

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	26 March 2020
By	Director of Countryside & Policy Management, and Landscape & Biodiversity Strategy Lead.
Title of Report (Decision)	South Downs National Park – Climate Change Action Plan

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

- 1) Note the climate and nature emergency that has been declared by a number of partner organisations**
- 2) Affirm the Authority’s commitment to contribute to addressing the climate and nature emergency by;**
 - a) Committing to the South Downs National Park Authority becoming a ‘Net-Zero’ Organisation by 2030 as defined within appendix 1;**
 - b) Agreeing the action plan set out at appendix 4 which includes a commitment to working with our constituent Local Authorities and other partners, in particular communities and landowners to deliver actions that respond effectively to the climate and nature emergency;**
 - c) Committing to working towards the South Downs National Park becoming ‘Net-Zero with Nature’ by 2040 as defined within appendix 1.**
- 3) Note the creation of a climate change action fund reserve as part of the 2020/21 budget.**
- 4) Note that monitoring of delivery against the Climate Change action plan will be undertaken by the Policy and Resources Committee.**

I. Introduction

- I.1** In November 2019 a workshop was held, attended by Members, officers and invited partners to consider how the SDNPA should begin to develop its response to the emerging climate emergency, which had been declared by a number of statutory and non-statutory partners across the areas of the National Park. The session provided an opportunity to consider the issues for the National Park and discuss how the SDNPA might develop its response.
- I.2** There was a clear recognition from NPA members at a member workshop that there was a global environmental and ecological crisis. There was also an acknowledgement of the role the SDNPA could play, and desire to understand where we could make the biggest contribution, acknowledging that this has to be set within the context of furthering National Park purposes and Duty
- I.3** SDNPA members requested additional work be undertaken to better understand:-

- The up-to-date evidence for the National Park area in terms of carbon and GHG emissions, the role of each sector and how the biggest reductions could be made;
- What the SDNPA could do directly to address the challenge, in terms of its own operations and business continuity;
- How we might best be able to co-operate with other reporting authorities to achieve this shared purpose;
- How we might use our convening role to achieve the necessary join-up and shared action with our external partnerships;
- Areas that were outside the scope of the SDNPA do deal with.

1.4 The results of this initial work is set out in the attached appendices to this report and is intended to help the National Park Authority reach an informed decision about its contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency . It makes a number of recommendations to members on the future direction of the NPAs work.

2. **Policy Context.**

2.1 The South Downs NPA has a key role in meeting the challenges arising from the climate and nature emergency, in respect of the National Park, in particular through the existing Management Plan and Local Plan policies. The NPA also has a range of tools and approaches at their disposal in terms of advocacy, influence and delivery.

2.2 This is especially the case in terms of its strategic planning and policy making role. It will inevitably require greater collaboration with our constituent Local Authorities and a wider range of delivery partners.

2.3 Through our new Local Plan and our recently reviewed Partnership Management Plan we need to properly co-ordinate our work on both climate change adaptation and mitigation. Some of our activities have the potential to deliver on both.

- **Mitigation** – Actions that limit the magnitude or rate of climate change and its related effects. This is generally focussed on cutting the emissions of Carbon Dioxide and other Green House Gasses.
- **Adaptation** – The process of adjustment to actual or expected changes in climate and its related effects.

3. **Issues for consideration.**

3.1 There is a great deal of positive overlap with our developing work on Nature Recovery. Work to restore and create habitats will equally deliver on climate change targets. Consequently we propose to deliver '**Net-zero with Nature**' as further explored in appendix I.

3.2 It is also essential for the SDNPA to use its planning powers and policies to best effect. There are a number of proposals in the Action Plan that seek to use delivery mechanisms such as CIL to achieve greatest impact.

4. **Options & cost implications.**

4.1 Through the development of the 2020/21 budget a climate change action fund reserve has been created. For 2020/21 the exact amount available to fund the action plan is not yet confirmed and is dependent upon any underspend achieved in the 2019/20 budget. ., The budgetary position in relation to this work is subject to a separate decision making process and will be reported to the Policy and resources committee as part of its monitoring of this work.

4.2 The NPA could decide not to agree an action plan to contribute to addressing the climate and nature emergency, however this has not been recommended as it would mean the Authority is failing to play an apocopate role in the leadership and co-ordination of the response to the emergency.

5. **Governance in the SDNPA**

- 5.1 The SDNPA Senior Management Team will co-ordinate this work as a ‘cross-cutting’ issue with delivery predominately being delivered through the Authority’s Theme Programme Boards.
- 5.2 Resource planning and the links through to team plans will be overseen by the Operational Management Team (OMT). This will include the identification and allocation of resources, including staff resources, required to deliver on the action plan.
- 5.3 The intention is for the Policies & Resources Committee to maintain oversight on the delivery of this work as it progresses.
- 5.4 A communications strategy will be developed and the public affairs strategy will be reviewed to ensure Climate change is adequately expressed through this policy. Any resultant change to the public affairs strategy will be considered by the NPA at the appropriate time

6. **Other Implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes, the Action Plan will need sufficient staff resource across the NPA to support its delivery. This will include the development of a core team to take forward the proposed climate actions.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The Action Plan has been developed in response to the UK’s Climate Emergency. Money spent on positive action now will offset the costs of Climate Change Impacts in the future. As an example the UK insured losses from storm events were £620 million per annum in 2012. For Storm Ciara (2020) alone the costs are estimated between £912 million to £1.2 billion
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No, implications arising from the proposals in this report.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority’s equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes, no adverse implications have been identified. Individual projects will be assessed as they are developed
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Human Rights implications arising from this proposal.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	The existing climate change risk assessment highlights a number of health & safety and welfare issues that may result from not adequately adapting our policies and working practices.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None.
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	The Climate Change Action Plan is wholly compliant with the five principles of our Sustainability Strategy. 1/ Living within environmental limits 2/ Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3/ Achieving a sustainable economy 5/ Promoting good governance 6/Using sound science responsibly.

7. **Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The UK Government declared a climate change emergency in May 2019. This is in recognition of the existential threat it presents.	High	High	<p>SDNPA Climate Change Risk Assessment & Adaptation plan.</p> <p>SDNPA Climate Change Action Plan set out a range of actions we are able to take to mitigate and adapt to the worst of these risks.</p> <p>UK Climate Change Committee considers that the necessary transition is possible, with technologies and approaches we already have available to us.</p>

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDNP Climate Change Strategy 2. National Park Climate Change Action Plan 3. Climate Change Action Plan – Summary Tables 4. Climate Change Action Plan - LPA survey 5. Climate Change Action Plan – 5 year programme (Comms Draft) 6. HLF Climate Change Action Fund – Funding Expectations
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	<p>SDNPA Climate Change Adaptation Plan.</p> <p>South East Climate Action group (SECA) Database that summarises current action by Local Authorities :-</p>