

## Sustainable Tourism Strategic Review Summary 2018

### 1. Underlying evidence and drivers for change

Almost 19 million visits to the South Downs National Park in 2016 (STEAM 2017) contributed £342 million to the economy and supported 4,878 FTE jobs. With uncertainty around future funding for rural development, a central Government drive to grow international tourism and growing pressures on the landscape mean that innovative approaches are needed to increase the economic impact of tourism while also increasing its sustainability.

### 2. Key issues

- Low individual spend per visitor, compared to other National Parks.
- Undersupply of accommodation stock, during peak season – a barrier to substantially increasing average spend per visitor.
- There is no unitary local authority or organisation responsible for sustainable tourism across the National Park (15 local authorities and 3 Local Enterprise Partnerships). South Downs National Park is not seen as a ‘destination’
- Sustainable tourism presents landowners, rural and market town communities with an accessible and viable mechanism for delivering economic development in the National Park, whilst supporting the two purposes.

### 2. Strategic outcomes

- Continued investment in sustainable tourism, post March 2019, creating a driving force in the growth of the rural economy, vital to the communities and farming sector of the South Downs and the wider South East.
- Throughout the year, visitors stay longer, across the whole of the National Park and spend more to feed into the National Park economy.
- Creation of a unifying, quality visitor experience by joining forces behind the National Park tourism offer based on the special qualities.
- An increase in the number of visitors choosing to travel to and across the National Park using sustainable transport options.

### 4. Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Developing and supporting visitor economy networks and cluster groups that:

- grow destination awareness and appeal
- improve access and ease of travel by sustainable transport options
- improve information provision, infrastructure and the visitor experience
- manage visitor impacts, reduce seasonality and increase dispersal
- collaborate on tourism provider support, training programmes and funding bids
- demonstrate and share best practice, research and evidence.

