

Report to	Resources and Performance
Date	8 February 2012
By	Director of Corporate Services
Title of Report	Business Plan 2012/13
Purpose of Report	To present the draft Business Plan for 2012/13 for recommendation to the Authority

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) comment on the draft Business Plan 2012-13 and indicate any amendments required before the plan is presented to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) on 29 March 2011 to approve the plan**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) is required to produce a business plan. This report presents a draft plan for the 2012-13 financial year. It sets out the objectives and priorities proposed for next year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The National Park Authorities (Grant Agreement) (April 2008) requires each National Park Authority to produce a business plan (in addition to the National Park Management Plan) The format of the plan is not prescribed but it does require information about spending plans.
- 2.2 Until the South Downs National Park Management Plan is produced, the business plan sets the objectives and priorities for the organisation. In future years the objectives and priorities in the business plan will be significantly shaped by the National Park Management Plan.

3. The Business Plan

- 3.1 The business plan has been developed by building on the objectives and priorities set out for 2011/12 and has been developed in consultation with Members and staff of the Authority. Performance indicators proposed for the plan are reported as part of the Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Report on this agenda and so not listed again here.
- 3.2 The objectives and priorities in the plan will be used to inform the individual objectives for staff as set out in the Performance Management Framework. A draft of the 2011-12 Business Plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The key activities to deliver the objectives and priorities in the business plan will be set out in an operational plan and progress towards achieving them reported to the Resources and Performance Committee alongside other performance information.

4. Resources

- 4.1 The business plan has been developed alongside the draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 - 2015/16 for the Authority. This report needs to be considered along with the proposed Budget for 2012/13 which is also on the agenda for this Committee.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The Authority has maintained a Risk Register during 2011/12 which has been regularly considered by the Strategic Management Team and is reported quarterly to the Audit Committee. The Corporate Risk Register will be updated to reflect the revised objectives and priorities when they are agreed.
- 5.2 There are risks to the organisation if it does not have a business plan as required.

6. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

- 6.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 None.

HÉLÈNE ROSSITER Director of Corporate Services

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Appendices	1. Draft Business Plan
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Senior Solicitor.
Background Documents	Performance Management Framework – September 2011



South Downs National Park Authority

Draft Business Plan

Version 0.06

Responsibility	Director of Corporate Services
Last updated	13 January 2012
Date approved	
Approved by	SMT

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY BUSINESS PLAN 2012-13

INTRODUCTION

Our first year was a transitional one, as we moved from a shadow organisation to a live Authority which can make a positive impact on the future of the South Downs National Park. Applying the Guiding Principles developed with partners, we completed the establishment of the Authority and the recruitment of staff to key roles. We forged a ground-breaking partnership with local authorities to deliver our statutory planning function. We began work to develop the first National Park Management Plan for the South Downs, engaging partners and stakeholders from the outset, underpinning our work with an agreed definition of the National Park's Special Qualities. To ensure immediate local impact, in addition to the rangers and volunteers on the ground working in local communities, we launched the Sustainable Communities Fund and used it to support xxxx local projects. We will increase our commitment to partnership working using our South Downs Partnership fund to enable strong strategic partnerships to deliver significant benefits to the South Downs, including initiatives like our shortlisted bid for Nature Improvement Area status.

All the above provides a strong foundation for our second operational year of 2012/13. We will develop the National Park Management Plan and our first planning Core Strategy, working closely with partners and stakeholders, to provide an overall framework for the National Park. We will continue to support community initiative through the Sustainable Communities Fund, and through the work of our ranger service that brings local knowledge and the ability to help make things happen. We will increase our support for the South Downs Partnership Projects Fund, establishing it as a major vehicle for delivering strategic projects together with partner organisations.

This young National Park has made a bright and confident start. But it has been born into a world where public finance is under pressure as rarely before. The grant funding of our major partners is reducing, our communities face serious challenges, and the economic outlook for the longer term is uncertain. This makes it all the more vital that we look for innovative ways of bringing extra resources into the National Park, using its brand and profile to add real value to our communities and visitors.

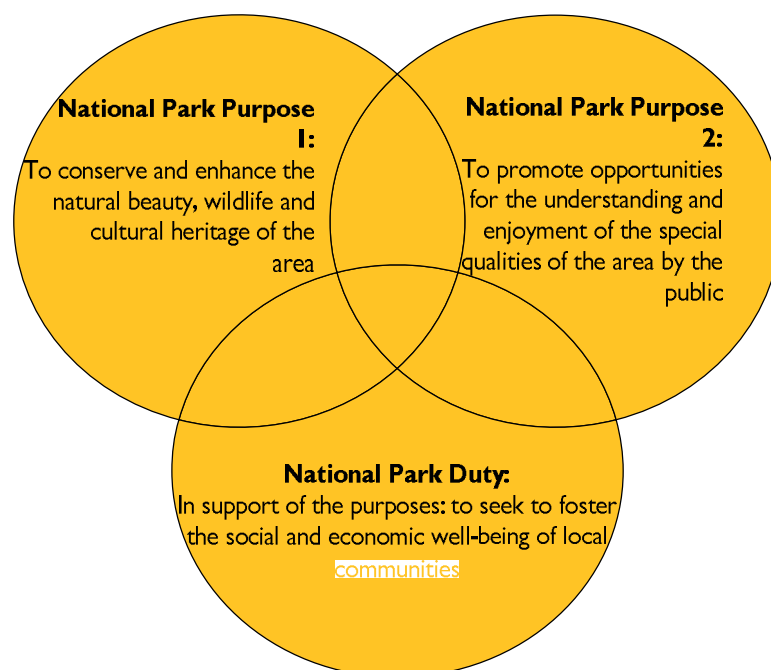
Margaret Paren
Chair

Trevor Beattie
Chief Executive

LOOKING AHEAD - STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL DELIVERY

The work of the South Downs National Park Authority is rooted in its statutory Purposes and Duty, and in its commitment to engage with local communities, partners and stakeholders. This year's Business Plan builds on the platform of our first operational year, setting out three high level objectives for what we seek to achieve in 2012/13 and priorities for action. These draw on work with partners and stakeholders to develop the South Downs National Park Management Plan, on the Guiding Principles and Values of the South Downs National Park Authority, and on the Vision for English National Parks and the Broads.

The Purposes and Duty of National Parks in England



Performance management

We will monitor and measure performance against this plan using a structured performance management framework – measuring the outputs we deliver ourselves, the outcomes achieved in partnership with others, and the positive impacts on the future landscapes, places and people of the National Park itself. Regular reports on progress will identify achievements and actions still needed to deliver our priorities.

OBJECTIVE 1

Working with partners, we will define the most important strategic priorities for the South Downs National Park, and ensure they are reflected in our own plans and strategies

The South Downs National Park Authority is required to adopt a National Park Management Plan within three years, that will guide the delivery of the National Park Purposes and the Duty by ourselves and others. This is a plan for the National Park, not just for the National Park Authority. It will also inform the Core Strategy that will guide land use in the National Park. These plans will provide a strategic policy framework for the National Park, and we are committed to developing them with the active participation of partners and communities, encouraging shared ownership of the objectives and priorities and practical support for their delivery. We are also committed to ensuring that this work is informed by sound and comprehensive factual evidence about the condition of the National Park.

Our Priorities for 2012/13:

- 1. Produce a State of the National Park report which provides robust evidence, shared with partners, about the current condition of the South Downs National Park**
 - 1.1 We will publish information on the special qualities of the National Park
 - 1.2 We will work with partners to publish a State of the National Park report and use it as a baseline from which to inform the National Park Management Plan and Core Strategy
 - 1.3 We will work to ensure that the report and its underpinning evidence base lends itself to extensive use by the communities and media in and around the National Park, with the potential to become the principal authoritative source of information about the area
- 2. Agree the Vision and a set of draft, shared objectives for the emerging National Park Management Plan**
 - 2.1 As a stepping stone to the National Park Management Plan we will build a shared agreement with communities and partners on a vision for the National Park
 - 2.2 We will agree with a wide range of communities and partners shared objectives for the National Park Management Plan
- 3. Ensure that the key themes and spatial/land use implications emerging from work on the National Park Management Plan are addressed in the Core Strategy and other planning policy documents**
 - 3.1 While the National Park Management Plan and Core Strategy are being developed, we will ensure that proposed development supports the National Park Purposes and Duty, and the Vision for National Parks in England.
 - 3.2 We will develop a thorough understanding of the historic landscape and design attributes that make places special and produce strategies and policies and advice to inform future development
 - 3.3 We will ensure proposed development supports better facilities for accessing and understanding the Park; addressing the impacts of climate change; seeking opportunities to restore and enhance the natural beauty and wildlife of the area
 - 3.4 We will seek to support sustainable rural economies and communities managing growth pressures arising from being within 1 hours travel time for 10m people and having a number of towns in the National Park

OBJECTIVE 2

Working with communities and partners, we will together deliver outcomes that meet the Purposes and Duty, and bring additional resources into the South Downs National Park

We are committed to basing our priorities on sound factual evidence and a clear understanding of the priorities of local people and partners. It will take some time to develop this framework, through the National Park Management Plan and Core Strategy, so in the meantime we will support priorities identified by communities and agreed with partners that are clearly consistent with the National Park Purposes and Duty. We will invest in these emerging priorities for the National Park and commit our staff to support their development and delivery. In all this we will take care not to pre-empt or compromise the work to develop the National Park Management Plan and Core Strategy.

Our Priorities for 2012/13:

1. Conclude the policy reviews started in 2011/12 and implement the conclusions.

- 1.1 We will produce short-term action plans, for based on our early engagement work and policy reviews into Rights of Way; The South Downs Way; Hot Spots; Branding; and Volunteering that do not pre-empt work on the National Park Management Plan and start to implement them

2. Deliver and enable a number of new major projects and partnerships

- 2.1 We will develop a series of new Major Partnerships, based on the overall approach to partnership delivery developed during 2011-12
- 2.2 We will deliver the year one objectives and milestones for the Major Partnerships we formed in 2011-12
- 2.3 We will support new local projects, for example through the Sustainable Communities Fund ensuring the delivery of National Park Purposes and the Duty in projects selected, and stimulating income generation

3. Work with communities and partners to engage them in the National Park and developed shared messages

- 3.1 We will engage with stakeholders by developing a shared brand and identity for the National Park which allows local communities, land managers, visitors and others to showcase their contributions to it and derive benefit from it

4. Support local communities through advice, planning support and funding

- 4.1 We will provide advice, practical help and financial support, as appropriate, to local communities, land managers, visitors & others on how to conserve & enhance the National Park and to deliver activities to promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park
- 4.2 We will work with networks of small businesses and social enterprises to identify ways of maximising their contribution to the National Park and the benefits of the National Park to them

5. Deliver a locally effective and efficient planning service

- 5.1 We will deliver excellent planning services in a cost-effective manner, both directly and through our local authority partners, in order to deliver the National Park Purposes and the Duty

6. Develop an income generation strategy which identifies the potential for the SDNPA to act as a catalyst to bring new public and private income into the National Park in ways that support the Purposes and Duty

- 6.1 Taking account of the pressures on public finance in the country and of the potential for National Park status to be able to attract additional resource to the South Downs, we will investigate options to increase the streams of public and private income available to support delivery of National Park Purposes and Duty

OBJECTIVE 3

As an ambitious and enterprising organisation we will work in productive and responsive ways to enable us to deliver our priorities and support the achievement of National Park Purposes and Duty

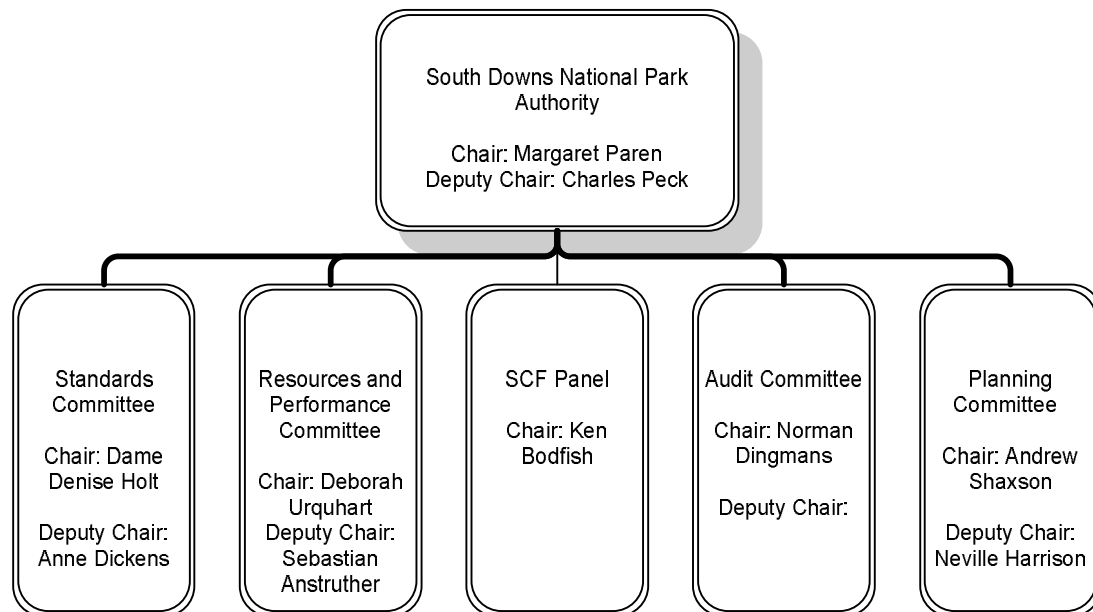
Having put in place staffing, systems and support arrangements for the first operational year of the National Park Authority, we now want make sure that these fully support the organisation in carrying out its role. We will review and improve them where necessary to help us be as effective and enterprising as possible in our service to the National Park.

Our Priorities for 22012/13:

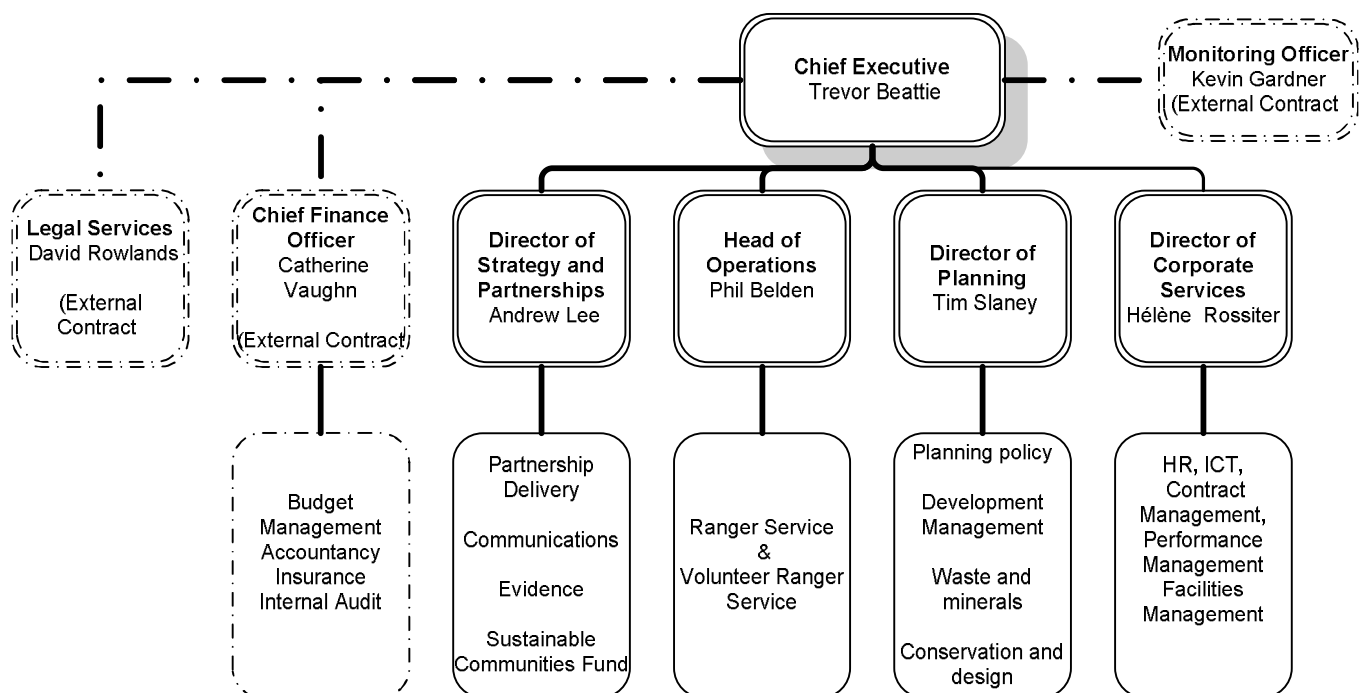
- 1. Make sure our systems and processes support effective delivery of our objectives**
 - 1.1 Take action to strengthen the building blocks for the organisation, giving our staff, volunteers and Members the tools they need to be able to deliver for the National Park Authority as well as the South Downs National Park
- 2. Support and develop our people to help them deliver**
 - 2.1 Develop a new People Strategy, to help our people (staff, Members and volunteers) to understand their roles, feel valued, supported and able to deliver effectively for the organisation
- 3. Seek continuous improvement in what we do and how we do it**
 - 3.1 Give focus to continuous improvement, creating a plan of action for key areas for development, using the results of the staff survey and preparations for the peer review, feedback from stakeholders and other mechanisms
 - 3.2 Produce action plans which allow us to work towards best practice in Sustainable Development and in Equality & Diversity, both for ourselves as a public authority and in the strategies and policies for the National Park

RESOURCES TO DELIVER

Our Committees



Our directorates



Funding over 3 years

What the SDNPA will spend

Spending against the objectives

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Guiding Principles

In May 2010 The South Downs National Park Authority adopted a set of Guiding Principles, to clarify how it could best add value to this special part of England. The Guiding Principles were developed through extensive engagement with organisations and individuals across the National Park, and we continue to work closely with them to develop the first National Park Management Plan for the South Downs. The role of the Authority is to:

- Champion the South Downs National Park with inspiring, strategic leadership and priorities that carry wide support;
- Bring people together, acting as a coordinator for partners and community groups, to engage, inspire and achieve more for the South Downs through combined action;
- Influence policy making and the decisions at local, regional and national levels, acting as a voice for the South Downs National Park and a source of knowledge and expertise;
- Deliver flagship projects, drawing down external funding and filling the gaps that others cannot fill and are too important to be left;
- Engage directly with local residents, farmers, land owners, land managers and visitors to understand their priorities and provide advice or support in helping achieve our shared aspirations for the South Downs;
- Encourage volunteering to support National Park Purposes and help strengthen communities; and
- Build effective partnerships to tackle the challenges facing the South Downs National Park, including climate change, demographic change and development pressures.

Values

Taking account its Guiding principles, the South Downs National Park Authority has agreed the following statement as an expression of the values to which staff and Members aspire

Working for the National Park we will:

- have a common goal determined by the National Park's Purposes and the Duty
- champion the National Park's aspirations
- communicate clearly and listen well
- be flexible, encourage innovation and welcome challenge.

Working Together we will:

- trust and respect people within and outside the SDNPA
- work in an open way
- work as one organisation which is mutually supportive
- be committed to working in partnership with others to develop shared priorities and gain mutual benefits

To deliver results we will:

- ensure our approach and decisions are informed by evidence
- be positive and enthusiastic: take the initiative
- be seen to add value in all that we do.

Vision for the English National Parks and the Broads

In 2010 Defra published *"The English National Parks and Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010"*. This set out the vision that by 2030 English National Parks and the Broads will be places where:

- There are thriving, living, working landscapes notable for their natural beauty and cultural heritage. They inspire visitors and local communities to live within environmental limits and to tackle climate change. The wide range of services they provide (from clean water to sustainable food) are in good condition and valued by society.
- Sustainable development can be seen in action. The communities of the Parks take an active part in decisions about their future. They are known for having been pivotal in the transformation to a low carbon society and sustainable living. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, low carbon transport and travel and healthy, prosperous communities have long been the norm.
- Wildlife flourishes and habitats are maintained, restored and expanded and linked effectively to other ecological networks. Woodland cover has increased and all woodlands are sustainably managed, with the right trees in the right places. Landscapes and habitats are managed to create resilience and enable adaptation.
- Everyone can discover the rich variety of England's natural and historic environment, and have the chance to value them as places for escape, adventure, enjoyment, inspiration and reflection, and a source of national pride and identity. They will be recognised as fundamental to our prosperity and well-being.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Progress against this Business Plan will be published in the Annual Report for 2012/13, which will be published in June 2013. Further information is available on the South Downs National Park Authority website:

www.southdowns.gov.uk

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