



CHAPTER 6: THE FORWARD PLAN

EAST WINCHESTER LANDSCAPE FORWARD PLAN

The evidence base (from the consultation and engagement work and desktop research), the vision, five key principles, and the seven strategic issues together with their opportunity statements have been used to prepare a suite of actions to shape the work which will help to deliver the vision for the East Winchester Landscape and to help address the issues that emerged from the landscape conversation. The landscape forward plan has set out details in relation to scope of the initiative, suggested partners for delivery and targets and key performance indicators.

FIGURE 23: THE ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE FORWARD PLAN



PLAN

The Forward Plan is a reference document for the stakeholders both old and new to use to inform new projects and initiatives and to aid collaboration; to help them to be consistent with the ethos and findings of the project. It is not exhaustive and is of it's time and place.

However, the Forward Plan is more than a 'starter for ten'. It has been prepared to set out important and ambitious actions that are required to overcome and reverse landscape degradation and improve

accessibility to the South Downs National Park It requires careful and immediate consideration by the National Park Authority and hopefully by the stakeholders too so that the recommendations can become part of the day job and embedded into the psyche for planning, managing, living and working and playing in this part of the National Park. All of the actions will need resources which will be most successfully found through collaboration and partnership working.

TABLE 6: EAST WINCHESTER LANDSCAPE FORWARD PLAN: STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Strategic Initiatives	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
S1 Set up an M3 task force responsible for delivering the green bridge and to deliver the package of measures identified by partnership working in 2019. See Appendix 1i for more details.	SDNPA (lead) Highways Authority Landowners HCC WCC HIOWWT WSC	Creation of a Green Bridge Patronage of Downs beyond the M3. Relieve the intense recreational and development pressures on protected reserves at St Catherine's Hill and Winnall Moors. Give nature the flexibility to move and adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis Reconnect the City of Winchester to the wider landscape, restoring it as the gateway to the South Downs Quantity of new priority habitat created;
S2 Create a East Winchester landscape forum with the aim of connecting parties together in decision making and coordinating the implementation of opportunities and initiatives. The forum will also serve as an opportunity to share knowledge and experience.	SDNPA (lead) WSC All stakeholders	Annual Forum Meeting. Quasi-formal set up with a 3 year rotating chairperson, supported by officer administration. Number of different stakeholders actively participating.
S3 Prepare a detailed green infrastructure map of critical natural capital and identify opportunities for habitat creation, especially chalk grassland and woodland, improved access and environmental management solutions to assist in mitigating the effects of climate change. Incorporate the historic environment in the scope of this work		Length of new access. Quantity of new open access. Increase in priority habitats. Nature based measures to address water quality, soil quality and natural flood management
S4 Prepare a communications strategy for the study area that will introduce a quality standard for signage, encourage consistent messages, and include clear wording relating to the status of the landscape and land management.	WCC (Tourism) HIOWWT SDNPA HCC (Economic dev) Farm Cluster	Task group Existing Baseline Brief Downloadable pdfs for standard signs for landowners (NFNP example)

Strategic Initiatives	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
<p>S5 Establish a pilot programme with the Farm Cluster to prepare for the new ELM scheme, likely training requirements to support diversification and land management support to maximise biodiversity gain and access management in the longer term. Include traditional crafts, skills and materials where possible to encourage research into sustainable building materials and preservation of historic buildings.</p>		
<p>S6 Establish a programme to monitor activities which are prescribed to mitigate the effects of climate change. This should include tree planting, natural flood management, soil retention and carbon capture.</p>		<p>Area of woodland planted Area of priority grassland habitat Area of wetland habitat CO2 sequestration by habitat</p>

Suite Initiatives for S1 Infrastructure and Development M3 task force	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
<p>Improve the landscape corridor of the M3 through working at scale to achieve chalk grassland creation and native tree and hedge planting.</p> <p>Target new measures where they will provide most benefits for ecosystem services - like clean water, noise reduction, air pollution reduction, habitat connectivity.</p> <p>Undertake improvements to the A34/M3 rights of way underpasses to increase their accessibility and perception of personal safety.</p> <p>Develop an access, connectivity and interpretation strategy for the rights of way network around the M3 to address the severance caused by the road.</p>	<p>Landowners HCC WCC Winchester CTC (Cycling UK), Highways England project team, national team and designated funds team, Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>Long term</p>

Suite Initiatives for S3 Green Infrastructure	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
<p>Prioritise sustainable transport with free parking and charging points for electric cars, electric bus park and ride service, cycle hire.</p>	<p>Landowners HCC WCC Winchester CTC (Cycling UK)</p>	<p>Long term</p>
<p>Creation of new public rights of way (bridleways, cycleways and footpaths) which connect to form a network and provide new opportunities to view the wider landscape,</p>	<p>SDNPA (lead) Farm clusters Access groups</p>	<p>Priority access routes to the SDNP identified.</p>
<p>Creation of new circular routes (bridleways, cycleways and footpaths) focusing on improving access from the urban area, and relieving recreational pressure on sensitive sites</p>	<p>SDNPA (lead) Farm clusters Access groups</p>	

Suite Initiatives for S3 Green Infrastructure	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
Review of parking. Creation of transport hubs – park and ride to the National Park. Creation of low key, small scale parking areas associated with publicised walks/views accessed using electric vehicles.	SDNPA (lead) Council highways depts WSC	
Creation of new vistas and views as destinations along recreation routes. Enhance existing viewpoints, such as St Catherine’s Hill and Cheesefoot Head and other heritage assets.	Farm clusters Landowners HIOWWT	Area of scrub clearance Additional access secured
Explore the potential to align conservation and access to scheduled sites with overall public access improvements and improvement around condition and awareness of cultural heritage.		
Improve east-west sustainable transport options across the National Park.	HCC WC	
Grassland verge initiative which seeks to improve biodiversity along the network of rural lanes throughout the area.	Farm clusters Landowners Plantlife Hampshire Highways Authority	
Work with landowners to target biodiversity enhancement in areas where biodiversity is known to be poor or poorly connected. Use existing habitat mapping to identify opportunity areas.	Farm cluster Landowners HIOWWT Natural England	New priority habitat Connectivity measure
Creation of new woodland and management of existing woodland connecting existing habitats. Appropriate locations for these habitats to be informed by landscape character and improvements to the ecological network.	Farm cluster Landowners HIOWWT Natural England	New woodland Management of existing Wooded landscape plan
Seek opportunities to increase the use of natural flood management techniques. Consider River Itchen and River Itchen Navigation Channel as river systems. To reduce the likelihood of potentially conflicting objectives this initiative should consider other existing plans and programmes, such as The Test and Itchen Restoration Strategy.	Environment Agency Natural England Landowners Farm clusters	
Creation of new gateway points on the urban edge marking the gateway to the National Park and providing information and low key facilities e. g. Twyford/Shawford and Dykes Farm, Winchester; and the Bespoke Biking Café at St Catherine’s Hill.	Landowners Farm cluster Developer Local business	

Suite Initiatives for S3 Green Infrastructure	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
<p>Creation of a new central visitor hub on the existing visitor destinations in the area possible locations; e. g. Science Centre and city centre resources such as Winchester City Mill (National Trust) and the Tourist Centre. The new South Downs Visitor Hub would offer facilities and information and provide a location for a sustainable transport interchange. This hub should seek to be a destination from which the wider downs can be explored and where information on the downs is readily accessible. The location of this centre needs to be visually and physically connected to the landscape resource such that it can celebrate the special qualities of the wider area in a way which is tangible to the visitor and encourages engagement and exploration.</p>	<p>Landowners National Trust Science Centre Winchester TIC Landowners WSC</p>	
<p>Link public engagement and educational activities through a Country Trust⁵⁴ bringing together parties, such as schools, clubs and youth groups, and visitor destinations such as the Science Centre and farms. For example, to provide experiences of tranquillity and dark night skies and in managing landscape for biodiversity</p>	<p>Hampshire Country Trust Science Centre Marwell Zoo Farm cluster Landowners</p>	
<p>Integrate with existing health and wellbeing initiatives, such as Winchester Health Walks and social prescribing.</p>	<p>Ramblers Walking for Health Hampshire CHC</p>	
<p>Establishment of apps which provide information on the landscape, heritage and its management along key route, e.g. Itchen Mill and River Itchen.</p>		
<p>Establishment of virtual tours for the less mobile</p>		
<p>Connect farms and local pubs, restaurants and cafes and seek to establish a local produce charter which encourages outlets to source and sell local produce from farms within the area.</p>	<p>Farm clusters Restaurants and cafes village shops</p>	
<p>Establish rotating programme of farmer's markets and local crafts in each village/core destination within the area which celebrate the landscape and conservation work.</p>	<p>Farm clusters Landowners WCC (Tourism) SDNPA</p>	
<p>Creation of new satellite destinations focused on enjoyment of the landscape (farm safaris, farm shops, heritage sites, key views, woodlands, pubs) which are connected via existing and new footpath and cycle routes.</p>	<p>Farm clusters Landowners WCC (Tourism) SDNPA</p>	

Suite Initiatives for S4 ELM Pilot	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
Integrate initiatives such as nitrate and carbon offsetting, developers with the emerging ELM and other payments through private arrangements which will support payment for public goods.	Farm cluster Landowners Defra	Ha under new agreement
Work with landowners to target biodiversity enhancement in areas where biodiversity is known to be poor or poorly connected. Use existing habitat mapping to identify target areas.	Farm clusters Landowners HIOWWT Natural England	New priority habitat areas
Creation of new woodland and management of existing woodland connecting existing habitats. Appropriate locations for these habitats to be informed by existing landscape character areas and to achieve improvements to the biodiversity network.	Farm clusters Landowners HIOWWT Natural England	Long term
Work with Winchester Downs farm cluster to undertake land management activity which delivers improved soil heath, increased biodiversity and water quality in a way which conserves and enhances the special qualities and heritage of the different landscape areas e. g. the establishment of chalk grassland and animal grazing in areas of steep topography emphasising dry valleys.	Landowners Farm cluster SDNPA DEFRA/ NE	Long term
Develop infrastructure to support farmers in establishing mixed farming, including grazing partnerships and mobile abattoirs.	Landowners Farm clusters Defra Natural England	
In conjunction with existing plans and programmes, seek opportunities to increase the use of natural flood management techniques along the Itchen and the Navigations. Deculvert/decanalise river through Winchester to join up the water meadows.	Environment Agency Natural England Landowners Farm clusters	
Continue and expand the East Winchester Forum. Include new sectors of the community, particularly youth groups such as Scouts, Guides and Woodcraft Folk. Consider subgroups to focus on different initiatives and focusing on adapting to the future.	All existing Scouts Guides Woodcraft Folk Other youth groups	
Consider augmenting existing land app capability to include more information for landowners which provides information on the landscape and its management along key routes e. g. Itchen Mill and River Itchen.		
Establishment of field information for public knowledge; develop an app which explains (with an updating facility for each location linked by satellite and farm) what is in each field, why and how it is being produced.		

Suite Initiatives for S4 ELM Pilot	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
Connect farms and local pubs, restaurants and cafes and seek to establish a local produce charter which encourages outlets to source and sell local produce from farms within the area.	Farm clusters Restaurants and cafes village shops	
Champion local farmers as sustainable food producers and nature ambassadors.	Farm clusters Landowners	
Creation of new satellite destinations focused on enjoyment of the landscape (farm safaris, farm shops, heritage sites, key views, woodlands, pubs) which are connected via existing and new footpath and cycle routes.	Farm clusters Landowners	
Develop and support diversification initiatives such as sustainable tourism, including provision of visitor accommodation such as B&Bs and glamping.	Farm clusters Landowners & residents	
Identify training and support needs for landowners to assist with the administrative transition of ELM and be in a position to help deliver the strategic initiatives of the study area.		
Facilitate mixed farming support for farmers by including grazing partnerships and mobile abattoirs. developing new destinations; necessary facilities for visitors; creating circular walks from centres of population; and, improved signage and information. Encourage smaller arable fields, maintenance of field boundaries and restoration of expansive open areas of chalk downland.		
Improve the management of and access to archaeological sites through the ELM pilot, using more integrated networks and support for farmers in ELMS to address care, management and conservation of Scheduled and non-scheduled heritage assets.		
Opportunities for the Historic Environment to inform flood management and climate resilience		
Research into existing and potential for carbon sequestration embodied in floodplain (peat) deposits along the Itchen.		

Suite Initiatives for S5 Communications Strategy	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
Consider how information can be better shared and targeted across the study area.	Landowners, WCC	
Establishment of community heritage projects enabling research and engagement with this rich archaeological landscape. Include improvements to interpretation and access. To work with recognised community heritage organisations to help them achieve ambitions across improved interpretation, connectivity, economic, tourism and wellbeing offers	Winchester Museum Hampshire Cultural Trust HCC Farm clusters Landowners	
Link public engagement and educational activities through a Country Trust bringing together parties, such as schools, clubs and youth groups, and visitor destinations such as the Science Centre and farms. For example, to provide experiences of tranquillity and dark night skies and in managing landscape for the biodiversity.	Hampshire Country Trust Science Centre Marwell Zoo Farm clusters Landowners	
Seek to remove negative signage along access routes and improve positive signage. Include clear wording relating to the status of the landscape.	Landowners Farm clusters SDNP Comms	Short term
Establishment of apps which provide information about anything of importance to landowners and the people who visit the area especially e. g. recording anti-social issues.		

Suite Initiatives for S6 Monitoring and response programme	Key partners	Targets & KPIs
Link public engagement and educational activities through a Country Trust bringing together parties, such as schools, clubs and youth groups, and visitor destinations such as the Science Centre and farms. For example, to provide experiences of tranquillity and dark night skies and in managing landscape for the biodiversity	Hampshire Country Trust Science Centre Marwell Zoo Farm clusters Landowners	
Establishment of apps which facilitate easy monitoring and reporting of information.		
Seek opportunities for Citizen science projects to increase knowledge about and monitor biodiversity baseline.	HIOWWT Education institutions (colleges and universities) Farm clusters Landowners WSC	
Work collaboratively with WCC, the Science Centre and others to develop climate change initiatives, taking account of the SDNP Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and specifically to identify actions relating to this study area.	WCC Science Centre Winchester Action on Climate Change Group	

CONCLUSION

AFTER THE LANDSCAPE STUDY

This project has designed and utilised a collaborative process of engagement with stakeholders in the study area to hold a 'Landscape Conversation'. The evaluation results showed that stakeholders found the process was easy to contribute to and was also very worthwhile (see Figure 16). Participants were less confident that the plans that they had contributed to developing would be implemented.

Experience from other dialogue processes suggest that the response to the 'confidence' question is not unusual as this is about 'what happens next'. There is a recognition that implementing a landscape plan is a complex process with many interests and decision-makers. Confidence building will be an important early step in the development and implementation of the Forward Plan for the study area if the support of the stakeholders is to be maintained.

This study is focused on building the Natural Capital of the East Winchester area. There are three further 'capitals' which have emerged from the stakeholder dialogue all of which will integrate and add value to the implementation of the Forward Plan for the study area:

- Development of **Human Capital**; defined as the increase of knowledge and skills required to contribute effectively to society. In the Landscape Conversation participants learnt more about the landscape, the views of other participants and different ways of working. There is an opportunity to further develop the knowledge and skills and empowerment of stakeholders to better support implementation through a continual engagement process;
- Creation of **Social Capital**; defined as connections and relationships that can potentially lead to greater co-operation and collaboration. Dialogue brings diverse interests together and helps people explore both differences and common ground. This was witnessed through this Landscape Conversation where people, brought

together for the first time, identified common interests.

- **Solution Development**; during the consultation events a wide range of potential solutions were discussed, some of which will be taken forward in the study area's Forward Plan. Of importance here is that there will be a greater sense of ownership of the solutions because the people who might well be impacted by them have had a role in their development.

These three outcomes provide a potentially valuable resource for achieving environmental gain in the landscape east of Winchester; a 'Community of Interest' with the knowledge and skills to collaborate on a landscape scale.

LANDSCAPE AND ACCESSIBILITY

The project discovered two strategic and challenging questions that lie at the heart of this study:

- (1) Why is landscape integrity and distinctiveness becoming slowly degraded?
- (2) What makes this part of the SDNP less accessible than other areas of the National Park?

The stakeholder engagement process opened up dialogue around many diverse and interesting aspects. It revealed that stakeholders are knowledgeable and passionate about their countryside, their landscapes and culture. Overall, it can be concluded that stakeholders feel a decline in landscape quality is an issue for this part of the South Downs National Park with new development (houses) and infrastructure (roads) being held principally responsible alongside land management changes shaped by a current farm subsidy system which optimises production at the expense of the environment.

Accessibility discussions confirmed that there is a lack of access opportunities when compared with other areas of the South Downs National Park. In particular, the countryside to the centre and east of the study area is singularly deficient in large areas

of accessible greenspace when compared with the rest of the National Park.

The M3 is a singularly negative force affecting a wide range of landscape and access factors including: tranquillity, noise, air quality, visual impact, habitats fragmentation and the desirability of access.

NEXT STEPS

Landscape quality is not just about it's appearance, it is also about how the landscape is functioning

- is it healthy or in decline?
- Are the habitats and species improving in number and quality?
- Are the waters clean
- is the air good to breathe and
- is the soil naturally regenerating?
- Are people able to enjoy and benefit from it's natural beauty.

These are big questions which the Landscape Conversation – this study – has opened up. It has identified an ambitious vision, key principles and seven strategic issues to prioritise actions which will drive forward delivery for reversing landscape fragmentation and improving accessibility for all. The South Downs National Park Authority is identified as needing to play an important leadership and facilitation role, working as ever, through the strong partnership spirit which defines the work of the National Park Authorities and through the dedication of the residents and stakeholders in the study area. This study is an important first step to a larger and longer process of achieving the vision for this important part of the national park.

The forward plan has recorded ideas and recommendations made during the workshops and in discussions with stakeholders. These are in outline and the development of these ideas into delivery processes will require more work by the stakeholders and statutory bodies.

The study was undertaken in 2019 /2020 and the public pressure to respond to the double climate and nature emergency in this country is

increasing from many quarters. The long-awaited Environment Bill 2021 will confirm the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) which are likely to be delivered by the County Councils and Unitary/Metropolitan Authorities. These strategies will shape a range of government delivery mechanisms from ELM through to the English Trees Action Plan 2021⁵⁵ and the Nature for Climate fund⁵⁶. The Hampshire LNRS will also help to shape the interface between Winchester and the South Downs National Park and this study will feed into the priority setting for the strategy.

On the wider horizon the East Winchester Open Downland provides a potential chalk downland habitat link to the North Wessex Downs as part of the Big Chalk programme which seeks to coordinate nature and climate action across the protected chalk landscapes of the south of England. This could be a pivotal programme for the East Winchester area in re-establishing it's identity as part of the classic open downland of the South Downs National Park.

Stakeholders in the study area were positive about the engagement process and were pleased to be involved, however there was some doubt about the ability and resources for the National Park Authority to continue the work after the project finished. The feedback given by stakeholders at the end of Workshop 3 is photographed in Figure 4 below and it shows this concern clearly. The National Park Authority will need to carry out it's own prioritisation process following the study which reflects how increasingly limited resources are being stretched across the whole National Park. The National Park Authority believes that the work undertaken so far provides a good fit for current thinking on nature based solutions for a range of environmental issues, climate change and wide stakeholder engagement and that this will enable successful partnerships and funding to flow into the East Winchester Open Downland area.

55 [gov. uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024)

56 [gov. uk/government/publications/ealrt-23-march-2021-more-on-nature-for-climate-fund/ealrt-23-march-2021-more-on-nature-for-climate-fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ealrt-23-march-2021-more-on-nature-for-climate-fund/ealrt-23-march-2021-more-on-nature-for-climate-fund)

FIGURE 24: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE THIRD WORKSHOP SHOWING THAT ATTENDEES FELT THE STAKEHOLDER PROCESS HAD BEEN WORTHWHILE BUT HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE NEXT STEPS

