

18 September 2015

Subject: South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework

This letter explains the work being undertaken by the South Downs National Park Authority and partner authorities to develop a South Downs Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework and seeks support for both the principle of a Framework and the milestones for achieving it.

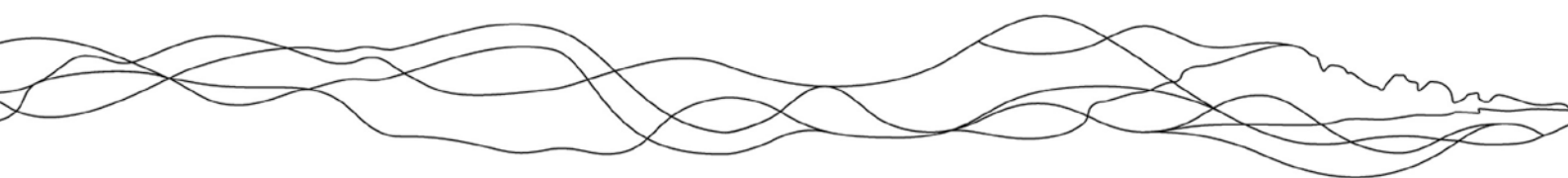
The case for a South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework emerged from public consultation in February 2014 on options for the South Downs Local Plan and your officers' advice following a GI workshop on October 14th. Overwhelming endorsement was received for a Local Plan GI policy that would be supported and informed by a GI Strategy setting out the approach to the provision of GI in and around the National Park in accordance with paragraph 114 of the NPPF. From further dialogue with partners, the consensus has been to develop a Framework rather than a strategy, the rationale being that a Framework more aptly describes the need to link with and build upon existing initiatives and strategies rather than risk duplication.

The Framework is as much aimed at delivery of GI outside of the South Downs National Park as it is about delivering it in the National Park. The focus is strategic delivery of GI across local authority boundaries, attracting the scale of funding that can only be achieved through partnership working.

The draft aim and objectives for the Framework were discussed, as advised at a workshop: *Planning to Deliver Multi-functional Benefits for the SDNP and Beyond* held at the South Downs Centre on 13 October 2014 and at a Duty to Co-operate event held in July 2015. The aims and objectives have since been refined via a Technical Working Group and are included in Enclosure 1 that provides further details of the proposed document and process toward adoption.

I would like to secure your feedback and support to the following programme for review and adoption of the Framework.

Nov	2015	Draft GI Framework to be circulated for officer review by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies;
Jan	2016	Updating of GI Framework to address officer comments;
Feb/Mar	2016	Formal Consultation on Revised Draft Framework by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies;

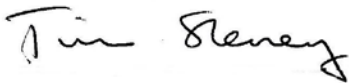


- Apr/May 2016 Further updating of GI Framework to respond to formal Consultation;
- Summer 2016 Final Framework Agreement circulated for signature by partner authorities / stakeholder bodies.

The GI Framework is an exciting opportunity to really add value at no cost to yourselves, and be in a good position to attract funds for GI. The Framework will offer opportunities to collaborate on evidence collection in support of the planning function and the potential to partner on major funding bids that support GI delivery across the Framework area.

I very much welcome your support for this initiative.

Yours



Tim Slaney
Director of Planning

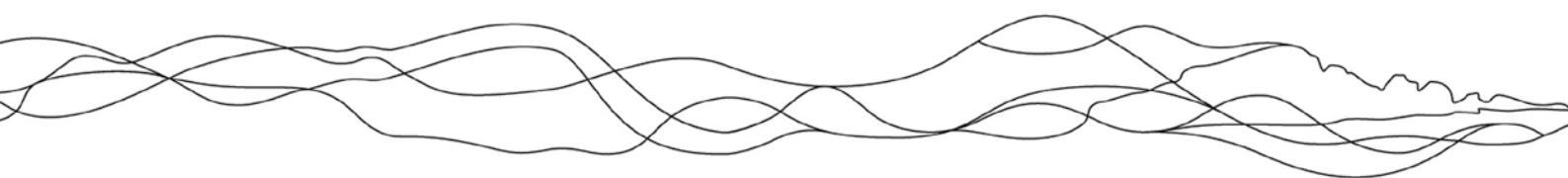
Enclosure I: South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework: Further Details.

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South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework

What is it?

The South Downs Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework is being developed to support the delivery of strategic GI across the administrative boundaries of local authorities in and around the South Downs National Park. The aim and objectives set out below provide a clearer picture of what the Framework sets out to achieve.

Aim

To create, protect and enhance a connected network of multifunctional assets; which sustainably meet the needs of local communities and supports the special qualities of the South Downs; by achieving a consensus about the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure.

Objectives

- *Use GI Assets to support health and well-being of people and businesses in the Framework area;*
- *Demonstrate and deliver economic benefits through GI;*
- *Protect and enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity to maintain and improve the health of the environment;*
- *Protect and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Framework area;*
- *Improve resilience to the effects of climate change;*
- *Improve the sustainability of communities across the Framework area;*
- *Improve opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the wildlife, natural beauty and the special qualities of the National Park;*
- *Use green infrastructure to support the delivery of ecosystem services;*
- *Integrate cultural heritage into the GI network;*
- *Improve access opportunities to natural greenspace in the Framework area for all sectors of society;*
- *Identify and prioritise opportunities to enhance and deliver optimum benefits from strategic GI;*
- *Encourage the enhancement and delivery of strategic GI through contributions from new development.*

What level of support does the Green Infrastructure Framework have?

A workshop to discuss the development of a South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework was attended by representatives from 14 of the 15 Local Planning Authorities that straddle the National Park boundary (see Annex A). It was also attended by representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage (now Historic England). The workshop provided feedback on draft objectives for the Framework and endorsed the appointment of a Technical Working Group

to oversee development of the Framework from among the delegates attending. The members of this group are listed below.

Technical Working Group Members

Name	Organisation
Natalie Bumpus	Wealden District Council
Virginia Pullan	East Sussex County Council
Ellie Henderson	Woodland trust
Tim Dyer	West Sussex County Council
Julie Boschi	Havant Borough Council
Rebecca Fry	Brighton and Hove City Council
Charmaine Smith	Surrey County Council
Ben Daines	Adur and Worthing Council
Rebecca Pearson	Natural England
Jennifer Hollingum	Mid Sussex District Council
Martin Small	English Heritage
Ian Phillips	SDNPA
Dave Brookshaw	Brighton & Hove LAF
Simon James	Forestry Commission
Sebastian Anstruther	SDNPA Member
Ses Wright	ARRT Project Officer
David Hill	Rural Surveyor, CLA
Rich Howarth	Brighton and Hove Biosphere Manager
Tom Ormesher	NFU
Hannah Hyland	Planning Liaison, Environment Agency
Rosie Pyper	Catchment Coordinator

Natural England views this initiative by the South Downs National Park Authority and its neighbouring local planning authorities as a rare opportunity to create a truly multifunctional GI network capable of delivering a broad range of ecosystem services on a landscape scale. For this potential to be realised, however, GI must be considered spatially in an overarching Framework. This must be strategic in nature with the ability to reach beyond the National Park Boundary.

What area will the Framework cover?

The proposed area for the Framework will include all of the District Authority partners which have an area within the SDNP. This provides a buffer around the entire National Park enabling cross-boundary issues to be captured. Cross boundary issues in the vicinity of Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA already form the focus for liaison on Habitats Regulations Assessment issues. Waverley BC is therefore being considered in relation cross boundary issues and will be invited to be a party to the Framework. There is clear overlap with The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Green infrastructure Strategy and Implementation Framework for South Hampshire and SDNPA has been actively contributing to the review of this. Close liaison between The PUSH Green infrastructure Strategy and Implementation Framework and South Downs GI Framework will be appropriate into the future to ensure collaboration on projects that are of mutual benefit. Similarly, the Framework would link to and complement work being undertaken via the Green Infrastructure West Sussex Network and the East Sussex Landscape and Biodiversity Working Group.

What is the current status of progress with the Framework?

The draft Aim and Objectives set out above were tabled at a meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on 16 September. The Framework document is being drafted by consultants Blackwood Bayne Ltd. commissioned by the SDNPA. A key element of their task has been to review the strategies and policies of all the partner authorities / organisations alongside other evidence and identify potential strategic GI priorities across the study area. The TWG has reviewed the strategic priorities and the structure and presentation of the draft Framework document on 16 September. Blackwood Bayne Consultants are now preparing a first draft of the document for circulation to TWG members for review in November 2015.

What commitment is being sought from potential Partners to the Framework?

The commitment required is to support the principle of joint working at a strategic level for the planning, investment and delivery of green infrastructure. There is no financial commitment being sought above and beyond staff time to support periodic meetings. The Framework will offer opportunities to collaborate on evidence collection in support of the planning function and the potential to partner on major funding bids that support GI delivery across the Framework area. All will be aware of emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plans and devolution bids in various Authorities. The Framework can both inform and enable potential cross-boundary GI projects. Some collaboration already takes place; the Framework aims to improve the range and scope of projects for which collaboration is possible.

Where to obtain further information?

Potential partners that have representatives involved in the Technical Working Group for the South Downs GI Framework may wish to discuss the Framework with their nominated TWG member in the first instance. However feedback on any aspect of the Framework is welcome by contacting the Project Manager direct; Ray.Drabble@southdowns.gov.uk; tel: 01730819262; mob: 07785425937.

Annex A to Enclosure I to
SDNPA Letter entitled 'South
Downs Green Infrastructure
Framework' dated 18 Sep 15.

Attendees at SDNPA hosted Workshop: 'Planning to Deliver Multi-functional Benefits for the SDNP and Beyond' dated 13 October 2014.

Organisation	Contact Name	Position
ESCC	Virginia Pullan	GI Lead
ESCC	Kate Cole	Biodiversity Lead
ESCC	Revai Kinsella	SUDS Lead
WSCC	Nicola Woolfenden	GI Lead
WSCC	Tim Dyer	Team Mgr Env & Heritage
HCC	Garry King	Project Officer (Policy)
Brighton and Hove	Rebecca Fry	Senior Planning Officer
Test Valley	Steve Lees	Hd Planning Policy & Transportation
Winchester	Susan Croker (nee Bragg)	Head of Landscape and Open Spaces
Wnchester	Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey	GI Lead
East Hants	Bruce Collinson	W&B Project Lead
Havant	Julie Boshi	Planning Policy
Arun	Charlotte Hardy	Planning Policy
Adur and Worthing	Hannah Grove	Planning Policy
Eastbourne	Simon Hurt	Parks and Gardens
Lewes DC	Robert King	Snr Planner & GI Rep
Mid Sussex	Jennifer Hollingum	Ashdown Forest/Habitats/SANG/SAMM
Wealden	Natalie Bumpus	Planning Officer
Natural England	Rebecca Pearson	SDNPA Planning Lead
Sussex WT	Henri Brocklebank	Strategy Lead – Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
Sussex WT	Laura Brook	Conservation Officer
Environment Agency	Hannah Hyland	Planning Liaison
ARRT	Sebastian Anstruther	Chair, Arun and Rother Rivers Trust
EC WG on GI	Ian Philips	Rep of the EC WG on GI
Forestry Commission	Alison field	Area Dir.
Forestry Commission	Matthew Woodcock	Forest Svcs Rep
Forestry Commission	Simon James	Area Mgr
Woodland Trust	Ellie Henderson	Regional and Local Govt Officer
National Trust	Jane Cecil	
SD LAF	David Brookshaw	B&H LAF
English Heritage	Martin Small	EH Planning Liaison
SD LAF	Glynn Hugh Jones	S. Downs Society
Thurrock Council	Allison Campbell	Landscape Strategy Mgr