

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

Partnership Management Plan 2020–2025

AT A GLANCE





Introduction

The South Downs National Park (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.

The National Park is a diverse and dynamic landscape cherished by many, yet it is a landscape under great pressure. The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan sets out how the Authority and its partners will work to secure a positive future for this nationally important landscape, its wildlife and the people who visit it or call it home.

The South Downs National Park Authority looks forward to working with partners, both big and small, and the communities of, and visitors to, the National Park to bring this ambitious Plan to reality, ensuring the



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South Downs National Park becomes an even better home for both nature and people.

Everyone has a part to play.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Paren".

Margaret Paren

Chair

South Downs National Park Authority

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK IN A NUTSHELL

Largest National Park population

117,000 residents



18 distinctive landscape types



3rd LARGEST NATIONAL PARK IN ENGLAND



1% Lowland heath 'rarer than rainforest'

23% woodland cover

45% of which is ancient woodland

4% chalk grassland



Which includes:



One of...



...International Dark Sky Reserves



91,000 volunteer days annually



17.5 km of coastline (including the defined Sussex Heritage Coast)

2.2 MILLION people within 10km



166 conservation areas

Provides water for 1.2 million people



893 schools in or nearby



4.4% OPEN ACCESS LAND



29 registered historic parks and gardens



67% of the National Park, has Dark Skies



18.8 MILLION visitors annually



575 scheduled monuments



13 European wildlife sites



176 town or parish councils



5,203 listed buildings



15% national or local wildlife sites



3,300km of rights of way including the South Downs Way

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a vast field of purple heather in the foreground and middle ground. In the background, a line of trees is visible under a bright, hazy sky, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is serene and natural.

Our ambitions for the next five years

The Outcomes and Priorities set out in the following pages are what partners across the National Park together hope to achieve by 2050.

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. For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

1.1 PROTECT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

To protect and enhance the natural beauty and character of the National Park and seek environmental net-gain from any infrastructure projects

1.2 CREATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

To improve green and blue infrastructure to deliver nature recovery networks and connect people to nature within and around the National Park

1.3 TARGET NEW PAYMENTS

To maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the National Park



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.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

2.1 IMPROVE SOIL AND WATER

To improve soil and water by reducing soil erosion, improving carbon capture and filtration and reconnecting wetland habitats

2.2 IMPROVE TREES AND WOODLAND

To 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



OUTCOME 3: HABITATS & SPECIES

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

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

3.1 JOIN UP HABITATS

To create, restore and improve areas of priority habitat to be more, bigger, better, and joined up at a landscape scale.

3.2 MANAGE PRIORITY AND INVASIVE SPECIES

To increase the genetic diversity and resilience of target species and implement a landscape scale strategy for tackling invasive species, pests and diseases.



OUTCOME 4: ARTS & HERITAGE

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

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

4.1 CONSERVE HERITAGE

To increase conservation, awareness, access to and understanding of South Downs cultural heritage.

4.2 PROMOTE CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND CRAFTS

To promote creativity and understanding of the landscape and traditions of the South Downs through contemporary arts and crafts.



OUTCOME 5: OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high quality access and sustainable transport networks. For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

5.1 A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL

To encourage everyone to experience the National Park and widen participation for under-represented groups through targeted activities and promotion.

5.2 IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

To 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 TRANSPORT

To encourage sustainable access into and around the National Park, encouraging the retention and expansion of rural transport services.



OUTCOME 6: LIFELONG LEARNING

There is widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

6.1 PROVIDE OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

To provide high-quality outdoor learning opportunities as part of a locally relevant curriculum.



OUTCOME 7: HEALTH & WELLBEING

The South Downs National Park is a well-used and recognised asset for sustaining mental and physical health and wellbeing.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

7.1 IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

To develop initiatives which enable local communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing.



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.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

8.1 INCREASE VOLUNTEERING

To increase and diversify volunteering opportunities that support the National Park.



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.

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

9.1 INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To increase affordable housing stock in the National Park, with focus on exemplary design and using local sustainable materials.

9.2 SUPPORT VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

To support community-led initiatives which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park.

9.3 IMPROVE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

To support improvement in digital infrastructure, speed and coverage throughout the South Downs National Park.



OUTCOME 10: GREAT PLACES TO WORK

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

For this outcome our priorities for the next five years are:

10.1: STRENGTHEN ENTERPRISE

To strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise.

10.2: INCREASE DESTINATION AWARENESS

To increase awareness and desirability of the South Downs as a special place to visit.

10.3: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

To establish the South Downs as an exemplar in sustainable tourism.



How we will measure progress

As part of this Plan we have developed a set of 35 indicators which will allow us to measure our collective progress in delivering the ten outcomes and making the National Park a better place.

Wherever possible, we have linked these to the national indicators Defra is using to measure its 25 Year Environment Plan, but we also have local indicators for things which are especially important in the South Downs, like Dark Night Skies. Examples for each outcome can be seen in the table opposite.

On behalf of all the partners involved in delivering the plan, the Authority will create an annual report setting out progress. As part of this it will include its own activities and blend in the key achievements of other key organisations based on their assessment of how major projects are progressing.

Outcome		Example PMP Indicator
1	Landscape & Natural Beauty	% of communities with access to natural greenspace.
2	Increasing Resilience	% of rivers and groundwater bodies with water available for abstraction.
3	Habitats & Species	Area, condition and connectivity of target priority habitats.
4	Arts & Heritage	% of heritage assets 'at risk'
5	Outstanding Experiences	% of visitors who felt very satisfied with the visitor experience.
6	Lifelong Learning	% of schools within a 10km radius of the boundary using the National Park for learning outside the classroom experiences at least once a year.
7	Health & Wellbeing	At least 3 health and wellbeing hubs developed across the National Park.
8	Creating Custodians	Total number of volunteer days spent on activity relating to the special qualities.
9	Great Places to Live	Proportion of new homes built that are 'affordable housing'.
10	Great Places to Work	Number and diversity of business types that exist in the National Park.

How can you help?

- Support pollinators by planting bee and other pollinator friendly plants in your garden.
- Do a 2 minute litter pick when you go out for a walk.
- Visit cultural heritage sites across the National Park and share what you learn.
- Save our dark night skies by turning off your lights or installing lights that point down.
- Get active – cycle, run, kayak, ride or just stroll gently.
- Support young people in your life to get into nature.
- Use public transport or car share.
- Get involved in the development of your community's neighbourhood development plan or community plans.
- Grow your own fruit and veg.
- Support wildlife groups in your area.





SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

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