

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	27 February 2020
By	Performance and Research Lead
Title of Report (Decision)	Corporate Plan 2020-25 draft

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Receive the draft Corporate Plan 2020-25**
- 2) Recommend approval of the Corporate Plan to the National Park Authority (NPA) in March 2020**

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the draft Corporate Plan for 2020-25. Members are asked to review and comment on it prior to it being taken for approval to NPA in March 2020. The current corporate plan was approved by the NPA at its meeting on 28 March 2019 (Report NPA05/19). It was a second bridge year plan, as we developed our new 5 year plan linked to the revised Partnership Management Plan, which was approved by the NPA in December 2019 (Report NPA19/20-21).

2. A new five year Corporate Plan for 2020-2025

2.1 The Corporate Plan identifies organisational priorities for the next 5 years, (2020-25). It includes:

- Large projects
- Areas of work that require significant resource to enable delivery
- Cross organisational areas of work, and
- New or innovative pieces of work that we have not done before

2.2 More detailed plans are maintained by individual teams and Theme Programme Boards.

2.3 The Corporate Plan follows the format of previous plans and sets out what we expect to achieve over the first year of the plan period.

2.4 The key priorities in the Corporate Plan will be monitored by P&R committee on a quarterly basis. Measures of success will be reported on annually and will largely run for the lifetime of the Corporate Plan to measure change over time. Targets will be set for all measures of success.

2.5 The draft Corporate Plan is at **Appendix I**.

3. Options & cost implications

3.1 The Corporate Plan is developed alongside the budget and will be reviewed each year. There is minimal cost associated with the development of the Corporate Plan itself apart

from some small cost for design and limited print run. The budget will be subject to a separate report and approval from the Authority.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Following comments and approval of the draft content by the P&R Committee, the content of the Corporate Plan will be revised as necessary and, following approval by the NPA, transferred to the public format, and published.

5. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes, the final Corporate Plan will be taken to NPA in March 2020 for sign off
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Implications of this report in itself do not raise an issue of value for money. However the projects that the organisation has funded are assessed for value for money when they are approved. In addition, projects are evaluated individually for value for money when they finish. This is reported regularly to the Policy and Resources Committee.
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?	Yes, whilst the Corporate Plan itself has not undergone an equalities assessment, all projects in the Corporate Plan will go through an assessment as part of the project approval process.
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, not directly although during development of the Corporate Plan, sustainability issues are included as part of the process.

6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 6.1 Robust corporate planning and monitoring of performance are part of the mitigations for our corporate risk as detailed in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Unforeseen changes to the level of funding provided by relevant Government departments for future years	Likely	Minor	A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to relevant Committees on projects and the budget available along with a Corporate Plan which sets clear priorities to support delivery of Partnership Management Plan outcomes.

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Appendices	I. Corporate Plan 2020-25_Year I action plan_draft
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager; Countryside and Policy Managers
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	None

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South Downs National Park Corporate Plan 2020-25_draft

Front page

Title: South Downs National Park Corporate Plan 2020-25, Year 1 action plan 2020-21

Foreword

The South Downs National Park covers over 1,600km² of England's most valued lowland landscapes shaped, over millennia, by the people who have lived and worked here. Its inspirational and varied landscapes, internationally important wildlife, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant market towns and villages hold a special place in the hearts of many millions. If we want it to remain a special place in 2050, we need to make sure that its landscapes can provide more benefits to more people, who can enjoy, understand and take action to support it.

The new Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2020-2025, and the Local Plan adopted in July 2019, set a clear guiding framework for the actions we as an Authority will take for the next five years, and this Corporates Plan sets these out in more detail. Whether you live in or near the South Downs National Park, are a business, one of our partners, a visitor, or simply someone who cares about its future, we hope you find this plan evidence of our commitment.

The Partnership Management Plan identified four overarching challenges for the next 5 years.

[Members to note that from Year 2 of the Corporate Plan onwards (2022/23 onwards), we will reflect back on key achievements from the previous year(s)].

I. The Climate Emergency

Climate change is having fundamental effects on biodiversity, agriculture and water resources. The National Park is already experiencing more unpredictable weather events causing drought, soil erosion and flooding. This is changing the landscapes as habitats come under pressure and agricultural systems and infrastructure struggle to adapt.

The SDNPA will develop a Climate Change Action Plan, working with other partners, for a net-zero National Park and Authority. As part of this we will:

- Use our planning policy and development management service, working together with all local planning authorities across the National Park
- Encourage communities to make changes to how we travel and live, for example by using renewable energy and decarbonising transport
- Work with farmers, estates and other landowners to changes to the way land is managed to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

We will act as an exemplar by demonstrating best practice in our corporate response to climate change. We want to be recognised as a leading player in managing the impacts of climate change on the South Downs National Park and contributing to a low carbon economy.

2. Nature recovery

Nature is increasingly under pressure, with growing national evidence about decline in insect populations, soils, water and air quality, and the onset of new pests and diseases (such as Ash Dieback) becoming evident.

The SDNPA will develop a nature recovery strategy for the National Park itself, linking this to a wider regional campaign, with AONBs, Local Nature Partnerships and Local Authorities. These will:

- help reverse the decline of nature, by supporting species recovery and habitat management
- encourage land owners and managers to give nature a chance to recover, by supporting nature recovery areas and networks
- build consensus with land owners and managers about how to use agriculture, forestry and rewilding approaches together to rebuild our natural capital alongside food production and carbon sequestration.

We will act as a catalyst to bring key stakeholders together to pilot new and innovative approaches.

3. Health and well-being

Evidence of the physical and mental health benefits of connection with nature continues to grow. The PMP includes a new outcome and priority on health and wellbeing which aims to involve communities in and around the boundary who suffer from poor health, in using the National Park to prevent ill-health, restore good health in partnership with the NHS.

We will:

- continue to promote the National Park for learning and recreation, supporting schools and volunteering
- work with public health authorities and the NHS to increase its use to prevent ill-health and restore good health amongst those most in need
- increase sustainable access to the National Park by delivering new dedicated walking & cycling routes and encouraging transport providers to improve public transport into and around it

We want the National Park to excel in delivering and inspiring excellence in natural health.

4. Economy, housing and infrastructure

The National Park is home to more than 8,000 businesses and a thriving economy is essential if our landscapes are to be sustainably managed. When the UK leaves the EU, a major transition will take place. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be replaced by a New England Land Management Scheme (NELMS) and tourism and the visitor economy will change. Situated in the heavily populated South East, the National Park is already experiencing major housing development around its borders. These new communities will inevitably have a significant impact; for example, on water abstraction and treatment, transport systems and because people will want to and should have access to enjoy the South Downs.

We will:

- push for our farmers to be part of the national pilot for the new England Land Management System
- develop innovative approaches to providing affordable rural housing
- encourage improvements to broadband connectivity and speeds for our rural communities and businesses
- use our tourism work to encourage people to stay longer, do more and spend locally
- work with neighbouring local authorities to develop people and nature networks across boundaries
- be a robust advocate to avoid or reduce the impact on the National Park of national infrastructure schemes and to achieve net gain for the environment.

Seven Sisters Country Park

The transfer of the freehold of the SSCP from ESCC to the SDNPA creates a huge opportunity for the Authority to make a direct contribution to National Park purposes and to the key issue listed above: nature recovery, climate change, health & wellbeing and economy. Crucially it will also allow us to diversify our income and make the work of the Authority more sustainable. The various elements of the SSCP project have been shown under each of the sections of the plan.

The context within which we work

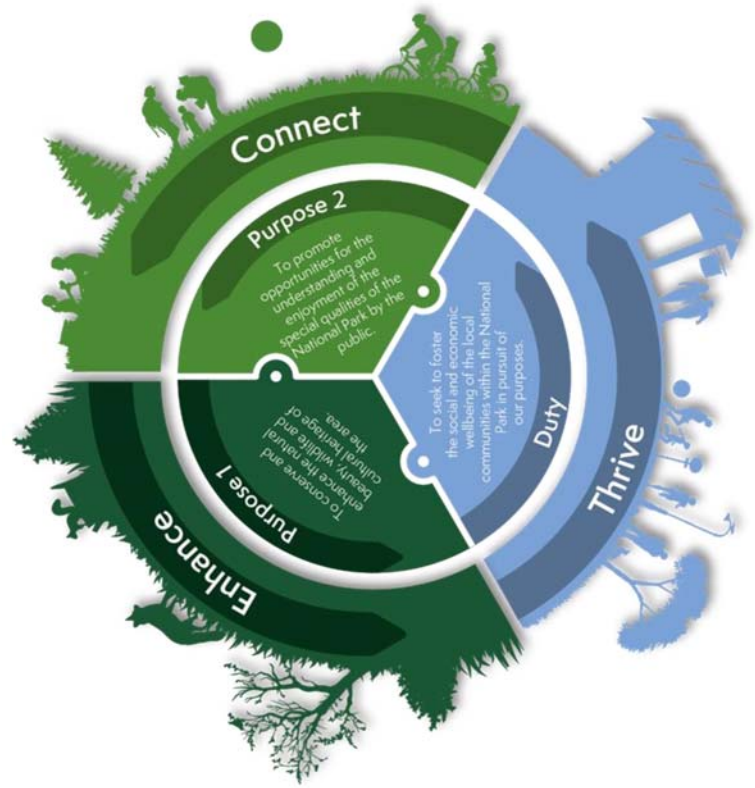
[Note for Comms: Dom to design up our 'golden thread' infographic and insert here].

The primary purpose of the South Downs National Park Authority Corporate Plan is to set out how we will deliver those elements of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) for which we are responsible. All relate back to the 10 outcomes in the PMP.

The Corporate Plan is one of our key management tools to ensure delivery of our Purposes and Duty.

Progress towards demonstrating that we have delivered the success measures will be monitored by the South Downs National Park Authority annually and published in the Annual Review.

Our Purposes and Duty



Strategic priorities: I Enhance

We will develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver the first Purpose of National Parks: to **conserve wildlife, the natural beauty of the landscape and cultural heritage (Enhance)**. Outcomes 1-4 in the Partnership Management Plan 2020-25 address these as follows:

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes	Partnership Management Plan Priorities	Corporate Plan key priorities	In year 1 of our Corporate Plan we will:
<p>Outcome 1: The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities, natural beauty and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by avoiding or mitigating the negative impacts of development and cumulative change</p>	<p><i>1.1 Protect and enhance the natural beauty and character of the SDNP and seek environmental net-gain from any infrastructure projects</i></p> <p><i>1.2 Improve green and blue infrastructure to deliver nature recovery networks and connect people to nature within and around the SDNP</i></p> <p><i>1.3 Maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the National Park</i></p>	<p>Deliver the strategic approach to the spatial elements of the People and Nature Network (Green Infrastructure)</p> <p>Lead the Authority's response to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposals (NSIPs) ii) Major and strategic planning applications iii) Other ad hoc major projects as required <p>Provide high quality specialist advice in Design, Conservation and Landscape, predominantly within the Planning directorate but also across the organisation as required</p> <p>Implement Local Plan Supplementary Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to develop local projects in key areas including Winchester and Truleigh Hill 2) Pilot GI National standards working with (NE) <p>Respond in a timely and appropriate fashion to NSIP proposals and other major planning applications which may impact the National Park</p> <p>Provide specialist advice as and when required</p> <p>Create further guidance on Local Plan policies for Trees (SPD) and Biodiversity Net Gain (SPD)</p>

<p>Outcome 2: There is increased resilience within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures</p>	<p><i>2.1 Improve soil and water by reducing soil erosion, improving carbon capture and filtration and reconnecting wetland habitats</i></p> <p><i>2.2 Improve the resilience and quality and quantity of trees and woodlands in the National Park and ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place</i></p> <p><i>3.1 Create, restore and improve areas of priority habitat to be more, bigger, better, and joined up at a landscape scale</i></p>	<p>Documents (SPDs) and Technical Advice Notes (TANs)</p> <p>Environmental land management (ELM) system</p> <p>Develop SDNPA projects as part of the National Trust led HLF funded Changing Chalk initiative</p> <p>Reduce nitrates into groundwater as part of Brighton ChAMP Phase 2</p> <p>Develop nature recovery/nature based solutions as part of the climate change action plan</p> <p>Support the South Downs Forestry Champions Partnership and its action plan</p> <p>Complete Heathlands Reunited and secure ongoing commitments to heathland recovery and public engagement</p>	<p>Work with other organisations to develop their tests and trials and continue to build relationships through farm clusters</p> <p>Development Phase: 1) Grazing project officer in post 2) Undertake dew ponds baseline survey</p> <p>Continuation and rolling out of ChAMP phase 1 with farmers and with communities on rain gardens</p> <p>1) Develop and agree the climate change action plan with NPA and partners 2) Implementation to start late 2021/22</p> <p>1) Deliver Woodland Trust partnership project (extended by 3 years) 2) Investigate & confirm other woodland initiatives</p> <p>1) Complete current project 2) Define objectives & funding of Phase 2 looking at entire Wealden Heathlands network</p>
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<p>of priority species now exist in the National Park</p>	<p>3.2 <i>Increase the genetic diversity and resilience of target species and implement a landscape scale strategy for tackling invasives, pest species and diseases</i></p>	<p>Develop and implement a Nature Recovery Strategy and a wider campaign working with regional partners.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Define our vision & create a Nature Recovery Strategy 2) Define the Nature Recovery Networks 3) Adopt & apply Natural Capital Investment Strategy (NCIS) 4) Create guidance for net gain - including guidance for planners 5) Continue to develop satellite monitoring capability
<p>Outcome 4: Cultural heritage of the National Park is enhanced and widely understood and enjoyed</p>	<p>4.1 <i>Increase conservation, awareness, access to and understanding of South Downs cultural heritage</i></p>	<p>Set up and administer Biodiversity/Natural Capital Challenge Fund</p> <p>Produce a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) for Seven Sisters Country Park</p> <p>Create and undertake a Scheduled Monument Monitoring project</p> <p>Commission and oversee Archaeology On The Edge (Stage 2) project</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Investigate feasibility, define criteria & launch concept 2) Seek external funding to pump-prime <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Undertake biodiversity baseline survey 2) Start drafting the Landscape Management Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Project development: Liaise with partners (Historic England, National Trust) 2) Link with other projects (i.e. Changing Chalk) 3) Scope funding and timescales 4) Liaise with SDNPA colleagues re resource requirements and capacity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Project development: Liaise with partners (National Trust;

	<p>4.2 Promote creativity and understanding of the landscape and traditions of the South Downs through contemporary arts and crafts</p>		<p>County Archaeologist; Universities) 2) Secure partner sign up / commitment 3) Scope funding and timescales 4) Liaise with SDNPA colleagues re resource requirements and capacity</p>
		<p>Roll out the Footsteps App</p>	<p>1) Identify organisations that may benefit from use of the App 2) Tender for package of content - secure content development (scripting, filming etc.)</p>
		<p>Meet the Archaeologist NFC plaques created and installed</p>	<p>1) Work with historic environment county and district specialists to identify key sites and relevant archaeological expertise 2) Liaise with Historic England re. locations and walking routes linked to Scheduled Monuments / areas of archaeological interest 3) Liaise with rangers re landowner permission for NFC tag signage installation</p>

Strategic priorities: 2 Connect

We will develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver the second Purpose of National Parks: to promote understanding and enjoyment and improve health and well-being through volunteering & learning, high quality access management and providing information and events (Connect). Outcomes 5-8 in the Partnership Management Plan 2020-25 address these as follows:

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes	Partnership Management Plan Priorities	Corporate Plan Key priorities		In year 1 we will:
<p>Outcome 5: Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high quality access and sustainable transport networks</p>	<p>5.1 Encourage everyone to experience the National Park and widen participation for under-represented groups through targeted activities and promotion</p> <p>5.2 Improve accessibility through a network of high quality routes connecting communities with the landscape, heritage, attractions and transport hubs and gateways</p> <p>5.3 Encourage sustainable access into and around the National Park, encouraging the retention and expansion of rural transport services</p>	<p>Increase our digital reach and engagement</p>	<p>Relaunch the website</p>	<p>Deliver programme of celebration as set out in 10th Anniversary Comms Plan</p>
		<p>Manufacture and install 30 new entry signs inside the National Park</p>	<p>Successfully manufacture and install the entry signs by end 2021/22</p>	
		<p>Deliver Centurion Way Phase 2 from Singleton to Cocking</p>	<p>1) Undertake ecological/tunnel surveys for Centurion Way Phase II 2) Work with Sussex Bat Group to commission ecological surveys in West Dean Tunnel</p>	
		<p>Provide funding for permissive paths as a stop gap between expiring existing agri-environment schemes and the start of the new ELMs scheme</p>	<p>Ensure pilot agreements are in place with relevant landowners</p>	

<p>qualities and use resources more wisely</p>			<p>2) Extend the South Downs youth action programme to Easter and summer 2020 involving wider partners in a park-wide offer</p> <p>3) Identify next steps for incorporating the Youth Voice across the SDNP</p>
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Strategic priorities: 3 Thrive

We will develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver the Duty of National Parks: **to build sustainable communities which are engaged and shaping their environment and supporting sustainable businesses and tourism (Thrive)**. Outcomes 9-10 in the Partnership Management Plan 2020-25 address these as follows:

Partnership Management Plan Outcomes	Partnership Management Plan Priorities	Corporate Plan Key priorities In year 1 we will:	
<p>Outcome 9: Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to address local needs and improved access to essential services and facilities</p>	<p><i>9.1 Increase affordable housing stock in the National Park, with focus on exemplary design and using local sustainable materials.</i></p> <p><i>9.2 Support community-led initiatives which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park</i></p> <p><i>9.3 Support improvement in digital infrastructure, speed and coverage throughout the South Downs National Park</i></p>	<p>Develop an annual challenge fund to support the development of community facility enhancements that contribute to multiple PMP outcomes</p>	<p>1) Launch the concept and define the criteria 2) Seek external funding to create the fund</p>
		<p>Participate in the development of the Petersfield place making strategy</p>	<p>Set up governance and identify enhancements</p>
		<p>Review and update the Local Plan, including evidence gathering and engagement</p>	<p>Incorporate learning from the establishment of the first Local Plan</p>
		<p>Implement Local Plan Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Technical Advice Notes (TANs)</p>	<p>Create further guidance on Local Plan policies for Parking (SPD), Construction (SDP) and Viticulture (TAN)</p>
		<p>Effectively and efficiently operate all processes and systems for incoming and outgoing monies related to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 legal agreements</p>	<p>Efficiently and in a timely fashion distribute CIL and Section 106 payments</p>

<p>Outcome 10: A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park</p>	<p><i>10.1 Strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise</i></p> <p><i>10.2 Increase awareness and desirability of the South Downs as a special place to visit</i></p> <p><i>10.3 Establish the South Downs as an exemplar in sustainable tourism</i></p>	<p>Develop the Sustainable Economy and Tourism Engagement Strategic Approach</p> <p>Enhance the South Downs Public Realm</p> <p>Deliver the extended National Park Experience Collection (ENPEC), including the roll out of Ranger Experiences</p> <p>Assist in the development of the Sussex Heritage Coast Visitor Management Plan</p> <p>Develop and launch the SDNP Dark Skies Welcome scheme</p> <p>Complete Phase 1 & Phase 2 scope of works at Seven Sisters Country Park</p>	<p>1) Develop and launch a businesses network - including sustainable tourism</p> <p>2) Create the South Downs Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>3) Deliver recommendations highlighted in the 2018 Economic Profile</p> <p>Develop designs and contribute to schemes to enhance the public realm on and around highways</p> <p>Deliver the Discover England Fund 2 (DEF2) project with UK National Parks</p> <p>Commission the development of a Visitor Management Plan with Heritage Coast Partners</p> <p>Develop criteria and branding</p> <p>1) Complete Phase 1: refurbishment of buildings (starting Sep 2020) and commence construction</p> <p>2) Feed Phase 2 design into the overall masterplan</p>
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		Work towards building Seven Sisters Country Park into a world class visitor attraction	<p>1) Develop Seven Sisters Country Park holiday accommodation offering</p> <p>2) Achieve Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) baseline accreditation</p>
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Organisational priorities

We will develop strategies, support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver our organisational objective: **to be a confident and secure organisation exercising effective influence; providing excellent customer service, and value for money and generating income to support our work.**

Key Priorities

In Year 1 we will:

Seven Sisters Country Park	
Set up a trading company for Seven Sisters Country Park	Form a trading company and commence operations [subject to Authority approval]
Planning	
Maintain a robust and well performing host authority development management system	Monitor service and deliver continued improvements
Complete Soft Sand Single Issue Review	Submit for examination and adopt
Provide Local Plan training for officers, members and agents	Train officers, members and agents on the Local Plan
Deliver a robust and well performing development management and Minerals & Waste service	Exceed the performance indicators for issue of decisions whilst adding value
Deliver a robust and well performing development management service in terms of Appeals performance	Respond swiftly to appeals and aim to reduce the number of appeals
Deliver a robust and well performing enforcement service	<p>1) Undertake investigations within agreed timetables</p> <p>2) Ensure swift resolution and conclusion of investigations</p>

Deliver ongoing process and procedure improvements as set out in the Development Management Improvement Plan	Introduce a new Pre-application Service Charging Schedule
Performance, Projects and Learning	
Set up thematic research networks with academics and sector specialists based on research requirements highlighted through strategic reviews and in the PMP	Identify themes and potential partners
Undertake a systematic assessment of the way the organisation acquires, stores and maintains its spatial and generic data	Assess current data we are holding and produce a plan for solution implementation
Progress the Citizens Panel beyond the pilot phase	1) Award a new three year contract 2) Revise the Panel membership
Improve performance and project reporting information on the SDNPA website	Provide accessible information for stakeholders on our website
Establish, manage and monitor an evaluation framework tasked to carry out external evaluations of SDNPA corporate and project work	Establish the framework and procure evaluations - e.g. PMP process review
Other corporate priorities	
Continue to review opportunities to secure suitable long term accommodation for our area offices that meets the aspirations of the Authority	Relocate the Weald and Downland (Central) area team to new suitable accommodation
Commission a new Staff Survey and create an action plan	Plan the survey ready for commission and implementation the following year
Aim to achieve Climate neutrality for the SDNPA	1) Carry out a carbon audit 2) Agree and implement a climate change action plan
SDNPA to continue to support the Trust	To continue ongoing support, inc. financial support [subject to Authority budgetary approval]

Five year measures with targets

Measures of success		Targets
Nature recovery and biodiversity <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed
Climate change <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed
Cultural heritage <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed
% aware of SDNP in YouGov poll <i>(Survey of 2,000 YouGov pollsters in 2021 and 2023)</i>		2021: 67% aware of SDNP 2023: 70% aware of SDNP
Increase the diversity of the VRS (re age and ethnicity) <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed
Increase our average unique monthly web visitors from @36,000 to 54,000 by 2025		Year 1: 39,000 Year 2: 42,000 Year 3: 46,000 Year 4: 50,000 Year 5: 54,000
Increase our social media following from @37,000 to 50,000 across all platforms by 2025		Year 1: 39,000 Year 2: 41,000 Year 3: 44,000 Year 4: 47,000 Year 5: 50,000
'Your National Park' campaign launched and reaching 20,000 people by 2025		Year 1: 10,000 Year 2: 12,000 Year 3: 14,000 Year 4: 17,000 Year 5: 20,000
Create two new gateways to the National Park between 2020 and 2025		Year 1/2: gateway at Seven Sisters By Year 5: one other gateway
Develop at least 3 Health and Well- Being Hubs across the National Park by 2025		At least 3 hubs created by 2025
Whole Estate Plans <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed
Economy and new housing and infrastructure <i>(to be defined)</i>		To be agreed

% major applications determined within 13 weeks	70% (Government target = 60%)
% non-major applications determined within 8 weeks	80% (Government target = 70%)
% of new projects brought forward that have delivery plans	100%
% of contractors satisfied with SDNPA as a client	80%
% of contractors fulfilling their obligations as set out in their tender to quality, time and budget	80%

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