

Agenda Item 8
Report PR21/22-01

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	15 July 2021
By	Countryside and Policy Manager (Eastern Downs)
Title of Report (Decision)	Partnership Management Plan Delivery – Nature Recovery

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Support and recommend to the NPA the adoption of the South Downs Wildlife Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) and South Downs Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus (Appendix 3), including its high level targets and opportunity map.**
- 2) Note the launch of the “South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign #ReNature”**
- 3) Endorse the proposed approach to Biodiversity Net Gain and a Call for Nature Sites**

I. Introduction

- I.1. There is a Global climate and nature crisis, and, as has been recognised by Members in previous discussions, the South Downs is no exception. For example, the Endangered Species Report (2020) states that *A quarter of Britain’s native mammals are “at imminent risk of extinction”*. Similarly, the *State of Nature Report (2019)* also makes rather grim reading.
- I.2. The Defra response to this crisis is set out in the Government’s 25 year Environment Plan (2018) and a number of subsequent measures including the Environment Bill. The Glover Review was clear that Protected Landscapes need to do far more to restore biodiversity, but need to be given the tools and resources to make this possible. In the Ministerial Written Statement made by George Eustice, SoS for Defra, on 24th June, he said:
“In May 2018, Defra commissioned Julian Glover and an independent panel to consider how we might improve the management of our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)”.
- I.3. Their report, the Landscapes Review, was published in September 2019. It set out a series of recommendations, including that more should be done to support nature’s recovery in these landscapes; that the status of AONBs should be strengthened; that there was a need to bring the family of protected landscapes closer together with more strategic oversight and greater opportunities for career progression; and that more funding should support public access to protected landscapes.
- I.4. The government agrees that more funding should be directed towards making space for nature and supporting nature’s recovery in our protected landscapes. Since the review was published, we have been supporting important projects in our protected landscapes through our Nature for Climate Fund and Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Our future Local Nature Recovery scheme, part of the future agriculture policy, will also support the objective of nature’s recovery in our protected landscapes and beyond.”

- 1.5. Nature Recovery is therefore one of the four main themes in the **South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2020-25** and the **SDNPA Corporate Plan 2021-22**. There is a powerful synergy between this and the other three themes. For example: the net zero for nature work in the Climate Change Action Plan, the Heath & Wellbeing benefits to people through better access to nature rich places, and via the Economy work on developing farm clusters and delivering the new **Farming in Protected Landscapes** scheme. This paper summarises the national policy context, outlines the SDNPA programme to address it, and introduces the new **“South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign “#ReNature”**

2. National Policy Context

- 2.1. The concept of a Nature Recovery Network was set out in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. This more integrated approach to biodiversity was launched in 2018, based on the principles in Making Space for Nature by Prof Sir John Lawton. He stated that in order for nature to thrive in this country it needs bigger, better managed and joined up areas of wildlife rich habitat rather than concentrating on the management of isolated sites.
- 2.2. The legal framework and delivery mechanisms for the **Nature Recovery Network (NRN)** and for **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)** have been set out in the Environment Bill 2020. This will also provide the statutory basis for emerging mechanisms such as mandatory biodiversity net gain through the planning system.
- 2.3. **A Nature Recovery Network** is defined as *a joined up network of marine, coastal and terrestrial habitats where nature and people can thrive. The network allows wildlife movement from place to place and provides places to live, feed and breed which enables the natural world to adapt to change.* The NRN will be much more than just a map, rather an active, adaptive spatial approach for the whole of England that identifies the best opportunities to deliver nature’s recovery nationally, regionally and locally.
- 2.4. The Environment Bill sets out how the nature recovery network will be created by means of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Although the detail is not yet clear, the draft legislation proposes that the preparation of these strategies will be coordinated at a local level by public bodies (such as local authorities), who will be designated as the “Responsible Authorities” by the Secretary of State. There are currently 5 pilot strategies which are informing the next step of developing guidance. They are all based on Counties or Metropolitan areas, but several include parts of a number of National Parks and AONBs. It is assumed that in this area the responsibility will fall to the County Councils.

3. National Parks England and National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONBs)

- 3.1. The **Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks** intends to drive action on nature recovery as part of the collective NPE response to the 25-year plan. Working with teams in each NPAs, NPE has developed an overall vision and targets (See **Appendix 1**) and a prospectus and nature opportunity map for each of the ten English National Parks. (**Appendix 3** – for the South Downs document)
- 3.2. Similar commitments exist for AONBs in the so-called “Colchester Agreement”, and all are currently preparing Nature Recovery Plans in accordance with a national template. Natural England (NE), NAAONB and NPE have jointly signed an agreement (5/6/21) which reaffirms our commitment to work together to conserve and enhance our finest landscapes to bring more benefits for people and nature.

4. Regional Collaboration

- 4.1. Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) were established across England in response to the 2011 Environment White Paper. Typically County based, they bring together NGOs, Protected Landscapes, Statutory Agencies, LAs and other partners such as landowners, water companies and public health professionals. Set up at the same time, and with notionally similar powers to, LEPs, in practice they have received precious little additional resources. In the SE the Sussex, Kent and Surrey LNPs are very active, with Hampshire/IoW not so advanced.

- 4.2. In 2020 our local LNPs formed the South East Nature Partnership (SENP), which aims to achieve a joined up nature recovery work across the region. The SDNPA is active - both in the individual LNPs and the SENP - thus ensuring that our work within the National Park is linked to neighbouring areas and supporting the principles of bigger, better and joined areas for nature.

5. The South Downs Nature Recovery Programme

- 5.1. The SDNPA Nature Recovery Programme was established to:
- Develop a Wildlife Delivery Plan for the National Park (6.2);
 - Launch (with the South Downs National Park Trust) the “South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign **“#ReNature”** (7.0);
 - Establish a clear role for the SDNPA in respect to funding mechanisms (10,11);
 - Develop an advice and support hub for landowners
 - Put mechanisms in place to measure progress.

6. A Wildlife Delivery Plan for the South Downs

- 6.1. From the NPE work above we have produced a draft Wildlife Delivery Plan for the South Downs (**Appendix 2**).
- 6.2. **Our ambition is to increase the area managed for nature in the National Park from the current 25% to at least 33%, an increase of 13,000ha, by 2030.**
- 6.3. The 33% target has been broken down into indicative costs for the re-creation and ongoing management of key habitats including native woodland, lowland heathland and grassland, and more natural river catchments. These in turn form the basis for the £100million figure in the **“South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign **“#ReNature”**** (see below).
- 6.4. The plan will be supported by a web-based resource hub including factsheets for communities, farmers and land managers, details on biological monitoring and advice on funding mechanisms. The overall package is designed to support and encourage landowners and managers to create the right habitat in the right place.

7. “South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign **“Help nature to #ReNature”**

- 7.1. To support the Wildlife Delivery Plan, the **“South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign **“Help nature to #ReNature”**** was launched on 5th July. A collaboration between the South Downs National Park Trust and the SDNPA, this has three key aims:
- to increase awareness of the 33% (13,000 ha) ambition;
 - to secure inward investment of at least £100m through public, private and charitable finance; and
 - to mobilise and inspire landowners, communities and the public to take action
- 7.2. The central proposition is captured in the “hero animation: The Night we Renatured the South Downs”, and the campaign will initially run for 6 months, using both earned and paid promotion to reach a wide audience through multiple channels. It will direct people to a digital hub on the National Park website to find out more, donate, and to find resources to help them renature.

8. A Call for Nature Sites

- 8.1. Since, at the time of writing the SDNPA owns no land except the South Downs Centre in Midhurst (albeit work is underway to acquire the Seven Sisters Country Park), a ‘Call for Nature Sites’ is being proposed – adapting the well-proven planning mechanisms for identifying housing sites. This would identify sites which have the potential to deliver nature recovery, and match these to suitable support mechanisms. These include new philanthropic funding (via the **“South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign **“#ReNature”**** /South Downs National Park Trust), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) payments through the planning system (see below), farm support schemes (including FiPL and the former ELM), and corporate green financing, nitrate or carbon offsets.

- 8.2. Land managers across the National Park would be invited to put forward sites and project at any scale or stage of development. The SDNPA would then provide:
- Specialist expertise to guide and develop projects
 - A ‘matchmaker/broker’ role to connect projects with one or more funding opportunities.

This is not a proposal for the SDNPA to acquire land itself.

- 8.3. The Call for Nature Sites process would be iterative, and project promoters would not be asked to make any formal commitments at the first stage. The proposition is to launch in Autumn 2021.

9. Biodiversity Net Gain

- 9.1. The aim of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is to ensure that new development leaves overall biodiversity in a better state than before, and it is due to take statutory form via the Environment Act, supported by regulations and guidance.
- 9.2. Net gain in biodiversity is already a requirement in the South Downs Local Plan (Policy SD9(1)(b) Biodiversity and Geodiversity). Interim guidance is being prepared on to how to achieve BNG in the SDNP. It will:
- ensure rigorous application of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid any offsetting elsewhere unless all possible actions on site have been exhausted
 - be consistent with the emerging Environment Act i.e. seek 10% BNG minimum measurable via the Defra Metric 2.0 (or latest version);
 - emphasise that the requirement for 10% is a minimum and developers should go further where possible;
 - set out guidance on ‘landscape-led net gain’ which positively responds and contribute to the quality of the landscape and an ecological network;
 - require that BNG must be addressed at the earliest stages in the design process as a clear and integrated part of the proposal; and
 - confirm that other biodiversity requirements, policies, and best practice still apply.
- 9.3. Several Local Planning Authorities have or are exploring a BNG requirement above 10%. For example, Lichfield District Council has a requirement for 20% BNG, and the Surrey LNP is advising Surrey LPAs to adopted 20%.
- 9.4. A requirement of 10% BNG would be consistent with the emerging legislation and it should be noted that this is a requirement for a *minimum* of 10% BNG. A requirement of a 20% minimum BNG would support a greater contribution to nature recovery and Purpose 1, however there may be implications for achievability when considered alongside other requirements for development to address . A watching brief will be kept on this as SDNPA BNG guidance is developed.

10. Other Green Financing Mechanisms

- 10.1. National Parks Partnerships Ltd (NPP) is working alongside NPE and innovative finance group Palladium to develop an innovative new mechanism for attracting private finance called Net Zero With Nature. It aims to support projects across the UK’s 15 National Parks.
- 10.2. The Net Zero with Nature (NZWN) Facility will draw on NPPs’ pipeline of corporate prospects, and build on the success of Palladium’s Partnerships for Forests (P4F) financing facility. This has incubated over 60 sustainable forest business models in the tropics and mobilised over £250 million of private investment.
- 10.3. Palladium and NPP are currently securing funding for a series of pilots – including one in the South Downs. These will convert the ecosystem service benefits from for example, proposals to convert arable or dairy to woodland into tangible financial products. Certification will be realised through methodologies developed by Defra and Forestry Commission, including the Biodiversity Net Gain metric, Natural England Nitrate scheme in the Solent, and the Woodland Peatland Carbon code.

- 10.4. If the approach is proven, it will be replicated and scaled up to build a broad pipeline of investable projects that help restore UK nature at scale.

11. Options & cost implications

- 11.1. Our nature recovery work programme is led by an Officer Working Group reporting to the Landscape & Biodiversity Theme Programme Board. It is a cross-departmental collaboration including Countryside Policy and Management, Planning, Communications, and involving partners such as the South Downs National Park Trust. As a Partnership Management Plan and Corporate Plan priority, nature recovery will be a core part of objectives for many others.

12. Next steps

- 12.1. Nature recovery will be a priority for at least the next decade. A blended approach to funding nature recovery (i.e. combining a number of public private or charitable sources) looks likely to become mainstreamed across the UK over the next few years. Next steps involve continuing to develop understanding of mechanisms, testing their potential and evolving the SDNPA role. The roll out of Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) is one such mechanism and funding source.
- 12.2. It is anticipated that The Environment Bill 2020 will create the statutory framework within which this activity will take place. It will determine whether the SDNPA or, as seems likely, the tier one authorities, will be required to create the statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- 12.3. Collaboration is key, so we will continue to work through the Local Nature Partnerships, the South East Nature Partnership, with Statutory Agencies, AONBs and, crucially, with the custodians of the landscape (landowners, managers and communities) who own the natural capital assets of the National Park.

13. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes, approval of the South Downs Wildlife Delivery Plan and South Downs Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus will be required by the NPA
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes, set out in paper. Both direct resources (officer and member time and SDNPA budget via Corporate Plan) and indirectly (channelling inward investment to nature recovery).
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	If successful, the SDNPA will play a catalytic role in gearing substantial external funding to land managers for nature recovery.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	The paper sets out the strategic framework for the SDNPA nature recovery programme of work. The South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign “#Renature” is aimed at raising awareness with the general public and is therefore accessible through multiple media channels and takes regard of the SDNPA equality duty. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken at an appropriate time for any project arising from this work.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime &	None

Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy	The proposals contribute to each of the Five sustainability principles: Living within environmental limits, Ensuring a strong healthy and just society, Achieving a sustainable economy, Promoting good governance and Using sound science responsibly

14. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Delay to the enactment of the Environment Bill 2020	Unknown	Delays legislative framework	Continue to work in readiness for the pending Bill
Success of the "South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign #ReNature"	Unknown at this time	Impact funding for nature recovery delivery	A blended approach to funding nature recovery is the future, so the campaign is just one potential mechanism
Not meeting the high level targets set out in the South Downs Wildlife Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) and South Downs Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus (Appendix 3)	Dependant on working with landowners and managers in the SDNP	Failure to deliver targets and support nature recovery	To maintain and build strong relationships with partners, land managers and other stakeholders. To support nature recovery initiatives through the active SDNPA nature recovery programme of work

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NPE Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks 2. SDNPA: Delivery Plan for Wildlife in the South Downs 3. The South Downs National Park Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus 2021-2031 4. Diagram of national – regional –local interrelationship 5. Diagram illustrating sequencing of objectives and targets: national – regional - local 6. South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign “Renature” Partner Briefing Note
SDNPA Consultees	Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services,
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	

NPE: Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks

[Delivery-Plan-for-Wildlife-in-National-Parks-FINAL.pdf \(nationalparksengland.org.uk\)](#)

Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks

This document is one of a suite of 4 inter-connected plans devised by the ten English National Park Authorities to drive action in nature recovery in response to the 25 year Environment Plan.



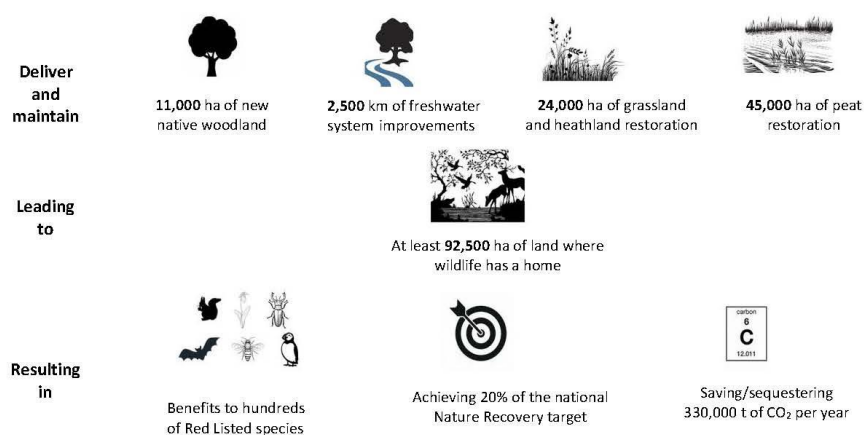
Nature Recovery vision - National Parks sit at the heart of the nation's nature recovery network; we are places where wildlife flourishes, habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded, and where everyone can experience nature and wildlife at their best. Strong local partnerships in each National Park will deliver 20% of the government's nature recovery target on 10% of the land, saving/sequestering 330,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

We will work together, and at scale, to transform nature's recovery in National Parks. We commit to developing a nature recovery programme for National Parks that:

- Identifies zones to deliver concentrated habitat enhancement and improved functionality
- Prioritises species to be safeguarded and re-introduced
- Increases tree cover and restores peatlands, grasslands, heathlands and other habitats, with the principle of right habitat, right place, right reason
- Provides nature based solutions to climate change resilience.
- Restores soil structure and health to improve function (carbon storage and water management)
- Implements long-term invasive non-native species control programmes
- Establishes buffer zones and green and blue infrastructure corridors linking National Landscapes, National and Community Forests, and urban areas to create a genuine national network where everyone can access and experience nature and wildlife at their best.

How will we do this: we commit to working through our strong local partnerships, to co-create the plans with farmers, landowners and communities. So we achieve sustainable change that supports the community in their role as custodians and identifies investment in nature recovery to help support viable farm businesses. These nature recovery programmes will form the backbone of our future National Park Management Plans.

This will deliver in the first 10 years, as a minimum:



Our programme to achieve the vision

Working at a landscape scale is a strength of National Park Authorities. We don't own much of the land, only around 10%, so we regularly work with farmers, landowners, the community and many other bodies across the entirety of National Parks. With a breadth of collective expertise - ecologists, planners, environmental scientists and rangers - we know our landscapes in depth, and we know the impacts that climate change and biodiversity loss are having on them. This gives our local partnerships many of the answers to nature recovery. We will work together and with Natural England and the National Association for AONBs to place these targets and our work across protected landscapes at the heart of the nature recovery network – making us more than the sum of our parts. We also need the policies, funding and collaboration to support delivery, both locally and nationally. We will monitor progress against this Plan and undertake a light-touch review each year.

How can you help?

Champion nature recovery in national landscapes with us:

- Ministers to champion National Parks at the heart of the national nature recovery network
- Defra to strengthen the role of National Park Management Plans, so they are the local nature recovery strategies for National Parks, and back their implementation with stronger legal status.
- Partners to collaborate with us to agree a joint and supportive approach to get more wildlife in National Landscapes.

Policies and powers to support nature recovery:

- National Parks to be identified as priority areas for funding within ELMS - with priorities within each National Park identified and agreed at a local level, within a national framework, informed by National Park Management Plans which will play a formal role in determining how those national and local priorities can be delivered. NPAs have a key role as 'environmental brokers' – linking buyers (public and private sector) of environmental goods with potential providers (landowners, managers and farmers).
- The National Peat Strategy and English Tree Strategy to fully recognise the need for positive action in National Parks and to adopt the Forestry Commission definition of *the Right Tree in the Right Place* for this work and the environmental principles proposed by the National Park Authorities for their development.
- A strengthened 'section 62' duty to be included in the Environment Bill to place on all public bodies a clear duty to help *deliver* the nature recovery network as set out in the NPMP, and further legislation to create powers to promote and protect nature in National Landscapes on a par with built heritage or road transport
- Defra to support devolution bids that give powers to expedite local delivery of the Nature Recovery Network

Provide underpinning evidence and insights for nature recovery:

- Defra, National Parks and AONBs to develop a common template for assessing the state of nature and natural capital in our National Landscapes which is regularly and robustly assessed, with resources to help this work.
- Natural England to carry out a review into the losses and gains in wildlife across the country, and work with us to establish opportunity maps with clear goals for the reinstatement of past losses of habitats and species, taking account of the impacts of climate change.
- Natural England to develop with the local Management Plan partnerships a set of Nature Recovery indicators, representing the key nature conservation attributes in each National Landscape.

Funding for nature recovery in our national landscapes:

- External funding grants to support collaborative work that delivers nature recovery targets.
- Delivery of the ambitious targets outlined for National Parks above are a priority for the Nature for Climate Fund and Green Challenge Fund so support from these funds catalyse the delivery of these objectives.
- All future Government grants for nature recovery in National Parks to include a check that the work is consistent with the nature recovery aspirations in the local partnerships adopted Management Plan.

Nature recovery at landscape scale:

- National Park Authorities have been involved in some of the biggest landscape management schemes in the country over the past 10 years. We will work across our national landscapes on large scale collaborative 'Net Zero With Nature' projects on an even bigger scale – starting with the 'Great North Bog' and the SW Peatland Partnership.

SDNPA: Delivery Plan for Wildlife in the South Downs

“Re Nature” the South Downs National Park A Delivery Plan for Wildlife

Introduction and Context

Nature Recovery a definition:

A Nature Recovery Network is a joined up network of marine, coastal and terrestrial habitats where nature and people can thrive. The network allows wildlife movement from place to place and provides places to live, feed and breed which enables the natural world to adapt to change. More than just a map, it is an active, adaptive spatial plan that identifies the best opportunities to deliver nature's recovery.

Our vision for the South Downs.

The South Downs National Park will be a climate resilient working landscape where all wildlife flourishes and communities thrive in a nature rich environment. By 2030 working with a strong partnership of farmers, land managers, communities and a wide range of partners, we will deliver one third of land dedicated **for nature** to flourish, protecting, managing, connecting and enlarging our core wildlife sites and priority habitats. We will encourage two thirds of land to be **Nature friendly** by incorporating features and practices that increase opportunities for wildlife alongside established land uses.

- The Rich habitats of the South Downs will be enhanced, extended, connected and act as a core to a wider wildlife network.
- As a special landscape, the South Downs will act as a nature rich core connecting to the wider countryside beyond its boundaries.
- Wildlife will flourish and will be able to move easily through the landscape and adapt to climate change.
- Our farmed landscape will remain productive but will also be a place where nature thrives.
- People living in and visiting the national park will be connected to the special landscape and the unique wildlife that lives here.

This delivery plan for the South Downs contributes to work by the ten English National Park Authorities who have developed a Delivery Plan for Wildlife in National Parks () to drive action in Nature recovery in response to the 25-year plan. The National Vision is included below and links to further documents can be found under supplementary documents.

[link](#)

Nature Recovery vision - *National Parks sit at the heart of the nation's nature recovery network; we are places where wildlife flourishes, habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded, and where everyone can experience nature and wildlife at their best. Strong local partnerships in each National Park will deliver 20% of the government's nature recovery target on 10% of the land, saving/sequestering 330.000 tonnes of CO₂ per year.*

There is a clear link between Nature recovery and many other SDNP Strategic Documents including the Partnership Management Plan, Local Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, Landscape Character Areas and the People and Nature Network. Nature recovery will be integrated as a core element in both National Park Partnership management plans and local plans as they are reviewed. This should also inform future reviews of the core documents for the South Downs.

Nature Recovery and the People and Nature Network.

The People and Nature Network (PANN) aims to protect, enhance and create a network of green and blue spaces, which sustainably meet the needs of local communities, support natural ecosystem services and respects the special qualities of protected landscapes by proposing the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of natural capital assets in the area.

The PANN provides the evidence base for the social element and identifies broad investment areas. The Nature recovery work will complement the PANN but also looks at the core areas for wildlife and wider opportunities for delivery for nature across the National Park and beyond.

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/partnership-management/people-and-nature-network-pann/>

Nature Recovery and Climate Change.

The Climate Change Action Plan looks at our response to the climate emergency. There are clear links to the crisis in Nature and the need for adaptation and mitigation for future resilience in the natural environment. One of the key strands of climate change action is Net Zero with nature and investment in nature recovery can make a major contribution to achieving net zero.

Nature based solutions can help with issues such as flood risk management, water and air quality and soil health whilst improved habitat connectivity and permeability of the landscape will help our native flora and fauna to adapt. The following actions for nature recovery are identified in the climate change action plan.

- Target project funding and environmental grant funding towards measures that increase resilience to a changing climate, support biodiversity and provide wider Ecosystem Service benefits.
- Undertake adaptive management and ensure that areas of valuable habitat are bigger, better managed and joined up. SDNPA to promote delivery at landscape scale.
- Increase the quality and habitat diversity of wildlife sites. Deliver large scale habitat creation where opportunities exist, create buffer zones for vulnerable or fragmented habitats
- Demonstrate how nature-based solutions can help develop resilience to climate change at a landscape scale.
- Develop pilot projects that show how Nature Recovery might be financed through the development of carbon off-setting schemes

The ten English National Parks have also developed a joint delivery plan for action in climate leadership. This is in response to the 25 year Environment Plan and climate imperative. This document can be found here; [Delivery-Plan-for-Climate-Leadership-FINAL.pdf \(nationalparksengland.org.uk\)](#)

Nature recovery at a national, regional and local scale.

National Parks England (NPE) have developed the Delivery plan for wildlife further with a prospectus and high level map for each National Park. The prospectus and maps will be used by NPE to inform a strategic and national approach to nature recovery across the national park family.

The Nature Recovery Network NRN is a single national network but planned at a local level. In Sussex and Hampshire NRN development is through the local nature partnerships. Local Nature Recovery Strategies will set out where nature recovery should be focused/ delivered. The spatial scale of LNRS is yet to be confirmed, however this Delivery Plan for Wildlife in the South Downs National Park and associated documents will inform the local strategies as they are developed and feed into the wider network. Within the National Park it is important that we continue to take a landscape led approach.

About the Biodiversity of the South Downs National Park

The unique combination of geology and microclimates of the South Downs has created a rich mosaic of habitats that supports many rare and internationally important wildlife species. Sheep-grazed downland is the iconic habitat of the chalk landscape; here you can find rare plants such as the round-headed rampion, orchids ranging from the burnt orchid and early spider orchid to autumn lady's tresses, and butterflies including the Adonis and chalkhill blues.

The greensand of the Western Weald contains important lowland heathland habitats including the internationally designated Woolmer Forest, the only site in the British Isles where all our native reptile and amphibian species are found. There are large areas of ancient woodland, for example, the yew woodlands of Kingley Vale and the magnificent 'hanging' woodlands of the Hampshire hangers.

The river valleys intersecting the South Downs support wetland habitats and a wealth of birdlife, notably at the Brooks in the Arun Valley. The clear chalk streams of the Meon and Itchen in Hampshire support a wealth of aquatic plants, fish, invertebrates and elusive mammals such as otter and water vole. The extensive chalk sea cliffs and shoreline in the east host a wide range of coastal wildlife including breeding colonies of seabirds such as kittiwakes and fulmars.

The extensive farmland habitats of the South Downs are also important for many species of wildlife, including rare arable wildflowers and nationally declining farmland birds. Corn bunting, skylark, lapwing, yellowhammer and grey partridge are notable examples.

Key issues

- Lack of appropriate management
- Habitat fragmentation/ poor connectivity.
- Pests and non-native invasive species
- Poor management or loss of boundary features, poor species diversity.
- Climate change

Opportunities and Priorities for Nature recovery

Our priorities

For Nature	Lowland calcareous grassland and chalk heath
	Lowland Heath, acid grassland and lowland bog
	Chalk Rivers, streams and lowland fens.
	Semi Natural broad leaved woodland, yew woodland, hanger woodlands
	Hedgerows.
	Floodplain grazing marsh , water meadows, reed beds, wet woodland
	Intertidal mud, saltmarsh, vegetated shingle and saline lagoons.
Nature Friendly	Buffer strips to hedgerows, woodlands and watercourses.
	Road verges managed for wildlife
	Beelines, pollinator mixes and pollinator strips.
	Ponds
	Winter stubbles, bird feed mixes, arable weeds.
	Wildflower meadows, in your garden, village, golf course or on your farm.
	Increase species diversity in semi improved and improved grasslands.
	Log piles, deadwood,
	Create a wildlife friendly garden network with your neighbours.

Key Principles

The following 10 principles will underpin our work for Nature recovery.

1. **Base decisions on an evidence based Local nature recovery map.** Use local mapping to inform the strategy and the best places to target interventions.
2. **Protect our most special places.** Protect designated sites (Nature reserves, SSSIs and LWS), improve their management for biodiversity and increase their size.
3. **Make connections between them.** Create corridors and stepping-stones to connect our special places and other areas of potential.
4. **Provide a bigger overall area for wildlife.** Increase the overall area of land in provided for wildlife
5. **Find space for wildlife in the wider landscape.** This Network should sit within a wider landscape characterised by nature-friendly development and farming. This would include encouraging a wide range of people to increase the amount of wildlife habitat in places like farms, parks, retail parks, churchyards, road verges, gardens and golf courses. **All spaces have the potential to contribute positively to nature's recovery.**
6. **Right habitats in the right place for the right reason.** Taking opportunities to restore landscape character through the creation of new habitats, enhancing existing habitats and in response to a specific ecological or functional need.
7. **A Network that works for people and nature.** The NRS should also take into account where the greatest benefits will be delivered for people, seek opportunities for investment in natural capital and multiple ecosystem services benefits
8. **Landowner informed (led) and delivery through partnership.** Placement of nature recovery interventions and land use change is informed and supported by Farmers and landowners and delivered through partnership.
9. **Net zero with nature and climate change resilience.** Linking nature recovery benefits with climate change actions, nature based solutions, such as Natural flood management, soil health and carbon storage. Developing climate change adaptation.
10. **Action for Species.** Prioritise species to be protected and re-introduced. Implement a long-term invasive non-native species control programme.

Mapping and Landscape Character

Nature recovery is not restricted to key sites; it can take place at any scale and in any place, from large nature areas to corridors, parishes and gardens. It can be spatial and can be thematic. It is important to target the right habitats in the right place and for the right reasons. Planning for nature recovery will be informed by spatial mapping. Planning for nature recovery will involve the Ecological Network Mapping undertaken by the Local Nature Partnerships and consideration of how this fits with the South Downs Landscape character assessment. The LCA provides an excellent framework for nature recovery. Each character area has a description of the important biodiversity within the area and broad management aims. (Link to a supporting document South Downs Nature Recovery Menu by Landscape Character Type is below)

Nature recovery across the National Park.

Nature recovery can happen anywhere and whilst the mapping will inform the right habitats in the right places anyone can contribute and at any scale. Specific nature recovery areas will seek to build on the Lawton principles to enhance our most important designated sites. Elsewhere we will support initiative that make space for nature or promote a nature friendly approach within the landscape.

Nature recovery areas.

As part of the programme for nature recovery we will identify nature recovery areas, these will be areas for nature based upon existing protected sites but with opportunities for making them bigger,

better managed and better connected. Examples of 3 potential areas are included in appendix 1 below.

Nature recovery in your area.

In addition to making space for nature, nature recovery is also about promoting nature friendly spaces; these can be at any scale from gardens to village greenspaces and nature corridors on farms. This initiative is not just about the rare but all nature, everywhere.

Thematic approaches for Nature recovery

The following table captures initiatives that take a thematic approach but also deliver for Nature recovery.

Bats	Utilising the Sussex bat protocol to develop manage and improve habitats along flight lines for key bat species from protected areas into the wider countryside
Bee Lines	After the successful campaign by the SD Trust developing pollination corridors within the farmed landscape.
Public open spaces.	Working with Local Authorities (Such as Adur/Worthing) to develop the Natural capital of public open spaces and new green infrastructure.
Trees for the downs	Another successful campaign by the SD Trust leading to tree planting with communities.
Road verges	Turning road verges into wildlife corridors, linking notable verges and introducing sensitive management.

Our Targets.

Our targets for the next 10 years are;



5380 ha of new woodland.



8260 ha of heathland, grassland & meadow restoration



162km of freshwater system improvements

Delivery

We commit to working through our strong local partnerships, to co-create the plans with farmers, landowners and communities. Therefore, we achieve sustainable change that supports the community in their role as custodians and identifies investment in nature recovery to help support viable farm businesses.

Delivery will be supported by a range of mechanisms. Details of these can be found in the supplementary document, Nature Recovery - Delivery Mechanisms Overview

Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken within the scope of the South Downs Biodiversity Monitoring Framework. The purpose of the framework is to outline all biodiversity surveying and data collection that we need to undertake in order to fully articulate the outcome/impact of our work and the broader ecological health of the South Downs National Park. (Link to the framework in the documents list below.)



The South Downs National Park Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus 2021-2031 (including targets and illustrative opportunities map)

The South Downs National Park Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus 2021-2031



This prospectus has been produced by NPE to demonstrate the scale of what could be achieved for nature recovery in each of our National Parks, working locally with landowners, farmers, land managers and other stakeholders, as part of a nationwide collaboration.



It sets out an ambitious but realistic programme for nature recovery in the South Downs National Park over the next 10 years. This is in response to the challenges for nature recovery set out in the 30 by 30 target by government; the 25Year Environment Plan and the Landscape (Glover) Review, and follows the NPE Wildlife Delivery Plan principles and approach.

South Downs National Park Nature Recovery Delivery Ambition 2021-2031 ¹						
Habitat type		Amount in ha	Existing habitat & increase	Create	Manage for 10 yrs	Total
 Woodland	New Parkwide native woodland planting	5380	27,864ha 19% increase	£29.7m	£16.2m	£46m
 Species rich grassland and heath	Lowland heath restoration and lowland meadow	8260	11,818ha 70% increase	£4.14m	£21.9m	£26m
 Rivers²	Managed realignment and upper catchment works to 'slow the flow' and restore natural flows to watercourses	162km WFD Poor status	198km ³ 45% increase	£18m	£10m	£28m

¹ Costings for the opportunities are indicative, and have been based on the best available information at the present time (Feb 2021), References for Countryside stewardship rates used are given and a multiplier of 2x for creation and 1.5x for management have been used to replace BPS.

² Specific details of works to rivers to allow natural flows, floodplains and wetlands that reduce downstream flooding and protects soils, habitats and people are not yet available.

³ Water Framework Directive: Rivers in SDNP are moderate status (40%), good or high status (15%)

 Total	At least 13640ha of <i>new wildlife habitat</i>	13640	39686ha 34% increase	£33.9m	
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South Downs National Park Wildlife Delivery Ambition 2021-2031

Create and maintain.....



5380 ha of new
native woodland



heathland restoration



Nature recovery in
13 river catchments



.....using these methods.....

- Nature Based Solutions for flood, water quality and climate mitigation and adaptation,
- Catchment plan based targeting/vulnerability mapping,
- Whole estate / Farm plans,
- Farm networks and collectives working together across large areas
- Invasive species control programmes
- Local community action
- Targeted species programmes
- Land purchase



...with these partners....

- Land owners, farmers and land managers
- Business and private sector
- Charitable trusts, community organisations
- [Heathlands Reunited](#)
- [Changing chalk](#)
- [South East/East Protected Landscape Group](#)
- [South East Local Nature Partnership](#)
- [South Downs Forestry Partnership](#)
- [South Downs Farm Clusters](#)
- [Farming Network](#)
- [Lost woods of the Weald NHLF](#)
- [Watercress and Winterbournes NHLF](#)
- Big Chalk NAAONB Pilot
















...combining a range of funding and resources.....

- Environmental Land Management,
- Net Zero finance,
- Green Challenge Fund,
- Biodiversity Net Gain,
- Water Environment Grant,
- Project Grant funding, eg National Lottery,
- Gifts in kind,
- Carbon offsetting and investment,
- Private finance,
- Nutrient Neutrality (Water)
- Land purchase

National Parks England Nature Recovery Delivery Prospectus

Illustrative opportunities map

The South Downs National Park

-  Opportunities to retain and improve core nature areas (SSSI)
-  Opportunities to create new habitat and increase diversity: (SSSI plus 1 km buffer)
-  (Priority Habitats)
-  Opportunities to enhance connectivity and join up habitats
-  Opportunities beyond the National Park boundary:
 -  Land
 -  Coastal
-  Wider connections for people and nature
-  London Green Belt
-  National Trails
-  River Catchments (WFD Operational)
-  Rivers
-  Urban Areas



Further information

The vision for nature in the South Downs National Park

People will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides. Large areas of high quality and well-managed habitat will form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape⁴

Examples of habitats and species for recovery in the South Downs National Park

These are some examples of key target species and habitats, for both management to improve the quality of existing habitats but also to create new areas of habitat

Key habitat types: Chalk downland, Ancient woodland & wide variety of woodland types, rivers and chalk streams, farmland habitats, lowland heath,

Key Species; Duke of Burgundy, water vole, nightjar, English Elm, otter, skylark, brown trout, burnt orchid, round headed rampion, sundew, barbastelle bat, corn bunting, lapwing, grey partridge, adonis blue, sand lizard,

Targeted habitat connectivity; Chalk downland, heathland, woodland & hedgerows, farmland field edges, settlements (highest population within NP).

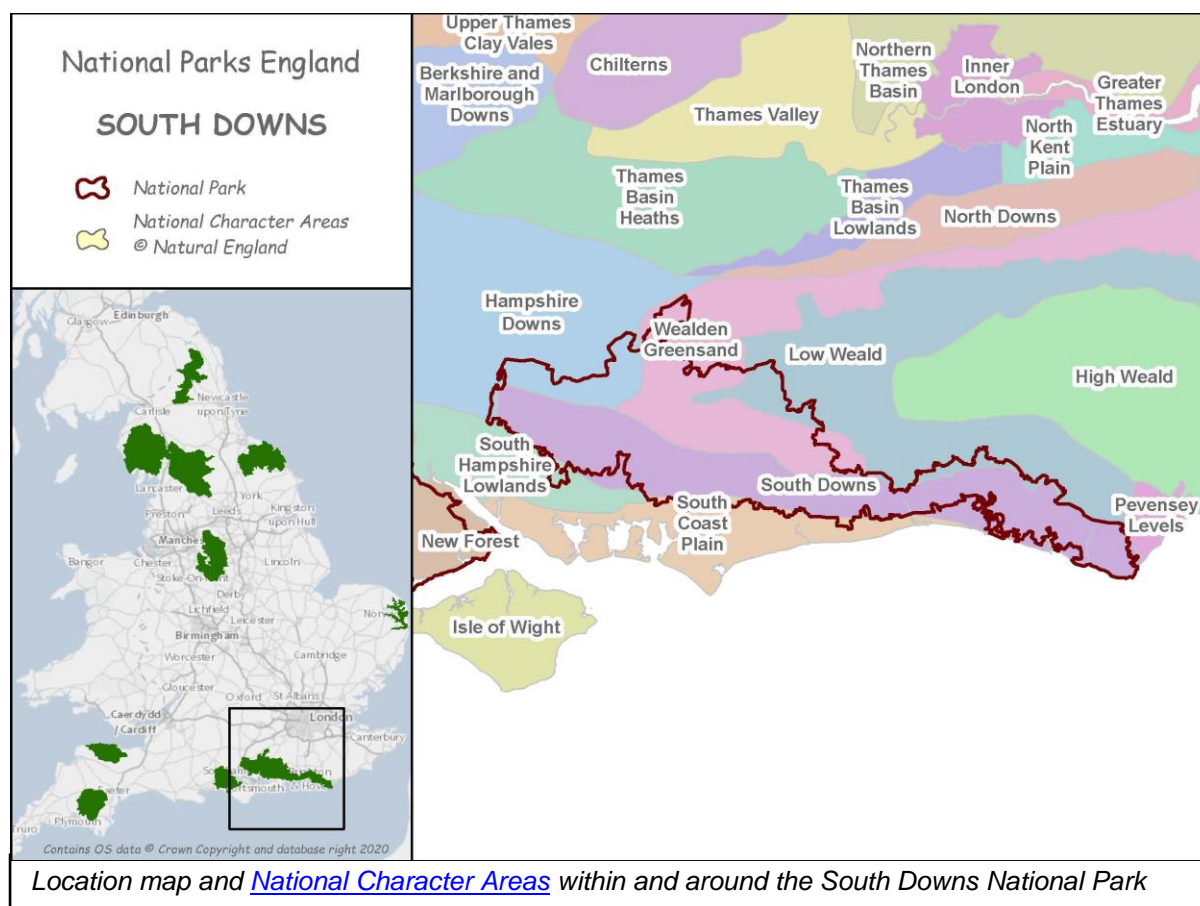
South Downs National Park Character

The unique combination of geology and microclimates of the South Downs has created a rich mosaic of habitats that supports many rare and internationally important wildlife species. Sheep-grazed downland is the iconic habitat of the chalk landscape. This is where rare plants such as the round-headed rampion, orchids ranging from the burnt orchid and early spider orchid to autumn lady's tresses, and butterflies including the Adonis blue and chalk hill blue can be found.

The greensand of the Western Weald contains important lowland heathland habitats including the internationally designated Woolmer Forest, the only site in the British Isles where all native reptile and amphibian species are found. There are large areas of ancient woodland, for example, the yew woodlands of Kingley Vale and the magnificent 'hanging' woodlands of the Hampshire Hangers. The extensive farmland habitats of the South Downs are important for many species of wildlife, including rare arable wildflowers and nationally declining farmland birds. Corn bunting, skylark, lapwing, yellowhammer and grey partridge are notable examples. The river valleys intersecting the South Downs support wetland habitats and a wealth of birdlife, notably at Pulborough Brooks. Many fish, amphibians and invertebrates thrive in the clear chalk streams of the Meon and Itchen in Hampshire where elusive wild mammals such as otter and water vole may also be spotted. The extensive chalk

⁴ [What is the Partnership Management Plan? - South Downs National Park Authority](#)

sea cliffs and shoreline in the east host a wide range of coastal wildlife including breeding colonies of seabirds such as kittiwakes and fulmars⁵



Monitoring the success of the proposals and projects

A Biodiversity monitoring programme is currently being designed by SDNPA in order to provide good data and evidence about trends and changes in habitats and species within the SDNP. The data being considered is under the following headings;

- Habitat extent and condition,
- Species range and abundance.

Current sources for this data and how further data can be gathered to inform on a range of biodiversity based activity (eg planning and ELM) is being considered.

Key opportunities for links beyond the SDNP boundary

- Heathlands – Surrey hills AONB/ Wealden Phase II SPA/Thurlsey NNR
- Woodland – High Weald AONB
- Pevensey Levels & NNR/SAC to east of Eastbourne
- The Big Chalk – AONB DEFRA Pilot of calcareous landscapes
- Wildlife Corridors to Chichester Harbour AONB (River Ems corridor)

⁵ [State-of-the-National-Park-Report.pdf \(southdowns.gov.uk\)](#)

Diagram of national – regional –local interrelationship

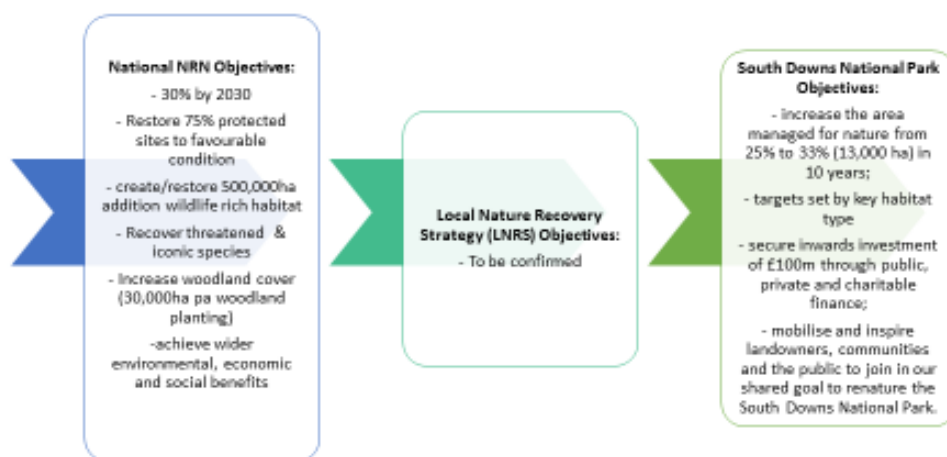
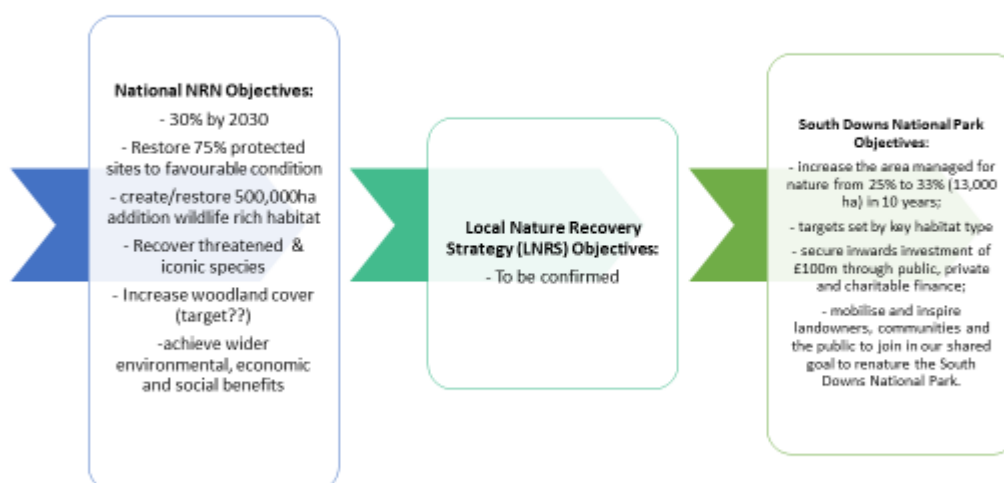


Diagram illustrating sequencing of objectives and targets: national – regional - local



South Downs Nature Recovery Campaign “Renature”
Partner Briefing Note



Nature Recovery in the South Downs National Park

Nature recovery is one of the four overarching themes of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan. Our goal is to support nature recovery across the National Park – delivered by organisations, businesses, communities and individuals. Together we can create space for nature across the South Downs National Park, for the benefit of wildlife, people and the climate. Landscapes where wildlife can flourish, habitats thrive and where everyone can experience the natural world. Simply put, we want nature everywhere, for everyone.

Our Ambitions for Nature

At the moment, 25% of the National Park is specifically managed for nature, and many different organisations have worked for decades to halt the decline of biodiversity and start turning the tide. Our goal now is to build on this achievement and increase that 25% to 33%– another 13,000 hectares - by 2030.

Our Wildlife Delivery Plan will set out targets and estimated costings. We are setting ambitious targets for the creation of new woodland, chalk grassland and heaths, and more natural river catchments. But we don't want to stop there. We also want to ensure that there really is nature everywhere, and so we want the remaining 67% to be nature friendly. We are going to be working with farmers, land managers, eNGOs, communities, local authorities and other partners to make this happen.

Our Nature Recovery Work

To achieve these ambitious goals will require hundreds of nature recovery projects: from large landscape scale restoration of entire habitats to small-scale projects in the community. To find and support them we will work through existing networks - such as Local Nature Partnerships and farm clusters - and create new networks with those who will help us Renature the South Downs National Park.

We are developing a nature recovery “toolkit” – a set of resources to support the delivery of nature recovery including guidance on nature recovery by landscape type, sources of funding and advice, and more.

To realise the ambition we need three things:

- the interest and support of the public,
- commitment from land managers
- significant investment upfront and in the long-term

We are therefore working in partnership with the South Downs National Park Trust to launch a nature recovery campaign.

Nature Recovery Campaign

We want everyone who cares for, enjoys and loves the South Downs National Park to be able to do their bit to support its nature recovery.

To meet our level of ambition of 33% by 2030, we need to see £100m invested in nature recovery over the next ten years. In addition to existing sources such as government funding, farm support schemes, water company investments, we are working with the South Downs National Park Trust to raise substantial new funds from donors.

We are therefore launching a campaign to **“Help Nature Renature”**. This will underpin our wider nature recovery work and its key goals are to:

- Raise awareness of our Nature Recovery work with the general public
- Inspire people to care and give them the information to do their bit
- Secure inward investment of £100m through public, private and charitable finance.

Campaign details:

- **“Help Nature Renature”** – the campaign is focused on helping nature to renature and while it has a clear goal of 33% by 2030, its wider aim is to inspire, encourage and support nature everywhere, for everyone.
- **Launch date:** 5th July 2021
- **Detail:**
 - Long-term, 10 year campaign
 - First phase for 6 months before being reviewed
 - Need ongoing investment and creative work
 - Based around a hero animation – “The Night we Renatured”
 - Visual look and feel to bring together all of our nature recovery work
 - Use of digital channels, leaflet and a competition to drive people to our website and a campaign hub to donate to the Trust
 - Information on how people can get involved
 - Digital hub for our wider Nature Recovery toolkit and resources

Call for Nature Sites

To best enable us to deliver our nature recovery goals we are setting up a register for sites from interested parties.

Launch of the call for sites: Autumn 2021

Raising £100 Million

The campaign is a partnership between the South Downs National Park Authority and the South Downs National Park Trust. The SDNPA and South Downs National Park Trust will seek to direct and raise the £100 million we estimate is needed to fund nature recovery projects across the National Park. Some of this funding will be secured and distributed through us, but a significant proportion will come from other sources, with our role as a facilitator and supporter in securing it. Examples of the different sources and routes are laid out below:

- **Registered sites** that have been submitted to our call and assessed as suitable for nature recovery could be packaged as part of a larger appeal, funded through existing grants such as Beelines and Trees for the Downs or through soon to be established new grant funds focused on hedgerows and ponds. Once more substantial funds have been secured, the Trust will look to introduce a new fund for nature recovery.
- **Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL):** A new Defra scheme specific to National Parks and AONBs which includes nature recovery;
- **National farm support schemes (formerly called ELMS):** these apply England wide (including the SDNP) and include a sustainable farming initiative, a nature recovery level and a landscapes recovery level;
- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** this approach to net gain through the planning system will generate funding from developers to offset the impacts of developments which cannot be mitigated on site;
- **Markets for carbon and nitrate offsets:** This is a rapidly growing area with nitrate offsets from mature recovery schemes in the wider Solent catchment area of the NP already happening; and

- **Private Finance for Nature Recovery:** The National Park family is working with global positive impact firm Palladium to create a facility that will direct private and public finance at scale into restoration and conservation in the UK. We will be looking to trial this approach in the South Downs in 2020, and if successful will be looking to scale up to help deliver our nature recovery ambitions.