

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **24 November 2022**
By **Director of Countryside & Policy Management, and Landscape & Biodiversity Strategy Lead.**
Title of Report **Climate Change Action Plan - Update 2023/24**
Decision

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Receive and consider the draft SDNPA Climate Change Action Plan 2023-24 as set out at Appendix I; and,**
 - 2. Recommend the draft SDNPA Climate Change Action Plan 2023-24 to the NPA for approval as part of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 Year 4 Action Plan 2023-24.**
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I. Introduction

- I.1 On 17 December 2020 the SDNPA approved its first Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (CC Action Plan). This affirmed the Authority's commitment to addressing the climate and nature emergency by;
 - Setting a target for the South Downs National Park Authority to become a 'Net-Zero' Organisation by 2030;
 - Agreeing to work with our constituent Local Authorities and other partners, in particular local communities and landowners, to deliver actions that respond effectively to the climate and nature emergency;
 - Working towards the South Downs National Park becoming 'Net-Zero with Nature' by 2040.
 - Created a Climate Change action fund reserve as part of the 2020/21 budget.
- I.2 The CC Action Plan highlighted the areas where the NPA could add the most value in terms of delivering and supporting climate action through both its Countryside Policy and Planning functions.
- I.3 The Terms of Reference of the Policies and Resources Committee would include monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Authority in the context of the delivery of the Corporate Plan and make recommendations for changes as appropriate.
- I.4 A full report was taken to P&R Committee on the 17th February 2022 to update Members on progress to date. This also reported on the project pipeline that had been developed and supported through the Climate Change Action fund. At that stage, the action fund reserve was fully committed and scope for further projects was limited.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 Protecting the landscapes, wildlife and cultural heritage assets of our National Parks from the impacts of climate change is a significant and profound challenge. The Authority has a key role in meeting these challenges, helping to develop adaptation responses and helping others understand how they can help. We believe that National Parks are a critical element of driving a national step-change in behaviour and inspiring collective action that meets the scale of the challenge we face.
- 2.2 Climate Action is one of the priority programmes within our current Corporate Plan. We have been through a process of reviewing our previous CC Action Plan and identified current programmes and projects that will need to be progressed looking ahead to 2023/24.
- 2.3 We also have policies and outcomes within our Local Plan and our Partnership Management Plan that seek to deliver on climate change adaptation and mitigation. In delivering these, the SDNPA relies on its ability to advocate, to deliver through partnership working – as well as direct mechanisms such as our planning function.
- 2.4 In consultation with colleagues in both Countryside Policy and Management (CPM) Directorate and the Planning Directorate, we have worked to refine the CC Action Plan, and to ensure it is a good fit with our wider strategic and corporate plan priorities. This review was undertaken in the light of recent organisational changes, and an assessment of our current staff resource to deliver on each element of the work programme.
- 2.5 With support from the Senior Management Team and CPM Managers, we also considered whether there was a need to stop, refocus or change our approach to delivery. The resulting draft CC Action Plan sets out our draft programme, and once approved will form the basis of our activities for 2023/24.
- 2.6 A copy of the draft CC Action Plan is included as **Appendix I** to this report.

3. Priorities for the CC Action Plan

- 3.1 Accounting for emissions from land use and land management is crucial for the National Park as the landscape is mostly rural, and the businesses are land-based. There are significant areas under agricultural management, with the remainder being habitats such as woodlands, grassland and wetlands.
- 3.2 Land-based emissions are, to an extent, compensated by the carbon sequestration in the existing woodlands, meadows and hedgerows – and agricultural soils have the potential to sequester more carbon under certain forms of management.
- 3.3 Reducing these land-based emissions and scaling up on the ability of both agricultural land and habitats to sequester more carbon is going to be crucial for addressing both the climate and nature recovery crisis.
- 3.4 The delivery of nature-based solutions, to draw down and sequester greater amounts of carbon will be the main mechanism that will drive emission reductions and get us to our Net-Zero target. The CC Action Plan will seek to deliver on this:
 - Through our work on Nature Recovery, and ambitious targets for habitat restoration and creation;
 - Through encouraging woodland management and new woodland planting;
 - By encouraging land-management practices that protect soils and increase their ability to sequester carbon;
 - By supporting the transition to low-carbon for the land-based sector – in line with their own Net-Zero ambitions.
- 3.5 The draft CC Action Plan also maintains a strong emphasis on working with local communities, working with our constituent Local Authorities and supporting the rural economy/green growth.

- 3.6 In summary the priority areas for the draft CC Action Plan are:
- Work with the wider National Parks family to establish the NPAs as leaders in meeting the challenge presented by Climate Change;
 - Delivering ‘Net Zero with Nature’ – Linking Nature Recovery and Climate Action;
 - Delivering Climate Action through the Planning System;
 - Supporting the Land-based sector to transition to a low-carbon future;
 - Working with our local communities – supporting them to become more resilient;
 - Working with our Local Authorities and Sector Partners to deliver positive action;
 - Support rural businesses to adapt their business operations and transition to a low-carbon economy.
- 3.7 These priority areas reflect the steer from P&R Committee, and focus on the areas where the National Park Authority can have the greatest impact. Given this is a broad agenda, and it cannot do everything, the NPA needs to continue to focus its resources and effort.

4. SDNPA Carbon Baseline work

- 4.1 A main challenge for the implementation of climate action and nature recovery is ensuring decisions are based on the best available data and evidence. We need to implement landscape scale approaches that support climate adaptation and balance that with the need to protect the landscape and restore nature.
- 4.2 The SDNPA commissioned Small World Consultants to produce a carbon baseline assessment for the National Park. The assessment was an essential piece of evidence work to help us understand the implications of our Net-Zero targets.
- 4.3 The assessment covers greenhouse gas emissions that are attributable to residents and visitors to the park, in terms of energy use, food, purchase items and travel to and from the National Park. It uses these emission calculations to produce a set of targets for transitioning to a low-carbon future.
- 4.4 Taking this broader approach better reflects the full climate impact of people’s lifestyles and choices. It also highlights areas of impact – and the need for action in areas that a production-based assessment would overlook – such as with food and energy use.
- 4.5 The final version of the assessment was published in June 2022. It provides a comprehensive review of the carbon footprint of the National Park across key sectors, including consumption based figures for both residents and visitors. It also gives a trajectory for the National Park to achieve Net-Zero by its target date.
- 4.6 A full [South Downs Carbon Baseline Assessment is available on the SDNPA website](#).

5. Issues for consideration

- 5.1 The carbon baseline assessment helped us to better understand the potential trade-offs that are necessary to guide significant changes in land-use, support new woodland planting, and drive restoration of habitats at a landscape scale.
- 5.2 It also gives us some clear priorities on how we might support our local communities to take action on climate change – including supporting behaviour change and the shift to a low-carbon lifestyle.
- 5.3 The draft CC Action Plan has been informed by the priorities set out by the Carbon Baseline Assessment, but focusses on the areas where we can deliver directly, or have a clear advocacy/influencing role.
- 5.4 As a Consumption based study, it includes the carbon footprints of residents and visitors, and across multiple sectors. These all have a direct impact on the overall emissions arising within the National Park. There are clearly areas where the SDNPA does not have a direct

delivery role and other partner organisations with the appropriate powers and duties will need to lead on delivery of these.

5.5 As an example, the assessment provides evidence that the overall carbon footprint for travel by both residence and visitors is high. This requires systematic and ongoing actions from the Highways Authorities rather than the SDNPA. However, we can use this baseline evidence, and advocacy with partner bodies – to drive positive action that reduces overall emissions, arising from the National Park.

6. Options & cost implications

6.1 The SDNPA is currently progressing with its budget exercise to finalise programme budgets for 2023/24. It is proposed that the Committee recommend that the NPA approve the draft CC Action Plan as part of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 Year 4 Action Plan 2023-24. The budget and Corporate Plan Action Plan will be considered by the NPA at its meeting in March 2023.

7. Next steps

7.1 The SDNA Climate Change Action Plan seeks to mainstream our activity across the Authority as a programme of work. We will continue to do this as part of our current Corporate Plan cycle, and subsequent reviews of Local Plan and Management Plan policies.

7.2 Members of the Committee are asked to consider the draft CC Action Plan which gives a detailed summary of our delivery programme for 2023-24.

7.3 In terms of the SDNPA Climate Change Adaptation reporting requirements, we will incorporate a Climate Change Risk Assessment as part of the Management Plan review process. This will ensure we are effectively considering the impacts of Climate Change on the National Park, and are taking the necessary actions to both mitigate and adapt where those impacts are most significant.

7.4 We will continue to review progress and report back to P&R Committee as required.

8. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes, as part of the approval of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 Year 4 Action Plan 2023-24.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The review of the CC Action Plan was undertaken in the light of recent organisational changes, and an assessment of the current staff resource to deliver on each element of the work programme.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The current Corporate Plan review and budget exercise includes 'Climate Action' as a priority area of work, with high level targets for delivery. This will ensure we mainstream the work as much as possible.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	<p><u>OUTCOME 2: INCREASING RESILIENCE</u></p> <p>There is increased resilience within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.</p> <p><u>OUTCOME 8: CREATING CUSTODIANS</u></p> <p>More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, communities and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.</p>

Implication	Yes*/No
Links to other projects or partner organisations	Details of projects and partners linked to this programme of work are given in Annex I – Climate Change Action Plan 2023 to 2024.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The SDNPA Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan was produced specifically to deliver on the Authority's climate change objectives.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No adverse implications have been identified. Individual projects were assessed as they were developed. Projects that support community-based action on Climate Change, and help to make those communities more resilient to Climate Change, deliver positive social value. Resilience is a key factor in ensuring community cohesion.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	No adverse implications have been identified. Individual projects are assessed as they are developed.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Human Rights implications arising from this proposal.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	The existing climate change risk assessment, highlights a number of health & safety and welfare issues that may result from not adequately adapting our policies and working practices.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None.
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	The Climate Change Action Plan is fully compliant with the five principles of our Sustainability Strategy. The projects that have been developed through the programme have delivered on the following :- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly.

9. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The UK Parliament declared a climate change emergency in May 2019. This is in recognition of the existential threat it presents.	High	High	The SDNPA produced a Climate Change Risk Assessment as part of its Adaptation Planning and Reporting role. SDNPA Climate Change Action Plan also sets out a range of actions we are able to take to mitigate and adapt to the worst of these risks.

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Appendices	I. Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2024
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	Greenhouse gas emissions assessment for the South Downs National Park – June 2022 (Small World Consulting Ltd)

SDNP Climate Change Action Plan – 2023-24

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME I – ESTABLISHING A BASELINE FOR OUR CARBON TARGETS

Objective	Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
Establishing a baseline for our Carbon Targets	<p>Establish a baseline from which we can monitor the effectiveness of our actions to cut emissions.</p> <p>Produce options that allow us to demonstrate different trajectories to achieving our Net-Zero target.</p> <p>Update emissions data and land use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) annually – based on UK national emissions data.</p>	<p>CHRIS FAIRBROTHER</p> <p>National Parks England, BEIS, UK National Parks and protected landscapes network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEIS data – The updated emission data along with the latest Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) estimates issued to UK National Parks June /July 2023. • Update of UK National Park carbon baseline model to take account of revised data. • Development of monitoring and review of Corporate Plan targets linked to these annual updates, and a more comprehensive 5-year review linked to the PMP and Climate Change Adaptation Reporting Process. • Develop a Comms Plan and annual reporting mechanism with case-study examples for Defra and other external audiences.
Setting Carbon Budgets National Park Authorities	<p>Work to ensure each National Park has a production and consumption based Carbon Budget that is consistent across all National Parks.</p> <p>Develop scenarios to reach net zero by the fastest time possible.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring framework to report (ideally annually) on progress toward net zero.</p>	<p>CHRIS FAIRBROTHER</p> <p>National Parks England, UK National Parks and protected landscapes network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a programme to monitor and report on progress towards achieving their Net-Zero targets. Capture the learning and common themes across the participating Protected Landscapes • Development of a national programme to help to encourage and support behaviour change and climate action – based upon the ‘Count Us In’ platform. • UK National Parks to secure collective membership of ‘Race to Zero’ based upon our carbon baseline/Net-Zero targets. Develop this as a common framework to help partnership work with constituent local authorities, based upon shared metrics and targets. • Improve links with BEIS – promote the National Park as a test-bed of nature-based solutions to inform and help develop their monitoring and reporting of national progress against Land Use, Land use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) targets.
Research, Evidence & Monitoring	<p>Develop better data on carbon storage by land use or habitat type, to make informed choices on land use change.</p> <p>Develop a greater understanding of how to maximise carbon storage through biodiversity projects. Develop case studies of nature based and adaptation solutions.</p> <p>Research and monitor climate change impacts and trends.</p> <p>Develop research agenda and links with national level research bodies.</p>	<p>RESEARCH & EVIDENCE</p> <p>National Parks England, UK National Parks and protected landscapes network.</p> <p>National Research Bodies: LWEC, NERC and CEH. Research Hub and Universities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop carbon mapping for habitats and land cover across the SDNP. This will identify the best nature-based carbon storage and sequestration options park-wide (Cranfield) • This is part of our ongoing Climate Change Adaptation Planning role. The SDNPA risk assessment will be revisited once the updated UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published (expected early 2022) • Address gaps in knowledge around habitat carbon in soils and some priority habitats. We are currently partners in a project with Sussex University, which will research the potential for soil carbon for habitat creation/restoration and agricultural reversion.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 2 – WORKING WITH OTHER NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES & CONSTITUENT LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Joint Advocacy National Park Authorities</p>	<p>Convene the UK National Parks Climate Change & Energy Group.</p> <p>Advocate for policy change in Government to provide NPAs with the tools to deliver Net-Zero with Nature’</p> <p>Work with National Park Partnerships to secure funding for the Net Zero with Nature proposal.</p>	<p>CHRIS FAIRBROTHER</p> <p>National Parks England, UK National Parks and protected landscapes network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities for collaboration linked to the joint statement for the Protected Area on Climate Action launched at COP26. Continue to promote the statement to international partners and signatories for upcoming Biodiversity (COP15) and Climate Conferences (COP27) • Set up a national monitoring and review framework informed by the carbon baseline assessments; improve UK National Parks ability to report collectively on their carbon emissions reductions and progress on Net-Zero targets. • Develop collaboration between the UK National Parks and their constituent LPAs – using the ‘race to zero’ application/pledge as a common framework to drive this; • The ‘Net-Zero with Nature’ funding platform (Revere) – establish and deliver the first tranche of projects. Develop link with the Small World carbon baseline assessments. Link with work on developing carbon markets and attracting private sector investment. • Develop a model for adaptation reporting under ARP3 by the English National Parks and the National Association of AONBs. Integrate this work with PMP review cycle, and develop new Management Plan guidance with Defra.
<p>Working with our constituent Local Authorities through the duty to co-operate.</p>	<p>Work with our Local Authority (LA) partners on Climate Change actions. Help support and add value to their work through the delivery of our own Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>Work with our LA partners to establish common metrics and targets that make a clear contribution to delivering national and locally based targets.</p>	<p>PLANNING SERVICES (with support from CPM)</p> <p>Climate Change Leads in Local Planning Authorities, Sector Partners such as South East Climate Action (SECA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work closely with our neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, under the ‘Duty to Cooperate’, to develop joint working on strategic and/or cross boundary themes. • Through our Local Plan Review, this will include the ‘mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.’ This will include working cooperatively on developing a shared evidence base and metrics and targets.

2030 TARGET: COMMITTING TO THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY BECOMING A ‘NET ZERO’ ORGANISATION BY 2030

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 3 – MEETING A 2030 ‘NET ZERO’ TARGET FOR THE SDNPA

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
Improving the SDNPA’s sustainable performance - becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2025.	<p>Deliver effective carbon emission reductions for the SDNPA and monitor progress towards the organisations 2025 target.</p> <p>Develop a localised offsetting option for the SDNPA with key partners, where GHG emissions cannot be reduced.</p> <p>Oversee the application of the SDNPAs sustainability policy – through its operations, estate and procurement activities.</p>	CORPORATE SERVICES (TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the SDNPAs carbon performance against its emission reduction targets. Continue to report on this as a Corporate Plan priority. • Continue to work through SDNPA Sustainability Action Plan, making progress on outcomes towards 2025 target. • Develop an offsetting scheme with the Cowdray Estate, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust via a Woodland Carbon Code accredited scheme. Investigate the potential for the SDNPA to become carbon positive in advance of the 2030 target

2040 TARGET: COMMITTING TO WORKING TOWARDS THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK BECOMING A ‘NET ZERO WITH NATURE’ BY 2040

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 4 – DELIVERING CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH THE PLANNING SYSTEM.

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
Tackling climate change through the role of the SDNPA’s Planning Function	<p>Embed the principle of both Biodiversity Net Gain within the planning system through SDNP Local Plan strategic policies.</p> <p>Use existing Local Plan policies to influence positive impact on landscape character and ecosystem function.</p> <p>Promote green corridors, high quality green spaces and street trees within the urban environment to improve capacity for regulating air quality, and managing climate change impacts at a local level.</p>	<p>PSMT</p> <p>Local Authority Partners, Natural England, Environment Agency, Developers and Planning Agents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Review of the South Downs Local Plan to commence during 2022-23.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Start the assessment of evidence requirements for the review. ➢ Start/commission evidence work. ➢ Prepare LPR 2023-24 and run Regulation 18/19 consultation. ➢ Adopt LPR 2024-25. • Opportunity to review and strengthen some policies relating to Climate Change and Community-based renewable. • National list of planning policies will apply – which may have an impact (positive or negative). Not clear what exemptions may apply for National Parks yet.
Sustainable Construction – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	<p>Promote energy efficiency and sustainable building standards in terms of design, materials and site layout.</p> <p>Implementation and monitor the delivery of our policy and SPD to understand their contribution to our emission reduction targets.</p>	<p>MARK WALLER-GUTIERREZ</p> <p>MHCLG, Local Authority Partners, Natural England, Environment Agency, Developers and Planning Agents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Energy Technical Advice Note (TAN) has been produced • Use the existing Sustainable Construction SPD to deliver improvements. • Explore the opportunity to review and strengthen some policies relating to Climate Change and sustainable construction through the Local Plan review.
Call for sites – Local Plan	Current call includes strategic/local sites for BNG and for community-based renewables.	<p>PLANNING (TBC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the best opportunities for local nature recovery and climate action through the call for sites. Ensure their contribution to GHG emission reductions and carbon sequestration are captured and accounted for against the SDNP Net-Zero targets.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 5 – WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER CLIMATE ACTION.

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
Helping to develop resilient communities	<p>Support Town and Parish Councils to become a central point for sharing best practice/advice with local residents on making a positive contribution to climate change action.</p> <p>Encourage local action within parishes and other community groups that supports the delivery of wider climate change targets.</p> <p>Work with a small number of pilot communities to establish the carbon emissions of their own operations. Establish action plans to improve energy performance.</p> <p>Encourage communities to use their CIL receipt and other sources of funding to improve their own environmental performance and contribute to their wider parish carbon reductions.</p>	<p>CHRIS FAIRBROTHER</p> <p>Community Energy South, Petersfield Climate Action Network, Worthing Climate Action Network, South East Climate Alliance, Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC), Greater Brighton Energy Group, Community Land Trusts and Transition Town Groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help build the capacity of communities to develop projects that reduce carbon emissions, generate renewable energy and protect nature. • Support the exchange of learning and best practice from current Climate Action projects to other SDNPA communities. • Develop and launch a Climate Change Resource Hub for Parish Councils and Local Community Groups. • Support the WeCAN project to trial the development of ‘Net-Zero’ community-based plans – apply this learning with other parish and community groups across the SDNPA. • Trial the production of carbon emissions ‘heat maps’ to be used alongside carbon footprint tool (e.g. IMPACT) for parishes to use as a starting point for considering what action to take in addressing climate change.
Developing community energy schemes within the South Downs National Park.	<p>Develop a network of Climate Change ‘Champions’ to promote best practice and deliver local training and support.</p> <p>Focus on communities that are keen to make rapid transition to a low-carbon future. Use these communities as exemplars for others to learn from and follow.</p> <p>Ensure local communities and businesses can access benefits from delivering carbon storage, renewable energy generation and other low carbon activity.</p> <p>Encourage uptake of micro-generation and community based renewable projects that minimises the impact on the South Downs landscape.</p>	<p>CHRIS FAIRBROTHER</p> <p>Community Energy groups, Local Authority Partners, Renewable Energy Companies, Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC), Greater Brighton Energy Group, Transition Town Groups, Parish Councils and Landowners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for communities in the early stages of considering community energy schemes by responding to enquiries, providing project and group development support and support for funding applications. • Provide mentoring and advice to early adopters and for local communities considering renewable and retrofit projects – through to the submission of external funding bids. • Continue to support best practice and advice to Parishes and local communities across the NPA – through a call-off advice contract with Community Energy South (CES). • Encourage Parishes and Community Groups to use CIL to fund Climate Action such as new greenspace, woodland planting or community-based renewable energy projects.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 6 – CLIMATE ACTION FUND PROJECT

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
Community Lottery - Climate Action Fund Bid (Ouse Valley Climate Action Project)	<p>Bring together community groups and organisations to take climate action, over a five year period, focussing on people least engaged at present. Support them to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take practical action now; • Maintain and increase ecological resilience; • Accommodate change - Integrate across all sectors; and • Develop knowledge and plan strategically. <p>Apply learning from the project to inform community-based Climate action efforts across the South Downs National Park.</p>	<p>STEPHANIE MILLS/ PROJECT TEAM</p> <p>South Downs Trust, Ovesco, Community Energy groups, Local Authority Partners, Greater Brighton Energy Group, Community Land Trusts and Transition Town Groups, Parish Councils and Landowners.</p>	<p>Delivery plan for first year of the project is currently being drafted, more detail to follow, activities to include :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sustainability and Climate Change information sessions – programme of events to be planned and delivered. Building capacity and facilitating behaviour change/positive action. • Sustainable energy hub – technical development, community energy groups/champions, household energy advice, carbon literacy training for project partners/community groups. • Nature based Solutions – project development, develop a programme of community based Rewilding and Nature Recovery interventions

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 7 – DELIVERING ‘NET ZERO WITH NATURE’ – RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE WITH NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS.

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Developing a Nature Recovery Network (NRN)</p>	<p>Increase habitat connectivity and the permeability of the landscape to wildlife.</p> <p>Demonstrate how nature-based solutions can help develop resilience to climate change at a landscape scale.</p> <p>Increase the quality and habitat diversity of wildlife sites. Deliver large-scale habitat creation where opportunities exist, create buffer zones for vulnerable or fragmented habitats.</p> <p>Increase the understanding of climate change and its impacts on the priority habitat and species within the South Downs National Park.</p> <p>Encourage naturally functioning floodplains and sustainable urban drainage schemes that help deliver natural flood management and adapt to the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>CLAIRE KERR</p> <p>Natural England, Environment Agency, Wildlife & Woodland Trusts, Local Nature Partnerships, SE Nature Partnership, Farmers and Landowners, Local Planning Authorities, SEEPL.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coherent Nature Recovery Network for the National Park, in collaboration with LNPs/ LNRS development with the relevant authorities and other partner bodies. • Develop habitat carbon monitoring to track the contribution of the Nature Recovery programme. • Ensure the High-level targets are aligned so we understand the contribution nature recovery projects will make to our overall carbon reductions and Net-Zero targets. • The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) - Support the development of sustainable urban drainage schemes including demonstration projects at Wild Park and BHCC Urban Fringe. • Green finance - develop projects that can trial new funding mechanisms to support nature recovery and Nature based Solutions to Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Palladium/Revere Partnership - pilot projects ➢ Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) pilot - local/strategic sites ➢ Conservation Covenant Agreements ➢ ELMS (Landscape Recovery pilot, Local Nature Recovery tier)
<p>‘Call for Nature sites’ (C4NS) – Potential to broaden out the C4NS mechanisms to focus on carbon sequestration and/or offsetting sites.</p>	<p>Initiate a South Downs National Park wide ‘call for sites’ that looks to deliver carbon off-setting schemes that are ‘nature-based’.</p> <p>Consider the sites strategically across the South Downs National Park.</p>	<p>NATURE RECOVERY WORKING GROUP</p> <p>Natural England, Environment Agency, Wildlife & Woodland Trusts, Local Nature Partnerships, Farmers and Landowners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will need to link to the update NR Work Programme for 2023/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Continue to deliver C4NS “green” initiatives ➢ Progress C4NS “amber” initiatives • Woodland Opportunity Mapping work completed, looking at opportunities to pilot this as a targeting tool – linked to a ‘Call for sites’ and the development of the Nature Recovery Network.
<p>Tackling climate change through new woodland planting</p>	<p>Research which species are most impacted by changes in climatic conditions. Plan ahead in terms of planting species that may be more resilient to prevailing climatic conditions in the medium/long term.</p> <p>Identify the best carbon storage options for the South Downs National Park that provide the widest range of ecosystem service benefits. Enhance the capacity for carbon storage and sequestration at a landscape scale.</p> <p>Produce guidance on the ‘right tree in the right place’ to help inform the design of good planting schemes that meet carbon targets and enhance the landscape quality of the South Downs National Park.</p>	<p>SONIA LORENZO-MARTIN</p> <p>Natural England, Environment Agency, Wildlife & Woodland Trusts, Local Nature Partnerships, Farmers and Landowners, South Downs/WT Conservation Partnership, SD Forestry Champions Partnership, Local Planning Authorities, Forestry Commission, Forestry England and Forest Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream the woodland opportunity mapping and identify areas with the best potential for new woodland planting across the National Park. • Carry out more detailed site assessments to identify the best opportunities, and to screen out unsuitable sites. • Develop carbon mapping for other habitats and land cover across the National Park to identify the best nature-based carbon storage and sequestration options park-wide. • Provide advice/support for larger tree planting schemes/projects, supported by funding opportunities including Trees for the Downs. • Produce guidance on the ‘right tree in the right place’ to help inform successional planting and the design of good planting schemes that meet carbon target, and are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 8 – SUPPORTING THE LAND-BASED SECTORS.

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Support the transition to a low-carbon economy for the land-based sectors.</p>	<p>Work closely with sector partners who have also declared net zero ambitions, particularly the NFU (2040), National Trust (2030) and Environment Agency (2030).</p> <p>Promote uptake of high precision or low-input farming techniques so that the application of nitrate fertilisers does not result in excess nutrients passing into the aquifers at key times of recharge (Autumn/Winter).</p> <p>Encourage sustainable land management that protects the environmental assets and ecosystem services of the South Downs National Park while maintaining the profitability of farming.</p> <p>Encourage land management practices that maintain the structural and microbial condition of soils and maximise its ability to store water and nutrients - especially in areas that are prone to erosion or more susceptible to drought conditions.</p> <p>Encourage land management practices that support pollinators and the use of natural pest controls or pest resistant crop species to reduce the need for pesticide use.</p>	<p>NIGEL JAMES</p> <p>NFU, CLA, Farm Clusters and FC Facilitators, Research Bodies (NERC, CEH), Statutory Agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the potential of projects funded through FiPL to help to contribute towards climate change/net-zero targets. • Farm Carbon Project - Undertake Farm Carbon Toolkit calculations (with the assistance of the Farm Carbon Toolkit Project Officer) for the 13 (out of 20) farms that have already undertaken (in 21/22) soil sampling/analysis stage. Remaining 7 farms within project to undertake soil sampling/analysis stage. • Farm Carbon Project - Carry out 5 workshops/farm events across the SDNP (Stephen Woodley, SW Farm Consultants and the Farm Carbon Toolkit) to discuss results (both soils and carbon) and identify practical management practices that can be adopted to improve them. • The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) - Continue to promote nitrate reduction and trial additional measures. • The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) - Promote to farmers and land managers new guide to Natural Flood Management measures (produced with EA and Sussex Flow initiative). • Ensure that the Local nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Tiers of the Environmental Land Management (ELM) deliver projects and outcomes that contribute towards climate change/net zero targets in the future. • Use the 'Bee-lines' funding to support projects that benefit wild pollinators at field, farm and landscape scale.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 9 – TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABLE ACCESS

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Work alongside Local Highway Authorities to develop sustainable travel schemes and deliver the best 'low-carbon' options for connecting into the South Downs National Park.</p>	<p>Work with sector partners to encourage provision of facilities, opportunities and incentives to allow for reduced carbon travel.</p> <p>Support the shift to low-carbon travel. Support and encourage people to go 'car free' during their visit to the South Downs National Park.</p> <p>Build and promote off road cycle infrastructure (see current infrastructure projects to the right)</p>	<p>ALEX PRINGLE ?</p> <p>Local Highway Authorities, Highways England, Public Transport Providers, Tourism Businesses, Access and Amenity Groups, Local Access Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egrets Way Phase V - Construction of 1.5km of new shared use path between Riverside Park and Piddinghoe. • Egrets Way Phase VI - Detailed specification, tender preparation and commence construction of 3km of a new shared use path between Lewes and Rodmell. • Centurion Way (West Dean to Singleton) - Detailed specification and initial construction works on Centurion Way path between West Dean and Singleton. • South Downs Way - Chilcomb Improvements - Complete construction of 1km of Phase I of new SDW cycle route and start initial designs for Phase II.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 10 – RURAL ECONOMY & TOURISM

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Support rural businesses to adapt their business operations, improve their sustainability, and boost their contribution to the SDNP local economy.</p>	<p>Deliver against Key Principle 2 in the SDNPA (2020) Economic Recovery Strategy through supporting businesses to better understand, improve and track their carbon performance.</p> <p>Help to promote the South Downs National Park as a ‘low carbon’ destination and work with businesses who can help deliver on this.</p> <p>Work with the Responsible Travel Partnership to promote places to stay which can demonstrate their environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>MARK ALDEN</p> <p>Responsible Travel Partnership, Tourism Providers, National Parks England and the Tourism Officers Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and deliver a new SDNP bespoke business sustainability programme in collaboration with Green Tourism, seeking a carbon reduction of business activity within the SDNP. • Develop the sustainable business network to help businesses work collaboratively and engage with SDNPA initiatives around nature recovery and climate change. • Agree and adopt the Sustainable Regenerative Tourism Statement for UK National Parks linking to the National Parks commitment to climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 11 – ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Raise awareness of SDNPA climate change strategy to the South Downs Volunteer and Learning Network members.</p>	<p>Extend the scope of volunteer capacity within parishes and local groups to enhance community resilience to potential climate change impacts.</p> <p>Focus on climate change as a key area for collaboration across the education sector.</p> <p>Develop new ways to frame the SDNPA’s communication with young audiences that are sensitive to the need to minimise the potential for eco-anxiety in young people.</p> <p>Collaborate on a workshop for learning providers in supporting learning about climate change.</p>	<p>AMANDA ELMES</p> <p>Learning Network, Schools and Education sector partners, Sustainability Centre,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the SDNP Trust on three key grant schemes to promote positive action for the environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Volunteer Conservation Fund (open for applications in January with grant decision making in March each year): Promotes volunteer activity in support of the SDNP priorities including habitat and biodiversity enhancements. ➢ Youth Action Grant funds: Grant scheme in collaboration with Clarion Housing promoting youth social and environmental action with a focus on renature and climate change initiatives. ➢ School Nature Grants (title tbc): New grant scheme that provides small seed funding to schools for positive action on their school estate. • Work in partnership with members of the SDNP Learning Network with a focus on climate change education to deliver a workshop for the wider network and/or schools. • Deliver South Downs Youth Action providing social and environmental action tasks for young people aged 16-25 years in support of renature and climate change priorities • Reduce carbon emissions associated with school visits in the SDNP through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting in-school visits and online teacher training to bring the SDNP into school curricula. ▪ Promoting sustainable transport options for School Visit Grants alongside traditional coach travel. ▪ Supporting providers to deliver more content online.

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMME 12 – HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL HERITAGE SECTOR

Objective	Proposed Actions	SDNPA Lead Officer / Partners	Year 2023-24 Activities
<p>Communicating the impacts of climate change and supporting behaviour change and greater resilience for local communities.</p>	<p>Collaborate with sector partners to explore the establishment of a grant programme to support communities with sustainable and carbon reducing actions.</p> <p>Developing more effective and engaging ways to communicate around the challenges of climate change and adaptation to the public through the creative and cultural sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can we open up ‘climate conversations’ within the SDNP? ➤ How can we ensure a diversity of voices in those conversations? ➤ How can museums and galleries act as agents / partners in hosting and facilitating conversations about climate, through a cultural lens? 	<p>ANOOSHKA RAWDEN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops to activate ideas and thinking within the creative and cultural sector – open to museums and heritage sites, grassroots creative collectives and single practitioners (based within and around the South Downs). ▪ Workshops to activate ideas and thinking within Parish Councils and local community collectives – inspiring people to think about how play and creativity to help thinking and action around the climate crisis. This audience would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youth groups ➤ Local community collectives/ grassroots organisations can embrace creativity in communicating climate action and supporting behavioural change (i.e. work with WeCAN and PeCan, and through Ouse Valley Climate Action). ➤ Parish Councils: how they can develop climate resilience and support local action. • Develop inter-disciplinary groups to include young people and the science/cultural sector to develop public projects to inspire public discourse and encourage climate action. • Deliver CMUK training to groups in the South Downs and its surrounding areas to increase confidence in holding conversations about the climate and nature crisis