

Report to	Policy and Resources Committee
Date	20 July 2017
By	Director of Countryside and Policy Management
Title of Report	Wiston Whole Estate Plan

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to endorse the Wiston Whole Estate Plan.

I. Summary and Background

- I.1 In 2015 the SDNPA introduced the idea of Whole Estate Plans, meeting with numerous Estates with significant land holdings within the National Park area (to date around 28 holdings have been engaged). A Whole Estate Plan (WEP) aims to enable collaboration between individual estates and the National Park Authority to achieve the ambitions of the Estate / Farm / School and the purposes of the National Park, and deliver the Partnership Management Plan. A WEP is a non-statutory plan which demonstrates the overall position and aspirations an organisation should have as an estate and plans do not have to cover a specific time period, and may be updated to reflect changes in circumstance or withdrawn if appropriate.
- I.2 A WEP is designed to support an organisation which is generally a large landholding which includes complex commercial, social and environmental activities. It is expected that WEPs would generally be land holdings in excess of 400 acres, with multiple diverse activities, and employing or having residents in excess of 30 people, although this is not mandatory..
- I.3 WEPs are a progressive and almost unique approach by a planning authority or National Park Authority in the UK as they look to foster good working relationships to key stakeholders and facilitate better understanding of the issues surrounding sustainable rural estate communities – of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They are not focussed on or to be limited to planning matters but rather the whole husbandry of the Estate – farming, woodland management, conservation, access provision etc.
- I.4 An endorsed Whole Estate Plan (WEP) will be a material consideration in determining planning applications and will provide a solid understood contextual background to any development proposals. The inclusion of a development proposal within a WEP however does not guarantee that planning permission will be granted and any proposal will still need to be comply with relevant development plan policies. A WEP can also be used to help guide and support funding bids, future neighbourhood plan production, agri-environment and forestry schemes and with other Natural Capital projects. Beyond the finished product, the WEP process also provides value in terms of relationship building; between the Estate and the SDNPA, as well as the local community.
- I.5 A WEP is comprised of 4 elements: a Vision, an Asset Audit, Ecosystem Services Analysis, and an Action Plan. Officers look at how all these elements relate to each other, i.e. is the Vision a genuine representation of the actions proposed, and are the actions evidenced by the Asset Audit and Ecosystem Services Analysis? Estates should also be able to demonstrate that they have engaged with the local community during the process of producing the WEP.

2. Wiston Whole Estate Plan

- 2.1 Wiston Estate has been engaged in the WEP process from a very early stage in its inception in the SDNP. A WEP (**Appendix 1**) for the Wiston Estate was submitted for endorsement in April 2017 and will be the first WEP considered by Members for endorsement. The WEP has been considered by officers from the Countryside & Policy and the Planning Directorates (summarised in **Appendix 2**) and follows meetings between officers and representatives of the Estate. There has also been contact from an early stage with the relevant Parishes and other interested parties, as detailed in their Statement of Community Engagement. The WEP is a well laid out, well presented document, which utilises interactive links throughout to demonstrate how the aim of the Vision is evidenced and followed through in the remainder of the Plan. The Wiston WEP format loosely follows the structure suggested in the SDNPA guidance, but has been more significantly influenced by the SDNP Partnership Management Plan. For example, the Asset Audit includes a table comparing the Wiston Estate's contribution with the whole National Park's to various environmental and social factors. Wiston has also set the aspirations and actions identified within the WEP in the context of the Partnership Management Plan's Outcomes. Officers consider this reflects a high level of understanding by the Estate and its commitment to fulfilling the National Park's purposes.
- 2.2 The WEP is light on specific reference to the historic environment, although there is a full audit of heritage assets provided as part of the WEP appendices and a summary within the Plan itself. There is a commitment within the WEP to continue to manage, maintain and care for heritage assets within the Estate and it is considered that whilst reference to the historic environment is not explicit throughout, this does not mean that the Estate does not recognise its importance. Any applications for planning permission submitted would still have to give due consideration to the impact of proposals on the historic environment.
- 2.3 Overall, it is considered that the Estate has responded positively to the suggestions made by officers during the formation of the WEP. The finished document is a successful example of joint working, which clearly demonstrates the Estate's aspirations and strategy for fulfilling the aims and objectives of their WEP, in the context of the National Park setting.
- 2.4 The following provides a summary assessment of each of the 4 elements that make up the WEP and the evidence of community engagement.

Vision

- 2.5 The Wiston WEP Vision is clear and successfully represents the objectives running through the Plan. The overall Vision is supported by 5 themes:
- A place for people,
 - A place for nature,
 - A place for productivity,
 - A place without waste,
 - A place for learning and exploration.

These provide focus for the Estate and understanding of the Estate's intentions moving forward.

Asset Audit

- 2.6 The Asset Audit provides the geographical and historical context for the Estate. There are graphic and map-based summaries of land-use areas, employment, rights of way and the historic environment, as well as a summary of how the Estate contributes to the Park's Special Qualities. This baseline review is supplemented with case studies, which the Estate have included to highlight some of their favourite things (strengths). These have been categorised using the 3 strands of sustainability (economic, environmental and social) and represent practical examples of ongoing activities and projects on the Estate, such as habitat creation for grey partridge and Duke of Burgundy butterfly.
- 2.7 This represents a thorough review of the assets within the Estate, providing extra detail of projects that align with Park Purposes and Duty.

Ecosystem Services Analysis

- 2.8 The Ecosystem Services Analysis has deviated from the standard SWOT analysis table, although the necessary information has still been collected. The ecosystem services the Estate identifies have been captured as strengths around the ecosystem services diagram the SDNP has used in the draft Local Plan and Partnership Management Plan. Weaknesses and threats are considered and categorised based on the Pressures for Change identified in the Partnership Management Plan, and opportunities have been explored under the heading Management Strategy.

Action Plan

- 2.9 The Action Plan comprises 8 broad action areas, which indicates the ecosystem service benefits they would bring. Icons are also used indicating broad benefits the actions relate to (e.g. landscape, community, farming). The project numbering is also used to link back to earlier sections of the WEP, highlighting how the actions are grounded in the Vision and supported by the Asset Review and Ecosystem Services Analysis. To conclude the WEP, the projects in the Action Plan and the Estate's wider management approach is considered in light of the Partnership Management Plan outcomes. This again robustly frames the WEP firmly within the context of the National Park setting and demonstrates commitment to the original concept of WEPs.
- 2.10 The action areas are deliberately broad to ensure that the SDNPA does not find itself in a position of unequivocal support for specific projects prior to necessary applications or consents being submitted. Project summaries, which provide more detail of how the actions could be met are provided in the WEP appendices, however these are to demonstrate the Estate has begun to consider how the Vision could be fulfilled. Officers consider they are sufficiently detached from the Action Plan itself to prevent Members being placed in a position where they are deemed to absolutely support the projects in the Action Plan.
- 2.11 The Estate has provided a Statement of Community Engagement as an appendix to the WEP. This provides detail of the stakeholders approached as part of the Community (e.g. employees, tenants, parish council, neighbourhood plan steering groups and residents from the neighbouring villages), the methods of engagement, including letters, questionnaires and public exhibitions. The feedback gathered from these is summarised within this document. The level of engagement and the methods employed are considered to be appropriate.

3. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, although applications for grant funds or planning permission may be submitted for consideration by other forums relating to actions highlighted within the WEP.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. If endorsed, the WEP will be included on the SDNPA website, however update and review of the document is the responsibility of the Estate. If the WEP is amended, it will need to be considered again by Officers and Members.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	N/A
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	This decision has no direct equalities implications. This document will be used to inform future decisions by the Authority, which will be subject to their own equalities impact assessments.

Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy: 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly	The WEP has principles 1-3 at its core, which is evidenced by the Plan being set within the context of the SDNP Partnership Management Plan and to support the delivery of the draft Local Plan.

4. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 4.1 There is the potential for a reputational risk for the SDNPA through failure of endorsement after an Estate has gone through the process of producing a WEP that meets the criteria for endorsement. There is also a risk of WEPs being misunderstood and considered as planning documents only, or being interpreted as a 'green light' for development. Both of these concerns can be mitigated by providing continued support to Estates, case officers and other interested parties and providing guidance on the SDNPA website.

ANDREW LEE

Director of Countryside Policy and Management South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer:	Vicki Colwell – Major Planning Projects Officer
Tel:	01730 819280
email:	Vicki Colwell
Appendices	1. Wiston Whole Estate Plan 2. Summary of Consultation Responses
SDNPA Consultees	Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	Wiston Whole Estate Plan Wiston Whole Estate Plan – Appendix 2 (maps) Wiston Whole Estate Plan – Appendix 3 (environmental) Wiston Whole Estate Plan – Appendix 4 (Socio-Economic) Wiston Whole Estate Plan – Appendix 5 (Heritage) Wiston Whole Estate Plan – Appendix 6 (Community Engagement) SDNPA Whole Estate Plan Guidelines SDNP Partnership Management Plan 2014-2019

Agenda Item 16 Report PR07/17 Appendix 2

Officer	Comments
Local Plan Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well-presented and articulate document• Further public access to be encouraged• Any opportunities for cycle links?• As Wiston (village) doesn't have settlement boundary, should reference to open market housing be removed?
Historic Buildings Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historic environment under-represented• Opportunity for historic environment to be included in WEP for its intrinsic value, rather than as a constraint or to be exploited• No consideration of non-designated heritage assets

