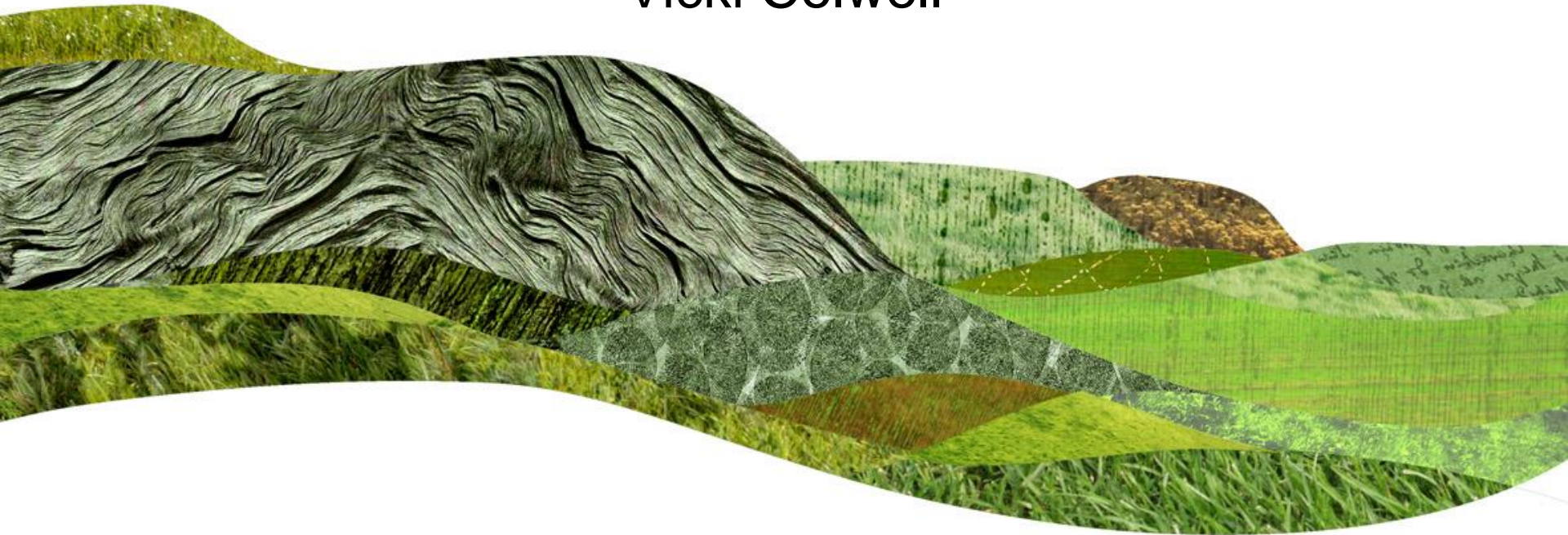


Agenda Item 16 – Wiston Whole Estate Plan

Vicki Colwell



Whole Estate Plans

Purpose

- Enable collaboration
- Identify opportunities and threats

Who

- Landholding comprising multiple activities
- Estate, Farm, School, etc



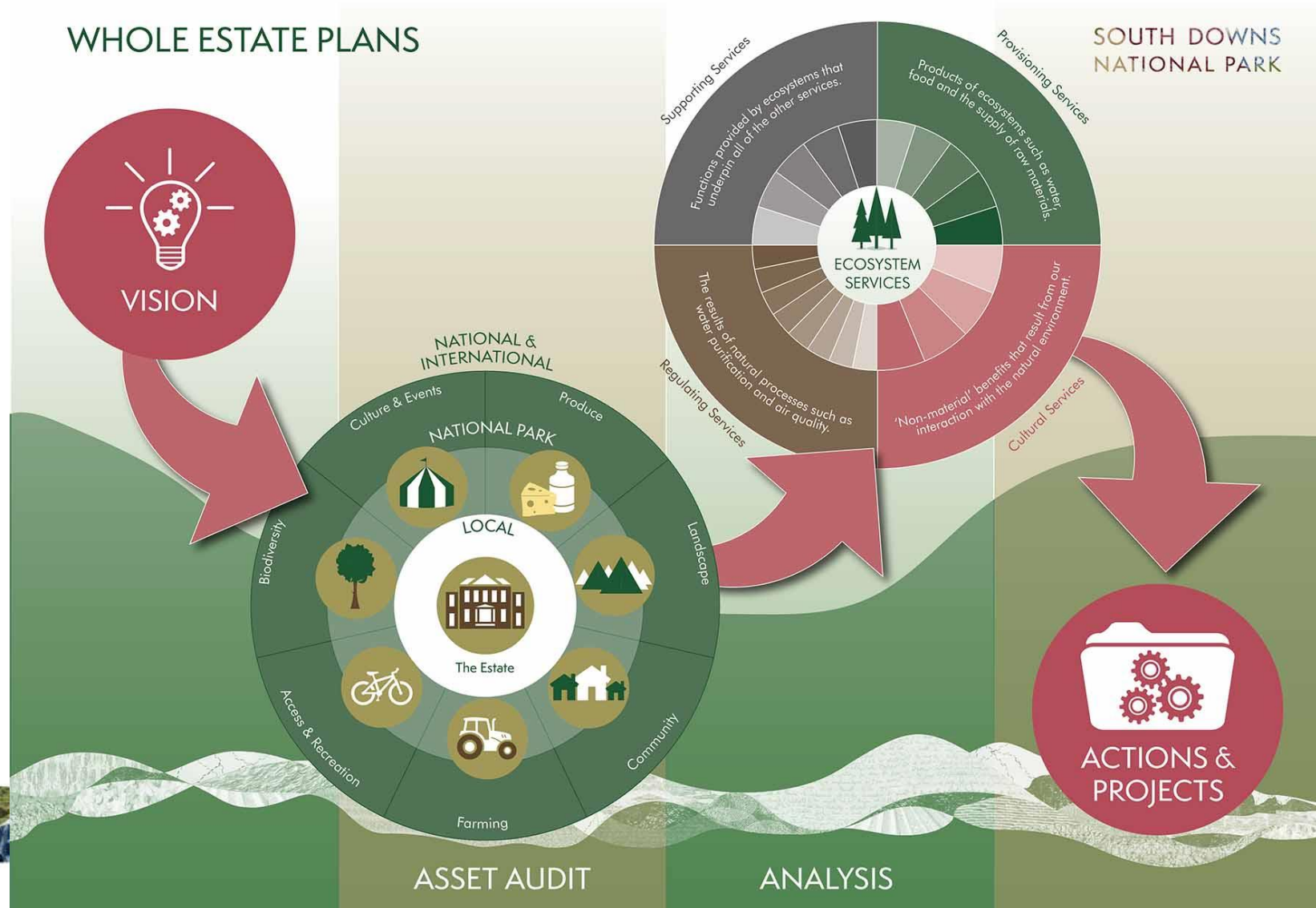
Whole Estate Plans

Benefits

- Agri-environment and forestry schemes
- Relationship building
- Material consideration in planning applications
- Contextual background to development proposals
- Guide and support funding bids
- Neighbourhood Plan production



Whole Estate Plans



Whole Estate Plans

Format

- 4 Key Areas should be included
- Flexible presentation – can be adjusted to meet the Estate needs
- Endorsement requires assessment of how each section relates to each other
- Community engagement



Wiston WEP

Background

- 1st WEP to be considered by Members for endorsement
- Extensive engagement with local community
- Content and format influenced by Partnership Management Plan



Wiston WEP

The Vision:

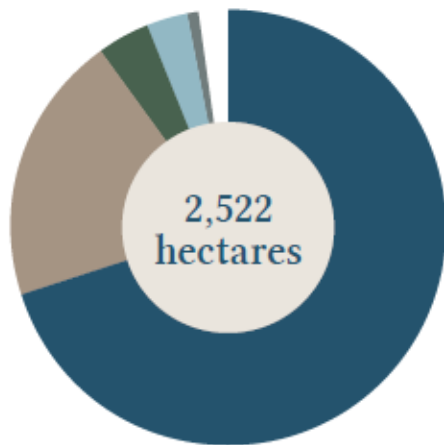
To see the Estate flourish;
for it to be an inspiration for excellent
engagement with a living landscape

This has been informed by the visions set out in our local neighbourhood plans, in the Horsham Local Plan and the South Downs draft Local Plan. It is designed to support and sit alongside these visions as our local expression of what we want to achieve.

We have engaged with and listened to feedback from team, tenants and local stakeholders throughout the process³ and shaped the aims of the vision accordingly.



Asset Audit



- Farmland 70% (1,765ha)
- Woodland 20% (495ha)
- Parkland 4% (100ha)
- Quarries 3% (70ha)
- Ponds & Wetland 1% (24ha)
- Residential, commercial and amenity areas

-  106 households
-  11 farms
-  22 businesses
-  employs 26 people directly
in the woods, on the farm, at the gardens of Wiston House, in the winery and in maintaining estate properties and in the estate office. There are well over 250 employed people living or working in estate premises.

It partners with two charities based on the estate, the Steyning Downland Scheme and Roots to Growth.



There are 4 SINC's (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance) and 1 SSSI (site of Special Scientific Interest) on the estate.



The estate is steward of a wide range of environmental and heritage assets. In all the estate includes 38 listed buildings, including the Grade 1 Wiston House.

There are



35km of Bridleway



22.8km of footpaths



63ha of open access by permission



17ha of statutory open access

Asset Audit

Case Study: Grey Partridge Project

Having started on the estate in 1968 the Game and Wildlife Conservancy Trust study on the Sussex Downs is the longest-running monitoring project in the world that measures the impact of changes in farming on the fauna and flora of arable land. The decline in Grey Partridge has been catastrophic since the introduction of herbicides and insecticides in the late 1960s and 70s.

Prof Dick Potts (GWCT) has been invaluable in giving guidance to the farm management and specifically in advising on options for Higher Level Stewardship at Findon Park (the estate's in hand farm)

HLS has enabled us, via long term secure funding, to grow conservation headlands, beetle banks, wild bird seed mixes, which are specifically aimed at feeding (and creating cover) for the newly born chicks in Spring. Without this funding it would be impossible to financially justify doing the conservation work that brings such benefits.

This drive towards greater biodiversity and partnering with the RSPB and Natural England puts the farm in an excellent position as regards habitat creation for this priority species and gives a wide range of farmland birds the best chance of survival with the threat of climate change perhaps now their biggest challenge.



Ecosystem Service Analysis

Supporting Services

The foundation that land provides for other activities to the soil, the base functions of plant growth (converting solar energy, water and nutrients into matter) water purification (through the journey of rain water through the ground) and the diversity that a range of life forms bring.

The Wiston Estate by nature of its rural context relies entirely upon these natural systems of life. Management over many generations has been respectful of this, even when demands on the land have been extreme (e.g. after WWII). This is shown by the broad bio-diversity and species mix recorded in the Environmental Asset Audit.

Regulating Services

Positive outcomes that arise from natural processes:

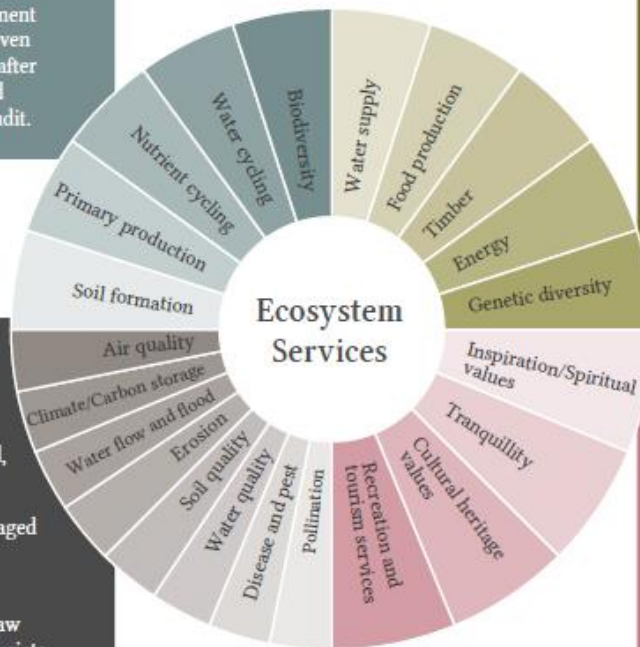
Air quality & Climate; 485ha of managed woodland, 820ha permanent grassland

Water flow & erosion; streams monitored and managed to prevent flooding, steep slopes left uncultivated

Soil quality; rotational farming systems, importing manure and compost with high organic content, straw chopped in field, minimum cultivation where appropriate

Disease and Pest; diverse cropping, mixed woodlands, active vermin control

Pollination; 12m pollinator strips along 1.5km of South Downs Way, wild bird seed mixes and 5 different beehive sites across the estate



Provisioning Services

The base products that the land and its management can provide:

Water supply; Three chalk streams across the estate, NVZ compliance and working with the EA on best practice

Food; over 5000T of cereals produced for malting, biscuit and bread production. Up to 250k bottles of wine produced. 2 Market gardening enterprises. Grass fed beef and sheep enterprises

Timber; 600T of woodchip pa, chestnut fencing, firewood and quality roundwood timber production

Energy; 50kW solar array, 4 biomass boilers on site, 1MW gas to energy plant

Genetic Diversity; HLS schemes in place across 9 farms, chalk grassland, mixed woodland plantations, heritage livestock breeds

Cultural Services

The things that people enjoy from landscape such as:









Inspiration/Spiritual values; linking local churches with their environment (SDS), events such as BCDO and David's Tent, St Columba's barn, open and permissive access to key areas (Chanctonbury Ring), strong relationship with the local church

Tranquility; specific areas that are non-intervention led, retreat spaces, landscape scale management

Cultural/heritage; 38 listed buildings, ancient monument sites, historic agricultural barns and multi-generation residents and farming families

Recreation/tourism; 2 car parks, 57km of PROW, 80ha of open access, winery tours, woodland tours

Action Plan

Key								
	PRODUCT	VISITOR ECONOMY	ECONOMIC	LANDSCAPE	HOUSING	COMMUNITY	FARMING	ECOLOGY

6	Environment	Environment Bank	2017 ongoing	  	SS PS CS RS
7		Rock Common Quarry	2018 to 2025	  	SS PS RS CS
8		Water Quality Strategy	2017 to 2018	  	SS PS RS CS

Creation of Wiston Estate
environmental offset project

Measurable net gains in biodiversity in response to developments on and related to the estate.

Restoration and re-development

New sustainable visitor economy facilities and infrastructure.

Estate scale water
quality strategy

Work with partners and tenant farmers to identify actions to improve the quality of water bodies on and within the estate boundaries



Outcomes

Outcomes One & Two

The landscape character of the National Park, its special qualities and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by effectively managing land and the negative impacts of development and cumulative change. There is increased capacity within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

- Continued commitment to tenant farms and to diversified farming structure
- Ongoing commitment to positive environmental management of farmland and woodland beyond Brexit / CAP
- Maintain extent and proportion [of whole] of woodland and chalk grassland
- Secure net additional biodiversity and habitat by estate based “Environmental Bank plus” from any development on the estate



Outcomes

Outcome Four

The condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their settings is significantly enhanced, many more have been discovered and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

- Continued commitment to the maintenance and management of Wiston House, its gardens and parkland
- Continued care in the refurbishment of listed buildings and to enable any EPC regulations to be met with appropriate aesthetic measures
- Investment in a portfolio of new assets and revenue generating enterprises (Rock Common, North Farm and others) to generate increased surplus to support this expenditure and ongoing maintenance and improvement of historic houses and buildings
- Increase estate trading activity to improve protection from capital taxation on inter-generational transfer
- Landmark of Chanctonbury Ring is well maintained and there is improved communication on its history and importance



Conclusion

- Positive engagement with SDNPA Officers
- Successful example of joint working
- Clear demonstration of Estate's aspirations
- Robust strategy for achieving these aspirations
- Strong links and understanding of the National Park setting
- Commitment to original concept of Whole Estate Plans

Wiston Whole Estate Plan is therefore recommended for endorsement

