South Downs
National Park Authority

WHOLE ESTATE PLANS PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Background, Content and FAQs

Issued 02.12.2015
Rev A (Issued 14.06.2016)
Rev B (Issued 22.05.2017)

Prepared by: South Downs National Park Authority

DRAFT DOCUMENT: Please note, this document is not a formal SDNPA policy document. It is provided in good faith to aid discussion with those seeking to prepare Whole Estate Plans. It should not be published in any format without the express permission of SDNPA.

Comments or queries regarding this document should be sent to:

WEPS@southdowns.gov.uk

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The area now designated as the South Downs National Park includes significant privately owned and farmed areas of the landscapes. It is also the most heavily populated National Park in the UK. The National Park brings many tangible benefits, however the management of this landscape and these benefits is intrinsically linked to many of the large estates and farm operations located within the National Park.

The National Park Authority are currently preparing its Local Plan. The Plan is landscape led with the concept of Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital the core focus of the approach. The Local Plan recognises the significant influence of the estates and farms across the National Park and the impact the management activities of these estates has in the short, medium and long term. We also recognise the challenges faced by those who own and operate these estates to both manage the land and maintain some the most significant cultural/heritage assets within the SDNP. By providing a degree of flexibility when considering development proposals on estates which have prepared an endorsed Whole Estate Plan (Strategic Policy SD22: Development Strategy) it is hoped that balance can be achieved.

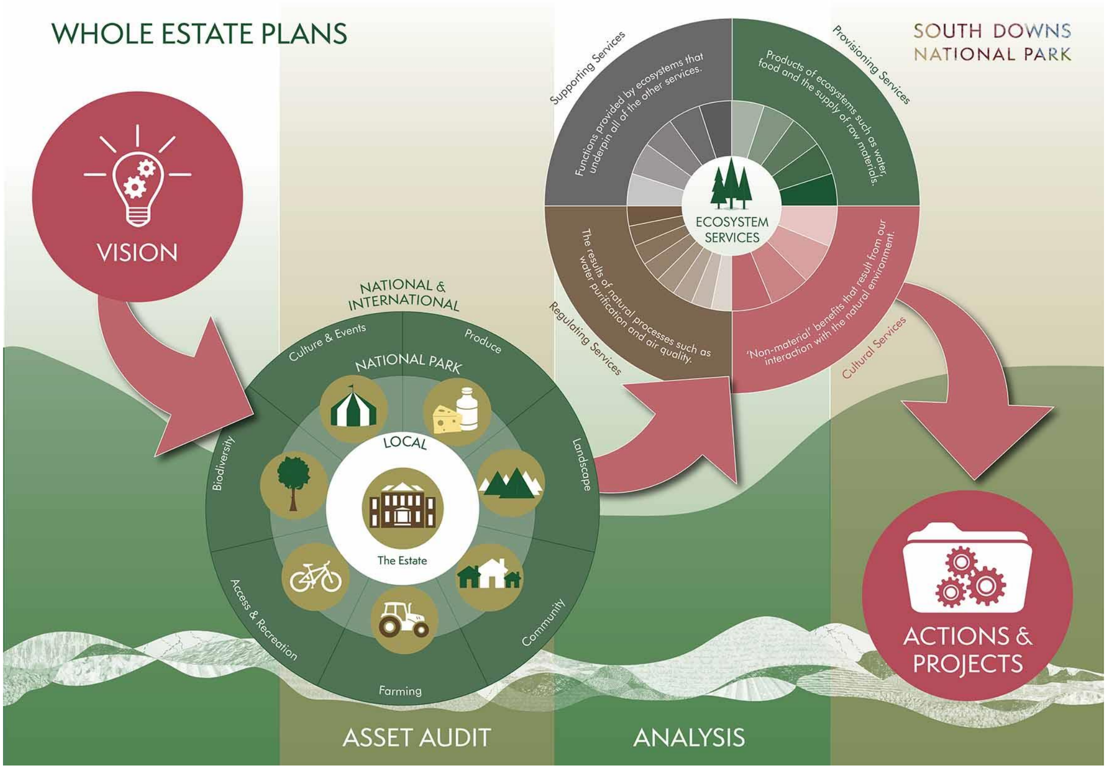
Why: Enabling collaboration between individual estates and the National Park Authority to achieve the ambitions of the organisation and the purposes of the National Park.

What: A non-statutory plan which demonstrates the overall position and aspirations of an organisation. Plans do not have to cover a specific time period, and may be updated to reflect changes in circumstance or withdrawn if appropriate. Plans can also be presented for endorsement by the National Park.

Who: Whole Estate Plans are designed to support organisations which are generally large landholdings which include complex commercial, social and environmental activities. It is the intention of the NPA that no organisation which can show practical reasons for the preparation of a WEP will be discouraged. However it is generally expected that WEPs will generally be land holdings in excess of 400 acres, with multiple diverse activities, and employing or having residents in excess of 30 people.

How: We have created a basic format which we feel is both practical for smaller organisations with limited resources and/or aspirations for development, and which can be expanded to accommodate those estates who are seeking to support large scale multi-facetted development programmes. The simple form of the content is;

- Vision
- Asset Audit
- Ecosystem Services Analysis
- Action Plan



Frequently Asked Questions in Brief

Q1: Will my Whole Estate Plan be adopted as planning policy? - No it won't. Whole Estate Plans are not a statutory planning document identified in the NPPF.

Q2: Will producing a Whole Estate Plan guarantee me planning permission? - No, it will not guarantee you planning consent. However, Whole Estate Plans which are endorsed by SDNP will carry additional material weight.

Q3: Do I need to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)? - No you don't. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments are prepared for individual planning applications.

Q4: How do I protect commercial confidentiality? - The SDNP wish to encourage openness and transparency between organisations leading the stewardship of the National Park. Therefore, Whole Estate Plans may include a 'Part B'. This may contain sensitive information and financial elements which whilst referenced in the plan text would not be placed in the public domain by the NPA, and may be exempt from FOI requests.

Q5: Can I prepare the plan without a team of consultants? - Absolutely, your Whole Estate Plan can be a simple document, which in its base form is a 100 word vision, a series of maps with some commentary and two tables.

Q6: How will this impact on my work with other organisations like HLS etc? - We anticipate that a lot of the information which many of you have already prepared for funding bids such as HLS will be very useful in preparing your Whole Estate Plan.

Q7: Do I need to formally consult with the public? - No you don't. This is not a formal planning policy document, and therefore formal public consultation is not required. However it is recommended that you engage both internally and externally with local stakeholders in order to get the most from the process.

Q8: How will SDNPA be involved? - The SDNPA's involvement will vary subject to the collective resources available, however initially we would recommend engaging with your areas Countryside Policy Manager, Lead Ranger or Planning Link Officer.

Q9: Where can I get mapped spatial data from? – A 'Mapping Package' is available from the NPA, please contact us for more information.

Q10: What timescale should our WEP cover? – A practical time frame would be similar to the Local Plan which will cover the period to 2032. A period of up to 15 years allows the identification of long term goals but is not so far reaching as to become merely a wish list.

1.0 Introduction

The area now designated as the South Downs National Park includes significant privately owned and farmed areas of the landscapes. It is also the most heavily populated National Park in the UK.

The National Park brings many tangible benefits contributing over £2billion pounds to the regional economy. It produces significant quantities of food, supplies many people with drinking water and the opportunities for fresh air, exercise and tranquillity which can be found among the chalk downland, farms, heaths, villages, woods and river valleys. However the management of this landscape and these benefits is intrinsically linked to many of the large estates and farm operations located within the National Park. (Fig 1)

The support of the large estates and farms is fundamental to the success of the National Park. Large scale landowners can make a significant positive impact in assisting the National Park Authority in tackling overarching issues within the Park. Examples include fragmentation of chalk grassland and heathland, piecemeal erosion of landscape quality through clutter and signage, loss of heritage assets, access issues, challenges to the profitability of farming, supporting tourism, loss of public services in small communities, and the barrier that house prices present to those starting their working lives within the National Park. On top of all these factors, climate change is likely to have fundamental effects on biodiversity, agriculture and water resources. Working together will create the economies of scale needed to tackle these types of issues.

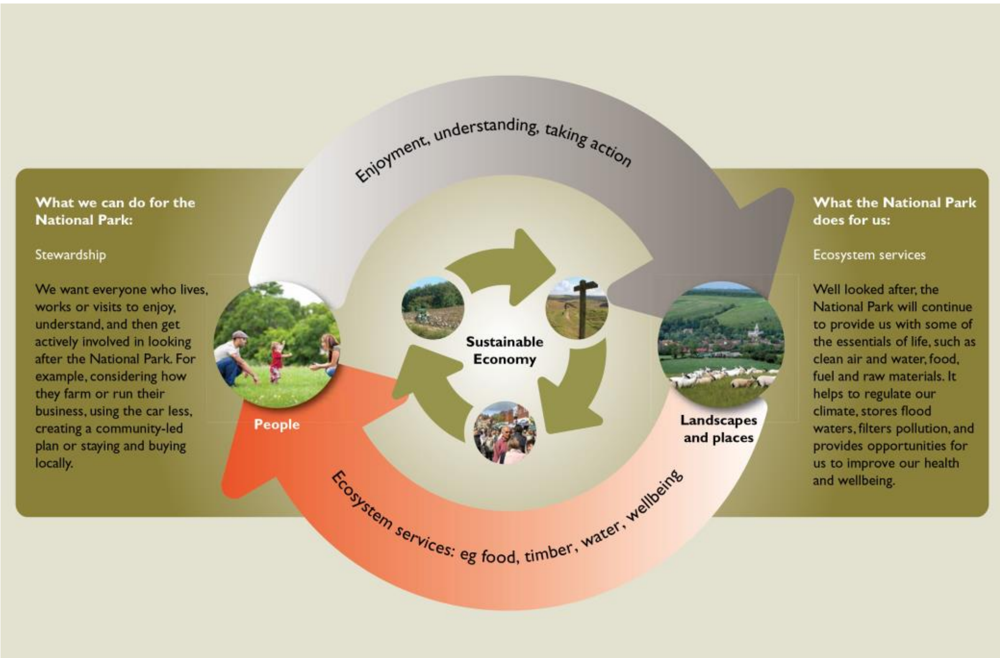


Fig 1: The Sustainable Economy

1.1 The shared Vision for the South Downs National Park (2050).

The National Park has set out its vision for 2050, which focuses on;

- Conserving English lowland landscapes and heritage
- Protecting and managing habitats to support wildlife networks throughout the landscape
- Enhance the relationship between people and the landscape
- Create a self-sustaining and empowered community
- Support successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the national park

The Whole Estates Plan process seeks to assist the South Downs National Park Authority and large estate organisations to work together in delivery of this vision.

1.2 Understanding the Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park

It is critical that when preparing Whole Estate Plans, estates and big farms continually focus back towards the seven special qualities of the South Downs National Park which were identified by the public as a measure of whether activities or proposals will have a positive impact towards the Vision for 2050.
The special qualities are:

1. Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views
2. Tranquil and unspoilt places
3. A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species
4. An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise
5. Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences
6. Well-conserved historical features and rich cultural heritage
7. Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area.

This approach is reflective of the overall goal of the Whole Estate Plans which is to be a holistic document which captures the spirit and productivity of individual estates, not just a planning document.

1.3 Achieving the Vision for the South Downs National Park

The Partnership Management Plan (PMP) identifies the steps needed to achieve the Vision for the National Park by 2050. It sets out the short term policies for the five year period of the PMP which take us a step closer to achieving the long-term vision for the National Park.

There are both general policies such as developing landscape scale partnerships and initiatives to focus on enhancing the key ecosystem services delivered by the National Park, such as improving and maintaining the rights of way and access within the land; to provide a better connected and accessible network for a range of abilities and users and to reduce conflict where it occurs and; enhance local production by developing local economic supply chains and enabling businesses in the National Park to gain added value by linking their marketing activities to the special qualities of the area.

The delivery framework then identifies specific projects and programmes of work which will drive progress and improve the condition of the special qualities of the National Park. These can only be achieved by many landowners, businesses, organisations and individuals working together. These are areas where it is hoped that the production of WEPs will both enable Estates to identify ways in which they can support the National Park, but also areas where through facilitation the NPA can assist in developing collaborative working for the benefit of the National Park as a whole.

1.4 South Downs Local Plan

The National Park Authority are currently preparing its Local Plan. The Plan is landscape led with the concept of Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital the core focus of the approach. This will be the first time that there will be a comprehensive set of park-wide planning policies which will deliver co-ordinated and appropriate growth. (Fig 2)

The Local Plan recognises the significant influence of the estates and farms across the National Park and the impact the management activities of these estates has in the short, medium and long term. We also recognise the challenges faced by those who own and operate these estates to both manage the land and maintain some the most significant cultural/heritage assets within the SDNP. By providing a degree of flexibility when considering development proposals on estates which have prepared an endorsed Whole Estate Plan (Strategic Policy SD22: Development Strategy) it is hoped that balance can be achieved.

However this can only be done within an informed context which clearly sets out the longer term role of a development proposal within the overall ambition of the organisation and its contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park, its special qualities and the ecosystem services it provides. For this reason the National Park Authority supports Whole Estate Plans as a vehicle for understanding this context.

Fig 2: Whole Estate Plans within the NPA Policy Framework (See Appendix for large copy)

1.5 Whole Estate Plans: Why, When, What, Who & How

Why: Enabling collaboration between individual estates and the National Park Authority to achieve the ambitions of the land holding and estate and the purposes of the National Park . WEPS identify opportunities and threats to both parties and facilitates mutually acceptable and proactive solutions.

When: In line with the preparation of the Local Plan, we would like a group of WEPs to be endorsed by SDNPA by Summer 2016 to demonstrate at the Examination in Public the opportunity that this approach demonstrates.

What: A non-statutory plan which demonstrates the overall position and aspirations of an organisation. Plans do not have to cover a specific time period, and may be updated to reflect changes in circumstance or withdrawn if appropriate. Plans can also be presented for endorsement by the National Park.

Who: Whole Estate Plans are designed to support organisations which are generally large landholdings which include complex commercial, social and environmental activities. The reality is that across the National Park the physical attributes of an organisation which wishes to prepare a Whole Estate Plan will vary enormously. It is the intention of the NPA that no organisation which can show practical reasons for the preparation of a WEP will be discouraged. However for reference it is generally expected that WEPs will be of most use to organisations which include land holdings in excess of 400 acres, with multiple diverse activities, and employing or having resident in excess of 30 people.

How: We have created a basic format which we feel is both practical for smaller organisations with limited resources and/or aspirations for development, and which can be expanded to accommodate those estates who are seeking to support large scale multi-facetted development programmes. The simple form of the content is;

- Vision
- Asset Audit
- Ecosystem Services Analysis
- Action Plan

Over the course of this document we seek to explain what each section should include, why we are asking for this information, and who is best placed to prepare it. At the end of the document is a set of Frequently Asked Questions which we have prepared based on initial discussions with many organisations within the National Park. (Fig 3)

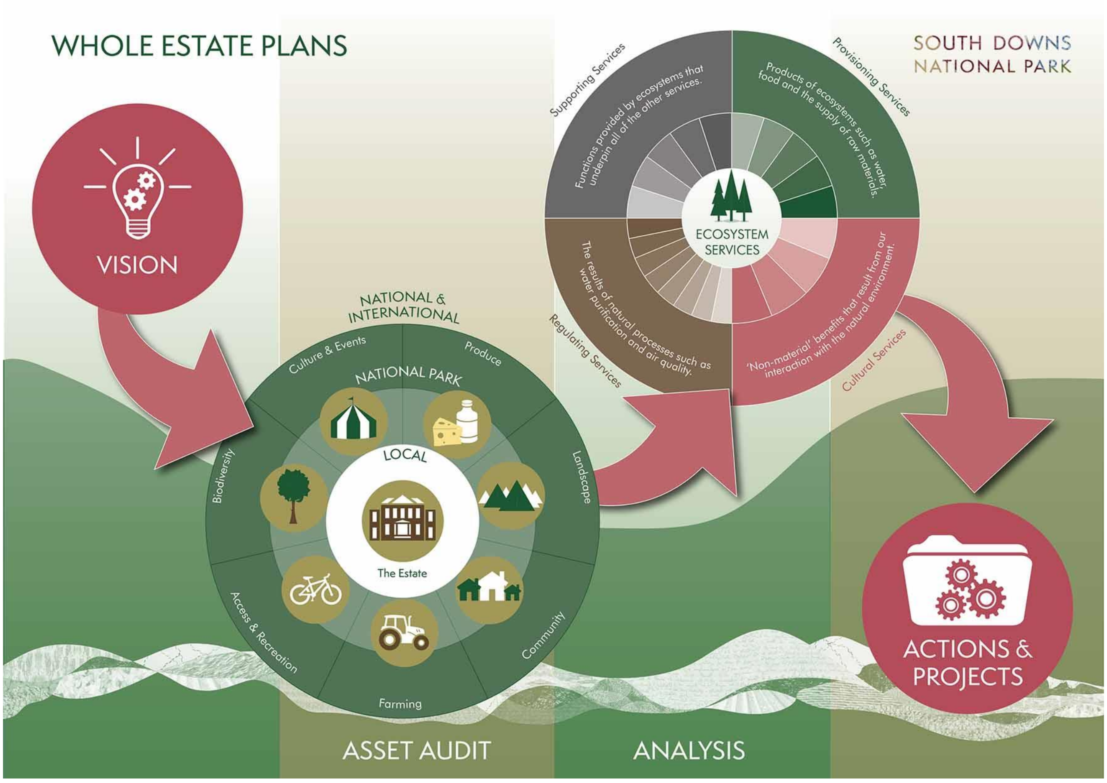


Fig 3: Whole Estate Plans Context Infographic (See appendix for large copy)

2.0 Estate Vision

2.1 What is the Estate Vision?

The Estate Vision is a simple statement (approximately 200 words maximum) that clearly sets out the priorities of your organisation. This should not be development focused (i.e. It is our vision to build 20 new houses, a biomass heating system and five new commercial units over the next 20 years). It should focus on the ethos of the organisation (e.g. It is our vision to create a visitor focused destination, which integrates heathland management with strong links to the South Downs Way whilst maintaining and enhancing the estates historic assets and continuing to support those who live and work on the Estate).

2.2 Why have an Estate Vision?

So that everyone, including all parts of both your own organisation, the South Downs National Park Authority and members of your local community can clearly and easily see what your priorities are. Many landholdings will already have a vision for their organisation. You do not need to change this. For organisations which are centred around a specific activity (e.g. education) your vision is likely to be very specific and not necessarily tailored towards the National Park. This is a perfectly acceptable approach, though we would encourage organisations to consider whether specific inclusion of the National Park and/or its purposes could be of overall benefit.

2.3 Who should write the Estate Vision?

This needs to be agreed at the highest level within your organisation, with cumulative buy-in to what the Estate wishes to achieve for the future.

3.0 Asset Audit

3.1 What is the Asset Audit?

The Asset Audit is a complete picture of all of the assets of the organisation. Whilst predominately physical, the asset audit should include items like areas of tranquillity and dark night skies and community facilities such as schools, shops and micro businesses which are supported by the Estate. This should be set out at the following levels;

National Park – Including but not limited to Landscape Scale Management Plans: Planning Policy, Landscape Designations, Biodiversity Designations, Cultural Heritage Designations, Access & Recreation Designations and Facilities.

(SCALE: Extending into the wider park to cover connections between the Estate and the National Park. FORMAT: Large scale plan. INPUTS: Data is available through a range of sources, including the mapping package available through the NPA)

Estate – Including but not limited to; Detailed Landscape (e.g. ancient woodlands), Bio Diversity Management (e.g. SSSI), Areas under specific management agreements (e.g. HLS), Listed Buildings, Gardens and Parklands, Boundaries of any publicly accessible elements (e.g. visitors centres and associated environs) and areas where privacy is maintained (e.g. tranquil areas around private property). Key public access routes within the Estate (e.g. public footpaths, bridleways, roads etc), existing properties identified by type (e.g. estate owned residential properties, commercial rental properties, commercial properties identified with specific businesses within the estate, properties associated with estate management or farming). Areas being farmed in a specific way (e.g. pasture, arable, farmed woodlands etc).

(SCALE: The Estate boundary plus its immediate environs as required. FORMAT: Medium scale plan plus small scale additions as required. INPUTS: The majority of the data will need to be provided by the Estate)

Connectivity – Identifying the connections the estate makes on a range of scales. Potentially local, National Park, national & international. (e.g. local = maintaining facilities for the resident community & staff, National Park = facilitating a segment of a park wide walking route or managing a major visitor attraction, National = hosting a nationally significant annual cultural event, International = export of locally produced products).

(SCALE: Dependent on the range and type of activities to be mapped. FORMAT: It is expected that this plan would be diagrammatic. INPUTS: Data provided by the Estate)

In its simplest form the Asset Audit is a series of maps which show the detail of the Estate. In its most detailed form the Asset Audit would be a series of maps, including larger scaled detailed sections where appropriate, accompanied by associated text and images giving additional detail on specific elements where appropriate.

Please note that these content lists are not exhaustive, and initial consultation with officers at SDNP to identify the unique requirements of your Estate are recommended.

3.2 Why have an Asset Audit?

The asset audit allows the estate and all its activities to be seen within its context, locally, within the National Park and nationally/internationally. It is critical to gather this information together so that it can be viewed as a whole. For those with complex future development plans the asset audit will be particularly helpful in ensuring that everyone involved in the stewardship of the National Park can see the context and connectivity of the whole estate and all of its activities, rather than just individual elements.

3.3 Who should write the Asset Audit?

Simple asset audits can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate. However the assistance of a cartographer may be of benefit to ensure that the spatial information is as useful as it can be to the wider Estate operation. SDNPA are able to provide some assistance with mapping of strategic level designations (see above).

It is recommended that the managers of all key enterprises/activities within the estate are involved in developing the content of the asset audit. This could include but is not limited to; estate/farm managers, individual enterprise/business activity managers, property managers, community infrastructure managers, event/product managers etc.

Where estates are particularly large and/or complex, additional professional disciplines may be of assistance depending on the particular circumstances of the individual estate, this could include; Landscape & Ecology, Planning, Master Planning, Conservation/Historic Buildings.

3.4 Scale and Volume of Information in the Asset Audit

We appreciate that depending on the size and complexity of the individual landholding that there may be a large volume of spatial data which could be included within the Whole Estate Plan. We would recommend that estates take a pragmatic approach to assessing the how much data to include. A clear overall picture will be required, and there is likely to be specialist data sets which are particularly pertinent to a particular landholding which it is therefore worth preparing in their fullest detail. It is recommended that where this is an issue that landowners have an early discussions with SDNPA to establish a priority list. As an overall principle, if it is envisaged that a data set will be needed in order to justify an action plan item, it should be included.

3.5 Critical issues relating to the Asset Audit

Ideally the production of the Asset Audit should be an opportunity for Estates to gather information from all levels within their organisation. It is not uncommon for simple but critically important assets to go unrecognised by senior management, who cannot be ‘in the field’ every day. Estates are strongly encouraged to involve and engage with their entire organisation in the process if at all possible in order to get maximum benefit from the exercise. Ideally all those involved with the Estate/Landholding should be aware of the Whole Estate Plan and their role in it.

The asset audit should not be a list of potential development sites. Whilst allocated housing sites and settlement/parish boundaries might be included within planning designations identified within the asset list, these must be seen holistically within the wider context.

3.6 Mapping Package

To support the preparation of the Asset Audit the NPA have created a mapping package which provides a range of basic data which will be useful to the majority of organisations wishing to prepare a Whole Estate Plan.

Additional information regarding the content and how to order the mapping package for your organisation is available on request from the NPA.

4.0 Ecosystem Services Analysis

4.1 What is the Ecosystem Services Analysis?

The Partnership Management Plan and emerging Local Plan for the South Downs National Park is based on the concept of our (The SDNPA and landowners) stewardship enabling the National Park to continue providing the many eco systems services which provide us with life's essentials; clean air and water, food, fuel and raw materials. Climate regulation, flood management, pollution filters and opportunities for improved health and wellbeing. (Fig 4)

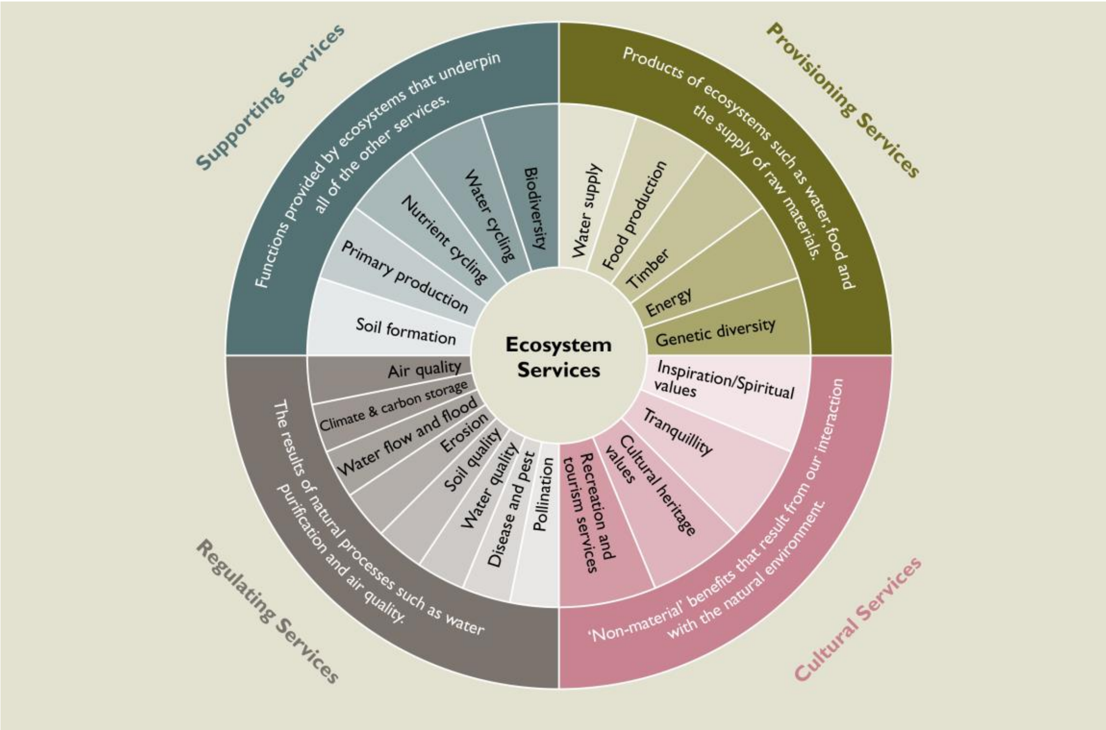


Fig 4: Ecosystem Services Diagram

The Ecosystem Services Analysis is essentially a tailored SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) Analysis, which is a simple but effective tool to understand current and future issues and opportunities. By prioritising what is identified the greatest opportunities for positive impact can be identified. Linking this to the purposes of the National Park enables us to work together to support it.

In its simplest form the Ecosystem Services Analysis could be a basic table. (Fig 5) Where an estate does not contribute to a particular Ecosystem Service, this section can simply be left blank. Future opportunities and threats can still be identified if appropriate.

		STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITY?
Functions provided by Ecosystems that underpin all of the other services	Bio Diversity					
	Water Cycling					
	Nutrient Cycling					
	Primary Production					
	Soil Formation					
Products of ecosystems such as water, food and the supply of raw materials	Water Supply					
	Food Production					
	Timber					
	Energy					
	Genetic Diversity					
The results of natural processes such as water purification and air quality	Air Quality					
	Climate & Carbon Storage					
	Water Flow & Flood					
	Erosion					
	Soil Quality					
	Water Quality					
	Disease & Pest					
	Pollination					
Non-material benefits that result from our interaction with the natural environment	Inspiration / Spiritual Values					
	Tranquility					
	Cultural Heritage Values					
	Recreation & Tourism Services					

Fig 5: Example of basic Ecosystem Analysis table

In its most detailed form the Ecosystem Services Analysis might need to be broken down into a series of tables in order to accommodate the amount of information to be included. Where there are particularly large or complex issues under a particular topic which will have a profound impact on the Estate and National Park it may be appropriate to provide additional text and images giving additional detail.

4.2 Why have an Ecosystem Services Analysis?

By taking the assets of an Estate (as identified in the Asset Audit) and comparing them to the Ecosystem Services, the individual strengths and weaknesses of an estate, and identify the opportunities and threats it faces in a clear and methodical way. This approach combines both the needs of the Estate and of the National Park, and allows both groups to comprehend the others aspirations and needs more clearly.

4.3 Who should write the Ecosystem Services Analysis?

A simple Ecosystem Services Analysis can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate. Like the Asset Audit, it is recommended that the managers of all key enterprises/activities within the estate are involved in developing the content of the Analysis. Those team members who are intimately acquainted with the day to day running of the estate are best placed to identify the opportunities and threats that face both the Estate and the National Park.

Where estates/landholdings are particularly large and/or complex additional professional assistance, particularly from a multi-disciplinary planner/master planner may be of benefit to bring together all of the strands of information. The input and advice of any professionals (in areas such as landscape/ecology, heritage/conservation) who assisted in the preparation of the Asset Audit may also be useful.

5.0 Action Plan

5.1 What is the Action Plan?

The Action Plan takes the opportunities and threats identified in the Ecosystem Services Analysis and identifies the actions required and the specific projects attached to achieving those actions. Where possible these should be broadly defined by priority (High, Medium & Low) and timescale (short, medium and long term), though the framework of how these are defined can be set by individual estates depending on their individual needs.

In its simplest form the Action Plan could be a table which lists Overall Actions and Individual Projects, where appropriate their planning policy designations and their likely timeframe, listed by order of priority. (Fig 6)

		Additional Information (where relevant)		
ACTION AREA	PROJECTS	Legislative Policies (Planning etc)	Funding Streams or other involved organisations	Timescale
A	Project 1			
	Project 2			
	Project 3			
B	Project 1			
	Project 2			
	Project 3			
C	Project 1			
	Project 2			
	Project 3			
D	Project 1			
	Project 2			
	Project 3			

Fig 6: Example of basic Action Plan table

It is suggested that, where possible, Estates include approximate timescales and priorities, in order to give some shape to their delivery schedule, however it is recognised that these will vary between estates and may not be appropriate for all.

It may also be appropriate in particular circumstances where a project identified is complex or significant to provide additional appended information about that project. This would be helpful and expected where a significant planning application is anticipated. (See FAQs relating to commercial confidentiality).

5.2 Why have an Action Plan?

The Action Plan is an opportunity to clearly articulate the activities which will take the Estate forward in its role as a steward within the National Park and as an individual organisation. It allows the National Park Authority to see individual projects within the context of a wider set of actions. This is particularly important for Development Management activities where individual requests for planning consent may need to be understood within the context of the collective stewardship of the National Park.

5.3 Who should write the Action Plan?

A simple Action Plan can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate, but should ideally be completed by the senior management team across all aspects of the Estate's management.

Where estates are particularly large and/or complex additional professional assistance, particularly from a multi-disciplinary planner and/or estate manager may be of benefit to ensure that the Action Plan can be effective as part of the estates wider business plan.

5.4 Critical issues relating to the Action Plan

The Action Plan should not just be a list of capital development projects. There should be a clear progression and justification of projects from the Asset Audit, through the Ecosystem Services Analysis and into the Action Plan. The inclusion of projects designed as enabling development is not precluded, but there should be a clear process to demonstrate need if this to be considered reasonable within the planning process (See FAQs relating to commercial confidentiality and planning consent).

FAQ’s

Q1: Will my Whole Estate Plan be adopted as planning policy?

No it won’t. Whole Estate Plans are not a statutory planning document identified in the NPPF and therefore cannot be adopted (like a Local Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plan or Village Design Statement).

However, it is the intention of the SDNP to ‘endorse’ Whole Estate Plans which are of sufficient quality. This would give them ‘material weight’ in planning decisions, and as such could be used by DM Officers and Planning Committee Members as background information when making planning decisions (See Q2: Will this guarantee me planning permission?)

Whole Estate Plans put forward for endorsement would be reviewed by the Policy & Programme Committee.

Q2: Will producing a Whole Estate Plan guarantee me planning permission?

No, it will not guarantee you planning consent. However, Whole Estate Plans which are endorsed by SDNP (See Q1: Will my Whole Estate Plan be adopted as planning legislation) will carry additional material weight.

One of the benefits of the Whole Estate Plan approach is that for Estates which have long term aspirations involving multiple development projects of various types, the Whole Estate Plan can be used as the initial evidence base for a range of applications such as HLS Funding Bids as well as Planning Applications. (See Q3: Do I need to prepare a LVIA). Ensuring continuity of approach, and allowing planning officers and Members to understand the intention behind an application. Currently individual applications can often appear disparate and unconnected, and it takes significant time and resources on the part of both the applicant and the authority to get to grips with both the implications of an application and how that application can produce wider benefits. By producing a simple document that clearly sets out the framework and rationale behind a range of applications this process is simplified.

The Whole Estate Plan will allow planning officers and Members to get up to speed not only with an individual project, but also how that project fits into your wider aspirations for your estate. It will also allow estate/landholding managers, all in the Estate and development management officers to identify opportunities to create wider community benefits which may have a positive benefit to the Estate itself.

Q3: Do I need to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)?

No you don’t. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments are prepared for individual planning applications. However if the Estate contains particularly sensitive features then mapping the areas of visual impact associated with them in order to inform later LVIA’s associated with specific planning applications may be appropriate.

Q4: How do I protect commercial confidentiality?

We appreciate that particularly within the Action Plan section of the Whole Estate Plans, we are asking you to identify projects which we recognise may be commercially sensitive, or where the detail of a project may be financially sensitive. These aspects may however be critical to explaining their rationale, particularly where they form a package including enabling development.

The SDNP wish to encourage openness and transparency between organisations leading the stewardship of the National Park. Therefore, Whole Estate Plans may include a 'Part B' to either the Ecosystem Services Analysis or the Action Plan. This may contain sensitive information and financial elements which whilst referenced in the plan text would not be placed in the public domain by the NPA.

Subject to a public interest test, Part B documents may also be withheld from publication under the Freedom of Information Act. (FOIs 43 (Commercial Interests) and EIR Reg 12 (5) (E) (Confidentiality of Commercial or Industrial Information)).

Q5: Can I prepare the plan without a team of consultants?

Absolutely, your Whole Estate Plan can be a simple document, which in its base form is a 100 word vision, a series of maps with some commentary and two tables. This can be prepared by any Estate Management team willing to put the time and effort in.

However, realistically those estates which are large and/or complex, will benefit from targeted professional assistance. This is primarily in the production of the document, rather than gathering the technical information. The vast majority of the content of your plan will come from working with your existing in-house team who know your estate better than any consultant ever could, but who will benefit from having someone who can pull together all the strands of information, present them effectively and assist in teasing out the future opportunities and threats to your organisation.

We would strongly recommend that this is a role best taken on by a multi-disciplinary planner. I.e. someone with a planning qualification and experience in landscape, master planning, or land management. Your choice should be based on the particular needs of your estate. This is not necessarily a project which should be led by a land agent, as individual development projects should form only one part of the document, and be framed within the wider context of the Estate as a whole and its stewardship role within the National Park.

Q6: How will this impact on my work with other organisations like HLS etc?

We anticipate that a lot of the information which many of you have already prepared for funding bids such as HLS will be very useful in preparing your Whole Estate Plan, and we would anticipate that an endorsed Whole Estate Plan will also be useful in showing your long term aspirations for your organisation in future funding bids.

Q7: Do I need to formally consult with the public?

No you don't. This is not a formal planning policy document, and therefore formal public consultation is not required. It is however recommended that you take the opportunity to use the preparation of your Whole Estate Plan to engage both internally and externally in order to get the most from the process.

If you wish to have your WEP endorsed by the National Park, then you should be able to demonstrate how you have engaged with the wider community and the impact this has had on the content of the WEP. Groups which may be able to positively contribute could be 'normal' stakeholders such as parish councils, but could also include tenant farmers, residents groups, and visitors to events or facilities on the estate, commercial suppliers or the local education authority. All may be able to offer useful insight into opportunities for the organisation to develop in the future.

Organisations should be particularly aware of the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) which may include areas within their control. Ideally estates should be fully engaged in the NDP process. Producing a WEP which is broadly aligned with an NDP is likely to be more beneficial in the long term, and will also assist in any applications for planning consent given that NDP's are formally adopted as planning policy. You are however under no obligation to conform with the content of any NDP relevant to your land holdings.

Q8: How will SDNPA be involved?

The SDNPA's involvement will vary subject to the collective resources available. Initially we would recommend engaging with your areas Countryside Policy Manager, Lead Ranger or Planning Link Officer, who will be able to assist in establishing if a WEP is appropriate for your organisation. We would then engage with you to establish what data may be useful to inform your Asset Audit and how you can collate this (see FAQ on the Mapping Package). When your WEP is prepared in draft format, review by specialist officers (landscape, access, heritage, biodiversity) is recommended to assist in drafting the Ecosystem Services Analysis in order to identify all relevant opportunities, which can be arranged by SDNPA. This will also assist the NPA in proactively facilitating opportunities across different agencies and organisations and to ensure that the plan can be 'endorsed'. This will be particularly important for those estates with complex and/or long term plans.

Q9: Where can I get mapped spatial data from?

We understand that for many organisations it is not the understanding and interpretation of spatial data about your landholdings which is difficult (no-one knows your estate better than you do), but collating and presenting that data on maps.

For this reason the NPA has put together a 'Mapping Package'. This allows organisations to access a range of standard information which covers the topic areas most frequently required by organisations preparing a WEP. The data will include your ownership boundary, and prepared as a standard scale PDF which can easily be placed into a document. For more detailed information on the 'Mapping Package' including content and cost, please contact the NPA.

Q10: What timescale should our WEP cover?

SDNPA recognise that many of the organisations interested in preparing WEPs have unique circumstances, often requiring very long term planning relating to issues such as inheritance planning, and also shorter term issues such as funding streams. Therefore we have not specified a timescale which a WEP must cover. However we would suggest that a practical time frame would be similar to the Local Plan which will cover the period to 2032. A period of up to 15 years seems practical for the majority in allowing the identification of long term goals but not being so far reaching as to become merely a wish list.

Appendix 1: Diagrams

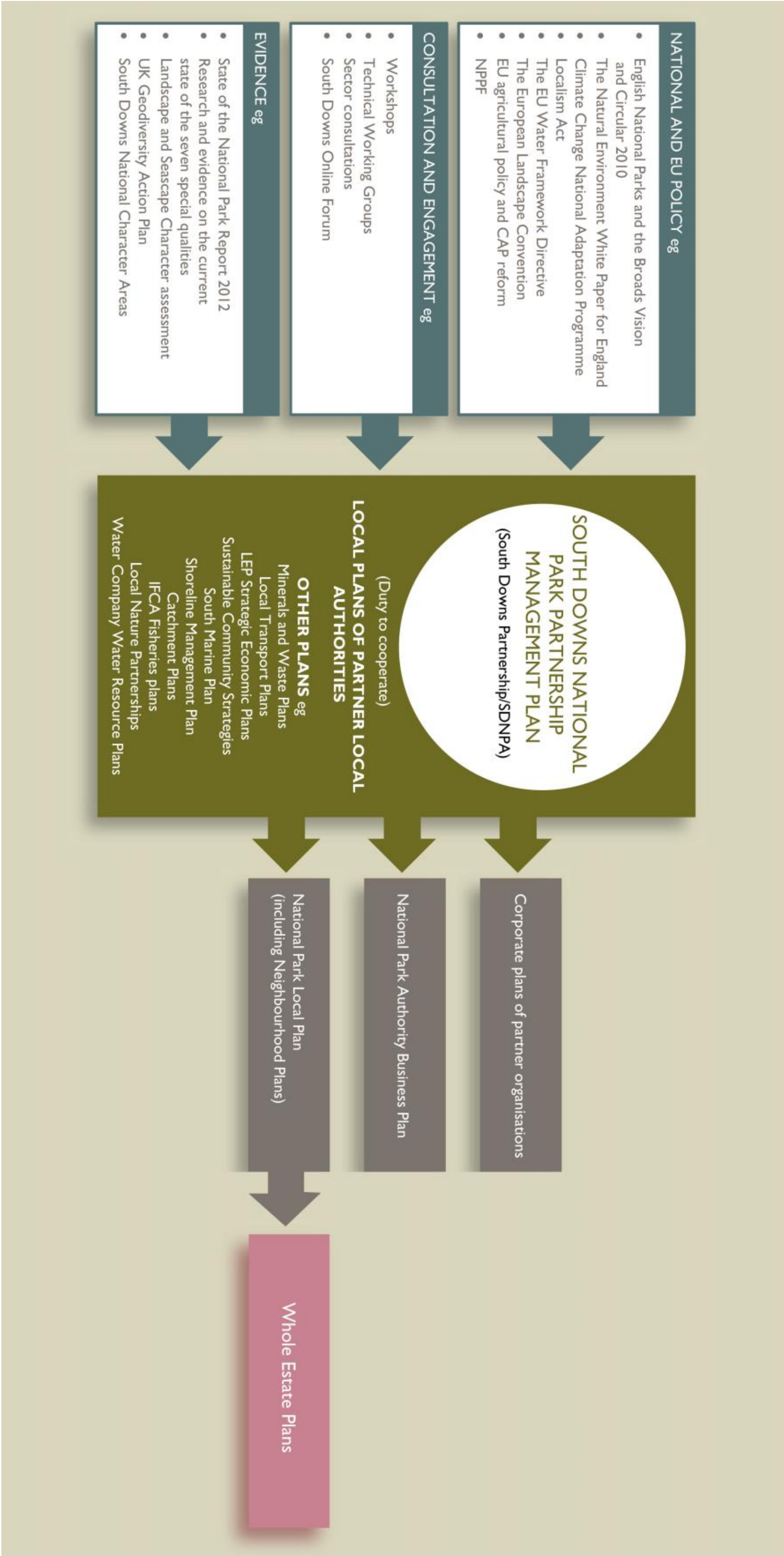


Fig 2: Whole Estate Plans within the NPA Policy Framework

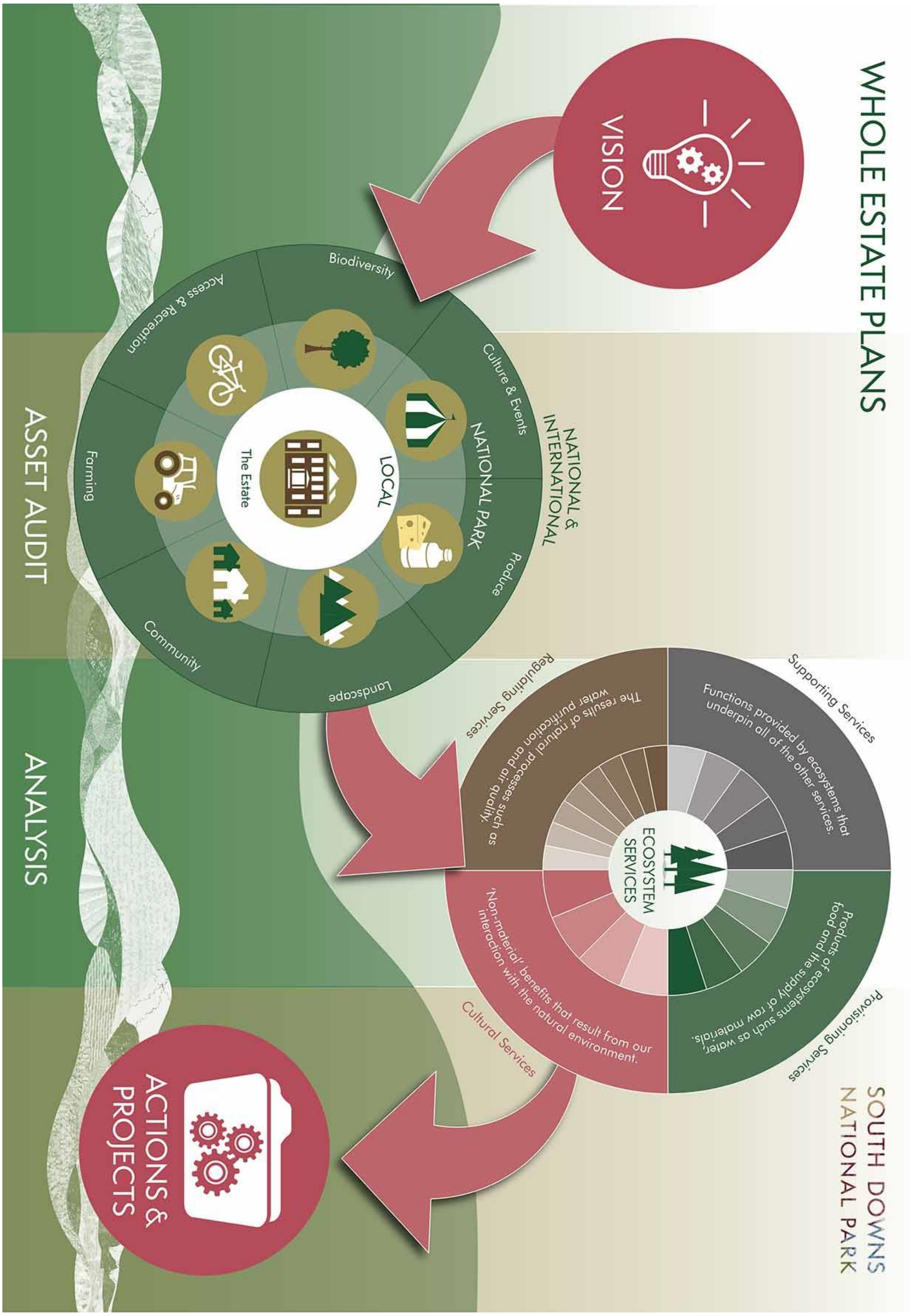


Fig 3: Whole Estate Plans Context Infographic