

Report to **South Downs National Park Authority**  
Date **9 December 2025**  
By **National Trails & Access Lead**  
Title of Report **South Downs Active Travel Network Plan**  
Decision

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**Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:**

- 1. Approve the South Downs National Park Authority Active Travel Network Plan 2025 – 2030 set out at Appendix 1.**
  - 2. Delegate Authority to the Director of Landscape and Strategy, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make any minor changes to the Active Travel Network Plan.**
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**1. Introduction**

1.1 This report seeks the Authority's approval of the new South Downs National Park Authority Active Travel Network Plan (ATNP) which sets out the Authority's long-term strategic framework for walking, wheeling, and cycling, building on the foundations laid by our Walking and Cycling Strategy 2017–2024. It marks a significant step forward in our ambition to create a more connected, healthy, and sustainable National Park, where active travel is a practical, inclusive, and enjoyable choice for everyday and leisure journeys.

1.2 In October 2017 the Authority formally adopted the South Downs Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017 – 2024. This confirmed our strategy and direction of travel to date including our approach to development of new off-road cycling and walking routes. The ATNP is intended to replace that strategy.

**2. Policy Context**

2.1 As that the 2017 - 2024 Strategy came to an end the Access Team reviewed the key priorities, aligning the stakeholder consultation and emerging priorities with the South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2026-2031 (PMP) which is also being considered at this meeting of the Authority.

2.2 In tandem, through the National Parks Access Officers Technical Working Group a relationship was developed with Active Travel England (ATE). ATE is an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Transport, with a remit to increase the number of journeys walked, wheeled or cycled. This partnership resulted in the South Downs National Park Authority receiving £100,000 in revenue grant funding in the 2024-2025 financial year which further supported the delivery of the ATNP.

- 2.3 The ATNP is an important document which supports the delivery of the PMP's, as such it was important to ensure the ATNP aligned with the emerging strategic aims of the PMP. Section 3 of the ATNP outlines the full policy context, but the following paragraphs detail how the ATNP supports the strategic aims (with the exception of aim 4) of the PMP.
- 2.4 PMP aim 1: The National Park is a nature-rich, resilient working landscape where wildlife flourishes. The ATNP supports delivery of this by linking fragmented habitats through multifunctional green corridors, reduces pressure on sensitive sites, and complements the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 2.5 Aim 2: The South Downs National Park is on track to become net zero by 2040 by mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The ATNP supports delivery of this by enabling a shift from private cars to active travel, cutting transport-related emissions for both residents and visitors.
- 2.6 Aim 3: Clean, abundant water supports nature and communities in the South Downs and beyond. The ATNP supports delivery of this by applying catchment-sensitive design, including sustainable drainage, riparian buffers, permeable surfaces, route realignment away from watercourses, and swales, to improve water quality and reduce flood risk.
- 2.7 Aim 5: A valued South Downs is welcoming and accessible to all. The ATNP supports delivery of this by aiming for barrier-free "Miles Without Stiles" routes and inclusive design standards, ensuring the National Park is open to the widest possible range of users.
- 2.8 Aim 6: Cultural Heritage is conserved, enjoyed, valued, created and passed on for future generations. The ATNP supports delivery of this by improving access to heritage assets via accessible routes, integrates interpretive signage at key sites (e.g. Singleton Station), and supports condition monitoring plus community engagement.
- 2.9 Aim 7: A thriving rural economy and local communities sit at the heart of the National Park. The ATNP supports delivery of this by connecting people to rural businesses, services and destinations, enables low-carbon access to housing, education and employment, and strengthens the sustainable visitor economy.

### **3. Issues for consideration**

#### Key Principles

- 3.1 The South Downs is not an island, and we cannot deliver the ambition set out in the ATNP without our wider range of partners. It is therefore important to note that our ATNP does not seek to duplicate existing partner Authorities' Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP's) but instead acknowledges and complements these by extending identified routes further into the National Park or adding new rural connections. Our ATNP links with 10 existing and developing Active Travel Plans developed by partners.
- 3.2 Formal LCWIPs utilise nationally adopted planning tools developed by the Department for Transport or ATE. These tools were developed for urban settings and require high user volumes. They are not always appropriate in a rural setting and if used would ensure only high volume urban or urban fringe routes got prioritised. LCWIPs are not mandatory and we have not used these tools for prioritisation, hence why we have not called our plan a LCWIP to avoid any confusion from direct comparison.
- 3.3 Due to the rural nature of our area and the high use of cycling and walking for leisure rather than for utility or commuting journeys, we are including leisure use within our definition of Active Travel and indeed acknowledge that leisure use is expected to be the primary function of our network.
- 3.4 For the same reason, we have adopted an access for all approach and wherever possible would seek to design network improvements that provide for equestrians, minority and underrepresented groups.

- 3.5 Our ATNP sets out our principles and ambition. It is not a delivery plan but sets a clear framework for prioritisation. Inclusion within our ATNP, does not necessarily mean something will be delivered by the Authority. It may be delivered by a lead partner, community group, partnership or led by the Authority depending on the project and resources available.
- 3.6 The South Downs Local Access Forum (SDLAF) is a statutory body under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and as such, their formal advice regarding the improvement of public access carries significant statutory weight to which the Authority must have regard.
- 3.7 The South Downs Local Access Forum provided a detailed response (**Appendix 3**), endorsing the ATNP's strategic ambition while highlighting specific areas for strengthening. In direct response to the Forum's feedback, Officers have incorporated several significant amendments into the final Strategic Framework. To address strategic connectivity, a commitment to engage with National Highways regarding the Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) has been added to tackle severance caused by the strategic road network. Responding to concerns regarding rural road safety, 'Rural Liveable Neighbourhoods and Quiet Lanes' has been introduced as a new Strategic Focus Area. The plan's approach to inclusion has been expanded to explicitly require the development of 'Mobility Hubs' with Blue Badge parking at trailheads. Furthermore, the strategic case for investment has been reinforced by incorporating updated data confirming that transport accounts for 63% of the Park's greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, specific regional requests, including the recognition of 'missing links' in East Hampshire and the need for improved maintenance considerations, are being integrated into Part 2 - Project Pipeline.

A living document

- 3.8 The ATNP is in two parts. Part one being the principles for active travel interventions, strategic focus and our scheme for route prioritisation and part two being the actual routes and priorities for delivery.
- 3.9 Whilst the ATNP sets out our scheme for route prioritisation it is not a delivery plan. Owing to the dynamic nature of delivering often complex large infrastructure projects and to enable the Authority to respond to opportunities that arise from short term funding, land ownership changes, changes to national policy and opportunities through the planning system other routes may come forward and be delivered during the plan period.
- 3.10 A dynamic network and priority project list will support this and addresses the SDLAF's concern regarding the plan looking dated, should new national or regional strategies or policies come forward.
- 3.11 Our ATNP clearly defines what our strategic focus should be for the life of the plan. It also sets out how individual interventions, improvements or large projects should be prioritised against each other.

**4. Options & cost implications**

- 4.1 The ATNP is not seeking approval for the delivery of the individual routes or interventions identified in the plan, but for the strategic approach set out in the plan. Individual routes or projects highlighted in this ATNP would still go through the agreed approval process and be assessed for their individual merits in the context of the resources and funding environment at the time.
- 4.2 Officers will continue to work with partners and to deliver the Authority's programme of access work in line with the ATNP and the annually agreed budget. Having the ATNP in place also supports future bids to ATE for further funding to support access work in the SDNP.

**5. Next steps**

- 5.1 Should the ATNP be approved by the SDNPA, it will be circulated to partners and ATE including a full list of prioritised projects identified to date.
- 5.2 It is also our intention to publish a live network map on-line to allow stakeholders to see the current ambitions and priorities as well as submit suggestions for new projects for consideration and scoring.
- 5.3 The Access Team is continuing to build the relationship with ATE and we are confident of receiving further funding in 26-27 and beyond to support the delivery of our Active Travel priorities outlined in this Plan. ATE has asked the SDNPA to submit our bid for 26-27 funding in January 2026 to take forward some of our priorities identified in this ATNP.

**6. Other implications**

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No further decisions will be required regarding the ATNP, but as highlighted in 4.1 and 4.2 decisions may be required when bringing forward priority projects for delivery.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	As set out in 4.1 and 4.2, the Authority delivers access work with resources as agreed through the annual budget. Resource implications will be considered on a project-by-project bases when they come forward for delivery.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The endorsement of the South Downs ATNP will strengthen our case for continued revenue funding from Active Travel England and support future bids for capital funding form ATE and other sources.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	The ATNP delivers against aims 1,2,3,5,6 and 7 of the PMP as outlined in section 2 above.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	The ATNP links to existing live projects including the Centurion Way, Egrets Way, Rother Valley Way and South Downs Way. It also links to our partners work including that of Hampshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council in their capacity as Highway Authorities.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	Active Travel can make a positive contribution towards a low carbon future, as it encourages modal shift and creates infrastructure to allow travel to and through the National Park without the use of a car.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. The ATNP enshrines to principles of inclusion and access for all. The expansion and improvement of a safe active travel network removes some of the barriers faced by disadvantaged sections of the community in accessing the countryside.

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None directly. Adopting the ATNP and delivering increase and improved active travel infrastructure will reduce the health and safety risks associated with active travel.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None.

**7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Lack of endorsement from SDNPA members	1	4	Lack of endorsement in December 2025 for the ATNP could reduce our chances of receiving further funding from ATE in 26-27.  Aligning the development of the ATNP with the PMP has meant that both member and stakeholder feedback regarding access and active travel has been fed into this current draft ATNP and that it has been aligned with the aims of the PMP and the draft policies of the Local Plan.
Lack of buy in from delivery partners	2	3	Significant consultation with partners has been undertaken to draft this ATNP. The plan actively acknowledges and supports partners own priorities, increasing the benefits for partners to endorse the plan.  Both SDNPA and Local Highway Authority Partners have a policy and funding relationship with Active Travel England. Maintaining and developing that relationship further would reduce any risks of lack of buy in because ATE funding relies on active travel delivery.
Lack of resource to deliver the Plan	3	3	Lack of resources from all partners would reduce or slow delivery on the ground. This would reduce our reputation amongst stakeholders.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
			This could be mitigated through diversifying the sources of funding. Looking at alternative funding sources is underway both locally and through national partnerships such as National Parks Partnerships.

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Appendices: 1. South Downs National Park Authority, Active Travel Network Plan 2025 – 2030 Parts 1 and 2

2. ATNP Vision Map

3. SDLAF Consultation Response

SDNPA Consultees: Director of Landscape and Strategy

External Consultees: None

Background Documents: South Downs National Park Authority, Cycling and Walking Strategy 2017 – 2024.

# South Downs National Park Authority (Draft)

## Active Travel Network Plan 2025 – 2040

### Part I – Strategic Framework

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## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 The Active Travel Network Plan .....	4
1.2 National Park Purposes and Duty .....	6
1.3 Key Definitions .....	7
<b>2. National Policy Context .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 National Vision for Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling.....	8
2.2 Road Infrastructure Strategy .....	9
<b>3. Local Policy Context &amp; Strategic Vision.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Partnership Management Plan .....	9
3.2 The Local Plan.....	9
3.3 South Downs Transport Study 2024 .....	10
3.4 Climate Change Adaption Plan.....	10
3.5 Sustainable Tourism Strategy .....	10
3.6 Strategic Review of Health and Wellbeing.....	10
3.7 Defining Success .....	11
<b>4. Evidence of Need for Increased Active Travel .....</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1 Key Issues for Active Travel in the National Park .....	12
4.2 Health and Wellbeing .....	13
4.3 Economic Benefits of Active Travel .....	14
<b>5. Visitor Economy &amp; Rural Businesses.....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Progress and Potential .....	15
5.2 Resident Profile.....	16
5.3 Farm Diversification Opportunities .....	17
5.4 Key Visitor Attractions and Partnership Opportunities .....	17
5.5 Pubs, Cafes, and Accommodation .....	18
<b>6. Equity &amp; Inclusion.....</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1 Levelling-up Outcomes.....	19
6.2 Inclusive Access for All .....	19
<b>7. Consultation &amp; Engagement.....</b>	<b>20</b>
7.1 Phase 1: Initial Stakeholder Engagement.....	20
7.2 Phase 2: Consultation on the Draft Plan .....	22
7.3 Equestrian Access.....	24
7.4 Local Plan and PMP Reviews .....	24
7.5 Online Stakeholder Mapping .....	25



**8. Regional Transport Landscape ..... 26**

8.1 Transport for the South East ..... 26

8.2 Local Transport Plans ..... 26

8.3 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans ..... 26

8.4 Rights of Way Improvement Plans..... 30

8.5 Emerging Needs from the Transport Plans ..... 31

8.6 Future Governance Framework ..... 31

**9. Key Principles for Active Travel Interventions..... 32**

9.1 Principles for Conserving and Enhancing the National Park ..... 33

9.2 Principles for Promoting Public Understanding and Enjoyment ..... 33

9.3 Principles for Fostering Economic and Social Wellbeing..... 34

**10. Scope, Focus, & Approach ..... 34**

10.1 Geographical Extent ..... 34

10.2 Timescales ..... 34

10.3 Strategic Focus Areas ..... 35

10.4 Route Prioritisation..... 37

10.5 Delivery Pipeline ..... 38

**11. Governance & Funding ..... 39**

11.1 Collaborative Governance Model ..... 39

11.2 A Diversified Funding Strategy ..... 40

11.3 Proactive Risk Management ..... 42

**12. Monitoring, Evaluation, & Evolution ..... 43**

12.1 Monitoring ..... 43

12.2 Review and Evolution ..... 43

**13. Conclusion..... 44**

**14. Glossary ..... 45**



# I. Introduction

## I.1 The Active Travel Network Plan

This Active Travel Network Plan (ATNP) sets out the South Downs National Park Authority’s (SDNPA) long-term strategic framework for walking, wheeling, and cycling, building on the foundations laid by our Walking and Cycling Strategy 2017–2024<sup>1</sup>. It marks a significant step forward in our ambition to create a more connected, healthy, and sustainable National Park, where active travel is a practical, inclusive, and enjoyable choice for everyday and leisure journeys.

To ensure a clear distinction between our strategic methodology and our spatial delivery, the ATNP is presented in two complementary parts:

- **Part 1: The Strategic Framework (This Document)** – Establishes the policy context, evidence of need, design principles, and the methodology used to prioritise investment.
- **Part 2: The Project Pipeline** – Contains the spatial vision, the specific route aspirations organised by regional 'Chapters,' and the dynamic prioritised pipeline of infrastructure projects. This pipeline is a 'living' schedule that will be refreshed annually to capture new funding opportunities, community aspirations, and feasibility progress.

The Project Pipeline is not a fixed list. It is designed to evolve. New schemes can be added, and projects can move up the priority list as they become 'shovel-ready' or as funding streams become available.

This framework repositions active travel as a tool for delivering the National Park’s statutory purposes and duty. It responds to a transformed national policy landscape, including the establishment of Active Travel England and the strengthened “seek to further” duty under the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

The evidence for investment is compelling. With 81% of visitors currently arriving by private car, the National Park faces challenges of congestion, carbon emissions, and pressure on sensitive landscapes. At the same time, rural isolation and health inequalities persist. Active travel offers a “triple win”: improving public health, lowering public costs, and supporting the rural visitor economy.

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<sup>1</sup> Walking and Cycling Strategy 2017–2024 (2017) — superseded by the ATNP.



Beyond transport, the ATNP is a key tool for delivering the landscape-scale goals of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP)<sup>2</sup>. By easing pressure on hotspots such as Devil’s Dyke and the Seven Sisters, it enables integrated landscape management through green corridors that enhance ecological connectivity, reduce car impacts, and give tangible form to emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRs).

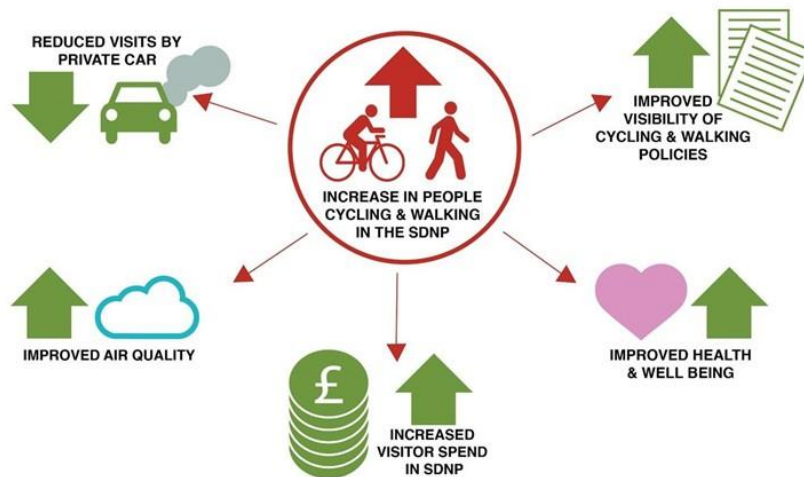
**Methodology and Prioritisation**

Part I sets out the rigorous governance and design standards that underpin the network. It introduces nine bespoke Active Travel Design Principles, tailored to the National Park, ensuring that infrastructure is landscape-led, nature-positive, and inclusive. It also explains the assessment methodology used to filter broad aspirations into a realistic delivery pipeline. The Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) and Deliverability Filter provide a transparent scoring framework, aligning potential schemes with strategic aims such as reducing severance, connecting communities, and supporting nature recovery.

**Next Steps**

While this Strategic Framework defines the rules and principles of the network, the routes themselves are detailed in the accompanying document. For regional maps, specific intervention proposals, and the schedule of priority schemes, please refer to Part 2: The Project Pipeline.

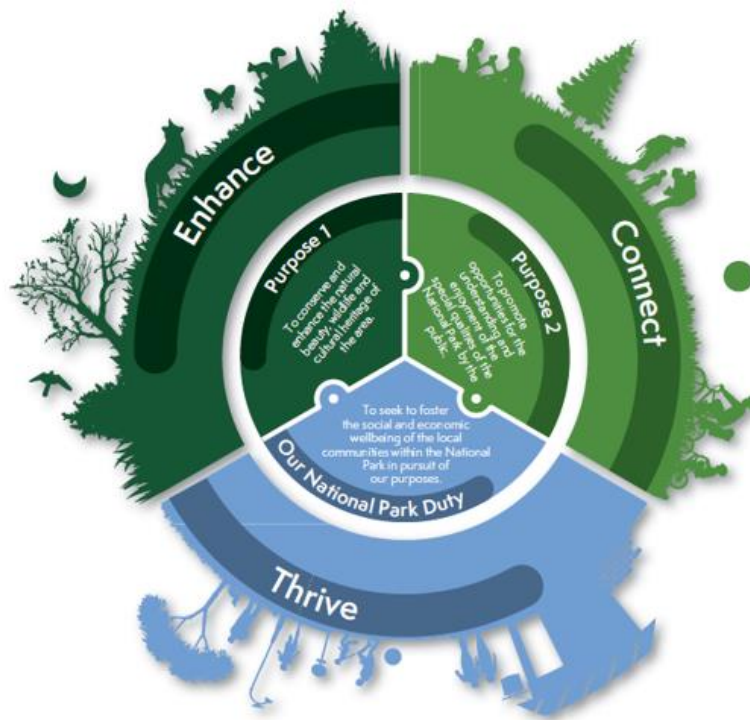
Together, these two parts provide a coherent, landscape-scale approach to active travel, one that strengthens our case for funding, supports statutory delivery, and defines a shared vision for the future of the South Downs: a future in which everyone, regardless of age or ability, can access and enjoy this extraordinary landscape on foot, by cycle, or by mobility aid.



<sup>2</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *Partnership Management Plan 2020-2025* (and emerging 2026-2031 Draft).



## I.2 National Park Purposes and Duty



The entire ATNP is structured around the statutory purposes and duty set out in the Environment Act 1995. This legal framework comprises of:

- **Purpose 1 (Enhance):** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
- **Purpose 2 (Connect):** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.
- **Statutory Duty (Thrive):** To seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park in pursuit of the two purposes.

This framework repositions active travel as a tool for delivering the National Park’s statutory purposes and duty. It responds to a transformed national policy landscape, including the establishment of Active Travel England and the strengthened “seek to further” duty under the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023<sup>3</sup>. In line with the Sandford Principle, as clarified in case law such as *Stubbs v Lake District National Park Authority*, the primacy of conservation (Purpose 1) applies only where there is an **irreconcilable conflict** with the promotion of opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment (Purpose 2). Where purposes can be aligned, or conflicts resolved through careful design and management, the Authority is expected to pursue both in tandem. The ATNP therefore positions active travel not as a competing demand, but as a means of reconciling statutory purposes - enhancing access while reducing environmental pressures and supporting nature recovery.

<sup>3</sup> *Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023*, c. 55.



### 1.3 Key Definitions

To ensure clarity regarding the scope and ambition of this plan, the following definitions apply throughout the document:

#### Active Travel

Walking, wheeling, and cycling for purposeful journeys (utility, e.g., to school or work) and recreational journeys. While the SDNPA remit focuses on rural access, we prioritise utility routes where they connect communities to transport hubs.

#### User Hierarchy

In accordance with the Highway Code (Rule H2)<sup>4</sup>, the hierarchy of users on mixed-use paths places those most at risk in the event of a collision at the top. All interventions and codes of conduct within this plan align with this hierarchy:

1. Pedestrians (including wheelchair users and mobility scooter users)
2. Horse Riders
3. Cyclists

#### Utility Journeys

Journeys undertaken for a specific practical purpose, such as commuting to work, traveling to school, or accessing local shops and services. These journeys are often time-sensitive and require direct, coherent routes.

#### Recreational Journeys

Journeys undertaken primarily for leisure, health, enjoyment of the landscape, or tourism. These are central to the National Park's second statutory purpose "(To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park)".

#### Non-Motorised Users (NMUs)

A collective term used in highway engineering and access planning to refer to pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and people with mobility impairments.

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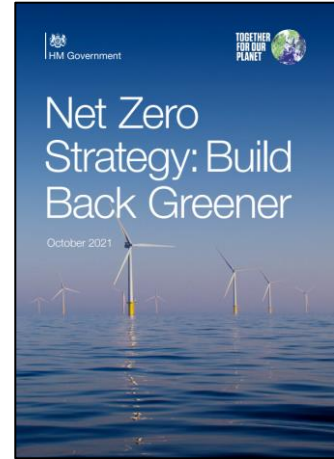
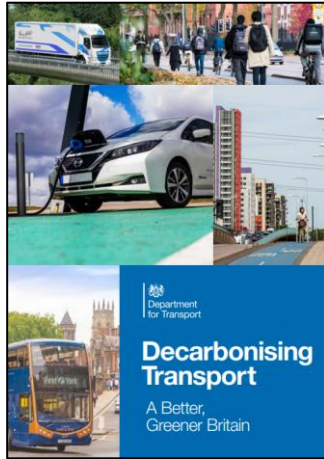
<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport, *The Highway Code*, Rule H2: Hierarchy of Road Users (Updated 2022).



## 2. National Policy Context

### 2.1 National Vision for Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling

The Government’s ambitions, reflecting commitments originally set out in Gear change<sup>5</sup>, the Transport decarbonisation plan<sup>6</sup> and the Net zero strategy<sup>7</sup>, are that by 2040 walking, wheeling, and cycling will be the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys, and that a world-class walking, wheeling, and cycling network will be delivered.



Other ambitions to be delivered over the same timeframe are summarised in the table below.

<b>BETTER SAFETY</b>	'A safe and reliable way to travel for short journeys'	Streets where people walking, wheeling, and cycling feel they belong and are safe; better connected communities; safer traffic speeds, with lower speed limits where appropriate to the local area; cycle training opportunities for all children.
<b>BETTER MOBILITY</b>	'More people cycling and walking - easy, normal and enjoyable'	More high-quality cycling facilities: more urban areas that are considered walkable; rural roads which provide improved safety for walking, wheeling, and cycling; more networks of routes around public transport hubs and town centres, with safe paths along busy roads; better links to schools and workplaces.
<b>BETTER STREETS</b>	'Places that have cycling and walking at their heart'	Places designed for people of all abilities and ages so they can choose to walk, wheel or cycle with ease; improved public realm; better planning for walking, wheeling, and cycling; more community-based activities, such as led rides and play streets where local places want them; a wider green network of paths, routes and open spaces.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Transport, *Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking* (July 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Department for Transport, *Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain* (July 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener* (October 2021).



## 2.2 Road Infrastructure Strategy

The Road Investment Strategy (RIS) is the UK Government’s long-term framework for managing and improving the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which includes England’s motorways and major A roads. Now entering its third phase (RIS3<sup>8</sup>), the strategy sets out priorities for the five-year period from 2026 to 2031, with a renewed emphasis on maintenance, safety, environmental outcomes, and integration with local transport. RIS3 aligns with national goals for economic growth, decarbonisation, and regional connectivity, and explicitly recognises the need to support walking, wheeling, and cycling, particularly where the SRN intersects with local routes and public rights of way. We will actively engage with National Highways to ensure active travel priorities are embedded within the RIS3 pipeline, specifically seeking to remediate severance caused by the SRN.

## 3. Local Policy Context & Strategic Vision

### 3.1 Partnership Management Plan

The South Downs PMP is the National Park’s definitive strategy, co-owned and delivered by a broad alliance of organisations committed to its statutory purposes. The 2026–2031 plan articulates seven strategic aims that will guide collaborative action over the next five years, including a clear objective to enhance accessibility by enabling everyone to actively travel and connect with both the Park’s natural landscapes and its cultural heritage.

The ATNP goes beyond alignment with the PMP to serve as one of its primary delivery vehicles. By directly mapping each ATNP route, project and performance target to the PMP’s strategic aims, the ATNP inherits the PMP’s statutory standing and the collective endorsement of its partners. This approach elevates the ATNP from an SDNPA-owned policy to a shared delivery framework for the entire South Downs partnership, providing a practical mechanism for Local Highway Authorities and other stakeholders to fulfil their ‘seek to further’ duty under the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

### 3.2 The Local Plan

The SDNPA Local Plan<sup>9</sup> is the spatial land-use plan for the National Park, setting out where development should happen and what it should look like. This ATNP complements the Local Plan by serving as a delivery framework for its aspirations. Specifically, the ATNP supports Strategic Policy SD20: Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes, which establishes development policies to preserve existing access. This policy is critical for safeguarding disused railway corridors, most notably the aspirational route from Petersfield to Pulborough, protecting them for future non-motorised travel against conflicting development.

<sup>8</sup> Department for Transport, *Road Investment Strategy 3: Investment Plan* (Forthcoming/Consultation Phase).

<sup>9</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *South Downs Local Plan (Adopted 2019)*, Policy SD20.



### 3.3 South Downs Transport Study 2024

As part of the evidence base informing the South Downs Local Plan, a detailed [Transport Study](#)<sup>10</sup> has been undertaken to assess strategic connectivity needs across the National Park. The Transport Study establishes the strategic framework for identifying key active travel interventions, while community mapping adds essential place-based context. Together, these evidence streams ensure that the ATNP is both strategically robust and locally responsive. A draft Stage 2 Study has been prepared and shared with stakeholders and further iterations may be required if there are significant changes to the Local Plan. The ATNP will be reviewed and refined in line with the evolving recommendations from these assessments.

### 3.4 Climate Change Adaption Plan

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan<sup>11</sup> recognises climate change as a major driver of environmental change, with significant implications for the sustainability of active travel networks. A critical concern is the impact of flooding and poor ground conditions, a challenge currently evident in the increasing frequency of seasonal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) closures on Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). We will work with Highway Authorities to explore sustainable management and drainage solutions that improve network resilience and minimize the need for these restrictions. This work is critical: with transport accounting for 63% of the Park's greenhouse gas emissions (2022), the highest of any UK National Park, enhancing active travel options is essential to achieving net zero by 2040.

### 3.5 Sustainable Tourism Strategy

The National Park attracts over 19 million visitors annually. However, 'honeypot' locations such as Devil's Dyke, Cuckmere Haven, the Seven Sisters, Butser Hill, and Birling Gap are under mounting pressure from tourism. With 81% of visitors arriving by car, congestion and environmental strain have become key concerns. Investing in active travel infrastructure will support the Sustainable Tourism Strategy<sup>12</sup> and help alleviate recreational pressure by reducing congestion and emissions, distributing visitor impact more evenly, and extending economic benefits to rural areas.

### 3.6 Strategic Review of Health and Wellbeing

The [Strategic Review of Health and Wellbeing \(2020-2025\)](#)<sup>13</sup> identifies the South Downs National Park as an essential yet underutilised asset for enhancing the mental and physical health of local communities and visitors. This ATNP aims to address key issues identified in the strategy, including improving access to natural green space, reducing physical inactivity, and tackling health inequalities.

<sup>10</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *South Downs Transport Study - Stage 2 (Draft 2024)*.

<sup>11</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2016/Updated)*.

<sup>12</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2015-2020*.

<sup>13</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025*.



### 3.7 Defining Success

The ATNP measures success by delivering tangible, measurable improvements in active travel infrastructure, connectivity and climate resilience across the South Downs National Park. While its scope is focused on sustainable transport, its impact cuts across multiple strategic objectives of the PMP. The table below maps the ATNP’s core delivery functions to the PMP’s aims for 2026–2031.

<b>PMP Strategic Aim (Draft 2026-2031)</b>	<b>How the ATNP is a Core Delivery Mechanism</b>
Aim 1: The National Park is a nature-rich, resilient working landscape where wildlife flourishes	Links fragmented habitats through multifunctional green corridors, reduces pressure on sensitive sites, and complements the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Aim 2: The South Downs National Park is on track to become net zero by 2040 by mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change	Enables a shift from private car to active travel, cutting transport-related emissions for both residents and visitors.
Aim 3: Clean, abundant water supports nature and communities in the South Downs and beyond	Applies catchment-sensitive design, including sustainable drainage, riparian buffers, permeable surfaces, route realignment away from watercourses, and swales, to improve water quality and reduce flood risk.
Aim 5: A valued South Downs is welcoming and accessible to all	Delivers barrier-free “Miles Without Stiles” routes and inclusive design standards, ensuring the Park is open to the widest possible range of users.
Aim 6: Cultural Heritage is conserved, enjoyed, valued, created and passed on for future generations.	Improves access to heritage assets via accessible routes, integrates interpretive signage at key sites (e.g. Singleton Station), and supports condition monitoring plus community engagement.
Aim 7: A thriving rural economy and local communities sit at the heart of the National Park	Connects people to rural businesses, services and destinations, enables low-carbon access to housing, education and employment, and strengthens the sustainable visitor economy.

Success will be measured not only by kilometres of path delivered or modal shift achieved, but by the ATNP’s ability to unlock investment, reduce emissions and improve equitable access across the National Park.



## 4. Evidence of Need for Increased Active Travel

### 4.1 Key Issues for Active Travel in the National Park

The key issues for active travel in the National Park are provided below:



#### Access Network and routes

Shortage of family friendly routes connecting communities with attractions and the wider countryside.



#### Major Road Severance

Major roads like A27, M3, A3, and A272 sever active travel routes isolating communities.



#### Highway Crossing Safety

At-grade crossings pose safety risks from fast, heavy traffic, especially for horse riders and families.



#### Connectivity from Towns and Transport Hubs

Access from gateway towns, stations, and bus stops is often poor.



#### Integrating New Developments

New developments offer active travel opportunities, but securing active travel links is challenging.



#### Information and Wayfinding

Route information is fragmented across maps, signs, and websites.



#### Facilities and Amenities

Many trails lack essential infrastructure like secure cycle storage, toilets, refreshments, limiting convenience.



#### User Behaviour and Education

Inconsiderate behaviour, though uncommon, can discourage walking, wheeling, and cycling.



#### Cycle Hire and Services

Challenges in hire options, coordination, and underdeveloped offer for mountain biking means riders go elsewhere.



#### Funding, Resources, and Costs

Trail development faces rising costs and limited resources, with construction inflation driving up prices by 38% since 2020.



#### Public Transport Integration

Many visitors rely on buses or trains, but recent years have seen cuts to local services. Bus routes to trailheads are sparse.



#### Railway Crossing Disruptions

Network rail has closed several level crossings forcing detours or severing access entirely.



#### Active Tourism

The potential for walking, wheeling, and cycling tourism remains untapped, offering a valuable opportunity to boost the local economy.



#### Public Health and Inclusion

Accessible trails boost public health, but poor transport and limited easy routes restrict access for inactive urban communities.



#### Climate Change Resilience

Hotter, drier summers can crack trail surfaces, while heavier storms cause flooding and erosion of paths.



#### Governance and Policy Changes

Ongoing devolution and LGR is reshaping the political landscape, with significant implications for how this plan will be delivered.



## 4.2 Health and Wellbeing

There is overwhelming evidence that active travel is one of the most effective interventions for improving individual health and reducing pressure on the healthcare system. National policy strongly reflects this: the NHS England agenda<sup>14</sup> to “Build an NHS Fit for the Future” makes clear that healthcare must prioritise prevention over treatment. Active travel supports this preventative model and is regularly described by health professionals as a “wonder drug” due to its wide-ranging benefits.

For most people, walking, wheeling, or cycling for short daily journeys is the easiest way to achieve the UK Chief Medical Officers’ recommendation of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week<sup>15</sup>. The health impacts of regular active travel are profound, particularly in reducing the risk of costly non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease (20–35% lower risk), certain cancers (20–30% lower risk), and type 2 diabetes (30–40% lower risk). It also reduces the risk of depression and dementia by 20–30%. Unlike gym memberships or organised sport, active travel weaves physical movement into everyday routines, making it a practical and inclusive way to improve wellbeing across the population<sup>16</sup>.

The ATNP provides the physical infrastructure that can support green social prescribing<sup>17</sup>. The Active Travel Network within the National Park is well placed to enable link workers, NHS trusts, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and GP practices to prescribe walking, wheeling, and cycling on safe, accessible routes within the National Park. This offers a cost-effective, non-clinical intervention to improve physical and mental health outcomes, particularly for those facing inactivity, isolation, or mobility challenges.

The ATNP will incorporate granular public health data, such as physical inactivity levels and rates of obesity, to identify communities that stand to gain the most from new active travel links. This provides an evidence-based justification for targeting investment to tackle health inequalities, directly supporting the objectives outlined in the Park’s Strategic Review of Health and Wellbeing.

<sup>14</sup> NHS England, *The NHS Long Term Plan* (2019).

<sup>15</sup> UK Chief Medical Officers, *Physical Activity Guidelines: 2019 Update*.

<sup>16</sup> Public Health England, *Health matters: getting every adult active every day* (2016).

<sup>17</sup> Defra & DHSC, *Preventing and tackling mental ill health through green social prescribing* (2020).



### 4.3 Economic Benefits of Active Travel

The economic case for investing in walking, wheeling, and cycling is overwhelming. Investment in active travel consistently delivers exceptionally high benefit-to-cost ratios (BCRs)<sup>18</sup>, frequently reported at an average of 13:1, meaning every £1 invested returns £13 in economic, health, and environmental benefits. Official figures from the Department for Transport (DfT) cite a consolidated government estimate placing the average BCR for walking and cycling schemes at 5.62:1, comfortably exceeding the DfT’s threshold for a “very high” value-for-money investment.

This exceptional return is driven by a unique blend of benefits. Active travel is simultaneously a public health intervention that reduces NHS costs, a transport solution that cuts congestion and pollution, and a local economic development tool that supports high streets and rural economies. The health dividend alone is often sufficient to justify the investment. Independent evaluations of green social prescribing and nature-based health programmes show a social return of £6.88 to £8.50 per £1 invested. Analysis suggests that expanding nature-based engagement to 1.2 million people per year could save the NHS over £635 million annually. In a National Park context, this represents a powerful triple win: improving health, lowering public costs, and supporting inclusive rural growth.



New section of the Centurion Way is unveiled – Photo by Sam Moore

<sup>18</sup> Department for Transport, *Value for Money Assessment for Cycling and Walking Projects* (2014/Updated).



### **Case Study 1: Centurion Way – Business Uplift**

The Centurion Way, a popular 11 km multi-user path linking Chichester to West Dean, serves as a prime example of how high-quality active travel infrastructure can generate direct economic benefits for local businesses. The route, which follows a disused railway line, provides a safe, scenic, and traffic-free corridor that channels a consistent flow of walkers, cyclists, and families through the countryside. This has created a captive market for businesses located along or near the route. Pubs in Lavant and West Dean, local cafes, and bike hire businesses in the Chichester area report a noticeable uplift in year-round trade directly attributable to users of the Way. The route effectively functions as an economic conduit, connecting the urban centre of Chichester with rural hospitality businesses and attractions, demonstrating a clear return on investment in the form of increased local spend and support for the visitor economy.

### **Case Study 2: Egrets Way – Community & Economic Benefit**

The Egrets Way project in the Ouse Valley is a testament to the power of community-led initiatives in delivering multi-faceted benefits. The project aims to create a continuous, safe, and accessible path linking the towns of Lewes and Newhaven with the surrounding villages. To date, over 16 km of the network is open and in daily use by walkers, cyclists, and mobility scooter users. The project has been a model of blended funding, successfully securing grants from the South Downs National Park Authority, Lewes District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and various charitable trusts. The route provides a vital connection for local residents, a safe alternative to the busy C7 road, and a valuable asset for visitors exploring the National Park. By connecting communities to transport hubs, local services, and the wider landscape, the Egrets Way demonstrates how targeted investment in active travel infrastructure can enhance local quality of life, support sustainable tourism, and deliver significant health and wellbeing benefits, making it a "valuable community asset for many years to come".

## **5. Visitor Economy & Rural Businesses**

### **5.1 Progress and Potential**

The SDNPA has made significant strides in delivering high-quality active travel infrastructure through flagship projects including the Centurion Way and Egrets Way which exemplify the potential of strategic investment in sustainable transport. These multi-user active travel routes have received widespread support, with community feedback consistently highlighting their role in encouraging safe, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable travel. Building on this momentum, continued investment in strategic routes will continue to deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits and enhance sustainable and inclusive access across the National Park.





Centurion Way at Singleton

## 5.2 Resident Profile

The South Downs National Park is home to just over 113,000 residents, making it the most populous of England’s National Parks. Its communities are predominantly rural and dispersed, which, combined with limited public transport and an aging population (26% are aged 65 or over, compared to 18.6% in England), has led to high levels of car dependency. Around 90% of households have access to at least one car, significantly above the England average of 72%. Car dependency imposes a financial burden and reinforces transport poverty, disproportionately affecting those without a vehicle, including young people, older residents, and people with disabilities. While car commuting has declined slightly, the rise in multi-car households suggests a sustained increase in car use for shorter, non-work trips, the very journeys with the greatest potential for active travel if safe alternatives are provided.

The Park is also one of England's most visited protected landscapes. The 2021 South Downs Visitor Survey<sup>19</sup> shows that 81% of visitors arrive by private car, a figure virtually unchanged from 2018. This car dominance contributes to localised congestion, pollution, and pressure on sensitive landscapes. Data from 2022 confirms that transport accounts for 63% of the National Park's greenhouse gas emissions, the highest of any UK National Park, making modal shift critical for decarbonization. This evidence creates a clear opportunity: to provide high-quality, inclusive active travel infrastructure that reduces reliance on the private car, improves

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<sup>19</sup> South Downs National Park Authority, *South Downs Visitor Survey 2021*.



local access, and enhances the health and sustainability of communities across the National Park.

### 5.3 Farm Diversification Opportunities

Recreation and tourism are vital to the Park's rural economy. The active travel network will be designed to support a sustainable visitor economy by connecting people to local businesses and attractions in ways that spread economic benefits and help manage visitor pressure. Routes will be strategically aligned to support appropriate farm diversification, with safe access to farm gates enabling new income streams through ventures such as farm shops, cafés, B&Bs, and cycle hire. We will champion inclusive diversification that welcomes all non-motorised users (NMUs), supporting landowners to provide essential multi-user facilities, such as secure bike parking, muddy boot facilities for walkers, and horsebox parking or tie-up rails for equestrians. This approach reframes the relationship with landowners, from simple access negotiation to genuine economic collaboration, positioning active travel routes as assets that can underpin business viability.

This is actively supported through initiatives such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) fund<sup>20</sup>, administered by the SDNPA. This Defra programme has delivered over £1.6 million to more than 125 projects, advancing nature recovery, climate action, and resilient farm businesses. Notable examples include Fawley Farm in Froxfield, which transformed a disused milking parlour into a café and community space, and Splash Farm in Burpham, which created a takeaway coffee and cake stop. These enhancements offer inviting rest points and refreshment opportunities for walkers, cyclists, and other active travellers, strengthening the network's appeal while supporting local enterprise.

### 5.4 Key Visitor Attractions and Partnership Opportunities

Key visitor attractions are the primary gateways through which most people experience the South Downs. Collectively, sites managed by partners like the National Trust (e.g., Birling Gap, Seven Sisters, Devil's Dyke), Forestry England (Alice Holt, Friston Forest), and the RSPB (Pulborough Brooks) attract a significant share of the Park's visitors. With around 81% of visitors arriving by motor vehicle, these high-traffic hubs present the single greatest strategic opportunity for intervention. This ATNP reframes these attractions not just as destinations, but as critical leverage points for catalysing a landscape-scale shift in travel behaviour.

Successful integration relies on an evidence-led, collaborative approach to ensure interventions are focused where they will have the most impact. For example, a focus on tackling "last mile" connectivity from rail stations to sites like Pulborough Brooks can unlock car-free access. Similarly, building on the proven success at Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECP), where high-quality, traffic-free routes connecting the park to Petersfield more than

<sup>20</sup> Defra, *Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme* (2021).



doubled the proportion of visitors arriving by bicycle, demonstrates that safe and direct infrastructure drives modal shift. We will also look to successful public transport integration, such as the 'Breeze up to the Downs' bus service to Ditchling Beacon, which demonstrates how accessible links can effectively reduce car dependency at honeypot sites. The SDNPA will continue to work in close partnership with all major attractions, including Marwell Zoo, the Wildlife Trusts, and major events like the Boomtown Festival, to develop and promote sustainable access solutions

### 5.5 Pubs, Cafes, and Accommodation

The network of rural pubs, cafés, and campsites across the South Downs are not just amenities; they are essential infrastructure for the recreational visitor economy. These establishments provide far more than food and drink: they offer secure bike parking, toilets, water refilling points, and welcoming spaces that make longer journeys both feasible and enjoyable. Many businesses have already embraced this market. Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Baker and White, and the four Cadence cafés all provide water points and bike tool stations. Campsites are also central to this ecosystem; Holden Farm, directly on the South Downs Way, is a prime example, offering a café, clean facilities, a bike maintenance station, and secure cycle storage.

Other key hubs include The Sustainability Centre near East Meon and The Royal Oak at Hooksway, which serves as a vital north-south link between the Shipwrights Way and Centurion Way. Through the ATNP, the Authority will champion and promote such businesses, helping to align routes with existing hubs. To future-proof this network, we will support the development of an e-bike charging network at accommodation providers and hospitality venues to meet growing demand. Furthermore, we will encourage inclusive facilities that cater to all non-motorised users, supporting the installation of tie-up rails for equestrians and muddy boot facilities for walkers alongside bike racks and repair stations. By doing so, the ATNP will help create a resilient ecosystem that enhances the visitor experience and strengthens the National Park's reputation as a world-class destination for active travel.



## 6. Equity & Inclusion

### 6.1 Levelling-up Outcomes

The ATNP can make a meaningful contribution to the UK Government’s Levelling Up agenda by addressing transport poverty and improving life chances in rural communities. For the many residents who live in the National Park, the network is not just about recreation, it must also support everyday mobility. Safe, convenient routes connecting homes to schools, colleges, workplaces, and essential services are vital for reducing inequality in access to opportunity.

This is particularly important for groups disproportionately affected by poor transport connectivity - young people without car access who need to reach education and employment; older residents seeking to access local services and avoid social isolation; and low-income households burdened by the high cost of car ownership in a rural setting. By providing a safe, free, and healthy alternative to reliance on the private car, the ATNP helps deliver tangible equity outcomes and supports the wider social wellbeing of local communities.

### 6.2 Inclusive Access for All

National Parks are for everyone. We are committed to designing an active travel network accessible to users of all ages and mobilities by removing barriers like stiles and steps, and ensuring designated routes feature gentle gradients, firm surfaces, and regular seating. Crucially, we recognize that inclusive access requires 'Mobility Hubs' with designated Blue Badge parking at trailheads for those unable to travel actively to the route start. This ensures the health and wellbeing benefits of the National Park are available to everyone in society.

We are also upgrading our Accessibility Hub to offer clearer, more inclusive information, covering mobility, sensory, cognitive, and hidden disabilities, to help visitors plan with confidence. We’re also exploring a project with Ordnance Survey to map accessible routes across the National Park. While still in its exploratory phase, this initiative could set a national benchmark for inclusive trail mapping across the UK’s Protected Landscapes and National Trails.



## 7. Consultation & Engagement

### 7.1 Phase I: Initial Stakeholder Engagement

Phase I focused on identifying the core strategic priorities and mapping the network's deficiencies. 79 key stakeholders participated, While the sample size (79) provides qualitative insight rather than statistical significance, the results align strongly with broader feedback from the Local Plan and PMP consultations (see paragraph 8.3). Stakeholders were asked to prioritise four focus areas on a scale from 1 (low priority) to 5 (high priority). As participants were not limited in the number of 'high priority' votes they could cast, they were able to signal strong support for multiple areas.

The results confirm a clear consensus that all proposed focus areas are highly valued. "Addressing difficult crossings and reducing severance" received the strongest support, with 77.6% of respondents ranking it as a high priority. This was followed by "Developing current aspirational routes" (65.8%), "Creating longer, segregated, off-road walking, wheeling, and cycling routes" (62.8%), and "Upgrading the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network" (59.5%). The almost complete absence of low-priority votes reinforces the consensus that stakeholders perceive significant value in all four areas of work. The table below provides a breakdown of how much priority each proposed workstream was given including weighted average scores which provides a more granular comparison of the relevant importance assigned by stakeholders:

<b>Survey Question.</b> How much priority should we give to...	<b>1 – low priority</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 – high priority</b>	<b>% high priority votes</b>	<b>Weighted average (out of 5)</b>
Addressing difficult crossings and reducing severance?	0	0	2	15	59	77.6%	4.75
Developing our current aspirational routes (2017 strategy)?	0	2	12	13	52	65.8%	4.46
Creating longer, segregated, off-road routes?	0	2	12	15	49	62.8%	4.42
Upgrading the existing PROW network?	0	2	11	19	47	59.5%	4.41



Further analysis for each workstream is provided below:

***Addressing difficult crossings and reducing severance - Top Priority***

This option received the strongest support, with 59 of 76 respondents ranking it highest. Nearly 80% identified connectivity and safety as critical barriers fragmenting the network. Tackling difficult crossings and severance aligns with active travel goals to reduce barriers and improve access. Stakeholders noted that while major roads like the M3, A3, A27, and A31 offer benefits, they also isolate communities from the National Park. For cycling to be viable, key obstacles must be addressed and quiet lanes protected from rising traffic pressures.

***Developing the aspirational routes from the 2017 walking and cycling strategy - High Priority***

This option was strongly supported, with 52 of 79 participants ranking it as a top priority. Stakeholders praised existing walking, wheeling, and cycling routes for their accessibility and appeal, particularly the Centurion Way, noted as a peaceful, traffic-free path ideal for beginners. However, concerns were raised about stalled progress on key extensions, including the Centurion Way and Midhurst Greenway. Feedback stressed the need for all-weather, all-user routes, citing the Meon Valley Trail's limited usability due to poor surfacing. Expanding connections to railway stations was seen as a way to boost accessibility and uptake. Overall, there is clear support for completing routes outlined in the previous strategy, with calls for updated feasibility and cost-benefit reviews

***Upgrading the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network - High Priority***

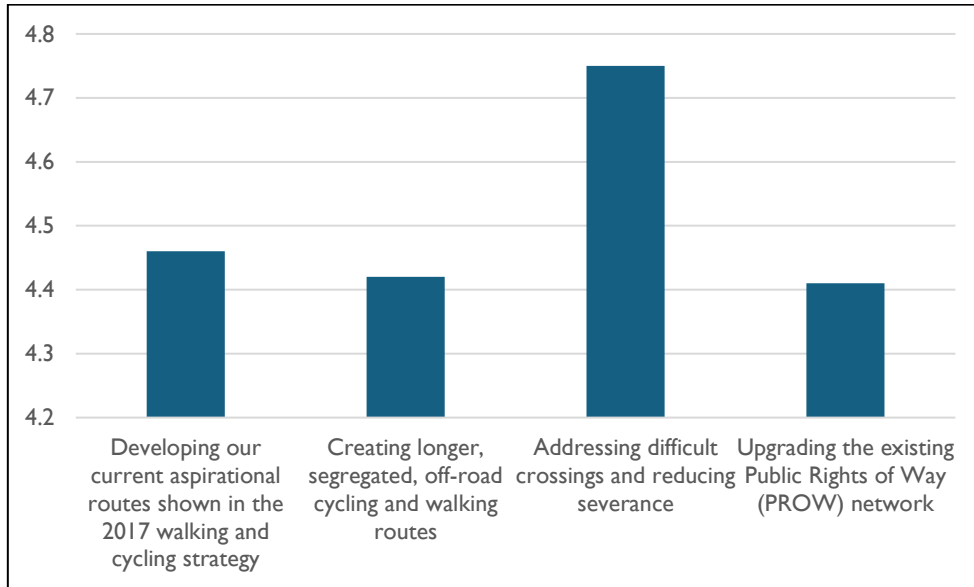
This option received strong support, with 47 of 79 respondents rating it as high priority. While the PROW network is valued, some stakeholders view it as more suited to recreation than transport. Tactical upgrades, such as converting footpaths to bridleways, and surface improvements were suggested to enhance connectivity and support key travel routes.

***Creating longer, segregated, off-road cycling and walking routes - Important***

This option ranked highly, with 49 of 78 respondents giving it top priority, reflecting strong demand for safe, dedicated infrastructure. However, slightly lower support than for aspirational routes suggests completing existing plans is seen as more urgent than developing new ones. While extended, segregated routes were supported, stakeholders emphasised the need for high-quality, well-promoted paths linked to sustainable transport. Suggestions included enabling cycle transport on the proposed South Downs Way hopper bus and prioritising shorter circular routes near accommodation to support green tourism over long-distance paths.



The high level of support for all workstreams indicates that stakeholders consider each to be an important component, and that each workstream should be prioritised within the ATNP. Weighted scoring indicates a stronger preference for addressing difficult crossings and reducing severance, as highlighted in the chart below:



The pronounced support for addressing difficult crossings reflects the immediate and tangible barriers these issues present to current and potential active travellers. Such problems are often daily frustrations that directly impact safety and route viability.

**7.2 Phase 2: Consultation on the Draft Plan**

Phase 2 tested the proposed Strategic Framework against partner policies and user needs. The consultation draft received strong support from a wide range of partners, endorsing the plan’s ambition to function as a strategic delivery tool for the National Park’s statutory purposes.

*“Really sensible approach to use the ATNP as a tool for delivering both the National Park purposes and statutory duty simultaneously. As the plan states, using this approach will really help to integrate active travel into wider transport, access, and environmental strategies.”* - **Infrastructure Planning & Place Team, East Sussex County Council**

*“The intention... to improve the network of paths available within the National Park itself, and in particular the ambition to improve connections... beyond the park boundary are very welcome. This strategy should lead to a much more integrated approach over the network as a whole.”* - **West Sussex Ramblers**



*“It is fantastic to see that the SDNPA recognises the need to improve and coordinate efforts to increase active travel... It is also very encouraging to see that this document goes beyond the national park’s boundaries... especially with regards to linking the national park to nearby transport hubs.” - **Cocking Parish Council***

In direct response to the Phase 2 consultation, the final Strategic Framework has been strengthened in the following key areas:

- **Rebalancing Utility & Recreation:** We have prioritised "dual-purpose" corridors, routes that serve rural utility needs (school/work) while also acting as leisure gateways, acknowledging that utility journeys are essential for decarbonisation.
- **Evidence-Led Urgency:** We have explicitly incorporated data confirming that transport accounts for **63%** of the Park's greenhouse gas emissions, framing active travel as a critical tool for achieving Net Zero.
- **Elevating Strategic Corridors:** We have raised the priority level of safeguarded disused railway lines (e.g., Rother Valley Way, West Meon to Alton) to "Top Priority," recognising their unique value in providing traffic-free, accessible infrastructure between major settlements.
- **Inclusive Access:** We have expanded our definition of inclusion to require "**Mobility Hubs**" with Blue Badge parking at trailheads, recognising that for many with mobility impairments, a vehicle is required to reach the start of the route.
- **Future-Proofing Governance:** We have added specific alignment with the emerging Sussex & Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) and Hampshire devolution to ensure our pipeline remains fundable under new regional governance structures.
- **A Dynamic Pipeline:** To prevent the plan from becoming static, we have separated the "Strategic Framework" (Part 1) from the "Delivery Plan" (Part 2). Part 2 will now serve as a live, annually updated pipeline of schemes, responsive to new funding opportunities and community intelligence.



### 7.3 Equestrian Access

The ATNP recognises the importance of including equestrians in active travel provision, reflecting the feedback received during the stakeholder consultation. In response to concerns raised by the horse-riding community, we have committed to actively consult with the British Horse Society and relevant stakeholders when developing active travel routes. Our approach aligns with the principles set out in the Rural Design Guidance<sup>21</sup>, which emphasises the need to design safe, accessible and inclusive routes for all users. For equestrians, this includes ensuring sufficient path width, durable and suitable surface materials, and appropriate separation from motor traffic. The needs of all non-motorised users (NMU) including equestrians and disabled users should be considered and where possible the access design hierarchy will be applied i.e. access for all; access for most; access for some.



Sign 956.1 – Route for use by pedal cycles, horses and pedestrians only

### 7.4 Local Plan and PMP Reviews

Both the Local Plan and PMP reviews have supplied vital, complementary insights for development of the ATNP. The Local Plan consultation generated 66 active-travel responses, with respondents stressing the need to shift trips out of cars by upgrading public rights of way, integrating high-quality walking, cycling and equestrian routes, and embedding traffic-calming and wayfinding measures. They called for clear but context-sensitive standards on path materials, widths and signage to safeguard users; highlighted the importance of network connectivity by delivering and linking new, upgraded and repurposed corridors identified in LCWIPs; and insisted that all routes be direct, accessible and inclusive for non-motorised users.

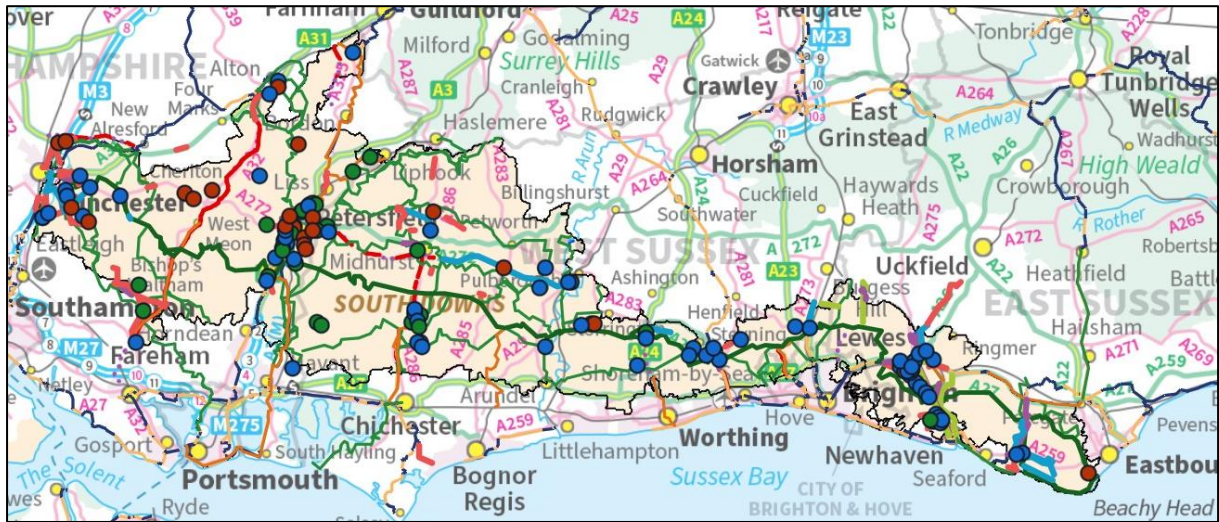
Meanwhile, the PMP review received 227 free-text submissions, with around 20% addressing access issues. While 6% of respondents praised existing walking and cycling opportunities, many highlighted barriers: 2% cited poor disabled access, 10% noted deteriorating rights of way, and a striking 49% flagged dangerous byways that deter walkers and riders. A further 16% called for new or improved active-travel routes, and another 16% urged better public transport links. Location-specific proposals included a 500-yard foot and cycle link west of Ford Station, a multi-user overbridge across the A27, accelerated completion of the Midhurst Greenway, strategic extensions to the Rother Valley Way, and improved access along the Rother and Arun waterways.

<sup>21</sup> Active Travel England, *Rural Design Guidance* (Forthcoming).



### 7.5 Online Stakeholder Mapping

An interactive [online mapping](#) tool has been developed to enable stakeholders to identify significant obstacles and missing links within the active travel network. This platform will evolve into a digital 'live' map of schemes, providing an up-to-date view of the network's development status. Crucially, it will remain a dynamic resource that empowers users to directly add their own ambitions for future active travel interventions and aspirational route proposals. Preliminary analysis indicates that many barriers are concentrated around key population centres and where the network intersects with major A roads.



In addition to our bespoke mapping tool, we have integrated additional stakeholder mapping resources, including Cycling UK's [online stakeholder map](#), the [list of suggested routes](#) from West Sussex County Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy 2015-2026, and Hampshire County Council's Countryside Access Plan development tool. These established tools have enabled us to cross-validate our findings and capture a broader range of community insights.



## 8. Regional Transport Landscape

### 8.1 Transport for the South East

Operating at a level between national policy and local delivery is Transport for the South East (TfSE), a sub-national transport body. In June 2025, TfSE agreed a new strategy with a major commitment to active travel, setting the stage for a revised Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) due by March 2026. This evolving strategy outlines a long-term vision for a high-quality, safe, and sustainable transport system that supports economic growth and enhances quality of life. Aligning our ATNP with the strategic corridors and 'Strategic Mobility Hubs' identified in these plans is an essential strategy for maximizing influence and securing investment. The planned Strategic Mobility Hubs, for instance at key gateways like Falmer, present a clear opportunity for the SDNPA to partner on delivering high-quality 'last mile' active travel connections from these hubs directly into the Park's network.

To ensure our network is integral to this regional vision, we will proactively engage with TfSE during the development of the revised Strategic Investment Plan (due March 2026). We will submit our prioritised strategic corridors for inclusion in the investment pipeline, providing robust evidence of their contribution to regional decarbonisation and economic growth to secure their status as funded priorities.

### 8.2 Local Transport Plans

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) across Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove set out a shared ambition for low-carbon, healthy, people-centred transport, and environmental protection. This creates a highly receptive policy environment for the SDNPA's active travel ambitions.

### 8.3 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

While LTPs set the overarching policy direction, LCWIPs are the primary tools for delivering infrastructure on the ground. Developed by our Local Highway Authority (LHA) partners, these plans are rightly focused on urban centres and key commuter corridors where the potential for modal shift from private vehicles is highest. However, the active travel networks identified in these LCWIPs often terminate abruptly at the boundary of the National Park, creating a disconnect between densely populated urban centres and the recreational and natural assets of the countryside.

The ATNP is strategically designed to complement and enhance LHA-led initiatives. Rather than operating in isolation, it strengthens partnerships by acting as a "value multiplier" for existing and planned investments. Through targeted interventions, bridging missing links, extending urban routes into the National Park, and connecting them to the wider PRowV network, the ATNP elevates the function of local infrastructure. Commuter routes become leisure gateways; local paths evolve into regional networks. This integrated approach delivers



wider benefits: improved public health, a stronger visitor economy, and support for rural enterprise. In turn, it amplifies the impact of LHA investment and makes a compelling case for joint delivery.

This partnership model operates at all scales. The SDNPA supports and champions ambitious, community-led initiatives, such as the LCWIPs developed by Arundel Town Council and the joint plan for Steyning, Bramber, and Upper Beeding, as well as Horndean Parish Council’s Green Trail and Heritage Network. By providing technical assistance and potential funding, the ATNP helps to elevate these valuable local plans, integrating them into a cohesive, landscape-scale vision for active travel.

The strength of the ATNP lies in its collaborative foundation. By aligning with and building upon the networks set out in local LCWIPs, the ATNP helps to connect a series of valuable but distinct plans into a more cohesive and regionally significant network. This joined-up approach supports more effective investment, delivering shared benefits for residents, visitors, the rural economy, and the natural environment. It reflects the spirit of the strengthened ‘seek to further’ duty introduced by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and reinforces the partnership-led ethos that is central to the long-term stewardship of the South Downs.



Horndean Green Trail and Heritage Network Map

The following table illustrates how the ATNP integrates with and adds value to district LCWIPs across the region.

LHA Area	LCWIP	Core Local Focus	ATNP Interventions	Key Outcome
Hampshire	Winchester City & District LCWIPs <sup>22</sup>	Walking zones and cycle routes in Winchester and surrounding market towns.	Extend the well-used Itchen Navigation creating a continuous corridor along the Itchen Valley.	Establish a strategic, multi-functional green corridor that significantly enhances both ecological and recreational connectivity.
			Develop 'green wheels' of connectivity around Winchester, Bishops	Build a seamless network integrating the city and market towns

<sup>22</sup> Winchester City Council, *Winchester District Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2024)*.



			Waltham, and Alresford.	with the National Park boosting the tourist economy.
	Eastleigh LCWIP <sup>23</sup>	Establishing a core walking zone and primary cycle routes connecting areas like Eastleigh rail station to Fair Oak.	Extend the proposed Route 280 from Fair Oak to forge a new link into the National Park via Upham.	Creates a seamless urban-to-rural connection from a major rail station, providing direct access to the South Downs Way and unlocking recreational circuits.
	Horndean Green Trail and Heritage Network	Creating an accessible network of trails connecting residents with local heritage assets and new housing developments.	Develop high-quality connections from the local trail network into the National Park, extending routes from Catherington Down.	Transforms a valuable local amenity into a key gateway, providing thousands of new residents with direct and sustainable access to the South Downs.
	East Hampshire LCWIP <sup>24</sup>	Cycle routes through key market towns like Petersfield	Develop the Rother Valley Way connecting Petersfield to Midhurst.	Delivers a long-held community aspiration for a strategic off-road route, addressing significant safety concerns on parallel A-roads.
West Sussex	West Sussex Active Travel Strategy <sup>25</sup>	A strategic framework prioritising district LCWIP delivery and connecting key population centres.		
	Chichester LCWIP <sup>26</sup>	A 58km cycle network and Core Walking Zone in the city centre.	Support delivery of Route A to provide the critical "first mile" link from the city to the Centurion Way.	Leverages local investment to unlock the full recreational and economic potential of the strategic Centurion Way corridor.

<sup>23</sup> Eastleigh Borough Council, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2023)*.

<sup>24</sup> East Hampshire District Council, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2022)*.

<sup>25</sup> West Sussex Active Travel Strategy, *West Sussex Active Travel Strategy 2024-2036 (2024)*.

<sup>26</sup> Chichester District Council, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021)*.



	Adur & Worthing LCWIP <sup>27</sup>	East-west coastal routes and connections to local hubs.	Enhance north-south corridors like the Downs Link (Route 330) to create premier gateways to the National Park.	Transforms transport infrastructure into a public health asset, providing safe and sustainable access to green space for large coastal populations.
	Arundel Town LCWIP <sup>28</sup>	Improving local connectivity between the town centre, railway station, and neighbouring parishes like Ford.	Enhance Route C2 (Herington's Field to Black Rabbit) to create a high-quality, legible route from Arundel's station directly into the South Downs.	Multiplies the value of local investment by supporting Arundel's position as a key destination with seamless access to the recreational landscape.
	Steyning, Bramber, & Upper Beeding LCWIP <sup>29</sup>	A community-led plan to improve local connectivity and safety across the three parishes.	Champion ambitious new connections like the proposed east-west route from Chanctonbury Ring to Washington (Route 5.7).	Creates a safe, high-quality alternative to the dangerous A283, opening up a significant new recreational corridor along the foot of the Downs.
East Sussex	East Sussex LCWIP <sup>30</sup>	A county-wide strategy including the flagship Egrets Way project and routes connecting coastal towns to the Downs	Act as a key delivery partner for the Egrets Way (Route N17), connecting Lewes to Newhaven.	Creates a premier, largely traffic-free tourism and leisure corridor through the Ouse Valley, linking rail and ferry hubs to the National Park.
Brighton & Hove	Brighton & Hove LCWIP <sup>31</sup>	North-south corridors (e.g., Dyke Road) connecting the urban core to the Downs.	Ensure seamless, high-quality extension of key corridors beyond the city boundary and into the Park's recreational network.	Transforms urban commuter routes into premier leisure corridors, unlocking health and wellbeing benefits for the city's large population.

<sup>27</sup> Adur & Worthing Councils, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan* (2020).

<sup>28</sup> Arundel Town Council, *Arundel Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan*.

<sup>29</sup> Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding Parish Councils, *Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan*.

<sup>30</sup> East Sussex County Council, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan* (2021/Updated).

<sup>31</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council, *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan*.



## 8.4 Rights of Way Improvement Plans

The National Park's extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network is a unique and valuable resource, forming the backbone of both recreational access and sustainable local transport. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, our LHA partners are required to produce Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs). These plans provide a strategic assessment of how the network can better meet current and future needs.

While funding constraints can make ROWIPs aspirational, this ATNP provides a direct mechanism to deliver on their shared objectives. Rather than simply creating new infrastructure, a primary focus of this plan is to invest in and upgrade the existing PRoW network, ensuring it is fit for purpose and fully integrated into the wider transport system.

By integrating the priorities of our partners' ROWIPs and LCWIPs, this ATNP takes a holistic approach. It recognises that the PRoW network is an integral part of the solution for reducing traffic congestion, providing safer routes for vulnerable users, and connecting communities to essential services in both rural and urban settings. This ensures that investment is targeted to serve the needs of residents on utility journeys as well as visitors seeking recreation, delivering on multiple national transport goals simultaneously.

Key themes from the ROWIPs developed by our LHA partners include:

**Hampshire** – The Countryside Access Plan (CAP)<sup>32</sup> is currently being reviewed. The new plan for 2025-2035 will incorporate enhanced focus areas including, health and wellbeing, accessibility for all, and climate resilience. The emerging CAP aims to create a strategic network, or 'green wheels' incorporating key links between population centres and places of interest in the countryside including the National Park.

**West Sussex** – The West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan 2018-2028<sup>33</sup> is the current ROWIP. It focuses on improving connectivity to provide circular routes, creating safer routes away from busy roads, and improving access by removing barriers.

**East Sussex** – East Sussex are currently reviewing their Rights of Way Access Plan<sup>34</sup>, the SDNPA are engaging with East Sussex to ensure that the plan aligns with our ATNP. Their previous plan for 2007-2017 includes priorities for improving access to the countryside from urban areas.

<sup>32</sup> Hampshire County Council, *Countryside Access Plan 2025-2035* (Draft).

<sup>33</sup> West Sussex County Council, *Rights of Way Management Plan 2018-2028*.

<sup>34</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council, *Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017-2027*.



**Brighton and Hove** – The Brighton and Hove Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017-2027<sup>35</sup> is the current ROWIP. The plan includes a priority to reduce severance and improve access to the National Park.

## 8.5 Emerging Needs from the Transport Plans

The collective transport plans point to a series of recurring infrastructure needs:

- **Safe Crossings over Major Roads:** Severance by major roads such as the A3, A24, A27, and A272 are consistently identified as major barriers.
- **Gateway Town and Rail Station Connectors:** Many key settlements and rail stations suffer from poor onward active travel connections.
- **Shorter Circular Routes:** There is a lack of shorter, accessible routes suitable for families and less active users.
- **North-South Downs to Coast Corridors:** There is a clear need to connect large populations along the coast with the National Park to the north.
- **Enhancing the East-West Corridor:** Upgrading and extending east–west routes is needed to create a continuous, high-quality network.
- **First Mile Connectivity:** Critical gaps exist between transport hubs and trailheads, notably the lack of signage from Winchester Station to the South Downs Way National Trail.

## 8.6 Future Governance Framework

The transport policy landscape is set to undergo significant transformation. The establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) is anticipated in May 2026, followed by broader Local Government Reorganisation expected to deliver new unitary authorities across Sussex by 2028. Alongside evolving devolution arrangements in Hampshire, these changes will shift strategic transport powers and funding decisions to a sub-regional level.

To ensure the continued delivery of the ATNP, the SDNPA will actively align its Project Pipeline with the emerging priorities of these new authorities. We will engage with the transition process to ensure our aspirational routes are integrated into the future joint LTPs and investment strategies that these bodies will develop, adapting our governance model to secure funding and partnership support under this new structure.

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<sup>35</sup> East Sussex County Council, *Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2007-2017/Emerging Update)*.



## 9. Key Principles for Active Travel Interventions

The ATNP will apply the principles set out in Active Travel England’s emerging Rural Design Guidance, which adapts the core LTN 1/20 principles (Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive) to a rural context. The following nine bespoke principles have been developed to ensure that all schemes are designed to achieve these national standards while also being fully aligned with the National Park’s statutory purposes and duty. The diagram below illustrates how each of the nine active travel principles align with the statutory framework that underpins the National Park:



These principles will be further developed into a detailed implementation guide and a formal application process to ensure that all projects added to the project pipeline are appropriate, well-conceived, and fully aligned with the plan's strategic objectives.



## 9.1 Principles for Conserving and Enhancing the National Park

The following three principles aim to ensure active travel infrastructure makes a positive and demonstrable contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Park.

### ***Principle 1: Landscape-Led and Culturally Sensitive Design***

Active travel routes will be landscape-led, ensuring that they protect, enhance, and reveal the distinctive character and rich cultural heritage of the South Downs.

### ***Principle 2: Creating and Strengthening Ecological Networks***

Active travel routes will be planned, delivered, and managed as multifunctional green corridors that contribute to the ecological resilience of the National Park. Implementation guidance will ensure route proposals align with and support the emerging LNRs.

### ***Principle 3: Protecting Sensitive Environments and Heritage Assets***

A precautionary and evidence-led approach will be taken to avoid harm to the most sensitive parts of the National Park, including designated wildlife sites, priority habitats, and heritage assets.

## 9.2 Principles for Promoting Public Understanding and Enjoyment

The following three principles aim to ensure the active travel network provides high-quality, safe, and inclusive opportunities for the public to access, understand, and enjoy the Special Qualities of the National Park.

### ***Principle 4: A Coherent and Legible Network for Discovery***

The active travel network must be coherent, legible, and seamlessly integrated, connecting people to the places they want to go and enabling journeys of discovery.

### ***Principle 5: Safe, Tranquil, and Welcoming Journeys***

All routes must be designed to be, and to feel, exceptionally safe and welcoming, protecting the quality of tranquillity that is a special quality of the National Park.

### ***Principle 6: Inclusive Access for All***

The active travel network must be designed to be inclusive and accessible to the widest possible range of users, regardless of age, mobility, or confidence, actively removing barriers to participation. To ensure safety and enjoyment for all, the network will be promoted alongside a 'Share the Path' code of conduct, emphasising that cyclists must give way to walkers and horse riders.



### 9.3 Principles for Fostering Economic and Social Wellbeing

The following three principles that address the National Park Authority's statutory duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of its local communities, ensuring that the active travel network delivers tangible benefits for the people who live and work in the Park.

#### ***Principle 7: Supporting a Thriving and Sustainable Visitor Economy***

The active travel network will be designed to support and enhance a sustainable visitor economy, connecting visitors to local businesses and attractions in a way that distributes economic benefits and manages visitor pressure.

#### ***Principle 8: Enabling Healthy and Active Local Communities***

The network must support both everyday mobility and recreational access for the Park's residents, providing safe, convenient routes for daily journeys and inviting people to explore and enjoy the landscape.

#### ***Principle 9: Integrating with a Living, Working Landscape***

Route development and management must be undertaken in close partnership with land managers, respecting land ownership and ensuring the network is successfully integrated with the Park's primary economic activities.

## 10. Scope, Focus, & Approach

### 10.1 Geographical Extent

The geographical scope of this ATNP extends beyond the formal boundary of the South Downs National Park to strategically include neighbouring parishes and key access corridors. This broader approach reflects the reality that many journeys begin or end just outside the National Park boundary and is essential for creating a coherent and effective network. This expanded scope aligns with the strengthened 'seek to further' duty introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, which requires relevant authorities to actively further National Park purposes, including when considering areas beyond the National Park boundary where functional connectivity is relevant.

### 10.2 Timescales

The ATNP looks ahead to 2040, matching the Government's ambition that by then walking, wheeling, and cycling will be the natural choice for everyday journeys. Rather than being a fixed document, the Plan is designed to grow and adapt. The Project Pipeline acts as a living record of improvements, showing how new routes and ideas can be added, reshaped, or brought forward as opportunities arise. This means progress won't stall and can move ahead whenever funding or community support is available.



By combining a clear long-term vision with a flexible project pipeline, the Plan ensures steady momentum towards a healthier, more connected National Park, while keeping local voices at the heart of decision-making.

### 10.3 Strategic Focus Areas

The key focus areas from stakeholder consultation and local transport plans converge on the same priorities. The ATNP’s decade-spanning investment strategy will integrate these insights with long-term objectives.

Strategic Focus	Strategic Actions	Justification	Priority Level
Addressing difficult crossings and reducing severance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Engage with DfT and National Highways to embed active travel infrastructure into SRN upgrades (RIS3).</li> <li>➤ Invest in safe crossings over major barriers including the M3, A27, A3, A272, and A325.</li> <li>➤ Conduct a park-wide severance audit.</li> </ul>	Highest stakeholder support and aligns with DfT’s emphasis on removing barriers to active travel, improving safety, and enabling inclusive access across the SRN	Top priority
Resolving Missing Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify and bridge critical gaps between transport hubs (rail stations/bus stops) and trailheads.</li> <li>➤ Connect fragmented sections of existing rights of way to create continuous corridors.</li> </ul>	Addressing "First Mile" connectivity issues - such as the lack of signage from Winchester Station to the South Downs Way enabling NMU access to the network.	Top Priority
Creating shorter circular routes from communities, sustainable transport hubs, and tourist hotspots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with partners to map and develop local circuits from sustainable transport hubs and tourist hotspots.</li> <li>➤ Enhance edge-of-town connectivity.</li> <li>➤ Focus on user experience.</li> <li>➤ Promote green tourism.</li> </ul>	Key theme from local transport plans and supports stakeholder feedback, edge-of-town access, green tourism, and will be attractive to casual users and families	Top priority
Delivering Strategic Railway Corridors (Local Plan Policy SD20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Accelerate delivery of safeguarded disused railway lines, specifically the Rother Valley Way, Centurion Way, Watercress Way, and West Meon to Alton corridor.</li> <li>➤ Facilitate multi-modal connections along these historic assets.</li> </ul>	Safeguarded in the Local Plan; these corridors offer existing flat gradients ideal for accessible, inclusive active travel and provide critical utility links between major towns.	Top priority



<p>Rural Liveable Neighbourhoods &amp; Quiet Lanes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Commission a study to designate and protect a network of Quiet Lanes.</li> <li>➤ Implement modal filters to remove rat-running traffic from villages (e.g., Owslebury).</li> </ul>	<p>Protects the character of rural lanes for shared use by walkers, cyclists, and equestrians, creating safe "liveable" zones without the need for heavy infrastructure.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Developing existing aspirational routes,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Accelerate completion of the Egrets Way and Centurion Way extensions.</li> <li>➤ Focus on user experience and connectivity.</li> </ul>	<p>Strong local mandate to build on previous strategy foundations and complete long-standing community ambitions.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Upgrading and surfacing the existing Public Rights of Way network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement tactical upgrades to surfaces and gates on promoted routes.</li> <li>➤ Balance multi-use objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>Supports rural recreational access, though offers less potential for modal shift/utility travel than strategic railway corridors.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Creating new longer, segregated off-road cycling and walking routes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate opportunities for new routes outside of the safeguarded railway corridors.</li> <li>➤ Work with local communities on leisure links.</li> </ul>	<p>While valuable for leisure, these routes often face significant delivery challenges compared to safeguarded corridors and offer lower strategic utility.</p>	<p>Important</p>



### 10.4 Route Prioritisation

Aspirational routes will be prioritised using a two-stage process to balance strategic ambition with practical deliverability. While the SDNPA's primary remit covers rural and recreational access, we recognise that in a climate emergency, every journey counts. Therefore, we will prioritise 'dual-purpose' corridors, routes that connect rural communities to essential services (utility) and simultaneously connect transport hubs to the National Park for visitors (recreation). This ensures our investment delivers the maximum carbon reduction and social value.

#### Stage I - Strategic Ranking

All aspirational routes will be scored against this Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) framework. This ensures that investment flows to the projects that deliver the highest strategic value against our prioritized focus areas.

Criterion	Description	Weight
Strategic Leverage	Does the project multiply the value of an existing active travel route or link to a transport hub? Does it offer high leverage for securing external funding?	3
Resolving "Missing Links" & Severance	Does the project bridge a critical gap between a transport hub and a trailhead? Does it address a major severance barrier (e.g., A27, A3) or significantly improve safety at a hazardous crossing?	5
Shorter Circular Routes & Communities	Does the project create accessible loops from settlements or hubs? Does it serve a high population density or address a specific infrastructure deficiency?	4
Delivering Strategic Railway Corridors (Policy SD20)	Does the route utilise a safeguarded disused railway line (e.g., Rother Valley Way, Watercress Way)? Does it secure a long-term strategic corridor?	5
Rural Liveable Neighbourhoods & Quiet Lanes	Does the project protect a Quiet Lane from traffic or remove rat-running from a village centre (e.g., via modal filters)?	4
Upgrading PROW & Creating New Routes	Does the project upgrade existing Rights of Way surfaces or create new off-road links <i>outside</i> of the strategic railway corridors?	3
Conserving and Enhancing (Purpose 1)	What is the potential for the project to align with Principles 1-3 (Landscape-led design, nature recovery, protecting heritage)?	5
Promoting Understanding (Purpose 2)	What is the potential for the project to align with Principles 4-6 (Legible network, welcoming journeys, inclusive access)?	4



Fostering Economic/Social Wellbeing (Duty)	What is the potential for the project to align with Principles 7-9 (Visitor economy, healthy communities, working landscape)?	3
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**Stage 2 - Deliverability Filter**

The top-ranked schemes from Stage 1 will then be subjected to a separate "Deliverability Filter". This involves a more detailed, practical assessment against practical criteria to confirm a realistic, phased delivery pipeline.

- Land ownership status and access agreements
- Estimated cost band
- Planning, environmental and design complexity
- Confirmed partner and stakeholder support
- Delivery risks and mitigation potential

This two-stage approach ensures we honour the strategic priorities identified by stakeholders while focusing our efforts on schemes that are both transformational and achievable.

**10.5 Delivery Pipeline**

To convert our Active Travel Network Map into actionable outcomes, projects from the 10-year Strategic Network Plan flow into a prioritised and dynamic Pipeline. This programme is structured across three overlapping phases; the multi-criteria assessment above will also be used to prioritise how projects move through the phases:

**Long-Term Schemes (>5 Years): Aspirational Pool**

This pool comprises the network’s most ambitious projects that require extended timeframes. Corridor alignments are safeguarded through the Local Plan.

**Medium-Term Schemes (3–5 Years): Development Pipeline**

Selected from the Aspirational Pool, these high-priority projects undergo detailed investigation, feasibility studies, and preliminary design work.

**Short-Term Schemes (<3 Years): Shovel Ready Projects**

This is a continuously updated register of initiatives that are fully prepared for immediate delivery, with completed designs, finalised costings, and secured land agreements. This register of fully developed schemes ensures the SDNPA maintains pipeline readiness, positioning us to secure and deploy capital grants from Active Travel England and other national funding bodies at short notice.



## 11. Governance & Funding

### 11.1 Collaborative Governance Model

The ATNP’s successful delivery depends on a flexible, partnership-led governance model that can adapt to forthcoming local government reforms. Under this model, we will formalise Memoranda of Understanding with our Local Highway Authority partners and with emerging unitary and combined authorities to define shared objectives, decision-making processes and delivery responsibilities. We will also actively engage district, borough, parish and town councils, landowners and community groups throughout planning and implementation, supporting parish and town councils as “Local Delivery Leads” for specific schemes with clear guidance and capacity-building resources. This adaptable structure ensures the ATNP remains aligned with evolving governance arrangements and fulfils the strengthened “seek to further” duty set out in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Governance arrangements will evolve to reflect the changing political landscape. We will align our decision-making structures with the emerging Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) and devolved arrangements in Hampshire. As strategic transport powers and funding streams devolve to these sub-regional bodies, we will secure representation and advocate for the ATNP priorities within their developing Local Transport Plans.



Refurbished Singleton Railway Station on Centurion Way – photo by Sam Moore



## 11.2 A Diversified Funding Strategy

Delivering the ATNP will require a proactive and diversified funding strategy. The SDNPA will act as a 'project enabler', blending different funding streams to create viable financial models for complex schemes. This approach treats different types of projects as distinct 'investment products', tailored to the interests of different funders beyond traditional active travel grants.

The ATNP aligns with multiple targets under the PMP, particularly Aim 5, and supports outcomes in accessibility, public health, cultural heritage, nature recovery, and sustainable tourism. This opens opportunities to match infrastructure delivery with funding sources that reflect the specific benefits of each scheme. For example, projects with heritage value may be eligible for support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, while those delivering measurable biodiversity benefits could attract green finance through SDNPA's ReNature Credits programme. Developer contributions (SI06/CIL) will be pursued where schemes directly mitigate the impact of new development. To secure major capital grants for our top-priority strategic corridors (such as the Rother Valley Way), we will also explore the development of HM Treasury Green Book-compliant business cases to clearly articulate Value for Money (VfM) and Strategic Leverage, positioning these projects to compete effectively for national and regional infrastructure funds. Public health grants may support accessible routes that improve wellbeing, particularly in underserved communities.

Sustainable long-term maintenance is a critical component of our delivery model. We recognise the resource pressures facing our Local Highway Authority partners and the need for clarity regarding asset management. Consequently, there is no default assumption regarding the adoption of new infrastructure. Instead, maintenance responsibilities and funding mechanisms (such as commuted sums or stewardship by local partners) will be agreed on a **project-by-project basis** during the feasibility stage. These arrangements will be codified within the specific delivery agreement for each scheme, ensuring that every new route has a viable management plan in place before construction begins.

The Risk Register, presented on the following page, details the primary strategic risks facing the ATNP, ranging from funding constraints to land acquisition challenges, and sets out the proactive mitigation measures and clear ownership required to manage them effectively.



Project Type	Description	Primary Funding Source	Secondary Funding Source	Key Delivery Partners
<b>Severance Crossing</b>	New bridge or underpass across a major road (e.g., A27) to reconnect communities and access routes.	Active Travel England (ATE); National Highways (Designated Funds); Department for Transport (DfT).	Developer Contributions (SI06/CIL) from major nearby developments.	LHA; National Highways; District Council (Planning).
<b>Heritage Trail on Disused Railway</b>	Multi-user path restoring and interpreting a historic transport corridor, connecting settlements.	ATE; National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).	Green Finance (ReNature/Carbon credits); Community Fundraising.	LHA (Highways); Local Heritage Groups; Landowners; Railway Paths Ltd.
<b>'Last Mile' Station Link</b>	High-quality, direct route connecting a mainline railway station to the National Park boundary or a key visitor destination.	ATE; LHA (Local Transport Plan funds); Rail Operator (Station Improvement Funds).	Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding; Business Improvement District (BID) levy.	LHA; Network Rail; Train Operating Companies; District Council.
<b>Green Corridor/ Nature Recovery Route</b>	Route designed to enhance ecological connectivity, linking priority habitats and providing public access.	DEFRA (e.g., Landscape Recovery funds); ATE.	Green Finance (ReNature/Carbon credits); Corporate ESG partnerships.	National Trust; Forestry England; Wildlife Trusts; Local Farmer Clusters.
<b>Community 'Miles Without Stiles' Route</b>	Short, circular, accessible route from a village centre, designed to improve health and wellbeing for less active residents.	ATE (Capability Fund for design); Public Health grants; National Lottery Community Fund.	Parish Council precept; CIL (Neighbourhood Portion); Local fundraising.	Parish/Town Council; Local Community Groups; Public Health Teams.



### 11.3 Proactive Risk Management

This plan incorporates a formal risk management framework to build confidence with funders and partners. A dedicated Risk Register will be maintained and regularly reviewed to assess the likelihood and impact of identified risks and detail specific mitigation and contingency plans.

	Description	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Risk Score (LxI)	Mitigation Measures	Risk Owner
<b>Financial</b>	Failure to secure sufficient capital funding for prioritised schemes due to competition for national grants.	4 (High)	5 (Critical)	20 (Extreme)	Develop a diversified funding strategy; create a pipeline of "shovel-ready" projects; establish joint funding bids with LHA partners via formal governance structure	National Trails & Countryside Access Lead
<b>Delivery</b>	Inability to secure necessary land access or permissions from multiple private landowners for a key strategic route.	4 (High)	4 (High)	16 (High)	Engage landowners at the earliest possible stage (pre-feasibility); explore alternative alignments; offer fair permissive path agreements; utilise Authority powers under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 to create new rights of way; and exercise Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers as a measure of last resort where strategic delivery is critical.	SDNPA Project Manager
<b>Reputational</b>	Strong local opposition to a proposed scheme (e.g., due to perceived loss of parking or impact on amenity), leading to political delays or cancellation.	3 (Medium)	5 (Critical)	15 (High)	Implement a robust, multi-stage community engagement plan for all major schemes; use trial schemes/tactical urbanism to demonstrate benefits; secure local champions and advocates early.	SDNPA Project Manager
<b>Environmental</b>	Unforeseen negative impacts on a designated wildlife site (SSSI, SAC) or heritage asset discovered during detailed design or construction.	2 (Low)	5 (Critical)	10 (Medium)	Conduct thorough ecological and archaeological surveys at feasibility stage; design in mitigation measures (e.g., buffer zones, sensitive construction timing) from the outset; maintain close liaison with Natural England and Historic England.	SDNPA Project Manager
<b>Governance</b>	Lack of coordination or conflicting priorities between partner authorities stalls progress on cross-boundary projects.	3 (Medium)	4 (High)	12 (Medium)	Establish formal governance structure secure signed MOUs with all LHA partners defining roles and shared objectives.	Rights of Way & Access Officer



## 12. Monitoring, Evaluation, & Evolution

### 12.1 Monitoring

The ATNP will be managed as a living document. Progress will be tracked through a dedicated monitoring dashboard, focused on delivery against the specific targets under **Aim 5** of the South Downs Partnership Management Plan:

- **Target 5.1a:** By 2031, 300km (10%) of the National Park's public Rights of Way network is in good condition and 'accessible'.
- **Target 5.1b:** Pilot five digital accessibility mapping surveys to provide network-wide accessibility information
- **Target 5.1c:** Increase active travel to and within the National Park year on year through infrastructure improvements
- **Target 5.1d:** Improve sustainable access by expanding public transport services to key visitor hubs and gateway towns by 2031

This focused approach ensures the ATNP remains transparent, accountable, and clearly aligned with its core delivery role, while providing a robust evidence base to support investment and decision-making.

### 12.2 Review and Evolution

The ATNP will be managed as a living document, responsive to new opportunities and delivery progress. Rather than a static periodic review, we will publish an annual update to the Delivery Plan (Part 2).

This annual process will focus on refreshing the Project Pipeline, ensuring that our "Shovel Ready" and "Development" lists accurately reflect the latest funding status, feasibility work, and stakeholder aspirations. The online stakeholder mapping tool will be maintained as a live platform, serving as a continuous channel for community intelligence. Insights gathered from the tool, alongside ongoing dialogue with our Local Highway Authority partners, will feed directly into this annual pipeline refresh, ensuring the network plan remains current, ambitious, and ready for investment.

The updated Project Pipeline will be published annually for partners and the public, summarising schemes delivered and presenting the latest data against the specific targets under Aim 5 of the PMP. This will ensure transparent reporting on accessibility, active travel uptake, and sustainable transport improvements.



### 13. Conclusion

The ATNP delivers a clear, actionable vision for enhancing access, connectivity, and climate resilience across the South Downs National Park. Far from a conventional transport plan, it has evolved into a strategic delivery mechanism for the Partnership Management Plan's seven aims, driving outcomes in nature recovery, Net Zero, inclusive access, cultural heritage, and rural prosperity.

While integrating catchment-sensitive design to protect water quality, the plan's primary force lies in its ability to deliver modal shift, decarbonisation, and public health benefits. Its accessible "Miles Without Stiles" routes and strategic corridor connections open the Park to all users, reducing reliance on the private car and strengthening the visitor economy.

The plan's governance model, anchored by the evolving relationships with the new Mayoral Strategic Authority and devolved bodies, ensures robust partnership working and gives statutory weight to delivery commitments. Underpinned by transparent prioritisation, a focused monitoring dashboard, and clear targets, the ATNP offers a robust framework for securing long-term value. Ultimately, this is not just a plan for building paths, but a blueprint for healthier communities, thriving ecosystems, and an inclusive future for everyone who travels, lives, and works in the South Downs.



## 14. Glossary

- **Active Travel:** Walking, wheeling, and cycling for purposeful journeys (utility, e.g., to school or work) and recreational journeys. While the SDNPA remit focuses on rural access, we prioritise utility routes where they connect communities to transport hubs.
- **ATE (Active Travel England):** The government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling, and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.
- **ATNP (Active Travel Network Plan):** The strategic framework document setting out the vision for walking and cycling in the South Downs.
- **BCR (Benefit-to-Cost Ratio):** An indicator used in cost-benefit analysis that attempts to summarize the overall value for money of a project.
- **BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic):** A highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths and bridleways are so used.
- **CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy):** A charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development.
- **CROW Act (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000):** Legislation that provides for public access on foot to certain types of land and amends the law relating to public rights of way.
- **CWIS (Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy):** The government's strategy that sets out the long-term vision for walking and cycling.
- **Defra:** Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.
- **DfT:** Department for Transport.
- **EqIA (Equality Impact Assessment):** A process designed to ensure that a policy, project, or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.
- **ICB (Integrated Care Board):** A statutory NHS organization responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget, and arranging for the provision of health services in the area.
- **LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan):** A strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level.
- **LHA (Local Highway Authority):** The organization responsible for the maintenance and management of public roads and rights of way (e.g., County Councils).
- **LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy):** A new system of spatial strategies for nature which will cover the whole of England.



- **LTN 1/20:** Local Transport Note 1/20. The government's guidance on the design of high-quality cycle infrastructure.
- **LTP (Local Transport Plan):** A statutory document that sets out the local transport strategies and policies for an area.
- **MCA (Multi-Criteria Assessment):** A decision-making tool used to evaluate multiple conflicting criteria as part of the route prioritization process.
- **MSA (Mayoral Strategic Authority):** The proposed future authority for the Sussex and Brighton region that will likely hold devolved powers for strategic transport funding.
- **NMU (Non-Motorised User):** A collective term for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and people with mobility impairments.
- **PMP (Partnership Management Plan):** The overarching five-year strategy for the management of the South Downs National Park.
- **PROW (Public Rights of Way):** Paths on which the public have a legally protected right to pass and repass.
- **RIS (Road Investment Strategy):** The government's long-term strategy for funding and improving the Strategic Road Network.
- **ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan):** A statutory plan that sets out how the local authority will improve the public rights of way network.
- **SI06 (Section 106 Agreement):** Legal agreements between local authorities and developers; these are linked to planning permissions and can also be known as planning obligations.
- **SDNPA (South Downs National Park Authority):** The organisation responsible for promoting the purposes of the National Park.
- **SIP (Strategic Investment Plan):** The long-term investment strategy produced by Transport for the South East.
- **SRN (Strategic Road Network):** The network of motorways and major trunk roads managed by National Highways.
- **TfSE (Transport for the South East):** The sub-national transport body for the South East of England.
- **TRO (Traffic Regulation Order):** A legal order that allows the Highway Authority to regulate the speed, movement, and parking of vehicles (often used to restrict motorized traffic on byways in winter).



# South Downs National Park Authority (Draft)

## Active Travel Network Plan 2025 – 2040

### PART 2 – Project Pipeline

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## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Network Overview .....	3
3. Chapter 1: Western Downs (Winchester to Alresford) .....	4
4. Chapter 2: East Hampshire Downs (Alresford to Petersfield) .....	9
5. Chapter 3: Western Weald & Downs (Petersfield to Arundel).....	13
6. Chapter 4: Arun Valley & Central Downs (Arundel to Steyning) .....	16
7. Chapter 5: Sussex Downs & Coastal Fringe (Steyning to Lewes) .....	19
8. Chapter 6: Eastern Downs (Lewes to Eastbourne) .....	22
9. Top Ten Shovel Ready Projects.....	25
10. ATNP Vision Map.....	26

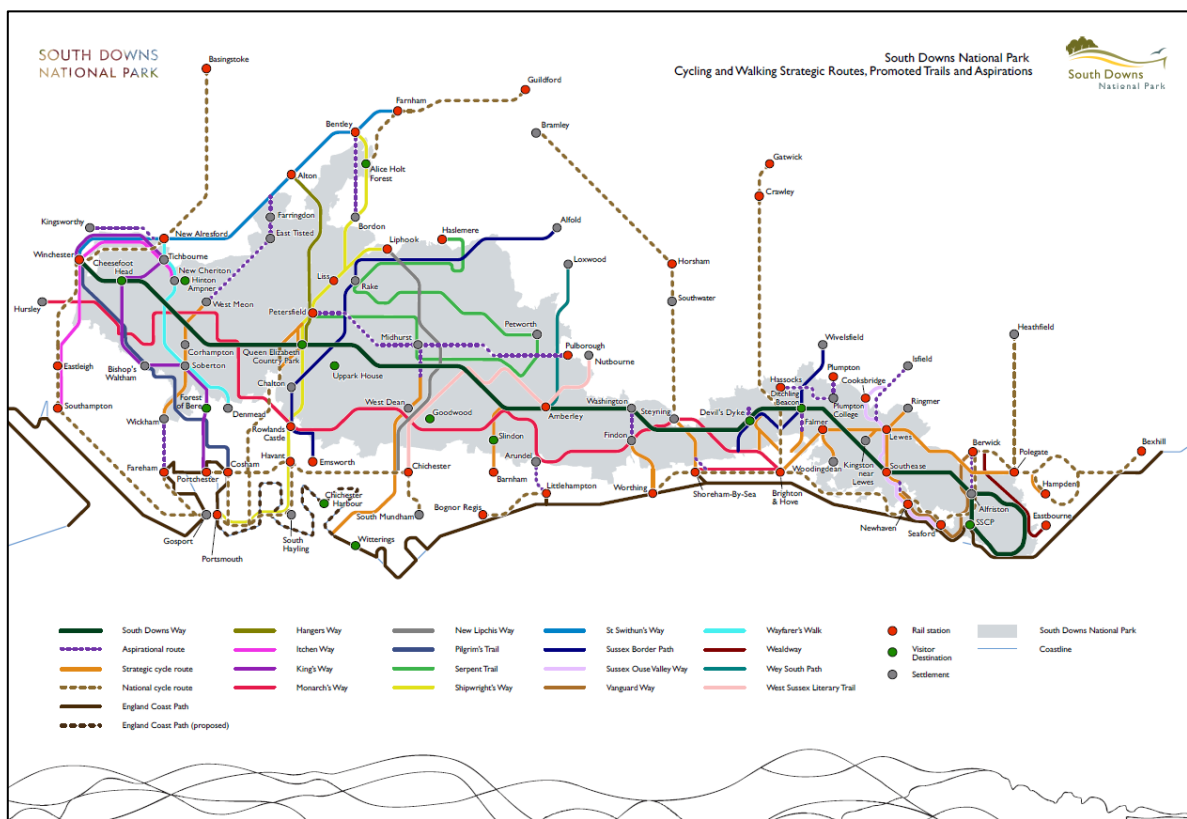


## 1. Introduction

Part 2 of the Active Travel Network Plan, the Project Pipeline, sets out the practical pathway for turning our strategic vision into reality. Building on the principles and priorities established in the Strategic Framework, the Pipeline identifies a sequenced portfolio of projects that will deliver safer, more inclusive, and better-connected routes across the National Park. **Each project is positioned within a clear timeline, showing how ideas progress from concept through design, funding, and implementation. By presenting the Pipeline alongside the Framework, we demonstrate not only where we are heading, but also how we will get there – ensuring transparency, accountability, and confidence in delivery for Members, partners, and communities.**

## 2. Network Overview

The tube-style map below highlights our strategic priorities and illustrates the key routes we aim to develop.



<Click the map to view full version>

### 3. Chapter I: Western Downs (Winchester to Alresford)

**The western gateway to the National Park, defined by the historic city of Winchester and the chalk stream landscapes of the River Itchen.**

#### **Key Settlements**

The Winchester District serves as the crucial western gateway to the South Downs National Park. Its combination of a major historic city, well-connected market towns, and direct transport links makes it a primary hub for visitors. As the historic capital of England and the western terminus of the South Downs Way, Winchester is a premier gateway city, with direct train services from London taking as little as 56 minutes. Key market towns such as the medieval Bishop's Waltham and Georgian Alresford, home to the Watercress Line heritage railway, further strengthen the district's role as a centre for leisure and tourism.

#### **Health & Wellbeing**

Although overall health in Winchester District is strong, pockets of deprivation in urban wards such as St Bartholomew and St Michael, highlighted by the 2019 IMD Health Deprivation and Disability scores, face limited access to high-quality green space. Establishing direct, safe active-travel corridors from Winchester's city centre into the National Park would bridge that nature-access gap, encourage regular exercise across all age groups, and help redress health inequalities district-wide. Creating active travel connections from nearby cities such as Eastleigh and Fareham would also be highly effective health interventions.

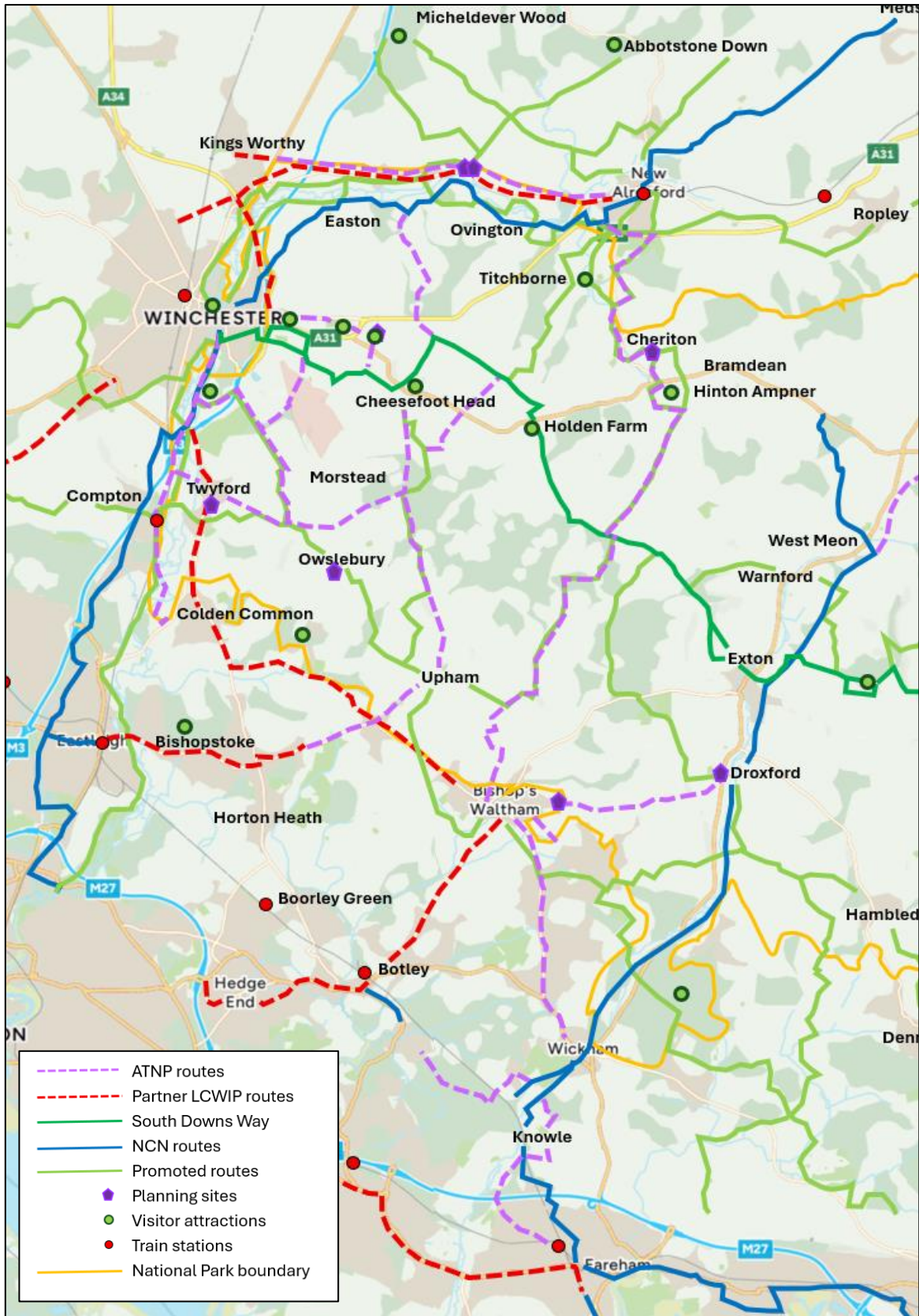
#### **Severance**

A significant barrier to accessing the National Park from the Winchester district is the severance caused by major trunk roads. Stakeholder consultations consistently identify the M3, A31, A34, A272, and the busy Morstead Road as routes that isolate communities and fragment the active travel network. The South Downs Way National Trail itself crosses the M3 and A31 on a bridge to exit Winchester, and until recently, the onward route for cyclists and equestrians was a narrow path immediately adjacent to the busy A31. While interventions like the new off-road Chilcomb Link have to some extent addressed this specific issue, these major corridors remain significant obstacles that deter less confident users and require strategic investment in safe crossing points to create a truly connected network.

#### **Promoted Routes**

The district's recreational network centres on several promoted routes, most notably the South Downs Way, which begins its journey to Eastbourne from Winchester. Key ambitions include supporting its proposed realignment near the city to create a more scenic gateway via St Catherine's Hill, and a separate intervention with the Milbury at Beauworth to provide a safer, off-road route. This is complemented by other valuable traffic-free corridors along former railway lines. The popular Meon Valley Trail has a long-standing ambition to extend north to Chawton and connect with National Cycle Network route 224, with further potential links south to Fareham, Whiteley, Droxford, and Swanmore. Similarly, the

community-led Watercress Way project proposes reopening the disused line from Kings Worthy to Alresford, creating a new recreational asset and linking several villages.



### **Visitor Attractions**

This section of the National Park is home to a rich variety of visitor attractions, and a key goal of this plan is to make them more accessible via active travel. The proposed extension of Eastleigh's Route 280 into the National Park via Upham will create new recreational circuits to major destinations like Marwell Zoo. Similarly, the development of a continuous active travel corridor along the Itchen Valley is designed to forge better links to the National Trust's Hinton Ampner estate. For unique experiences, the network of routes radiating from Winchester will improve access to the Matterley Estate, home to the Boomtown Festival, and the Winchester Science Centre and Planetarium, an official Dark Sky Discovery Site within the National Park which is an International Dark Sky Reserve. The wider landscape features the ancient woodlands of West Walk, and the important National Nature Reserves at Beacon Hill and Old Winchester Hill.

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

The landscape is dotted with traditional country pubs, cafes, and campsites that are popular with walkers and cyclists, forming an essential part of the recreational network. Along the scenic Itchen Valley, establishments such as The Plough in Itchen Abbas, The Bush Inn at Ovington, and the Tichborne Arms provide vital refreshment stops, as does The Ship Inn in the rural village of Owslebury. The network is further enhanced by cycle-friendly cafes in strategic locations, including the Cadence Handlebar Cafe at the foot of St Catherine's Hill and the new Baker & White coffee shop on the South Downs Way at Cheesefoot Head. For multi-day journeys, campsites are central to this ecosystem, with Holden Farm being a prime example, located directly on the South Downs Way and offering excellent facilities for walkers and cyclists.

### **Transport Plans**

Local transport plans provide a strong foundation for ATNP interventions, with the Winchester and Eastleigh LCWIPs working together to create a joined-up network. Winchester's LCWIPs propose 'green wheels' of connectivity radiating from the city, with a central ambition to establish a continuous active travel corridor along the Itchen Valley by linking key routes such as Route 100 (Easton to Winchester) and Route 210 (Kings Worthy to New Alresford). This would connect rural parishes like Easton, Itchen Abbas and Titchborne to the city and destinations such as Hinton Ampner. Additional proposals include extending Route 120 (South Winchester to Otterbourne) and creating direct links from Owslebury and Twyford to the realigned South Downs Way. Eastleigh's LCWIP complements this by extending Route 280 from Eastleigh Station through Bishopstoke and Fair Oak to Upham, unlocking direct access to the South Downs Way and new circuits to Owslebury and Marwell Zoo. Route 340 (Otterbourne to Swathing) reinforces the Itchen Valley corridor, while Route 262 (Kanes Hill to Botley) supports a future link from Botley Station to Bishop's Waltham and the National Park.

### Nature Recovery

The ATNP interventions in the Winchester district are designed to be a primary delivery mechanism for the emerging Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The focus on creating continuous active travel corridors along the Itchen and Meon Valleys directly aligns with the LNRS objectives of linking Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) and strengthening riverine habitats. These routes will be designed as multifunctional green corridors, enhancing ecological connectivity for species like otters and water voles, while providing sustainable access for people.

### Development Sites

Allocated development sites provide tangible opportunities to deliver missing links in the rural network. In Droxford and Swanmore, new non-motorised, multi-user links can be created to connect with the popular Meon Valley Trail. In Owslebury, an area with significant equestrian use, interventions can focus on improving bridleway surfaces and creating new links towards Twyford and Colden Common. The allocated site at Twyford is particularly strategic and could contribute to vital connections into Winchester and to the proposed new alignment of the South Downs Way National Trail.

### Proposed Interventions

Our current proposed active travel interventions for the Western Downs include:

Route Code	Route Name	Strategic Purpose	Key Partners	Cost Band	Status	Score
<b>Short-Term Schemes (&lt;3 Years): Shovel Ready Projects</b>						
	BW – Swanmore	Community aspiration linking local amenities and school	HCC, BW and Swanmore Parish Councils	£10k	Implementation	
<b>Medium-Term Schemes (3–5 Years): Development Pipeline</b>						
	Hockley - Otterbourne	Key aspirational route for multiple partners	HCC, WCC, Sustrans, Parish Councils	£500k	Feasibility	
	Compton – Twyford	Community aspiration and network link			Consultation	
	SDW - Win Approach	Realignment of National Trail	HIOW Wildlife Trust		Traffic Surveys	
	SDW - M				Feasibility	
	Boomtown Link				Feasibility	
	Shawford to Twyford	Quiet Lane	HCC, Shawford Parish Council		Feasibility	
<b>Long-Term Schemes (&gt;5 Years): Aspirational Pool</b>						
	Otterbourne – Colden Common				Feasibility	
	Kings Worthy - Alresford		WCC, Watercress Way Group		Feasibility	
	Twyford – New SDW link				Aspirational	

	Alresford – SDW link				Aspirational	
	Upham - Bishopstoke				Aspirational	
	Upham - SDW				Aspirational	
	BW - SDW				Aspirational	
	BW - Droxford				Aspirational	
	BW - Wickham				Aspirational	
	Fareham – MVT				Aspirational	
	Whiteley – MVT				Aspirational	
	SDW – Avington				Aspirational	

## 4. Chapter 2: East Hampshire Downs (Alresford to Petersfield)

**A transitional landscape encompassing the wooded 'Hangers' and the key inland hub of Petersfield.**

### **Key Settlements**

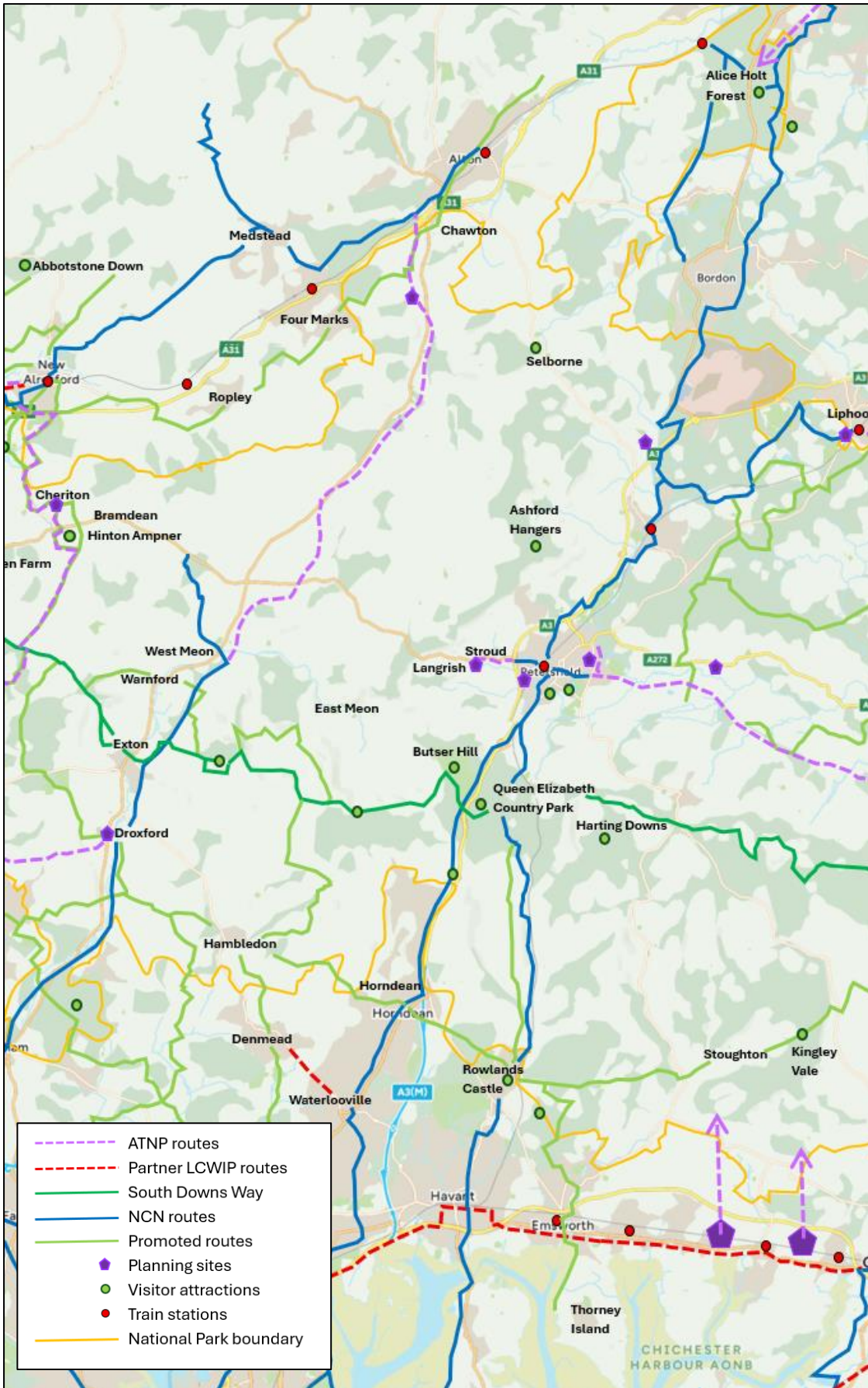
East Hampshire is home to several key settlements that act as important gateways and hubs for accessing the National Park. Petersfield, a traditional market town, is often called the 'Gateway to the South Downs National Park' as it is surrounded by it, offering excellent rail and road connections. The thriving market town of Alton serves as an ideal starting point for exploring the northern part of the district, particularly the 'Hangers', a series of steep wooded hills. The large village of Liss has a mainline railway station providing direct access into the heart of the National Park, while Horndean and Clanfield are significant villages on the southern edge providing local access. The historic village of Buriton lies at the foot of the Downs just south of Petersfield, and Selborne is famous for its connection to the naturalist Gilbert White.

### **Health & Wellbeing**

East Hampshire's predominantly rural district, with 24.5 percent of residents aged 65 and over (versus 18.6 percent nationally), faces a pronounced life-expectancy gap, high obesity rates and widespread sedentary behaviour. Preventative health measures are therefore vital, and prioritising safe, direct active travel links in the fast-growing southern settlements of Horndean and Clanfield will embed daily physical activity into residents' routines and curb emerging car dependency. Creating active travel connections from nearby cities such as Fareham and Portsmouth would also be highly effective health interventions.

### **Severance**

The primary barrier to active travel in East Hampshire is the severance caused by the A3 and A272 trunk roads. The A3, a major route between London and Portsmouth, circuits Petersfield and passes close to Horndean and Clanfield, creating a significant obstacle for non-motorised users wanting to access the countryside to the east and west. The A272, which cuts east-west through the district, further fragments the network, particularly around Petersfield. These busy corridors deter less confident users and isolate communities from the National Park, reinforcing the need for strategic investment in safe, dedicated crossing points.



### **Promoted Routes**

The district is crossed by several nationally and regionally significant promoted routes. The South Downs Way passes just south of Petersfield, connecting the area to the wider National Trail network. The 50-mile Shipwrights Way runs north-south through the district, linking Alice Holt Forest, Bordon, Liss, and Petersfield with Queen Elizabeth Country Park and the coast. Complementing this is the 21-mile Hangers Way, which runs from Alton through Selborne and Steep to meet the South Downs Way at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

### **Visitor Attractions**

East Hampshire offers a wealth of attractions that draw visitors to the National Park. Queen Elizabeth Country Park, just south of Petersfield, is a major gateway with over 2,000 acres of woodland and downland, with Butser Hill at its heart. The area has strong literary connections, with Gilbert White's House & The Oates Collection in Selborne being a major cultural destination. Other key sites include the unique archaeological site of Butser Ancient Farm, Petersfield Museum and the popular Petersfield Heath. The landscape itself is an attraction, with the steep wooded Ashford Hangers, the important heathland of Woolmer Forest, and the tranquil Selborne Common all offering unique experiences.

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

A strong network of rural pubs, cafes, and campsites supports the visitor economy and provides essential services for those exploring the area. Pubs such as the Selborne Arms in Selborne and the Hawkley Inn in Hawkley are popular stops for walkers on the Hangers Way, offering local ales and food. Bolly's Cafe, located at the Meon Springs Fly Fishery near East Meon, is a particularly convenient and popular stop for those on the South Downs Way, providing refreshments in a tranquil setting directly on the trail. The area around Petersfield is well-served with campsites that cater to walkers and families, including Upper Parsonage Farm, which is just half a mile from the South Downs Way, and Cedar Valley, which has its own on-site pizza restaurant and bar.

### **Transport Plans**

Local transport plans provide a robust framework for targeted ATNP interventions. The East Hampshire District LCWIP identifies core walking zones in Alton, Bordon, and Petersfield, and establishes primary cycle routes including a north-south corridor from Horndean to Borden (Route 110) and an east-west route through Petersfield (Route 220). A key ATNP priority is to support a strategic extension from Petersfield's rail hub to connect with the South Downs Way and the network of rural parishes. This approach also allows for the championing of aspirational, community-backed projects like the proposed Rother Valley Way, a safe, traffic-free path along the former railway line between Petersfield and Midhurst, which would address significant safety concerns on parallel roads.

At a more local level, the community-led Horndean Green Trail and Heritage Network provide an excellent model for partnership. Its goal is to create an accessible network connecting residents with local heritage and integrating new housing developments. The

ATNP's role is to multiply the value of this investment by ensuring the network forges high-quality connections into the National Park, such as the proposed routes extending west towards Catherington Down. This transforms a valuable local amenity into a key gateway, providing direct and sustainable access to the South Downs for thousands of residents.

**Nature Recovery**

Proposals in East Hampshire directly support the objectives of the Hampshire LNRS by creating and enhancing green corridors that link key habitats. The aspirational Rother Valley Way, following a disused railway, will serve as a vital ecological corridor connecting the heathlands and woodlands of the Western Weald, providing a safe passage for wildlife away from busy roads. Similarly, enhancing connections to large habitat blocks like Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Alice Holt Forest strengthens the resilience of these areas by improving landscape-scale connectivity.

**Development Sites**

Allocated development sites across East Hampshire offer significant opportunities to deliver key active travel links. In Liphook and Binsted, sites can facilitate the upgrading of footpaths to create multi-user routes connecting to the wider countryside, Alice Holt Forest, and the Shipwrights Way. Allocations in and around Petersfield, Sheet, and Stroud provide a crucial opportunity to secure contributions towards the aspirational strategic route from Petersfield to Pulborough along the disused railway line. These developments can also deliver vital local connections, such as a new multi-user route from Stroud and Sheet into Petersfield town centre.

Route Code	Route Name	Strategic Purpose	Key Partners	Cost Band	Status	Score
<b>Short-Term Schemes (&lt;3 Years): Shovel Ready Projects</b>						
<b>Medium-Term Schemes (3–5 Years): Development Pipeline</b>						
<b>Long-Term Schemes (&gt;5 Years): Aspirational Pool</b>						

## 5. Chapter 3: Western Weald & Downs (Petersfield to Arundel)

**The vast western portion of the central park, covering the wooded Weald and chalk downs of the Chichester District.**

### Key Settlements

This western section is anchored by historic market towns and key gateways. The cathedral city of Chichester serves as the major southern gateway with significant transport connections. Within the park's interior, Midhurst and Petworth are vital hubs, providing services and access to surrounding parishes and landscape. Liphook and Haslemere function as important northern gateway settlements with rail stations, making them key locations for building strong southward walking, cycling and public-transport links into the National Park.

### Health & Wellbeing

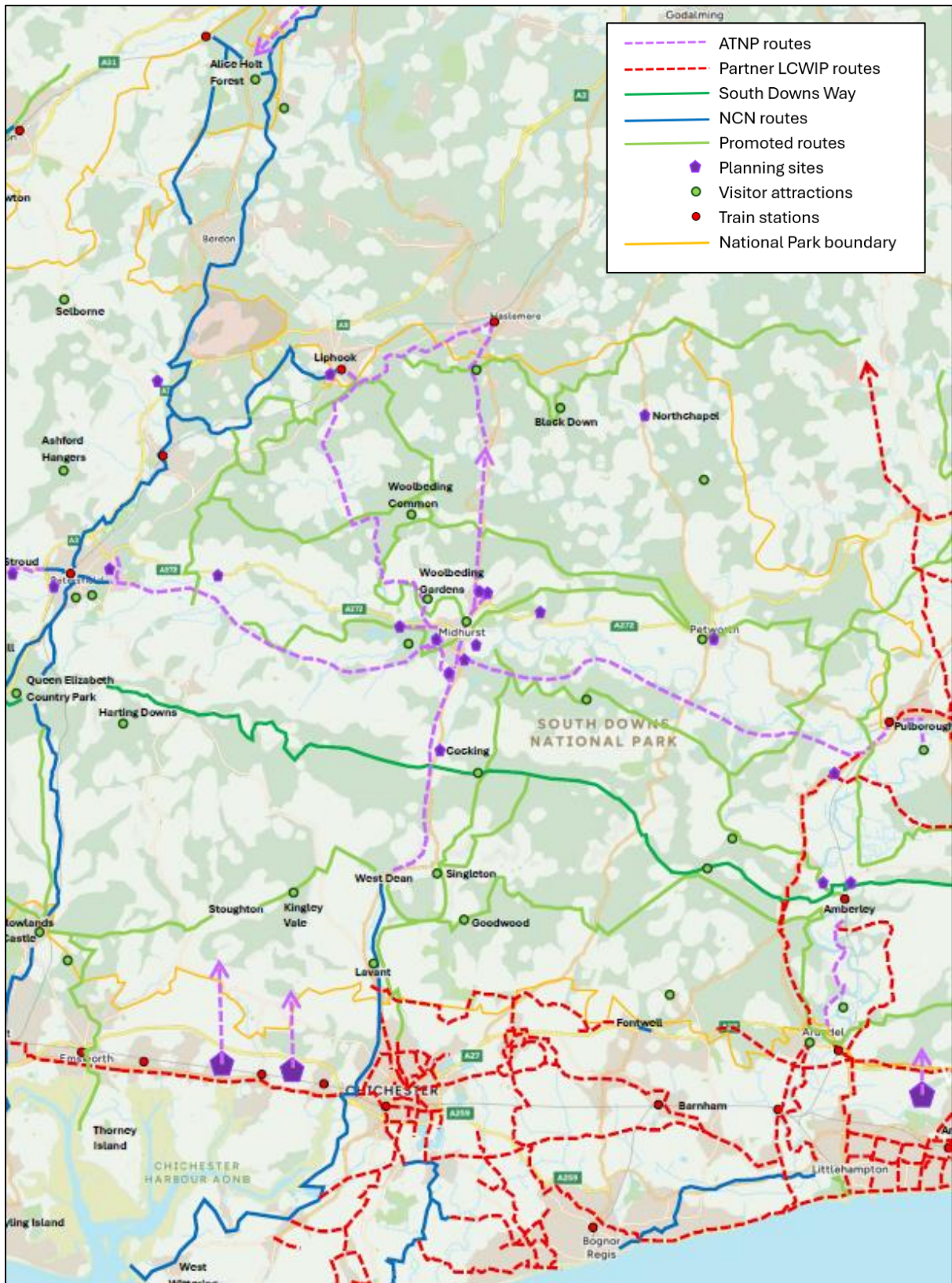
For the more affluent district of Chichester, where health outcomes are already among the best in England, interventions focus on preventative health and maintaining active lifestyles. The strategy here is to provide high-quality, safe, and attractive car-free recreational opportunities, such as improving links to the Centurion Way, to encourage continued physical activity and cater to a population with high rates of excess weight (62.0%) and physical inactivity (19.6%).

### Severance

The landscape of the Western Weald and Downs is severely fragmented by major transport infrastructure. The A27 trunk road, running along the coastal plain, is the most significant barrier, effectively severing the city of Chichester from the National Park to the north. Further north, the A272 crosses the park between Midhurst and Petworth, creating challenges for east-west connectivity and isolating communities from the landscape.

### Promoted Routes

The recreational network in this section is defined by its flagship multi-user paths along disused railway lines. The most significant of these is the Centurion Way, a popular path providing a vital link from the city of Chichester northwards towards the Downs. A key ambition is to extend the Centurion Way from West Dean to connect with the South Downs Way, creating a premier gateway corridor. The South Downs Way National Trail itself passes across the district along the chalk ridge. Other aspirational routes, such as the Rother Valley Way connecting Midhurst to Petersfield, also form part of the long-term vision for creating a cohesive network.



### **Visitor Attractions**

This region boasts a remarkable density of nationally significant attractions, anchored by great estates such as Petworth House and Park, Uppark House, the Goodwood Estate, Stansted House and Gardens, and the Woolbeding Estate. Cultural heritage is exceptionally rich, including the Weald and Downland Living Museum, Bignor Roman Villa and West Dean Gardens. The natural environment offers unique experiences, from the ancient yew forest at Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve to the heathlands of Iping and Stedham Common, and this section contains the Park's highest point, Black Down (280m).

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

A strong network of rural pubs, cafes, and campsites supports the visitor economy and provides essential amenities for those exploring the National Park. Traditional country pubs like The Royal Oak in East Lavant, The Welldiggers Arms near Petworth, and The White Horse in Chilgrove are popular with walkers and cyclists. The district also offers unique camping experiences, such as the "gastro campsite" at Woodfire Camping on the Westerlands Estate near Petworth, which offers locally sourced meals and provides direct access to the South Downs Way, catering to a growing market for high-quality tourism experiences.

### **Transport Plans**

A multi-tiered planning framework is in place to deliver active travel improvements. This ranges from the city-focused Chichester LCWIP, which establishes the critical "first mile" link from the city to the start of the Centurion Way, to the overarching West Sussex County Council LCWIP, which provides the strategic backbone for key long-distance corridors. The role is to champion the delivery of these vital inter-community corridors, ensuring that investments made in individual towns are fully realised.

### **Nature Recovery**

The enhancement of disused railway lines is a cornerstone of the nature recovery strategy in this section. Flagship projects like the Centurion Way and the aspirational Rother Valley Way are not only recreational assets but also established wildlife corridors. Enhancing these routes for active travel will be done in a way that boosts their ecological value, for example by managing verges for pollinators and improving connectivity between the fragmented ancient woodlands and heathlands of the Western Weald, directly contributing to the aims of the West Sussex LNRS.

### **Development Sites**

Allocated development sites across the district present significant opportunities to secure funding and deliver key active travel connections. Sites in Cocking, Midhurst, Petworth, and Rogate are strategically placed to provide contributions towards major aspirational projects, such as the proposed multi-user routes along the disused railway lines from West Dean to Midhurst and from Petersfield to Pulborough. In other areas, new developments can deliver vital local links, such as in Easebourne and Lodsworth to create multi-user routes into Midhurst.

## 6. Chapter 4: Arun Valley & Central Downs (Arundel to Steyning)

**The landscape defined by the Arun and Adur river valleys and the central chalk ridge.**

### Key Settlements

This central section is anchored by a series of historic towns and key transport hubs. The historic town of Arundel, dominated by its castle, sits on the River Arun and acts as a key visitor destination. Further east, Pulborough is a large village with a mainline railway station, acting as a crucial north-south access point. The picturesque village of Amberley offers both a station and direct links to the bridleway network. The historic town of Steyning, nestled at the foot of the Downs, marks the eastern boundary of this section.

### Health & Wellbeing

This section exhibits a sharp contrast in public health profiles. The coastal district of Arun records some of the region's worst health inequalities, with high rates of physical inactivity (19.6%), excess weight (63.8%), and significant life-expectancy gaps. For these communities, the primary health intervention is the creation of safe, high-quality north-south active travel routes across the A27 to connect deprived coastal areas to the free health and wellbeing asset of the National Park. This is juxtaposed with the more affluent districts of Horsham and Mid Sussex, where health outcomes are among the best in England. Here, interventions focus on preventative health by developing high-quality links from transport hubs like Pulborough to encourage car-free recreation.

### Severance

The landscape of the Central Downs is severely fragmented by major transport infrastructure. The Arun Valley railway line presents a physical barrier to east-west movement, while major north-south arteries, including the A24 and A23, create hazardous at-grade crossings that deter all but the most confident users, particularly families and equestrians. The A283, which runs east-west, is a particular challenge for users trying to travel between Steyning and Washington.

### Promoted Routes

The recreational network in this section is defined by its strategic long-distance routes. The Downs Link is a 37-mile multi-user path that provides a crucial traffic-free corridor from Surrey to the South Downs Way at Botolphs. The South Downs Way National Trail itself passes across the district along the chalk ridge, offering access to iconic viewpoints such as Chanctonbury Ring. Community-led initiatives are also focused on creating new routes, such as a proposed east-west trail from Chanctonbury Ring to Washington, to provide a safe alternative to the A283.



**Visitor Attractions**

This region is rich in natural and cultural attractions. The landscape is dominated by the magnificent Arundel Castle and the nearby Arundel Wildfowl and Wetland Trust. Amberley Museum and the wetlands of Amberley Wild Brooks offer unique experiences. The area provides access to important archaeological sites, including the Iron Age hill fort at Cissbury Ring and Chanctonbury Ring. For nature lovers, the RSPB Pulborough Brooks reserve is a major draw for birdwatching.

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

A vibrant network of pubs, cafes, and campsites supports the visitor economy. In the historic town of Arundel, traditional pubs and riverside cafes are plentiful. The villages of Amberley and Steyning also offer a range of welcoming pubs and tea rooms popular with walkers and cyclists. The area around the Downs Link is well-served by establishments like the Bax Castle pub, which is conveniently located on the route. Several campsites are strategically located to serve users of the promoted routes, including Splash Farm near Arundel and the Washington Caravan and Camping Park.

### **Transport Plans**

Local transport plans are characterised by strong community leadership and a focus on enhancing key strategic corridors. The community-driven Arundel Town LCWIP addresses the unique challenges of a heritage town, with a key goal of enhancing routes from the station and historic core directly into the South Downs. The joint plan for Steyning, Bramber, and Upper Beeding calls for crucial surface upgrades to the Downs Link and proposes a new east-west route from Chanctonbury Ring to Washington to provide a safe alternative to the dangerous A283.

### **Nature Recovery**

Interventions in this section will directly support the West Sussex LNRS by strengthening ecological connectivity. The enhancement of the Downs Link, a former railway line, is a key opportunity to manage a significant linear corridor for both access and biodiversity, improving verges for pollinators. Furthermore, creating new east-west routes at the foot of the Downs, such as the proposed Chanctonbury Ring to Washington path, will help connect fragmented habitats and allow species to move more freely across the landscape, a core objective of the LNRS.

### **Development Sites**

Allocated development sites offer key opportunities to deliver missing links. The allocated site at East Street Farm in Amberley could provide a vital off-road link from Amberley's train station to the South Downs Way. The site at Cold Waltham in Horsham District is strategically important, with the potential to create a non-motorised link into Pulborough that would also support the aspirational Petersfield to Pulborough strategic route.

## 7. Chapter 5: Sussex Downs & Coastal Fringe (Steyping to Lewes)

**The critical interface between the chalk escarpment and the dense urban populations of the Sussex coast, including Brighton & Hove.**

### Key Settlements

The city of Brighton & Hove is the largest urban area adjoining the South Downs National Park and serves as its most significant urban gateway, with a population of over 270,000. Its northern edge directly meets the Park's boundary, creating a unique interface between a major city and the National Park. The large coastal town of Worthing and the historic port of Shoreham-by-Sea at the mouth of the River Adur are also primary southern gateways. Key inland access points include the large village of Hassocks, with its mainline railway station offering direct and sustainable access to Ditchling Beacon, and the historic villages of Steyping, Bramber, and Ditchling, which are nestled at the foot of the Downs. The historic county town of Lewes marks the eastern boundary of this section.

### Health & Wellbeing

This section reveals the most pronounced health inequalities in the National Park. Despite its active reputation, Brighton & Hove faces serious challenges: 26% of adults are physically inactive, and men's life expectancy varies by 9.1 years between the most and least deprived areas. Eastern neighbourhoods like Whitehawk, Moulsecomb, and Hollingbury are among the worst affected—and most cut off from the Downs by the A27. Adur and Worthing show similar patterns, with high inactivity and significant life-expectancy gaps. The priority is clear: creating safe, direct active travel routes from these communities into the National Park is the most urgent health and wellbeing intervention, connecting residents to a free, accessible health asset.

### Severance

The A27 trunk road is identified as the single greatest barrier to access in the entire National Park. This multi-lane highway wraps around the northern urban fringe of Brighton & Hove and runs parallel to the coast through Adur and Worthing, creating a formidable physical and psychological barrier. For hundreds of thousands of residents, particularly those in communities immediately south of the road, it cuts them off from the green space on their doorstep. The noise, speed, and volume of traffic make crossing it a dangerous and unpleasant experience. Overcoming this barrier at strategic points is the single most important challenge to unlocking sustainable access for the region's large population.

### Promoted Routes

The network in this section is focused on creating north-south 'green arteries' to channel people from the dense urban areas on the coast to the South Downs Way, which runs along the ridgeline to the north. In Brighton & Hove, transport plans prioritise the upgrade of several key corridors, including London Road (A23), Dyke Road, and Ditchling Road, to transform

them from simple transport routes into seamless, safe, and appealing green corridors that draw people out of the city and into the landscape. The Downs Link, a vital multi-user path ending at Shoreham-by-Sea, provides a crucial existing traffic-free corridor from the coast into the heart of the Downs.

### **Visitor Attractions**

The landscape immediately north of the urban fringe contains some of the National Park's most iconic "honeypot" sites that attract large numbers of city residents, including Devil's Dyke, Ditchling Beacon, Stanmer Park and the Jack and Jill Windmills. These destinations strongly incentivise active travel, so high-quality walking and cycling routes are essential to manage visitor pressure and reduce car use. Plumpton College also attracts many visitors; a targeted link from Plumpton Station to the college, tied into a new route from Hassocks, would strengthen sustainable access and relieve local parking and traffic demand.

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

A network of hospitality businesses provides crucial support infrastructure for active travel from the urban fringe. Strategically located establishments function as destinations and vital rest stops for those exploring the Downs. Pubs like The Foragers in Hove, campsites such as Housedean Farm (located directly on the South Downs Way and a bus route), and hostels like YHA Truleigh Hill are essential assets. They enable longer, car-free excursions by providing food, drink, and overnight accommodation, thereby supporting the local visitor economy and making the National Park more accessible for multi-day trips.

### **Transport Plans**

The urban-focused LCWIPs for Adur & Worthing and Brighton & Hove provide the strategic foundation for connecting the coastal populations to the Downs. The role of the park's active travel plan is not to duplicate this work but to add value by championing the delivery of these crucial north-south gateways and ensuring they extend seamlessly into the Park's recreational network. This creates a cohesive and user-friendly experience from the city centres and seafronts directly into the National Park.

### **Nature Recovery**

The severance caused by the A27 is as much an ecological barrier as it is a human one, fragmenting important chalk grassland habitats and impeding the movement of wildlife. The strategy for this section explicitly links human access with nature recovery goals. Interventions are designed to serve a dual purpose, creating "green arteries" for wildlife as well as people. The proposed 'green tunnel' at Toad's Hole Valley in Brighton exemplifies this modern approach. It is designed not only to provide a safe crossing for walkers and cyclists but also to create a vital wildlife corridor, helping to heal the fragmented landscape and improve ecological connectivity across the urban fringe.



**Development Sites**

New housing developments on the urban fringe are positioned as strategic opportunities to secure investment in sustainable infrastructure and act as catalysts for transformative change. The planned development of 800 homes at Toad's Hole Valley, immediately adjacent to the A27, creates both the imperative and the financial mechanism (through developer contributions) to deliver the 'green tunnel'. Such an intervention would mitigate the development's impact by providing its residents with direct, car-free access to the National Park, while also delivering a strategic connection for the wider city and a vital wildlife corridor. Other major opportunities include the Shoreham Cement Works site, which could integrate a premier recreational route with a landscape-scale nature recovery project, and the 'boundary site' at Keymer, Hassocks, which could deliver a connection from the station to the South Downs Way.

## 8. Chapter 6: Eastern Downs (Lewes to Eastbourne)

**The iconic eastern terminus, featuring the river valleys of the Ouse and Cuckmere and the dramatic chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters.**

### Key Settlements

The eastern section of the National Park is anchored by Lewes, the historic county town and a key transport and cultural hub largely within the National Park. Eastbourne, a major coastal resort, marks the dramatic eastern end of the South Downs Way where the chalk downs meet the sea. Newhaven and Seaford serve as important gateway towns, with Newhaven's ferry port providing international connections. The surrounding downland villages, Alfriston, East Dean, West Dean and Wilmington, offer quieter, locally distinctive entry points into the eastern Downs. Cooksbridge, with its rail station, is an additional important settlement and a practical gateway for sustainable travel into the National Park.

### Health & Wellbeing

This section revisits the theme of sharp health contrasts, with affluent, healthy rural areas in Wealden and inland Lewes sitting alongside deprived coastal towns such as Eastbourne and Newhaven. In Eastbourne, where inactivity and obesity rates are high, the strategy focuses on creating safe, legible green routes from its most deprived neighbourhoods to the South Downs Way to embed daily exercise into residents' routines. Likewise, extending active travel corridors from Newhaven to inland trails is proposed as a key intervention to bridge its health gap and ensure equitable access to the Park's wellbeing benefits.

### Severance

The primary barriers to active travel in the Eastern Downs are the major A-roads that run parallel to the coast and cut through the landscape. The A27 is a significant east-west trunk road that creates severance between Lewes and the coastal towns, with proposals for major upgrades between Lewes and Polegate consistently raising concerns about environmental impact on the National Park. The A259 coastal road also has a major impact, passing directly through sensitive areas of the Park between Seaford and Eastbourne, including the iconic Cuckmere Valley. Further inland, the A26 and A22 provide the main north-south routes, creating additional barriers for non-motorised users

### Promoted Routes

This region is anchored by the final, iconic stretch of the South Downs Way, which runs from Lewes over Firle Beacon and along the Cuckmere Valley before culminating at the spectacular white cliffs of Beachy Head in Eastbourne. A key feature of the trail is its split at Alfriston, offering a coastal footpath over the Seven Sisters for walkers, and a separate inland bridleway for cyclists and horse-riders to manage different user groups and impacts. The flagship project for the area is the Egrets Way, a partnership-led initiative to create a continuous, largely traffic-free route along the Ouse Valley, linking the port of Newhaven with the town of Lewes.

Additionally, the Cuckoo Trail, part of National Cycle Network Route 21, provides a valuable traffic-free corridor running north from the Eastbourne area.



**Visitor Attractions**

The Eastern Downs are home to some of the most iconic landscapes and cultural attractions in the National Park. The Seven Sisters Country Park, with its dramatic chalk cliffs, Birling Gap, and the meandering Cuckmere River, is a world-famous destination. The area has a rich cultural heritage, particularly associated with the Bloomsbury Group; Charleston Farmhouse and Monk's House are major visitor attractions. The historic town of Lewes boasts its Norman Castle, while other key sites include the Long Man of Wilmington chalk figure, the Litlington White Horse, and the National Trust's first-ever property, Alfriston Clergy House. The landscape also features Friston Forest, Lullington Heath National Nature Reserve, and the dramatic cliffs of Seaford Head and Beachy Head.

### **Pubs, Cafes and Campsites**

A vibrant network of pubs, cafes and campsites supports high visitor numbers in the Eastern Downs. Lewes offers traditional pubs such as The Swan and The Lewes Arms, known for serving local Harvey's Ale. The wider area includes popular country pubs and local anchors, The Bull in Ditchling, the Flint Barn Restaurant at the English Wine Centre in Berwick, the Rainbow Inn near Cooksbridge, the Offham Blacksmiths Arms and the nearby Offham Farm Shop, all of which serve walkers and cyclists. There are numerous campsites and visitor stays, including YHA Southease on the South Downs Way, Swanborough Lakes near Lewes and Sussex Camping at the Yew Tree Inn in Arlington.

### **Transport Plans**

The East Sussex LCWIP sets a county-wide strategy for an integrated active travel network, proposing key routes from residential areas to the Downs along the A259 and vital Lewes connections (Routes L3 and L9) to the South Downs Way. The Egrets Way remains a flagship project to create a traffic-free corridor from Newhaven to Lewes along the Ouse Valley, and there are long-standing ambitions to extend strategic links north from Lewes to Cooksbridge and onwards to Uckfield (the railway alignment to Uckfield is safeguarded in the Local Plan). Hamsey Parish Council, jointly with Lewes District Council, have completed a feasibility study for a multi-modal route connecting South Chailey, Cooksbridge and Lewes, which could form a northern extension of the Egrets Way. These strategic plans are supported by on-the-ground interventions such as temporary measures between Exceat Bridge and Seaford delivered with East Sussex County Council, aimed at progressing more permanent solutions.

### **Nature Recovery**

The active travel proposals for the Eastern Downs are a core delivery mechanism for the East Sussex LNRS, particularly through the focus on river valleys and coastal habitats. The flagship Egrets Way project is a prime example of a multifunctional green corridor. It enhances the ecological network of the Ouse Valley floodplain—a priority habitat—while providing a premier sustainable tourism route. This demonstrates how investment in active travel can directly contribute to a more resilient and biodiverse landscape. Similarly, creating an integrated route along the A259 corridor between Seaford and Eastbourne offers the opportunity to restore and connect fragmented coastal habitats, a key objective of the LNRS.

### **Development Sites**

Allocated development sites across Lewes District offer a cohesive opportunity to create an integrated network of local and strategic routes. For the sites in and around Kingston and Lewes, proposals focus on collaboration to create multi-user links from Kingston into Lewes and connecting to the wider countryside, including the South Downs Way and NCN Route 90 to Brighton. These sites could also contribute towards the strategic aspirational route from Lewes to Isfield along a disused railway line. In Cooksbridge, a multi-user link to Offham would connect to the South Downs Way.

## 9. Top Ten Shovel Ready Projects

The following table highlights the top 10 schemes that have passed through the prioritisation filter and represent the most compelling "early wins" for the ATNP and provide a tangible summary of the plan's immediate focus.

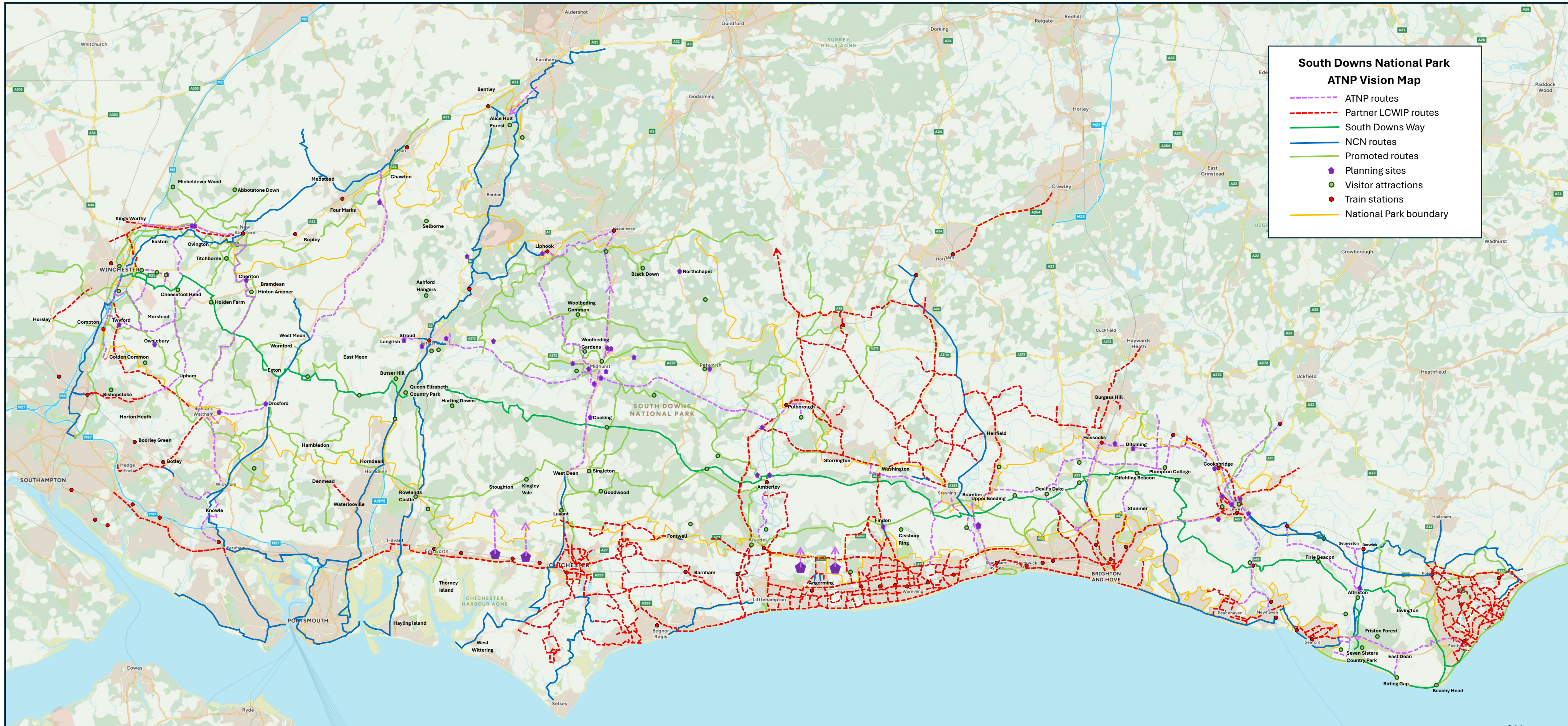
Rank	Route Name	District	Strategic Purpose	Key Partners	Cost Band	Status	Score
1	Centurion Way - Littlewood Bridge	Chichester	Key aspirational route	National Trust	£30k	Planning approval	...
2	Egrets Way – Resurfacing	Lewes	Key aspirational route	Sustrans	£70k	Implementation	...
3	Centurion Way - West Dean Link	Chichester	Key aspirational route	West Dean Estate	£45k	Planning approval	...
4	Itchen Corridor	Winchester	Key aspirational route	HCC, WCC, Sustrans	£	Feasibility	...
5	South Downs Way – Winchester Approach	Winchester	Realignment of National Trail	HIOWWT	£15k	Planning approval	...
6	Egrets Way – Unsurfaced Bridleway	Lewes	Key aspirational route	Sustrans	£145k	Implementation	...
7	Centurion Way – Northern Section	Chichester	Key aspirational route	Cowdray Estate	£45k	Planning approval	...
8	South Downs Way – Milbury Pub	Winchester	Realignment of National Trail	Milbury at Beauworth	£10k	Feasibility	...
9	Seven Sisters – Seaford			East Sussex			...
10	Centurion Way – Singleton Link	Chichester	Key aspirational route	National Trust, Singleton Parish Council	£13k	Feasibility	...



## 10. ATNP Vision Map

The ATNP Vision Map forms the backbone of our plan, setting out our ambitions for a connected and accessible active travel network across the National Park. The full version of the Vision Map provided at Appendix I.







## South Downs Local Access Forum

To: South Downs National Park Authority

For the attention of: Andy Gattiker, National Trails and Countryside Access Lead

21 November 2025

Dear Andy,

### **Active Travel Network Plan - Formal Advice from the South Downs Local Access Forum**

#### **1. Strategic Context and Timing**

While supportive of the plan's intent, we note that pressing ahead now feels slightly premature given the ongoing CWIS3 consultation and the delay of the Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS). To prevent the strategy from looking dated quickly, it must reference the Carbon Budget assumptions—specifically the target that 50% of short journeys (under 5 miles) in towns and cities will be walked or cycled, rising to 55% in 2035.

Furthermore, regarding Section 2, the National Park must prioritise engaging with National Highways immediately regarding the Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) which will be set in March. Unless priorities are firmly established now, the Park risks being left out of major infrastructure upgrades that could resolve severance.

#### **2. The "Missing Gap": Quiet Lanes and On-Road Provision**

A major concern is that the plan focuses heavily on off-road provision, overlooking the potential of the rural road network to provide connectivity.

- Designated Quiet Routes: We strongly propose creating a designation system—such as "Quiet Cycle Route" or "Scenic Quiet Route"—to identify a network of quiet lanes. This would create a mosaic of circular options essential for those (including users with mobility issues) for whom rough off-road tracks are not viable.
- Maintenance Reality: In a time of budget constraints, Local Highway Authorities prioritise road maintenance over Rights of Way. Incorporating these quiet lanes offers a pragmatic way to secure accessible, paved surfaces.
- Missing Links: The plan must explicitly address short "missing links" (e.g., south of Small Dole to Upper Beeding) that are required to open up much longer routes.

#### **3. Inclusion, Hubs, and Facilities**

To deliver true equity, the plan requires more specific commitments:

- Mobility & Accessibility Hubs: We urge the Authority to identify locations beyond Falmer. We suggest trialling pop-up accessibility hubs (hiring Trampers/4-wheel rollators) and secure cycle hubs to test demand.

- "Quick Wins" on Maintenance: We suggest collaborating with local recycling centres to use approved donated materials (paint, wood) for non-official facility upgrades (benches, way markers) as a cost-effective delivery mechanism.
- Signage: Consistent wayfinding from stations to trails is a high-impact, low-cost priority that is currently lacking.

#### **4. User Conflict and Safety**

We note that the issue of conflict on Rights of Way was omitted from the new Partnership Management Plan (PMP). It is therefore critical that it is addressed here. Previous surveys indicated 49% of respondents categorised dangerous byways as a barrier; the ATNP must include measures to address this.

#### **5. Technical Corrections**

- Page 4: Clarify if 1,627 refers to km (distance) or km<sup>2</sup> (area).
- Page 18 (Chart): The axis scaling is misleading as it starts at 4.2; this makes "Severance" look disproportionately higher than other priorities which also scored highly.
- Maintenance: Maintenance of the existing PROW network must be explicitly included in the Section 10.3 table to ensure routes remain accessible.

We look forward to seeing these points incorporated into the final Strategic Framework.

Yours faithfully,



Ben Marsh  
On behalf of

**Doug Jones**  
**Chair of the South Downs Local Access Forum**

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