

Report to **South Downs National Park Authority**
Date **20 March 2026**
By **Chief Executive Officer**
Title of Report **Chief Executive's Progress Report**

Note

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to note the report and progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) since the last report.

1. Summary and Background

1.1 This report provides a summary of our performance against the corporate plan targets and an overview of some key workstreams that have been underway since the report to the 9 of December 2025 NPA.

2. Introduction

2.1 It's fair to say it's been wet since the last National Park Authority meeting. And we've seen the impact on this on our roads, our ability to get about, our water - with supplies harder to treat and more run off into our rivers, and in some areas, it has also affected our ability to deliver. Models indicate we're going to see more of this and so the work we are doing collectively in the Park on climate action has never been more vital and the emphasis on water in the new Partnership Management Plan (PMP) never more important.

2.2 And on that point, I'd like to celebrate the amazing launch of the PMP earlier this year. I've lost count of how many people have said how fun the digital version is to read. A huge thank you to Ruth James and the whole Communications team who have done a fantastic job. We've already had great partner engagement, reflecting an appetite to move quickly into delivery. When we are clear, ambitious and outward-facing (and when we have buttons that play bird song) others respond positively. Onwards now to creating the partnership!

2.3 The PMP was approved at the last NPA meeting and now we will be considering its sister the Local Plan. A huge amount of effort has gone into this. The two plans speak to each other and there has been a real focus on how they interlock to help deliver our purposes. I'm really excited about the policy work that has gone into this plan, the consultation, cross team working and the guidance by Members. I'll have fingers crossed as we send it on its next stage of assessment. A massive thank you to Claire Tester and the whole planning team. I know it's not over yet, but this is a major milestone.

2.4 This feels like the beginning of a new chapter in the story of the South Downs. And to help us write that I'd like to formally welcome Allison Potts who joined us in February as our new Director of Landscape and Operations. Allison, you're very very welcome and it already feels like you've always been with us. Exciting times ahead!

- 2.5 I want to finish this intro with a mention of Cultural Heritage. There is a lively debate about what this means, and in particular what it means for the Park. I've included a section in this report covering the excellent Members workshop on this but would like to highlight one of the many overlaps I come across weekly between culture and nature.
- 2.6 This week we will launch the Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve. This is a big deal! (a huge well done to Claire Kerr for all the work getting us to this point - more below). Since I joined, I've had many conversations of the merits of introducing choughs to cliffs around Seven Sisters and as part of that we have mused over whether they were there in the past. I happened this week to be introduced to the 18th century romantic poet Charlotte Smith, who grew up and lived in the South Downs. One of her most famous poems is called Beachy Head published posthumously in 1807. I quote an extract below.

*“While, inmates of the chalky clefts that scar
Thy sides precipitous, with shrill harsh cry,
Their white wings glancing in the level beam,
The terns, and gulls, and tarrocks, seek their food,
And thy rough hollows echo to the voice*

*Of the gray choughs, and ever restless daws,
With clamour, not unlike the chiding hounds,
While the lone shepherd, and his baying dog,
Drive to thy turfy crest his bleating flock.”*



Mystery solved! But will we hear the voice of those gray choughs again?

- 2.7 Below you will see the now standard report on progress against the Corporate Plan (this will soon change to align with the new PMP). And under general updates in this report I've included:
 - Cultural Heritage – see above
 - Planning – to highlight the Local Plan
 - Landscape and Operations – to set out next steps on the PMP following the excellent launch
 - Seven Sisters Country Park – to celebrate the launch of the National Nature Reserve
 - Devolution and LGR – because this is fast moving and we're doing great work here
 - Income Generation – to update on the exciting progress we're making in this area

3 Progress against the Corporate Plan

Nature Recovery

- 3.1 **HLT#1: To secure an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature by 2030 from a baseline of 25%.**

	Total to date (2022 start)	Annual 2025/26 Target	Annual total to date	Q3 contribution	RAG Status	Expected RAG Status at Year-End
HLTI	7,459ha	1,300 ha	683.3ha	225ha		

	57% of 2030 target		53% of annual target	17% of annual target		
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At the end of Q3, 57% of the 13,000 hectares target to be reached by 2030. It is likely that the annual target may not be met this year. A significant amount of internal resource has been dedicated to the maintenance of habitat sites, especially protected sites, which aren't included in this HLT1 target. Recent project funding has been for protected sites. The very wet winter has also hindered planned delivery programmes which are now delayed.

- 3.2 Action and delivery for nature recovery can experience fluctuations beyond our immediate control. We will be working with landowners and land managers to increase our pipeline to mitigate this. Until we're sure of that pipeline, the longer-term forecast for the 2030 target will remain as amber RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated.
- 3.3 In addition to this, the pipeline of potential sites for legal security is not guaranteed. There are a number of barriers that may delay or prevent a binding contract. Action and delivery for nature, ebbs and flows by nature, therefore, the forecast for this target will remain as amber.
- 3.4 During Q3 the Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published - launched on 8 December 2025. This provides a county-wide strategy for nature recovery. SDNPA will continue to be a key partner as the strategy moves into its delivery phase.
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/hampshire-strategy>
- 3.5 192ha of land has been created or improved for nature through projects in Q3. This includes 133ha of ditch reprofiling work at Amberley Wildbrooks as part of the Downs to the Sea project. Targeted woodland regeneration has been delivered at the Preshaw Estate and Hartley Park Farm.
- 3.6 Other habitat and land-management work has been delivered, such as tree popping, woodland coppicing, bramble and scrub clearance, plus invasive species removal. Improvements have been made to the South Downs Way verge to support species recovery, alongside use of the cut-and-collect mower funded by the South Downs Trust.
- 3.7 33.4ha land has been legally secured for Biodiversity NG at Wiston Estate this quarter.
- 3.8 **HLT#2: Work to maintain, enhance and/or restore 30% of existing Core Nature sites and support key species recovery within the SDNP by 2030.** ●
- 3.9 This KPI is now monitored through national targets set out in the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF)
- 3.10 The amber RAG status reflects that, whilst progress is being made, current performance remains significantly below the interim targets set for 2031 and 2028. Further improvement is needed. Data is reporting annually and updates are expected in May 2026.
- 3.11 2025 figures are:
 - PLTOF Target 2: 29.7% against target of 50% by 2031
 - PLTOF Target 2: 20.8% against target of 60% by 2028
- 3.12 Q3 marked the completion of the second full year of delivering Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship at SSCP. This quarter, pockets of SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) habitat at Seven Sisters has been identified for nesting locations for the Potter Flower Bee alongside opportunities for creating a flower rich habitat.
- 3.13 Wetland enhancement at the Country Park has seen the creation of new scrapes and ditches, repair of existing sluice gates, and the formation of additional dew ponds. The sluice gates have enabled optimum management of the water levels during the very wet Autumn and Winter period, and early ecological benefits are already visible, with the rare "scarce

blue-tailed damselfly" recorded for the first time and greater numbers of wading birds recorded on the saltmarsh.

3.14 HLT3: To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

3.15 BNG data is reported annually in Q4.

Climate Action

3.16 HLT#4: South Downs National Park Authority to reduce its carbon footprint by 150 tonnes per annum in line with the 2030 net zero target. ●

3.17 SDNPA emissions data is reported annually in Q4. However, it is predicted that capital works carried out in 2024/5 has likely generated increased carbon emission. We expect the data to reflect this increase and have assigned a red RAG status for this HLT as a consequence.

3.18 During Q3, a sustainability statement was approved and published on the SDNPA website. This statement sets out SDNPA's intent, and work is now underway to develop a comprehensive sustainability policy that will outline the Authority's approach and the key actions required to reach net zero. In parallel, Small World Consulting is working with the group to develop an action plan focused on reducing Scope 3 emissions.

3.19 Also in Q3, four EV (Electric Vehicle) chargers were installed at SSCP. These will begin generating data on CO₂ avoided from Q4 onwards. In addition, an assessment of SSCP is being completed to understand the site's overall carbon sequestration rate.

3.20 HLT#5: 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019. ●

3.21 The HLT target data, Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) Forestry component data, is reported annually and progress will be included in the Q4 performance report. However, data from the Carbon Disclosure project published earlier this year, has shown a rise in emissions against the SDNPA 2019 baseline figure, therefore, the RAG status for this HLT is currently 'red'.



3.22 Work has progressed on the Carbon Habitat Mapping initiative following the completion of the Iford pilot project. Recent discussions have centred on identifying the next set of locations where the carbon measurement methodology can be further demonstrated and refined.

3.23 At the close of the quarter, the Authority received its latest environmental impact reporting scores from CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project). CDP assesses organisations across eight scoring levels, from D- to A. The SDNPA achieved a B rating, reflecting a strong overall performance.











A National Park for All

3.24 HLT#6: Increase diversity of those engaging with the South Downs National Park.

KPI	Annual 2025/26 Target	Annual total to date	Q2 Contribution	RAG Status	Expected RAG Status at Year-End
H6.1 Number of people from underrepresented audiences engaged through engagement & project activities	3,500	3,586 102% of annual target	552 16% of annual target	●	●







H6.2 Number of engagement activities targeted at underrepresented audiences	90	182 202% of annual target	71 79% of annual target		
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- 3.25 Annual targets have been met this quarter and a continuing programme of events and activities throughout the remainder of the year will contribute further. Annual targets have been underestimated, however more relevant indicators and ambitious targets have been developed for the new Corporate Plan 2026-2031.
- 3.26 Our focus on promoting green careers and skills continued this quarter with a taster session for the heritage skills programme, welcoming 40 young people aged 16-25 to Weald and Downland Museum to try a variety of crafts and sign up to further training and careers support. 70 young people also attended an Eco-summit and green careers workshops at Chichester college.
- 3.27 **HLT#7: Work to make sure the landscape, scenery and tranquillity of SDNP is available to everyone, no matter what their access needs are.**

KPI	Annual 2025/26 Target	Annual total to date	Q3 Contribution	RAG Status	Expected RAG Status at Year-End
H7.1 Number of sessions facilitated by mobility equipment*	100 per year	169 169% of annual target	16 16% of annual target		
H7.2.1 Metres of new and/or improved accessible path	1,350 m	6,509 482% of annual target	3,569 m 264% of annual target		
H7.2.2 Number of interventions to improve access	85	116 136% of annual target	42 49% of annual target		
H7.3 Number of visits to the digital Accessibility Hub	10,000	6,466 65% of annual target	2,984 30% of annual target		
H7.4 Number of page views of the Seven Sisters Country Park Accessibility Guide	5,000	2,132 43% of annual target	35 1% of annual target		

- 3.28 The Access in Protected Landscapes funding has delivered 2.2km of new/improved path in Q3. Creation works have been completed on the new Slindon Bridleway project as well as improvement works to Stanmer Park access paths and Seven Sisters beach track.

- 3.29 In Q3, The Centurion Way project has established a 660-meter permissive path connecting Phase 1 of Centurion Way to Phase 2, between West Dean Village Halt and Chalk Stone Halt. This new route enables users to avoid the heavily trafficked A286.
- 3.30 The targets for H7.3 and H7.4 are ambitious. For H7.3, data trends show that visits to the digital Accessibility hub have stabilised since launch. For H7.4, the winter months always receive reduced traffic to the accessibility guide – the rainy weather has also had a detrimental impact, demonstrated by the lower number of bookings of mobility equipment this quarter.
- 3.31 **HLT#8: Digitally engage 100,000 people per year with the SDNP.**

KPI	Annual 2025/26 Target	Year to date	RAG Status	Expected RAG Status at Year-End
H8.1 Total number of E-newsletter subscribers	12,000 subscribers	13,899		
H8.2 Total social media audience	100,000	144,671		
H8.3 Total visits to the digital hubs throughout the year: (Nature Recovery, Climate Change, Walking hub, Communities)	65,000 since launch	77,786		

3.32 We continue to see excellent growth and engagement across our social media channels, with an additional 4,458 followers this quarter. This growth results in increased traffic to the digital hubs. We will be reviewing the metrics used to evaluate digital engagement when developing the 2026/2027 Communications and Engagement Strategy and the new Corporate Plan.

4. General Updates

Cultural Heritage

- 4.1 There has been much discussion about Cultural Heritage within the Authority, so it was great to hear that members attended a workshop on Cultural Heritage in February, led by our Cultural Heritage lead Anooshka Rawden, to explore the wider strategic and national policy context in which our work sits. In discussing the definitions of cultural heritage in law and national guidance, it was clear that heritage provides the assets, stories and context that enables society to continually respond to the past, and in so doing, create what is a dynamic and diverse cultural identity.
- 4.2 Policy is important, as it provides the leverage to further our purposes and impact, but expressing value through policy alone is not enough. Experiences that create connection are fundamental to building custodianship, and our approach focused on responding to national policy drivers through delivery of person-centred experiences, gives us the ability to demonstrate our capacity to meet government priorities while also building local and regional opportunity.
- 4.3 Examples include the Heritage Skills project, led by Sussex Heritage Trust but co-developed and piloted with SDNPA, which will reach 300 young people aged 16-25 living in and around the South Downs between 2024-2028 by providing career development support through hands on training. Or Species Stories, that commissioned eight ethnically diverse writers to create new work inspired by key species in the South Downs, which in turn inspired 42 children aged 9-14 to write their own stories responding to South Downs wildlife with a lasting outcome being new teacher resources to support classroom based learning through creative writing and connection to nature.

- 4.4 Using our capacity in a focused way towards outcomes that can influence ‘bigger, better, more joined up’ work with our key strategic partners maximises what we can achieve. This isn’t just policy. It’s building meaning to ensure we are relevant as public assets to the wider, diverse population.
- 4.5 The key message of the workshop was to ensure we don’t lose sight of the co-dependencies and co-opportunities between nature and cultural heritage, which gives us the ability to ensure what we do delivers maximum benefit. Our cultural heritage brings us additional leverage as we navigate devolution, and ensuring we view the landscape for both nature and heritage can ensure best value from public investment in environmental outcomes, which the workshop touched on via the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s co-signed statement with Historic England and Natural England.
- 4.6 Anooshka says “Operating with a ‘muse and home’ approach – where our heritage inspires creative and cultural investment in place – gives us opportunities to turn a tired and inaccurate narrative of cultural heritage as constraint into cultural heritage as opportunity”. Anooshka also shared that “with finite capacity, we have to be deliberate and intentional in how we deploy it. When we focus on using the capacity we have to catalyse wider action – bringing together policy, place and people – we can create outcomes for the National Park that are meaningful, inclusive and scalable thanks in a large part to working with major partners, enabling our impact to be greater than our resource alone can achieve.”

Planning

- 4.7 Our emerging **Local Plan** was considered by the Planning Committee on 12 February, following a series of workshops on various topics including site allocations and our approach to climate adaptation. The Plan covers the period 2024-2042 and is based on the landscape-led approach of the previous Plan and the need to address nature recovery and climate adaptation.
- 4.8 The Committee had a wide-ranging discussion. There was endorsement for the strategic approach – dispersed growth proportionate to settlement size- delivered in a way that takes its cue from the landscape. We are looking favourably on sites that can serve multiple benefits e.g. deliver affordable homes and enable greater nature recovery which ties well with the now adopted Partnership Management Plan.
- 4.9 A bespoke methodology and an assessment of the landscape capacity of the National Park to accommodate development, without conflicting with its statutory purposes was recommended to this meeting for approval. The Plan identifies sites for housing, gypsies and travellers and employment provision as well as renewable energy. There are a suite of thematic policies including promoting regenerative development and eco-systems services, landscape-led design and protection of the water environment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given all we are trying to do, Members of the Planning Committee removed a couple of proposed allocations as too harmful.
- 4.10 It was right the Committee gave the Plan and its intended outcomes a thorough testing. With our pushing the nature recovery (BNG!) and climate adaptation policies beyond the minimum we will see how we do later today and at examination! We even have a policy on viticulture and associated development, a first for any local plan I believe.
- 4.11 The Planning Committee voted unanimously to recommend, to this meeting, for agreement to publish the Plan. If agreed, we can then consult for final public comments (Regulation 19 consultation) in May/June. It should be noted any comments received are considered by the Inspector examining the Plan as well as ourselves. We can make recommendations, but the Inspector will consider those as well. We will then submit the Plan for examination in November 2026. This is before the December 2026 deadline which is vital.
- 4.12 This is vital because we are going through the biggest change to the Governments **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** in years - and they do like to change NPPF We have commented on the proposed changes, particularly in relation to the slight weakening of approach taken to major development, development outside of settlement boundaries and the potential inability to set our own methodology for housing need which we have done

this time. We are however pleased to see reference to natural beauty, bringing the NPPF into line with our first purpose, rather than 'scenic' beauty.

- 4.13 Another area we are commenting on is the move toward a more standardised rule-based approach to planning policies. The NPPF is seeking to take over much of the current function of local plans in setting decision-making policies. There is a danger that this 'one size fits all' approach to policies will damage the special qualities that our landscape was designated for. Without the ability to set our own detailed policies on certain matters we potentially reduce our ability to act as a national resource for nature, climate adaptation and the health and wellbeing of local communities and the wider public.
- 4.14 We have also commented upon the proposals regarding **Spatial Development Strategies (SDS)**, continuing to repeat the need for us to be engaged in any spatial planning rather than be consultees only. If we are proactively engaged, we can ensure our wider role in growth of nature, health and well-being and the rural green economy is recognised and embraced.

Landscapes & Operations and PMP Update

- 4.15 The Authority approved the **Partnership Management Plan (PMP)** in December 2025. The plan was then designed and loaded into our new online platform. The new plan was formally launched on 28 January. It is the next step towards the National Park's vision for 2060 – a thriving, buzzing nature-rich South Downs. It has been developed over 18 months and comes after several rounds of consultation and engagement across the region. There was strong support from partners with many contributing supportive statements to the launch press release. A PDF (Portable Document Format) version of the plan was sent to everyone who left details as part of the consultation on the plan and to all Local Authorities; sector stakeholders and Natural England and Historic England and as required, to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Feedback so far on the look and feel of the plan as well as its obvious ambition has been positive.
- 4.16 To sustain momentum and build on the positive engagement of partners during the development of the PMP, the Authority will be setting up and facilitating new partnership structures to oversee joint delivery. The **PMP Delivery Partnership** will review progress against delivery of targets, promote joint projects, facilitate information sharing and advocate for the PMP, it may also make recommendations to the Authority on emerging gaps, risks, priorities and delivery. Thematic delivery for nature recovery and climate will be coordinated through multiple mechanisms, including alignment with LNRS delivery, and delivery through key partners (such as environmental Non-Governmental Organisations - NGOs), farmers, land managers and owners, farm clusters and community groups, with Local Nature Partnerships playing a coordinating role to avoid duplication. A people and place delivery group will also be facilitated by the SDNPA to bring together relevant partners for this theme. The delivery groups will focus on co-ordinating delivery and aligning strategies as well as providing an opportunity for developing collaborative funding bids. The new partnership structures will be proposed at an event in May, where partners will come together to celebrate delivery of their priorities in the National Park and define how they want to work together. The final form of the delivery partnership and delivery groups may develop after that meeting. A report to the NPA to establish the groups and approve terms of reference will come to the NPA meeting in July.

Seven Sisters Country Park

- 4.17 It is great news that the official declaration of the **Seven Sisters National Nature Reserve (NNR)** took place yesterday. This is the culmination of a huge amount of work by the partners, co-chaired by Claire Kerr and Dan Fagan at the National Trust. The event was organised by the National Park Authority in close partnership with the other seven partners to the NNR and Natural England, and was focused around the partners and the landscape. The core partners to the Seven Sisters NNR are Eastbourne Borough Council, Forestry England, National Trust, Natural England, Seaford Town Council, South Downs National Park Authority, South East Water, and Sussex Wildlife Trust.

- 4.18 On 22 March the NNR will be celebrated alongside all things water at a **public community event at SSCP**. This event, being organised by the SSCP team, will include six free guided tours across the wider landscape led by expert Rangers (from across the NNR partners) including Seaford Head, Seven Sisters Downland, Beachy Head, Eastbourne Downland and Lullington Head.
- 4.19 Talks and interactive activities for the public are also arranged, and we are delighted **David Riviere author of ‘Dew Ponds’** will be giving two talks as well as walks on.....Dew Ponds!
- 4.20 There is also a family fun day with interactive activities on a water theme arranged by us and partners including South East Water, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Downs to Sea and Ouse Valley Climate Action (OVCA). A link is provided here providing more detail [Celebrating World Water Day! - Seven Sisters](#) . My thanks go to the SSCP team for providing such a full and varied programme around this vital, literally, subject.

Devolution and Local Government Reform

- 4.21 Since we last met, there have been several significant developments in relation to devolution and local government reform across Hampshire and Sussex.
- 4.22 The Government has confirmed that Mayoral elections for the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authorities (MCCAs) will now be delayed until 2028. This decision has been taken to allow Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to be completed first - currently anticipated in 2027 - in order to minimise disruption and streamline implementation. As a result, some of our direct engagement with mayoral candidates has been paused.
- 4.23 Despite this delay, progress towards the establishment of MCCAs continues, and it remains important that we maintain influence during this interim period. The Government has indicated that combined authorities will receive a proportion of powers and funding - approximately one third - ahead of mayoral elections. Both Hampshire and Sussex are actively lobbying for enhanced powers and resources, with some early indications of success in Sussex. These negotiations, alongside the delay to mayoral elections, have created a degree of uncertainty and distraction, and we have observed a noticeable slowing in stakeholder engagement. We are seeking to remain understanding during this period; however, once these matters are resolved, we expect engagement to accelerate, providing further opportunities for us to contribute.
- 4.24 To support their decision-making legitimacy, the emerging MCCAs (governed by the Leaders of the upper tiers whilst awaiting a Mayor) are pressing ahead with the development of Local Growth Strategies and Spatial Development Strategies. It is essential that National Park purposes and priorities are embedded within these documents. We have therefore continued to respond proactively to calls for evidence and to promote a strong pipeline of deliverable projects aligned with potential future Mayoral funding, at every opportunity.
- 4.25 In parallel, we have been actively reinforcing the importance of National Parks’ involvement in Spatial Development Strategies at a national level. This is gaining traction, including through discussions in the House of Lords and emerging guidance which recognises our role. Regionally, this is already reflected in Hampshire, where the National Park has been incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the emerging “Hampshire Planning Advisory Board”. We are now working to secure similar recognition within Sussex governance structures.
- 4.26 The outcome of the LGR consultations is expected in the spring, at which point there will be greater clarity on the geography of new unitary authorities. This will have implications for our future membership and governance arrangements. Over the course of 2026, we will begin to consider how best to respond to these changes, with a view to maintaining the balanced and effective governance we currently benefit from. This work will align with other scheduled governance reviews, with more detailed proposals expected in late 2026 or 2027.
- 4.27 In the meantime, we continue to engage closely with existing local authority partners to understand emerging risks and opportunities associated with reorganisation, and members

will be kept informed as these develop. In the shorter term, the recently confirmed local elections will have a more immediate impact on our membership.

Income Generation

- 4.28 Since my last update on income generation in the Autumn, we have made strong and encouraging progress.
- 4.29 Most notably, due to an unprecedented major gift of approximately £3 million, we now have a total of £4.2 million secured through Fundraising. This represents a significant step forward and puts us in a very strong position as we move into the new financial year.
- 4.30 The Natural Capital Team has already exceeded its annual target, raising £423k against a target of £398k, with further gains expected before year-end. This will result in the Green Finance Reserve breaching £1 million, meaning we can be confident about our Natural Capital full cost recovery forecasts within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In addition, the team is engaged in exciting discussions around our Woodland Carbon Project, which is featured on today's agenda.
- 4.31 Importantly, £234k of the income received this year has the potential to contribute to unrestricted funding. This is a key objective as we move forward to ensure we are more financial sustainable and self-sufficient.
- 4.32 We have also made good progress on plans to further expand our income generation activity. Arrangements to establish a company within the Trust have now been approved by both the SDNPA and the South Downs Trust. Alongside this, tenders have been submitted to Defra, for their National BNG credits and Southern Water's £1 billion "Sustainable Drainage and Habitat Restoration Framework".
- 4.33 Our approach to this new venture will be cautious but ambitious. Over the coming year, we will focus on establishing the company and testing the market to better understand where the most significant opportunities for growth lie.

Urgent Action Decisions

- 4.34 I would also like to report, in line with the Authority's Standing Orders, two urgent action decisions that have been taken in consultation with Vanessa as Chair of the Authority. The first was the approval of a factual amendment to the Partnership Management Plan following the Government's announcement of the continuation of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme. The second was the approval of funding and the award of a contract to undertake works at Foxholes Cottages to ensure they are fit for purpose as holiday accommodation for the long-term.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 As with previous reports, the aim has been to provide a necessary snapshot of some of the highlights of the period since the report to the 9 December 2025 NPA, leaving Members to follow up any issues on which they would like more detail, or would like to discuss further at the Meeting.

SIÔN MCGEEVER

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Appendices: None

SDNPA Consultees: Director of Landscape and Operations; Director of Placemaking; Director of Growth and Organisational Development; Chief Finance Officer; Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer; Legal Services; Business Service Manager.

External Consultees: None

Background Documents: None

