

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**  
Date **17 February 2022**  
By **Head of Governance & Support Services**  
Title of Report **Corporate Risk Register**

**Note**

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:**

**I. Note the Corporate Risk Register as at February 2022**

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**I. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Policy and Resources Committee has terms of reference which include "... to ensure the robustness of risk management and performance management arrangements; and to agree the Internal Audit Plan and Annual Report and receive progress and other relevant internal audit reports."
- 1.2 The Corporate Risk Register is reported to each meeting of the Committee. The register is regularly monitored by the organisation's Operational Management Team and issues escalated to Senior Management Team (SMT) as required.

**2. Policy Context**

- 2.1 Corporate Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. It includes the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which public bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to and engage with their partners, communities and citizens.
- 2.2 Risk management is a key aspect of corporate governance and is one of the 7 principles in the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016) developed by Cipfa and SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers) to help public bodies make open, transparent and better informed decisions that take full account of risk and opportunities.

**3. Issues for consideration**

- 3.1 **Appendix 2** shows the risk register in a graphical way which allows Members to see, at a glance, the likelihood and impact of risks. Explanatory information is provided at **Appendix I** to this report.

3.2 Updates to mitigations and actions, where identified, across all risks are documented in **Appendix 2** to this report. The following significant changes have been made to the register since the last time it was presented to the Committee

- Risk 25 (Government response to Landscape Review) Updated to reflect the publication of Government response to the Landscapes review. The response no longer refers to the introduction of a statutory National Landscape Service, however does include reference to new possible new functions and powers without associated increase in resources and the risk register has been updated to reflect this new position.

#### 4. Options & cost implications

- 4.1 Members are asked to comment upon and note the Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.2 Management of risk is a key aspect of the organisation’s governance and is undertaken within existing corporate budgets.

#### 5. Next steps

- 5.1 Further updates on the Corporate Risk Register will be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

#### 6. Other implications

Implication	Yes/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	There are no additional resource requirements arising directly from this report. Any additional resources required for the delivery of identified mitigations will be subject to the Authority’s usual decision making requirements.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Effective risk management contributes to the efficient running of the organisation.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority’s equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	There are no equalities implications arising from this report. Actions and mitigations are subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment where this is appropriate.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	There are no implications arising from this report.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	There are no implications arising from this report.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	There are no implications arising from this report.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	There are none
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA	Effective risk management contributes to the

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Sustainability Strategy?	principle of promoting good governance

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

7.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report. The report outlines the current major risks facing the Authority and how they will be mitigated.

### **ROBIN PARR**

#### **HEAD OF GOVERNANCE**

#### **South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explanatory Information</li> <li>2. Corporate Risk Register</li> </ol>
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Countryside Policy & Management, Director of Planning, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer
External Consultees	none
Background Documents	Previous committee reports

**Explanatory Information for Risk Register:**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Likelihood of Occurrence</b>
<b>Almost Certain (5)</b>	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances.
<b>Likely (4)</b>	There is a strong possibility the event will occur.
<b>Possible (3)</b>	The event might occur at some time
<b>Unlikely (2)</b>	Not expected, but a slight possibility
<b>Rare (1)</b>	Highly unlikely. It could happen but probably never will

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example Descriptor of Impact</b>
<b>Insignificant (1)</b>	Basic first aid required, less than £100 financial impact, reputation remains intact.
<b>Minor (2)</b>	Short term injury to 1 or 2 people, minor localised disruption lasting less than 24 hours, between £100-£1000, minimal reputation impact.
<b>Moderate (3)</b>	Semi-permanent disability, affects between 3-50 people, high potential for complaints, financial burden between £1,000 and £10,000, litigation possible.
<b>Major (4)</b>	Causing death serious injury or permanent disability. Service closure for up to 1 week, significant financial burden, national adverse publicity, litigation expected.
<b>Catastrophic (5)</b>	Multiple deaths, Financial burden over £100,000, international adverse publicity, widespread displacement of people (over 500), complaints and litigation certain.

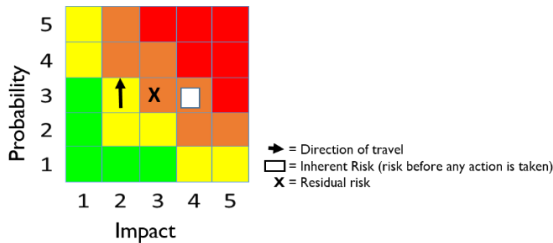
**SDNPA Risk Appetite Statement:**

The Authority seeks to operate within a limited overall risk range. The Authority’s lowest risk appetite relates to safety including employee health and safety, with a higher risk appetite towards those activities directly connected with the Authority’s Purposes and Duty. The Authority accepts that risk is ever present and is generally only willing to accept low levels of risk as part of its day to day business and in relation to its reputation. The Authority will normally only consider options where the level of risk can be managed to a low degree. However, the Authority may be willing to consider a higher level risk where it has the opportunity to be innovative in relation to its service delivery.

**Corporate Risk Register**

**Risk 01: Health and Safety – Owner Vicky Patterson**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Possible with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is worsening.



Description of impact of risk:

Accident or incident involving staff, volunteers, visitors, members or the public resulting in serious injury or death at an SDNPA facility or event. Breach of statutory duties, litigation and cost against the authority. Impacts of Covid Pandemic.

Mitigations:

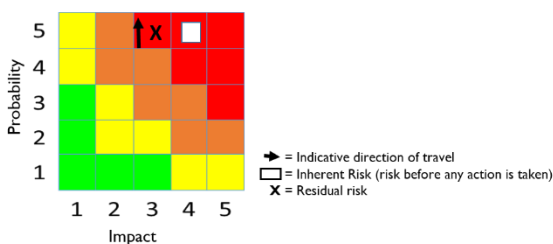
1. Services of external Health and Safety consultant retained.
2. H&S strategy and responsibilities agreed.
3. Health and Safety elements included in induction programme for staff and volunteers.
4. H&S committee operating and receiving regular accident reporting.
5. Health and Safety policy in place.
6. All area offices regularly audited.
7. Annual report to P&R Committee with recommendations.
8. Members and SMT trained and briefed on H&S responsibilities.
9. All risk assessments reviewed and updated.
10. Additional health and safety related training provided via e-learning—fire safety and health and safety delivered as mandatory courses.
11. IOSH training completed by all H&S reps.
12. Lone working policy agreed by OMT.
13. Internal health safety advisor in place to support existing contact. Risk registers and new procedure in place to support arrangements to recover from pandemic

Updates:

Health and safety policy reviewed by Health and Safety Committee and approved by OMT

**Risk 02: Finance and Budgets - Owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Almost Certain with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Almost Certain with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is worsening.



Description of impact of risk:

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Budgets insufficient or budgets become insufficient due to a failure of the Defra grant to increase in real terms or in-year requirement for savings; failure to match resources and workloads across the organisation; or negative impact of increased inflation rates on costs. Management plan suffers and SDNPA lacks capacity to support other work. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.

### Mitigations:

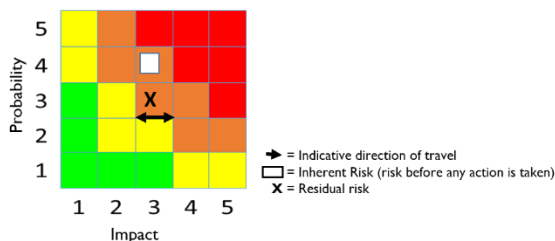
1. Sufficient flexibility within revenue budget and sufficient reserves to enable residual shortfall to be managed in short term whilst Medium Term budget adjusted.
2. Income Generation activity underway (see risk 22) to provide potential to raise income.
3. Effective and early planning through member workshops to redefine MTFP process and approach to Budget setting, including refocussed corporate plan.
4. Monthly budget monitoring undertaken by managers and OMT, enables identification of areas of potential overspend and compensating savings. Industry indices used to model real world inflation implications through MTFP.
5. Procurement processes identify issues related to inflation and where appropriate changes to specifications etc. made to manage impacts of inflation.
6. Inflation issue partly offset by anticipated increase in interest rates, but overall negative implications for Authority financial position still anticipated.
7. Work underway to encourage private investment into the National Park e.g.: Payment for Eco System Services and carbon trading

### Updates :

Risk and mitigations updated to include impacts of higher than anticipated inflation rates - risk score unaffected as already rated red. Revise Corporate Plan due to be considered by NPA in March

### **Risk 07: Development Management - Owner: Tim Slaney**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Moderate impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No change.



### Description of impact of risk:

Lack of capacity to manage development management function effectively results in unwanted developments not enforced against, lack of consistency, delayed decision making or an increase in planning appeals/inquiries. Significant additional costs to the Authority incurred and reputation damage and loss of confidence in the planning functions of the Authority.

### Mitigations:

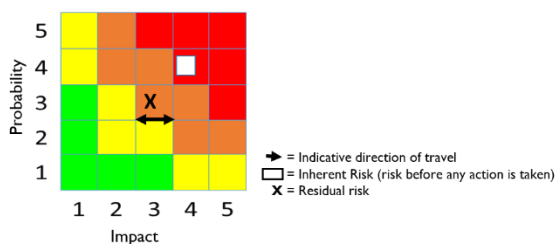
1. Recruitment and retention practices
2. Staff pay and benefits scheme
3. Planning reserve in place.
4. training provided to host authority's
5. s101 agreements in place
6. Planning performance data reported to P&R committee and appeals info reported to Planning Committee
7. Use of planning consultants as appropriate

### Updates:

Current vacancies and turn over stable at a manageable level

**Risk 16: Staffing – owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Inability to attract/retain key staff impacts upon the organisation’s service delivery. High staff turnover results in inefficiency across the organisation. Mental Health issues affect staff performance and delivery.

Mitigations:

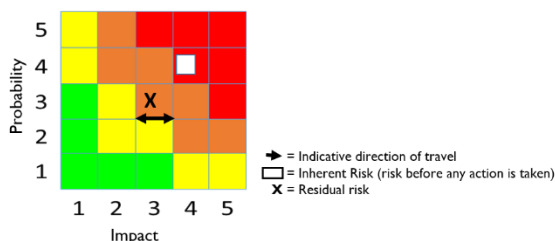
1. Pay structure and terms and conditions in place,
2. training and development programme,
3. staff survey action plan,
4. PDR policy,
5. capacity regularly reviewed by OMT,
6. Internal policies and procedures in place e.g. (Family friendly, flexible working).
7. Staff survey to inform development of post-Covid plan.
8. Webinars available for all staff related to mental health and homeworking, regular communications through internal communications channels.
9. Mental health first aiders in place, independent counselling and support resources available through simply Heath. Staff health and wellbeing group in place.
10. New blended working policies agreed

Updates:

Blended working policies agreed and presented to staff in September 21

**Risk 17: Legislative impact post Brexit – owner Andrew Lee**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

The new legislative and policy framework arising from exiting the European union does not sufficiently safeguard the National Park environment, address rural funding issues, or provide sufficient transitional support for farming and rural industries especially in relation to commodity tariffs/seasonal labour

Mitigations:

1. Close liaison maintained with other NPAs, with AONBs, NGOs and with central government departments to maximise information, advance warning and collective action.

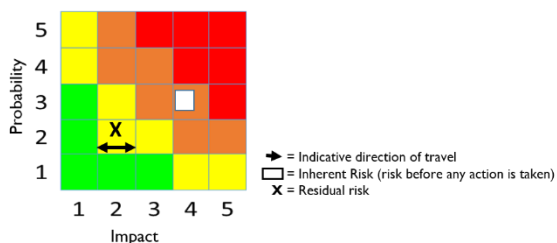
2. Members similarly on the alert within their own networks. Close liaison between NPE and Defra Ministers and officials, Natural England etc. .
3. Strong joint working between SDNPA and agencies, landowners, environmental NGOs, NFU and CLA in area.

Updates:

None

**Risk 20: Business Continuity Planning and Organisational Resilience – Owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Possible with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Unlikely with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change.



Description of impact of risk:

Lack of organisational business continuity planning and organisational resilience may prevent delivery of key services in the event of a major incident, or as a result of the loss of key staff.

Mitigations:

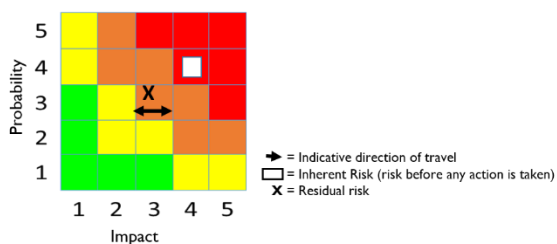
1. BCP in place.
2. Business Critical functions identified and planned for.
3. IT Disaster Recovery plans in place and tested annual.
4. Key staff roles identified in BCP and communicated.
5. Potential single points of failure in organisation identified and mitigations in place including documenting of key processes.
6. Specific implications of IT provision addressed through day to day IT support functions being provided via outsourced contracts meaning that user support would not be immediately impacted by the departure or absence of the IT Strategy Manager.
7. IT network and key systems delivered externally via contracts.
8. Network Resilience and continuity issues have also been addressed via the IT contracts. Linked to mitigations of risk 16 related to staffing.

Updates:

Separate BCP for Seven Sisters Country Park operations in place. IT disaster recovery testing undertaken in Jan 22

**Risk 21: Projects—External facing (Delivery and Reputation) – Owner Andrew Lee**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change .



Description of impact of risk:

failure to deliver key projects or NPMP outcomes and objectives due lack of resources, unrealistic expectations or alignment with partner business plans and /or Loss of commitment or ability to



deliver from Partners due to Covid 19 impacts and recovery priorities and failure to maintain the profile and programmes of the National Park post COVID results in SDNPA reputation and influence with decision makers, partners and other stakeholders being negatively impacted.

Mitigations:

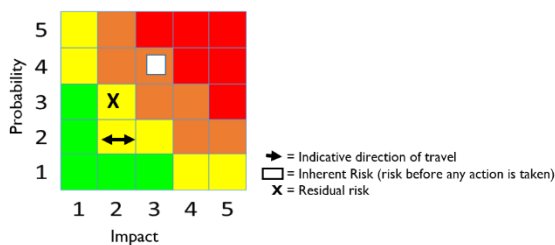
1. Creation of new independent partnership that will support addressing this risk.
2. PMP in place and new approach to budget setting embedded .
3. Public affairs strategy and proactive comms managing public expectations and setting out key messages for stake holders and partners.
4. Project evaluation and lessons learnt reported to committee.
5. Engagement with Lawton Group to encourage closer working between national NGO’s operating within the NP.

Updates:

Partnership established and meeting independently

**Risk 22: Income Generation – Owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Moderate impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change



Description of impact of risk:

Insufficient income generation opportunities are identified to generate significant income to support NPA budgets. Insufficient skills /experience “in house” to exploit potential income generating opportunities. Challenge to commercial activity results in additional costs or reputational damage to the Authority.

Mitigations:

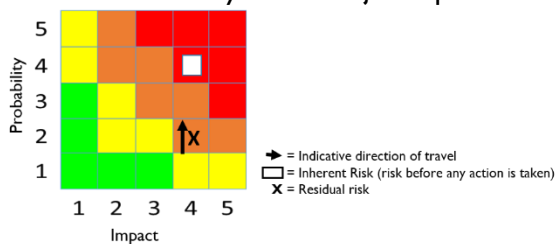
1. Governance framework for consideration of SDNPA powers in relation to commercial/income generation activity developed.
2. Seven Sisters project plan and business case
3. Sufficient reserves held to enable recruitment of staff with necessary skill set if required.
4. Skilled income generation team operating well and meeting its targets

Updates:

Limited retail operations have commenced at SSCP

**Risk 23: Seven Sisters Country Park – Owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Unlikely with a Major impact. Perceived direction of travel is Worsening



Description of impact of risk:

Seven Sister Country Park project diverts focus and resources from other priority areas. Failure to effectively manage project impacts negatively on the Authority's finances and reputation

Mitigations:

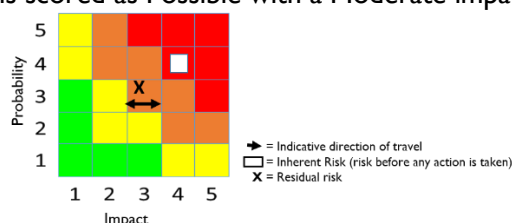
1. New PMP developed setting out priority areas, and new approach to budget setting developed to support effective prioritisation of PMP outcomes.
2. Corporate Plan places Seven Sisters within the context of the wider business of the Authority.
3. Project board established.
4. project reporting to P&R Committee .
5. Resource management plans in place and overseen by SMT.
6. Stakeholder and comms plans in place.
7. Seven sisters team in place and trading co established .
8. Active search underway for possible opportunities in the western area of the National Park.

Updates:

SDNPA teckal company now established. Limited retail operations now underway at seven sisters country park. Annual business plan for Teckal Company due to be presented to NPA in March for approval

**Risk 25: Government Response to Landscape Review – Owner Trevor Beattie**

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is No Change



Description of impact of risk:

Outcome of consultation exercise on Govt response to Landscape review results in additional expectations, powers and commitments on the NPA and Key partners without additional funding/resourcing. Newly raised expectations negatively affect relationship with public and key partners.

Mitigations:

1. Close Working with Defra Officials to inform decision making within Government including CEO representation on high level Defra Groups
2. Officer involvement in Defra Thematic workshops and other networks and working groups
3. Development of a joint approach through National Parks England
4. Delivery of Landscape review outcomes built into existing work programmes and PMP.
5. Establishment of new South Downs Partnership enables more effective communication with key partners.
6. Staff and members kept informed through internal communications channels and regular updates from SMT
7. Member Working group to consider implications of proposed Governance changes arising from consultation.

Updates:

Risk updated and rescored following publication of Govt response and consultation exercise in Jan 2022. Member workshop held in Jan 22 to consider Authority response