Agenda Item 4 Report NPA19/20-27 Appendix 1

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

South Downs National Park Corporate Plan 2020–2025

YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN 2020-21

South Downs National Park Authority

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Introduction

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 Corporate 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 Authority has identified five overarching priorities for the next five years.

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The Climate Emergency

Climate change is having a fundamental effect 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.

Working with our partners, the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) will develop a Climate Change Action Plan 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 change 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.



Biodiversity

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

The South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) 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.

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

Biodiversity.

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, use 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.

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 Environmental 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 Environmental 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

Situated in the South Downs National Park, Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) comprises 280ha of chalk cliffs, meandering river valley and open chalk grassland.

The transfer of the freehold of the Seven Sisters Country Park from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to the South Downs National Park Authority creates a huge opportunity for the Authority to make a direct contribution to National Park purposes and to the key issues listed above: climate change, nature recovery, health & wellbeing and economy, housing and infrastructure.

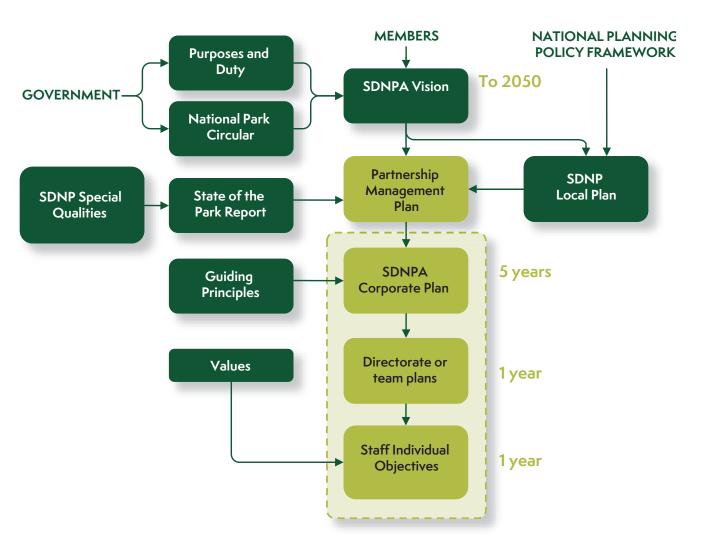
Crucially it will also allow us to diversify our income and make the work of the Authority more sustainable. The various elements of the SSCP project have been shown under each of the sections of the Corporate Plan. Seven Sisters Country Pa

The context within which we work

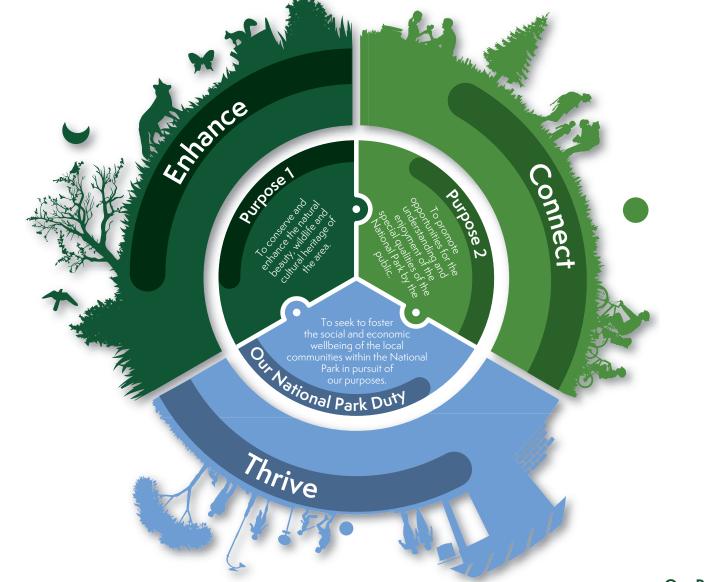
The South Downs National Park Authority's Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver those elements of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) for which we are responsible. All relate back to the 10 outcomes in the PMP.

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



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strategic priorities 1. 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:

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OUTCOME 1: LANDSCAPE & NATURAL BEAUTY

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.

- 1.1 Protect and enhance the natural beauty and character of the SDNP and seek environmental net-gain from any infrastructure projects
- 1.2 Improve green and blue infrastructure to deliver nature recovery networks and connect people to nature within and around the SDNP
- 1.3 Maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the National Park

'n	SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
7	Deliver the strategic approach to spatial elements of the People and Nature Network (Green Infrastructure)	 Continue to develop local projects in key areas including Winchester and Truleigh Hill Pilot the GI National standards working with (NE)
	Lead the Authority's response to: i) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Proposals ii) Major and strategic planning applications iii) Other ad hoc major projects as required	Respond in a timely and appropriate fashion to NSIP proposals and other major planning applications which may impact the National Park
ver e	Provide high quality specialist advice in Design, Conservation and Landscape, predominantly within the Planning directorate but also across the organisation as required	Provide specialist advice as and when required
	Implement Local Plan Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Technical Advice Notes (TANs)	Create further guidance on Local Plan policies for Trees (SPD) and Biodiversity Net Gain (SPD)
	Environmental land management (ELM) system	Work with other organisations to develop their tests and trials and continue to build relationships through farm clusters

OUTCOME 2: INCREASING RESILIENCE

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

- 2.1 Improve soil and water by reducing soil erosion, improving carbon capture and filtration and reconnecting wetland habitats
- 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

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
Develop SDNPA projects as part of the National Trust led HLF funded Changing Chalk initiative	Development Phase: 1) Grazing project officer in post 2) Undertake dew ponds baseline survey
Reduce nitrates into groundwater as part of Brighton ChAMP Phase 2	Continuation and rolling out of ChAMP Phase 1 with farmers and with communities on rain gardens
Develop nature recovery/nature based solutions as part of the climate change action plan	 Develop and agree the climate change action plan with NPA and partners Implementation to start late 2021/22
Support the South Downs Forestry Champions Partnership and its action plan	 Deliver Woodland Trust partnership project (extended by 3 years) Investigate & confirm other woodland initiatives

OUTCOME 3: HABITATS & SPECIES

A thriving and connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of pri ority species now exist in the National Park

- 3.1 Create, restore and improve areas of priority habitat to be more, bigger, better, and joined up at a landscape scale
- 3.2 Increase the genetic diversity and resilience of target species and implement a landscape scale strategy for tackling invasives, pest species and diseases

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE
PRIORITIES	PLAN WE WILL:
Complete Heathlands Reunited and secure ongoing commitments to heathland recovery and public engagement	 Complete current project Define objectives & funding of Phase 2 looking at entire Wealden Heaths network
Develop and implement a Nature Recovery Strategy and a wider campaign working with regional partners	 Define vision & create a Nature Recovery Strategy Define the Nature Recovery Networks Adopt & apply Natural Capital Investment Strategy (NCIS) Create guidance for net gain- including guidance for planners Continue to develop satellite monitoring capability
Set up and administer the Biodiversity/Natural	 Investigate feasibility, define criteria & launch
Capital Challenge Fund	concept Seek external funding to pump-prime
Produce a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) for	 Undertake biodiversity baseline survey Start drafting the Landscape Management
Seven Sisters Country Park	Plan

OUTCOME 4: ARTS & HERITAGE

Cultural heritage of the National Park is enhanced and widely understood and enjoyed

- 4.1 Increase conservation, awareness, access to and understanding of South Downs cultural heritage
- 4.2 Promote creativity and understanding of the landscape and traditions of the South Downs through contemporary arts and crafts

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
Create and undertake a Scheduled Monument Monitoring project	 Project development: Liaise with partners (Historic England, National Trust) Link with other projects (i.e. Changing Chalk) Scope funding and timescales Liaise with SDNPA colleagues re resource requirements and capacity
Commission and oversee Archaeology On The Edge (Stage 2) project	 Project development: Liaise with partners (National Trust; County Archaeologist; Universities) Secure partner sign up/commitment Scope funding and timescales Liaise with SDNPA colleagues re resource requirements and capacity
Roll out the Footsteps App	 Identify organisations that may benefit from use of the App Tender for package of content– secure content development (scripting, filming etc.)
Meet the Archaeologist NFC plaques created and installed	 Work with historic environment county and district specialists to identify key sites and relevant archaeological expertise Liaise with Historic England re. locations and walking routes linked to Scheduled Monuments / areas of archaeological interest Liaise with rangers re landowner permission for NFC tag signage installation

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:

OUTCOME 5: OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high quality access and sustainable transport networks

- 5.1 Encourage everyone to experience the National Park and widen participation for under-represented groups through targeted activities and promotion
- 5.2 Improve accessibility through a network of high quality routes connecting communities with the landscape, heritage, attractions and transport hubs and gateways
- 5.3 Encourage sustainable access into and around the National Park, encouraging the retention and expansion of rural transport services

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES		IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
Increase our digital reach and engage	ement	Relaunch the website
Deliver 10th Anniversary programme celebration		Deliver programme of celebration as set out in the Comms Plan
Manufacture and install 30 new entry the National Park	•	Successfully manufacture and install the entry signs by end 2021/22
gh Deliver Centurion Way Phase 2 from 3 e Cocking		 Undertake ecological/tunnel surveys for Centurion Way Phase II Work with Sussex Bat Group to commission ecological surveys in West Dean Tunnel
d Provide funding for permissive paths of gap between expiring existing agri-en schemes and the start of the new ELM	vironment	Ensure pilot agreements are in place with relevant landowners
Create a safe crossing on the A283 a Beeding on to the South Downs Way		Support West Sussex County Council with scheme feasibility and outline design work
Complete Egrets Way Phase V		Complete scheme design for Phase V, secure permissions and commence scheme construction
Identify Protected Landscape issues wi transport policies and planning in Tra South East region	nsport for	Identify issues in partnership with the South East Protected Landscapes group and develop actions to deliver recommendations
Create a new cycle way along the Ro		Complete scheme feasibility and outline design work for Phase 1 (Petersfield to Nyewood)

OUTCOME 6: LIFELONG LEARNING

Widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES

6.1 Provide high-quality outdoor learning opportunities as part of a locally relevant curriculum

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE
PRIORITIES	PLAN WE WILL:
Develop the 'Our South Downs' Learning Network	 Pilot the ambassador schools programme with Bury Primary School and Droxford Junior School Research the potential for a schools eco grant

OUTCOME 7: HEALTH & WELLBEING

The South Downs National Park is a wellused and recognised asset for sustaining mental and physical health and wellbeing

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES

7.1 Develop initiatives which enable local communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
Develop our Health and Wellbeing work programme by developing our partnerships	Support the delivery of the Southern National Parks and Public Health England social prescribing conference
Deliver the John Muir Award (JMA) Families Inclusion Award	Deliver year 1

OUTCOME 8: CREATING CUSTODIANS

More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, communities and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES

8.1 Increase and diversify volunteering opportunities that support the National Park

ATING CUSTODIANS		
by ties	SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
iies	Develop our youth engagement programme	 Review the youth ambassador pilot and extend the role to other National Park areas Extend the South Downs youth action
ities		programme to Easter and summer 2020 involving wider partners in a park-wide offer 3) Identify next steps for incorporating the Youth Voice across the SDNP

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:



OUTCOME 9: GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

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

- 9.1 Increase affordable housing stock in the National Park, with focus on exemplary design and using local sustainable materials.
- 9.2 Support community-led initiatives which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park
- 9.3 Support improvement in digital infrastructure, speed and coverage throughout the South Downs National Park

s	SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
	Develop an annual challenge fund to support the development of community facility enhancements that contribute to multiple PMP outcomes	 Launch the concept and define the criteria Seek external funding to create the fund
	Participate in the development of the Petersfield place making strategy	Set up governance and identify enhancements
ŋn	Review and update the Local Plan, including evidence gathering and engagement	Incorporate learning from the establishment of the first Local Plan
of	Implement Local Plan Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Technical Advice Notes (TANs)	Create further guidance on Local Plan policies for Parking (SPD), Construction (SDP) and Viticulture (TAN)
	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	Continue to develop the Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP) as a mechanism to direct CIL money to National Park priorities

OUTCOME 10: GREAT PLACES TO WORK

A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES

10.1 Strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise

10.2 Increase awareness and desirability of the South Downs as a special place to visit10.3 Establish the South Downs as an exemplar in

sustainable tourism

SDNPA CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN WE WILL:
Develop the Sustainable Economy and Tourism Engagement Strategic Approach	 Develop and launch a businesses network- including sustainable tourism Create the South Downs Enterprise Partnership Deliver recommendations highlighted in the 2018 Economic Profile
Enhance the South Downs Public Realm	Develop designs and contribute to schemes to enhance the public realm on and around highways
Deliver the extended National Park Experience Collection (ENPEC), including the roll out of Ranger Experiences	Deliver the Discover England Fund 2 (DEF2) project with UK National Parks
Assist in the development of the Sussex Heritage Coast Visitor Management Plan	Commission the development of a Visitor Management Plan with Heritage Coast Partners
Develop and launch the SDNP Dark Skies Welcome scheme	Develop criteria and branding
Complete Phase 1 & Phase 2 scope of works at Seven Sisters Country Park	 Complete Phase 1: refurbishment of buildings (starting Sep 2020) and commence construction Feed Phase 2 design into the overall masterplan
Work towards building Seven Sisters Country Park into a world class visitor attraction	 Develop Seven Sisters Country Park holiday accommodation offering Achieve Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) baseline accreditation

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 measure the rate of dismissals
Deliver a robust and well performing enforcement service	 Undertake investigations within agreed timetables Ensure swift resolution and conclusion of investigations
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

KEY PRIORITIES	IN YEAR 1 WE WILL:
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	 Award new three year contract 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	 Carry out a carbon audit Agree and implement a climate change action plan
SDNPA to continue to support the Trust	To continue ongoing support, incl. financial support [subject to Authority budgetary approval]

FIVE YEAR MEASURES WITH TARGETS

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Nature recovery and biodiversity (to be defined)

Climate change (to be defined)

Cultural heritage (to be defined)

% aware of SDNP in YouGov poll (Survey of 2,000 YouGov pollsters in 2021 and 2023)

Increase from the baseline (in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy) in the number of people from underrepresented groups participating in volunteering opportunities led by the South Downs National Park Authority

Increase our average unique monthly web visitors from @36,000 to 54,000 by 2025

Increase our social media following from @37,000 to 50,000 across all platforms by 2025

'Your National Park' campaign launched and reaching 20,000 people by 2025

Create two new gateways to the National Park between 2020 and 2025

Develop at least 3 Health and Well-Being Hubs across the National Park by 2025

Whole Estate Plans (to be defined)

Economy and new housing and infrastructure (to be defined)

% major applications determined within 13 weeks

% non-major applications determined within 8 weeks

% of new projects brought forward that have delivery plans

% of contractors satisfied with SDNPA as a client

% of contractors fulfilling their obligations as set out in their tender to quality, time and budget

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

