

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**  
Date **23 February 2023**  
By **Performance and Projects Manager**  
Title of Report **Corporate Plan Update**

## **Note**

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**Recommendation:** **The Committee is recommended to note the proposed revised format of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan, as set out in Section 3 of this report.**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the proposed structure and approach to the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan.
- 1.2 In December 2019, The National Park Authority (NPA) approved the second Partnership Management Plan. It agreed that the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Corporate Plan should span the same period. The Corporate Plan identifies organisational priorities for the five years from 2020 to 2025 and delivery has been reviewed annually. Given the reduced resources of the Authority to deliver the Corporate Plan, Officers consider it appropriate to consider delivery and simplified measures for the final two years of the Corporate Plan together.
- 1.3 A draft of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan would normally be before Members at this meeting. However, a clear steer was received from Members that, due to the financial situation and reduced resources of the Authority, they required further opportunity to consider the delivery of the Corporate Plan in Years 4 & 5. A Member Workshop to consider this is being held on the morning of 23 February, prior to this meeting of the P&R Committee. Therefore, it has not been possible for Officers to prepare a draft of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan which P&R Committee would be able to consider at this meeting for recommendation to the National Park Authority for approval.

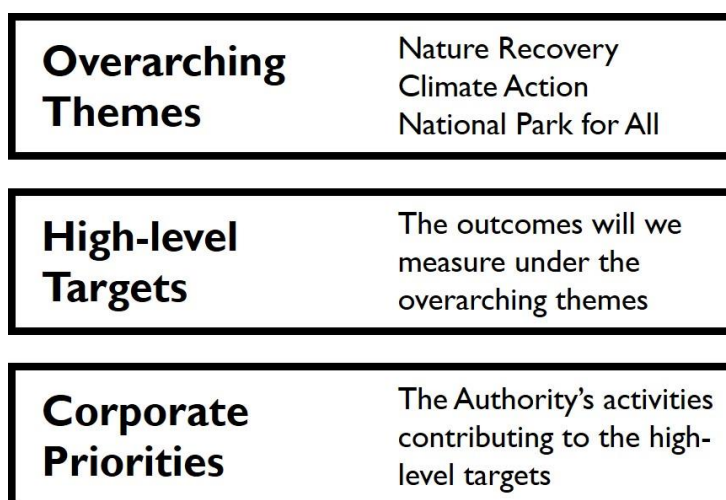
## **2. Policy Context**

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will deliver its elements of the much broader Partnership Management Plan (PMP). The National Park grant from Defra for 2023/24 is expected to be a flat cash settlement, however, what the settlement for 2024/25 may be is not known. In combination with flat cash settlements for the last few years, this is a significant reduction in resource and has meant cuts of over £1m ongoing have been made, with consequent reductions in headcount. This means fewer resources to deliver the Corporate Plan.

### 3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 The Year 3 Action Plan contained three high level targets: Nature Recovery, Climate Action, and A National Park for All. Underneath these were nine areas of work that contributed towards these high-level targets, and against these areas of work were 36 priorities with 75 associated measures. This resulted in rather complex monitoring and reporting requirements for the Year 3 Action Plan. It was therefore clear that due to the reduced resource and capacity at the Authority to carry out this work, a revised format for the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan was required to ensure clear, simple and manageable monitoring and reporting.
- 3.2 The proposed revised format of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan will retain the three high level targets of Nature Recovery, Climate Action, and A National Park for All as overarching themes. However, rather than a complex framework of work areas, priorities and measures underneath, each overarching theme is instead proposed to have 2-4 high level targets with associated key performance indicators (KPIs). Supporting this, a much simpler framework of corporate priorities, again with associated KPIs, would be set out, with a total of 25-30 indicators overall. This will ensure more effective monitoring and simpler reporting. The corporate priorities will clearly demonstrate how the Authority's activities are contributing to the high-level targets.

Figure 1. Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan structure



- 3.3 It is anticipated that the proposed structure of the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan will align with the emerging revised reporting requirements from Defra and Natural England though these have not yet been published.
- 3.4 The corporate priorities are proposed to be grouped around Nature Recovery, Climate Action, National Park for All, People and Place, Generating Income, Land Management, and Economy. These reflect more directly how we are focusing our resources to support the three overarching themes.
- 3.5 In addition to the overarching themes, high-level targets, and corporate priorities, the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan will include and explain, as have previous versions, the context in which we work, National Park purposes and duty and the Authority's resources.
- ### 4. Options & cost implications
- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is developed alongside the budget and is reviewed each year. There is minimal cost associated with the development of the plan itself apart from some small cost for design. The SDNPA budget is subject to a separate report and approval from the Authority.

## 5. Next steps

- 5.1 The content of the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan will be revised to reflect comments from Members received at the workshop on the 23 February. Due to the need for the additional Member Workshop and the schedule for approval of the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Years 4 & 5 Action Plan, Members will note that P&R is, on this occasion, not able to perform its function of annually recommending the Corporate Plan to the SDNPA.
- 5.2 The draft Years 4 & 5 Action Plan will come to a meeting of the SDNPA for approval. Depending on the comments of Members at 23 February workshop and the amount of further work required on the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan, this may be either the March or July meeting of the Authority. All members of the P&R Committee who are also Members of the Authority will have the opportunity to fully consider the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan at the meeting of the Authority. To ensure all P&R Committee members views are taken into account, comments will be sought from the co-opted members of the P&R Committee before a final draft of the Years 4 & 5 Action Plan is placed before the Authority for approval.

## 6. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes - the final version of the Corporate Plan will be approved by the National Park Authority.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes – the Corporate Plan sets out how we will deploy our resources, both financial and staff, to deliver our priorities. The plan is developed in conjunction with the budget for the short to medium term.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The production of the corporate plan takes some officer time, but no other resources. It is considered to be value for money.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	The corporate plan sets out how we will deliver against all of the PMP outcomes.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	The Corporate Plan sets a strategic direction for the deployment of resources. We deliver the vast majority of our work in conjunction with partners. How this works is set out in the plan itself.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The Corporate Plan prioritises how we will use our resources, Climate change is one of the key priorities in the plan. It therefore contributes significantly in allocating resources to support delivery of our climate change action plan.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No Social Value implications arising directly from the development of the plan. What is delivered, may require procurement of some type. Each procurement exercise will follow current SDNPA guidance.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes - EDI assessments will be undertaken for each section of the development of the plan. Each lead officer was asked to carefully consider EDI issues when completing their sections of the plan.

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	<p>The production of the plan itself does not have any implications on sustainability. We will seek to minimise the number of printed copied we make available, as much as possible.</p> <p>The strategic priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan directly deliver against the sustainability principles.</p>

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

- 7.1 Risks to delivery of the corporate plan are in the corporate risk register. Risk 16 relates to the impact of reductions in staffing on the capacity to deliver the corporate plan priorities. The flat cash settlement from Defra has resulted in staff reductions. This means we can no longer deliver all of the priorities in the original corporate plan

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
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	3	3	The Corporate Plan Action Plan for Years 4 & 5 ha been restructured and simplified to focus resources on key priorities.
Budgets insufficient or budgets become insufficient due to a failure of the Defra grant to increase in real terms over a number of years, SDNPA lacks capacity to support previous span of work. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.	5	3	Effective and early planning process through member workshops to redefine MTFP process and approach to Budget setting, including a refocused Corporate Plan Action Plan.

## **ANNE REHILL**

### **Performance and Projects Manager**

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

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Appendices	None
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Countryside and Policy Mangers, Head of Income Generation and Marketing, Head of Communications and Engagement, Head of Finance and Corporate Services, Commercial Manager - Seven Sisters Country Park, Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager, Development Manager, HR Manager, Head of Governance.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	<a href="#">Corporate plan</a> <a href="#">Report to the NPA March 2022</a> <a href="#">Partnership Management Plan</a>

