

# 3

## SPATIAL PORTRAIT AND SPATIAL STRATEGY

## INTRODUCTION

**3.1** This chapter of the Local Plan introduces the spatial portrait, which is a new way of looking at the South Downs National Park (the National Park) as a single entity, arising from its geology, geography and settlement pattern. This is illustrated by the spatial diagram set out in Figure 3.4. The spatial strategy is also explained in this chapter and is summarised in Figure 3.1.

### FIGURE 3.1: SUMMARY OF SPATIAL STRATEGY

Having regard to the landscape and five broad areas and river corridors, the spatial strategy for the *South Downs Local Plan* is for a medium level of growth dispersed across the towns and villages of the National Park.

## THE NATIONAL PARK TODAY

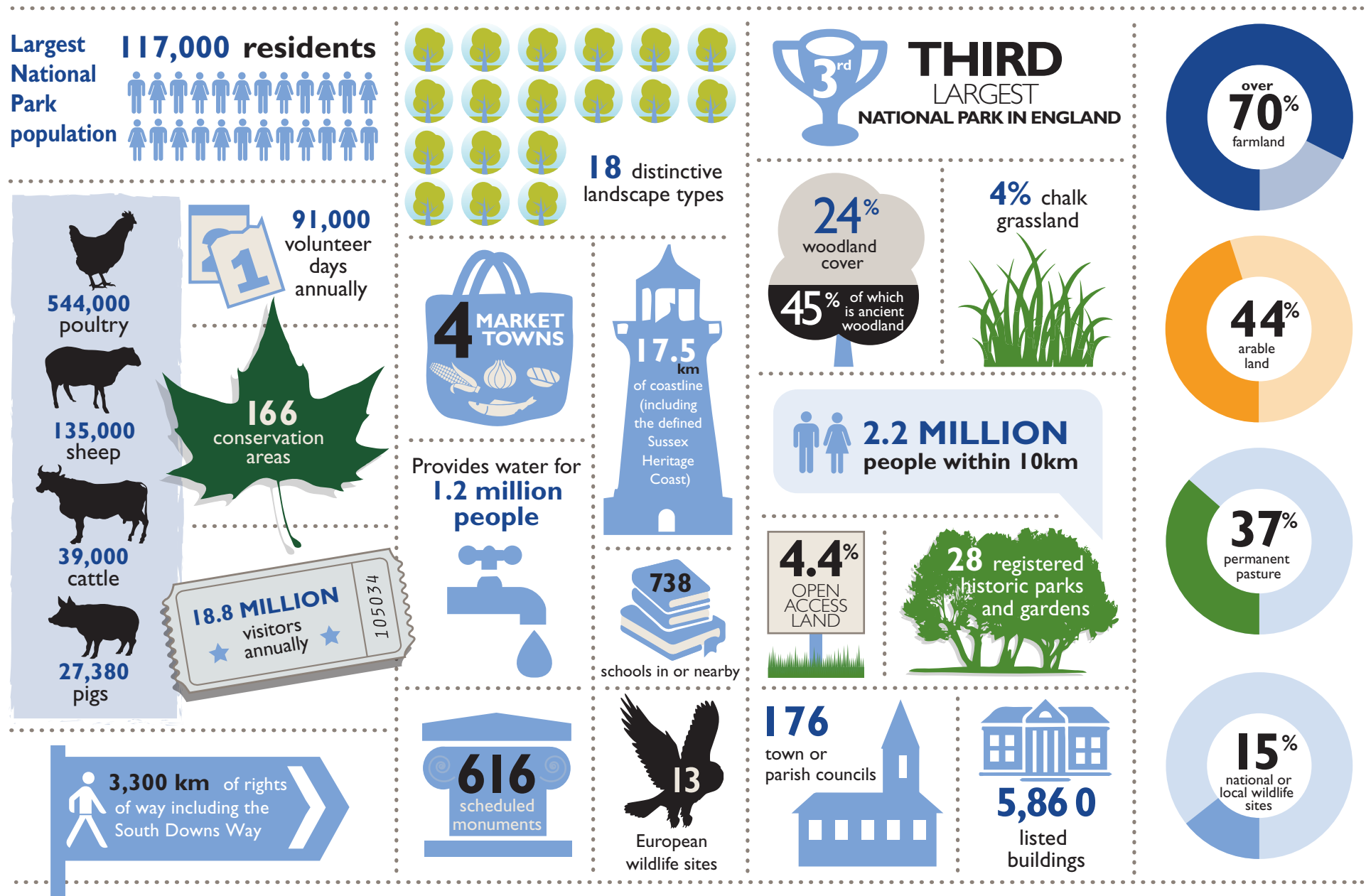
**3.2** Figure 3.2 is a map showing key features of the National Park. The National Park has a population of about 112,000, and approximately 2 million people live within 5 kilometres of its boundary. Figure 3.3 is a snapshot of the South Downs National Park today.



### FIGURE 3.2: THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK



FIGURE 3.3: A SNAPSHOT OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK



## THE SPATIAL PORTRAIT

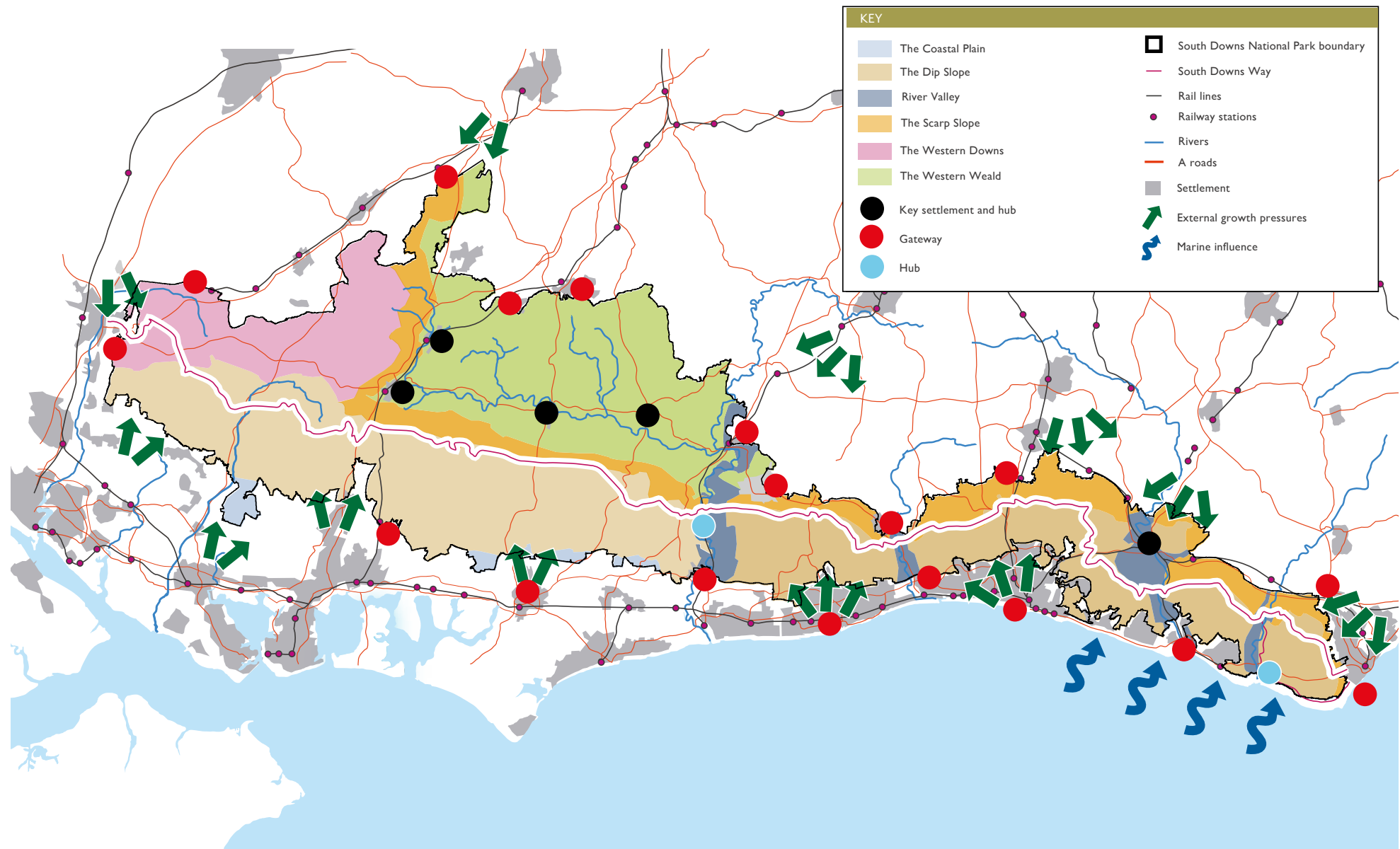
**3.3** This Local Plan introduces a new way of looking at the South Downs National Park as a single entity, arising from its geology, geography, and hydrology and settlement pattern. This is illustrated in the spatial diagram set out in Figure 3.4. The spatial portrait is based on five broad areas and four river corridors. These are the Western Downs, the Western Weald, the Scarp Slope, the Dip Slope and the Coastal Plain broad areas and the Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere river corridors. The four river corridors highlighted all flow north to south bisecting the National Park; there are several other important rivers in the National Park such as the Itchen, Meon and Rother whose whole catchment area lies within the National Park. The spatial portrait:

- Is informed by the characteristics of the different landscapes, as defined in the *South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment* (SDILCA) and the historic patterns of development. For example, the springline villages that run along the Scarp Slope from east to west face common challenges and opportunities, which are different to those faced by communities in the Western Weald

- Seeks to recognise the ecosystem services and special qualities that exist in different 'amounts' and provide opportunities for multiple benefits stemming from development, as well as constraints to growth
- Combines this with the reality of a long, relatively thin protected landscape which is strongly influenced by the areas around it

**3.4** The spatial portrait stretches beyond the National Park's boundary, and acknowledges the many interdependencies and connections that exist across the boundary. For example, the Coastal Plain only covers the southern fringes of the National Park but extends southwards down to the coast. The spatial portrait and strategy have informed the National Park Authority's approach to the *Duty to Cooperate*.

**FIGURE 3.4: CONCEPTUAL SPATIAL DIAGRAM OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AND SURROUNDING AREA**



**3.5** Each of the broad areas and river corridors are now discussed in greater detail under the following sub-headings:

- Special qualities: describes how the special qualities are expressed within that area (**SQ references in bold**)
- Towns and villages
- Gateways: settlements outside the South Downs with good bus, ferry or rail links to the wider region and beyond, and bus and cycle links into the National Park
- Hubs: settlements in the National Park that have public transport links, accommodation and hospitality businesses and tourist information points
- Ecosystem services: benefits people and society get from the natural environment. Most ecosystem services are provided Park-wide, but the stock of natural capital from which these services flow does vary spatially between the different areas. This differentiation is particularly clear with 'provisioning services,' which are the goods or products obtained from ecosystems such as food crops and timber. Ecoserv<sup>15</sup> maps have been produced for the whole National Park and its different areas, and are explained in more detail in the next chapter. They have been compiled into the document *Mapping of Ecosystem Services within the South Downs National Park using the EcoServ GIS Tool*<sup>16</sup>, which is part of the core document library and will be updated as new data becomes available (**main type of ecosystem service in bold**)
- Challenges and issues: identifies distinctive challenges and opportunities for individual broad areas

**3.6** The settlements, strategic sites, gateways and hubs for the broad areas and river corridors are listed in Appendix 1. The *Settlement Context Study*<sup>17</sup> provides a strategic overview of the landscape context of the settlements in the National Park.

<sup>15</sup> EcoServ – GIS Toolkit V2

<sup>16</sup> Mapping of Ecosystem Services within the South Downs National Park using the EcoServ GIS Tool (South Downs National Park Authority, 2016)

<sup>17</sup> Settlement Context Study: Report and User Guide (South Downs National Park Authority, 2017)

## THE WESTERN DOWNS

**3.7** This broad area is located in the north west of the National Park and is close to the historic city of Winchester where the South Downs Way starts.

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.8** The Western Downs are characterised by large-scale open farmland dotted with the remnants of ancient woodland. In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)** there is Open Downland to the west. Downland Mosaic covers the central and eastern part of this area, which is intersected by Clay Plateau in places. The Western Downs contain some of the most **tranquil (SQ2)** areas and darkest night skies in the National Park. However, it also contains some areas of relatively low tranquillity, for example, the area surrounding the city of Winchester.

**3.9** In terms of its **wildlife (SQ3)**, this area has a rich variety of habitats, which support a variety of rare and internationally important species. These include ancient woodland, chalk grassland fragments, and the River Itchen, within the north-western boundary of the National Park. This is a chalk stream which is designated both as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its high-quality habitats, which support a range of protected species including the water vole and otter.

**3.10** In this area, **farming and new enterprise (SQ4)** takes the form of larger, diversified holdings such as the Rotherfield Estate which include arable, managed woodland, shoots and fisheries. Nationally important watercress production occurs in the Itchen Valley.

**3.11** Opportunities **for access (SQ5)** are more dispersed than in some of the other areas where the National Park is narrower with a larger population close at hand. Winchester is linked to its adjacent downland by the South Downs Way, and there are other hotspots, such as Cheesefoot Head.

**3.12** This broad area also has a rich **cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)**, including the site of the Battle of Cheriton (English Civil War battle of 1644) and the National Trust house and garden at Hinton Ampner.



**3.13** Picturesque villages, many with literary links, are situated in the Western Downs, such as Chawton, which was home to Jane Austen. These **distinctive settlements (SQ7)** are more scattered than in other areas of the National Park as they are less strongly influenced by the drainage pattern and the proximity of rivers or springlines.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.14** There are no market towns in this area of the National Park. Villages in the Western Downs are clustered along the northern boundary of the National Park and relate most closely to the gateway towns, along the A31 corridor.

## GATEWAYS

**3.15** The city of Winchester is the main western gateway to the National Park and is the county town of Hampshire. Alton and Alresford are smaller gateways to the north.

## HUBS

**3.16** There are no hubs within this sparsely populated area of the National Park.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.17** Food provision in the Western Downs is of national importance with extensive areas of arable production including fodder crops for livestock. The chalk rivers and streams in this area are among the finest in the world, providing high-quality water for domestic, agricultural and commercial uses including paper mills, fish farms and water cress beds (**provisioning services**). The high relative tranquillity and sense of isolation in this area provides a **cultural service** to visitors and locals.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WESTERN DOWNS

**3.18** Parts of the Western Downs are easily accessible from more densely populated areas around the National Park, such as Winchester and Alton, and there are opportunities to create better multi-user routes and circular itineraries based on railway stations.

**3.19** A specific challenge in this area lies with the need to safeguard the important habitats and species of the Itchen and to reconcile these with the commercial imperatives of watercress production by finding more sustainable methods of cultivation and processing.

## THE WESTERN WEALD

**3.20** The Western Weald runs from the northernmost point of the National Park at Alice Holt Forest down to the market town of Petersfield, and east along to Petworth and Pulborough.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.21** The Western Weald is made up of wooded hills, deep valleys and open heaths linked by sandy sunken lanes. It includes Black Down, which is the highest point in the National Park.

**3.22** This area is made up of a diverse range of types of **landscapes (SQ1)**, including the following SDILCA areas – Scarp Footslopes, Greensand Terrace, Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale, Wealden Farmland and Heath Mosaic, Sandy Arable Farmland, Greensand Hills, Low Weald and Major Scarp. It has some of the most **tranquil (SQ2)** areas and darkest night skies in the National Park, such as Ambersham Common. However, it also contains some areas of relatively low tranquillity, for example, along the northern boundary and around the towns of Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth.

**3.23** The area has a rich variety of **wildlife (SQ3)**. This includes the river Rother, which is unusual in that it flows through chalk and greensand, large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and a chain of lowland heathland sites. Internationally important woodland sites include Ebernoe Common NNR/SAC and The Mens SAC. Heathlands are of considerable international biodiversity importance and home to a large number of rare plants, insects, birds, amphibians and reptiles. Designated sites and priority sites include Woolmer Forest SAC and the Wealden Heaths (Phase II) SPA.

**3.24** The thin sandy soils in the majority of the Western Weald provide very poor agricultural land for **farming and new enterprise (SQ4)** and instead there is a large amount of heathland and woodland. However, there are areas of



Grade 3 and Grade 2 agricultural land; the most fertile soils being found in the north and alongside the River Rother in Hampshire. Ancient, species-rich and ecologically important coppice woodlands, traditionally intensively managed for fuel and timber, are a feature, and the area is home to a number of wineries.

**3.25** There are particular opportunities for **access (SQ5)** to activities based on the special qualities of the National Park. These include large areas of open access land and accessible woodland. Examples include Alice Holt Forest, Black Down, Iping Common, Woolbeding Common and the Serpent Trail.

**3.26** There are **rich cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)** in the area, including Cowdray Park and Petworth Park, and the historic market towns of Petersfield, Midhurst and Petworth. There are a number of large ponds, representing hammerponds associated with the Wealden iron industry or later mill ponds, and the most significant Bronze Age barrow cemetery in the National Park is on Petersfield Heath.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.27** Four of the National Park's five main settlements are located in the Western Weald, namely Petersfield, Liss, Midhurst and Petworth. These settlements serve a wide rural hinterland. Petersfield lies well-hidden from longer views in the valley of the Rother, with a historic core and medieval market square. It is well connected, situated on the A3 and a mainline railway line between London and Portsmouth. Liss is sometimes known as the 'hidden village' located in the wooded valley of the River Rother. It is also well connected by road and rail to London and the south coast. Midhurst and Petworth are smaller market towns than Petersfield located in the heart of the National Park. The historic town of Midhurst is located on a key junction of the A272 and A286 and on the River Rother; it is located close to Cowdray House and Park and the home to the ruin of the Tudor Cowdray House. Petworth is the centre of a nationally significant antiques trade. It is home to the 17<sup>th</sup> century Petworth House situated on the edge of town, with high walls surrounding the house and Capability Brown designed gardens.

## GATEWAYS

**3.28** Liphook, Haslemere and Pulborough all provide easy access to the National Park from their train stations and have direct services to London.

## HUBS

**3.29** Petersfield, Liss, Midhurst and Petworth all provide a variety of services for visitors to the National Park.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.30** The heavily wooded Western Weald has one of the highest densities of ancient woodlands in England and provides a number of **provisioning services** particularly timber from commercial plantations on the larger estates. It is a mixed farming area producing significant amounts of cereals and arable crops and is important for livestock including sheep, pigs and cattle. Vineyards are increasingly a feature on the south facing slopes. This broad area forms part of a sandstone aquifer, which has an important role in maintaining springs and base flows into rivers. The woodlands and heaths of the Western Weald provide **regulating services**, for example, through carbon sequestration and storage. The woods at Alice Holt provide **cultural services** to children and young people with school field trips and forest schools.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WESTERN WEALD

**3.31** There are opportunities to improve facilities in the three market towns.

**3.32** The redevelopment of the former Syngenta site in Fernhurst provides an opportunity for an exemplar sustainable development of a strategic scale.

**3.33** Heathlands are very vulnerable to rapid loss and degradation, for example, through neglect, and require careful management.

**3.34** There is a risk of creeping urbanisation encroaching on the hills, which would dilute the hidden character of most of the larger settlements.

## THE SCARP SLOPE

**3.35** The Scarp Slope runs from Butser Hill in the west to Eastbourne in the east and is the steep, largely north facing aspect of the South Downs. It also runs north from Petersfield to mark the edge of the Western Downs. There are many picturesque springline settlements at the foot of the chalk Scarp Slope.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.36** The escarpment provides sweeping views north across the Weald. Distinctive sunken lanes link the Western Weald with the scarp slopes emerging on open commons such as Noar Hill, known for its wild flowers and rare butterflies like the brown hairstreak.

**3.37** This area is made up of a diverse range of inspirational **landscapes (SQ1)** as defined in the SDILCA. The Major Scarp, Greensand Terraces and Scarp Foothills run from Petersfield in the west to Eastbourne in the east and north towards Alton.

**3.38** This broad area has a rich variety of **wildlife (SQ3)**. Designated sites and priority habitats include Old Winchester Hill NNR, Butser Hill SAC/NNR, Ashford Hangers NNR and which is also part of East Hampshire Hangers SAC, Rook Cliff SAC, Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC, Lewes Downs (Mount Caburn) NNR and Lewes Downs SAC, together with many other fragments of chalk grassland and deciduous woodland.

**3.39** In terms of **farming and new enterprise (SQ4)**, the steep topography in much of this area has meant that conversion of grassland to arable has been less prevalent as has wholesale intensive forestry despite the heavily wooded nature of the central downs. However, less livestock has meant many important habitats have been under grazed. More intensive arable cultivation is the norm on the clay soils below.

**3.40** There are particular opportunities for **access (SQ5)** and overnight stays linked to the South Downs Way. Along the route there are a number of landmarks and key visitor attractions, including Butser Hill, Chanctonbury Ring, Devil's Dyke and Ditchling Beacon. This broad area also has a rich **cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)**, including Charleston Farmhouse,

Roman villas such as at Bignor, Iron Age hill forts and Parham House and Gardens.

**3.41** At the foot of the chalk slopes and hangers are a number of springline villages including the village of Selborne, which was the home to the 18<sup>th</sup> century 'father of ecology' Gilbert White.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.42** Villages are distributed along this broad area as far east as Ditchling. The strongest relationships are mainly with towns outside the broad area such as Midhurst and Petersfield in the Western Weald.

## GATEWAYS

**3.43** There are a number of gateways that lie just outside the National Park and cover both the scarp and dip slopes such as Worthing, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Polegate, Storrington, Steyning and Hassocks.

## HUBS

**3.44** There are no notable hubs on the scarp slope.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.45** The lowland calcareous grassland that covers the Scarp Slope has been called the European equivalent of tropical rainforest as up to 45 species of flowering plants can be found within one square metre of this habitat. This is part of a **supporting service** that helps to maintain the other ecosystem services. The breath-taking views from the top of the Scarp Slope from, for example, Butser Hill and Ditchling Beacon are a form of **cultural service** from which people derive happiness and inspiration. The sheep that graze the steep Scarp Slope are an important source of local and regional food and provide a **provisioning service**. The underlying chalk aquifers act as a storage reservoir forming the principle source of water for all of the settlements in and around the South Downs ridge. This in turn provides **regulating services** with the chalk geology acting as a natural filtering system, which helps to maintain the chemical and ecological status of water bodies in and around the Dip Slope.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SCARP SLOPE

**3.46** Flooding is the major challenge for the springline villages that run along the bottom of the scarp slope. There is great potential for these communities to benefit from being access points and gateways for visitors coming to the National Park. There is also a need for more good-quality, low-cost accommodation for users of the South Downs Way. The challenge, given the small size of most settlements, the narrow roads and the scarcity of parking, is to provide facilities and routes which encourage more walkers and cyclists and fewer cars. There is also a need to spread visits across a wider area to reduce pressure on hotspots such as Devil's Dyke.

**3.47** The views out from the Scarp Slope are one of the reasons so many people visit this area. These views of the surrounding landscapes are vulnerable to development, such as creeping urbanisation on the lower scarp slope, which has the potential to create intrusion and alter the scale of views due to urbanising and incongruous elements.

## THE DIP SLOPE

**3.48** The Dip Slope extends along the entire length of the South Downs ending in the east at the spectacular sheer white cliffs of the Sussex Heritage Coast. This broad area includes villages such as Twyford, Singleton and Findon, and parts of country estates such as Uppark and Goodwood. Along with the Scarp Slope, it includes the downland part of the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve, one of six areas (including the Isle of Man) in the United Kingdom recognised by UNESCO.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.49** In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)**, the south-facing chalk Dip Slopes are intersected by river valleys, until the eastern end where the Dip Slope ends dramatically at the white cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head.

**3.50** The Dip Slope includes parts of the following landscape types defined in the SDILCA – Chalk Valley Systems (associated with the Rivers Itchen, Meon

and Lavant), Downland Mosaic, Wooded Estate Downland, Upper Coastal Plain and Open Downland.

**3.51** The area has a rich variety of **wildlife (SQ3)**. There are extensive areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland, such as Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Houghton and Friston Forests. Other designated sites and priority habitats include Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), one of Europe's finest yew forests, areas of outstanding south facing Dip Slope chalk grassland such as at Castle Hill NNR/SAC near Brighton and Lullington Heath NNR.

**3.52** To the west, the River Meon is a high quality chalk stream which supports a range of protected species including the water vole and otter. To the east there are important coastal, marine and estuarine habitats, including the chalk sea cliffs which are home to breeding colonies of seabirds such as kittiwakes and fulmars. A Marine Conservation Zone (designated in 2013) protects the chalk reef offshore and runs from Brighton Marina to Beachy Head, providing a valuable habitat supporting species such as the Short-snouted Seahorse.

**3.53** The majority of the Dip Slope is Grade 3 agricultural land (**farming and new enterprise (SQ4)**). However, there are pockets of Grade 2, some of the most fertile soils in the National Park. The farmed south-facing slopes provide for a range of food and drink production, including arable, grazing, vineyards such as those at Hambledon and Alfriston, and breweries such as those at Dundridge and Lewes.

**3.54** The Dip Slope has many **access (SQ5) opportunities with** Rights of Way (RoW) linking the coast to the crest of the South Downs, long-distance footpaths such as the Monarch's Way and large areas of accessible woodland and estates open to the public. This broad area also has a rich **cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)**, including West Dean Estate, Weald and Downland Open Air Museum and Goodwood.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.55** The villages on the Dip Slope are nearly all situated in southern-oriented valleys and have relationships of varying strength with towns beyond

the southern boundary of the National Park. The exceptions are Twyford in Hampshire and East Dean in East Sussex, at either end of the National Park, which look across the chalk ridge towards Winchester and Eastbourne respectively.

## GATEWAYS

**3.56** There are a number of gateways that lie just outside the National Park and cover both the scarp and dip slopes such as Worthing, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Polegate, Storrington, Steyning and Hassocks. Shawford is a western gateway providing convenient access to the Itchen Way and the village of Twyford.

## HUBS

**3.57** Stanmer is an important hub on the Dip Slope located close to Falmer Station and with cycle links both into Brighton and the South Downs.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.58** The gently sloping, south facing Dip Slope provide many of the **provisioning services** within the National Park. This includes viticulture, cereal production, sheep grazing and both beef and dairy cattle. The underlying chalk aquifers provide the same **regulating and provisioning services** described for the Scarp Slope. There are a number of notable attractions on the Dip Slope that provide world famous **cultural services** such as Glyndebourne, home to the world famous opera festival.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DIP SLOPE

**3.59** The Dip Slope is easily accessible from the densely populated Coastal Plain and so similar challenges and opportunities arise in ensuring that extra visitor pressure does not damage the special qualities. Improving the RoW network as a whole and providing new off-road multi-user routes can also relieve the pressure on very sensitive sites such as Kingley Vale.

**3.60** Areas of more fertile soil on these warm south-facing slopes, coupled with the effects of climate change, mean there are particular opportunities for viticulture and wine production. As this is one of the most productive

areas agriculturally, the incentive for more intensive production and related agricultural developments is higher than in other areas, and over time more sustainable ways to farm on the thin chalk soils may be found which provide benefits in terms of carbon sequestration and reducing soil erosion alongside crop production. The potential fragmentation of the remaining Dip Slope chalk grassland habitats is a key challenge for the National Park.

**3.61** The undeveloped coast is an important aspect of the National Park landscape. The boundary of the National Park was intentionally drawn to include several narrow locations in addition to the Heritage Coast where settlements do not extend across the coastline. These areas are subject to particular developmental and recreational pressures from surrounding urban settlements.

## THE COASTAL PLAIN

**3.62** The northernmost part of the Coastal Plain is located within the National Park. The entire Coastal Plain extends southwards from the South Downs to the Solent and the English Channel and includes large towns and cities such as Southampton, Portsmouth and Chichester.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.63** The fragments of this broad area that lie within the National Park include Wooded Claylands, Upper Coastal Plain and Shoreline **landscapes (SQ1)**.

**3.64** Due to the proximity of large urban areas to the south, much of this area is relatively less **tranquil (SQ2)** than others in the National Park, and light pollution is more prevalent; this makes the parts that are quieter and have darker skies particularly special.

**3.65** In terms of **farming & new enterprise (SQ4)**, this broad area and the adjacent Dip Slope to the north, include some of the most fertile soils in the National Park, which has led to a larger proportion than elsewhere of intensively farmed Grade 2 agricultural land.



**3.66** The proximity of the coastal towns and the largely gentle topography means there are particular opportunities to provide **access (SQ5)**, for example, to areas of accessible woodland such as West Walk in the Forest of Bere.

**3.67** There are rich **cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)** in the Coastal Plain area, which has been settled from prehistoric times forward.

**3.68** The part of the Coastal Plain located within the National Park is sparsely populated with small hamlets and valley villages (**distinctive towns and villages (SQ7)**), such as Lavant. Many of these are relatively well connected to settlements beyond the southern boundary, on which they rely for many essential services.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.69** The villages within the fragment of the Coastal Plain within the National Park are all closely related to the city of Chichester.

## GATEWAYS

**3.70** Chichester is the main gateway into the Coastal Plain within the National Park.

## HUBS

**3.71** There are no notable hubs on the Coastal Plain within the National Park.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.72** It is mainly provisioning services that are provided here, with highly fertile soils covering the river flood plains; this broad area also overlies chalk aquifers.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COASTAL PLAIN

**3.73** There is very significant development pressure on this southernmost broad area because of the growth of housing to the north of the coastal towns and along the A27. The A27 itself forms a noisy and congested barrier to people from the south accessing the National Park. As the population of the

wider Coastal Plain grows, the thin strip within the National Park provides opportunities for family days out, hiking, cycling, dog walking and other leisure activities. Managing this increased pressure so that visitors can discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park without damaging its special qualities is a challenge. As the first point of entry from the south, this area can play a part by providing good facilities at gateway points which orientate visitors, raise awareness of the importance of the landscapes and encourage more sustainable travel choices and behaviour.

**3.74** Significant parts of this broad area are at a relatively higher risk from coastal, groundwater and/or fluvial flooding. To ensure these areas are adapting well to the impacts of climate change will involve using natural processes such as changes in cultivation and land-use in flood sensitive zones rather than major engineering solutions more suited to urban areas.

## RIVER ARUN CORRIDOR

**3.75** The source of the River Arun lies outside the National Park to the east of Horsham. It flows north-south across the National Park from Pulborough to Arundel and enters the English Channel at Littlehampton. Its main tributary is the River Rother.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.76** In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)**, the River Arun flows through Major River Floodplains and Major Valley Sides.

**3.77** The Arun Valley area has a rich variety of **wildlife (SQ3)** and is designated partly as an SAC, SPA and Ramsar site and partly as a Local Wildlife Site. Pulborough Brooks is an RSPB reserve that can be accessed from the gateway village of Pulborough. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve at Arundel is also at a gateway location. Both sites are important in providing managed **access (SQ5)** to the sensitive wildlife of the valley.

**3.78** The Arun Valley has many rich **cultural heritage and historical features (SQ6)** including the Castle Park of Arundel, which forms a southern gateway, the industrial museum at Amberley, the painted church at Hardham, and the

route of the Wey and Arun Canal north of Pulborough. The villages of Bury and Burpham have literary connections.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.79** The villages of Bury, Amberley, Coldwaltham and Watersfield are located in the Arun Valley.

## GATEWAYS

**3.80** Arundel and Pulborough are important gateways into the National Park.

## HUBS

**3.81** Amberley Station forms a small hub in this river corridor.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.82** The principal ecosystem services provided by all the river corridors are **regulating services** particularly the regulation of water timing and flows. However, the River Arun has lost much of its flood storage capacity through land drainage and conversion for agriculture. In terms of **provisioning services** highly fertile soils cover the river flood plains and significant areas have been drained and converted to intensive agriculture. There are extensive areas of brooks and flood plain grazing marshes on the lower stretches of the River Arun at Amberley. There are also **cultural services** with people enjoying both recreational pursuits and the aesthetic qualities of this major river.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RIVER ARUN CORRIDOR

**3.83** The principal challenge for all the river corridors relate to flooding. The principal opportunities relate to recreational opportunities along the river.

## RIVER ADUR CORRIDOR

**3.84** The River Adur is formed at the confluence of the western Adur and eastern Adur just west of Henfield. It flows north to south across the National Park from Coombes Farm and through a gap in the South Downs near Lancing College where it is fed by the Ladywell Stream. It travels past the strategic

site of Shoreham Cement Works and leaves the National Park just north of Shoreham-by-Sea. It enters the English Channel at Shoreham-by-Sea.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.85** In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)**, the River Adur flows through Major River Floodplains and Major Valley Sides.

**3.86** Coombes Farm gives visitors an insight into the **farming way of life (SQ4)** of the South Downs.

**3.87** The **historic buildings (SQ6)** of Bramber village and Lancing College mark the northern and southern entrances to the section of valley in the National Park.

**3.88** The Downs Link non-motorised travel route runs along the Adur Valley, providing opportunities for **access (SQ5)**.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.89** There are no notable settlements in that part of the National Park within the Adur Valley.

## GATEWAYS

**3.90** Shoreham-by-Sea is an important gateway to the south of the National Park.

## HUBS

**3.91** There are no notable hubs in this river corridor although Shoreham Cement Works does offer opportunities to become an important hub for the National Park.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.92** The main ecosystem services provided by all the river corridors are **regulating services** particularly the regulation of water timing and flows. The Adur's floodplain and wetlands retain water, which can decrease flooding and reduce the need for engineered flood control infrastructure. There are

also **cultural services** with people enjoying both recreational pursuits and the aesthetic qualities of this major river.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RIVER ADUR CORRIDOR

**3.93** The principal challenge for all the river corridors relates to flooding. The principal opportunities relate to recreational opportunities along the river and in the case of the River Adur these principally lie at Shoreham Cement Works. The river corridors are all substantially tidal, which limits their recreational use.

## RIVER OUSE CORRIDOR

**3.94** The River Ouse rises near Lower Beeding and then travels eastwards into East Sussex. It flows into the National Park near Hamsey and through the town of Lewes where it is crossed by Willey's Bridge, the Phoenix Causeway next to North Street Quarter, and Cliffe Bridge. It flows on past the villages of Glyde, Rodmell and Southease and leaves the National Park just south of Piddinghoe. It enters the English Channel at Newhaven.

## SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.95** In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)**, the River Ouse flows through Major River Floodplains and Major Valley Sides.

**3.96** In terms of its **distinctive towns and villages (SQ7)**, Lewes is considered to be one of the best preserved small market towns in England, with significant artistic and **cultural heritage (SQ6)** making it a popular tourist destination. Springline settlements lie at the foot of the chalk scarp, including the village of Rodmell, which has literary connections with Virginia Woolf.

**3.97** A large part of the floodplain is designated as Lewes Brooks SSSI for its nationally important **wildlife and habitats (SQ3)**, notably in the ditches that criss-cross the area.

**3.98** The South Downs Way crosses the River Ouse at the small hamlet of Southease, which has a railway station served by trains direct from Brighton, and from London via Lewes. The construction of the Egrets Way multi-user route

along the river provides an opportunity to improve **access (SQ5)** to the valley for walkers, cyclists, mobility scooters and, in places, horse-riders.

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.99** The historic market town of Lewes is located in the River Ouse corridor and is the county town of East Sussex. The villages of Kingston-near-Lewes and Rodmell also lie on the valley sides.

## GATEWAYS

**3.100** Newhaven, with its ferry service, is a gateway into the National Park from the continent.

## HUBS

**3.101** Lewes is also an important hub within the National Park providing a full and varied range of services and attractions to visitors.

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.102** The principal ecosystem services provided by all the river corridors are **regulating services** particularly the regulation of water timing and flows. The Ouse's floodplain and wetlands retain water, which can decrease flooding and reduce the need for engineered flood control infrastructure. In terms of **provisioning services** highly fertile soils cover the river flood plains and significant areas have been drained and converted to intensive agriculture. There are extensive areas of brooks and flood plain grazing marshes at Lewes Wild Brooks. There are also **cultural services** with people enjoying both recreational pursuits and the aesthetic qualities of this major river.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RIVER OUSE CORRIDOR

**3.103** A key challenge for the town of Lewes is flooding as it is located on a stretch of the River Ouse where it flows southwards through a narrow gap in the South Downs. Restoring the natural capacity of the floodplain to the north of the town to absorb floodwater also brings opportunities in terms of wildlife and access. The redevelopment of the North Street Quarter of Lewes offers major regeneration opportunities for the town and the wider area.

## RIVER CUCKMERE CORRIDOR

**3.104** The River Cuckmere rises near Heathfield, flows across the Weald and enters the National Park just north of Alfriston. The Cuckmere Valley Nature Reserve is located on the lower estuary stretch of the river and it flows into the English Channel on the Sussex Heritage Coast at Cuckmere Haven.

### SPECIAL QUALITIES

**3.105** In terms of **landscapes (SQ1)**, the River Cuckmere flows through Major River Floodplains and Major Valley Sides. The meanders of the River Cuckmere are an iconic feature of the National Park.

**3.106** Multiple opportunities exist for **access (SQ5)**, with Berwick station nearby, the Seven Sisters Country Park and footpaths along the river.

**3.107** Alfriston is a **distinctive, historic settlement (SQ6, SQ7)** that is a magnet for visitors to the area.

**3.108** The southern part of the valley is designated as an SSSI for its **wildlife (SQ3)**, in particular for its plants and birds. The Cuckmere is one of few undeveloped estuaries along this stretch of coastline.

### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

**3.109** The picturesque and historic village of Alfriston is located on the River Cuckmere.

### GATEWAYS

**3.110** There are no notable gateways into the River Cuckmere Corridor.

### HUBS

**3.111** The Seven Sisters Country Park at Exceat forms a small hub next to the river.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

**3.112** The principal ecosystem services provided by all the river corridors are **regulating services**, particularly the regulation of water timing and flows. The Cuckmere Valley provides **supporting services** in terms of biodiversity and

**regulating services** in relation to water flow. In terms of **cultural services** there is a sense of relative remoteness and wildness associated with the undeveloped heritage coast and Cuckmere Haven.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE RIVER CUCKMERE CORRIDOR

**3.113** The principal challenge for all the river corridors relate to flooding. The principal opportunities relate to recreational opportunities along the river and in the case of the River Cuckmere these opportunities can be accessed at the Seven Sisters Country Park hub at Exceat.

### THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

**3.114** The spatial strategy seeks to deliver the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. It guides how the National Park will evolve and develop over the plan period (2014 – 2033). **Having regard to the landscape and five broad areas and river corridors, the spatial strategy for the South Downs Local Plan is for a medium level of growth dispersed across the towns and villages of the National Park.** This starts from the following key principles:

- The Local Plan must first and foremost reflect the purposes of the National Park, and is therefore based on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate growth (landscape-led); and
- Pursuant to this, the Local Plan must reflect the duty of the National Park, and should therefore seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities, across the breadth of the National Park.

**3.115** The spatial strategy therefore seeks to ensure that our towns and villages remain vibrant centres, whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities.

**3.116** There are several hundred settlements in the National Park, ranging from a collection of a few buildings, to large market towns. However, the spatial strategy of dispersed growth is limited to the 53 settlements listed in Policy SD25: Development Strategy of this Plan. These are the settlements for which there are defined boundaries, and where the principle of growth is accepted.



## LEVEL AND DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING GROWTH

**3.117** The level and distribution of growth is informed by a robust evidence base and engagement exercise that incorporates the results of informal and formal consultations on the Local Plan. The proposed **level** of housing growth is a matter that has been carefully considered through a wide ranging evidence base including the *Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)*<sup>18</sup>, (which builds on the *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)*<sup>19</sup>), the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)*<sup>20</sup>, and the *Sustainability Appraisal (SA)*<sup>21</sup>. The scenarios considered in the context of a landscape-led approach were:

1. **Low growth:** the minimum number of homes needed to maintain the size of the current population;
2. **Medium growth:** the number of homes to reflect the historic delivery rate in the area now covered by the South Downs National Park, for the period 2004 – 2014;
3. **Medium growth + 60%:** the number of homes to reflect the Winchester, East Hampshire and Lewes Joint Core Strategies, **and** a 60% uplift on historic delivery for settlements outside the Joint Core Strategy areas; and
4. **High growth:** projects forward population growth for the period 2013 – 2033 based on five year trends, as set out in the SHMA – this scenario fully meets the objectively assessed housing need (OAN) identified in the HEDNA.

**3.118** For each of these scenarios, two high-level development strategies were initially considered: dispersed development, where development would be spread across a wide range of settlements, and a concentrated strategy, where

housing growth would be restricted to the five key settlements of Petersfield, Lewes, Midhurst, Liss and Petworth.

**3.119** Some scenarios were, at an early stage, considered not to be reasonable alternatives. Low growth would have resulted in little growth occurring anywhere but the five large settlements, which would fail to meet social and economic sustainability objectives. For higher growth scenarios, a concentrated strategy would lead to such high levels of development in the larger settlements that negative landscape impacts would be inevitable.

**3.120** Of the remaining options tested through the SA, it was determined that a ‘dispersed **medium**’ development strategy would do most to promote the vitality of a wide range of settlements in the National Park and support the rural economy, whilst protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park. The SA also identified the sustainability benefits of encouraging development in a range of small settlements to support local services, rather than limiting growth only to locations with public transport opportunities.

**3.121** A dispersed **medium** development strategy also reflects the outcome of public consultation. There has been strong community support for addressing local housing need within many settlements across the National Park. Equally, there was little appetite within the large settlements for high levels of growth over the period of the Local Plan, given their landscape setting.

## OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED HOUSING NEED AND THE DUTY TO COOPERATE

**3.122** The ‘objectively assessed need’ for housing (OAN) is the forecast amount of housing needed for an area to fully meet the needs of its population. Footnote 9 of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* identifies national parks as an area where development should be restricted and OAN does not need to be met, notwithstanding the more generally applied national policy requiring local plans to meet the full OAN for housing in the housing market area. For the South Downs National Park, the HEDNA has set out a housing need of 447 new dwellings per year. The SA has confirmed that the National Park Authority would not be meeting its statutory purpose if it were to seek to fully meet the OAN within the National Park boundaries. Figure 3.5

<sup>18</sup> Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (G.L. Hearn, 2017)

<sup>19</sup> Strategic Housing Market Assessment (G.L. Hearn, 2015)

<sup>20</sup> South Downs Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (South Downs National Park Authority, 2016)

<sup>21</sup> South Downs Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (AECOM, 2014, 2015 and 2017)

sets out the overall picture of housing provision in the South Downs Local Plan, compared with the OAN range as advised in the HEDNA.

**FIGURE 3.5: HOUSING PROVISION COMPARED WITH OAN**

Annualised OAN in the National Park (over whole Plan period)	447 (8,493)
South Downs Local Plan housing provision (over the whole Plan period)	250 (4,750)
Annual shortfall in the National Park (over the whole Plan period)	197 (3,743)

**3.123** The National Park Authority has tested all known possible housing sites for development potential through the SHLAA, and made provision for housing within a limited landscape capacity. The National Park Authority is also working with partner authorities to fully test all reasonable options for meeting unmet housing need in suitable locations outside the National Park boundaries. Chapter 1 of this Local Plan explains what the National Park Authority has done to engage positively with its neighbouring local authorities and others on cross-boundary issues, including housing. The *Duty to Cooperate Statement*<sup>22</sup> sets out further details of how the unmet need relates to specific district, borough and city areas, and also sets out in detail the processes by which partners are seeking to address the need.

## LEVEL AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND RETAIL GROWTH

**3.124** This Local Plan seeks to provide local employment and facilities primarily to address the social and economic wellbeing of local communities, and to provide for local businesses that contribute to the special qualities of the National Park. Chapter 7 sets out relevant strategic policies.

**3.125** The HEDNA indicates a modest need for new employment land supply, and much of the requirement is met by extant planning permissions. Opportunities for new sites, as well as extant permissions, are focused on

larger settlements. The SA recognised that the National Park's business base is based on small businesses that do not require large scale allocations. The spatial strategy for employment is therefore to focus on safeguarding local employment sites, and modest employment growth in the main towns.

**3.126** The spatial strategy for retail is focused on supporting and sustaining local settlements and the rural economy. The market town centres within the National Park are Petersfield, Midhurst, Petworth and Lewes. Liss forms a larger village centre and smaller village centres are identified at Alfriston, Ditchling, Fernhurst and Findon.

**3.127** There is no provision in the spatial strategy for strategic or large scale retail development, as this would not be appropriate for a National Park.

## BROAD AREAS

**3.128** The spatial strategy applies across all the broad areas and river corridors and will be delivered through the policies of this Local Plan. It follows that the Local Plan policies will need to be interpreted in slightly different ways in the different areas if they are to operate effectively. For example, opportunities for agricultural diversification exist throughout, but we are likely to see more applications for development related to vineyards across the Dip Slope, and more for woodfuel supply chains in the Western Weald. The spatial portrait and spatial strategy will help to inform the preparation of further Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). Planning applications should reference the spatial portrait and spatial strategy as appropriate.

<sup>22</sup> *Duty to Cooperate Statement (South Downs National Park Authority, 2017)*