

Agenda Item 11
Report NPA28/18

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	16 October 2018
By	Countryside and Policy Manager
Title of Report Note	National Accord between Forestry Commission England and National Parks England

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to note the National Accord between Forestry Commission England and National Parks England attached at Appendix I, and the future development of a local accord between the SDNPA and the Forestry Commission.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2018 an accord between Forestry Commission England (FC) and National Parks England (NPE) was signed.
- 1.2 The Accord is a statement of a shared ambition between the FC and NPE, and will bring together decision makers to ensure woodland is managed sustainably and in line with a natural capital approach.
- 1.3 This will take into account the environmental, social and economic impact of trees and forests and the statutory purposes of our National Parks; our shared ambition.
- 1.4 Through the Accord the organisations will work together to achieve the following shared ambition:
'Woods and forests in England's National Parks are recognised as being at the forefront of sustainable forest management underpinned by the UK Forestry Standard and through this the delivery of relevant outcomes sought by the 25 Year Environment Plan and other relevant government policies. These are places where the stewardship of natural capital assets, cultural features and special qualities are central to land management decision making and the long-term view prevails. Woodland managers are admired for their pragmatic approach and principled management, delivering a range of benefits that protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage, nurture people's connections with woodlands and promote economic and social well-being'
- 1.5 In order to address the ambition and priorities set out in the national accord the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is working with the FC regional office to develop a set of local priorities which have been developed by the stakeholder Forestry Champions Group.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 Each National Park has a National Park Management Plan which is developed and delivered in partnership and provides a shared plan for the National Park area.
- 2.2 There is a statutory duty for relevant authorities, including FC, to have regard to National Park purposes when coming to decisions or carrying out activities relating to or affecting land within the National Parks, and to attach greater weight to the purpose of 'conserving and enhancing' if it appears that there is a conflict between the two National Park purposes.
- 2.3 The FC is a non-ministerial government department whose mission is to protect and expand forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.

- 2.4 In England, the FC's Forest Services works with the wide forestry sector to protect, improve and expand England's woodland.
- 2.5 Forest Enterprise is the agency of the FC that manages the Nation's Forests (formerly known as public forest estate). In early 2019 the Forest Enterprise name will change to Forestry England, Forestry England aims to connect everyone with the Nation's Forests. Forestry England aspires that people understand and value the Nation's Forests, to help support them, and to invest in them through commercial and public income. In this way Forestry England can then secure and grow the Nation's Forests for future generations, increasing their natural capital asset value and ensuring that they continue to provide places for people to enjoy, nature to flourish and business and the economy to grow.
- 3. Issues for consideration**
- 3.1 The accord states the **shared values** between the organisations as:
- Identify, respect and celebrate local distinctiveness, fostering a tailored approach to delivery;
 - Identify and pursue opportunities for shared, streamlined and efficient delivery that contributes to our shared ambitions;
 - Identify areas of potential conflict early and work constructively to endeavour to find mutually acceptable solutions; and
 - Adopt a pragmatic approach to National Park boundaries, recognising the interconnectedness of ecosystems and landscapes within and beyond them.
- 3.2 It also identifies the shared priorities as:
- We will work together, with the involvement of other appropriate partners, across the following **five priorities** to achieve our shared ambition.
 - Decision-making that enhances National Park landscapes and the woodlands in them.
 - Woodland creation and expansion in National Parks.
 - Exemplary Forest Enterprise and NPA owned / managed woodlands in National Parks.
 - Woodland grant schemes fit for the future.
 - National Park woodlands for people.
- 4. Options & cost implications**
- 4.1 Officer time will be required to develop the local accord with the Forestry Commission regional director. This will be based on the technical working group of the South Downs Forestry Champions, an industry membership stakeholder group working with the SDNPA as evidence to form the priorities for the local accord which will be bespoke to the South Down National Park.
- 5. Next steps**
- 5.1 A draft a local accord will be produced with the Forestry Commission regional director. South Downs Forestry stakeholders will be engaged to agree suitable arrangements for determining local focus and how to deliver these arrangements.
- 5.2 The local accord will based on the priorities of the South Downs Forestry Champions, a technical working group formed by the SDNPA with membership from across the woodland and forestry culture in the South Downs. The group includes membership from all the departments of the Forestry Commission.
- 5.3 The South Downs Forestry Champions technical working groups are formed into: People, Place and Prosperity covering aspects from pests and diseases, apprenticeships and local timber utilisation.
- 5.4 The local accord priorities will reflect and shape the future National Park Management Plans and Forest England Area Integrated Plans.
- 5.5 The final local accord will be shared with SDNPA Members.
- 5.6 Progress in delivering the priorities with the local accord will be reviewed on an annual basis and a full review of the national priorities themselves will be undertaken in 2021.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No?? The final local accord will be brought to a future NPA for Members to note.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	See above 4.1
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	N/A
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Equality issues will be considered as part of the MOU.
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 Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy	No

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 Appendices I. Accord between Forestry Commission (England) and National Parks England
 SDNPA Consultees Director of Countryside Policy and Management
 External Consultees None
 Background Documents [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/see-South-Downs-AONB-local-accord.pdf/\\$FILE/see-South-Downs-AONB-local-accord.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/see-South-Downs-AONB-local-accord.pdf/$FILE/see-South-Downs-AONB-local-accord.pdf)

