

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **23 February 2023**
By **Head of Governance**
Title of Report **Corporate Risk Register**

Note

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note the Corporate Risk Register as at February 2023.

1. 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 and members have the opportunity to discuss the detached with officers in advance of the committee as part of the ongoing risk management process. 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 1** to this report.
- 3.2 Updates to mitigations and actions, where identified, across all risks are documented in **Appendix 2** to this report. There has been one significant change made to the register, which is the removal of Risk 23, Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP), from the Corporate Risk Register, which was specifically related to the SSCP Project Phase 1. As Phase 1 of the

SSCCP project has been completed the Risk 23 is no longer required. The Authority's risks in relation to the ownership of the asset and Health and Safety remain on the Corporate Risk Register (Risks 26 & 27). The risks of any future SSCP projects undertaken by the Authority will be assessed and reported as required. Members' attention is also drawn to the following notable updates in the Risk Register:

- Risk 02, Finance and budgets – Expected flat cash settlement for 23/24 not yet confirmed. Through development process for Corporate Plan action plan for years 4 and 5 to ensure challenges are fully considered. Regular contact maintained between CEO and senior officials in Defra to make the case for additional funding and reduce the risk of unanticipated changes.
- Risk 07, Development Management – Targeted campaign, being supported by a specialist agency was used to recruit to the vacancies but with minimal success. Now introducing variations to the traditional 'Senior Planner' post by opening posts out to an Appeals officer and Planning Ecologist, both of which would alleviate pressure on Senior and other planners. Advertising due to take place again when new roles been through grading system. Also, use of consultants now familiar with ways of working and colleagues working well albeit a short term measure.
- Risk 20, Business Continuity Planning and Organisational Resilience – New hybrid working arrangements have increased organisational resilience, as demonstrated during recent bad weather.
- Risk 21, Projects - External Facing (Delivery and Reputation) – SDNPA support for amendments to the LURB Bill to strengthen the S62 duty.
- Risk 25, Government Response to Landscape Review – Departmental plans for the new Partnership are not expected to erode NPA authority or independence. CEO closely involved with Defra on plans for the Partnership. Defra expected to announce its response to the consultation on Glover by the end of March 2023 but no commitment as yet for legislation to implement S62 and other changes. SDNPA supporting CNP amendments at Lords Committee stage as a way of prompting action by government. Defra Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 commits to implement proposals set out in the government's response to the Landscapes Review.

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.

Implication	Yes/No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Effective risk management contributes to the efficient running of the organisation.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Risk management at the SDNPA underpins the effective delivery of PMP Outcomes and Corporate Plan Priorities.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	As the SDNPA works in partnership with many other organisations, some risks will inevitably impact on project and/or partnership working.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives?	Risks to SDNPA's objectives and action plan would be monitored through risk management procedures and, if required, would be escalated to the Corporate Risk Register.
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?	Whilst risks on the register may have H&S implications and mitigations in place for the Authority, there are no implications arising directly 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 Sustainability Strategy?	Effective risk management contributes to the 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.

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South Downs National Park Authority

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explanatory Information2. Corporate Risk Register February 2023
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:

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

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

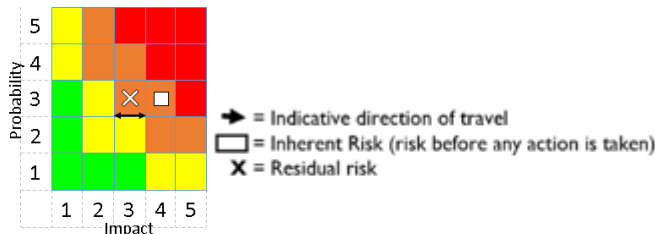
**South Downs National Park Authority
Corporate Risk Register**



Risk 01: Health and Safety

Owner: Vicky Paterson

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 no change.



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.

Mitigations:

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

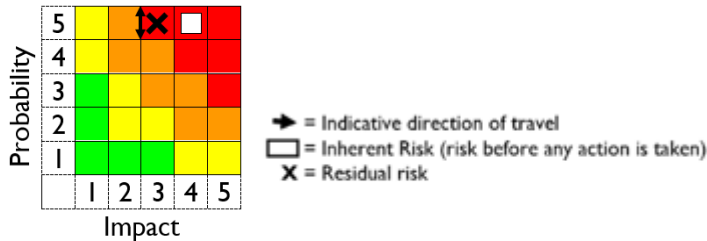
Updates:

Member H&S training to ensure all are aware of their responsibilities to be delivered on 7 February and 15 March 2023. Fire risk assessment of South Downs Centre completed by Jon Wayte, H&S Consultant on 7 December 2022.

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 no change.



Description of impact of risk:

Budgets insufficient or budgets become insufficient due to a failure of the Defra grant to increase in real terms over a number of years, a reduction of the Defra grant, or an 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 properly remunerate the staff and/or support other work. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.

Mitigations:

1. Sufficient headroom within revenue budget and sufficient reserves to enable any shortfall to be managed in the 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 process through member workshops to redefine MTFP process and approach to Budget setting, including refocused 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 MTFS.
5. Procurement processes identify issues related to inflation and, where appropriate, changes to specifications etc. made to manage impacts of inflation.
6. Work underway to encourage private investment into the National Park e.g. Payment for Eco System Services and carbon trading
7. Review of fixed costs, including staffing costs completed with significant savings identified.

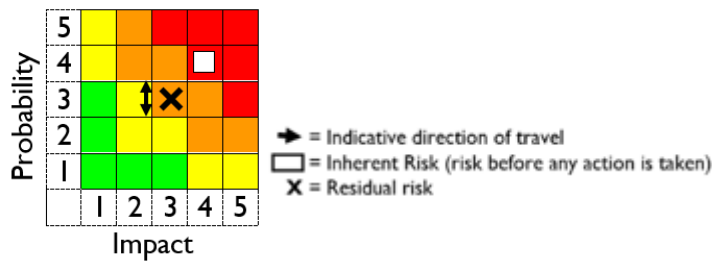
Updates:

Flat cash settlement expected for 23/24 but not yet confirmed. New MTFP agreed March 2022. Cost saving exercise, including reductions in staff resources has identified £1.1m reduction in fixed costs. Through development process for Corporate Plan action plan for years 4 and 5 to ensure challenges are fully considered. Regular contact maintained between CEO and senior officials in Defra to make the case for additional funding and reduce the risk of unanticipated changes. Impacts of inflation being taken account of as part of budget setting process.

Risk 07: Development Management

Owner: Tim Slaney

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:

Lack of capacity to manage development management function effectively results in backlog of applications, potential for greater appeals and reduced service. Significant additional costs to the Authority incurred and reputation damage and loss of confidence in the planning functions of the Authority.

Mitigations:

1. Use of planning consultants as appropriate
2. Refreshed SI01 agreements in place with 5 host authorities
3. Recruitment and retention practices updated to reflect broader issues with planning recruitment nationally
4. Staff pay and benefits scheme
5. Planning reserve in place.
6. training provided to host authority staff
7. Planning performance data reported to P&R committee and appeals info reported to Planning Committee
8. Corp plan prioritisation exercise to inform allocation of staffing resources
9. SI01 agreements in place with host authorities

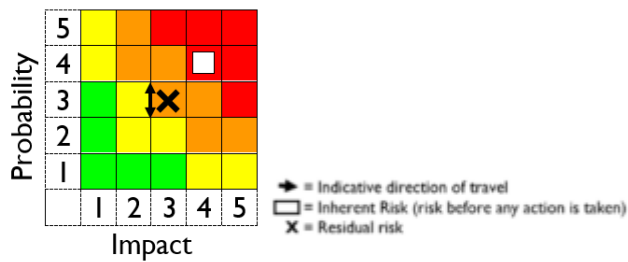
Updates:

Position reflects national picture with regard to planning recruitment and retention. Targeted campaign, being supported by a specialist agency was used to recruit to the vacancies but with minimal success. Now introducing variations to the traditional 'Senior Planner' post by opening posts out to an Appeals officer and Planning Ecologist, both of which would alleviate pressure on Senior and other planners. Advertising due to take place again when new roles been through grading system. Also, use of consultants now familiar with ways of working and colleagues working well albeit a short term measure.

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. Corp plan prioritisation exercise to inform allocation of staffing resources
11. New blended working policies agreed

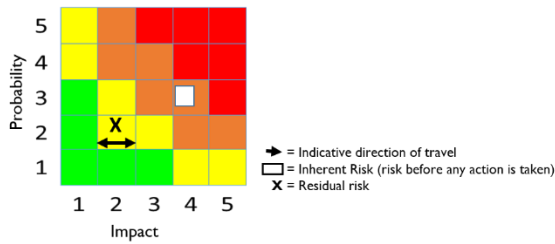
Updates:

New staff survey to be launched in May. Member budget workshop considered pay award. Corporate Plan work programmes are being revised for next two years to take account of the reduction in staff capacity. Staff turnover in 2022 remains within a normal range of 16%. This rate reflects voluntary leavers and does not take into account any voluntary redundancies and early retirements where posts have not been replaced, as a result of the organisational review. Successful recruitment undertaken to all except senior DM posts (see Risk 07 above).

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 for Authority and its offices.
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.
9. BCP for Seven Sisters Country Park in place.

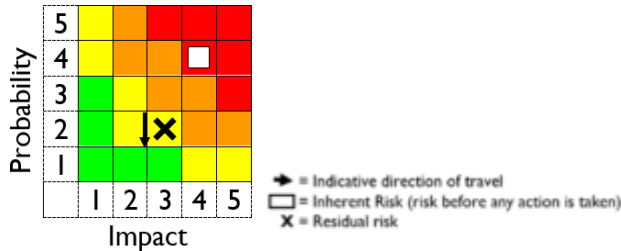
Updates:

New hybrid working arrangements have increased organisational resilience, as demonstrated during recent bad weather.

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 Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is improving in relation to probability, but not impact.



Description of impact of risk:

Failure to deliver key projects or NPMP outcomes and objectives due to lack of resources, unrealistic expectations or alignment with partner business plans and /or loss of commitment or ability to deliver from Partners and failure to maintain the profile and programmes of the National Park results in SDNPA reputation and influence with decision makers, partners and other stakeholders being negatively impacted.

Mitigations:

1. South Downs Partnership established and operating very effectively.
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 stakeholders and partners.
4. Project evaluation and lessons learnt reported to committee and used to inform future practice.
5. SDNPA advocacy for strengthened S62 duty, as advocated in Glover review.

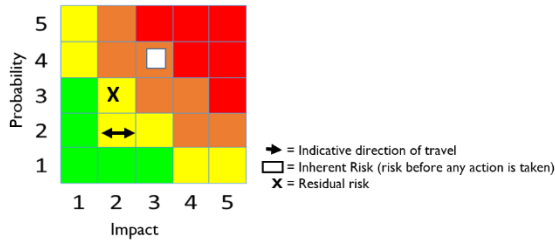
Updates:

SDNPA support for amendments to the LURB Bill to strengthen the S62 duty.

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. Inability to meet expectations of Government in relation to income generation. 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
5. Ongoing support for South Downs National Park Trust
6. Active search underway for possible opportunities in the western area of the National Park.

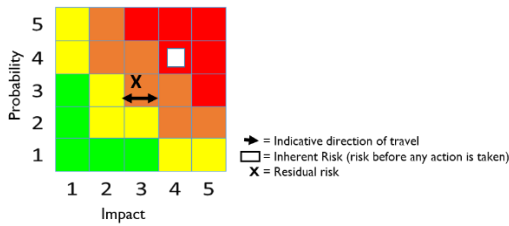
Updates:

Significant successes in income regeneration (Trust and Authority) particularly on Nature Recovery and, Climate Action eg Ouse Valley, Ebernoe Common etc. Income generation for 2022/23 will exceed £3m. More realistic figures for cost recovery have been developed for use in funding bids where appropriate. New green finance model ready for business to business launch and already generating income. Pressure for one to two year extension of FiPL seems to have been successful but has yet to be confirmed.

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 Government response to Landscape review results in additional expectations, powers and commitments on the NPA and Key partners without additional funding/resourcing. Failure to legislate by Defra to deliver their proposed responses to Glover on S62, the power of competence etc. impacts upon NPA ability to deliver against new expectations.

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

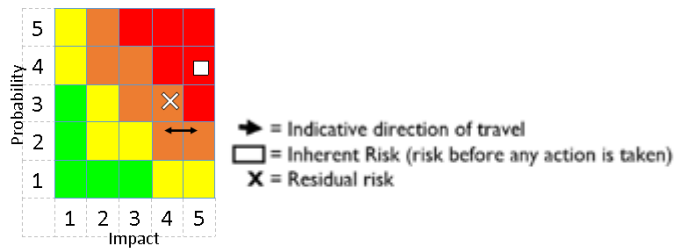
Updates:

Departmental plans for the new Partnership are not expected to erode NPA authority or independence. CEO closely involved with Defra on plans for the Partnership. Defra expected to announce its response to the consultation on Glover by the end of March 2023 but no commitment as yet for legislation to implement S62 and other changes. SDNPA supporting CNP amendments at Lords Committee stage as a way of prompting action by government. Defra Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 commits to implement proposals set out in the government’s response to the Landscapes Review.

Risk 26: Seven Sisters Country Park – Health and Safety

Owner: Trevor Beattie

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



Description of impact of risk:

Accident or incident involving staff, volunteers or members of the public resulting in serious injury, serious illness or death at a Seven Sisters Country Park. Breach of statutory duties, litigation and cost against the authority. Reputation and financial impacts on the authority

Mitigations:

1. Services of external Health and Safety consultant retained.
2. Risk assessments undertaken for high risk activities (provision of food etc.)
3. SSCP staff represented on Health and Safety committee
4. H&S strategy and responsibilities agreed.
5. Health and Safety elements included in induction programme for staff and volunteers.
6. H&S committee operating and receiving regular accident reporting.
7. Health and Safety policy in place
8. Site audits undertaken.
9. SSCP issues included within annual report to P&R Committee with recommendations.
10. Members and SMT trained and briefed on H&S responsibilities.
11. All risk assessments reviewed and updated.
12. Additional health and safety related training provided via e-learning, fire safety and health and safety delivered as mandatory courses, food hygiene etc.
13. IOSH training completed by SSCP Park Manager.
14. Lone working policy agreed by OMT.
15. Internal health safety advisor in place
16. Park signage in place to support visitor movements
17. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site
18. Participation in partnership groups e.g. Cliff safety partnership and liaison with emergency services
19. Insurance arrangements in place

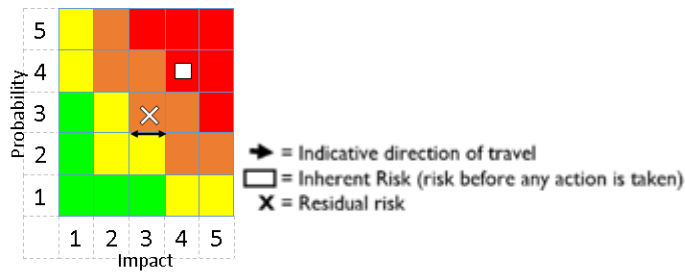
Updates:

Health and safety audit and fire risk assessment completed by external H&S consultant Jon Wayte on 7 December 2022. Implementation of site specific risk assessment and COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health).

Risk 27: Seven Sisters Country Park – Asset ownership

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:

Damage to or failure to maintain the asset causes environmental damage, legal challenge or dispute with tenants, reduction in visitor numbers or damage to SDNPA reputation

Mitigations:

1. Insurance arrangements in place
2. Operational risk register monitored by project team
3. Land agent employed
4. Maintenance programme for reed bed
5. Operating agreement with SDCO to support effective maintenance of the site and regular performance reporting to P&R
6. Regular survey of river assets
7. Project plan related to foxholes properties to ensure these are secure during works
8. Fencing and systems in place to manage livestock on site
9. Close working with water level management board and environment agency to fully understand management options in relation to riparian ownership.
10. Seven Sisters health and safety risk identified as separate risk on Corporate risk register
11. New Barn cottage and barns, security measures to prevent unlawful occupation. Long term plan to prevent degradation of asset

Updates:

Company model under review. Greatly improved financial and cash flow reporting now in place. Significant additional funding attracted for the Seven Sisters project from Defra and a range of other sources, which has greatly improved the visitor offer. Future maintenance of reed beds under review to ensure best long term solution in place for SSCP.