

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	25 November 2021
By	Enterprise Development Lead
Title of Report (Decision)	Whole Estate Plans (WEP) update

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note the outcomes from the recently completed Whole Estate Plan Evaluation conducted by LUC (Land Use Consultants) and the progress made to implement the new Whole Estate Plan process**
- 2) Endorse the emerging revised Whole Estate Plan Guidance detailed at section 4 and Appendix I.**
- 3) Consider and note the performance of the Whole Estate Programme, and the current Whole Estate Plan pipeline.**

I. Introduction

- I.1 Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) were introduced, as a concept, by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) in 2015 to promote collaboration between individual estates and the SDNPA. A response, in recognition of; the vital contribution significant land owners make to the South Downs National Park (SDNP), the vast area of SDNP land used for farming (over 70%) and the importance of collaborative working between SDNPA and the land-owners for future ambitions on both sides to be realised. This approach is supported by Glover (2019) who states, *“successful landscape management is fully dependent on collaborative working”*.
- I.2 Estates, through their work, are a force for good, positively contributing to the SDNP across the spectrum of SDNPA PMP Outcomes and Corporate Priorities. Whether it be sustainability or cultural heritage from West Dean, education from Highfield, rural economy from Wiston or landscape management successes from Newton Valence, Iford or Eastbourne Downland, the WEP concept acts as a catalyst for new relationships and collaborative working that delivers against our PMP Outcomes in pursuit of our purposes and duty. Through the nurturing of existing relationships and the building new ones, the SDNPA is able to integrate its own objectives with those of estates. This ensures estates contribute to the SDNP, respond to the Nature and Climate crisis whilst simultaneously helping to build thriving prosperous communities through their contribution to the rural economy.
- I.3 Following endorsement of the sixth WEP (Eastbourne Downland WEP, 29th September 2020) it was decided to undertake an evaluation of the WEP process to assist the transition of the management of WEPs from the Planning Directorate to the Countryside Policy Management Directorate.

- 1.4 Completion of LUC's evaluation has provided a solid evidence base to inform a transition of the WEP process into the next phase of its existence.
- 1.5 The key recommendations listed in section 2 below have now all been incorporated into the new WEP process, which is being adhered to for all current active estate WEPs.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on:
- the recommendations from the recently completed WEP Evaluation conducted by LUC
 - the new WEP process
 - the working version of the new WEP Guidance
 - the performance of the six estates that benefit from endorsed Whole Estate Plans (WEPs), against Partnership Management Plan Outcomes, during the last financial year (1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021)
 - the Pipeline which details estates progress in the WEP process
 - those estates with an endorsed WEP

2. **WEP Evaluation (LUC)**

- 2.1 In the early autumn of 2020 LUC were commissioned to conduct an impartial evaluation into the WEP process and development of the first six endorsed WEP's up to the 29th September 2020. The evaluation was centred around 5 key questions:
- Question 1: Is the process around the identification, prioritisation and development of WEP's sufficiently effective and robust?
 - Question 2: Are the right people included at the right time and engaged in the right way?
 - Question 3: How, and to what extent, do WEP's contribute to PMP Outcomes?
 - Question 4: What are the key benefits/successes of the development and endorsement of WEP's for all stakeholders?
 - Question 5: Are there any significant cost or resource benefits or implications arising from the development of WEP's for both the SDNPA and the estates?
- 2.2 Interrogation of the findings by LUC revealed a number of key issues that have been addressed immediately by the WEP Team. These are listed below as follows alongside Officer response:
- 2.2.1 Some concerns exist around WEP's guidance. This has since been addressed by the creation of a new WEP Guidance highlighted in Item 4 below.
- 2.2.2 The evaluation uncovered issues with regard to engagement with Members. This has since been addressed in the new WEP Process highlighted in Item 3 below. Whereby, Members are invited to formally input into the WEP process on three separate occasions; the early draft, the site visit and the final draft.
- 2.2.3 It was suggested the relationship between the delivery of WEP actions and pursuance of the PMP Outcomes is not clearly communicated. This has been addressed through conducting an end of year performance review of each of the estates with an endorsed WEP captured in a report presented to SMT. See Item 5 below.
- 2.2.4 The evaluation revealed a multitude of perceived and actual benefits from the WEP process and their implementation to-date. However, it is argued these benefits are not clearly understood and identified by all. Once again, this has been addressed through the end of year performance review.
- 2.2.5 Concerns were raised both internally and externally about the resource requirements of endorsing a WEP and whether this was proportionate to the perceived benefits of WEP's. The new WEP process puts the emphasis of creating a WEP back onto the estate with SDNPA Officers taking on a guiding and lubricating role ensuring the process is successfully navigated through. This approach has drastically reduced the resource time spent working with estates on their WEP

journey. This coupled with the easy identification of delivered PMP outcomes through the end of year performance review process provides the crucial ingredients required to calculate resources expended verses benefits gained.

- 2.3 LUC also provided a number of recommendations in response to findings, which have been afforded a less critical status and as such WEP Team response has been less immediate while reflections and implications are assessed. These recommendations are listed below:
- 2.3.1 Up-date the current WEP guidance that should include a user-friendly tool to help them with the ecosystem services analysis.
 - 2.3.2 Start to develop and deliver a process for Micro-WEP's or WEP-Lite's.
 - 2.3.3 Provide a concise non-technical 'briefing note' to help raise awareness around WEP's.
 - 2.3.4 Consider a WEP online 'information HUB'.
 - 2.3.5 Organise a future 'knowledge and process sharing' event.
 - 2.3.6 Review the positioning of WEPs on the SDNPA website (currently housed within the planning policy section)
 - 2.3.7 Creation of a simple check-list to share with interested estates to help advise on suitability or otherwise for a WEP.
 - 2.3.8 Record resource time spent on each estates WEP journey to endorsement to feed into the post endorsement review process.

3. The New WEP Process

- 3.1 Following the successful endorsement of Eastbourne Downland WEP on 29th September 2020 the management of WEPs was transferred from the Planning Directorate to the Countryside Policy Management Directorate.
- 3.2 In response to the evaluation a refreshed new WEP process catalogues the various elements of a WEPs journey into five sequential stages allowing easy tracking and clarity for estates on the exact point of the journey they are currently on whilst clearly identifying next steps. Figure 1 shows the new process.

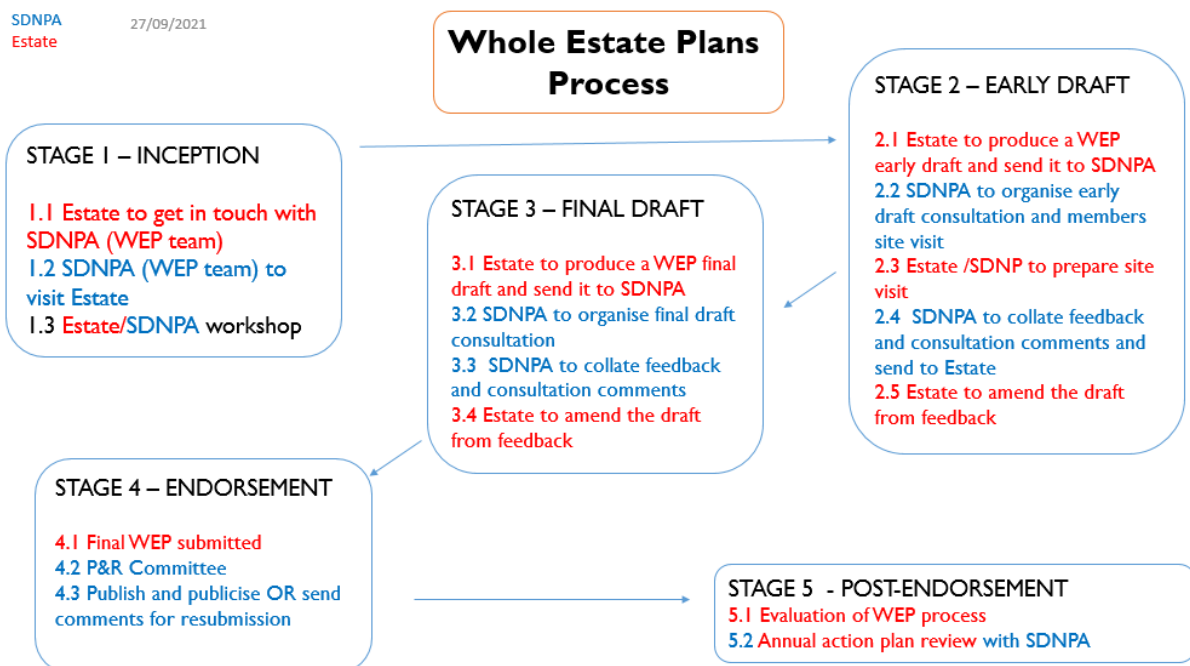


Figure 1

4. Revised WEP Guidance (Working Version)

- 4.1 The current WEP guidance dated 2nd December 2015, last updated on 22nd May 2017 provides concise guidance for estates on how to prepare a WEP for endorsement by the

SDNPA. In direct response to LUC's evaluation works have commenced to write a new updated WEP Guidance that reflects the new WEP process, draws on the experiences of the six estates with endorsed WEP's and holds up-to-date and relevant information for the user.

- 4.2 The new WEP guidance (**Appendix I**), replacing the 2015 version, is structured around five key sections.
- 4.2.1 Whole Estate Plans: The Concept: Large landholdings have a vital role to play in the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, the development of a sustainable rural economy, contributing to thriving rural communities, providing crucial access and managing its ecosystem services. WEP's are designed to support these large landholdings through the promotion of collaboration between the land owner and the South Downs National Park Authority.
- 4.2.2 The Plans and Policies of the SDNPA: Through National drivers, with origins in The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, The DEFRA (2010) National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 sets the key policy for National Park Authorities.
- 4.2.3 Producing a WEP: This chapter focusses on the four key elements which is the encouraged framework for any WEP of; The Vision, The Asset Audit, The Ecosystem Services & Analysis and The Action Plan. Figure 2 below illustrates this framework.

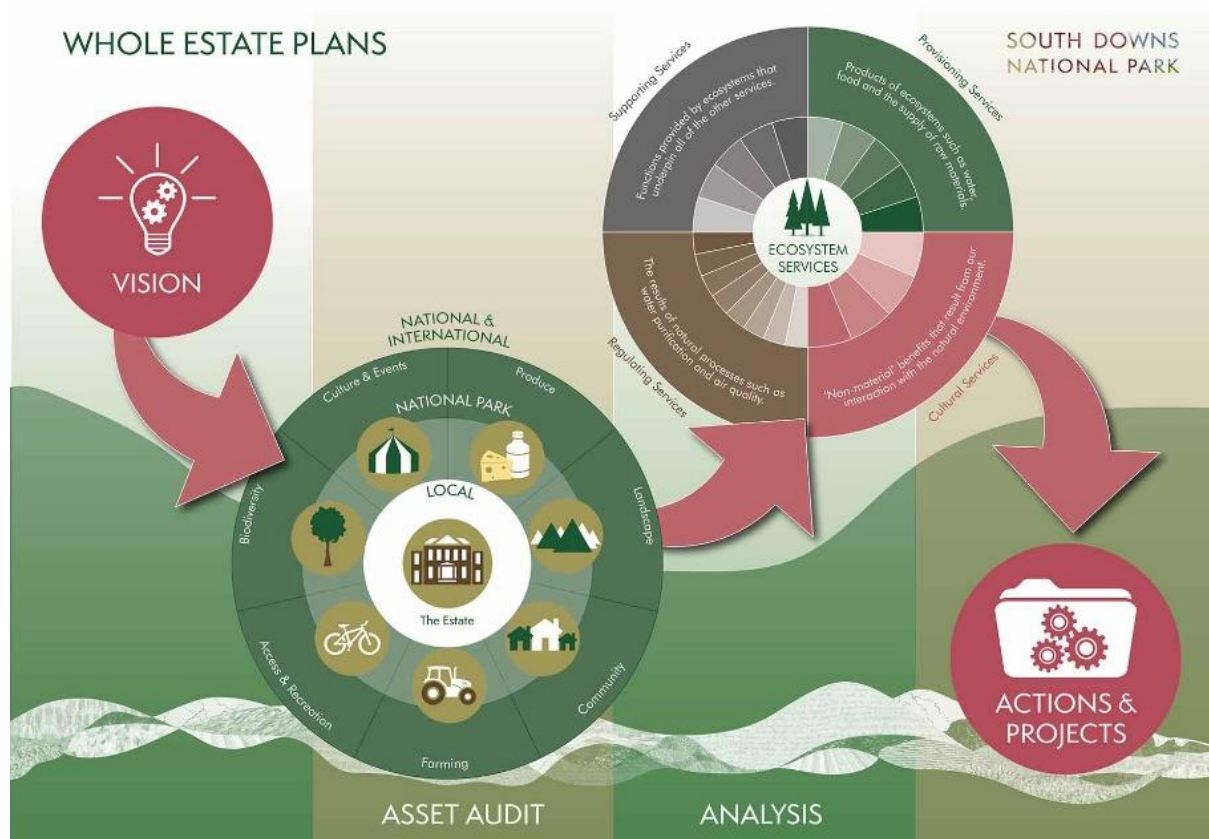


Figure 2

- 4.2.4 The Endorsement Process: Estates can request their WEP to be endorsed by SDNPA through the Policy & Resources Committee. Creating a bond between parties assisting in the delivery of objectives of the South Downs National Park Authority and the estate.
- 4.2.5 Future Working: An endorsed WEP aids collaboration between an estate and the SDNPA to achieve the ambitions of the landowner while also delivering on the Partnership Management Plan Outcomes in pursuit of the National Park's purposes and duty. They act as a catalyst for building relationships, they facilitate the understanding of the National Park's Special Qualities, they identify opportunities and threats to the estate and, importantly, they enable better understanding of the pressures facing estates.

5. The first WEP Year End Performance Review (1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021)

- 5.1 From the findings of LUC's WEP evaluation it was suggested the relationship between the delivery of WEP actions and pursuance of the PMP Outcomes is not clearly communicated. In direct response to this finding a year end performance of Estates performance against their endorsed WEP's took place with findings presented to Senior Management Team.

Methodology

- 5.2 The year end performance review was conducted internally by SDNPA WEP Officer with findings interrogated and presented in a report to SMT. The data utilised in this review has been sourced from interviews with each of the six estates with endorsed WEPs. The structure of each interview was based on the Action Plan of each individual WEP. Data gathered was interrogated with a RAG (Red Amber Green) status applied to determine estate performance. The RAG status was as follows; Red: no progress this year / on hold / not started yet, Amber: the estate started working on this action but it is not fully completed yet, Green: the action is fully completed. Each Action Plan item given a Green RAG status was then cross examined against Partnership Management Plan (PMP) Outcomes to identify which actions delivered by the estate in the last financial year, have contributed directly to SDNPA PMP Outcomes. Due to the varied number of Action Plan items in each WEP a percentage has been utilised as a method of presenting the data to allow cross tabulation of each endorsed WEP.

Results:

- 5.3 **Overall:** Figure 3 shows the percentage of items in each Estates Action Plan delivered between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021.

	Newton Valence	Eastbourne	Wiston	Iford	West Dean	Highfield	Average
G	50%	21%	33%	22%	36%	22%	31%
A	18%	64%	44%	56%	42%	28%	42%
R	32%	14%	11%	22%	21%	50%	25%
N/A	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Figure 3

- 5.4 On average 75% of items contained within the six action plans achieve a RAG status of either green or amber. When these findings are placed into the context of the exceptional circumstances faced by estates from the Covid-19 Pandemic the results of only 25% of action plans in red status is surprising. The ability for estates to deliver across multiple PMP Outcomes in the most difficult of circumstances highlights their importance to the SDNP and the delivery of SDNPA objectives.

Performance measured against PMP Outcomes:

- 5.5 Figure 4 shows the percentage of each PMP Outcome delivered by the six estates. Outcome 1 was the most commonly delivered against of all the outcomes with 20%, followed by Outcome 10 with 14%. Outcome 2, Outcome 3 and Outcome 5 were joint third highest with 12%. This raises the question, on whether these findings are a direct result of conservation, land management and access work representing logistically more achievable work during Covid-19 restrictions or if this represents a typical year for estates in the implementation of their action plans and how this implementation delivers on National Park Purposes and Duty. An explanation for the high volume of work in pursuit of Outcome 10 is the striving for financial stability at a time of great economic fall-out experienced as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. Work around Health & Wellbeing was the least delivered outcome during the year.

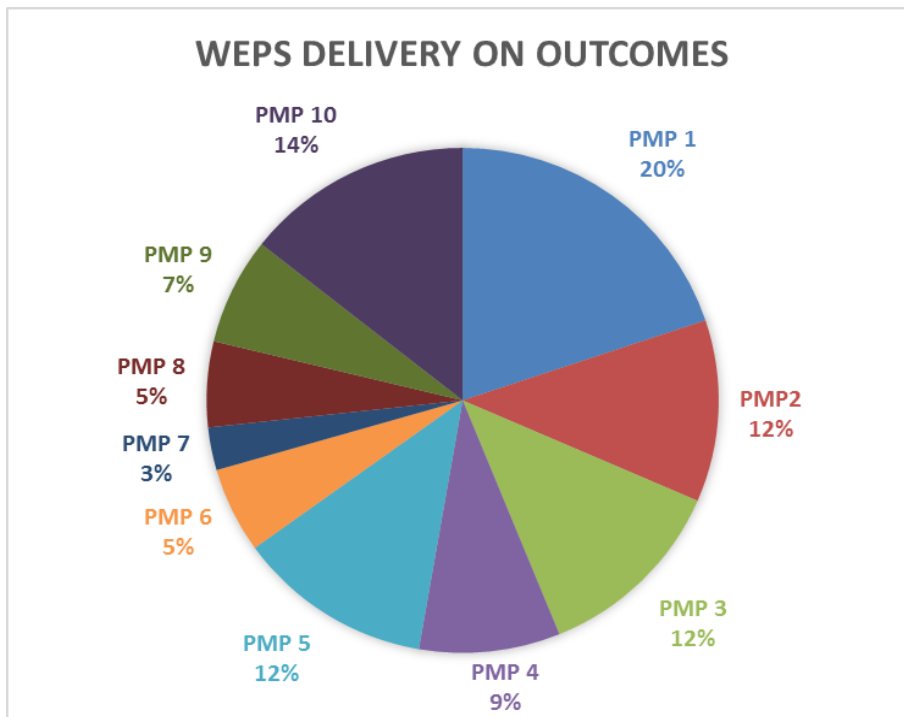


Figure 4

5.6 Figure 5 shows the number of actions delivered per estate and which PMP outcome each action specifically delivered against.

	PMP 1	PMP 2	PMP 3	PMP 4	PMP 5	PMP 6	PMP 7	PMP 8	PMP 9	PMP 10	
Newton Valence	8	3	3	1	3	0	0	5	4	5	
Eastbourne	6	2	2	1	2	3	1	0	0	5	
Wiston	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Iford	9	4	7	1	3	0	1	1	1	3	
West Dean	5	3	5	9	6	2	2	1	3	5	
Highfield	0	4	1	1	2	3	0	1	2	1	
Number of actions	29	17	18	13	18	8	4	8	10	21	146
	20%	12%	12%	9%	12%	5%	3%	5%	7%	14%	100%

Figure 5

5.7 Figure 6 shows the percentage of each PMP outcome delivered per estate (Green & Amber status only).

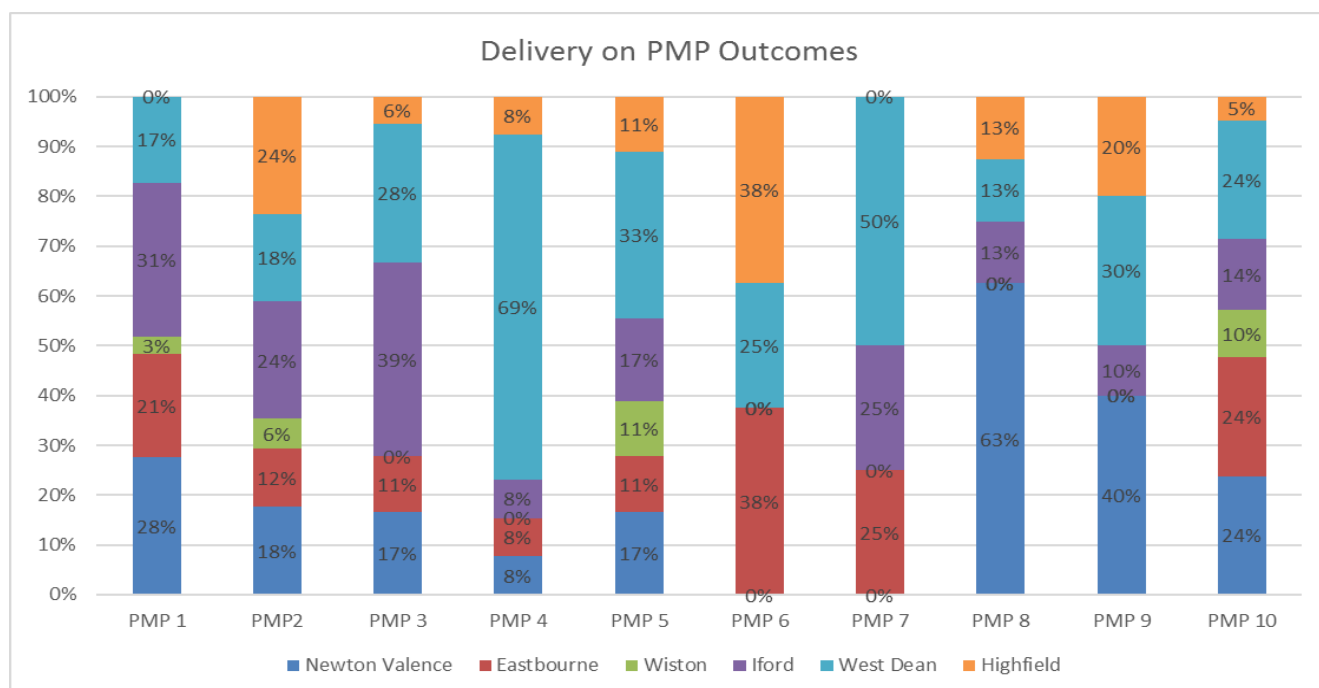


Figure 6

5.8 The results of the 1st year end performance review (ending 31st March 2021) provide clear evidence of how estates with endorsed WEPs deliver against our PMP Outcomes through their practices. Evidence leads us to believe this will continue in the current financial year as we emerge from the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is believed estates will also be contributing to new SDNPA Nature Recovery and Climate Change targets as well as benefitting from involvement in initiatives such as Farming in a Protected Landscape (FIPL) and Our South Downs (OSD).

6. The pipeline

6.1 There are currently four estates with active WEPs in development, all in various stages in the process outlined in green below. These are Bereleigh, Brighton & Hove Downland, Barlavington and Firle.

6.2 There are a further thirty estates who have inactive WEPs at various stages of the process all stalled for varying reasons outlined in red below.

6.3 Figure 7 shows estate WEP activity as of 5th November 2021 at various stages of the process.

	Stage 1 Inception		Stage 2 Early Draft		Stage 3 Final Draft		Stage 4 Endorsement	Stage 5 Post Endorsement
	Early	Advanced	Early	Advanced	Early	Advanced		
Number of Estates	19	3	8	2	1		1	6

Figure 7

7. Estates with an endorsed WEP

7.1 At 27th September 2021, six estates have benefitted from endorsed WEPs. These are: Wiston Estate endorsed on 20th July 2017, Newton Valence Farm endorsed on 19th September 2017, Highfield and Brookham endorsed on 29th March 2018, Iford Farms endorsed on 29th March 2018, West Dean endorsed on 28th February 2019 and Eastbourne Downland endorsed on 29th September 2020. These can be seen in Figure 8 below,

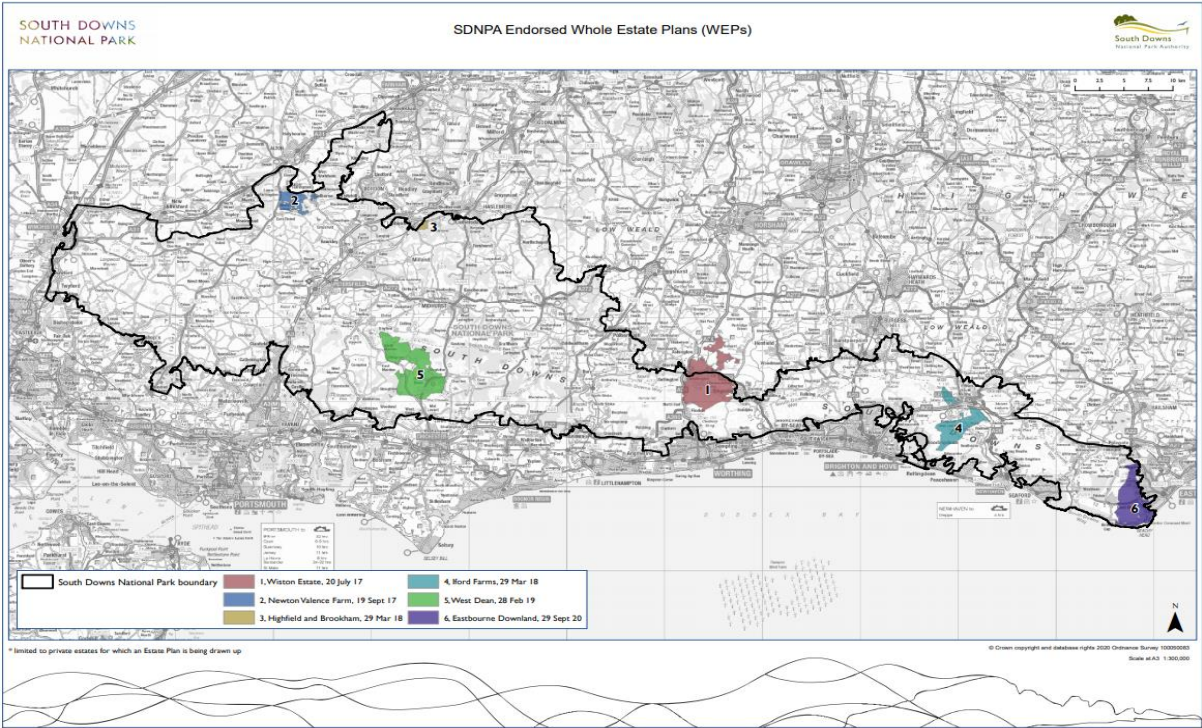


Figure 8

8. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, although applications for grant funds or planning permission may be submitted for consideration relating to actions highlighted within the WEP.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. Delivery of the WEP programme is met from within existing resources. However, endorsed WEP's, are included on the SDNPA website, and Annual Performance Reviews are conducted by SDNPA Officers. Any update and review of the endorsed WEPs is the responsibility of the Estate. If any WEPs are amended, they will need to be considered again by Officers and Members.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	It is considered that the advantages of WEPs outlined in the report justify the amount of officer time and Authority resources committed to the WEP programme.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	This decision has no direct equalities implications. This document will be used to inform future decisions by the Authority, which will be subject to their own equalities impact assessments. Officers work with eth estates at the various stages of the WEP process sto ensure Equalities obligations are complied with e.g. when consultations are undertaken .
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No

Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy.	WEPs have sustainability principles at their core, always set within the context of the SDNP Partnership Management Plan and to support the delivery of the Local Plan.

9. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 9.1 There is a risk of WEPs being misunderstood and considered as planning documents only, or being interpreted as a 'green light' for development. Both of these risks are mitigated by providing continued support to Estates, case officers and other interested parties and providing the guidance included in item 4 above which, when completed, will be available on the SDNPA website.

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Appendices [1. Revised WEP Guidance working version](#)

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services.

External Consultees 'none'

Background Documents
(printed document available upon request)

- WEP Evaluation produced by LUC (*(printed document available upon request)*)
- [Current WEP Guidance](#)

Whole Estate Plans Guidance
South Downs National Park Authority
November 2021

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STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

Please note that this document is not a formal South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) policy document. It is provided in good faith to assist those seeking to prepare Whole Estate Plans (WEP). It should not be published in any format without the express permission of SDNPA.

Use of the term ‘Estates’ throughout this document, will also be taken to include large farm holdings, schools / institutions, businesses, conservation organisations, Local Authorities and organisations owning land generally in excess of 400 acres, with multiple diverse activities and employing or having residents in excess of 30 people.

Comments or queries regarding this document should be sent to:

WEPS@southdowns.gov.uk

Further information and a copy of the WEPs endorsed to date are on our website:

www.southdowns.gov.uk/whole-estate-plans

INTRODUCTION

The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is a 1600 sqk culturally rich, diverse, dynamic but complex mosaic which includes significant areas of privately owned and farmed landscape. It is the most heavily populated National Park with over 117,000 residents. The SDNP Economy is the largest of all English National Parks (NPs) contributing to 40% of NPs employment and 37% of NP turnover. With over 8000 businesses, the SDNP Economy also boasts the most densely populated NP in terms of business, employing over 55,000 people.

With over 70% of the SDNP used as farmland the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) manage their landscape by proxy¹ (Glover, 2019) meaning successful landscape management is fully dependent on collaborative working. The support of the estates and farms is therefore fundamental to the success of the National Park.

A SDNPA concept, Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) look to promote collaboration between individual estates and the SDNPA to help achieve the ambitions of both.

This document aims to provide clear and concise guidance to those thinking about creating a WEP for their estate or for those who are in the process of writing a WEP.

¹ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (DEFRA). (2019c). Julian Glover. Landscapes Review. Final Report.

1. WHOLE ESTATE PLANS: THE CONCEPT

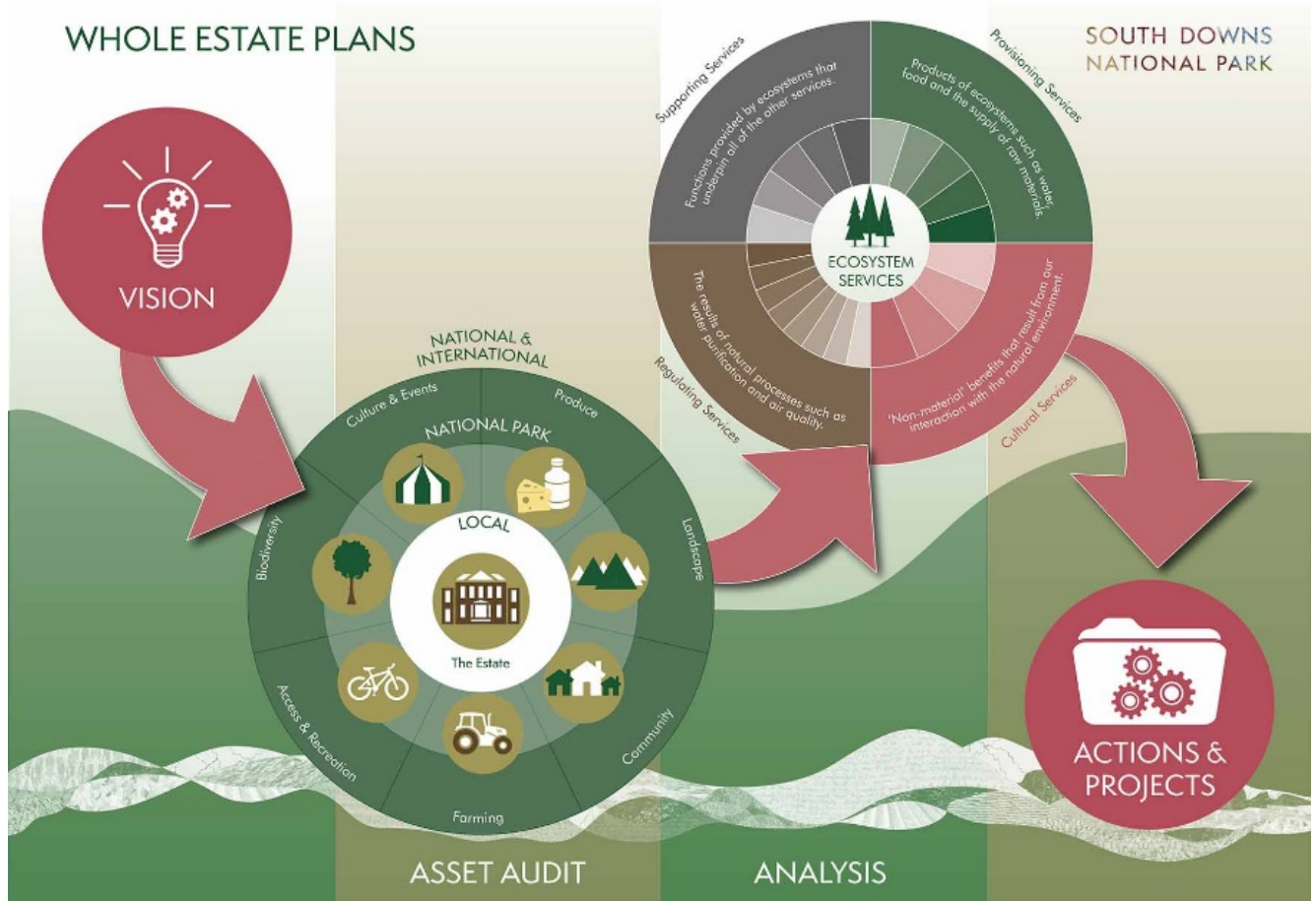
It is widely accepted that the reason for this landscape achieving its designation as a protected landscape in 2010 is a direct result of the commitment, dedication and best practice land management approaches adopted by the plethora of landowners, be it; farmers, conservation charities, schools, businesses, public organisations and institutions that reside in the SDNP. Within this guidance, these landowners will be collectively referred to as estates.

Estates across the National Park have a vital role to play in the conservation and enhancement of the landscape, the development of a sustainable rural economy, contributing to thriving rural communities, providing crucial access and managing its ecosystem services. It is acknowledged that supporting the estates is fundamental to the conservation and enhancement of this landscape and the future success of the National Park. As the SDNP includes significant areas of privately owned and farmed landscape the need for collaboration and partnership working is paramount for NPAs to ensure successful landscape management practices are upheld. Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) were introduced, as a concept, by the SDNPA in recognition of this fact with the principle purpose to promote collaboration between individual estates and the National Park Authority (NPA) to help achieve the ambitions of both.

WEPs are designed to support organisations which are generally large landholdings which include complex commercial, social and environmental activities. This could mean schools, conservation organisations, Local Authorities and other institutions, as well as Estates, businesses and large farm holdings. It is clear the physical attributes of an organisation which wishes to prepare a WEP will vary enormously. Although it is the intention of the NPA to not discourage any organisation who can demonstrate practical reasons for the preparation of a WEP, for reference, it is generally expected that WEPs will be of most use to organisations which include land holdings in excess of 400 acres, with multiple diverse activities, and employing or having resident in excess of 30 people.

The format all WEPs should be framed around four key elements:

- Vision
- Asset Audit
- Ecosystem Services Analysis
- Action Plan



Through the process of preparing a WEP the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is required along with identifying proactive solutions that support the estate and contribute to the Purposes and Duty of the National Park.

A WEP is a non-statutory plan that sets out the overall position and aspirations of the estate. There is no prescribed time period a WEP should cover. We are aware estates and institutions often work to longer timescales than others. To enable long-term thinking WEP's should look at least 10 years ahead and ideally further. Post endorsement, WEP's should be considered to be fluid, working documents that can and should be updated over time to reflect changes in circumstance or strategic direction.

WEPs can also be presented for endorsement by the National Park and if successful they will have weight in determining planning applications on the Estate. This may enable developments not normally considered acceptable in countryside locations to be permitted as they can be seen in the context of the long-term plans of an entire estate.

Although endorsed WEPs will be displayed on the SDNPA website, they remain the property of the estate's themselves and estates will be under no obligation by the SDNPA to implement their action plans.

Over the course of this document we seek to explain what each section should include, why we are asking for this information, and who is best placed to prepare it. This document will also set out the iterative step by step journey a WEP under development must take if the estate holds aspirations for the WEP to be endorsed by the SDNPA.

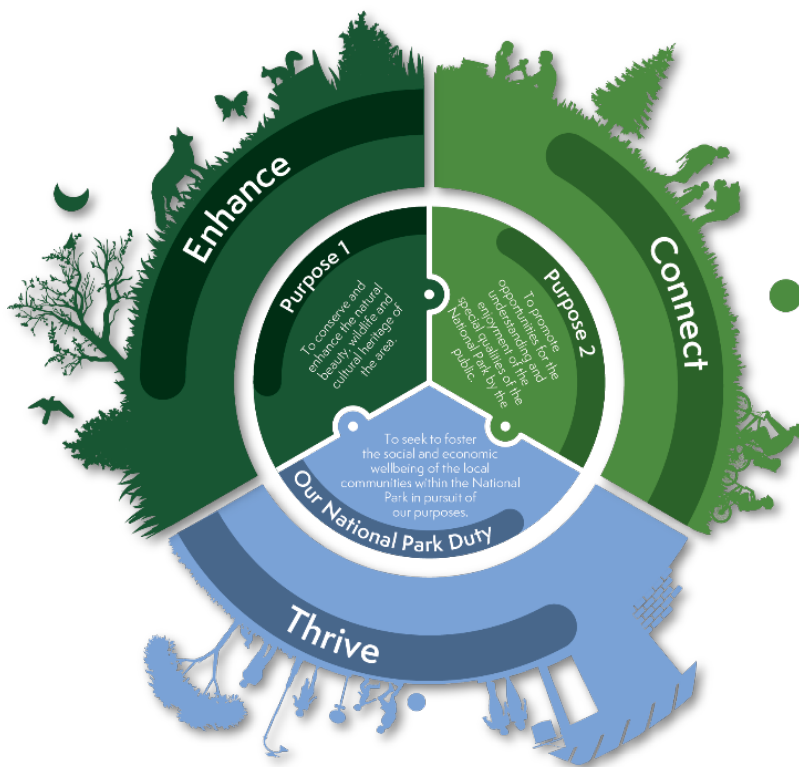
2. THE PLANS AND POLICIES OF THE SDNPA

There are a number of key drivers in the form of both national and local policy.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949² (HM Government, 1949) Section 5 A&B (1) sets out two National Park purposes. These can be seen in the illustration below.

Section 11A (1) of the 1949 Act³ effectively places a “*duty to foster and maintain vibrant, healthy and productive living communities*” on NPAs (DEFRA, 2010, p.18). The key policy guidance for NPAs is provided by the **DEFRA (2010). National Parks and the Broads. UK Government Vision and Circular 2010**⁴. Paragraphs 72 and 74 of the DEFRA (2010) were directly informed by the findings contained within the Taylor Report (2008)⁵. Taylor (2008) suggests, “*creating and maintaining strong rural economies is critical to supporting sustainable and vibrant rural communities with important social, economic, employment and environmental benefits*” (Taylor, 2008, p.122).

The purposes and duty of a National Park



² UK Government. (1949). National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

³ UK Government. (1949). National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

⁴ DEFRA. (2010). National Parks and the Broads. UK Government Vision and Circular 2010⁴.

⁵ Taylor Report. (2008). Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing.

This is reflected in the shared Vision for the South Downs National Park (2050), contained within the SDNPA (2019) Partnership Management Plan, where it is stated:

By 2050 in the south downs national park

The iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational and distinctive places, where people live, work, farm and relax, are adapting well to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

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 landscape.

Opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities. The relationship between people and landscape will enhance their lives and inspire them to become actively involved in caring for it and using its resources more responsibly.

Its special qualities will underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the communities in and around it, which will be more self-sustaining and empowered to shape their own future. Its villages and market towns will be thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses and supporting the wider rural community.

Successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to, and derive economic benefit from, its unique identity and special qualities.

WEP's are an important tool, not only demonstrating to estates that the SDNPA acknowledges the positive contribution they have made and continue to make to the SDNP but also acting as a vehicle for the SDNPA to build deep rooted relationships with estates that will in time allow the SDNPA to enable, facilitate and add value to existing estates activity for mutual benefits in the future. Partnership working is at the core of the work undertaken by the SDNPA. This is acknowledged in the SDNPA (2019) PMP that sets out 10 clear outcome objectives in pursuit of the Purposes and Duty.

SDNPA (2020) Partnership Management Plan

The ⁶SDNPA (2020) Partnership Management Plan (PMP) sets out the overarching five-year strategy for the management of the SDNP explaining how the SDNPA and its partners will work to secure a positive future for the SDNP. Please find a link [here](#) to the SDNPA (2020) PMP.

The SDNPA (2020) PMP is generally regarded as the single most important policy document for the NP and consists of a vision, key themes and outcomes which set where we would like to get to by 2050. It identifies specific projects and programmes of work, which will drive progress and improve the condition of the special qualities of the National Park. These can only be achieved by many landowners, businesses, organisations and individuals working together. The aspiration is that the production of WEPs will both enable Estates to identify ways in which they can support the National Park, but also areas where through facilitation the SDNPA can assist in developing collaborative working for the benefit of the Estate and National Park as a whole.

⁶ SDNPA (2020) Partnership Management Plan 2020-2025

The SDNPA (2020) PMP sets out ten Outcomes that the SDNPA and its partners aspire to achieve by 2050.

- [Outcome 1](#): Landscape and Natural Beauty
- [Outcome 2](#): Increasing Resilience
- [Outcome 3](#): Habitats and Species
- [Outcome 4](#): Arts and Heritage
- [Outcome 5](#): Outstanding Experiences
- [Outcome 6](#): Lifelong Learning
- [Outcome 7](#): Health and Wellbeing
- [Outcome 8](#): Creating Custodians
- [Outcome 9](#): Great Places to Live
- [Outcome 10](#): Great Places to Work

It is crucial that when preparing WEPs, estates continually link back to these PMP Outcomes as a measure of whether activities or proposals will have a positive impact towards the Vision for 2050.

This approach reflects the overarching objective of all WEPs, which is to be a holistic document capturing the spirit and productivity of individual estates, not just a planning document.

South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan(2019)

The South Downs Local Plan sets out many of the planning policies to be used in the determination of planning applications in the National Park and recognises the significant influence of the estates and farms across the National Park and the impact the management activities of these estates has in the short, medium and long term. We also recognise the challenges faced by those who own and operate these estates to both manage the land and maintain some of the most significant cultural and heritage assets within the SDNP. Policy SD22 of the Local Plan states that positive regard will be had where development proposals are part of a WEP that has been endorsed by the National Park Authority and deliver multiple benefits in line with the purposes and special qualities of the National Park. This provides a mechanism through which a balance can be struck between these elements.

However, this can only be done within an informed context, which clearly sets out the longer term role of a development proposal within the overall ambition of the organisation and its contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the National Park, its special qualities and the ecosystem services it provides. For this reason the National Park Authority supports WEPs as a vehicle for understanding this context.

The Climate Change Agenda & Nature Recovery.

HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan makes clear that moving forward in a post-Brexit world, there will be a focus on enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment, supported by the idea of 'public goods for public money'. This is built on the foundations of Natural Capital, which is also the basis for the Partnership Management Plan and Local Plan.

The SDNPA (2016) Climate Change Adaptation Plan

The SDNPA has a key role in meeting the challenges and opportunities climate change may present. The SDNPA (2016) Climate Change Adaptation Report sets out how the SDNPA along with its partners will utilise their convened powers to achieve the required co-ordinated and shared action.

SUMMARY: How WEPs fit into the SDNPA Policy Framework

- WEPs are a tool for delivering the outcomes identified in the PMP
 - WEPs are supported by policies in the Local Plan
 - Once endorsed a WEP becomes a material consideration in assessing planning applications
- WEPs can co-ordinate action in response to meeting the challenge of climate change and nature recovery.

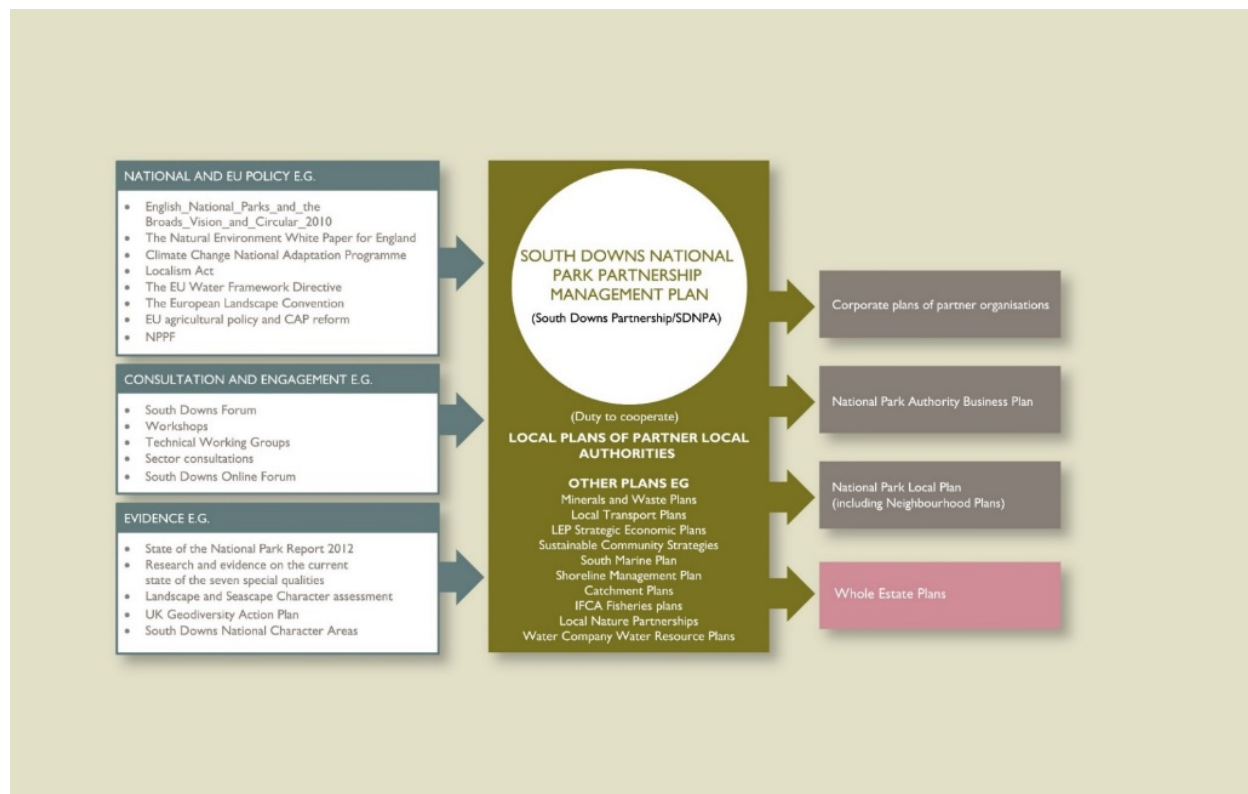


Figure 1: Where a WEP fits into National Park Policy and Plans

3. PRODUCING A WEP

The typical and indeed encouraged framework for any WEP is broken into 4 key elements; The Vision, The Asset Audit, The Ecosystem Services & Analysis and the Action Plan. Although not explicitly prescribed in the WEP process, public participation is strongly encouraged.

The timeframe for which a WEP is created and endorsed is solely the responsibility of the estate. It is important to acknowledge, for those estates seeking endorsement for their WEPs, the SDNPA

limits the number of member site visits (See Stage 2 of the WEP Process below) to four each year. These four dates are released in December for the following year and can be reserved by estates in a first come first served basis. Therefore, this must be considered and factored into any works programme when planning the WEP journey and the key milestones.

Consultation

There is no 'formal' requirement for a WEP to undergo formal public consultation. However there are significant benefits to Estates who actively engage with communities who live, work and spend their leisure time within their land holdings and the SDNPA will expect to see evidence of this taking place throughout the WEP process, particularly when forming the vision and at the point of firming up the Action Plan. Good consultation also adds to the 'weight' likely to be given to the document by the SDNPA.

There are many ways in which Estates can seek to include communities, suggestions include activities such as open days, workshops, and questionnaires. Many Estates already have well established ways of communicating with businesses and tenants and these can be good ways of engaging people. It is hoped that by adopting this approach local communities will both be kept informed of the aspirations and issues faced by Estates, and also proactively contribute with ideas and information.

The SDNPA has lots of experience of consulting on plans and can be a source of ideas and information if needed.

3.1 THE ESTATE VISION

What is the Estate Vision?

The Estate Vision is a short and simple statement that clearly sets out the priorities of your organisation.

It should focus on the ethos of the organisation e.g. 'It is our vision to strengthen our multi-faceted business with a focus on wine production and visitors, which integrates sustainable farming and tourism practices' or 'In 20 years' time our Estate will be a place where sustainable farming enterprises continue; biodiversity thrives including the creation of new marshland habitat; the local economy is supported by the new affordable housing....

This should not be development focused e.g. 'It is our vision to build 20 new houses, a biomass heating system and five new commercial units over the next 20 years'.

There are examples in the WEPs already endorsed by the SDNPA.

Why have an Estate Vision?

So that everyone, including all parts of your own organisation, the South Downs National Park Authority and members of your local community can easily see what your priorities are.

Many estates and businesses will already have a vision for their organisation. This need not change unless you believe so. For organisations which are centred round a specific activity (e.g. education, sporting excellence) your vision is likely to be very specific and not necessarily tailored towards the National Park. This is understandable but we would encourage you to consider whether inclusion of elements from the National Parks Purposes and Duty or Special Qualities into the vision could be beneficial and this will be looked at during the endorsement process.

Another option might be to include a short explanation of how your Vision links to the National Park Purposes and Duty, or one of the key plans of the National Park e.g. the Partnership Management Plan.

Who should write the Estate Vision?

Agree this at the highest level within your organisation.

Even if you decide to get external support in order to write a WEP there needs to be cumulative buy-in to ensure that what you want to achieve in the plan, is both ambitious but also realistic. The Landowner / Principal / Headmaster / Chief Executive will ideally take responsibility for the finalisation of the WEP.

This production of the WEP should also be an opportunity to consult with the local community or other interested groups, residents and organisations.

3.2. ASSET AUDIT

What is the Asset Audit?

The Asset Audit is a complete picture of all the assets of the estate, both physical and non-physical.

Whilst the asset audit predominantly sets out obvious elements such as land and land use, people and property, it should also include items like areas of tranquillity, dark night skies and community facilities such as schools, shops and microbusinesses, which are supported by the estate. When compiling the Asset Audit, you should consider the following:

What designations are in place on the estate? These might cover part or all of the estate, and extend beyond the boundary. It would include landscape, biodiversity, historic environment, access and recreation designations. Planning policy designations (for example, settlement boundaries or local green spaces) should also be included.

What built and natural assets are there? This could be the make-up of fields, archaeological features, barns, houses, farmsteads, business units, public rights of way, woodland. Remember to include assets that are in, on, under and over the land such as aquifers and mineral resources. It is often easy to identify the built assets, but consider the natural capital your estate has (i.e. the stock of renewable and non-renewable resources) for example:

- animal and plant species / habitats
- soils
- rivers, streams, lakes, ponds
- coastal areas and the sea.

Our natural capital is vulnerable to impacts from human activities and cannot be readily substituted and repaired, it is therefore as important as the buildings and infrastructure and we need a good understanding of these natural assets through your assessment process.

How are the land and buildings used? This could detail areas that are being farmed in a specific way (pasture, arable, farmed woodlands etc), tenancies, commercial occupation, areas under specific management agreements (e.g. higher level stewardship), public and private spaces. How do any of these interrelate? Are any at risk, in need of improvement or expansion? In particular if your estate contains buildings of historic value, a brief assessment of their condition, future care / maintenance and plans and the level of risk to them should be recorded. This might highlight areas in need of more detailed assessment and our Conservation Officers can input into this as required.

What services do you provide? This should include the number of tenants (residential and commercial), any community/social facilities you provide (for example access across land for the school/reduced rent at the village hall), visitor attractions, rental of land for cultural events, training in specialist skills etc. as well as physical provision of services such as water services

How is the estate perceived? This could include what its importance is locally now, and how it has influenced visitors and residents historically (e.g. Eric Ravilious, Bloomsbury Group, William Blake).

The examples above are not exhaustive, as each estate will be different, but they indicate some of the elements that may need to be included in the audit. In its simplest form, the Asset Audit is a series of maps, tables and images, which show the detail of the estate. This could be supplemented with case studies, which can be used to provide additional detail on specific elements. Initial consultation with officers at SDNPA to identify the unique features of your Estate may help.

Why have an Asset Audit?

The Asset Audit allows the estate and all its activities to be seen within its context locally, within the National Park and nationally or even internationally.

It is critical to gather this information together so that it can be viewed as a whole. For those with complex future plans the Asset Audit will be particularly helpful in ensuring that everyone involved in the stewardship of the National Park can see the context and connectivity of the whole estate and all of its activities, rather than just individual elements.

Who should write the Asset Audit?

Simple asset audits can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate.

However the assistance of a cartographer / graphic designer may be of benefit to ensure that the spatial information is as useful as it can be. The SDNPA are able to provide some assistance with mapping of strategic level designations.

It is recommended that the managers of all key enterprises/activities within the estate are involved in developing the content of the Asset Audit. This could include estate/farm managers, individual business managers, property managers, event/product managers etc.

Where estates are particularly large or complex, additional professional disciplines may be of assistance this could include ecological advisors, planning practitioners, and heritage advisors. The input of local residents and other interested groups and organisations may also help you to identify assets.

Important information relating to the Asset Audit

Ideally the production of the Asset Audit should be an opportunity for Estates to gather information from all levels within their organisation. Estates are strongly encouraged to involve and engage with their entire organisation in the process if possible in order to get maximum benefit from the exercise. Ideally all those involved with the Estate/Landholding should be aware of the WEP and their role in it.

There may be some cases where a large volume of data could be included within the WEP. We would recommend that estates take a pragmatic approach ensuring that there is a clear overall picture with use of specialist data sets when particularly pertinent to a particular interest or action.

Importantly the Asset Audit should not merely be a list of potential development sites. Whilst development opportunities are important to some WEPS, these must be seen holistically within the wider context.

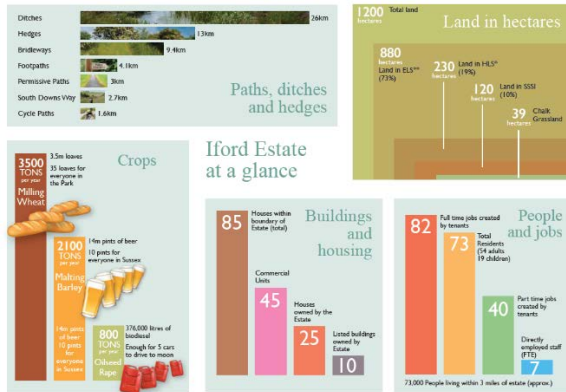


Figure 2: An example from Iford Estate on how to present data

SDNPA Mapping Package

To support the preparation of the Asset Audit the SDNPA have created a mapping package which provides a range of basic data which will be useful to the majority of organisations wishing to prepare a Whole Estate Plan.

The cost of this package is: £385.00 ex vat

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/WHOLE-EST-PLANS-MAPPING-PACKAGE.pdf>

3.3. ECOSYSTEM SERVICES & ANALYSIS

Ecosystem services are the benefits that people and society get from the natural environment, and underpin much of the rural economy. An ecosystems approach helps us to identify the benefits we get from nature, value them and build them into decision making and management. These benefits can be economic, social, cultural, or related to wellbeing. The South Downs provide a multitude of ecosystem services and they can be grouped into four categories as illustrated overleaf.

The National Park Authority adopted an ecosystems approach to the South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP) and this is embedded into the South Downs Local Plan. The diagram below provides a useful guide as to what services fall into which categories.

What is the relationship between natural capital and ecosystem services?

World Forum on Natural Capital states:

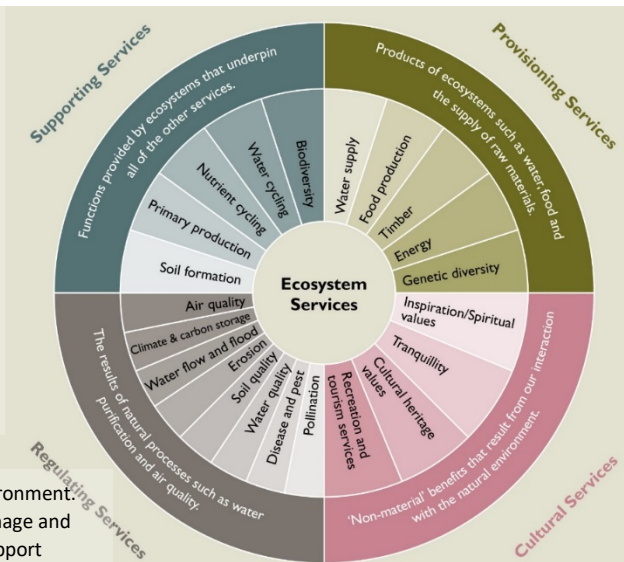
‘Natural capital can be defined as the world’s stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.

It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.

Your natural capital should be set out in the asset audit, the services you get from it can be set out in the Ecosystem Services Analysis.

Fig 3: Ecosystem Services Diagram

Supporting services offered by flora and fauna and micro-organisms are essential for healthy soils, habitats and nutrient cycling, which underpin the environment’s natural goods and services which benefit people. The National Park has a rich variety of species, landscapes, rivers and coastline which support the other ecosystems services, such as soil and water quality.



Provisioning services relate to the products and productivity of the natural environment. Approximately 85 per cent of the National Park is farmed and its soils support it being a major producer of cereal crops, which are grown mainly on the dip slopes. These soils also support grazing and biodiversity of important native habitats and species like the Duke of Burgundy butterfly. Approximately 25 per cent of the National Park is wooded, which contributes renewable fuel like biomass. The chalk hills, which sweep across the National Park, filter and store fresh water, providing us with high-quality drinking water.

Regulating services are the controls from the natural environment. For example, rivers which help to control water flow, drainage and flooding. Rivers such as the Meon, Ouse and Cuckmere support habitats and biodiversity. Enhancing species like bees and other pollinators are vital for food crops as well as other plants and wildflowers. Woodland also prevents soil erosion and is an important resource for carbon storage which helps to mitigate climate change. These services also regulate pollution in the air, water and on land. These include regulating carbon dioxide and air pollutants from cars and industry, chemicals from the treatment of agricultural fields or viticulture or surface water run-off and percolation from the urban environment into rivers and ground water.

Cultural services relate to people’s enjoyment of the National Park and its special qualities. The distinctive landscape of the Western Weald, the chalk ridge, scarp and dip slopes and the dramatic Seven Sisters cliffs are of inspirational value through their sense of place and tranquillity, including dark night skies. Embedded in the landscape is important cultural heritage and social history which is rich

What is an Ecosystem Services Analysis?

The Ecosystem Services Analysis is essentially a tailored SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis.

It is a simple tool that can be used to understand both the current and future issues and opportunities within each category. By then prioritising what is identified, the greatest opportunities for positive impact can be identified.

In its simplest form the ecosystem services analysis could be a basic table or it can be a narrative. No one format suits all and it is likely that there will be some areas that are not relevant to you. It is important to really focus on the value of these services to your estate rather than just the areas where they may be lacking. There are a number of examples overleaf of how this might be handled.

Why have an Ecosystem Services Analysis?

The approach combines both the needs of the estate and the National Park.

By taking the natural capital of an estate (as identified in the Asset Audit) and reconsidering it through an ecosystems based analysis, the individual strengths and weaknesses of an estate and the opportunities and threats it faces can be examined in a clear and methodical way. It helps to ensure that the benefits and services people get from the natural environment are recognised and enhanced.

Who should write the Ecosystem Services Analysis?

A simple Ecosystem Services Analysis can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate.

Like the Asset Audit, it is recommended that the managers of all key enterprises/activities within the estate are involved in developing the content of the Analysis. Those team members who are intimately acquainted with the day to day running of the estate are best placed to identify the opportunities and threats that face both the estate and the National Park.

Where estates/landholdings are particularly large and/or complex additional professional assistance, particularly from a multi-disciplinary planner/master planner may be of benefit to bring together all of the strands of information. The input and advice of any professionals (in areas such as landscape/ecology, heritage/conservation) who assisted in the preparation of the Asset Audit may also be useful. The SDNPA recognise that each Estates is different and are willing to provide support and input where needed into the WEP.

Examples of a number of ecosystem services analysis are shown overleaf.

Example Ecosystem Services Analysis

EXTRACT FROM THE IFORD ESTATE

Provisioning Services

Products of ecosystems such as water, food, and the supply of raw materials.

Water supply

The Estate has always strived to minimise its impact on the Environment, with water pollution, both of surface and ground water, being one of the biggest risks. To achieve this, buffer strips about all the water courses on the estate, and manure and fertiliser applications are carefully managed with qualified advisors overseeing applications.

Potential additionalities: Several elements of the farming operation, although acceptable from a regulatory standpoint, present a risk to the water supply. These include the sprayer filling facilities that are situated close to farm drains, and silage storage, either as round bale silage or storage in silage pits which were constructed in the 1950s.

The ongoing modernisation and reorganisation of the farm brings with it the opportunity to address these matters.

Food Production

Food production is the core focus of the Estate’s business and agriculture is seen as being the primary generator of revenue for the Estate in future generations. Sufficient wheat is produced to make 3.5m loaves of bread each year – enough to provide 35 loaves each year for every resident of the National Park. That is more than half the bread eaten within the Park every year. The estate also grows a wide range of other crops and grazes beef cattle and sheep on areas where it is not possible or desirable to cultivate.

Potential additionalities: The modernisation of the farming infrastructure brings with it scope for increasing the productive efficiency of the farm, without needing to take more land into production (and out of habitat schemes).

Timber

The Estate has no commercial forestry.

EXTRACT FROM THE WEST DEAN ESTATE

CULTURAL SERVICES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Recreation and tourism services	over 100,000 visitors a year to Gardens including events 150,000 visitors to Living Museum special events held throughout the year 21 miles of PROW cycling and horse riding encouraged designed walks within the park 5 walking routes across the Estate short courses in the arts and crafts dark skies for astro-photography accessible by public transport and bicycle	no agreed strategy with the Living Museum to mitigate parking issues small areas of lighting affecting dark skies pedestrian link to College and museum is poor no shared ticketing visitor centre needs upgrading to improve facilities (EH) letting accommodation	improve visitor centre reduction in shoots joint ticketing community officer conversion of buildings into offices/workshops/art studios allotments extension of Centurion Way to improve access to College and Gardens Bothys	lack of affordable accommodation for key workers EPC upgrades increasing rents loss of affordable housing
Cultural heritage values	55 listed buildings 13 Scheduled Monuments registered Park art and antique collections accredited museum (Living Museum) important centre for modern art major provider in arts conservation with international reputation	archive not located in appropriate environment no assessment of non-designated heritage assets no archaeology policy lack of methodology for tree removal (Forestry policy) to protect archaeology	management agreement with SDNP reinstate Norwegian Lodge construct bothys conversion of buildings into offices/workshops/art studios	

EXTRACT FROM THE WISTON ESTATE

Regulating Services

Positive outcomes that arise from natural processes:

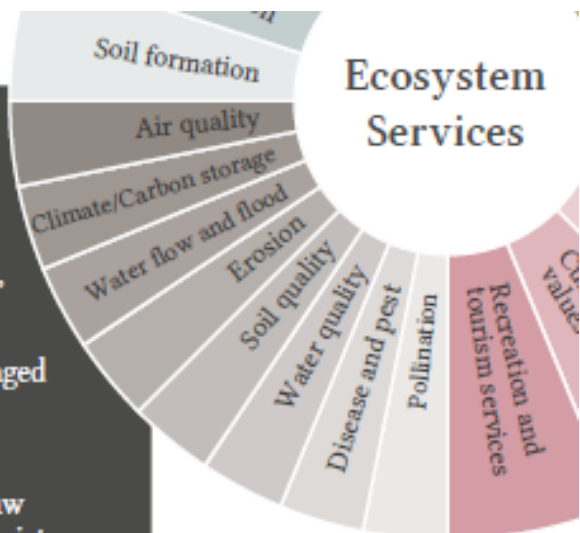
Air quality & Climate; 485ha of managed woodland, 820ha permanent grassland

Water flow & erosion; streams monitored and managed to prevent flooding, steep slopes left uncultivated

Soil quality; rotational farming systems, importing manure and compost with high organic content, straw chopped in field, minimum cultivation where appropriate

Disease and Pest; diverse cropping, mixed woodlands, active vermin control

Pollination; 12m pollinator strips along 1.5km of South Downs Way, wild bird seed mixes and 5 different beehive sites across the estate



Ecosystem Services

The diagram shows a wheel with segments for: Soil formation, Air quality, Climate/Carbon storage, Water flow and flood, Erosion, Soil quality, Water quality, Disease and pest, Pollination, Recreation and tourism services, and Cultural values.

Below is a generic template to assist estates with the Ecosystem Services & Analysis section of the WEP. This is available on request as an editable version.

Ecosystem Services template		Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Supporting Services	Soil formation				
	Primary production				
	Nutrient cycling				
	Water cycling				
	Biodiversity				
Provisioning Services	Water supply				
	Food production				
	Timber				
	Energy				
	Genetic diversity				
Cultural Services	Inspiration/Spiritual Values				
	Tranquillity				
	Cultural Heritage Values				
	Recreation and tourism services				
Regulation Services	Pollination				
	Disease and pest				
	Water quality				
	Soil quality				
	Erosion				
	Water flow and flood				
	Climate & carbon storage				
	Air quality				

3.4. ACTION PLAN

What is the Action Plan?

The Action Plan is the point at which you bring together all the work so far and identify the key actions or projects.

In its simplest form the Action Plan could be a table which lists outcomes and potential projects, their likely timeframe, their link with any SWOT analysis and the SDNPA priorities (e.g. the Partnership Managements Plan, Special Qualities or ecosystem services analysis).

It is suggested that Estates attempt to include approximate timescales and priorities, in order to give some shape to their Action Plan, however it is recognised that these will vary between estates and may not be appropriate for all projects.

It may also be appropriate where a project is complex or significant to provide additional information about that project. This would be expected where a significant planning application is anticipated. The information need not be in the form of detailed plans, but is a chance to provide more supporting information on the context and principle of the development.

If the WEP is successfully endorsed, this is not agreement that any future individual planning application would be approved but the document does become a material consideration.

Why have an Action Plan?

The Action Plan is an opportunity to clearly set out the type and range of activities which will take the Estate forward in its role as a steward within the National Park. It allows the National Park Authority to see individual projects within the context of the entire estate and a wider set of actions.

This is particularly important for Development Management activities where individual requests for planning consent may need to be understood within the context of the collective actions and plans of the Estate. This contextual background will also be highly beneficial if you are seeking external funding and other forms of project support.

Who should write the Action Plan?

A simple Action Plan can be prepared by anyone intimately acquainted with the workings of the estate, but to ensure it is actually deliverable it should have input from across the Estate.

It needs to be useful and realistic. Where estates are particularly large and/or complex additional professional assistance, particularly from a rural consultant or estate manager may be of benefit to ensure that the Action Plan can be effective as part of the estates wider business plan.

This might be another opportunity to consult with the local community or other interested groups, residents and organisations. They may be key parties in the delivery of some of these projects or actions. If the WEP has implications for local residents / tenants then they should be given the opportunity to be actively involved. We will wish to see that community and / or other stakeholder consultation has informed the proposal.

Important information relating to the Action Plan

- There should be a clear progression and justification of projects from the Asset Audit, through the Ecosystem Services Analysis and into the Action Plan.
- The inclusion of projects designed as enabling development is not precluded, but there should be a clear process to demonstrate need if this to be considered reasonable within the planning process.
- Where new dwellings are proposed, these should meet the priority housing needs of the local area, hence they should be affordable homes, or accommodate full-time, rural workers. Any exceptions to this would need to be fully justified, backed by clear evidence and deliver multiple benefits to ecosystem services and the special qualities of the SDNP.
- The Action Plan should not just be a list of development projects, but show how, if any development projects are proposed, they will assist in the wider action plan and stewardship of the countryside and the assets it provides..

Fig 4 – Extract taken from West Dean WEP

	SWOT RESPONSE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PMP	PRIORITY
Dark Skies and tranquility page 51	CS tranquility	Explore reasons for low quality dark skies at Preston Farm	to improve dark skies and tranquility	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	H
	CS tranquility	Approach SSE regarding streetlighting and improving canopies	to reduce light spill over village and improve dark skies	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	M
Farms and Farming page 54	SS combined	Promote the creation of a West Dean farm cluster	to improve habitats and promote biodiversity to support farmers by sharing aims and information to create support network to promote sharing of resources	2, 3, 8	M
	SS biodiversity RS pollination	Explore the use of more diverse crops for game cover	to encourage greater biodiversity and interest	2, 3	M
	SS biodiversity RS water quality	Explore potential reduction in rapeseed	to protect water quality by reducing slugs and the need for pellets (metaldehyde)	3	M
	SS combined	Record good conservation practice	to monitor and encourage ongoing conservation gains, especially if new Countryside Stewardship scheme is not taken up.	1, 2, 3	H

4. THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

What does endorsement mean?

WEPs which are of sufficient quality can be endorsed by the SDNPA through the Policy & Resources Committee. They can assist in the objectives of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan – a shared endeavour. From a landowner’s perspective, the WEP can be used as a useful supporting document for seeking grants or funding bids.

As stated earlier an endorsed WEP would have ‘material weight’ in planning decisions, and as such could be used by Officers and Planning Committee Members as background information when making planning decisions. It will not guarantee you planning permission but helps you to present your scheme in the context of the wide range of activities going on in your estate.

However, endorsement is not really about planning. It shows our commitment to work with you where we can, and where resources allow, to deliver multiple projects be it education to biodiversity enhancements, improved public access to public awareness.

The Process

If you aspire for your WEP to be endorsed by the SDNPA the WEP process outlined below must be followed exactly. For those estates looking to have their WEP endorsed it is imperative you contact us at the SDNPA before you commence working on the WEP so SDNPA Officers can advise on the process and answer any questions you have to make sure the WEP journey starts in an efficient and effective way. The basic stages for endorsement are outlined below.

Stage 1 - Inception

If an estate is considering producing a WEP for endorsement by SDNPA or has already decided to do so, estates must contact SDNPA to notify us. This will trigger a meeting between the SDNPA and the estate as well as an inception Workshop.

Stage 2 - Early Draft

Stage 2 of the WEP process is arguably the busiest phase in the WEP process. The estate is strongly encouraged to conduct early public consultation in the WEP process to help inspire the creation of the WEP. It is generally advised to do this early in Stage 2.

The estate must produce an early draft that will be entered into the first of two SDNPA internal consultations. The consultation period is 4 weeks and sandwiches a formal members site visit to the estate. On completion of the consultation period, SDNPA will collate and share the consultation responses with the estate within 4 weeks.

Stage 3 - Final Draft

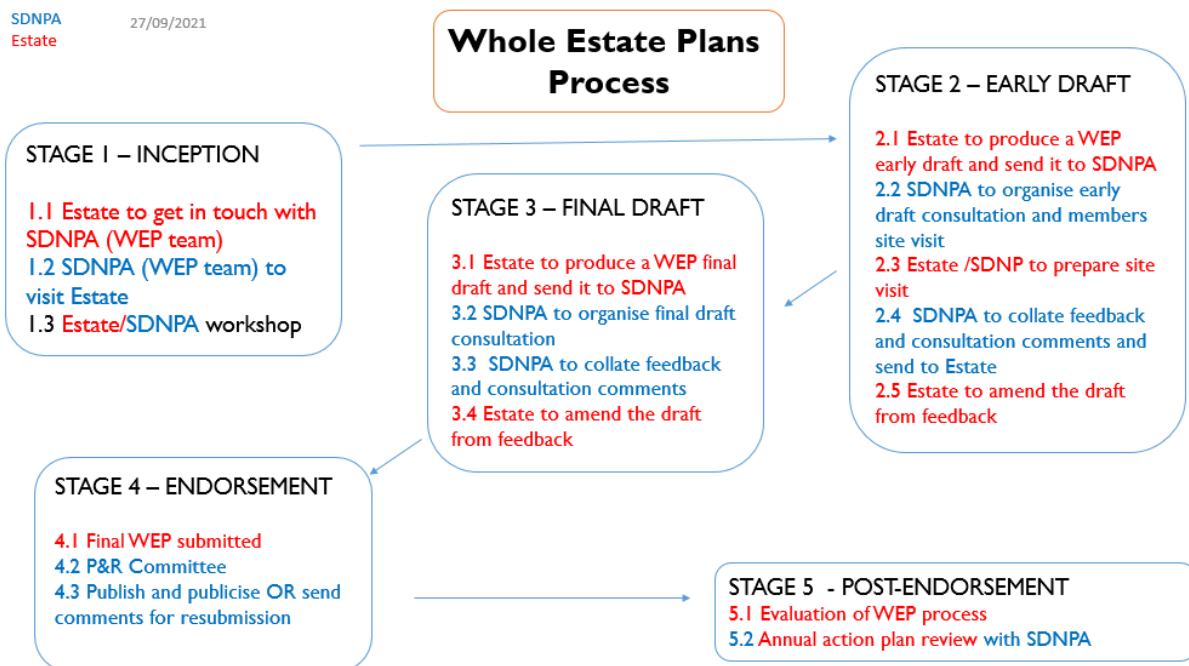
Stage 3 begins with the estate digesting the feedback provided as a result of the first SDNPA internal consultation and makes changes accordingly. The completion of a final draft then triggers the 2nd and final SDNPA internal consultation. The 2nd consultation is also 4 weeks. On completion of the consultation period, SDNPA will collate and share the consultation responses with the estate within 4 weeks. .

Stage 4 - Endorsement

Stage 4 begins with the estate digesting the feedback provided as a result of the first SDNPA internal consultation and makes changes accordingly. Once both the estate and SDNPA Officers are confident the changes reflect the feedback provided to date the estate is invited to present their WEP to P&R Committee for endorsement. Estates are encouraged to speak at the P&R Committee and make themselves available on the day to answer questions specific to the estate. Once a decision has been made, if positive, the newly endorsed WEP will be published on the SDNPA and be given material consideration status in the planning system.

Stage 5 - Post-Endorsement

Endorsement of an estate WEP is very much the start of the next chapter. The creation of the WEP and the relationships built, between the SDNPA and the estate, on the journey, lay the foundations for partnership working in the future. Of course, estates are under no obligation by the SDNPA to implement against their Action Plans; however, there is an expectation for this. Estates with endorsed WEP's will be encouraged to meet annually with SDNPA Officers to carry out annual reviews to track performance and continue to nurture relationships.



5. FUTURE WORKING

An endorsed WEP aids collaboration between a estate and the SDNPA to achieve the ambitions of the landowner while also delivering on the Partnership Management Plan Outcomes in pursuit of the National Park's purposes and duty.

They act as a catalyst for building relationships, they facilitate the understanding of the National Park's Special Qualities, they identify opportunities and threats to the estate and, importantly, they enable better understanding of the pressures facing estates.

They also enable a landowner/estate to demonstrate how they contribute to the outcomes and priorities identified in the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan. An endorsed WEP will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Planning applications that are part of a WEP will be called in by the SDNPA and they will provide a solid contextual background to any development proposals. A WEP can also be used to help guide and support funding bids, inform future neighbourhood development plan production, agri-environment and forestry schemes and with other natural capital projects. They also serve as an important communication tool within the community to enable a better understanding at a local level as well as providing a clear direction for legacy and succession planning.

The SDNPA recognise the huge benefits from developing long lasting relationships with estates, farms and landowners who are responsible for the designation of our amazing landscape.

The WEP's are seen as a Memorandum of Understanding with an agreed Action Plan which shapes the future working relationship between the SDNPA and the Estate.

SDNPA will offer regular liaison and annual review meetings to monitor the progress of the action plan.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact us at:

WEP@southdowns.gov.uk

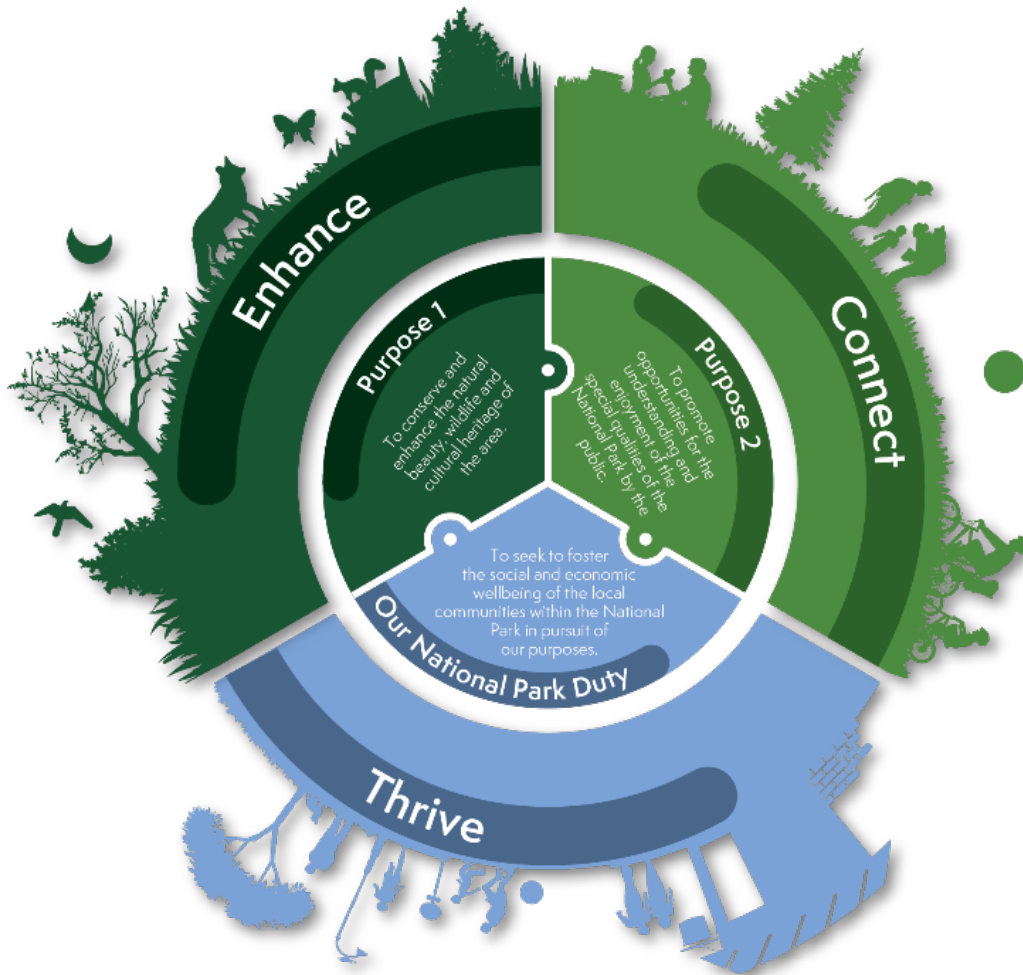
Phone us on 01730 814810 and ask for a member of the Whole Estate Team (Nick Heasman or Mark Alden).

Or visit:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/supporting-communities-businesses/whole-estate-plans/>

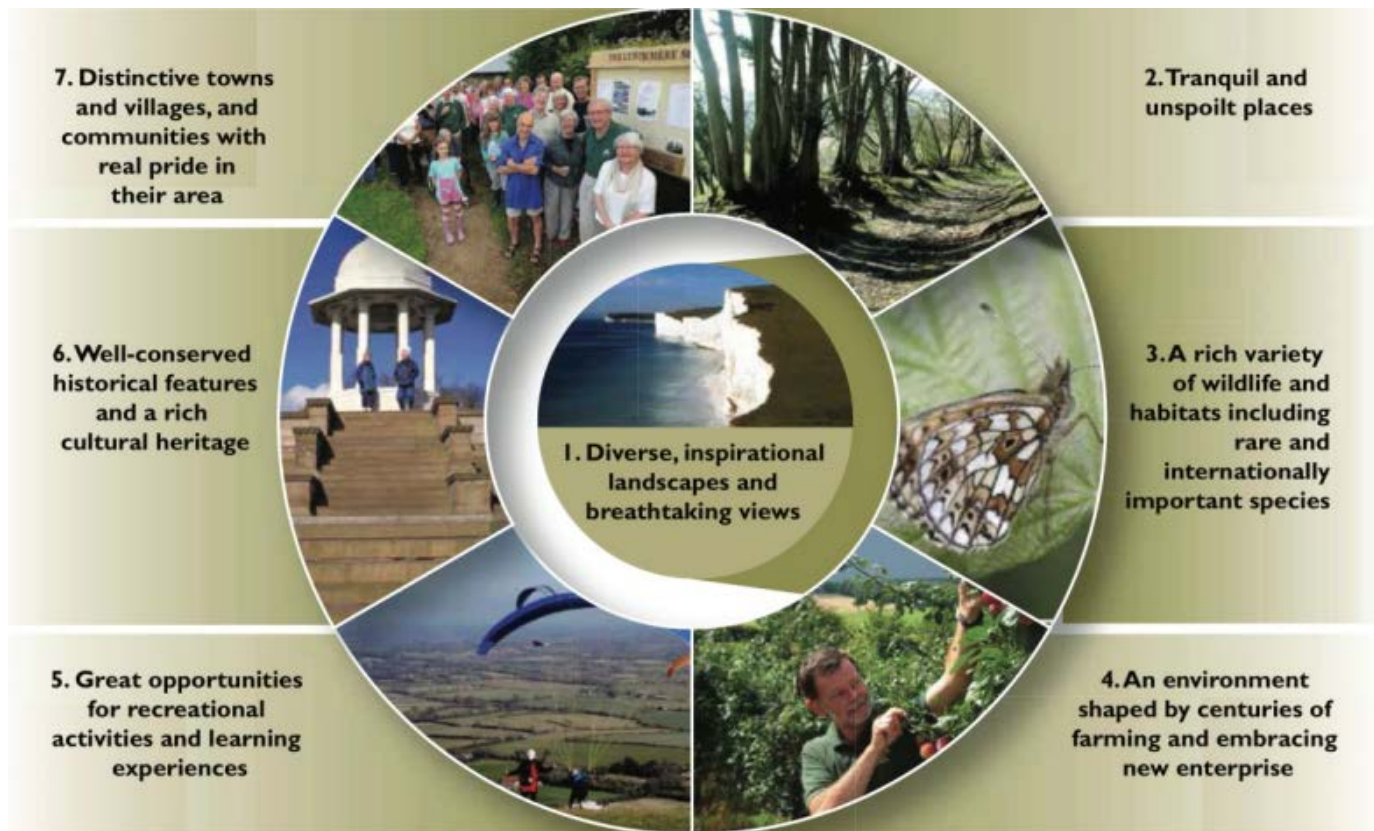
7. APPENDICES

Appendix I National Park Purposes and Duty.



Source: SDNPA website (2021)

Appendix 2: Special Qualities of the National Park



Source: SDNPA website (2021)

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