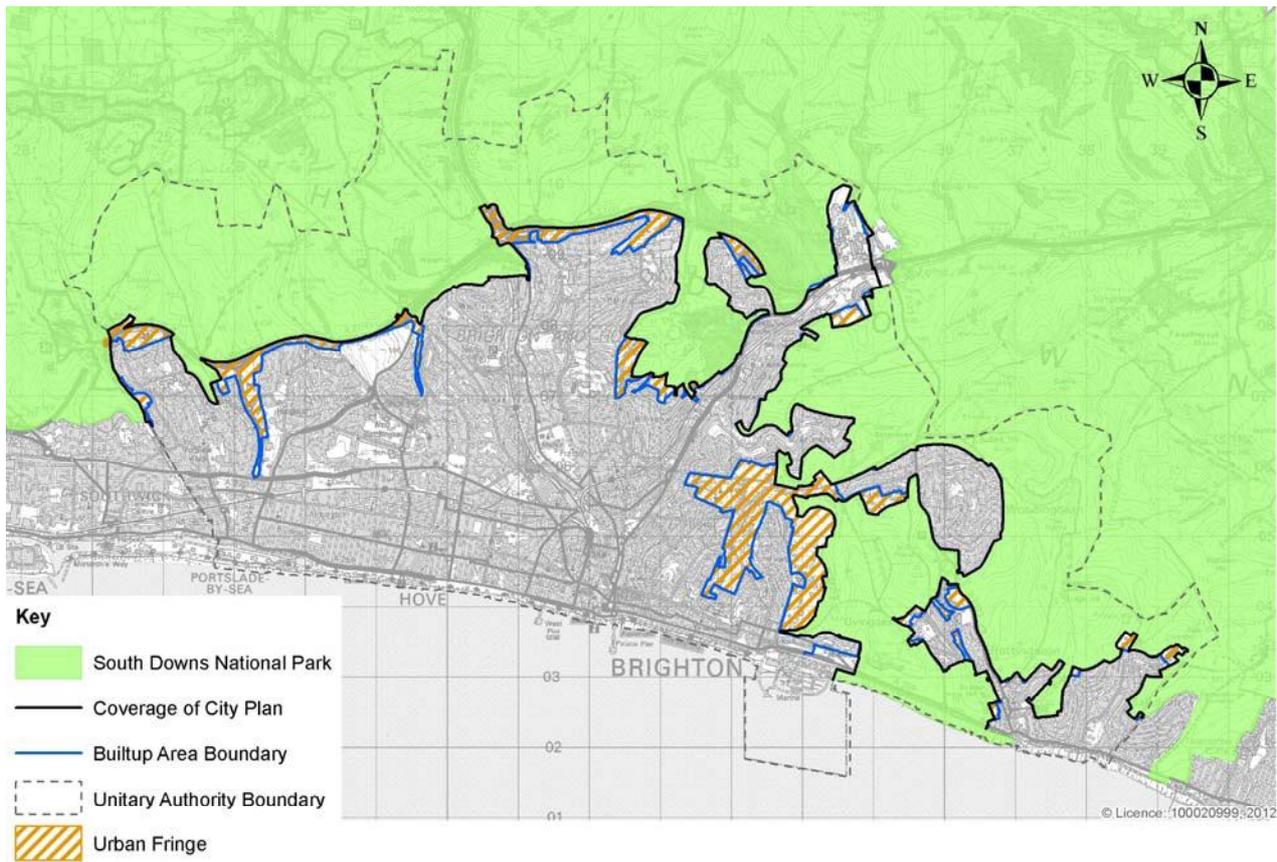


## SA5 – The South Downs



### Context

3.142 The South Downs National Park, covering the chalk landscapes of the South Downs stretching from Hampshire in the west to Beachy Head in East Sussex, came into being in 2010<sup>93</sup>. The National Park is administered by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), which has full planning responsibilities and a statutory duty to prepare development plans for the National Park. When making decisions in relation to the National Park area consideration must be given to the purposes of the National Park, which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park and provide opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public.

3.143 The Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that fell within the city was revoked upon the creation of the National Park. For the administrative area of Brighton & Hove the South Downs National Park boundary includes most of the land that was previously designated as part of the Sussex Downs AONB. It also includes a major tract of land west of Woodingdean and Ovingdean, south of the race course and the cliffs and coast south of Beacon Hill which did not previously enjoy AONB status. Much of the National Park boundary abuts the city's convoluted built up area boundary. The National

<sup>93</sup> The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed the creation of the South Downs National Park on the 12 November 2009. The South Downs National Park came into being on 31 March 2010. The South Downs National Park Authority was created on the 1 April 2010 and became fully operational on the 1 April 2011.

Park designation is a material consideration in the making of any planning decision that may significantly affect the Park.

## SA5 The South Downs

The council will work in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority and adjoining authorities and landowners to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the South Downs National Park. Proposals within the setting of the National Park must have regard to the impact on the National Park, in particular the purposes of the National Park and the ability of the South Downs National Park Authority to deliver its duty. The following priorities are recognised for National Park land and its setting **that fall within the city's administrative area:**

1. To promote Biosphere Reserve principles and objectives, bringing people and nature together.
2. To promote sustainable land use management systems on the downs with greater emphasis on local healthy food production, diversification and farming practices that are sympathetic to wider downland objectives;
3. To conserve and enhance downland habitats and species to meet Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets and recognise the role of the Downs in the **city's Green Network/Nature Improvement Area**/open space framework (see CP10 Biodiversity and CP16 Open Space);
4. To protect scheduled ancient monuments<sup>94</sup> and other downland features;
5. To protect sensitive aquifer protection zones and address catchment flood management issues.
6. To increase the amount of accessible land adjacent to the urban area and enhance access from the urban area to the Downs by sustainable transport including by walking, cycling and public transport modes (see CP9 Sustainable Transport and CP18 Healthy City).
7. To promote a stronger visitor experience between the city and the South Downs, facilitate sustainable eco tourism in the South Downs and the provision of gateway facilities to the South Downs National Park, recognising in particular, the role of Stanmer Park (see SA4 Urban Fringe and CP5 Culture and Tourism) and the need to manage parking and traffic in order to reduce the risk of degradation of these gateway areas and to link them to a sustainable transport system.

### Supporting Text

3.144 The South Downs National Park Authority is the planning authority for land within the National Park boundary and therefore responsible for producing a local development plan for the park area and the determination of planning applications within the National Park.

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<sup>94</sup> A statutorily protected building, structure or feature of national importance because of its archaeological and historic interest.

However Brighton & Hove City Council owns land within the National Park and is the local planning authority for the land outside the National Park within the city's administrative boundary, which includes land within the setting of the National Park (See Key Diagram). Proposals within the National Park must have regard to the purposes of the National Park. Proposals within the setting of the National Park must not undermine these purposes and will be expected to minimise any adverse impacts on the National Park which are being created by the proposal.

3.145 The purpose of this policy is to set out the council's aspirations for those parts of the South Downs National Park and its setting which fall within the administrative area of the city, to inform future partnership working with the National Park Authority. The majority of this land is owned and leased to tenants by the city council. The council is currently working towards a more sustainable approach to the land management of the South Downs, by improving conservation, public access and recreation (as appropriate to the location) whilst maintaining financially viable farm businesses<sup>95</sup>. In order to conserve and enhance downland habitats and species, specific biodiversity management plans will be drawn up for various downland sites within the council's ownership. Further, in relation to the management of the chalk grassland, conservation mowing practices will be implemented to enhance and protect biodiversity.

3.146 An important role of the National Park Authority is to promote understanding of the South Downs and to promote access to the Park by sustainable means. A number of these measures are likely to be implemented within the administrative area of Brighton and Hove and this emphasises the need for good partnership working. Stanmer Park is a Grade II registered park of special historic interest, a 485 hectare rural estate with landscaped park, buildings and gardens, a village, farmland, woodland and amenity grassland used as public open space and all falling within the National Park. It is covered by a variety of nature conservation and conservation designations and is a major recreational resource for residents of and visitors to the city. Brighton & Hove City Council seeks to promote access to the South Downs by developing Stanmer Park as a gateway, promoting open access and improving public transport. There is also the need to manage parking at gateway locations in order to reduce the risk of degradation of these areas and to link them to a sustainable transport system.

3.147 The chalk under the downland around the city is the aquifer or groundwater storage that supplies the city. It is therefore important that it is protected from any development or land use that could cause harm by polluting or affecting the water supply held in the chalk. There are also a number of sites of archaeological and biodiversity interest designated within the South Downs National Park area that are subject to national and regional protection.

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<sup>95</sup> Downland Initiative, 2005 - A programme of action compiled by the city council to deliver a sustainable downland landscape by integrating farming, recreation, biodiversity conservation and landscape objectives.