

**South Downs National Park Authority
Corporate Risk Register**

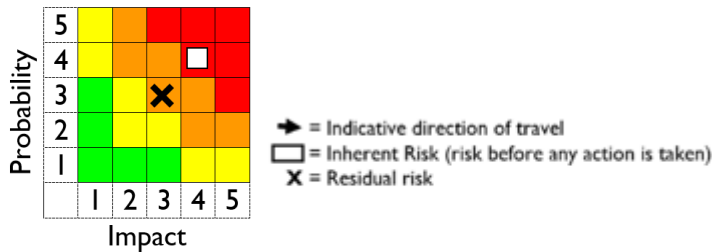


Risk I.1: Staffing

Owner: Siôn McGeever

CP Priority: Supports delivery of all

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is no change.



Description of impact of risk:

Inability to attract/retain key staff impacts upon the organisation’s service delivery. High staff turnover results in inefficiency across the organisation. Lack of diversity within the organisation impacts ability to deliver on priorities and on reputation. Mental Health issues affect staff performance and delivery.

Mitigations:

1. Pay structure and terms and conditions in place, with new pay award post April 2025.
2. Training and development programme,
3. Staff survey and action plan,
4. PDR policy,
5. Internal policies and procedures in place e.g. (Family friendly, flexible working).
6. Webinars available for all staff related to mental health and homeworking, regular communications through internal communications channels.
7. Mental health first aiders in place, independent counselling and support resources available through UK Healthcare. Regular communication of wellbeing resources to staff and access for staff and Members to wellbeing portal through the ELMS e-learning system.
8. Blended working policies agreed and monitored through OMT.
9. Action plan for improving diversity through recruitment.

Updates:

Line Manager Guidance will be implemented in February 2026 to ensure consistent approach to managing and supporting staff.

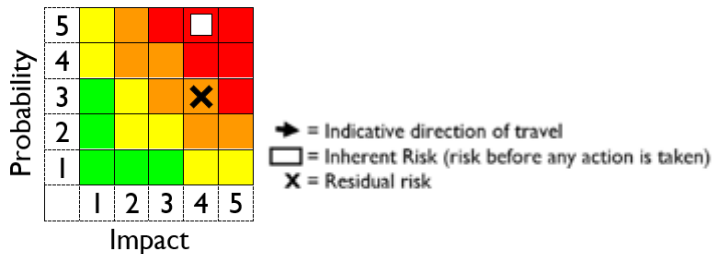
Revised induction and probationary guidelines to ensure that new starters are appropriately supported.

Risk 2.1: Finance and Budgets

Owner: Siôn McGeever

CP Priority: Supports delivery of all

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Almost Certain with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Major impact. Perceived direction of travel is increasing.



Description of impact of risk:

Budgets insufficient due to a failure of the Defra grant to increase in real terms over a number of years, a reduction of the Defra grant or a continuation of the lower revenue baseline from 25/26 arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), or an in-year requirement for savings; failure to match resources and workloads across the organisation; or negative impacts of increased inflation rates or increased employer pension or national insurance contributions on costs. Partnership Management Plan Review or Local Plan Review suffers and SDNPA lacks capacity to properly remunerate staff and/or support other work. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.

Mitigations:

1. Sufficient headroom within revenue budget and sufficient financial risk reserves to enable any shortfall to be managed in the short term whilst the medium-term budget is adjusted.
2. Ongoing Income Generation activity to provide additional income which supports the activities of the Authority led by Director of Business Development and Growth.
3. Appropriate capitalisation of expenditure to ensure optimum use of revenue and capital resources.
4. Thorough budget planning and profiling process undertaken with budget holders to support tighter financial information for the budget setting process with Members.
5. Effective and early scenario planning through Member workshops to redefine the medium-term financial planning process and approach to Budget setting, including strengthened alignment to the Corporate Plan.
6. Improved monthly revenue and capital budget monitoring undertaken by budget holders and OMT enabling identification of areas of potential underspend, overspend, compensating savings with subsequent action plan.
7. Industry and Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) indices used to model real world inflation implications through the medium-term financial plan.
8. Procurement processes identify issues related to inflation and, where appropriate, changes to specifications etc. are made to manage impacts of inflation.
9. Opportunities for funding and/or private investment into the National Park continued to be explored which could result in potential cost recovery or mitigation for the Authority e.g. S106 and Nature Based Solutions Service.
10. Close liaison with Defra to understand potential impacts of CSR as early as possible.

Updates:

Input from Members through two budget workshops in December 2025 and January 2026 to support the Authority in delivering a balanced budget for 2026/27.

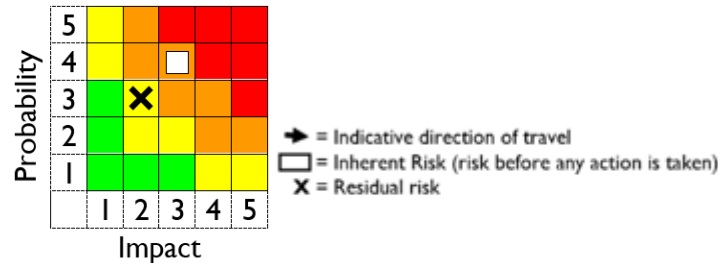
Formal notification of the NPA grant from Defra not expected until the end of the financial year.

Risk 2.2: Income Generation

Owner: James Winkworth

CP Priority: CP3, CP4

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Moderate impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change



Description of impact of risk:

Insufficient income generation opportunities are identified to support NPA budgets and delivery of priorities. Inability to meet expectations of Government in relation to income generation. Changes in legislation increase or reduce the Authority’s ability to generate income. Insufficient skills /experience “in house” to exploit potential income generating opportunities.

Mitigations:

1. Governance framework for consideration of SDNPA powers in relation to income generation activity in place.
2. Sufficient reserves held to enable recruitment of staff with necessary skill set if required.
3. Director of Business Development and Growth leading the approach to income generation across the Authority.
4. Skilled income generation team operating well and meeting targets.
5. Cross-directorate income generation group supports generation and assessment of opportunities.
6. Ongoing support for South Downs National Park Trust and close working to explore potential commercial model.
7. Nature Based Solutions Service promotes nature recovery on sites in the SDNP and provides the Authority with opportunities for cost recovery in the delivery of the service.
8. Reviewing future workstreams with a view to greater targeting of long-term external grants and other income streams.
9. Income generated through delivery of the Planning Services, including through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements.
10. Opportunities for income generation at Seven Sisters Country Park being delivered for the benefit of the Country Park. Future opportunities being explored form part of the annual operating plan.
11. Advocating for the role of National Parks with central government and other stakeholders.

Updates:

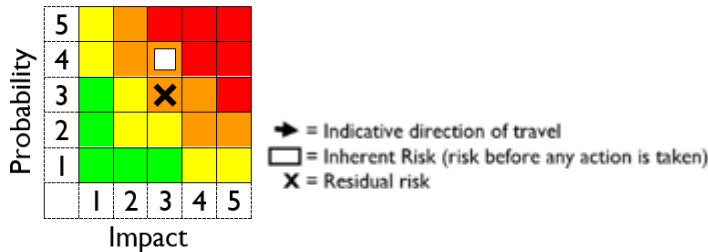
General Power of Competence for NPAs included in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which would support the Authority’s efforts to widen its income generating activities.

Risk 3.1: Health and Safety

Owner: Vicky Paterson

CP Priority: Supports delivery of all

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Possible with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is no change.



Description of impact of risk:

Accident or incident, including bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, involving staff, volunteers, visitors, Members or the public resulting in injury, possibly serious, or death at an SDNPA facility or event. Breach of statutory duties, litigation and cost against the authority.

Mitigations:

1. Services of external H&S consultant retained
2. Internal H&S Officer in place.
3. H&S strategy and responsibilities agreed.
4. H&S elements included in induction programme for staff, Members, and volunteers.
5. H&S Committee operating and receiving regular accident reporting.
6. H&S policy and other supporting policies and guidance (e.g. extreme weather) in place.
7. All staff training on bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment, and safeguarding.
8. All area offices and Seven Sisters Country Park annually audited.
9. Annual report to P&R Committee with recommendations.
10. Members and SLT trained and briefed on H&S responsibilities.
11. All risk assessments reviewed and updated.
12. Dangerous sites process in place to highlight sites that staff may visit in their role which present particular risks to their H&S.
13. Additional H&S related training provided via e-learning, with fire safety and H&S delivered as mandatory courses.
14. IOSH training completed by all H&S Committee reps.
15. Trained first aiders in place
16. Lone working policy agreed by OMT.
17. Biennial H&S survey of staff.

Updates:

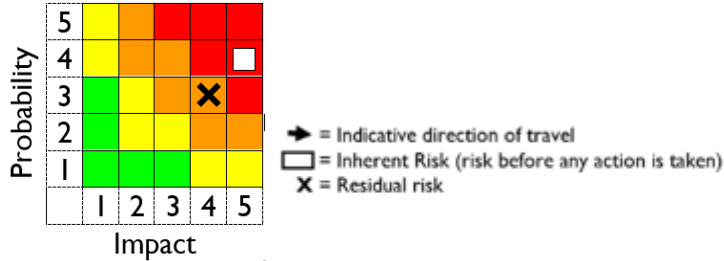
New Senior Leadership Team to undertake H&S leadership training in May 2026.

Risk 3.2: Seven Sisters Country Park – Health and Safety

Owner: Tim Slaney

CP Priority: CP3

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a catastrophic impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Major impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Accident or incident involving staff, volunteers or members of the public resulting in serious injury, serious illness or death at a Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP). Breach of statutory duties, litigation and cost against the authority. Reputation and financial impacts on the authority

Mitigations:

1. External H&S consultant advice
2. Risk assessments undertaken for high-risk activities (e.g. provision of food).
3. SSCP staff represented on H&S committee
4. H&S responsibilities agreed.
5. H&S elements included in induction programme for staff and volunteers.
6. H&S committee receives regular accident reporting.
7. Site audits undertaken.
8. SSCP issues included in regular reports to P&R Committee.
9. All risk assessments reviewed and updated.
10. Additional site-specific H&S related training (e.g. food hygiene).
11. Trained first aiders on site.
12. Park signage in place to support visitor movements and advise on safety issues.
13. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site.
14. Participation in partnership groups (cliff safety partnership and liaison with emergency services).
15. Insurance arrangements in place.
16. Actively pursuing improvements to the road crossing with highways authority.

Updates:

Site visit with H&S Committee Chair and H&S Officer in November 2025.

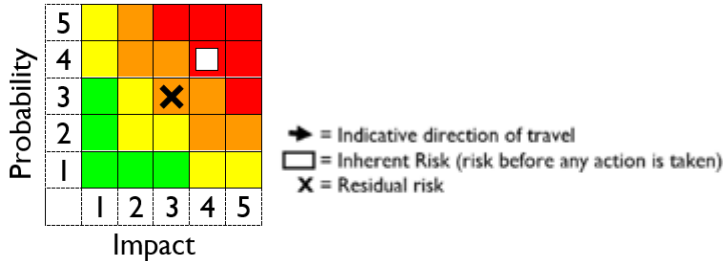
New signage under development including on cliff and river safety.

Risk 4.1: Seven Sisters Country Park – Asset ownership

Owner: Tim Slaney

CP Priority: CP3

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Damage to or failure to maintain the asset causes environmental damage, legal challenge or dispute with tenants, increased costs, reduction in visitor numbers or income, or damage to SDNPA reputation.

Mitigations:

1. Insurance arrangements in place.
2. Operational risk register monitored by SSCP team.
3. Advice on operations through advisory group including external advisors.
4. Regular survey of river assets.
5. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site.
6. Close working with water level management board and environment agency to fully understand management options in relation to riparian ownership.
7. New Barn cottage renovation underway supporting the long-term plan to prevent degradation of asset.
8. Survey of all assets in the work programme to be undertaken.

Updates:

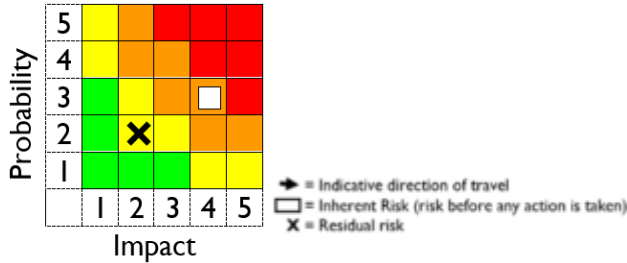
Potential impacts of Exceat Bridge closure being assessed and incorporated into 2026/27 budget forecast.

Risk 5.1: Business Continuity Planning and Organisational Resilience

Owner: Richard Sandiford

CP Priority: Supports delivery of all

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Possible with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Unlikely with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Lack of effective organisational business continuity planning and organisational resilience may prevent delivery of key services in the event of a major incident, cyber-attack, or as a result of the loss of key staff.

Mitigations:

1. Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in place and regularly reviewed for Authority and its offices.
2. Business Critical functions identified and planned for.
3. IT Disaster Recovery plans in place and tested annually.
4. Cyber incident response plans in place.
5. Key staff roles identified in BCP and communicated.
6. Documenting of key processes to mitigate points of failure.
7. Specific implications of IT provision addressed through day-to-day IT support functions being provided via outsourced contracts meaning that user support would not be immediately impacted by the departure or absence of the IT Strategy Manager.
8. IT network and key systems delivered externally via contracts.
9. Network Resilience and continuity issues have also been addressed via the IT contracts.
10. BCP for Seven Sisters Country Park in place.

Updates:

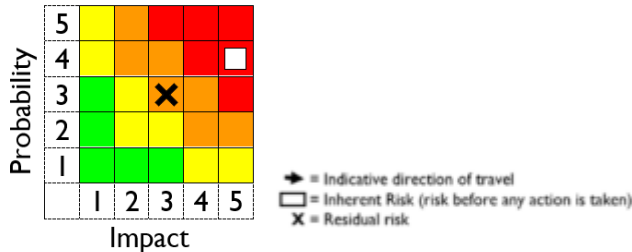
None

Risk 7.1: Partnership Working and Partnership Management Plan Delivery

Owner: Allison Potts

CP Priority: N/A

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Failure to deliver on the aims and objectives in the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) with partners due to lack of flexible resources and staff time within the SDNPA, unrealistic expectations of partner delivery, or lack of engagement, commitment or ability of partners to deliver. This could result in an inability to deliver the PMP and achieve the vision for the SDNP.

Mitigations:

1. Extensive engagement programme with partners, stakeholders and the public to inform the aims and objectives in the PMP supports buy-in.
2. PMP Steering Group ensures partners and stakeholders are integral to the delivery of the PMP.
3. New Communications Strategy under development to support the PMP, to manage public expectations and to set out key messages for the Authority, stakeholders and partners including goals, expectations, and reporting requirements.
4. Regular check-ins with key delivery partners and partnership forums to be held.
5. Reporting expectations to be embedded in partnership agreements / MoUs.
6. Early engagement with partners to jointly plan and design deliverables and reporting outputs.
7. Use of shared KPIs, feedback loops, and recognition of partner contributions.
8. Project evaluation and lessons learnt reported to committee and used to inform future practice.
9. Development with the South Downs Trust of longer term and diversified streams of income to support delivery.
10. The protected landscapes duty is a powerful tool supporting public bodies to take positive action in support of the PMP.

Updates:

The new PMP for 2026-2031 was approved by the NPA in December 2025.

Particular risks at this early stage are insufficient engagement or commitment from delivery partners with the potential to compromise delivery and increase the likelihood that targets are not met.

PMP launch event to be held in May 2026 to garner shared commitment.

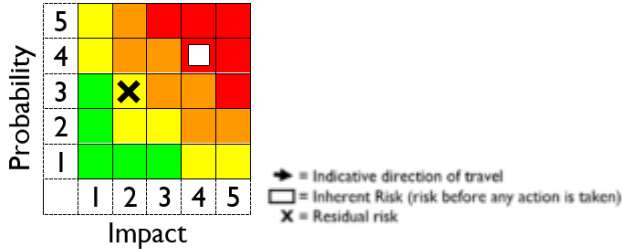
A Delivery Group for the PMP will be established to drive engagement, commitment and delivery.

Risk 7.2: Delivery of 2025/26 Capital Programme and Strategic Projects

Owner: Siôn McGeever

CP Priority: N/A

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Failure to deliver the capital programme through lack of resources, limited time or insufficient monitoring of capital projects results in having to return capital funding to Defra. Increased focus on capital programme delivery distracts from delivery of strategic projects possibly resulting in delays, inability to meet commitments to partners, and/or potential loss of funding. This could impact negatively on the SDNPA’s reputation and ability to secure project funding.

Mitigations:

1. Revised capital programme approved at July 2025 NPA meeting.
2. Project pipeline in place to ensure shovel ready projects are in place to support spend of capital funds.
3. New procedures, including monthly monitoring of project delivery and close scrutiny of progress, improve organisational effectiveness to support timely and on budget project delivery.
4. Quarterly reporting of capital programme delivery to P&R Committee.
5. Strategic projects continue to be supported by dedicated staff as required.
6. Biannual report to P&R Committee on strategic project delivery, including lessons learnt to inform future practice.
7. New Director of Business Development and Growth supports close partnership working with the South Downs National Park Trust on project funding and delivery.

Updates:

On track to spend full capital allocation by year end.

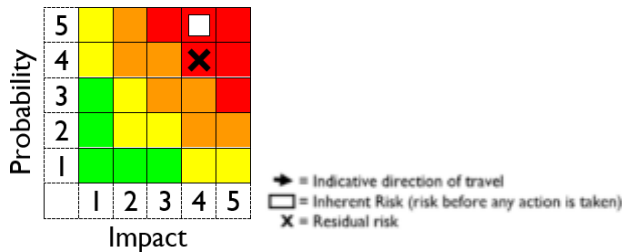
Capital programme for 2026/27 being prepared with the expectation of similar capital funding.

Risk 8.1: Devolution in England and Local Government Reorganisation

Owner: James Winkworth

CP Priority: N/A

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Almost Certain with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Likely with a Major impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

The significant changes that will take place through devolution of power from Whitehall to strategic mayoral authorities and through local government reorganisation have the potential for wide ranging and substantial impacts on the National Park and the National Park Authority. As Hampshire and the Solent, and Sussex and Brighton have been accepted into the government’s devolution priority programme these changes will take place at pace. The risks include:

- Devolution and local government reorganisation may reduce the capacity of local authorities across the SDNP to be involved in other projects or to ability to invest in local assets which could put at risk some of our partnership working. This is likely to be further exacerbated by inclusion in the devolution priority programme meaning a higher level of local authority resources are likely to be focussed on meeting the government’s ambitious timeline.
- It may be challenging to influence the development of devolution and local government reorganisation and where the NPA will sit within the hierarchy of local government within a strategic mayoral authority. As an MHCLG led initiative the NPA’s government department, Defra, is not directly involved in the development of devolution policy which could lead to the NPA being overlooked.
- The potential impact of the proposed local growth plans and mayoral powers on the SDNP and the NPA are currently unknown.
- NPAs not currently included in spatial development strategies risks reduced influence on major infrastructure projects.
- With the move to single-tier (unitary) authorities the hosted planning arrangements (section 101 contracts) are at risk. If all these arrangements were to fall away there would be a substantial impact on the NPA and the Planning Directorate in particular.
- The move to single-tier (unitary) authorities will impact the Membership of the NPA with a lower number of local authorities appointing Members to the NPA.
- The SDNP will sit across two strategic mayoral authorities who may have different priorities and different views on the role of the SDNPA and the NPA.

Mitigations:

1. Monitoring of progress and updates by senior officers and efforts to work closely at senior level between the NPA and other local authorities to ensure the SDNP is considered in discussions and that impacts are clearly understood as proposals are developed.
2. Discussions on Planning S101 contracts with all host authorities.
3. Work with outgoing authorities and early engagement with leaders of new authorities (Mayors, Chairs, and Chief Executives) to understand priorities and identify opportunities for partnership working and future home for various assets and if some could be best managed by the SDNPA.

4. Discussions with Defra, MHCLG, and other stakeholders to cultivate a better understanding of NPAs as local authorities, the impacts of devolution and local government reorganisation, and advocate for the NPA as formal consultees and ensure our voice is heard on key issues.
5. Working with NPE and Defra to influence the development of changing governance arrangements in the NPA.
6. Early consideration of implications for partnership projects and reassessment where expected resources from local authorities may not be available due to capacity.
7. Early-stage workshop held with Members to consider opportunities and risks for the SDNP and the NPA of devolution and local government reorganisation.
8. Work to be undertaken to identify areas the NPA could support incoming mayoral and unitary authorities, particularly in specialist areas of expertise for the NPA.
9. Working to build county-wide environmental partnerships, including with National Landscapes, to strengthen our collective influence with Mayoral and Unitary Authorities.
10. Contingency plans to be developed for particular risk areas where identified.

Updates:

Mayoral elections delayed until May 2028.

Council elections postponed at East and West Sussex County, Adur District, and Worthing Borough Councils.

