIGGER, BETTER AND JOINED UP AT A LANDSCAPE SCALE

**2.19** The National Park has a rich mosaic of habitats including species-rich chalk grassland, crystal clear chalk streams, precious acid heathland and ancient deciduous woodland. However, many are fragmented and some species populations have become isolated. Through concerted actions by landowners we will continue the approach set out by Prof Sir John Lawton in *Making Space for Nature* – joining up important areas of habitat, making key sites larger and improving their management condition. This Nature Recovery Network needs to extend well beyond the National Park boundary and connect with our neighbouring AONBs.

**2.20** The Authority will support this vital work by pulling together information from the habitat capability mapping tool, biodiversity opportunity areas and ecosystem service mapping. Land managers will work together with conservation organisations to target the best locations to develop connectivity, enlarge existing habitats and improve their quality (see also 3.1 above)

### 3.2 MANAGE PRIORITY AND INVASIVE SPECIES

#### TO INCREASE THE GENETIC DIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF TARGET SPECIES AND IMPLEMENT A LANDSCAPE-SCALE STRATEGY FOR TACKLING INVASIVE SPECIES, PESTS AND DISEASES

**2.21** The National Park supports many iconic species such as burnt orchids, sand lizards, barbastelle bats and brown trout. Many are rare and localised but the populations of some – such as the otter and Duke of Burgundy butterfly – are recovering through sensitive management and improving habitat connectivity. Other species, such as the wart biter cricket and the water vole, have had a helping hand with the introduction of new populations. The actions in 3.1, will increase the populations of key species by creating corridors for species movement, and improving genetic diversity by enabling populations to exist across a wider geographical range. These will be supplemented where necessary with introductions of wildlife lost to the area – recent examples include plans to bring back the beaver and the pine marten.

**2.22** Invasive non-native species, pests and diseases are a major issue on a global scale – both in terms of damage to native ecosystems but also health and economic impacts. In the UK the economic impact of control and containment is

estimated at £2 billion per annum. Locally, in the South Downs, both invasive non-native species and pests and diseases are a growing problem. We will continue to focus on the prevention,

control and eradication of those that are most harmful to our native biodiversity. See the following example projects.

## CHANGING CHALK

Changing Chalk is a distinctive peri-urban project led by the National Trust with many other partners. It focuses on the chalk grassland landscape of the eastern Downs and the communities of the coastal urban fringe of Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Newhaven.

This densely populated coastal area is immediately next to the fragile chalk grassland, which is facing rapid decline with only 4% of original habitat remaining. The area has some of the most economically deprived wards in the UK with high levels of unemployment and reports of young people feeling disconnected and isolated.

Through 24 different streams of activity, this new and ambitious project will bring together people and nature to tackle the threats to our chalk grassland and to grasp the opportunities that the area offers. The vision is to reverse the decline in chalk grassland and establish a long-term collaborative management plan which is sustainable because of the benefits it will provide for people.



© SDNPA/Alex Bamford

## BEE-LINES

Species-rich Downland is the iconic habitat of the chalk landscape and is traditionally managed through grazing, particularly by specialist sheep breeds such as the Southdown and Hampshire Down. During World War II many of the chalk grassland sites in the South Downs were ploughed and have remained under cultivation. More recently, intensification of farming methods has contributed to the loss and decline of this important habitat.

This new project aims to improve management and increase connectivity between fragmented chalk grassland sites by working with farmers, schools and other organisations within the Arun and Adur river areas. It will identify the current areas strong in wildlife and the which have the potential to connect them. The project will also seek to source a selection of native and locally sourced flowering plant seeds, which are not currently commercially available.



© Stephen Falk



# OUTCOME 4 ARTS & HERITAGE

The cultural heritage of the National Park is enhanced and widely understood and enjoyed.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

2.23 The cultural heritage of the National Park charts the history of inspirational landscapes and buildings that have evolved through human activity and continues to contribute to our sense of place. Cultural heritage is not static, and change comes with both threats (such as climate change)<sup>1</sup> and opportunities (such as digital technologies)<sup>2</sup>. Its unique value is in helping us to engage with the present, by understanding our human journey.

2.24 Cultural heritage does not exist in isolation, but is intimately tied to how we have used, adapted and valued landscapes and places – their character, natural resources, biodiversity, built forms, views and vistas.

- 2.25 The value of culture was outlined in the DCMS Culture White Paper (2016):
- The intrinsic value: Culture creates inspiration, enriches lives and improves our outlook on life.
  - The social value: Culture has important social benefits in terms of health, education and community cohesion.
  - The economic value: the contribution culture makes to economic growth.

2.26 In the National Park, aspects of our cultural heritage have been protected by using designated protections, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, designated conservation areas or registered parks and gardens. But in a landscape with such a long history of settlement, our understanding of the past is continually growing and changing, with new sites still being discovered, and new technologies revealing hidden stories. Cultural heritage in the National Park is being actively used to inspire new audiences about its special landscapes, and the landscapes, in turn, are continuing to inspire creativity.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

4.1 CONSERVE HERITAGE TO INCREASE CONSERVATION, AWARENESS, ACCESS TO AND UNDERSTANDING OF SOUTH DOWNS CULTURAL HERITAGE

2.27 Cultural heritage in the National Park is intrinsically linked to the natural environment, and contributes to it<sup>3</sup>. It is threatened by similar factors to those which affect species and habitats, and our heritage assets need to be actively looked

after to ensure they survive for future generations. It is important to ensure that the skills needed to maintain them are not lost.

2.28 The role of cultural heritage in facilitating health, wellbeing, engagement and inclusion is widely recognised. In the South Downs it is also a key contributor to local business and tourist economies, making some cultural heritage projects a sound economic investment. However, there are significant challenges around diminishing funding, skills and resources, and threats to preservation and conservation from climate change and land management, heritage crime, large-scale infrastructure projects and development pressures.

- 2.29 The projects in this Plan balance conservation and preservation with access and engagement:
- To protect and conserve we will:
    - monitor, record and conserve Heritage at Risk and related vulnerable sites, structures and buildings that contribute to the Park’s special character;

1 See: ASC (2016) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report – Summary for England; May Casser (2005) Climate Change and the Historic Environment;  
2 DCMS (2018) Culture is Digital  
3 DEFRA (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.



- promote awareness of heritage crime and its impact, encouraging public custodianship of heritage assets;
  - develop partnerships, projects and research, on heritage protection and adaptation in the context of climate change;
  - support joint initiatives, including apprenticeships and mentoring, which address skills loss or increase expertise and capacity to deliver conservation and access to cultural heritage; and
  - increase investment in the protection and interpretation of cultural heritage through use of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy money, where appropriate and relevant.
- To increase access and understanding we will:
- support initiatives that increase awareness of, and engagement with, culture and heritage;
  - support projects that increase knowledge and understanding of our cultural heritage;
  - develop and promote the contribution of cultural heritage engagement to health and wellbeing;
  - collaborate with volunteer providers to shape the next generation of ambassadors for cultural heritage in the South Downs;
  - foster engagement between museums, galleries, libraries and archives holding collections relating to the history of the

South Downs to develop projects and initiatives that increase our understanding, and which engage the public; and

- build stronger collaboration between a broad range of cultural heritage organisations from in and around the National Park and its immediate environs by encouraging cultural heritage organisations to join the South Downs Volunteering Network.

## 4.2 PROMOTE CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND CRAFTS

### TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE LANDSCAPE AND TRADITIONS OF THE SOUTH DOWNS THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND CRAFTS

**2.30** The National Park has a rich heritage of art, music and rural traditions. There is a strong association with writers, poets, musicians and artists who have captured the essence of this most English of landscapes, and drawn inspiration from its special qualities and sense of place: Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, Hilaire Belloc, Edward Thomas, Gilbert White, Edward Elgar, Joseph Turner, Eric Gill and Eric Ravilious, among many others.

**2.31** Today, traditions continue through activities such as folk singing and events like Findon Sheep

Fair. Intangible cultural heritage – such as oral traditions, festivals and traditional practices – provides fragile but emotive links to our ancestors. The culture of the National Park is also continually renewed. New art and creative expression which is inspired by landscapes, while continuing to celebrate the strong traditions of the past. The Authority will develop a strategic relationship with Arts Council England to support, nurture and disseminate creative practice across the arts, libraries and museums.

**2.32** We will encourage this by:

- encouraging participatory events with artists/practitioners inspired by the South Downs, which empower participants to create;
  - supporting a diverse range of artists and arts organisations, to respond creatively to the National Park;
  - encouraging the use of traditional skills and crafts as inspiration for contemporary artistic responses to the South Downs landscapes, wildlife and history;
  - promoting a wide range of the 50 or more festivals active in the South Downs, promoting creativity inspired by its landscapes, wildlife and history, and engaging wider audiences.
- See the following example projects.

# SCHEDULED MONUMENTS MONITORING PROJECT

Scheduled Monuments are recognised as nationally significant archaeological sites, and scheduling is a commitment to hand on these heritage assets to future generations. The National Park has 589 Scheduled Monuments, and currently 7% are considered to be "At Risk".

Using lessons-learned from a 2018 pilot project, the Authority and its Ranger team will liaise with Historic England, with County and District Archaeology Officers and the National Park Ranger teams to develop a new sustainable delivery model for monitoring and recording these important sites, with a programme of condition monitoring, conservation and repairs to Scheduled Monuments accessible by the Park Ranger teams. The innovative project will also incorporate training for volunteers and create resources and interpretation to support public engagement with these important heritage assets.



© SDNPA/Guy Edwardes

# CULTURAL HERITAGE HEALTH & WELLBEING MAPPING

Museums, galleries, libraries and archives in and around the South Downs are delivering work that benefits communities, and, in particular, can improve health and wellbeing. From dementia-friendly reminiscence sessions to craft café's addressing loneliness and isolation, their collections are supporting creative processes and engagement. Nationally, it is hard to evaluate the benefits of these activities, and many activities occur outside of social prescribing frameworks.

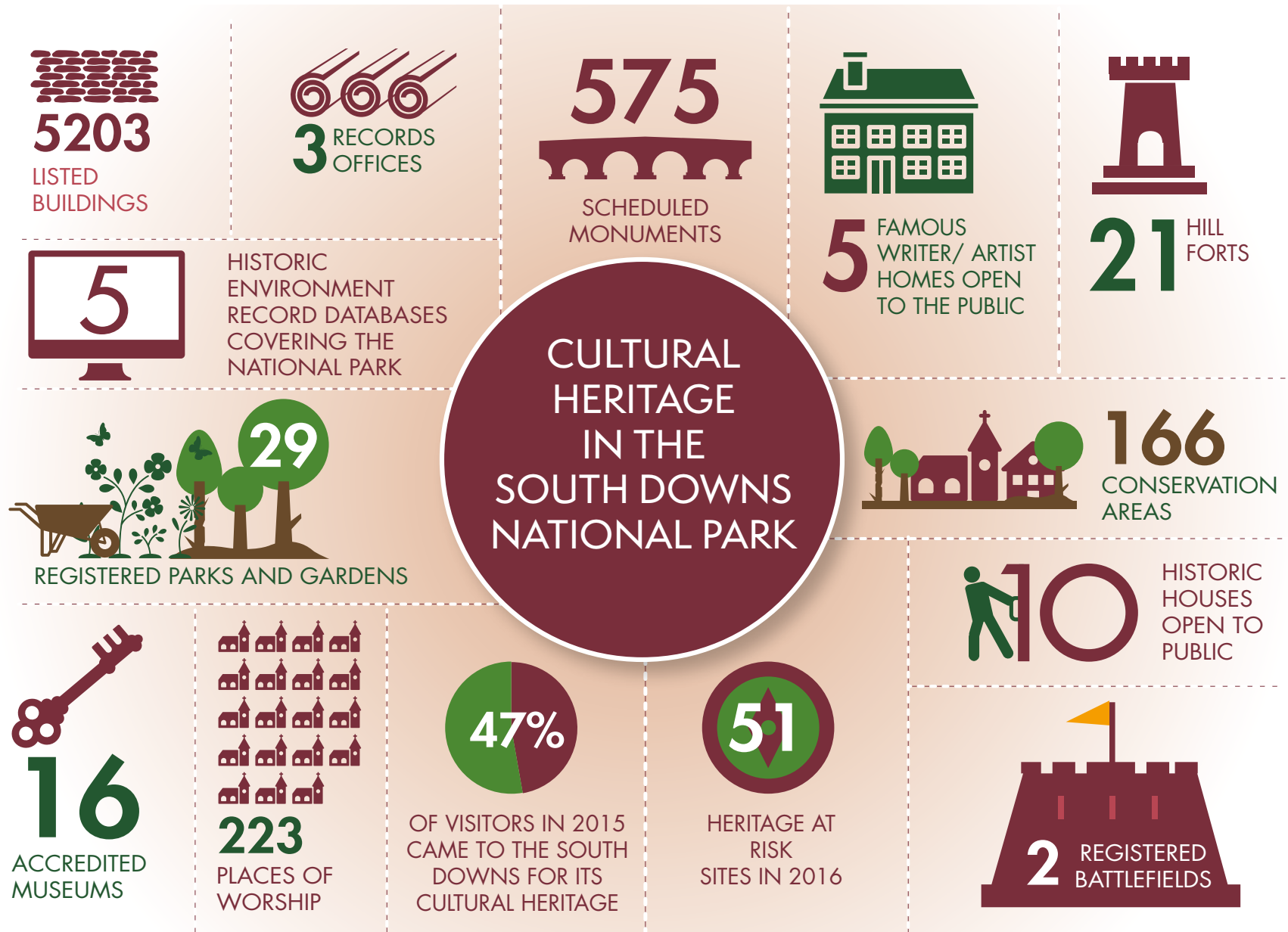
The Authority will act as a broker to strengthen health and wellbeing delivery, and so help support more heritage organisations to engage with social prescribing. This will bring community wellbeing and health benefits as well as access to funding and networks. A commissioned research piece will help us to connect heritage sites with social prescribing, and to create networks of activity within the National Park and its environs.



© SDNPA/Mischa Haller



FIGURE 2.1: CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK





A person wearing a blue jacket and grey trousers is walking a light-colored dog on a red leash along a path covered in fallen autumn leaves. The path is surrounded by tall trees with vibrant yellow and orange foliage. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path.

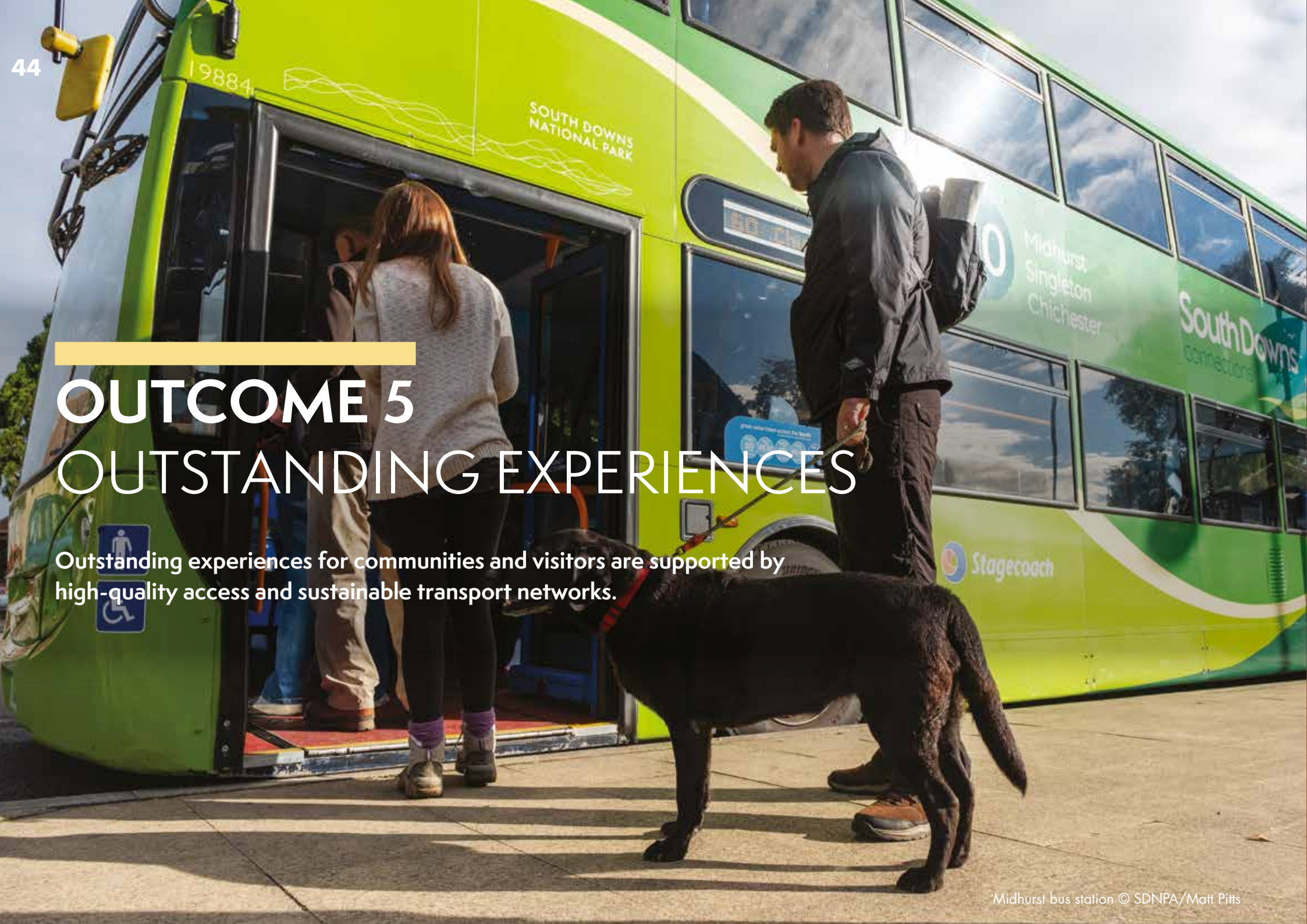
## 2. ENHANCE: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Support pollinators by planting bee and other pollinator friendly plants in your garden.
- Save water – put a time on your shower, turn off the tap when brushing your teeth, use a water butt to water your plants.
- Volunteer to support biodiversity through wildlife monitoring or other tasks.
- If you don't have time to volunteer regularly why not take part in a micro-volunteering activity.
- Do a 2 minute litter pick when you go out for a walk.
- Visit cultural heritage sites across the National Park and share what you learn.
- Support local arts and crafts.
- Save our dark night skies by turning off your lights or installing lights that point down.
- Take the Lead when out walking your dog – keep them on a lead or under control and pick up and take away dog poo.



# 3. CONNECT





# OUTCOME 5 OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high-quality access and sustainable transport networks.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**3.1** National Parks are designated for everyone<sup>4</sup>, and the South Downs provides outstanding recreational opportunities associated with its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. It is really important that local communities, and visitors have a wide range of opportunities to learn and be inspired, and to improve their health and wellbeing. However, evidence to date shows that certain groups have been consistently under-represented.

**3.2** The most recent Authority visitor survey<sup>5</sup> indicated that 98% of visitors rated their experience of the National Park as high or very high, 77% of visitors counted our scenic landscapes and breath-taking views as key factors in their enjoyment, and going for a walk was by far the most popular activity amongst visitors – with 73% identifying this as their main activity.

**3.3** The priorities in this chapter will help improve these experiences, enabling more participation by addressing barriers to access, and manage the pressures of growing visitor numbers in certain hotspots.

**3.4** To give one example, barriers on the Rights of Way network include steps and stiles which prevent access by less mobile individuals, and a lack of good ‘family friendly’ routes connecting to major settlements in and around the National Park. In most areas these are compounded by poorly promoted public transport and declining bus services. The severance caused by major highways on the edge of the National Park, such as the A27 and M3, and increasing traffic flows on roads within it, is also significant.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

### 5.1 A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL TO ENABLE EVERYONE TO EXPERIENCE THE NATIONAL PARK AND WIDEN PARTICIPATION FOR UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS THROUGH TARGETED ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTION

**3.5** The visitor profile of the National Park shows that certain groups are currently under-represented. In particular:

- Young people (16–24) – Staying visitors are much more likely to be from older age groups (>55 years).

- People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Our visitors are overwhelmingly white, with only 1% from BAME communities (compared to 14.8% in the populations surrounding the National Park).
- People with disabilities – 26% of people polled cited ‘Health issues prevent me’ as a key reason for not visiting.
- People from areas of social deprivation – 16% of people surveyed said they ‘can’t afford to go/it is too expensive’ as a main reason for not visiting. There are people struggling in the most apparently affluent areas.

**3.6** Working together this Plan aims to improve access for everyone by reducing the barriers to visiting the National Park. These include:

- **Physical barriers:** including gates, stiles, path surfaces and steep gradients
- **Economic barriers:** for young people who don’t drive or have low incomes, it can be expensive to travel, to stay places, to eat and to join activities.
- **Cultural and social barriers:** lack of appropriate information can be a significant barrier. Evidence<sup>6</sup> suggests individuals who have had a positive experience are more likely

4 8-Point Plan for England’s National Parks, Defra, March 2016

5 SDNPA Visitor Survey 2018

6 Sussex Community development Association (2015) BME Inclusion and Access to the South Downs National Park

to share information within their communities, and this has greater impact than officially produced literature.

**5.2 IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY  
TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH  
A NETWORK OF HIGH-QUALITY ROUTES  
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITH THE  
LANDSCAPE, HERITAGE, ATTRACTIONS  
AND TRANSPORT HUBS AND GATEWAYS**

**3.7** With over 3300km of public paths, this National Park has one of the most extensive Rights of Way networks in the country. The 2018 visitor survey<sup>7</sup> showed 73% of visitors came to enjoy a walk, yet many people who live close by are not experiencing it. There is a shortage of ‘family friendly’ paths suitable for inexperienced

cyclists and vulnerable users. Connectivity from market towns and transport hubs can be an issue, and major highway corridors – in particular across the A27 to the coastal fringe, and across the M3 to Winchester – present significant barriers to access.

**3.8** The Authority Strategy for Cycling and Walking<sup>8</sup> sets out an ambitious agenda to improve accessibility for all by creating a network of traffic free routes that are easily reached by communities within and near to the National Park, and which are well connected to public transport.

**3.9** It is now firmly understood that being out in nature is good for us. Enabling more people to access the National Park for walking, cycling,

horse riding and other activities creates multiple benefits. It improves health and wellbeing, encourages greater visitor spend<sup>9</sup> in the local economy, eases traffic hotspots, and improves air quality by taking cars off the road.

**3.10** A wide range of projects are underway or planned by various partners. These range from strategic off-road routes for Non-Motorised Users to *Miles without Stiles* programme, which is opening up more of the National Park to the less mobile by removing stiles and path resurfacing. Many of the projects feature in Local Highways Authorities’ Local Transport Plans and Countryside Access or Rights of Way Improvement Plans. See the following example projects.

7 SDNPA Visitor Survey 2018

8 South Downs National Park Authority Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017-2024

9 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results)



## FAMILIES INCLUSION PROJECT USING THE JOHN MUIR AWARD

For families and young people who have had little access to wild places, often from the most deprived sectors of society, working together in nature to a shared goal offers ways to share new and positive experiences and to improve wellbeing.

The John Muir Award is an environmental scheme focused on wild places. It supports people to connect with, enjoy and care for nature, landscapes and the natural environment. It's for people of all backgrounds and ages, is non-competitive, inclusive and accessible.

The Award asks participants to meet four challenges:

- Discover a wild place.
- Explore it by a walk, camp, bike ride or cycle.
- Conserve it through practical conservation or campaigning.
- Share your experiences through making a film, talking to friends and family, or making a display of photos or poems.

Since 2014, the Authority has used the award very successfully to engage schools and outdoor learning organisations. Building on this success we are now extending the scheme to families who live in areas of deprivation around the National Park, working in partnership with already established groups at support centres in towns and cities including Food Banks, Sure Start Centres and Social Services.



© SDNPA/Luke Geoghegan

## MILES WITHOUT STILES

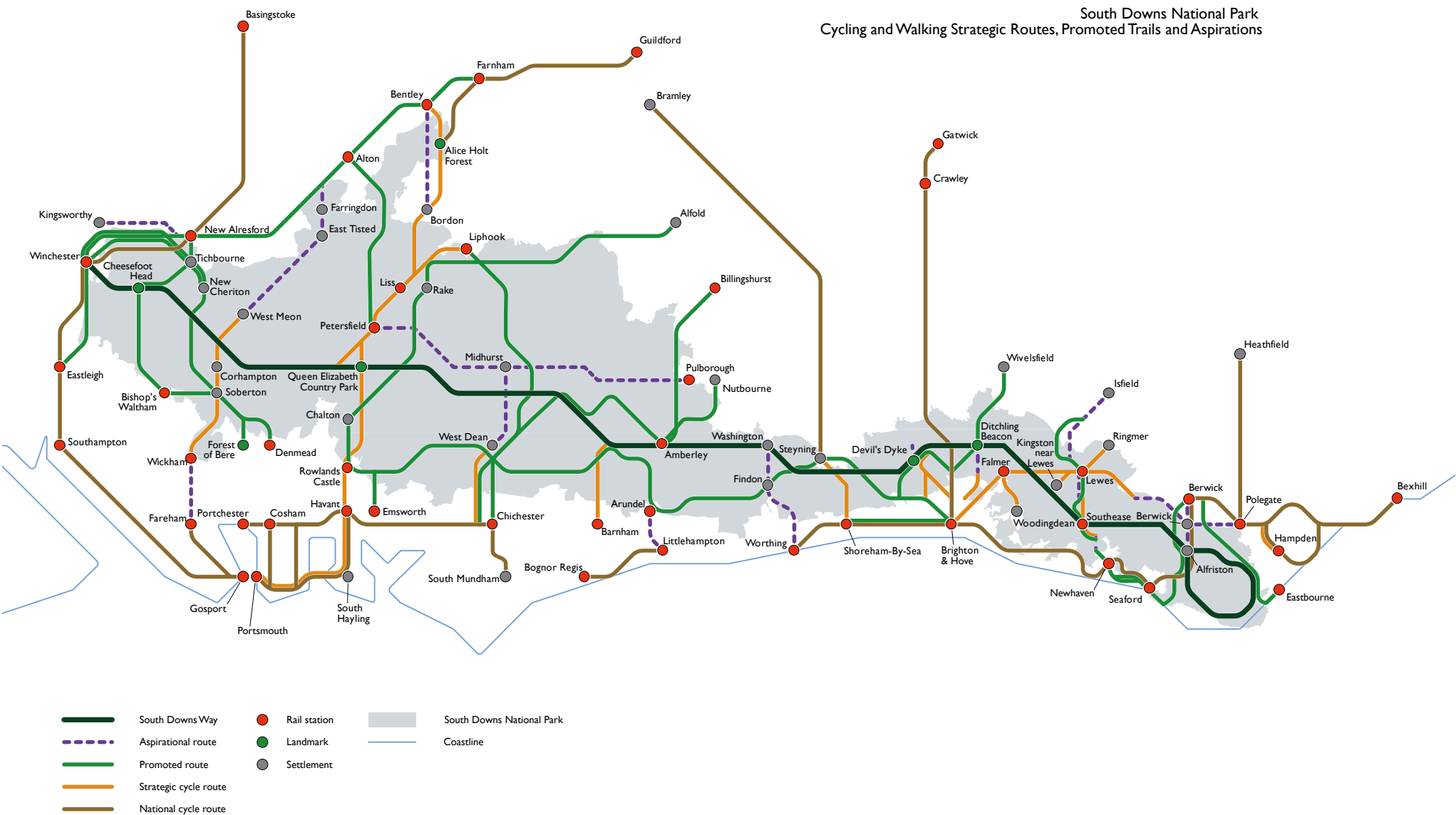
Many people have difficulty or are excluded from enjoying the National Park due to physical barriers on the rights of way network. Small changes can make a huge difference to the accessibility of our network. A partnership with Gatwick Airport, the South Downs National Park Trust and the Authority has made £60,000 available over 3 years to improve access to open up large areas of the existing network to a wider audience. Work has included physical improvements to the network and the publication of better information to promote accessible areas.

The partnership aims to work with our rights of way authorities to continue to improve the access network through many small interventions that, together, have a big impact.



© SDNPA/Sam Moore

FIGURE 3.1: CYCLING AND WALKING STRATEGY VISION “TUBE” MAP OF STRATEGIC ROUTES AND PROMOTED TRAILS (2017)





### 5.3 ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

#### TO ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE ACCESS INTO AND AROUND THE NATIONAL PARK, ENCOURAGING THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF RURAL TRANSPORT SERVICES

**3.11** The South Downs is under huge pressure from car use. The 2018 Visitor Survey estimates that 77% of visits were made by car, creating carbon emissions, air pollution, noise and congestion. Improving public transport into and around the boundary is therefore vital.

**3.12** Parts of the National Park are well served by rail, with stations acting as visitor gateways linking directly to destinations such as the South Downs Way National Trail, or connecting with

bus routes for onward travel. However, evidence shows<sup>10</sup> that visitors still need more information about how to get around and that there is a lack of confidence in the 'final mile' – meaning visitors arriving by more sustainable modes are uncertain of how to reach their end destination. This is being tackled through a variety of projects including the development of Travel Hubs at gateway stations; digital mapping, on the ground signposting and more joined up ticketing services.

**3.13** The retention and expansion of rural transport services is a key issue for the National Park. A transport network that works for both residents and visitors is a critical factor in supporting communities and enabling outstanding visitor experiences, yet rural bus services have reduced in the last five years through cuts in the

budgets of Passenger Transport Authorities. This is having an impact on young people's ability to access education and employment, and is increasing isolation among elderly or disabled rural residents without access to a car.

**3.14** Nationally, trends in transport suggest mobility services will look very different in the future, with continuing decline in scheduled routes but the rise of more app-based, on demand, sharing services. Without strong advocacy it is unlikely that rural areas will become early adopters of these new technologies, but partners in the South Downs are very keen to find new ways of keeping rural communities connected and would therefore welcome innovative pilot projects within this period of the Plan.

# OUTCOME 6

## LIFELONG LEARNING

There is widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**3.15** Worldwide, there is compelling evidence of a growing disconnect between people and the natural environment<sup>11</sup>. The National Park provides a real opportunity for people to take part in life-long learning opportunities, which help people move from inspiration to taking action and getting involved.

**3.16** With 893 schools inside, or within 10 kilometres of the boundary, the potential is huge. Nearly 200 providers of outdoor learning opportunities, from farm visits to museums and adventurous activities, offer a diverse range of learning experiences. Changes to the National Curriculum and OFSTED Inspection Framework have created the opportunity to support schools with locally relevant learning across the whole curriculum. However, barriers include the rising cost of transport to sites and the confidence and skills of some school staff in leading groups outdoors.

**3.17** Adult and life-long learning is also a key sector and organised groups are well represented, including the University of the Third Age (U3A) which has over 38 branches in and around the National Park. There are 42 higher

and further education organisations which have areas of academic interest aligned to National Park Purposes. Creating a shared knowledge of the National Park and building a robust evidence base to guide future delivery is a key opportunity for this sector.

**3.18** With over 70 per cent of the National Park classified as agricultural, and with a rich cultural heritage, the land-based economy and traditional rural businesses and crafts have historically provided local jobs and support many of the special qualities. Long-term commitment and support for training and skills development is vital for the future.

## PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

### 6.1 PROVIDE OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

#### TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY OUTDOOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AS PART OF A LOCALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

**3.19** There is clear evidence from a wide range of academic publications and research studies<sup>12</sup> that learning outside the classroom is beneficial for young people's social, physical and academic development. In an Authority survey of 213

schools in 2017<sup>12</sup>, 96% of school head teachers or outdoor learning coordinators said learning outside the classroom was good for children's physical and mental health and improved their personal, social and emotional development. Improved behaviour was noted by 77% and 75% stated that it raised attainment. We want more children to be able to access high-quality learning opportunities as part of a locally relevant curriculum.

**3.20** The highly successful South Downs Learning Network, facilitated by the Authority will continue to deliver high-quality learning outside the classroom opportunities for young people. These activities will include designing locally relevant programmes of study with head teachers and curriculum planners, delivering teacher training and INSET day sessions with school staff, working with Universities to up-skill trainee teachers, targeting learning through initiatives that support health and wellbeing and providing supporting infrastructure through the Learning Zone, Learning Map and School Travel Grant. See the following example project.

11 November 2017, Discover England Fund Research Summary Report: Making Great Memories in England's National Parks and Countryside, Visit England, Xv Insight

12 SDNPA (2017) Survey of schools' usage of outside space for learning

# INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

Teacher confidence in delivering learning outside the classroom is a key challenge in providing high-quality outdoor learning experiences for young people<sup>1</sup>. Teachers entering the profession now are more likely than ever to have experienced nature deficit themselves during their childhoods, reflected in a decline in confidence in teaching and learning outdoors. This Authority led project aims to engage trainee teachers through their universities and colleges as an important step in building confidence in teaching outside the classroom and knowledge of how to embed this into the national curriculum. This has been delivered through a lecture and practical workshop sessions to 100+ second year Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students at the University of Brighton in 2018.

Workshops included a running game/orienteering star course, geology rocks, landscape art & photography, John Muir Award 'Mission Explore' and a history extravaganza delivered by Charleston House and the Sussex Archaeological Society. After the immersion this cohort of future primary teachers left with a much improved understanding of the potential of learning outside the classroom in the inspirational South Downs – and more confidence in knowing where to begin.

1 SDNPA (2017) Survey of schools' usage of outside space for learning



© SDNPA/Alex Bamford



© SDNPA/Laura Warren



# OUTCOME 7

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

The South Downs National Park is a well-used and recognised asset for sustaining mental and physical health and wellbeing.





WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

3.21 There is compelling evidence that access to open space and the natural environment improves mental and physical health. Increased physical activity, taken outdoors in a natural environment, closer to nature, has proven benefits for reducing stress and improving general wellbeing. There are 2.2 million people living in the major urban centres adjacent to the National Park. This diverse population includes a significant number who suffer from health inequalities and deprivation.<sup>13</sup>

3.22 By providing opportunities for social interaction activities in the South Downs, we can also help to create a stronger sense of community for those who feel isolated.

7.1: IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
TO DEVELOP INITIATIVES WHICH ENABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES  
AND INDIVIDUALS TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

3.23 The inspiring landscapes, natural beauty and special qualities of the National Park provide a wide range of opportunities for communities and individuals to improve physical and mental health. We will work to make this national and regional asset available to a wider range of people from more diverse backgrounds and locations.

3.24 Many partners are already delivering activities through a range of mechanisms and are now developing social prescribing as a way of using the National Park to support improvements in mental and physical health. The Authority is building a partnership with health bodies and local networks of providers and commissioners, both in and around the National Park, to encourage a better appreciation of the potential of the South Downs as a place for healthy outdoor activity and relaxation, and as a place where mental health and emotional well-being can be nurtured and supported. The

South Downs Local Plan, and those of neighbouring Local Authorities, also have a crucial role in ensuring that the built environment and adjacent green infrastructure provides more opportunities for healthy living. See the following example project.

GROW

The GROW project developed from an initial partnership with Brighton & Hove MIND, the National Trust and an independent charitable organisation run by people who've got personal experience of mental health issues. It aims to give people experiencing psychological and emotional distress a chance to recover and feel better through structured and unstructured activities in nature, including nature walks, practical conservation work, helping on the farm, cooking wild food and a range of arts and crafts. The project runs out of Saddlescombe Farm (near Devils Dyke, Brighton). The Authority will continue to support the project in future years so that its benefits reach a larger number of people.

Bespoke information

A new project will be developed to create bespoke communications for health professionals to get them to better understand the links between contact with nature, and cultural heritage and arts, as a good opportunity for social prescribing. Working with the NHS and Public Health Teams the project will identify key messages and use appropriate language to support the increase in the use of the National Park for social prescribing.

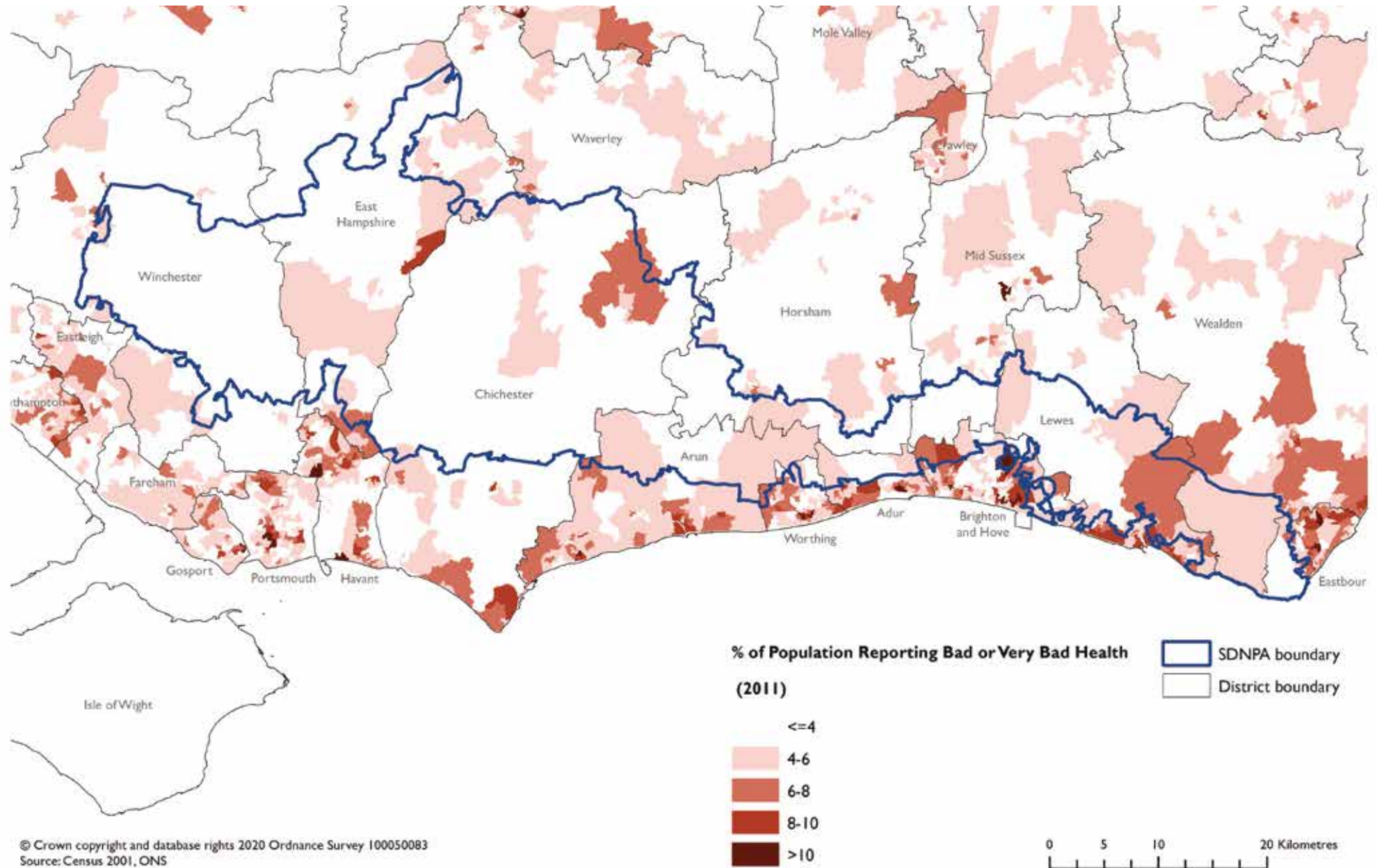


© SDNPA/Mischa Haller

13 See General Health, Bad or Very Bad (Census 2011).



FIGURE 3.2: HEALTH MAPPING IN AND AROUND THE NATIONAL PARK







# OUTCOME 8

## CREATING CUSTODIANS

More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, communities and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**3.25** One of the key challenges for the National Park is to increase the opportunities to enjoy it without creating unsustainable pressure upon it. Encouraging widespread knowledge and understanding, and creating a greater sense of place, allows residents, businesses and visitors to build a stronger connection to the landscape and encourages more people to make a positive contribution. One of the best ways to do this is through volunteering.

**3.26** There are currently 3440<sup>14</sup> volunteers undertaking activities relevant to National Park Purposes, delivering huge benefits and creating a powerful network of ambassadors. This includes the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service (SDVRS) and volunteers working for many other conservation and heritage organisations. The large number of people

living in and around the National Park provide a great opportunity to further expand and diversify these activities, and we are working to remove the barriers some groups face to accessing them.

### 8.1 INCREASE VOLUNTEERING TO INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES THAT SUPPORT THE NATIONAL PARK

**3.27** Over 170 organisations provide volunteering opportunities relating to National Park purposes. Volunteers contribute 95,120 days each year, a staggering £5,136,480 cash equivalent (using living wage calculations). Volunteers therefore provide a great practical resource, make a huge impact as ambassadors and, at the same time, improve their own physical and mental wellbeing.

**3.28** However, at present, the volunteering profile in the South Downs is not representative of the regional demography. In particular, young people (age 16–25), people with disabilities, people from more socially disadvantaged communities and people from BAME communities are under-represented and this is something we intend to address.

**3.29** There are a number of factors affecting the current demographic of volunteers, including the nature of the tasks offered. Of organisations supporting volunteering, 98 per cent of those recently surveyed cited practical tasks/conservation as the main roles offered. Important as this is, it is also important to offer a wider range of volunteer activities which respond to people's evolving needs and interests. See the following example projects.

14 SDNPA (2016) Survey of volunteering in the South Downs National Park

# YOUTH AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEERS

The Authority has created a new volunteer role specifically for young people, that of Youth Ambassador. Two young conservation volunteers from within the SDVRS were recruited to this role and have been busy engaging with more young people.

To date, the Youth Ambassadors have represented the National Park at Careers Fairs and public events, and have initiated an Instagram take-over to promote micro-volunteering opportunities. They have spoken to the wider National Park Volunteer Network and inspired other organisations to consider adopting this model of youth empowerment.



© SDNPA

# SOUTH DOWNS YOUTH ACTION

The landscapes of the South Downs will always need volunteers to support and improve biodiversity.

South Downs Youth Action is aimed at young people aged 16–25 who get the chance to volunteer through taking part in specific activities and micro volunteering during the summer months. The aim of the approach is to increase the percentage of young people who volunteer from 4.5%, giving them an opportunity to help support this nationally-important landscape and to improve their own health and wellbeing.



© SDNPA



### 3. CONNECT: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Explore somewhere new in the National Park and share your experiences **#southdowns**
- Get active – cycle, run, kayak, ride or just stroll gently.
- Take part in the John Muir award.
- Volunteer to help others experience the National Park.
- Encourage your school to get outside to learn.
- Support young people in your life to get into nature.
- Bring a friend who has never been before.
- Support the South Downs National Park Trust.
- Attend one of our events across and around the National Park.
- Use public transport or car share.
- Develop circular walks in your area.



# 4. THRIVE





# OUTCOME 9 GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to address local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

4.1 The residents of the National Park play a pivotal role in sustaining its vibrant communities and shaping its unique landscapes. There is real pride in our towns and villages, and many people dedicate time and resources to enhancing community life, conserving what is important to their local area and planning for the needs of future generations.

4.2 Together we want to help our communities to become more sustainable and resilient and to provide environments that improve health and wellbeing, where residents have better access to housing, jobs, facilities, infrastructure and the services they need.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

9.1 INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK IN THE NATIONAL PARK, WITH FOCUS ON EXEMPLARY DESIGN AND USING LOCAL SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

4.3 All National Parks have higher house prices than the average for their constituent counties, with average house prices equivalent to 11.6

times local earnings (14.6 in the South Downs National Park).<sup>15</sup>

4.4 The high proportion of larger properties, and the associated high price of housing, makes access to affordable housing a key issue facing many local communities. Young people and young families, in particular, find it difficult to get low-cost housing that would enable them to continue living in the area. This has the potential to increase the average age of the population in our communities, placing further pressure on existing services, and increasing the need for people to travel to find suitable affordable accommodation and employment. The South Downs Local Plan requires 50 per cent affordable homes on sites of 11 or more and to have affordable housing provision on smaller sites.

9.2 SUPPORT VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES WHICH ENHANCE THE TOWNS, VILLAGES AND LANDSCAPES OF THE NATIONAL PARK

4.5 The majority of National Park residents live in the market towns (Lewes, Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth) or, the larger villages. These vibrant

larger settlements provide essential services and facilities for their residents, but importantly also for those from the surrounding rural areas. The individual character and appearance of our smaller and more isolated settlements make them attractive places to live, but it is here that accessing services and facilities is most difficult.

4.6 There are 176 Town and Parish Councils – and even more distinct communities – across the National Park. The majority are already engaged in community led planning and initiatives to improve local quality of life and make them more resilient and attractive for residents and visitors.

4.7 The Authority has already supported the preparation of over 150 Community Led Plans, including 56 Neighbourhood Plans, and these are invaluable to understand local issues and aspirations. In a protected landscape such as ours, neighbourhood planning provides an important way to reconcile the need to conserve and enhance the landscape while allowing for appropriate levels of growth, and the groups that have formed to create them may often go on to start other projects in their communities.



### 9.3 IMPROVE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

#### TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT IN DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE, SPEED AND COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE NATIONAL PARK

**4.8** At 82%, the percentage of superfast broadband available to premises in the National Park is significantly lower than the national average (just under 95%) and the UK Government target (97%<sup>16</sup>). 'Not spots' (where properties are unable to receive 2 Mbit/s) cover 1.3% of the area, whereas the national average is 0.4%.

**4.9** Availability of gigabit-capable broadband is crucial if the National Park is to attract and retain high value businesses, for whom this is becoming the baseline requirement. Better digital connectivity also benefits residents and encourages more home working which will reduce out-commuting.

**4.10** In order to start, grow and retain business in the National Park we must future proof by improving the digital infrastructure right across the National Park. See the following example project.

### WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL RURAL DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

#### Delivering on Outcome 9: Great Places to Live

Access to future-proofed and reliable broadband is vital to the set up and growth of rural businesses. Currently in the discovery phase, this West Sussex County Council-led project aims to overcome issues of poor connectivity in rural areas by providing full fibre infrastructure between Chichester and Horsham districts.

It is envisaged that the project will enable new and accessible full fibre broadband infrastructure to reach rural 'not spots'. It may also enable smaller internet service providers and local self-build communities to invest in and grow the fibre network. An additional benefit may be a boost in coverage from mobile operators where currently 4G coverage is not available or provided by only one commercial operator.

Delivery is part of the wider West Sussex Full Fibre Programme which includes complementary projects and opportunities aimed at increasing coverage of gigabit-capable digital infrastructure. The Programme also includes national initiatives such as the government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme aimed specifically at rural areas where current broadband speeds are less than 30mbps. Rural Gigabit vouchers can be used by groups of rural properties to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit capable connection. Businesses within a group can claim up to £3,500 against the cost of a connection and residents can claim for a voucher of up to a value of £1500. For more information visit <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/for-residents/suppliers/>



© SDNPA/Anne Purkiss

# OUTCOME 10 GREAT PLACES TO WORK

A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.





## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**4.11** Establishing and maintaining a healthy economy is essential to underpin the landscapes and communities of the National Park. There are over 8000 businesses within the boundary, providing jobs for 54,480 people. Of those, 98% are micro businesses with fewer than 10 employees, or small businesses with 10–49 employees<sup>17</sup>.

**4.12** Farming and forestry is the 3rd largest sector, with over 700 land-based businesses employing around 3000 people, and our natural capital is heavily dependent on this sector. For example, as described elsewhere, woodland provides a wide range of public benefits: 32% is managed on a commercial basis, and much of the remainder for amenity purposes.

**4.13** The visitor economy, which currently accounts for only 10% of businesses and has potential for growth, greatly relies on the landscapes and the special qualities of the National Park to provide opportunities for

recreation, food and drink, and health and wellbeing.

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

### PRIORITY 10.1: STRENGTHEN ENTERPRISE

#### TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLY MANAGED LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES AND LOCAL ENTERPRISE

**4.14** A key challenge in the changing economic climate is to nurture the existing businesses and support investment in new enterprise. However, it is also important for our businesses to improve their sustainability, by boosting their environmental performance and actively seeking to employ local people, source local products and support other local businesses.

**4.15** Local businesses play a crucial role in ensuring the economic viability of National Park communities (see above), and a positive community economic cycle<sup>18</sup> is crucial. Research<sup>19</sup> has shown every £1 spent locally is worth more than 400% to the local economy.

By encouraging our communities to buy locally, we help support sustainable local businesses creating employment, ensuring that more young people and young families are able to choose to live and work in the community they call home, thus reducing the amount of out commuting, currently at 43% in the National Park. We will work with government to increase the amount of business support, and ensure a good supply of employment space through the South Downs Local Plan.

### PRIORITY 10.2: INCREASE DESTINATION AWARENESS TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND DESIRABILITY OF THE SOUTH DOWNS AS A SPECIAL PLACE TO VISIT

**4.16** Supported by a wide variety of holiday accommodation, we want visitors to delve deeper and connect with wildlife, history, culture and cuisine. The Authority and its partners will therefore work together and create unique experiences for visitors which also benefit our communities and businesses.

17 SDNPA. (2018). Economic Profile

18 Scott, J. (2001). Living Economy: the Reuters guide to the economy of modern Britain. Published by Reuters, London.

19 Local Multiplier 3. Online. Available: [Im3online.com/about](https://www.im3online.com/about) (accessed on 11th May 2019)

**4.17** Local awareness of the National Park has grown steadily – in 2018 82% of respondents<sup>20</sup> noted that they were aware of being inside it, compared to 77% of people surveyed in 2011<sup>21</sup>. But the National Park still has a low national and international profile and we intend to change this.

**4.18** Research has shown that once people are aware of the sensitivity of their surroundings they are more likely to take action and care for the place. Working with tourism partners and local providers, the Authority’s Communications & Engagement Strategy aims to take visitors on a journey from awareness to becoming an active champion for the National Park.

**PRIORITY 10.3: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**  
**TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH DOWNS AS AN EXEMPLAR IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**4.19** The South Downs attracted an estimated 18.8million visits in 2016, the highest of any UK National Park. However, at £342 million, the attributed visitor spend was one of the lowest per head, though it still supported approximately 4,900 full time equivalents.<sup>22</sup> This is because the majority are day visitors, either living or staying in the surrounding area. The visitor economy also differs across the National Park: in 2018 only 6% of total visitors surveyed were using accommodation inside the National Park, showing the potential for growth in provision elsewhere. Growth in international visits will help increase the economic impact of tourism

to the South Downs and support employment opportunities by increasing demand and visitor spend.

**4.20** Tourism brings economic benefits but can also put pressure on popular ‘hotspots’. Businesses can reduce negative impacts by enabling visitors to have outstanding experiences out of season and accessible by public transport.

**4.21** A combination of partners including tourism businesses and operators, the Authority, other UK National Park Authorities, Visit England and Visit Britain and local destination partners, will develop new projects which support a resilient sustainable tourism economy in the National Park, in line with the South Downs Local Plan and the Authority’s Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

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20 South Downs National Park Visitor Survey 2018  
21 South Downs National Park Visitor Survey 2012  
22 TEAM Report, 2017



## NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE COLLECTION – DISCOVER ENGLAND FUND

### Delivering on Outcome 10: Great places to work

This exciting Discover England Fund funded project brings together nine of England's National Parks including the South Downs to attract international visitors into our National Parks. It is the first time England's National Parks have worked together on a project of this nature.

The project aims to:

1. Develop an overarching experiential brand in England's National Parks.
2. Develop a framework to enable local businesses to be engaged in the offer, improve their productivity and enhance the overall visitor experience.
3. Create and deliver a range of compelling world-class experiences within most of England's National Parks highlighting the distinctive nature and assets of each.
4. Develop a travel trade strategy to stimulate commercial partnerships that successfully connect the brand and its bookable product with our targeted overseas markets.

In January 2019, the English National Park Experience Collection launched a set of 72 new visitor experiences along with 85 accommodation providers across these 9 National Parks to the industry after a year of working with businesses and the trade. The nine National Parks are now looking at how to continue the success of our joint tourism venture.



© Daniel Wildey



## 4. THRIVE: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Get involved with a community group.
- Get involved in the development of your community's neighbourhood development plan or community plans.
- Throw a star party with local food and drink.
- Grow your own fruit and veg.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Buy local.
- Support wildlife groups in your area.
- Care for people – help others in your community who may be struggling to get out into the National Park.





The background features a dark green field with several horizontal, wavy bands of lighter green. These bands contain various textures: a brick wall pattern on the left, a field of footprints in the center, and a dense forest of trees on the right.

# 5. CONCLUSION

# CONCLUSION

**The National Park is a diverse and dynamic landscape cherished by many, yet it is a landscape under great pressure.**

This Plan sets out how the Authority will work alongside the partners, communities, businesses and land managers who, together, can secure a **better** future, for this nationally important landscape, wildlife and the people who visit it or call it home. This Plan is the beginning of a five-year journey and more projects and initiatives to achieve the outcomes and priorities set out here will be added throughout its life.

Everyone has a part to play – alone or as part of a group or organisation.

**“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”**

**Jane Goodhall, conservationist**

You can follow this growth, see how we are doing and find out more about getting involved at **[southdowns.gov.uk/PartnershipManagementPlan](https://southdowns.gov.uk/PartnershipManagementPlan)**





# APPENDIX 1: POLICIES

This Partnership Management Plan is underpinned by 57 policies:

- **POLICY 1:** Conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the landscape and its setting, in ways that allow it to continue to evolve and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.
- **POLICY 2:** Develop landscape-scale partnerships and initiatives to focus on enhancing the key ecosystem services delivered by the National Park.
- **POLICY 3:** Protect and enhance tranquillity and dark night skies.
- **POLICY 4:** Create more, bigger, better-managed and connected areas of habitat in and around the National Park, which deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife.
- **POLICY 5:** Conserve and enhance populations of priority species in and around the National Park, delivering targeted action where required.
- **POLICY 6:** Favour natural functions and processes in and around the National Park where they support the value and resilience of terrestrial, freshwater, marine, coastal and estuarine habitats.
- **POLICY 7:** Actively promote more joined-up and sustainable management of the coast, including the defined area of the Sussex Heritage Coast, through Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).
- **POLICY 8:** Focus the prevention, control and eradication of invasive non-native species on those that are most harmful to biodiversity.
- **POLICY 9:** The significance of the historic environment is protected from harm, new discoveries are sought and opportunities to reveal its significance are exploited.
- **POLICY 10:** Improve the management of heritage assets, particularly focusing on those that are 'at risk', including from crimes against heritage.
- **POLICY 11:** Support land managers to access and maintain agri-environment schemes that deliver ecosystem services on the ground and influence the development and delivery of new incentive schemes
- **POLICY 12:** Support conservation grazing on semi-natural habitats as part of a profitable livestock and mixed farm economy.
- **POLICY 13:** Support the financial viability of farm businesses through appropriate infrastructure and diversification developments, in particular, encouraging those that will support sustainable farming.
- **POLICY 14:** Develop and support the market for and production of sustainable food, drink and other products with a National Park provenance
- **POLICY 15:** Increase understanding of farming and of farmers as the custodians of many of the special qualities of the National Park.
- **POLICY 16:** Engage with dog walkers to encourage responsible behaviour, especially around livestock and ground nesting birds.
- **POLICY 17:** Support woodland owners to access grant schemes aimed at increasing the area of woodland being managed, to improve biodiversity, age diversity, productivity, resilience and the protection of archaeological features.
- **POLICY 18:** Improve the economic viability of woodlands by developing a range of sustainable local markets for woodland and timber products, and create better relationships between markets, businesses and infrastructure.
- **POLICY 19:** Enhance the landscape, habitat connectivity, carbon storage and flood risk management with woodland creation by natural regeneration or tree planting with appropriate species, on an appropriate scale and in suitable locations.

## 72 Appendix 1: Policies.

- **POLICY 20:** Raise awareness of the inherent values of well-managed woodlands within the National Park, recognising the contribution of woodland workers in the maintenance of the wooded landscape and celebrating our strong woodland heritage.
- **POLICY 21:** Support woodland owners to provide a range of appropriate recreational, sporting and other diverse activities within woodlands, recognising the potential commercial value of these uses.
- **POLICY 22:** Support the active management of pest and diseases that impact on trees and woodlands to improve their resilience and gather evidence on the resilience of different species and genetic variants to diseases and a changing climate.
- **POLICY 23:** Improve the sustainability of water resources and wastewater management through partnership working across the water sector.
- **POLICY 24:** Support and promote river catchment management approaches that integrate sustainable land management, wildlife conservation, surface and groundwater quality and flood risk management.
- **POLICY 25:** Actively promote water efficiency measures and more sustainable patterns of domestic, industrial, farming and leisure water use, to reduce overall water use.
- **POLICY 26:** Raise awareness of the importance of chalk streams and rivers and develop a programme of restoration and rehabilitation.
- **POLICY 27:** Protect and enhance the National Park's special qualities through the management and restoration of minerals sites.
- **POLICY 28:** Improve and maintain rights of way and access land, to provide a better connected and accessible network for a range of abilities and users, and to reduce conflict where it occurs.
- **POLICY 29:** Enhance the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors by encouraging, supporting and developing the use of the National Park as a place for healthy outdoor activity and relaxation.
- **POLICY 30:** Develop 'access for all' opportunities, particularly supporting those groups currently underrepresented in the National Park visitor profile.
- **POLICY 31:** Raise awareness and understanding about the National Park with consistent messages that inspire and celebrate a strong sense of place.
- **POLICY 32:** Encourage and support the creative industries, creative economy and cultural activities which connect with and increase appreciation of the National Parks' special qualities.
- **POLICY 33:** Build and maintain volunteering capacity, and diversify volunteer roles and range of opportunities to deliver National Park purposes.
- **POLICY 34:** Support and enable communities to develop and deliver high-quality, community-led initiatives that contribute to the understanding, conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the National Park.
- **POLICY 35:** Promote and enhance integrated travel provision from rail stations located at gateways and within the National Park for pedestrians, cyclists and bus travel.
- **POLICY 36:** Improve existing public transport provision for visitors and local communities
- **POLICY 37:** Encourage cycling for both commuting and leisure purposes through the development and promotion of a seamless and safer network and by protecting the potential opportunities for future cycling infrastructure.
- **POLICY 38:** Work in partnership with key partners, business and organisations to reduce car travel across the National Park.
- **POLICY 39:** Manage vehicle parking to improve visitor experiences and reduce the impact of traffic and parking on the local area.
- **POLICY 40:** Manage the highway network and its infrastructure to integrate it more effectively into the landscape and reduce the impact of traffic on communities and visitors.



- **POLICY 41:** Maintain visitor enjoyment and influence visitor behaviour in order to reduce impacts on the special qualities and increase visitor spend in and around the National Park.
- **POLICY 42:** Develop a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the promotion and marketing of the National Park as a sustainable visitor destination.
- **POLICY 43:** Support the development and maintenance of appropriate recreation and tourism facilities and visitor hubs, in and around the National Park, including a mix of quality accommodation, which responds to market demands and supports a sustainable visitor economy.
- **POLICY 44:** Encourage and support tourism providers to develop sustainable business practices and increase knowledge about the National Park's special qualities to provide a distinctive and high-quality visitor experience.
- **POLICY 45:** Develop high-quality learning experiences, particularly in the outdoors, and resource materials that link to the special qualities of the National Park.
- **POLICY 46:** Develop a research programme leading to a robust evidence base about the National Park and the issues affecting it.
- **POLICY 47:** Support and encourage traditional rural skills by providing training and skills development which relate to arts and cultural traditions, the historic, farmed, wooded and natural environment necessary to conserve, enhance and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.
- **POLICY 48:** Support the towns and villages in and around the National Park to enhance their vital role as social and economic hubs.
- **POLICY 49:** Maintain and improve access to a range of essential community services and facilities for communities in the National Park.
- **POLICY 50:** Housing and other development in the National Park should be closely matched to the social and economic needs of local people and should be of high design and energy efficiency standards, to support balanced communities so people can live and work in the area.
- **POLICY 51:** Increase the availability and speed of broadband and the coverage of the mobile phone network, to facilitate business growth, encourage home working and improve quality of life.
- **POLICY 52:** Enhance local production by developing local economic supply chains and enabling businesses in the National Park to gain added value by linking their marketing activities to the special qualities of the area.
- **POLICY 53:** Improve access to business advice and funding that supports the creation and expansion of small and medium sized enterprises, in particular, those that help sustain communities and enhance the special qualities.
- **POLICY 54:** Support training schemes and employment opportunities to ensure balanced communities in the National Park.
- **POLICY 55:** Promote opportunities for diversified economic activity in the National Park, in particular, where it enhances the special qualities.
- **POLICY 56:** Support appropriate renewable energy schemes, sustainable resource management and energy efficiency in communities and businesses in the National Park, with the aim of meeting Government climate change targets.
- **POLICY 57:** Manage waste using the principles of a waste hierarchy from, in priority order, prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling and other recovery and disposal.







# SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

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## South Downs National Park – Partnership Management Plan 2020–2025