

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **23 February 2023**
By **Enterprise Development Strategic Lead**
Title of Report **Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate Whole Estate Plan**
Decision

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate Whole Estate Plan at Appendix

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2015, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) introduced the concept of Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) to encourage open dialogue between land-owning organisations and the SDNPA. The WEPs look to promote collaboration between individual estates and the SDNPA to help achieve the ambitions of both continuously striving for synergy, opportunities and understanding whilst ensuring estates are suitably equipped to meet the challenges they face in the 21st Century land management. A WEP is a non-statutory plan, which demonstrates the overall position, and aspirations an organisation has, as an Estate. Plans do not have to cover a specific timeframe, and may be updated to reflect changes in circumstance or withdrawn if appropriate.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 WEPs are a progressive and almost unique approach by a Local Planning Authority (LPA) or National Park Authority (NPA) in the UK as they look to foster good working relationships with key stakeholders and facilitate better understanding of the issues surrounding sustainable rural estate communities – of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They are not focused on or to be limited to planning matters but rather the whole husbandry of the Estate – farming, woodland management, conservation, access provision, cultural heritage etc. This enables the Estate to demonstrate how they contribute to the policies and outcomes identified in the South Downs National Park Authority 2020- 2025 Partnership Management Plan.
- 2.2 The South Downs Local Plan (2019) sets out many of the planning policies to be used in the determination of planning applications in the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and recognises the significant influence of the Estates across the SDNP and the impact the management activities of these Estates has in the short, medium and long term. Policy SD 25 p.103 of the SDNPA (2019) Local Plan states, “*positive regard will be had..... where development proposals are part of a WEP that has been endorsed by the National Park Authority and deliver multiple benefits in line with the purposes and special qualities of the National Park*”. The inclusion of a development proposal within a WEP, however, does not guarantee that planning permission will be granted and any proposal will still need to comply with relevant development plan policies. A WEP can also be used to help guide and support funding bids, future neighbourhood plan production, agri-environment and forestry schemes and with other Natural Capital projects. Beyond the finished product, the WEP process also provides value

in terms of relationship building; between the Estate and the SDNPA, as well as the local community.

3. The Whole Estate Plan Process

- 3.1 An evaluation to enable an opportunity to improve the Whole Estate Plan (WEP) process was completed in early 2022. As a desk based exercise, it provided opportunity for stakeholder feedback. The evaluation looked into the benefits, the process, resourcing and where improvements be made to WEPs.
- 3.2 Updated guidance on producing WEPs was published in March 2022 and is available online.
- 3.3 Following the evaluation of WEPs, we now benefit from a refreshed new WEP Process. The new process catalogues the various elements of a WEPs journey into five sequential stages allowing easy tracking and clarity for estates on the exact point of the journey they are currently on whilst clearly identifying next steps. Stage 1 is the inception stage and sets the framework for the WEP journey including introducing the process that must be adopted to achieve endorsement. Stage 2 focusses on the early draft, the Member site visit and the first internal SDNPA consultation involving Members and officers. Stage 3 builds on the feedback from the first consultation, which informs the final draft. This stage also contains the second and final internal SDNPA consultation. Stage 4 focuses on the creation of the final version of the WEP informed by the feedback received in the second consultation. This stage also includes the endorsement at P&R Committee. Stage 5 is the post endorsement stage and outlines the requirements of an Estate once the WEP has been successfully endorsed. This stage includes commitment to annual reviews, which track performance against the action plan.

Figure 1. Below shows the new process.

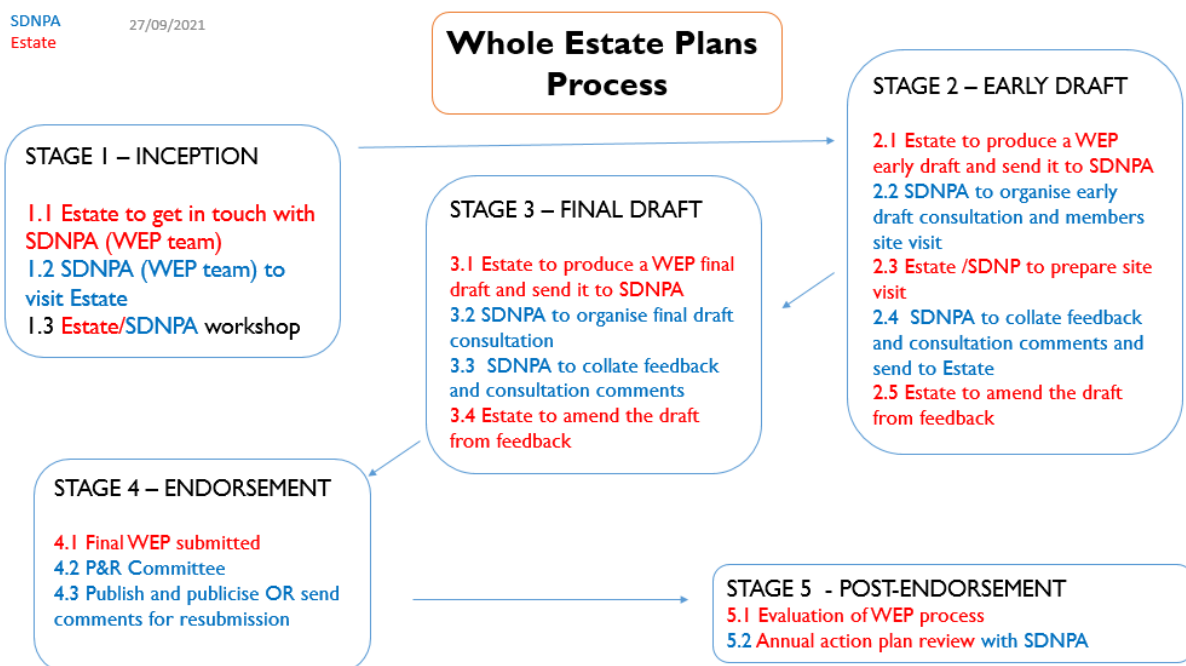


Figure 1. SDNPA WEP Process

4. Issues for consideration

4.1 A WEP is comprised of four elements.

- A Vision, which highlights the estates priorities.
- An Asset Audit, which provides a complete picture of all the assets of the estate, both physical and non-physical.
- Ecosystem Services and Analysis, helps to identify the benefits obtained from nature, put value to them and build them into decision-making and management.
- An Action Plan is the response to the analysis findings and identifies key actions and projects.

See Figure 2. below which shows the four elements of a WEP in an infographic.

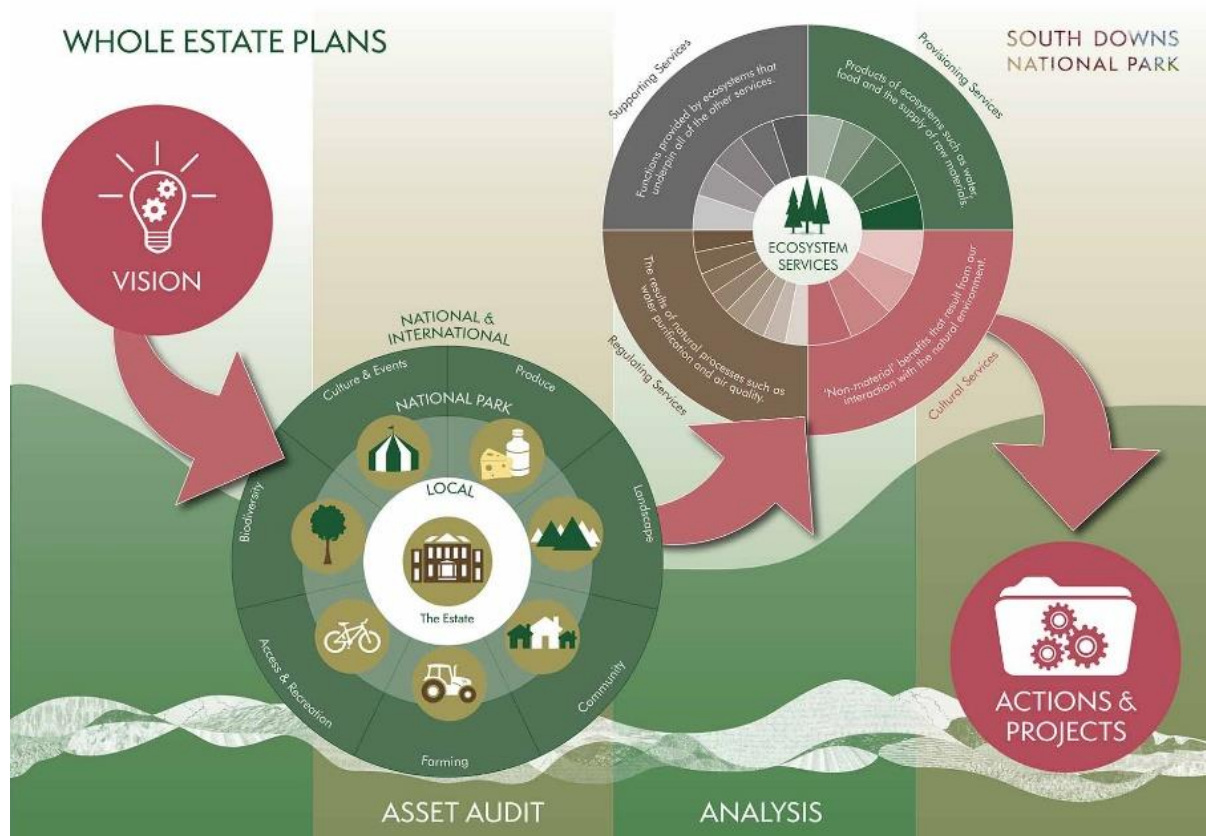


Figure 2. SDNPA WEP Elements infographic.

- 4.2 Officers look at how all these elements relate to each other, i.e. is the Vision a genuine representation of the actions proposed, and are the actions evidenced by the Asset Audit and Ecosystem Services Analysis? Estates should also be able to demonstrate that they have engaged with the local community during the process of producing the WEP.
- 4.3 Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate, with support from consultants Savills, engaged with the WEP process in the summer of 2020. Following a comprehensive public consultation process, the early draft was submitted on Wednesday 2nd March 2022, which triggered the first of two internal consultations with the NPA. The Estate also hosted a Member Virtual Meeting on 15th March 2022 and a Member Site Visit on 14th June 2022. The final draft was submitted on Friday 19th August 2022, which acted as the catalyst for the final internal NPA consultation.
- 4.4 To ensure the WEP passed efficiently and effectively through the governance structures of both Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) the process that SDNPA Members undertook to consider and feedback on the WEP varied slightly from the normal process, following consultation with the Chair of P&R Committee, but did not result in any reduced engagement from Members in the process.

During the first consultation in March 2022 a virtual session with BHCC and SDNPA Members was held to provide an introduction to the estate and the WEP. The Member Site Visit to the BHCC Estate was then held in June 2022 prior to the final consultation and Members were given the opportunity to feedback at a session during the site visit and later during the final consultation held in September 2022.

- 4.5 The Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate, located in the East of the South Downs National Park, is a 12,862 acres (5,205 hectares) estate owned by BHCC. 78% of the estate is farmland managed by 34 different tenancies. The estate also contains 51 heritage sites including; 21 listed buildings, 26 scheduled monuments and 1 listed park and garden.
- 4.6 The WEP for the Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate (Appendix 1) covers a 10-year period between 2023 to 2033.
- 4.7 Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate conducted two comprehensive public consultation events in an attempt to engage with the 291,738 residents.
- 4.8 The first public consultation, conducted by Planning For Real, took place between November 2020 and April 2021. Residents were invited to comment on what they valued about the estate and how they envisaged its future. 379 surveys were completed and 86 detailed written submissions provided.
- 4.9 The second public consultation took place between May 2022 and July 2022. The survey outlined the council's draft proposals and objectives.
- 4.10 Since the autumn of 2020 officers from across the SDNPA have had meetings with representatives of Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate to discuss issues. During the early draft consultation (7th March 2022), Member Virtual Session (15th March 2022), Member Site Visit (14th June 2022) and final draft consultation (22nd Aug 2022) both officers and Members were provided with opportunities to comment on the emerging versions of the WEP.
- 4.11 The WEP for the Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate has progressed in accordance with the SDNPA WEP Process and guidance.
- 4.12 The WEP has been well received by officers across the SDNPA, and officers are encouraged by how comments and issues raised throughout the process have been taken on board and the WEP amended accordingly. Overall, the WEP fits well with the Authority's Partnership Management Plan.
- 4.13 The following provides a summary assessment of each of the four elements that make up the WEP.

Vision

- 4.13.1 The Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate responds directly to the dual crises of our time; nature depletion and climate change. The Vision pledges the Estate will be carbon negative and climate resilient, with its biodiverse grassland landscape fully restored and teeming with wildlife through the adoption of sustainable farming practices. The Vision also references opening up more land to the public and making it easier for all to visit and enjoy.

Asset Audit

- 4.13.2 The Asset Audit provides a thorough account of all the features, activities and services on the Estate. These include; heritage, natural capital assets, farming, environmental designations, biodiversity, water, chalk grassland, woodland, community assets and public access. This is well evidenced and supported by maps, which are successful in explaining and demonstrating how the Estate fits in the SDNP context, its heritage and cultural assets, and how diverse the Estate is (including key facts about the Estates properties). The Asset Audit also contains a helpful 'Key facts at a glance' infographic on page 17.
- 4.13.3 It is considered that the Asset Audit provides a comprehensive review of the assets and provides a solid foundation for expanding or developing the projects within the Action Plan.

Ecosystem Services and Analysis

- 4.13.4 The Estate provides a comprehensive ecosystem services analysis that is categorised into four sections; Supporting Services, Provisioning Services, Cultural Services and Regulating Services. The ecosystem services SWOT analysis table on pages 51-57 sets out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and articulates the required continuation of works to ensure the Estate can deliver its vision.
- 4.13.5 It is considered that Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate have demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of what they have as well as articulating clearly the opportunities and challenges facing the Estate which inspire the final section of the WEP, Actions.

Actions

- 4.13.6 The Brighton & Hove City Downland WEP refers to the Action Plan section as “Actions”. This section identifies outcomes The Estate hopes to achieve in respect of issues identified through the analysis.
- 4.13.7 Within the “Actions” section, the Estate includes an Actions Summary in table form on pages 77 – 81 which includes a timeframe for delivery. The Actions in Section 5 are grouped into six categories. These are; 1.) An amenity for all 2.) Enabling biodiversity to flourish 3.) The route to carbon net zero and beyond 4.) Sustainable food and farming 5.) Connected landscape and 6.) Identifying new sources of income.
- 4.13.8 It is considered that there is a clear link between the analysis work outlined in Section 4: Ecosystem Services and Section 5: Actions. The inclusion of Section 6: Management & Delivery and Section 7: Next Steps begin to outline how the Actions will be implemented and when. The SMART targets listed in the table on pages 84-89 are welcome and will provide clarity for The Estate when mobilising for Action.
- 4.14 For the reasons set out above, the Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate Whole Estate Plan is recommended for endorsement.

5. Options & cost implications

- 5.1 There are no direct cost implications associated with the consideration of the endorsement of the WEP.
- 5.2 If endorsed, the Authority will continue to work with BHCC to realise some of the projects identified. The Authority will also conduct annual performance reviews in line with Stage 5 of the SDNPA WEP process.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 If the WEP is endorsed, it will be placed on the SDNPA website and officers will be made aware that it is now a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.

7. Other Implications

Implication	Yes/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, although applications for grant funds or planning permission may be submitted for consideration relating to actions highlighted within the WEP.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. If endorsed, the WEP will be included on the SDNPA website, however update and review of the document is the responsibility of the Estate. If the WEP is amended, it will need to be considered again by Officers and Members.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	N/A
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Outcome 1: Landscape & Beauty Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience Outcome 3: Habitats and Species Outcome 4: Arts & Heritage Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences Outcome 8: Creating Custodians Outcome 9: Great Places to Live Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
Links to other projects or partner organisations	N/A
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The vision pledges that Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate will be carbon negative and climate resilient. The WEP also devotes an entire section of its Actions to 'the route to carbon net zero and beyond' outlining the Estate's commitment to Climate Change mitigation and adaptation. Projects include carbon benchmarking, reducing waste, promoting local food and reducing food miles.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	This decision has no direct equalities implications. This document will be used to inform future decisions by the Authority, which will be subject to their own equalities impact assessments.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No

Implication	Yes/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, although applications for grant funds or planning permission may be submitted for consideration relating to actions highlighted within the WEP.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. If endorsed, the WEP will be included on the SDNPA website, however update and review of the document is the responsibility of the Estate. If the WEP is amended, it will need to be considered again by Officers and Members.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	N/A
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Outcome 1: Landscape & Beauty Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience Outcome 3: Habitats and Species Outcome 4: Arts & Heritage Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences Outcome 8: Creating Custodians Outcome 9: Great Places to Live Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
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 WEP has principles 1-3 at its core, which is evidenced by the Plan being set within the context of the SDNP Partnership Management Plan and to support the delivery of the Local Plan.

8. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 8.1 There is the potential for a reputational risk for the SDNPA through failure to endorse the WEP, without substantive reasons, after an Estate has gone through the process of producing a WEP that meets the criteria for endorsement. This risk is mitigated through the committee process and the requirement for the committee to give appropriate reasons for its decisions in public. There is also a risk of WEPs being misunderstood and considered as planning documents only, or being interpreted as a 'green light' for development. Both of these risks are mitigated by providing continued support to Estates, case officers and other interested parties and providing guidance on the SDNPA website.

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Appendices	I. Brighton & Hove City Downland Estate Whole Estate Plan (Main Document)
SDNPA Consultees	Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	SDNP Partnership Management Plan SDNPA (2022) Whole Estate Plans Guidance SDNPA New WEP Process



City Downland Estate Plan





Foreword

Our predecessors in the 19th century had the foresight to purchase for the city the downland that now forms the Downland Estate. We have a responsibility to conserve this to help future generations survive and thrive. That does not mean maintaining the status quo or turning back the clock. It does mean developing the estate in the most sustainable way possible to connect people, offering them opportunities to explore, learn and benefit from this vital asset.

Faced with the biodiversity and climate emergencies, we need the estate to help reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, to store it and to enhance wildlife. As we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, we look to it for quality public access to help improve residents' health and wellbeing. And given the cost-of-living crisis, we need our farmers and producers to supply affordable local food sustainably, including through community food-growing.

To meet the challenge of managing this most precious resource – our land – it is imperative that we bring together farmers, naturalists, recreational users and the whole spectrum of stakeholders who care passionately about the estate's future. It requires the committed involvement of the council – councillors and officers alike. We also need the participation of the wider community we represent – including those underprivileged or marginalised groups who have yet to experience what the estate has to offer.

This plan is the culmination of our efforts to date. It provides a route map for how we intend to achieve our objectives for the estate. It also reflects one of the most comprehensive public consultations ever undertaken by the council. We are immensely grateful to all those who have participated in the process.



Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty
Leader of Brighton & Hove
City Council



Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones
Deputy Leader of Brighton
& Hove City Council



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1. Overview

Objectives of the plan

Brighton & Hove is part of a unique environment. The city lies at the heart of a world-class area of natural value, recognised by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve. This is the UK's only urban biosphere, also known as The Living Coast. The city is also in the unusual and fortunate position of having among its assets the City Downland Estate – nearly 13,000 acres offering breathtaking landscapes stretching from the High Downs to the coast, and a wealth of natural capital.

Yet these natural treasures face serious threats. These include pollution of the groundwater aquifer, reduced biodiversity and a depleted landscape. According to estimates, under 10% of the Brighton Downs' ancient chalk grassland now

survives. What is happening on the estate is reflected in national trends. A report published by the State of Nature Partnership in 2019 highlighted how wildlife is being compromised in this country. That includes a 13% reduction in average species abundance since 1970.

Climate change poses myriad challenges and itself contributes to the loss of biodiversity. The Committee on Climate Change report – Land use: Policies for a Net Zero UK, recognises that carbon neutrality cannot be achieved without changes in how we use our land. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has identified climate as one of the principal drivers of environmental change and has produced its own adaptation plan.

“We have followed the SDNPA's guidelines in structuring our plan – acknowledging the need to establish some common bases for assessing and co-ordinating initiatives from multiple landowners”

Our approach

We have followed the SDNPA's guidelines in structuring our plan – acknowledging the need to establish some common bases for assessing and co-ordinating initiatives from multiple landowners, whose proposals for the development of their estates may affect (and be affected by) the whole landscape.

Thus the section which follows is 'Our vision' – a compact statement of what we are committed to achieving for the estate over the short and longer term. This is followed by 'Asset audit', a summary of the estate's possessions, attributes and capacities.

The 'Ecosystem services' section articulates the aspirations of stakeholders and the community for the estate, as described below; it also highlights the estate's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats it faces. This is followed by 'Actions' – initiatives we propose to pursue to achieve our vision. In 'Management and delivery', we discuss the human resources that will be required to bring our plans to fruition. Next Steps shows how we intend to proceed.

The development of our plan provided an opportunity for the council to canvass the views of a wide range of stakeholders, to ensure that all aspects of policy are rooted in the democratic will of the community. In the autumn of 2020, the council invited residents and stakeholders to help create a new vision for the estate. Using the Planning for Real methodology, this involved harnessing the widest possible range of

Brighton & Hove City Council was one of the first local authorities in the country to declare biodiversity and climate emergencies. Our work in these areas is mutually reinforcing. Not only are we committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, but we are also determined to ensure residents and visitors benefit from everything that a fully restored estate can offer. We will harness its qualities to meet both our biodiversity and carbon objectives.

While over recent years council policy-making has increasingly been driven by these considerations, we concluded that a further root-and-branch review was essential to ensure that our actions fully reflect our community's priorities. This coincided with the SDNPA's initiative to encourage estates within the park to produce whole estate plans.

Their purpose is to encourage open dialogue between land-owning organisations, the national park and the local community; and to consider land holdings holistically, taking account of environmental and social as well as economic factors. This is of particular relevance to us as nearly all of the estate falls within the national park's boundaries.

perspectives – represented by over 80 submissions and 300 survey responses from citizens and groups who care about the estate (a full list is set out in Appendix i).

In developing the plan we have taken into account for example input from The Aquifer Partnership, our farmers and the NFU, Southern Water, the Brighton Downs Alliance and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). Other key influences have been *A Brighton Landscape* – a plan commissioned by leading landscape architect Kim Wilkie, a member of the South Downs Partnership (see Appendix ii); and Natural Capital Research’s baseline assessment of this aspect of the estate (see Appendix iii). We also drew on the council’s own 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme, which sets out how we propose to meet this vital target. The Farm Carbon Toolkit has provided valuable insights

into how agricultural practices can have a far-reaching impact on the estate’s carbon footprint (see Appendix iv).

Underpinning all of these highly valued contributions has been our comprehensive programme of ‘live’ community consultation – one of the most extensive exercises of its kind in the council’s history.

The essence of our approach was an iterative cycle of presentations, discussion, polling and further exposition to bring this vision of the future into progressively clearer focus. The consultation culminated in the Brighton and Hove City Downland Estate Visioning Event. This, in turn, led to the creation of our vision statement, set out in the next section. Further details on this aspect of the Planning for Real process are highlighted in section 4 and in the report on the visioning event in Appendix v.

The priorities and actions outlined in our plan reflect first and foremost the conclusions from the consultations. We have, however, continued to seek feedback from all interested parties throughout the process leading to the publication of the plan. This included a second formal public consultation stage (May – June 2022), where we sought responses and comment specifically on our draft plan.

We received submissions from organisations whom we had heard from previously and a number of others, in addition to many individuals giving their views in a personal capacity. The diverse range of contributors included Brighton Active Travel, Brighton & Hove’s Wildlife Forum, Brighton Dogwatch, CPRE Sussex, Cycle UK, Equine Gentling, Keep the Ridge Green, Stanmer Preservation Society and the Sussex Wildlife Trust. A

summary of the quantitative findings is set out in Appendix vi, with full commentary available on our website.

This serves to illustrate the diversity of interests in and perspectives on the estate. It is inevitable that those interests can come into conflict. In some cases, this reflects the national conversation. For example, the publication of the National Food Strategy has highlighted what needs to change in order to ensure Britain benefits from healthy and nutritious produce. At the same time, the cost of living crisis has brought into sharp focus the need for affordable food. Producing food at competitive prices has led to agricultural practices which have damaged the environment. All these issues have resonance for those who have an involvement in the estate. In developing the plan, we have always kept in mind the need



“We harnessed the widest possible range of perspectives – represented by over 80 submissions from citizens and groups who care about the estate”

to acknowledge and, if possible, to reconcile the differing interests and requirements of estate users. Part of the purpose of this plan is to bring people together. The more widely based the support for our proposals, the more certain it is that we will succeed.

The plan forms part of a wider policy, as developed by the council itself, the SDNPA and national government. A digest of the key documents is set out in Appendix vii. References to the 'estate' throughout this document refer exclusively to the City Downland Estate, as opposed to other land and buildings owned by the council.

While we have not been able to accommodate our contributors' every wish, we have always listened. We are in no doubt that it is the energy, commitment and enthusiasm of those who have taken part which will make this plan a durable blueprint for the estate's long term future.



2. Vision

“A rejuvenated City Downland Estate will be carbon negative and climate resilient, its biodiverse grassland landscape fully restored and teeming with wildlife. The estate will be a leader in sustainable farming, where local food production will flourish.

By creating new amenities and opening up more land to the public – and by making it easier for all to visit and enjoy – the estate will fulfil its potential to boost the well-being of everyone who experiences it.

Democratic accountability will be the touchstone for all decisions affecting the estate. This land is ours.”



3. Asset audit

Key features

Brighton & Hove City Council is a unitary authority with a total population of 291,738 (2020 ONS UK). According to Natural England definitions, only half of Brighton & Hove's area is urban, with the balance either urban fringe or countryside.

One of the council's key assets is the 12,862-acre City Downland Estate. Around 94% of the estate is within the boundaries of the South Downs National Park. The geographical plan of the estate is set out in Appendix viii.

Notable features and popular local nature reserves include the Chattri memorial, Beacon Hill, Benfield Hill, Whitehawk Hill, Sheepcote Valley, Stanmer Park, the Waterhall Conservation Area, Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs (also a Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI]) and Castle Hill Special Area of Conservation (a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve).

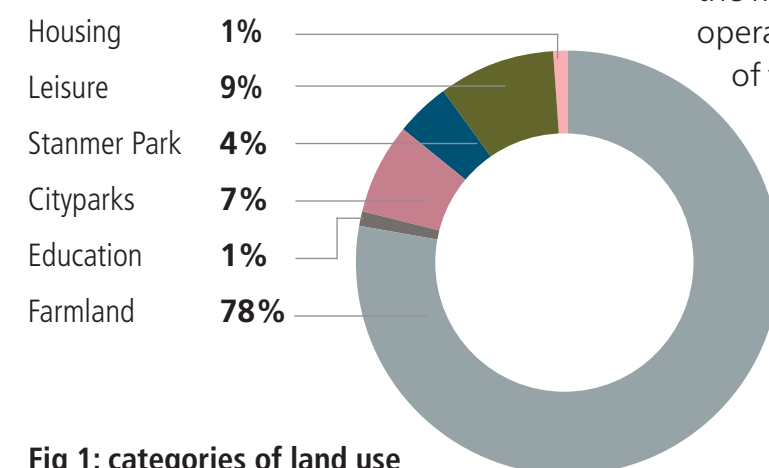


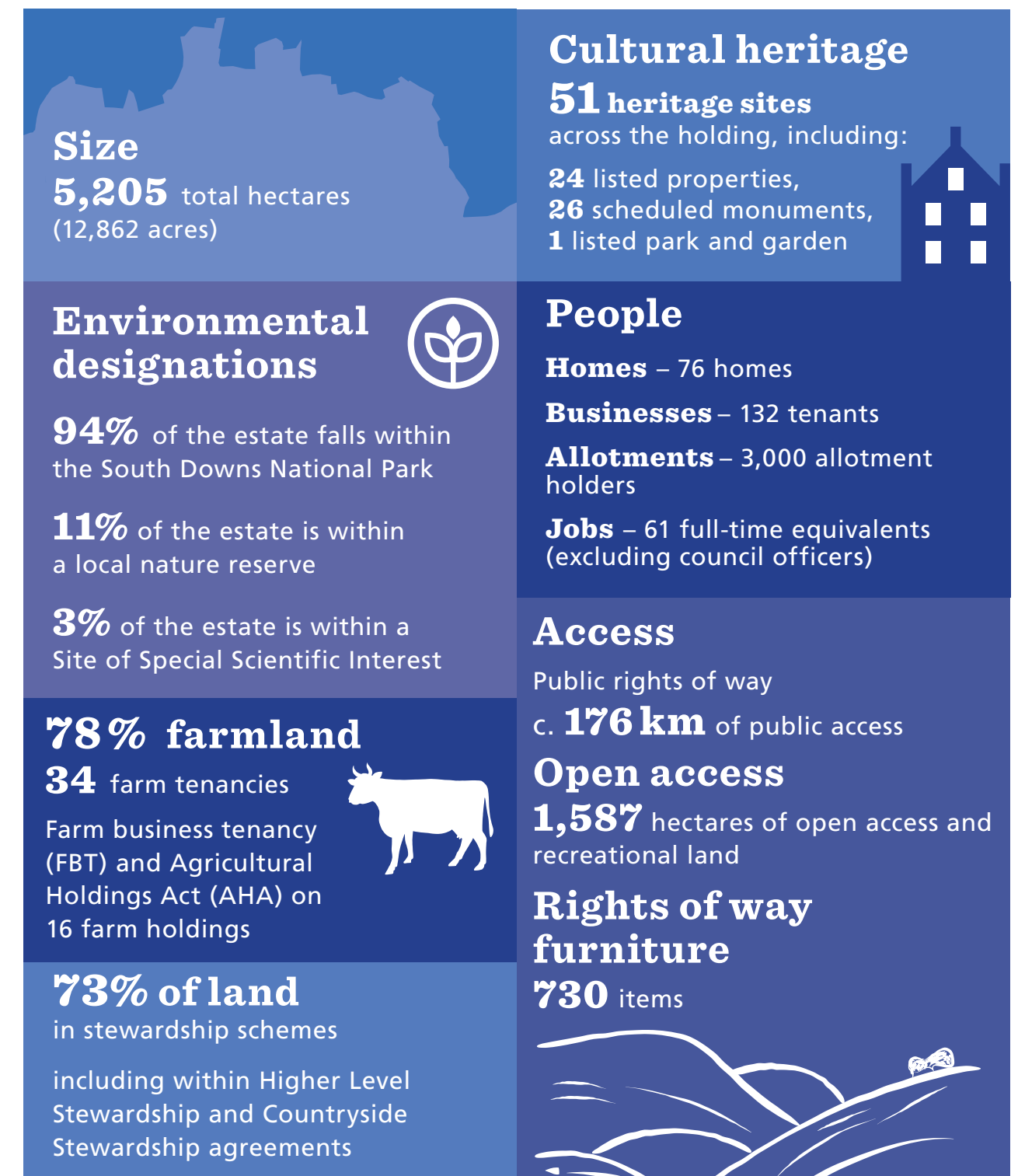
Fig 1: categories of land use

In addition to providing a restorative countryside resource for the urban population, the estate is a vital generator of natural capital – supporting the ecosystem services which we all rely on. For example, it is the source of 95% of the city's water supply.

The council's Cityparks department manages most of the 3,200 acres of open space across the city, including parks and countryside, which are also supported by volunteers and 'friends of' groups such as Stanmer and Whitehawk Hill. Stanmer Park and Estate is Brighton & Hove's largest park, and a gateway to the South Downs. It is an example of an 18th-century designed landscape and includes the Grade I listed Stanmer House, together with 23 Grade II listed buildings and structures. The council secured a £5.1m heritage lottery grant for the Stanmer Park restoration project in 2015.

As indicated in Figure 1, over three quarters of the land is devoted to farming. The average unit size of farms is 600 acres, with the majority combining livestock and arable operations. Grassland accounts for 57% of the total. At present the only organic producer is Home Farm, Stanmer. The farm's livestock includes 20 British White cows, one of the oldest breeds in Britain.

Key facts at a glance



A list of all estate assets is set out in Appendix ix.

The council has periodically reviewed the case for continuing to own the estate. It has been evident from our consultations that, as a highly prized public amenity, there is very strong support for the estate remaining in public ownership and under democratic control.

History

Exhibits on display in Brighton Museum’s archaeology gallery show that settlers have occupied the land which now belongs to the city and the estate from the dawn of human history, including through the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon periods.

The Saxons founded the village of Brighton after landing in Sussex in the 5th century CE.

In early medieval times it is probable that most of the Down pastures were managed as commons. By the late 14th century, some of these areas were enclosed for private home farm pastures, and by 1800, most of the Downs were farmed by tenant farmers.

Much of the farmed downland was purchased by The Corporation of Brighton in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the aim of protecting the town’s water supply, providing public access and controlling development. Those objectives continue to be relevant today.

In other respects, however, the functions which the estate has been expected to perform have undergone radical changes

over the period of the council’s ownership. These included providing a health resort enjoying royal patronage in the late 18th century, a base for troops from the Indian subcontinent during the First World War and the training and operations HQ for the Canadian Army during World War II.

Since the period of the original purchase, land has been managed principally through agricultural tenancies and in line with prevailing central government and council policy.

The structure of these tenancies, central government policy and changing economic and social patterns led to a continuing process of agricultural intensification. This initially reflected the war effort and the pressing need for self-sufficiency in food production. The trend was subsequently reinforced by the Common Agricultural Policy and the availability of production-based subsidies, combined with the commercial realities of agriculture and the pressure to produce cheap food.

This has been at the cost of biodiversity and other ecosystem services. Effects on the land have included soil erosion, nitrate pollution



of the aquifer, and loss of important habitats and wildlife, including significant tracts of chalk grassland. These have contributed to the release of greenhouse gases and have added to direct costs through, for example, flood damage and the need to remove nitrates from the water supply.

In addition, the ploughing out of earthworks has led to a substantial loss of previously rich archaeological remains in the South Downs.

Part of the council’s response to these problems has been to work with farmers to introduce new land management practices. These include stopping ploughing on

steep land and, where possible, replacing cereal planting with moisture-absorbing permanent pasture.

Natural capital assets

Natural capital is defined as the world’s stocks of natural assets which provide goods and services to people and living things. The estate is rich in natural capital from its geology, vegetation and water. The council commissioned consultants Natural Capital Research to carry out a natural capital baseline assessment of the estate, quantifying the ecosystem service flows across it. These are outlined in the following tables.

Table 1 – Natural capital assets across the estate

Land Cover	
Woodland cover	492.6 ha/9% holding is woodland
Broadleaved mixed and yew woodland	485.4 ha
Neutral grassland	1,584.7 ha
Calcareous grassland	451.9 ha
Hedgerows and trees outside of woodland	192.1 ha
Modified grassland	996.7 ha
Arable and horticulture	1,136.3 ha
Dense scrub	69.8 ha
Dwarf shrub heath	0.6 ha
Built-up areas and gardens	233 ha
Coniferous woodland	7.2 ha
Water	
Ponds and water bodies	1.5 ha
Open saline water	0.8 ha
Littoral sediment	37.8 ha
Topography	
Slope	11.4 %
Elevation	112.5 metres above sea level
Soils	
Silt loam	3,882.3 ha
Silty clay loam	85.8 ha
Loam	1,215.6 ha

Each natural capital asset provides us with valuable ecosystem services which contribute to making human life possible. Systems such as agriculture and human well-being rely on these services. The estate’s ecosystem services flows are quantified in the table below:

Table 2 – Ecosystem services flows

Ecosystem services flows	Total	unit	Average	unit
Carbon storage in vegetation and soils	2,155,910	tCO2e	414	tCO2e/ha
Carbon storage in woodlands and forests	159,208	tCO2e	31	tCO2e/ha
Carbon storage in trees and vegetation outside woodlands (scrub and hedgerows)	38,969	tCO2e	7	tCO2e/ha
Carbon storage in top-soil	1,957,733	tCO2e	376	tCO2e/ha
Carbon sequestration in vegetation and soils	2,802	tCO2e	1	tCO2e/ha/yr
Carbon sequestration in woodlands and forests	2,333	tCO2e	<1	tCO2e/ha/yr
Carbon sequestration in trees and vegetation outside of woodlands (scrub and hedgerows)	469	tCO2e	<1	tCO2e/ha/yr
Soil erosion prevention	96,365	Tonnes soil loss avoided/yr	19	tonnes soil loss avoided/ha/yr
Flood risk reduction	762,799	m³ runoff avoided/yr	162	m³ runoff avoided/ha/yr
Recreation	3,812,000	Number of visits/yr	n/a	n/a
Important areas for supporting insect pollinators of crops	3,226	ha	n/a	n/a
Important biodiversity habitats	5,205	ha	n/a	n/a

Environmental designations

The estate is a steward of a range of environmental and planning designations. This is beneficial as it can provide additional protection for species, habitats and geological features. It can also improve access to funding schemes and increase the potential for collaboration with local stakeholders. Designations include:

- South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)
- South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ)
- Adur and Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS)

- Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve – The Living Coast
- Source Protection and Safeguard Zones
- Scheduled monuments

In 2016, the South Downs National Park became the newest International Dark Sky Reserve.

The main local designation is the South Downs National Park: 94% of the estate falls within its boundaries. In addition, 11% is within a local nature reserve and 3% within an SSSI. This includes Clayton to Offham Escarpment and Castle Hill, one of the best examples in East Sussex of diminishing chalk grassland habitat.

Castle Hill is also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and National Nature Reserve. The estate is encompassed by the Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve – the only urban location with this designation in the UK.



Biodiversity

The estate is host to many important wildlife and biodiversity sites, including:

- Castle Hill
- Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs
- Clayton to Offham Escarpment
- Beacon Hill
- Benfield Hill
- Whitehawk Hill
- Sheepcote Valley
- Stanmer Park

Calcareous (chalk) grassland is pre-eminent in providing key habitats for biodiversity. Woodland and scrub are also important.

Many of these sites include areas of heritage protection that also benefit nature by, for example, imposing restrictions on agriculture and promoting light-touch approaches to land management.

Figure 2, on the next page, illustrates the distribution of the habitats or land covers in the estate.

The estate is most renowned for the species-rich chalk grassland at Castle Hill. The assemblage of rare and scarce species includes one of the UK's largest colonies of early spider orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata* and the wart-biter cricket *Decticus verrucivorus*. These have earned the site designations at both national and international level.

The many local wildlife sites on the estate include Patcham Court Field, Happy Valley, Stanmer Park and Ditchling Road; a local geological site is at Stanmer Village. Lying near the coast, the estate also has a marine conservation zone at Beachy Head West – the chalk reef – stretching from west of Brighton Marina to Eastbourne.

Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre shows that there are hundreds of protected and designated species on the estate. Sightings of nationally scarce plants include field fleawort *Tephrosia integrifolia*, Nottingham catchfly *Silene nutans* (for example, at Castle Hill), and bastard toadflax *Thesium humifusum* (for example, at Whitehawk Hill).

Fauna includes charismatic species of conservation concern such as adder, glow-worm, hornet robberfly, all three forester moth species, and Dark Green Fritillary butterfly. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List / Section 41 bird and invertebrate species include corn bunting, yellowhammer, linnet, brown-banded carder bee and small blue.

Water

All of the estate lies within a highly productive aquifer, providing the city's water supply (see Figure 3). The chalk downs act as a sponge, absorbing and filtering rainwater. Collaborations such as The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) aim to protect the aquifer by tackling water pollution.

The estate comprises 5 km of catchment drainage lines, 1.5 hectares of ponds and water bodies, 37.9 hectares of littoral sediment (habitats of shingle, gravel, sand and mud). Its central physiographic feature is its dry valleys. A total of 4,300 hectares are in groundwater source protection and safeguard zones, predominantly zones 1 and 2; 99% of the holding is located in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution).



Fig 2: Variety of habitats

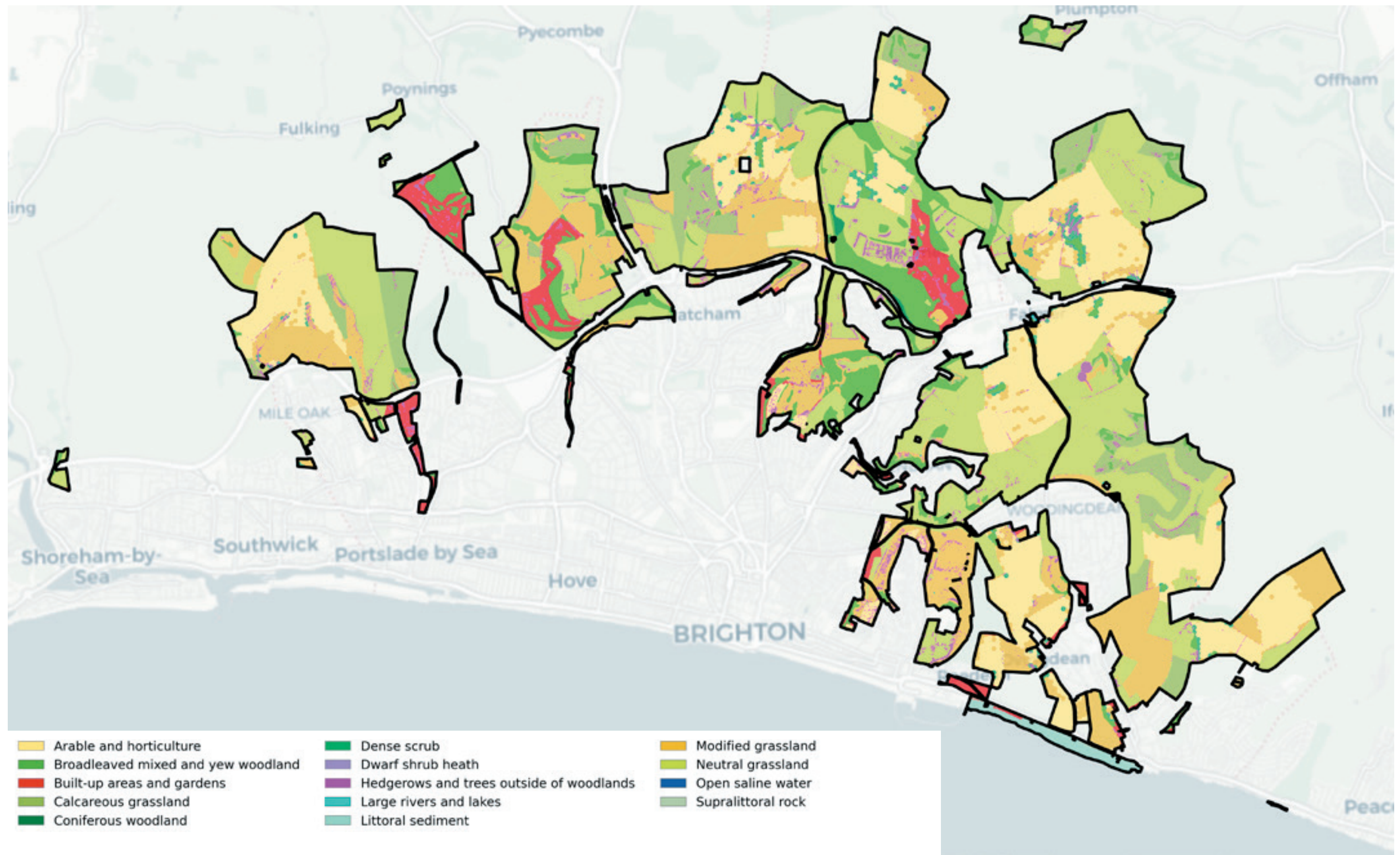
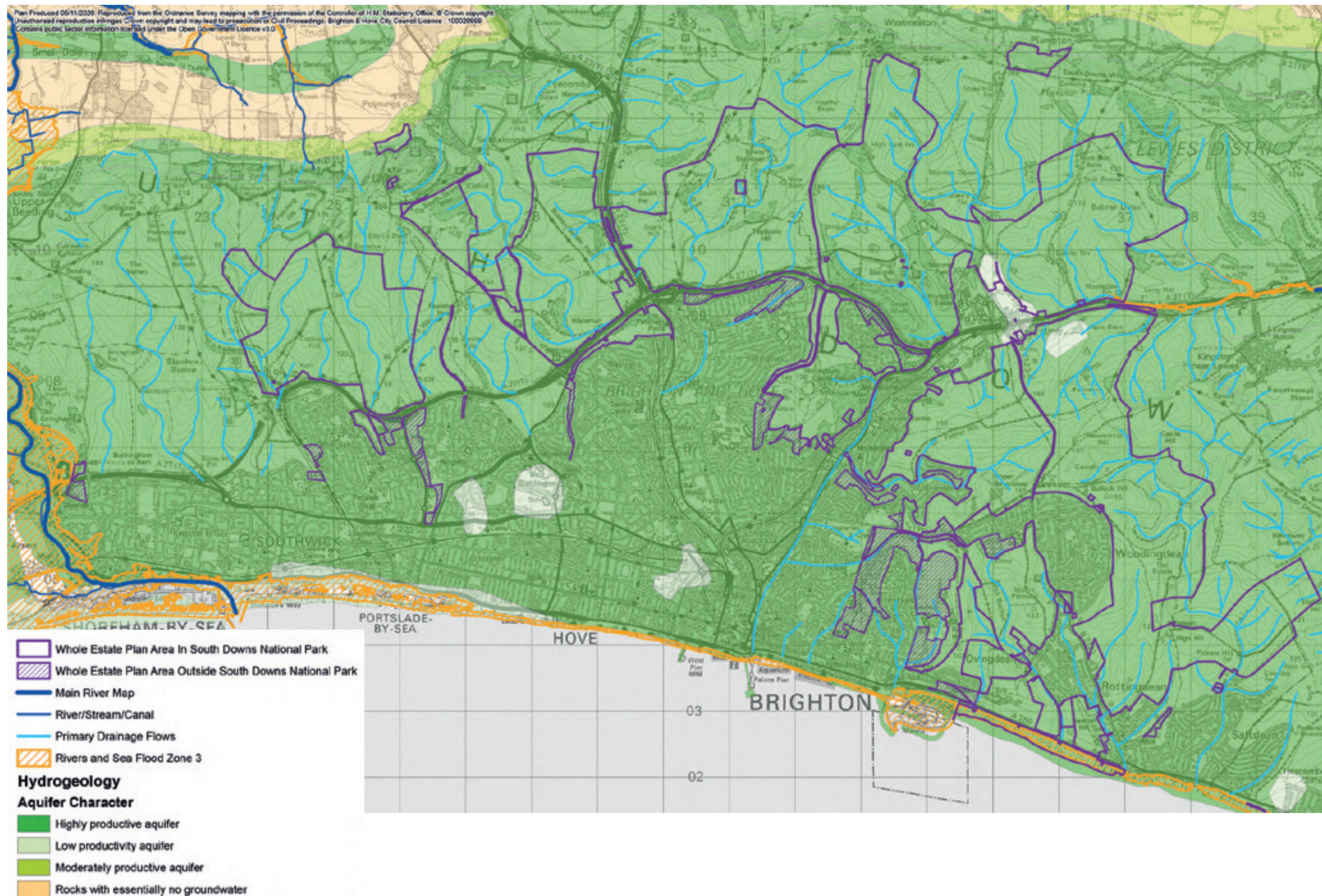


Fig 3: Location of the aquifer



Chalk grassland

This type of grassland has been identified both in local and national Biodiversity Action Plans as a priority habitat, and therefore among the most under threat.

Much of the chalk grassland on the estate is degraded and needs urgent action. Based on a comparison of open chalk outcrop on the Brighton Downs between 1840 and 2007, only around 9% is surviving old down pasture and associated scrub*. This comprises 180 fragments scattered thinly across the downland plateau. Only beyond the estate's boundaries, on the plateau's northern scarp, does chalk grassland still dominate the landscape.

Funded through a Higher Level Stewardship scheme, the council is managing 110 hectares at Whitehawk Hill, Beacon Hill and Benfield Hill with the objective of restoring and enhancing chalk grassland.

**A Freedom to Roam Guide to the Brighton Downs, Dave Bangs, 2008*



Woodland

Some 492.6 hectares of the estate is woodland, comprising 485.4 hectares of broadleaved mixed and yew woodland and 7.2 hectares of coniferous woodland. Some of these woodlands are rich in biodiversity. The estate also has areas of ancient woodland in and around Stanmer and eleven planted orchards and a number of fruit trees on allotments. The most notable orchards are at Racehill and Stanmer, which hosts the National Collection of Sussex Apples.

The carbon stored in woodland and forests across the estate is about 159,208 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with the highest amounts in and around Stanmer and above Coldean (see Figure 4).

Ash dieback is advanced across the estate. The council closely monitors incidences of this highly destructive disease. Where appropriate, we replace fallen or damaged ash trees with disease-resistant species. An ash dieback plan was published in June 2022 see appendix x. Surveys are underway across the estate to gauge infection, focusing mainly on footpaths, highways and property.

Dutch elm disease continues to be a challenge, and we respond promptly where new infections arise in order to contain the spread. For example, elm has recently been removed from farmland close to Stanmer Park. The park itself is a source of annual infections.

A woodland management plan is in place for Stanmer Park. This aims to bring Stanmer's woodland into active management and enhance nature conservation and the historic environment.

About 192 hectares of hedgerows and trees are located outside the woodlands, providing habitat networks across the whole estate.

Farmland

The agricultural estate has 34 farm tenancies across 16 agricultural holdings. Twenty are let under farm business tenancies (FBTs), tenancies granted after 1 September 1995, and 14 under Agricultural Holdings Act (AHA) tenancies allowing the tenant long-term security and successions. Some 73% of the estate is within a stewardship scheme, Higher Level Environmental Stewardship or a Country Stewardship scheme. The one organic farm has adopted an extensive livestock grazing system.

A number of tenant farmers have adopted regenerative farming techniques. These include growing cover crops to improve soil structure and limit erosion. Some have reduced ploughing, or stopped altogether. Other initiatives have included investment in new seed drills to reduce soil disturbance.



The agricultural estate is 57% grassland. Most of the farms are between 50 and 245 metres above sea level and lie generally on soil type Andover 1. This refers to chalky soils which are shallow and well drained on the slopes and crests, but with deep fine silty soils in the valley bottom. The presence of this soil type is part of the reason that most farms operate mixed arable and livestock enterprises.

The quality of agricultural land is graded from 1 to 5, with the best quality graded 1. Estate land is mainly in grades 3 and 4. This imposes some restrictions on the choice of crops, type of cultivation, harvesting and yield. Land in these categories is used for beef and lamb and, in the more fertile areas, cereals including wheat, barley and oats.

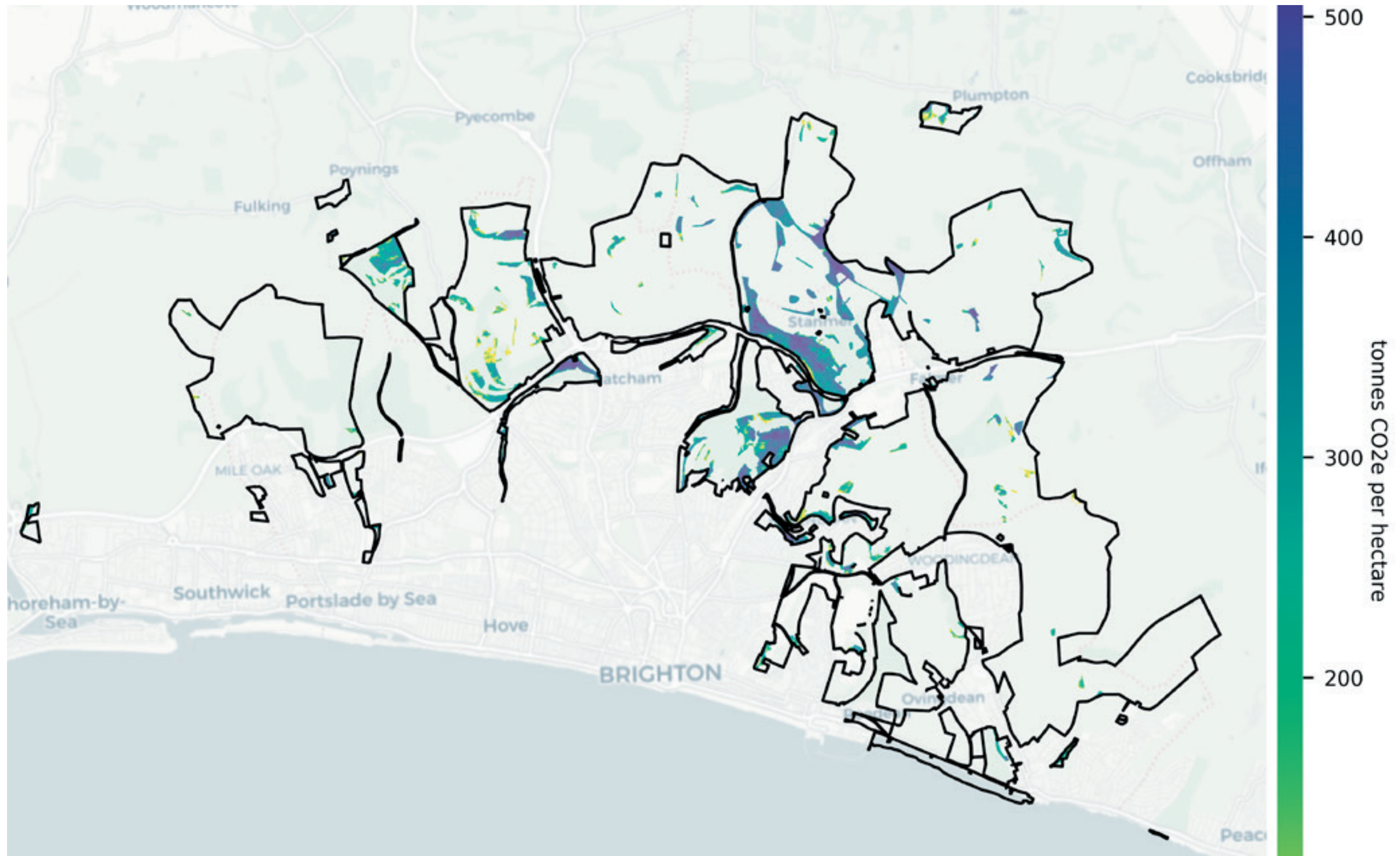
Community

The estate plays a key role in the community. This includes providing employment and housing, and encompasses events, public access, school visits and allotments.

The 32 hectares of allotments are spread over 36 sites, with 3,000 allotment holders. A recent study showed that they produce a significant benefit for both plot-holders and the community – providing green corridors for wildlife, storing carbon and contributing to wellbeing and good mental health.

In addition to buses running regularly along the southern border of the estate, services are available to Ditchling Beacon, Devil's Dyke and Stanmer Park – though only at weekends and on public holidays.

Fig 4: Areas of woodland storing high levels of carbon



Community (continued)

Across the estate, there are around 80 community facilities. These include car parks, three equestrian yards, several community food-producing projects and orchards, and two village farm shops at Falmer and Mile Oak. Leisure facilities include camping and glamping sites at Housedean and Upper Bevendean farms, and two golf courses.

A number of community organisations are based at Stanmer. These include Brighton Permaculture Trust, a charity which promotes sustainable development through education and fruit-growing. BHFP helps people to learn to grow and cook healthy food. Stanmer Organics supports projects that promote well-being and sustainable lifestyles. Volunteers are critical to all these organisations.

Sports facilities on the estate include five full-size football pitches at Waterhall and two at Stanmer. These are used by the Sussex County Women & Girls Football League, among others. Baseball is also played on the upper part of Waterhall.

Public access

The estate comprises 1,587 hectares of open access and recreational land – a high proportion relative to other landed estates in the South Downs. This includes areas such as Patcham Court Farm which have been designated as statutory access land in perpetuity.

The estate has a well-used network of public rights of way, comprising: 45 km of footpaths; 79 km of bridleways; 18 km of permissive footpaths; 20 km of permissive bridleways; 10 km of byway open to all traffic; and 4 km of national cycle networks. According to Natural Capital Research's baseline assessment, the City Downland Estate provides a higher level of public access than comparator estates. Access is more limited, however, for non-car owners. There are major bus routes near the Downs but little information about stops and signposted walks. Access is also impeded by the lack of crossings over major roads such as Old Boat Corner, Warren Road and Ditchling Road Upper Lodges Car Park.

Cultural heritage

The estate's 24 listed buildings include the Grade I Stanmer House, and many Grade II properties in Stanmer village. Stanmer Park is an 18th-century registered listed park and garden covering 457 hectares. The estate is also home to 26 scheduled monuments. As sites deemed to be of national significance, they are subject to statutory protections. Examples are the medieval settlement at Balmer, the Whitehawk Camp causewayed enclosure and Hillfort at Hollingbury.

The medieval village at Balmer has survived well in spite of agricultural activity. Comprising houses, gardens, yards, streets and paddocks, and often with a green, a manor and a church, these settlements were a key part of the rural landscape of medieval England. Between 50 and 70 causewayed enclosures are recorded nationally, mainly in southern and eastern England. They were constructed over a period of some 500 years during the middle part of the Neolithic period (c.3000–2400 BCE) but also continued in use into later periods.

Light univallate hillforts are defined as enclosures of various shapes, generally between one and ten hectares, on or close to hilltops and defined by a single line of earthworks. They date between the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (9000–6000 centuries BCE).

The Heritage at Risk programme identifies sites that are most vulnerable to being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. Stanmer Park is classified as a heritage at risk site, reflecting loss of woodland and the truncation of the parkland by the A27.

Homes

Of the 76 properties on the estate, 66 are within the agricultural portfolio, including nine farmhouses and associated farm cottages. Some of the cottages provide accommodation for farmworkers employed on the estate.

While city residents benefit from the proximity of the estate, its own boundaries, the SDNPA designation and the location of the A27 places significant constraints on the city's capacity to meet its housing needs.



Fig 5: Public access

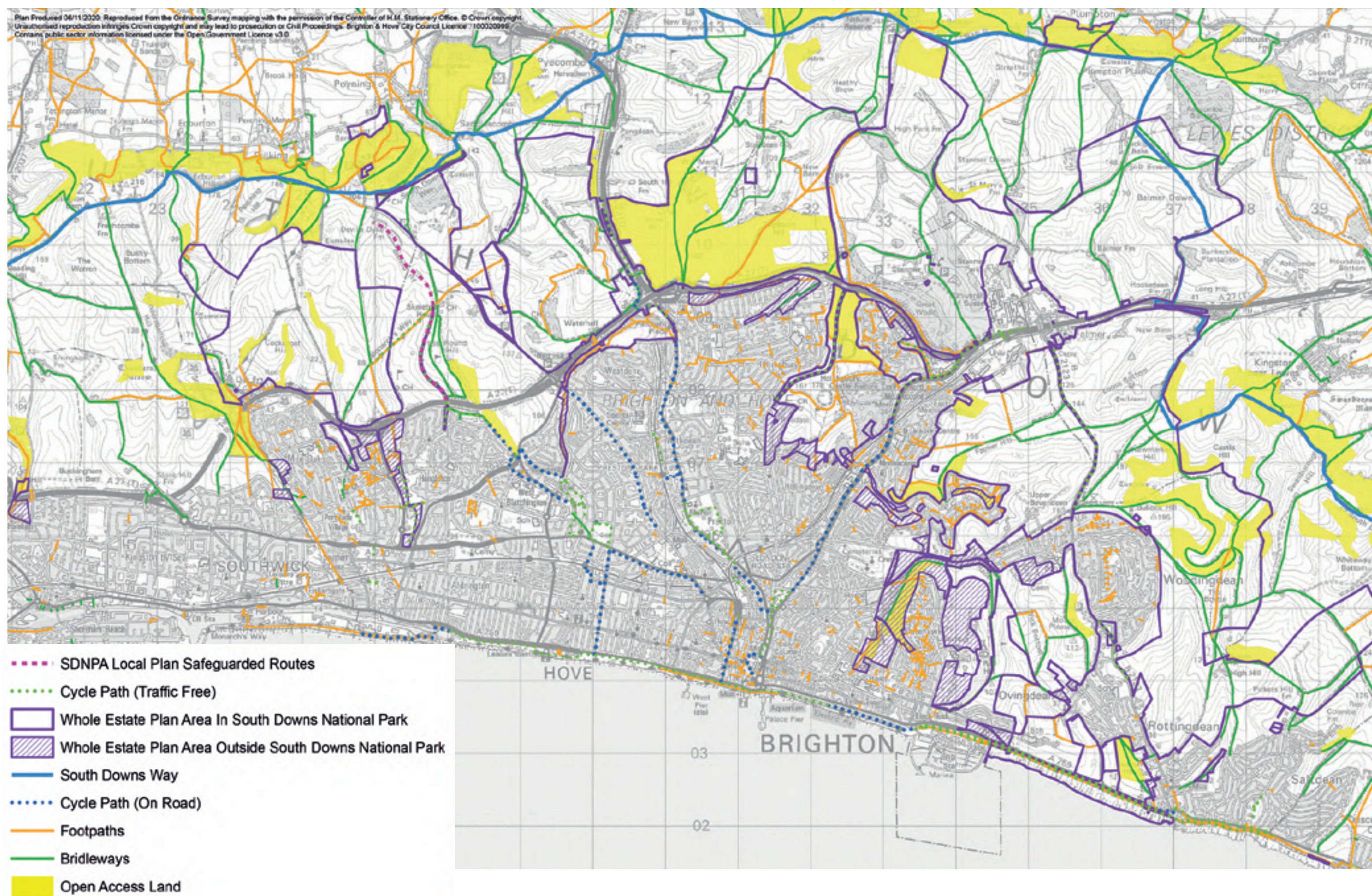
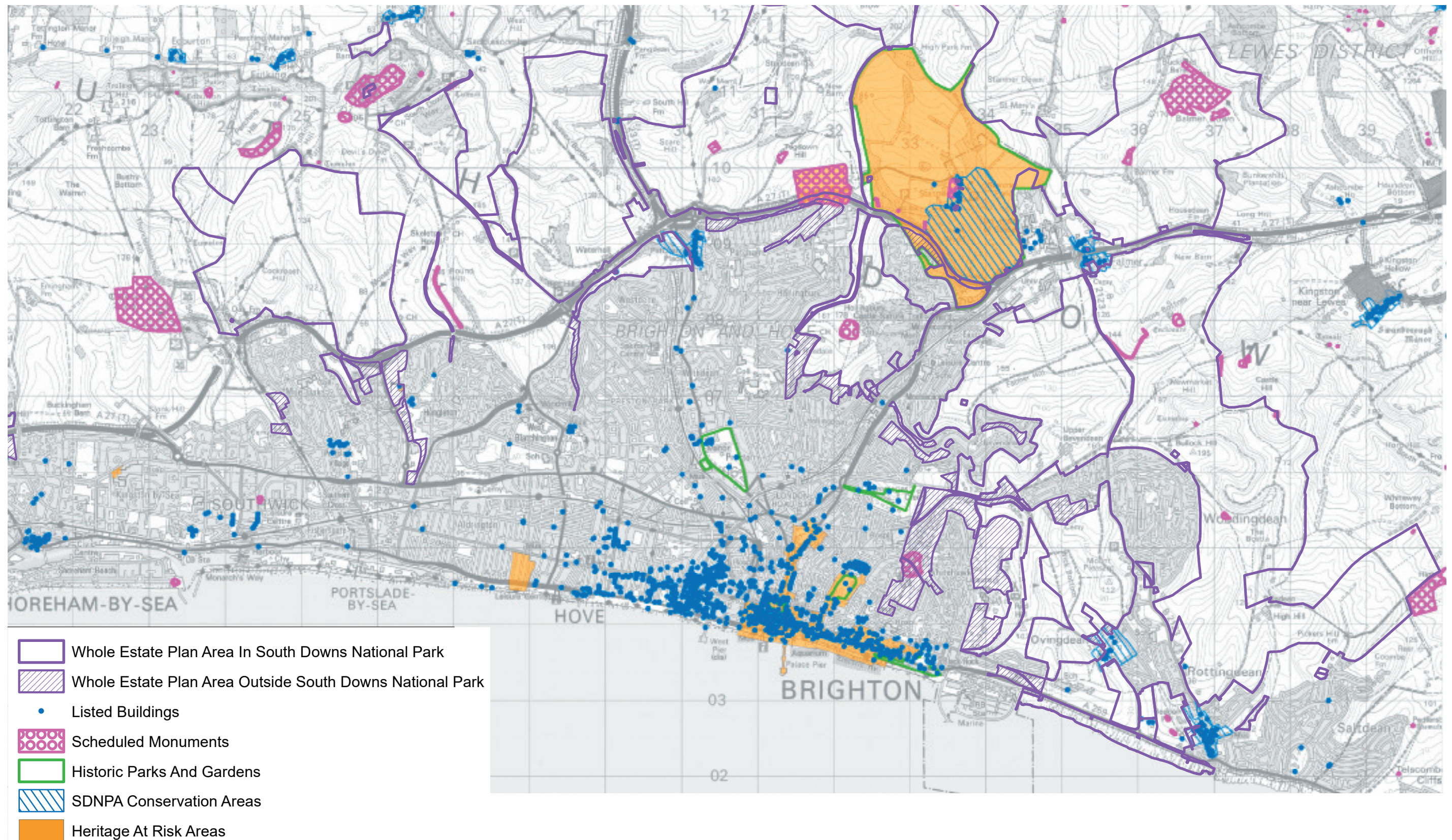


Fig 6: Heritage assets



4. Ecosystem services

In its guidance on the development of whole estate plans, the SDNPA asks estates to analyse their assets in the context of their ability to supply the services which provide many of life's essentials. These are broadly divided into four categories, as shown below:



With thanks to SDNPA for the use of this diagram.

Our approach

Our analysis assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the assets of the City Downland Estate, the opportunities and threats which they present and – above all – how we should define our priorities in order to ensure the estate achieves its full potential for the benefit of all.

The council has drawn on a wide range of sources to develop the analysis, including multiple stakeholder groups and the community consultation conducted through the Planning for Real process (see Overview).

The community consultation also provided deeper insights into the opportunities and threats facing the estate's ecosystem services and how we need to deploy our resources to have the biggest impact.

Within the four categories shown in the chart opposite, we changed or merged some of the subheadings set out by the SDNPA to reflect stakeholders' priorities and perceptions. The overlap between topics reflects the interconnected and often symbiotic relationship between many of the services.

The consultation process

The process began in the autumn of 2020 with five online events at which 400 residents and stakeholders shared their views on the estate, followed by polling structured to reflect the four ecosystem service categories described opposite.

We put particular emphasis on engaging with the widest cross-section of the public, for example through publicity tailored to the BAME and LGBTQ communities among others. With assistance from the Trust for Developing Communities, we also set up meetings with minority groups to talk about the project and get feedback.

Having analysed the chat logs from these events and identified some gaps in the initial polling, we set up a new stakeholder event in January 2021 to refine further the agenda for the next stage of the consultation. In parallel, a new interactive web portal linked to the council's Climate Assembly enabled visitors to post more detailed documents, videos and other material. The results were collated and explored at webinars held at the end of February. Following further analysis and debate, this led to the culmination of the consultation process – our visioning event in April.

The commentary overleaf reflects first and foremost the issues raised throughout the consultation process and in particular the conclusions reached by the community at the visioning event.



Priorities include better access for disabled people, improved use of Brighton Community Transport and more cycle lanes

Cultural services

Accessibility and inclusiveness

All sections of the community can benefit from the estate. But at present not all sections of the community benefit equally. A key priority for the council therefore is to help ensure that as many people as possible are given the opportunity to experience the life-enhancing qualities that the estate has to offer.

One of the key conclusions of the visioning event was that the council must adopt a strategy to make the Downs accessible to all within its catchment area. This includes making the most of the estate's proximity to some of the city's most deprived areas to create new opportunities for those living there.

Educational programmes have a key role to play in promoting engagement with the estate



While the community wishes to see a substantial reduction in car use in and around the estate, the objective of wider access can only be achieved if effective alternatives are available.

Initiatives to be considered include: improved bus services, and better publicity about the services which already exist; improved use of Brighton & Hove Community Transport; more cycle lanes; better access for disabled people; collaboration with Transport for the South East; and the appointment of a council officer with specific responsibility for co-ordinating activities of this kind. Other proposals include designating every site under the council's management as statutory open access land.

Educational programmes have a key role to play in promoting engagement with the estate. This should include outreach activities for excluded groups, including campaigns aimed at ethnic minorities and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pop-up events and experiences on the Downs could be used to broaden understanding of the estate's value to the community.

Recreation, well-being and health

The estate is already a vital recreational resource for the community, with an estimated 3.8 million visits per annum. Parts of the landscape which are frequently recorded and uploaded to social media platforms alone show there are over 196,000 social media hits each year.

Improved access is however a critical element in enabling a greater proportion of residents to make the most of the proven health as well as recreational benefits offered by the estate's green spaces.



The estate can help more people enjoy the benefits of being physically active

The council should consider the visitor experience in totality, rather than infrastructural upgrades in isolation. Areas for attention include the quality as well as quantity of access points. There is scope to provide better on-site interpretive information, signage and maps. Changes of this kind should be co-ordinated with the council's wider visitor economy and events strategies.

The needs of current users must not be overlooked. For example, studies (such as Natural England's *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment survey*) indicate that dog walking is the primary reason people visit parks and green spaces (walking without a dog was second). Where it may be necessary to place constraints on these activities (to protect ground-nesting birds or other sensitive

habitats), such users should be consulted about our plans and, through signage and other means, given clear guidance on where they can exercise safely.

The *A Brighton Landscape* plan highlighted the estate's power to imbue visitors with a deep sense of seclusion and tranquillity, providing much-needed respite from the pressures of city life. These qualities could be further enhanced, for example, through a judicious programme of tree-planting. One of the recommendations from the visioning event was that the council should engage with key light polluters to explore ways to preserve and improve the dark night skies for which the estate and national park are renowned.



Further tree planting has a role to play in imbuing a sense of seclusion and tranquility

Heritage

Our community consultations underlined the importance that participants attach to the enjoyment of the historic landscape and support for a programme of events which would raise the profile of the heritage assets.

The present-day estate carries many echoes of the past. The discovery of Whitehawk Woman – laid to rest here 5,600 years ago – illustrates the diversity of Neolithic peoples (often called ‘the first farmers’). Hollingbury Hillfort and Ditchling Beacon provide an insight into how farming changed between the Bronze and Iron Ages – possibly in response to environmental changes. The Chattri memorial and Holt Hill provide a connection to the people of Hindu and Sikh faith who died in World War I and whose ashes were scattered across the Sussex downland.

Historical narratives such as these have a key role to play in reinforcing the relevance and value of the estate to Brighton & Hove’s diverse communities.

The Brighton Downs Alliance’s submission emphasised that sites of high archaeological value should have priority for inclusion in landscape-scale restoration projects. Deep cultivation should stop on archaeological notified sites, with lighter machinery being used where cultivation continues.

All cultural heritage should be recorded and monitored, encompassing details of protection, conservation, information and interpretation, to preserve and celebrate our rich downland history.

Maintaining the estate as a public asset

The overall value of the estate to the community cannot be measured in terms of monetary returns. That said, the consultation and other submissions show there is a consensus for the principle that the estate should be financially self-sustaining: a critical factor in securing its long-term future in public hands. Income streams generated by the estate should be used to improve facilities and infrastructure – and above all, to enhance natural capital and reverse biodiversity loss.

As a publicly owned asset, a key priority for the community is that the governance and management of the estate is transparent and that the council can readily be held to account for all decisions affecting it. The integrity of the estate’s borders must be maintained. This means that land or buildings should not be disposed of, except where this would lead to improvements in the overall quality of the estate and its environment. Where this is the case, the proceeds must be reinvested in the estate.

Regulating services

Managing climate change

Taking action on climate change is one of the most urgent tasks facing the council. The estate has an important role to play in our 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme. This target requires the city’s greenhouse gas emissions to fall by 12.7% annually from 2020 onwards. It can only be achieved if all city organisations, businesses, communities, residents and visitors sign up to our common agenda.

The initiatives we are adopting to reduce the city’s carbon footprint are wide-ranging. With a third of emissions attributable to transport, a major part of the programme focuses on efforts to create pedestrianised communities, improved public transport and a car-free city centre, while also encouraging cycling and the use of electric vehicles. Other key areas include reducing emissions from council-owned buildings and vehicles.

Climate change was one of the principal areas of discussion during the consultation process and at the visioning event. In addition to achieving carbon neutrality, participants identified that creating climate

change resilience is the main objective. These aims in relation to the estate should be fully integrated into the council’s overall climate change and biodiversity plans.

The estate can contribute to achieving carbon neutrality through a number of means. In addition to making better provisions for cycling, walking and public transport, these include greener energy, tree and hedgerow-planting, species-rich habitat creation, new approaches to land management and low carbon farming techniques. Our carbon objective will also be directly served by improving water quality and the storage of carbon in vegetation and soils (see below).

The estate can mitigate the effects of climate-related flooding and extreme weather events by applying nature-based solutions. These include green infrastructure, water efficiency, recycling and the adoption of new land and soil health management techniques. We already maintain earth bunds at the bottom of valleys and apply restrictions on cropping. This limits the rate of water runoff and increases the moisture-carrying capacity in soil and vegetation.



Earth bunds help to tackle the effects of climate change by mitigating the potential for flooding

Water and soil quality

The city depends on the chalk aquifer for its water supply. The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) – a collaboration between the council, SDNPA, Southern Water and the Environment Agency – was formed as a result of the pressing need to tackle groundwater pollution and the rising level of nitrates that leach into the aquifer.

The need to protect the aquifer was strongly endorsed by participants in the consultation process. The visioning event recommended in particular that the council, through TAP, addresses rising nitrate levels from the public highway and farming. A number of stakeholders have called for an end to polluting agrichemical inputs on farmland to achieve the same outcome.

Regenerative agriculture (see Sustainable farming on page 46) is also fundamental in improving soil health and therefore carbon storage, biodiversity and water quality.

In addition to mitigating flood risk, slowing and delaying the rate of surface water runoff has a key role to play in improving water quality and aquifer recharging.

Contributory methods include the use of agricultural cover crops, a transition to more sustainable, extensive and pastoral-based farming systems, and the establishment or expansion of water bodies and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) where applicable.

The significance of soil health in delivering multiple objectives demonstrates the interconnected nature of the ecosystem services provided by the estate. In addition to improving biodiversity it strongly influences the land's capacity to retain water, helping to recharge the aquifer and mitigate flood risk; while also substantially reducing emissions by acting as a carbon sink.

The role that soil plays in this respect can hardly be overestimated. According to Natcap Research, 90% of our carbon in estate land is stored in vegetation and in the top 30 cm of the soil. Improving soil ecology and minimising erosion is thus a key priority for the estate.

The right selection of crops and vegetation has a vital role to play. Ploughing on steep slopes should stop because this leads to a loss of top-soil. Land managers should increase the organic content of soil where appropriate, and minimise tillage operations.

Pastoral-based farming and an increase in ponds and dew ponds on the estate can help to improve water quality and aquifer recharging



Restoring rare chalk grassland is a key priority for the estate

Grazing and chalk grassland

Rare chalk grassland is one of glories of the estate, and restoring it wherever possible is a key objective. The re-creation of permanent grazing pasture, with its high-value scrub, is widely recognised as playing a vital role in the recovery process. The visioning event proposed that the council should identify priority areas for restoration and agree an implementation plan for the short, medium and long term. For example, Moulsecoomb Home Farm has already been earmarked as a restoration site.

In addition to paying immediate attention to conserving the grassland that is left, restoration will involve stitching together patches that over time have become increasingly fragmented. Progress in this area would have wide-ranging benefits – such as helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity, enhancing landscape quality, safeguarding the aquifer and providing a means of sequestering carbon.

In addition, *A Brighton Landscape* advocates a co-ordinated approach to pastoral farming across the estate. Indeed a landscape-

scale approach is required for grassland restoration. We have a statutory duty to protect and enhance rare or valuable areas of chalk grassland; they will be given priority and treated more prescriptively than basic grassland. In practice this would mean a reduction in arable acreage and expansion in land devoted to grazing (though possibly with a reduction in the density of livestock).

Woodland

According to Natcap Research, 83% of carbon sequestered by the estate each year is in woodlands and forests, with the remainder in hedgerows and single trees that lie outside woodlands. Maturer trees store more carbon than younger stock.

The council notes that woodlands can be developed by means other than new planting. As described under 'Landscape restoration' overleaf, any new planting which does take place must be consistent with ecological objectives.

Tree-planting could also be informed by historical and archeological datasets showing areas of woodland lost over the last 200–300 years.

Provisioning services

Local food chains

There is strong support within the community for promoting local food chains. The council should work with BHFP, local retailers, food producers and allotment holders to increase opportunities to buy locally produced goods. This could include for example venison, microbrewing and other products that can be produced locally. We believe that conveying a strong sense of local authenticity and provenance will play an important role in marketing these goods.

Traditional orchards combine local food production with carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and community engagement. Other edible plantings offer similar benefits. Areas with better soils should be prioritised for these activities.

BHFP's vision is healthy, sustainable and fair food for all. Its aims include creating a vibrant, diverse and skilled community food sector, transforming catering and food procurement and working to make Brighton a city of food use, not food waste.

Part of the council's role will be to encourage local sourcing through its own procurement policies and practice.

Food production and its supply chain are the second largest carbon emitter in the UK. Local distribution will play a part in helping to achieve our net zero target.



Locally produced goods deliver environmental as well as economic benefits

Sustainable farming

Many farmers are under pressure. The NFU has highlighted that the phasing out of direct payments to farmers will mean that on average around two-thirds of the total farm business income will be lost. The community believes therefore that the council needs to work collaboratively with agricultural tenants to accelerate the adoption of sustainable farming methods.

The council will need to ensure farmers are financially supported as they transition to more regenerative or organic farming practices. Funding may be available from a number of sources, such as Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs). The council should help tenants to gain access to external funding where available. The council may also need to intervene directly by for example

applying rent reductions and/or rent-free periods to incentivise farmers to adopt environmentally and socially beneficial measures. The council should do all it can to encourage regenerative farming methods, which help to reverse climate change and strengthen biodiversity by rebuilding soil organic matter. The benefits include carbon removal and improvements in the water cycle.

A key environmental issue is cropping. Each year 96,355 tonnes of soil loss is avoided as a result of vegetation cover. Vegetation and soil cover also helps to reduce flood risk – they eliminate 203.8m³ of rainfall runoff per hectare per year, or over 1m³ for the estate as a whole.

Vegetation is working hard, especially on slopes, to prevent soil erosion. We need to work with farmers to restrict cropping further.



Vegetation cover substantially reduces soil erosion and flood risk

Particularly when contracting a new lease; the council can use its influence with agricultural tenants to embrace sustainable farming methods. This includes adopting regenerative and organic methods, reducing use of artificial fertilisers and agrichemicals, building biodiversity and soil health, and cutting carbon emissions associated with livestock and arable production. Rotating livestock regularly can generate biodiversity and carbon sequestration benefits.

The council should encourage new entrants to the farming sector, including community-based organisations, as they are likely to be more receptive to change. This includes adopting new ideas and technology in line with the council's aim of maximising biodiversity and achieving carbon neutrality.

Part of our approach will be to act as a conduit for sharing best practices, highlighting good examples to follow. This may include farms in the Higher Level Organic Stewardship scheme and those wanting to join ELMs when these become available.

Energy and waste

Energy matters are increasingly seen through the prism of climate change. At the visioning event, it was proposed that the council should establish the potential for installing solar panels on the roofs of existing buildings, both in the short-term and over the longer term. The council should implement energy saving measures at the estate as part of its wider energy efficiency review.

The council has also been improving its property portfolio by identifying inefficiencies in energy use and working with site managers to reduce consumption of gas, electricity and oil. By 2022/23 we plan to install 500 kW of solar PV in corporate, housing and leisure sites, saving 150 tonnes of CO2 per annum.

Maximising efficiency and reducing waste underlines the need for a 'whole system' approach to the estate. For example, leftover food could provide a valuable source of compost for plant crop nutrition. Composting reduces emissions and pollution. It also reuses organic waste and cuts fertiliser and agri-production costs, while returning to the soil nutrients that are needed in food production. Biosolids (treated sewage sludge) from Southern Water wastewater treatments plants could be used to provide crop nutrients and enhance the soil.

Supporting services

Landscape restoration

Restoring the species-rich chalk grassland that covered most of the high Downs until less than a century ago remains the priority (see 'Grazing and chalk grassland' above). Discussion groups at the visioning event also highlighted the potential role of tree and hedgerow-planting in enhancing the beauty of the landscape and softening the city's hard urban edge with the surrounding downland. This would also help to improve air quality, particularly near residential and traffic-congested areas.

New planting should not however undermine existing valuable ecology and the potential for wildflower-rich chalk grassland restoration, or cause damage to natural habitats or archaeological features. The choice of trees should take account of which species are likely to support native wildlife and be best adapted to changes in the climate, such as drought and disease-resistant varieties.

Similarly the consultation endorsed the creation or restoration of ponds and streams where this will not damage existing natural habitats, archaeology or the character of the landscape.

Biodiversity and wildlife

The estate is recognised nationally and internationally for its outstanding biodiversity and wildlife habitats. This is reflected in designations such as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and biosphere reserve.



Tree and hedgerow-planting softens the city's urban edge and helps to improve air quality



Yet this unique resource is under threat. As highlighted in the Asset audit section, less than 10% of the Brighton Downs' ancient chalk grassland now survives. In other areas, the estate is following national trends. These include 35% of all species declining in abundance, with 13% threatened with extinction.

Improving chalk grassland has a key role to play in reversing these trends. The Living Coast has highlighted that restoring and connecting up areas of chalk grassland would offer 'easy wins' for biodiversity and habitat resilience.

Land management plans should therefore be developed for areas of chalk grassland, with the objective of maintaining and increasing biodiversity. These would include a rolling programme of biological surveys at the start of a new tenancy and at five-yearly intervals thereafter. This would provide a check that legal wildlife protections are being observed and that approaches to management continue to be aligned with key priorities.

Land managers should manage amenity grassland, crop margins, scrub and hedgerows and woodland to support more wildlife, including key ecosystem service providers such as pollinators. Promoting good soil health (see Water and soil quality, on page 44) is also fundamental. They must also be alert to the role that heritage assets play in protecting species and habitats, and other aspects of improving the environment. This underlines the importance of taking a co-ordinated approach to managing all aspects of the estate.

This approach is fully aligned with The Lawton Review 2010, which found generally wildlife sites are small and isolated – and that the loss of species could be reversed by making the sites bigger, better, more numerous and joined-up. The Environment Act 2021 foresees the development of local nature recovery strategies as a key mechanism for delivering the Lawton recommendations. To this end, Brighton & Hove is working with East Sussex County Council to establish a local nature recovery network.

A commitment to achieve biodiversity net gain should be a condition for tenants when entering into new tenancies. In addition, when the council is considering planning applications within the boundaries of the city, the estate should be accorded a high priority in deciding how to deploy net gain. This could take the form of a monetary or environmental benefit (such as the creation of a new habitat).

The council should identify areas that could be suitable for wilding, establishing pilot projects and feeding back research results. One area for attention is mowing. It was suggested that some areas of grassland could be mowed much less frequently, perhaps once or twice a year. Pathways intersecting a patchwork of connected meadows could also help to increase the visibility of wildlife for walkers.

While wholeheartedly embracing the principle of accessibility, the council also needs to keep in mind the potentially damaging effects of increased visitor numbers and activities in ecologically sensitive parts of the estate. For example some access limitations will continue to be required in the locations of priority habitats.

Ecosystem services: SWOT analysis

The table below summarises the key findings from the Planning for Real process, expressed in terms of how stakeholders and the community perceive the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the estate's ecosystem services:

		Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Cultural Services	Accessibility & inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exceptional asset owned by the people, theirs in perpetuity • Proximity to a large local population • Access to internal and external expertise on how to tackle social exclusion • Council's connections with local partnerships and community groups • Engagement funding available for excluded and minority groups to support wellbeing and promote fairness • Rights of way improvement plan (RWIP) already in place • Expertise within council's tourism development and culture team • Access to council press and marketing teams • High access already over the estate • Good surface terrain for public access • Direct access to Brighton & Hove schools • Experience of running outreach programmes and groups to support delivery • An abundance of public open space and buildings to facilitate/host pop-up events, interpretation boards and community events • Ability to draw on support from community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity for co-ordination and resource more generally • Council expertise city rather than estate- focused • Limited current ranger support • Lack of local evidence to support decision making and to measure effects on priority habitats and wildlife • Poor signage and interpretation • Lack of clear identity, reducing the impact of good work already done • No financial support • Estate under-used by minority communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnify community goodwill, support and sense of public ownership • Connect existing rights of way and missing links • Expand the RWIP into an all-encompassing visitor management strategy • Improve public health (physical and mental) • Educate the public about the history of the estate and its links with the environment, countryside and food • Generate new income streams, e.g. from higher visitor numbers • Address areas of conflict, uncontrolled use, parking and signage • Expand conducted tours and improve signage for specific trails • Scale up initiatives and plans • Facilitate farm hosting (drawing on strong support from farmers) • Forge a clear identity for the estate, through for example events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet community expectation • Current infrastructure unable to support a significant increase in visitor numbers • Under-management leading to poor visitor behaviour - e.g. litter, vandalism, dog fouling, sheep & cattle worrying and disturbance of important wildlife habitats • Conflicts between users - walkers, professional dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders and land managers • Increase in cost of management and livestock husbandry; death of or injury to farm animals • Public safety • Loss of wildlife, ground nesting birds, hares • Long term maintenance costs of new and additional signage & interpretation

Cultural Services

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Recreation, well-being and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to a large local population • Iconic landscape • Short distance to areas of high tranquillity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to raise awareness of the estate's potential to improve health and wellbeing, and encourage citizens to take full advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain significant benefits from limited seed investment • Gather evidence to demonstrate the estate's value in supporting physical and mental health • Generate new income streams • Apply council influence to reduce light pollution and enhance tranquillity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tranquillity compromised by increased visitor numbers
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of continuous human settlement from, Neolithic, Bronze, Iron ages through to the modern era • Contribution to and connections with WW I & II • Rich cultural heritage, including archaeological sites, numerous scheduled monuments and other assets of historic value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor and limited interpretation of estate's cultural and historic heritage • Limited communication of the value of heritage assets to current and potential users of the estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use historic materials and sites to promote the estate's heritage • Generate new income streams from visitor attractions • Develop Stanmer Traditional Farm Building as a gateway to the South Downs and a cultural/recreational landmark for the estate • Capitalise on heritage to build the estate's identity and reinforce the message that it is publicly owned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term maintenance costs of new and additional signage & interpretation
Maintaining the estate as a public asset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratically accountable to the electorate • Well-developed governance through council committee structure and local government regulation • Council's role in delivering services to the community • High level of expertise and experience within the council • Ability to direct and coordinate council's resources to achieve community focused outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing funding priorities and speed of decision making • Multiple committees and sub groups (working/task & finish/advisory) • Statutory limitations of what the council can do and compliance with Local Government Act(s) • Limited access to funding (capital and revenue) and current council budget shortfall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand contribution to the public realm • Broaden access for the whole community and contribute to reducing social injustice • Rationalise management structure to facilitate more agile decision making • Maximise the benefits of collaborative working with partners and community groups • Harmonise policy affecting the estate with wider council policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits on the council's capacity to finance/fund its ambitions • Uncoordinated decision-making resulting from siloed department and committee structures • Lack of political consensus on council's priorities and objectives and the four-year electoral cycle

Regulating Services

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Managing climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's declared climate and biodiversity emergency and Commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee structure entails time consuming decision making processes Difficulty in building consensus on priorities given the range of internal and external stakeholders involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise carbon sequestration Take full advantage of biodiversity net gain Reduce impacts of weather events on city Improve quality of the city's drinking water Increase resilience to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited co-ordination capacity Limited financial resources to provide direct funding and/or seed-fund new initiatives
Water and soil quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon sink – 90% carbon stored in topsoil Strong partnership support from TAP Soil quality well suited to support priority chalk grassland habitats Direct support for farmers from Southern Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thin topsoils Lack of direct day to day management control/decision making - i.e. outsourced to farmers and land managers Topography susceptible to funnelling water into the urban fringe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain multifunctional benefits to the environment if water and soil quality improves Introduce sustainable farming methods Reduce and where possible eliminate chemical fertilisers and pesticide applications on farms, golf courses, parks and sports grounds Encourage new generation of farmers open to embracing change Achieve carbon negative farming Establish closer collaboration with Southern Water and increase direct/indirect funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction in council income from farm rents, resulting from sustainable farming methods being less profitable Central government funding from ELMs not sufficiently aligned to council priorities
Grazing and chalk grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chalk grassland relatively resistant to climate change Public support for restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented, with only c.9% remaining Limited benefit to farm incomes Requires high level management supervision/intervention to be established Requires grazing livestock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore and reconnect fragmented chalk grassland sites, re-establishing an environmental feature for which the estate is renowned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction in council income from lower farm rents (see above)
Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An important source of carbon storage Contributes to reducing soil erosion and storm water run-off Contributes to improving air quality Low density of woodland means less susceptibility to the effects of Ash dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively low proportion is wooded Historically under managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new woodland that does not damage landscape quality or biodiversity Improve quality of woodlands through the development of a comprehensive woodland management plan Manage and plant trees in order to help create a natural landscape, improving continuity between the SDNP, the urban fringe and the coast Establish species that are resistant to climate change and disease Use planting to screen new developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate tree planting could be detrimental to landscape and existing important habitats Pests and diseases

Provisioning Services

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Local food chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council influence as a major provider of food to schools and other council-owned and operated outlets • The council's farmers as major suppliers/potential suppliers of local food • Strong working relationship with the Brighton Food Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of cheap/affordable food continues to be a critical consideration • Complex food supply chains and well established wholesale/volume markets difficult to break into • Food supply chain a large emitter of carbon • Disconnect between local food requirements and markets and what is produced at farm level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead by example and influence food suppliers • Take advantage of growing demand for community food • Encourage good tenants such as Stanmer Organics to make a wider role/social contribution • Improve access to healthy eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and food procurement costs will increase • Sustainable farming systems increase costs of production and in turn food prices
Sustainable farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced and able farming community • Farmers maintaining a managed and open landscape • the farmed estate well placed to gain funding as a publicly-owned asset • Ability to introduce landscape scale change • Location, soil, climate well suited to mixed farming enterprises, and good for biodiversity and local food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced farm income resulting in lower rental revenue for the council • Unviability in many cases of small scale farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage new generation of farmers open to embracing change • Achieve council priorities on biodiversity and climate change • Deliver biodiversity, water quality and carbon reduction • Achieve council priorities through new farming leases and contracts • Act as a conduit for best practice, working with farmers, partnerships and community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of BPS payments, resulting in two-thirds reduction in farm income • Costs of farming a barrier for new market entrants
Energy and waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate's proximity to large energy consumers looking for renewable sources • Council's ability to influence supply chain behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited provision of renewable sources • Age and construction type of residential property leads to high EPC compliance costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of an appropriately located solar farm • Invest in new farm buildings, creating scope for roof-mounted solar • Recycle waste food and bio solids to improve soil fertility • PC compliance improving the quality of housing stock, reducing energy costs • Reduce water consumption (and thus level of extraction from the aquifer) through rainwater harvesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPC regulations tighten, increasing cost of energy efficiency compliance • Limited availability of finance to address EPC improvements and transition to more energy efficient equipment • Renewable energy sources (wind/solar) potentially damaging to landscape character
Landscape restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World class internationally recognised landscape • Large area of public land ownership • Ability to call on network of partners, community groups, local experts and volunteers for support • Nature recovery network in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited financial resources (capital and revenue) • Competing council priorities for finance to meet statutory responsibilities • Competing stakeholder and single interest group priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and promote landscape scale changes • Build on support for increasing, connecting and enhancing species rich grassland • Demonstrate the benefits of public ownership and what it can deliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented decision-making, leading to a disjointed approach to management • Failure to take sufficient account of landscape as a key component in decision-making
Biodiversity and wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host to internationally recognised habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated baseline information on and insufficient monitoring of estate's biodiversity • Limited capacity to coordinate and deliver improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more nature sites, including areas for agroforestry and wilding • Improve biodiversity through management plans • Explore potential for biodiversity net gain • Improve biodiversity in areas of closely mown grass, parkland, sports and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of managing important habitats which do not provide a source of income • Impact on species (e.g. bats) currently using empty buildings if they are repurposed

Conclusions from the community consultations and the SWOT analysis above have provided the basis for specific proposals – deliverable within the scope of the council's remit – that are set out in the next section.

5. Actions

Inevitably, the council could pursue a wide range of interventions to achieve its objectives. In deciding which areas to prioritise, an important criterion will be the potential for individual initiatives to benefit multiple ecosystems and the City Downland Estate as a whole. For example, many of our actions will help directly or indirectly to increase biodiversity and achieve our net zero target.

While the council is committed to embracing the initiatives set out in the following pages, both the detail and timetable for implementation will need to take account of a range of factors. We will need to co-ordinate estate actions with other council strategies and activities to ensure the best use of our resources. Given the vital importance of ensuring that the estate continues to be financially self-sustaining, each of our proposals will be subject to our annual budget approval process and, where appropriate, a rigorous business case analysis.



An amenity for all

Brighton & Hove is unusually fortunate to have such an extensive public asset on its doorstep. One of our key objectives is to ensure the residents of the city benefit from it to the maximum extent. We also want residents to know that the estate belongs to them, and to feel pride in that ownership. This message can be reinforced by creating an identity for the estate which reflects its unique qualities, supported by a publicity campaign and on-site signage and information boards.

A new public access and visitor management strategy

This will go beyond the Rights of Way Improvement Plan to tackle holistically access-related infrastructure and the best ways to attract and engage visitors. The former will include new circular and marked trails within open access land and high-quality paths, bridleways, gates, signage, and car parks.

Working with National Highways, Brighton Active Travel and others, we will help to establish new and improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists over the A27. We recognise the urgent need for crossings over the B2123 from Falmer to Rottingdean, particularly at the north end of Woodingdean. This is a key crossing for access to the Downs between Drove Road, Drove Avenue and Norton Drive and is much-used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. We will identify safe, segregated cycle routes, ensuring these are linked up to existing cycle infrastructure.

The strategy will include an evidenced based protocol for declaring statutory and permissive open access land, reflecting the council's objective of maximising both. The strategy will also encourage the use of public transport and facilitating access for specific groups, such as wheelchair users. Accepting that some visitors will continue to use private vehicles, we will plan the capacity and location of car parks to promote safety and minimise intrusiveness. We will identify opportunities to improve public transport, including through Brighton Community Transport. We will actively promote existing bus routes.

We will review and recommend the establishment of new green highways (for example, connecting Moulsecoomb, Hollingdean, Hollingbury Hillfort, Wild Park, Coldean Woods, Stanmer Park, High Park and Ditchling Beacon).

Our approach will dovetail with our Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. We will link public access routes to the networks of footpaths and bridleways that extend beyond the estate's boundaries. We will promote the objective of expanding open access and improving the quality of experience for all estate users, including those who live and work there. This will include providing clear guidance on where and how dogs can be exercised.

Analysing the estate's diverse attractions and how we can maximise their potential will be an important aspect of visitor management. This will include detailed proposals on how we can help transform the public's awareness and appreciation of the estate's biodiversity and rich cultural heritage.

To achieve the best outcomes, it is imperative that initiatives designed to promote access to and tourism at the estate are integrated within plans for the city as a whole. This will include ensuring that the estate plays a central role in the implementation of the council's Transport Plan and Visitor Economy Strategy. For example, we need to adopt a city-wide perspective to identify how best to improve public transport links to the estate.

An expanded range of walking routes and overnight accommodation

We propose to create the Brighton & Hove bunkhouse network. Repurposed from redundant farm buildings, the bunkhouses would offer a staging post and overnight accommodation at key locations along the green highways and other long-distance access trails. They would also provide information points and venues for pop-up recreational and educational events. The network could be linked to a city centre shop or information centre drop-off and pick-up point.

A further option on a less extensive scale is the Four Forges project, which would provide community information points and facilities in the former forges at Ovingdean Grange, Court Farm, Stanmer Park and Mile Oak. Retail offerings might include local food and walking and cycling accessories. These sites could also be used to provide facilities for disabled people and host community and pop-up events.

Creating a landmark recreational and heritage site

Standing as a gateway to the South Downs, the traditional farm buildings at Stanmer Park represent an opportunity to encapsulate and project everything that the estate represents. We believe this has the potential to become a significant visitor attraction. While the costs of restoring, repurposing and maintaining these buildings solely for public good are prohibitive, such an initiative could be funded through the development of new revenue streams (see 'Identifying new sources of income' on page 76). Some of the less historically important buildings could be sensitively converted for commercial use.

Celebrating the South Downs

We will develop a programme of events and activities to celebrate the South Downs to promote learning and engagement. For example, the Wild Chalk Festival (a collaboration between the council and the SDNPA) could include video installations or other exhibits providing illustrations of how a wild landscape would look, and the flora and fauna that might be found there. This could also explore the archaeology of the Downs – and the role that its geology has played in attracting settlers. The event would be developed and delivered in partnership with community groups, tenants, 'Brighton & Hove Museums, Stanmer Organics and the Permaculture Trust.

We will organise a series of pop-up events and experiences across the city and the estate, designed to introduce those who are unfamiliar with it to the recreational and health benefits it has to offer city-dwellers. We will also promote events which showcase the estate's history, working for example with The Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust.

These and other events will promote responsible and considerate conduct at the estate and throughout the national park, with reference for example to The Countryside Code and the control of dogs in the countryside.

Schools and outreach programmes

Our schools programme will include facilitating tours of the estate, including providing practical guidance to teachers organising the trips. One such event would be Downland Day, linking the city's 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme to the Brighton & Hove environmental education (BHee) programme. This would build on BHee's current work with headteachers to bring climate change education into the curriculum.

In supporting estate tours we will promote outdoor education and increase school students' exposure to food production, nature, sport, physical activity and (through pop-up events) theatre and music.

The council will develop and implement an outreach campaign to raise awareness of what the estate has to offer. This will encourage our citizens to make the most of its amenities and the opportunities it presents for social prescribing. While aiming this message at the whole community, we will focus in particular on excluded groups. These include: ethnic minorities; young people; those with disabilities and special educational needs; and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will work with the Trust for Developing Communities to refine these initiatives.



Enabling biodiversity to flourish

Reversing the loss of biodiversity on the estate is critical. Implementation of the council's estate plan and Biodiversity Action Plan must be closely co-ordinated. The activities we pursue to achieve greater biodiversity and our net zero target will be mutually supportive. For example we will ensure our tree-planting programme (see A connected landscape on page 71) has no adverse effect on priority habitats.

Local Nature Recovery Networks

As highlighted in section 4, we have joined East Sussex County Council to form a local recovery network. We will work together to develop our Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Through this we will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing habitat for nature, and identify specific proposals for creating or improving habitat and achieving wider environmental goals.

We will use the strategy to prioritise the application of our resources and guide the provision of compensatory habitat where housing or other developments in Brighton & Hove are required to deliver off-site biodiversity net gain.

Under the Environment Act, the LNRS will enable us to secure funding to help achieve our biodiversity objectives (see also Identifying new sources of income on page 74). The Act will also reinforce the council's legal obligation to conserve biodiversity and, through the LNRS, place an obligation on us to report every five years on the actions we have taken. We will fully embrace the LNRS in our day-to-day management of the estate.

Management plans for all key habitats

We will appoint an ecologist who would be responsible for preparing management plans for all key habitats across the estate (see section 6). The plans would benchmark the current level and quality of diversity at these sites, setting out enhancements to be implemented over the short, medium and long term. A key resource for the ecologist will be our Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which includes a detailed inventory of wildlife and commentary on the condition of habitats across the estate.

Our priority will be sites where we identify significant scope for improvement. Key areas for attention will include safeguarding existing chalk grassland sites, identifying how currently fragmented sites can be reconnected and where new ones could be created. We will connect and improve the mix of habitat types within Stanmer, with particular emphasis on increasing pollination sites. This could link to opportunities to promote education and local food, for example through the establishment of a bee garden).

Other interventions on the estate could include founding new orchards, areas for agroforestry and sites suitable for wilding. Management plans will make provision for periodic inspections or condition assessments to ensure that terms agreed in management plans and leases are being complied with.

Our ecologist will support agricultural tenants in providing advice, evidence or analysis as part of the process of preparing applications to join ELMs. The ecologist could also assist in day-to-day administration (particularly in the case of the Landscape Recovery scheme) and, where collaboration is required, help achieve landscape-scale ecological and biodiversity improvements.

Working with others

In addition to developing our local Nature Recovery Network with East Sussex County Council, close collaboration with the SDNPA (see 'Grants and funding schemes' on page 75) and other stakeholders will be critical to achieving our biodiversity objectives.

We will be transparent in managing nature reserves and wilding sites, publishing our performance against ambitious biodiversity and soil health targets set by our ecologist. We will share what we learn with our stakeholders – learning together how we can develop measurable targets to overcome the challenges and support the council's BAP.

The estate lies at the heart of The Living Coast, the biosphere reserve designated by UNESCO. In setting out to maximise biodiversity combined with sustainable development, the council and The Living Coast team are pursuing shared objectives. We will work closely with this team, drawing on each other's networks and providing mutual support.



The route to carbon net zero – and beyond

Many of the actions we are proposing can play a part in achieving our net zero objective. The adoption of regenerative farming practices however must be at the forefront of the campaign.

For example, implementing minimum tillage across the 1,750 hectares of arable farmland would conservatively achieve a 0.1% increase in soil organic matter. This alone would sequester an additional 8,187t CO₂e, transforming the estate from being a net emitter of 6,931t CO₂e to achieving net sequestration of -1,256t CO₂e*.

Combined with other methods of increasing organic content – such as the introduction of more pasture-based systems – this would enable us to fulfil our vision of a carbon-negative estate.

*Source: The Carbon Performance of the Brighton & Hove farm estate, final report January 2022; Farm Carbon Toolkit

Carbon benchmarking

We are using Farm Carbon Toolkit reports to help tenant farmers to measure, understand and reduce their carbon footprint. The Toolkit has been recommended by the NFU to its members as one of just three leading carbon calculators. Initial reports have been produced on each of the farms on the estate, and we will periodically repeat this exercise to monitor progress.

Benchmarking will create the foundations on which improved practices will be built. Having analysed the results for each tenant, we will work with them to develop a farm plan (see page 68) tailored to the specific circumstances and challenges of each business.

Reducing waste and the circular economy

A further key aspect of the net zero strategy for the estate will be a series of initiatives to reduce waste and maximise efficiency. These

will be aligned to the principles of the circular economy: namely, the objective of decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources to the benefit of business, people and the environment.

With this in view, we will carry out an audit of all estate activities and buildings to define our future energy requirements and identify opportunities to reduce waste. This will include applying the findings of Historic England's *Re-use and Recycle to Reduce Carbon* report. When a historic building is refurbished and retrofitted it is likely to emit less carbon than a new building, provided the whole life carbon emissions of buildings (including demolition) are taken into account.

The council will carry out low carbon heat technology surveys and transfer our energy supply to renewable sources as contracts become due for renewal.

In addition to the sites already identified for PV installation (see Ecosystem services, page 38), we will explore the feasibility of establishing grid-scale battery storage, small-scale hydrogen generation and a solar farm located close to large consumers of electricity on the estate. We will also identify and implement energy-saving measures to meet and future-proof EPC requirements. This would include improving insulation in residential properties, commercial buildings and redevelopments where practicable.

We will carry out a review to identify how the estate could make a material contribution in managing and disposing of the city's waste sent to landfill and sewage outfalls. This may include green composting. We would also explore with Southern Water the use of biosolids to enhance plant nutrition, soil organic matter and soil fertility.



Sustainable food and farming

We will encourage local food production, incentivising new entrants and current producers and land managers to adopt practices at farm scale which meet our sustainability and net carbon zero objectives.

Farm plans

We will encourage farmers and land managers to work jointly with the council in preparing individual farm plans.

The purpose of the farm plans will be to deliver a targeted land management approach that will deliver estate plan objectives. For example they will explore opportunities to restore chalk grassland and achieve landscape-scale nature recovery, improve water quality and expand public access. They would set targets for reducing carbon emissions against the baseline metrics which have already been established. The plans will be produced in partnership with the council.

They would take account of the financial impact on the farming business and provide the basis for any required commercial negotiations between the council, their tenants and land managers. The plans would help to identify where it would be possible for the council to provide targeted support to farmers and land managers.

Training and standards

We will provide practical help to agricultural tenants in managing the transition to organic, regenerative and carbon zero systems.

This would be reflected in training programmes for farmers and land managers on topics such as water storage and catchment, reducing nitrate applications, soil erosion, surface water runoff and biodiversity. We will promote and provide guidance on farming practices that increase the capacity to store carbon in vegetation and soil.

We will join an industry-standard regenerative agriculture certification scheme when available, encouraging all food-producing tenants and land managers to join the scheme where appropriate. We will also explore the possibility with our farming tenants and key

stakeholders of establishing an exemplar regenerative farm, to promote the techniques involved and how this would enhance the estate's natural capital assets.

In order to maintain soil fertility levels in organic, regenerative and carbon zero systems, we will carry out a review to establish the feasibility of using green waste from the city as an agricultural fertiliser and soil improver. The review would include a risk-benefit analysis and consider the legislative compliance framework required to achieve this. It would identify potential site(s) where green composting could take place and be readily distributed across the estate.

Financial incentives for tenants

Our approach will be to work with farmers through the development of farm plans to determine in the first instance whether implementing the changes required to achieve our sustainability objectives can be facilitated through external grants. For example we would ascertain the environmental and social benefits currently contributed by land managers and farmers and compare this with the eligibility criteria for joining an ELMs.

If a tenant is ineligible to receive grant funding or if the level of funding available is inadequate to meet costs, we will establish if top-up funding from the council can be justified. This could be used to help the farmer to meet eligibility criteria or otherwise implement the changes we are seeking. Farm plans will be a key component of the council's rationale for supporting a rebasing of farm rents and, where appropriate, providing top-up funding. One possibility would be helping to meet the costs involved in planting cover crops. We might also offer financial support to farmers to acquire new equipment and machinery required to minimise tillage. We will give priority to proposals that support our application to the Landscape Recovery scheme.

Contractual arrangements with tenants

All new farm leases will require the adoption of organic or regenerative practices and incorporate targets for improving public access, soil health and biodiversity as identified in the farm plan. Prior to the grant of any new lettings – and farm tenancies in particular – we will evaluate whether the proposed boundary needs to be adjusted to achieve landscape and habitat enhancements. This will be aligned with our Local Nature Recovery Strategy and any opportunities this presents in connection with ELMs.

We will also assess whether our objectives are best achieved by the council managing the land in hand, through a contract farming agreement or by a specialist environmental land manager such as Sussex Wildlife Trust. In line with the recommendations in *A Brighton Landscape*, when granting new leases we will encourage tenants to maximise pasture-based farming.

We will express our requirements in the form of key performance indicators set out in the farm plan, incorporating these in a new farm business tenancy template where appropriate to do so. This will ensure we take a consistent approach in assessing farmers' or land managers' progress towards achieving our objectives.

Non-native invasive game bird species are highly damaging to local ecology and we will continue to enforce a ban on game bird shooting on the estate. Where historic shooting rights have been granted, we will seek to enforce a ban by all means possible. This would include, but not be limited to, acquiring leasehold interests, restricting the renewal of leases to shooting tenants and renegotiating lease terms.

All new non-agricultural leases granting interests in land, such as golf courses, will also require a farm plan. This will help to ensure our objectives are delivered consistently across the estate.

We do not underestimate our incumbent tenants' ability and willingness to adopt sustainable

practices. At the same time, the council welcomes new entrants to the sector – this will be reflected in our marketing of new leases.

Promoting local food

We will work with BHFP and other stakeholders to determine how we can best support food producers, including our farmers, to develop markets for local produce. This will include embedding the 'buy local' principle into the council's own procurement procedures and supply chains. We would also encourage our tenants to focus on selling to local supply chains.

We will facilitate the expansion of our allotments and other local food growing initiatives, taking account of our landscape priorities. This includes identifying council facilities and buildings such as the traditional farm buildings complex at Stanmer, which could be used to host local food markets and promotional events.

Examples might include pop-ups showcasing produce grown by farmers, allotment holders, Stanmer Organics, One Garden Brighton and Brighton Permaculture Trust. We will also actively seek out new artisan food producers who may wish to relocate to the estate (particularly those who would locally source their raw ingredients).

Lessons learned from our work in these areas will be shared across the food-producing community. This could include for example a scheme for matching existing and prospective allotment holders. We will also facilitate collaboration between the BHFP and our agricultural tenants to cross-fertilise ideas and identify opportunities for farm diversification.

Reducing food miles

To help cut carbon emissions from the food supply chain and to support local farmers and food producers, our procurement policies will stipulate that wherever possible food should be sourced from the shortest distance to its destination.

A connected landscape

The estate's landscape and the strategic views it provides of the city, its downland and coast is a highly valuable resource in its own right. Management decisions affecting the estate will always take this into account. The landscape also illustrates the interconnected nature of the estate, the challenges it faces and the solutions we must adopt to overcome them. Our Local Nature Recovery Network and Strategy will also be critical in ensuring a holistic approach.

A Brighton Landscape describes the high-level principles we will follow. The council will carry out detailed site-specific landscape assessments to support our approach, with a view to promoting: chalk grassland; small-scale tree-planting; connected green corridors; areas for nature and future wilding; and the restoration of features such as hedgerows and dew ponds at landscape-enhancing locations. These initiatives and a move towards a more pastoral landscape will all help to enhance biodiversity and address climate change.

Key linkages between the city and the estate

Stanmer Park will play a central role in the future development and implementation of our plan by directly connecting the city with the wider hinterland of the estate through Home Farm Moulsecoomb, Hollingbury Hillfort & Golf Course and Wild Park. We will complete the development of the Stanmer Park master plan, always keeping in mind the need to maximise accessibility and the estate's value to the community as a public amenity.

One of our objectives will be to ensure Stanmer Park is taken out of Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

Given the popularity of Moulsecoomb as an open access resource, we will bring this land back in hand in conjunction with Hollingbury Hillfort and Wild Park. This will provide continuity of management. We will take land under our direct control at other sites where we can achieve significant social, environmental or landscape benefits. In doing so we will draw' on a combination of the council's resources, contractors, contract farming agreements with tenants or organisations who have specialist expertise (for example, in managing sites high in biodiversity).

We will define key strategic landscape views to and from the city, safeguarding them in future council planning policy and maintaining and enhancing them as part of our day-to-day management of the estate.

Mitigating the effects of climate change

Our efforts on climate change will be directed to mitigating its effects, as well as pursuing our net zero target. We will carry out a climate change impact assessment, including identifying priority habitats at greatest risk of damage or loss; and species (including trees) most vulnerable to invasive species and disease. This will include recommendations where applicable on adaptation and mitigation. In identifying which native trees and orchards to plant (see Tree-planting and woodland management, below), we will favour species which are climate change-resilient and able to support enhanced biodiversity.

We will review existing flood and surface water runoff infrastructure (see Improving water quality and management) to ensure it remains fit for purpose in protecting housing that directly adjoins the estate.

Tree-planting and woodland management

We will prepare woodland management plans at all relevant sites to support long-term maintenance, improvement and biodiversity and to ensure we qualify for available grants. This will include proposals for deer management, given the negative impact that the increase in the number of deer may have on woodland biodiversity and regeneration. The plans will be fully compliant with UK forestry standards.

We will plant native trees and scrub (or enable them to regenerate) in locations identified in *A Brighton Landscape*, provided they do not compromise important natural habitats and underlying archaeology. When planting woodland (as opposed to individual trees) we will comply with the Woodland Carbon Code, trading or offsetting any woodland carbon credits generated from the scheme. We will follow best practice as set out for example in the Woodland Trust's woodland creation guidance.

Improving water quality and management

Working with our farmers, commercial tenants and key stakeholders (such as the other members of TAP and Southern Water), we will seek to develop an estate-specific groundwater storage and catchment strategy and incorporate this where relevant within each farm plan (see above).

We will keep under review opportunities to restore and create sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), new streams, ponds and dew ponds that will help to delay and slow the rate of surface water runoff, supporting the recharging of the aquifer and mitigating flood risk. This would also help to expand biodiversity.

Landscape and biodiversity plans will incorporate input on scheduled monuments and non-scheduled heritage assets, taking account of legislative protections. This is a clear example of the interconnectedness of the estate and the need to co-ordinate management initiatives affecting its various facets.

Restoring grassland

In addition to revitalising biodiversity (see above), expanding the coverage of chalk grassland has a key role to play in restoring the full beauty of the landscape. We will identify areas suitable for restoration, with a view not only to increasing acreage but wherever possible connecting up sites which are currently fragmented.

For example Waterhall Golf Course is a priority target. This asset offers scope to run a pilot wilding project, and we will apply the lessons learned from this site to other contender sites identified on the estate. We will also review whether the former clubhouse could be repurposed for educational or commercial use.

In addition, we will assess interventions which would have the effect of softening the contrast between city and estate at the urban fringe. This would include determining whether we should reduce the frequency of mowing grassland in public spaces to once or twice a year. We will also increase streetscape tree-planting to enhance the urban fringe landscape, increase biodiversity, improve air quality and create inspiring spaces.

Dark skies

We will mirror the SDNPA policies on dark skies, determining how these could be incorporated in our own planning policies for developments close to the national park and the estate's urban fringe. Working with SDNPA we will engage with National Highways, American Express Community Stadium and other key light polluters to identify how light emissions could be reduced, or made less obtrusive when viewed from the estate landscape.



Identifying new sources of income

While it is not possible to quantify precisely the economic benefits generated by the estate, we estimate that at present they are broadly equivalent to its costs. The estate's capacity to generate financial returns for reinvestment is critical to securing its long-term future as a publicly owned asset.

A number of the initiatives proposed will require the council to increase its investment in the estate. The development of new income streams has a critical role to play in funding this investment.

Public amenities

We will for example identify the potential to generate income from recreation and leisure activities. Opportunities may include raising revenue from car parking, mountain bike hire and the use of dedicated bike trails, EV charging points, Segway routes, food/coffee concessions, farm and safari tours, campsites, playgrounds and play areas, foraging and wild cooking.

Where the costs of repurposing or maintaining buildings solely for public good are prohibitive – as would be the case at Stanmer Park – we would identify the most effective ways of raising capital and new sources of revenue. In this instance that could include ticket sales from pop-up events, event hire, weddings, bunk house accommodation, and letting commercial or retail space in buildings of less historical and architectural significance.

Grants and funding schemes

In addition to identifying funding opportunities through our local Nature Recovery Network (see 'Enabling biodiversity to flourish on page 63), a particularly valuable collaboration will be with the SDNPA. We will work together in seeking funding from Defra through the Landscape Recovery scheme (the top tier of the government's ELMs framework). This would apply in particular to recovering and restoring threatened native species, the recovery of priority habitats, habitat quality and species abundance.

We will also support our tenants in applying for the Sustainable Farming Incentive and local Nature Recovery Awards available under ELMs or other schemes, including the biodiversity net gain provisions.

We will investigate funding mechanisms, including seed funding, grant match funding and crowdfunding via for example the Heritage Lottery Fund Changing Chalk programme and Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs).

We will seek to partner with commercial or other organisations which benefit from the estate's natural capital and have an incentive to invest in its improvement – for example, Southern Water.

To ensure sufficient funding is available to deliver the plan and to meet running costs and investment needs, income generated over and above existing net income of the estate will be ring-fenced and used for reinvestment.

Renewables income and energy savings

Renewable energy has the potential to increase estate income. In addition to installing 500 kW of solar PV at corporate, housing and leisure sites, we will establish the feasibility of putting solar panels on the roofs of existing buildings in the short and longer term. We will continue to work with site managers to reduce consumption of gas, electricity and oil.

Financial planning

We will assess the requirement for new revenue in the context of the longer-term financial needs of the estate, taking account of annual running costs and anticipated capital expenditure needs (including the additional costs associated with delivering this plan). A key objective will be to ensure the estate continues to be self-supporting.

With this in mind, we will prepare and maintain a rolling capital investment budget covering a minimum five-year period. We will take account of potential proceeds from the disposal of surplus properties and developments identified in the city’s adopted local development plan. Investment in infrastructure required in connection with individual projects (such as the Brighton & Hove bunkhouse network or the repurposing of buildings at Stanmer Park) would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. We would prepare a budget including projected costs and revenue as part of the business plan for each venture.

Complementary to identifying new sources of income, we will seek to fund additional expenditure through efficiency gains, cost reductions or (where appropriate) reprioritisation of existing budgets.

Actions – Summary

1. AN AMENITY FOR ALL	Time frame*	Key partners
1.1 Public Access and Visitor Management Strategy		
Publish a new strategy	Medium	Transport operators; Local Access Forum (LAF); SDNPA
Develop a permissive and statutory open access protocol	Short	LAF; land managers
Establish new and improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists over the A27 and B2123	Long	National Highways; English Heritage; LAF; SDNPA;
Identify segregated cycle routes	Long	Brighton Active Travel (BAT)
Identify opportunities to improve public transport	Medium	Transport operators
Actively promote existing bus routes	Short	LAF; SDNPA
Recommend and establish new green highways	Medium	Transport operators; LAF; SDNPA
Dovetail with carbon neutral travel and transport town centre cycling and linkage to public access routes beyond the estate boundary	Medium	Transport operators; LAF;
1.2 An expanded range of walking routes and overnight accommodation		
Create a Brighton & Hove bunkhouse network (subject to planning)	Long	LAF;
Implement Four Forges project	Long	LAF; SDNPA
1.3 Creating a landmark recreational and heritage site at Stanmer traditional farm buildings		
Pursue significant visitor attraction and repurposing/conversion of traditional farm buildings (subject to planning)	Short	Historic England; SDNPA
1.4 Celebrating the South Downs		
Develop a programme of events and activities to promote learning and engagement	Medium	Community groups; SDNPA; Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Project
Organise a series of pop-up events and experiences for recreation and health benefits	Medium	Community groups; SDNPA; Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Project
Promote responsible conduct at the estate and in the National Park. Provide clear signage on where dogs can be exercised off-lead	Short	LAF; Community
1.5 Schools and outreach programmes		
Facilitate tours of the estate and teacher guidance	Medium	Farm tenants; SDNPA; Plumpton College; Trust for Developing Communities; Changing Chalk Partnership
Promote outdoor education and exposure to food production, nature and physical activity	Medium	BHFP; Brighton Permaculture Trust; Stanmer Organics; Plumpton College; Trust for Developing Communities; SDNPA
Develop an outreach campaign focusing on excluded groups and the provision of social prescribing	Medium	Trust for Developing Communities; SDNPA

2. ENABLING BIODIVERSITY TO FLOURISH	Time frame*	Key partners
2.1 Local nature recovery strategy		
Continue to develop our Local Nature Recovery network and finalise the Strategy	Short	East Sussex County Council; The Living Coast
Invest the proceeds of biodiversity net gain in the estate	Long	Downland Advisory Panel (DAP); SDNPA; Local Nature Partnership (LNP); The Living Coast; the council's development team
2.2 Management plans for all key habitats		
Appoint an ecologist and prepare key habitat management plans	Short	DAP; LNP
Identify further chalk grassland sites for improvement and implement management improvement plans	Short	DAP; LNP
Connect and improve the habitat types/diversity within Stanmer	Medium	DAP; farmers and land managers
2.3 Working with others		
Publish performance against biodiversity and soil health targets, and share with stakeholders	Short	SDNPA; LNP; The Living Coast; East Sussex County Council
Develop measurable targets	Short	DAP; LNP; SDNPA

3. THE ROUTE TO CARBON NET ZERO – AND BEYOND	Time frame*	Key partners
3.1 Carbon benchmarking		
Set baselines	Short	Farm Carbon Toolkit Team
Carry out a soil carbon assessment to understand how best to achieve carbon storage in soils	Short	Farm Carbon Toolkit Team; farmers
Repeat and monitor Farm Carbon Toolkit reports	Long	Farm Carbon Toolkit Team; farmers
3.2 Reducing waste and the circular economy		
Conduct energy and waste audit	Medium	Internal only
Establish feasibility of establishing a solar farm	Medium	SDNPA
Review green composting options and use of biosolids	Short	Southern Water; Environment Agency

4. SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING	Time frame*	Key partners
4.1 Farm Plans		
Encourage farmers and land managers to work with the council to prepare farm plans	Short, medium and long	Farmers
Ensure plans include identification of new public access opportunity, improvements in biodiversity, SuDS and key metrics and objectives	Short, medium and long	Farmers' LAF; Farm Carbon Toolkit; DAP
4.2 Training and standards		
Provide help to tenants to manage the transition to organic, regenerative and carbon zero systems	Short and medium	TAP; Southern Water; farmers
Develop a groundwater storage and catchment strategy (including a commitment to SuDS)	Long	TAP; Southern Water; farmers
Provide guidance on good farming practice	Short and medium	TAP; Southern Water; farmers
Join an industry-standard regenerative agriculture certification scheme and work with farming tenants and key stakeholders to establish an exemplar regenerative farm	Long	TAP; Southern Water; farmers
Review the feasibility of using green waste from the city as a fertiliser	Medium	TAP; Southern Water; farmers
4.3 Financial incentives for tenants		
Work with farmers through the development of farm plans to establish the suitability of external grants in achieving sustainability objectives (see also below)	Short	Farmers; SDNPA
Consider other opportunities, including support from the council, where grant funding is inadequate	Short, medium and long	Farmers and land managers
4.4 Contractual arrangements with tenants		
Ensure new land leases adopt organic or regenerative practices	Short, medium and long	Council tenants
Assess the options for managing the land, such as in hand, contract farming or specialist environmental land manager	Short, medium and long	Council tenants
Encourage tenants to maximise pasture-based farming	Short, medium and long	Council tenants
Create a set of key performance indicators for new tenancies set out in the farm plan	Short, medium and long	Council tenants
Enforce a ban on game bird shooting on the estate	Short	Internal
Ensure new non-agricultural land leases will require a farm plan	Medium	Internal
4.5 Promoting local food		
Work with stakeholders to support food producers and develop markets for local produce	Short, medium and long	BHFP; SDNPA; The Living Coast
Facilitate expansion of allotments and local food growing initiatives	Medium	BHFP
4.6 Reducing food miles		
Embed 'buy local' principles in council procurement policies	Medium	BHFP; Farmers

5. A CONNECTED LANDSCAPE	Time frame*	Key partners
5.1 Refine and develop A Brighton Landscape into a tool for future guidance	Short	Kim Wilkie The Living Coast
5.2 Key linkages between the city and the estate		
Complete development of Stanmer Park master plan	Short	Historic England SDNPA
Bring Home Farm Moulsecoomb under direct control	Short	DAP; LAF
Review other sites/properties suitable for being in direct control	Medium	DAP
Define key strategic landscape views to and from the estate	Short	Kim Wilkie; Historic England; SDNPA
5.3 Mitigating the effects of climate change		
Carry out climate change impact assessment	Medium	Internal
Review existing flood and surface water runoff infrastructure; identify new areas of risk and apply nature-based solutions where possible	Medium	Southern Water
5.4 Tree-planting and woodland management		
Prepare woodland management plans	Short	Internal
Establish new and self-seeded woodland	Medium	Internal
5.5 Improving water quality		
Review opportunities to restore and create new SuDS, streams, ponds, and dew ponds	Long	TAP
Develop an estate-specific groundwater storage and catchment strategy and incorporate where relevant in farm plans	Medium	Farmers
5.6 Restoring grassland		
Preserve existing chalk grassland and identify where it can be expanded	Short, medium and long	DAP SDNPA
Run Waterhall Golf Course as a pilot wilding project and apply the lessons learned	Short, medium and long	DAP; Waterhall Management Group; SDNPA
Repurpose former Waterhall Golf Course club house	Short	DAP; Waterhall Management Group; SDNPA
Assess interventions to soften contrast between city and estate at the urban fringe, including frequency of mowing and increase streetscape tree-planting	Short	Internal
5.7 Dark skies		
Mirror SDNPA dark skies policy	Long	Internal
Engage with National Highways and American Express Community Stadium and other large light polluters to reduce emissions	Medium	Highways England; American Express Community Stadium; SDNPA; CPRE Sussex

6. IDENTIFYING NEW SOURCES OF INCOME	Time frame*	Key partners
6.1 Public amenities		
Identify opportunities to generate income from events, recreation, leisure activities and other diversification activities	Short	Internal
6.2 Grants and funding schemes		
Develop local Nature Recovery Network and Strategy (see 2.1 on page 80)	Short	East Sussex County Council
Identify and apply for funding to support the delivery of <i>A Brighton Landscape</i> , ecosystems recovery and the landscape recovery scheme	Short	SDNPA
Support tenants applying for ELMs and providing biodiversity net gain	Short/ medium	DAP; SDNPA; Natural England
6.3 Renewables and energy savings		
Complete 500kW solar PV installations at corporate, housing and leisure sites	Short	Internal
Assess and build further installations	Medium	SDNPA
Maximise energy efficiency	Short	Internal
6.4 Financial planning		
Prepare rolling capital investment budget	Short	Internal

***Time scales:**

Short (1 to 2 years)

Medium (3 to 5 years)

Long (6 to 10 years)

6. Management and delivery

The city's continuing ownership of the estate comes with the responsibility to make best use of its assets. Active management and investment is essential to achieve this.

Implementing the actions described in the previous section will create a number of challenges. A critical step will be to carry out a thorough assessment of the management capacities required to deliver our objectives. Our goal would also be to ensure that resources are sharply focused on key tasks and that the right skill sets are in place to drive progress. This may involve the development of existing roles, new forms of internal collaboration and partnerships with external stakeholders.

The process of preparing this plan, however, has shown how much expertise on the estate can be found within the community, and the willingness of so many to help improve it. We intend to harness that enthusiasm, ensuring that everyone who wants to participate in the estate's development has an opportunity to do so.

A key priority is to appoint an individual who would have specific responsibility for the estate and for co-ordinating management initiatives which have an impact on it. The postholder will provide a focal point for all stakeholders and drive forward our agenda.

Such a role is likely to encompass: overseeing the implementation of the plan; co-ordinating cross-departmental initiatives; developing partnerships; taking the lead on strategic decisions; engaging with neighbouring landowners; and ensuring that the council's resources are deployed effectively.

This role could lead in building collaborations internally within the council (for example, between planning, health, education

departments and Cityparks); and also with external stakeholders including the SDNPA, The Living Coast, the Brighton Downland Alliance, BHFP, the LNP, TAP and commercial organisations that may be willing to invest in the estate's natural capital assets.

A key requirement would be to establish clear lines of reporting, ensuring that issues including biodiversity and public access are at the heart of all future decision-making.

Ecology expertise embedded in the management teams will play a key role in achieving our biodiversity objectives. In addition to championing this field, specialists will carry out baseline assessments of all valuable habitats and monitor improvements. This would include: developing and implementing site-specific improvement plans; advising council members, officers, tenants and stakeholders on biodiversity issues; and supporting the council's ranger service in connection with access arrangements, school visits and work with volunteers. The postholder could also draw on the voluntary sector to co-ordinate further resources and local expertise.

The scope of our current ranger service could be expanded to include countryside management and encompass all aspects of the estate. This may include the appointment of an additional ranger with specific responsibility for the estate and for developing the Public Access and Visitor Management Strategy (PAVM).

The role would encompass visitor engagement and tackle the challenges associated with access infrastructure, education, training and

engagement with farmers and land managers. Once they are operational, the ranger service will manage new leisure and heritage projects, such as the Brighton & Hove Bunkhouse and Four Forges initiatives. The service would also take the lead in developing a programme of pop-up events, together with harnessing the skills and resources available to the council through the voluntary sector.

The expansion of open access increases the level of commitment required by the council to manage public access and educate visitors on The Countryside Code. The rangers have a vital role to play in encouraging users of the estate to show consideration to each other and to discourage irresponsible behaviour.

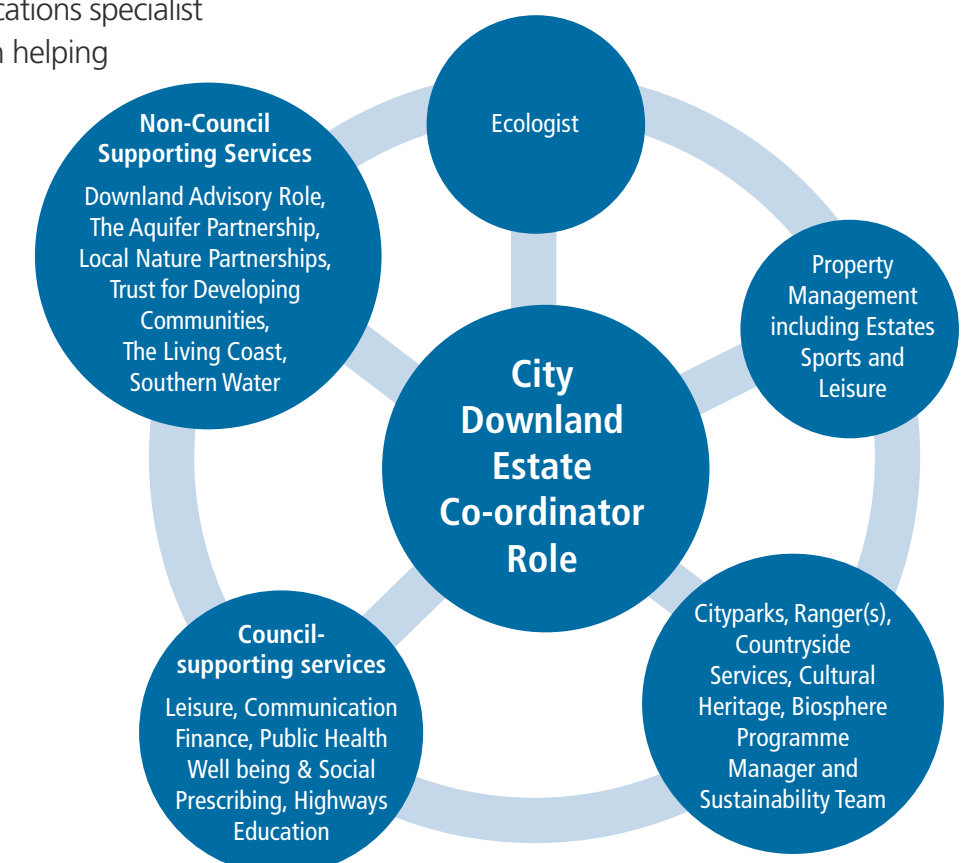
A number of other designations could be considered. For example, an officer with specific responsibility for co-ordinating well-being and social prescribing programmes could take the lead in developing courses on physical and mental health, aimed at commercial providers, local partners, trusts, charities, and social services. A communications specialist could play a valuable role in helping to create and reinforce a distinctive identity for the estate. This would include supporting initiatives designed to engage and inform estate users on transport links, public access and income-generating opportunities from recreational and leisure activities.

We have appointed the Downland Advisory Panel (DAP) to support the quality and transparency of decision-making. The panel comprises local

and key stakeholder representatives, food producers, and tenants who are subject matter experts, reporting directly to the council's Asset Management Board. The panel will meet regularly with the council to support and advise on the implementation of the plan. This will include producing an annual independent report to the council's policy and resources committee on progress. The panel would also act as a forum for debating issues arising between stakeholders, proposing potential solutions where interests conflict.

The council will work with DAP to identify and monitor KPIs and other methods of measuring success.

The organogram below summarises the role that the City Downland Estate lead could play in the following: co-ordinating input from internal and external stakeholders; marshalling the resources that the council has at its disposal; and creating clear accountability for decisions affecting the estate.



7. Next steps

In the introduction to section 5 we emphasise that in the case of some of the initiatives we are proposing the scope and timing of implementation will depend on further preparatory steps. We recognise that all actions must be SMART - that is, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. These will be developed over the mobilisation period and beyond, as we collect further data and consult with stakeholders.

With regard to shorter term proposals, however, we can map out now the individual steps we will be taking in more detail. These are set out in the table below. A wide range of projects are already in progress.

Critical to the success of the plan will be recruiting the right people to help put it into effect. The table assumes that we are able to make the relevant appointments within the expected time frame.

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
Management and delivery									
Appoint City Downland Estate co-ordinator									
Establish cross-departmental working group									
Appoint countryside ranger(s)									
Appoint consultant ecologist									
Complete terms of reference for DAP									
Work with the cross departmental working group, DAP and Asset Management Board to develop key performance indicators for the estate									
Organise six-month review meetings with key delivery partners									
Develop communication strategy									
Transition estate consultation web portal into website									

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
An amenity for all									
Install visitor/gate counters at key access locations									
Complete condition survey of RoW and open access signage furniture									
Install replacement access signage furniture									
Finalise 'amenity for all' task and finish group									
Complete permissive and statutory access protocol									
Commission new Public Access and Visitor Management Strategy (PAVM)									
Complete PAVM									
Complete Public Realm Strategy for Stanmer farm buildings									
Establish key partner deliverables from PAVM									
Develop events programme to celebrate the South Downs									
Finalise 2023 schools/ outreach programme (Changing Chalk Project)									
Provide public access to the traditional farm buildings and yard									

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
Enabling biodiversity to flourish									
Establish biodiversity working group to oversee mapping and habitat management plans									
Complete farm biodiversity survey									
Complete gap analysis of all biodiversity and ecological survey data									
Complete gap analysis of habitat potential mapping									
Procure field survey work as identified in gap analysis for 2023 – 2024									
Complete mapping of chalk grassland restoration priority areas									
Complete Local Biodiversity Action Plan update to ensure up to date and fit for purpose									
Join Nature Recovery Network									

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
The route to carbon net zero – and beyond									
Ongoing series of briefing sessions for tenant farmers on Farm Carbon Tool Kit findings and soil health									
Achieve Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) compliance									
Sustainable food and farming									
Complete farm plan for Patcham Court Farm									
Complete reletting of Patcham Court Farm									
Complete any required preparatory works e.g. fencing to facilitate reletting of South Downs Riding School									
Complete reletting of South Downs Riding School									
Agree farm baseline assessments									
Commission baseline surveys as required									
Complete soil baseline assessment									

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
A connected landscape									
Complete Stanmer Park master plan									
Bring Home Farm Moulsecoomb back in hand									
Repurpose Waterhall Golf Club House									
Define key strategic landscape views									
Complete estate woodland management plan									
Reduce area and frequency of mown public spaces for 2023 season									
Plant trees (standards) on urban fringe mown grass areas									
Develop and refine A Brighton Landscape, as and when more survey and evidence based information becomes available									

	In progress at plan launch	Mobilisation 2023	Implementation 2023 – 2024				Implementation 2024 – 2025		
		Jan - Mar	Q1 Apr - June	Q2 Jul - Sep	Q3 Oct - Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar	Q5 Apr - June	Q6 Jul - Sept	Q7 Oct - Dec
Identifying new sources of income									
Complete business case for repurposing Stanmer traditional farm buildings									
Work with ESCC to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and identify grant potential									
Complete business case to achieve approval for ring-fencing estate income for reinvestment									
Complete our first five-year capital budget, inc. resolution of the current cottage disposal programme									
Shortlist of key properties/sites capable of generating new income streams									
Complete solar farm feasibility study									
Prep and apply for the ELMs Landscape Recovery scheme									
Application of the ELMs Landscape Recovery scheme									

Appendix i
City Downland Estate Plan – first public consultation submissions

Introduction and background

During the first public consultation on the City Downland Estate Plan (November 2020 to April 2021), residents of Brighton & Hove were invited to contribute their ideas and opinions on both what they valued about our existing downland estate, and how they envisaged its future.

In addition to the main consultation, which was conducted by Planning For Real, residents were also invited to submit their ideas/opinions to the CDEP interactive webpage via written submissions and/or through the survey portal.

379 surveys were completed through the portal.

86 detailed written submissions were provided.

Of the 86 submissions provided, 27 of these were from the organisations and 59 from individual residents. The organisations providing submissions were as follows:

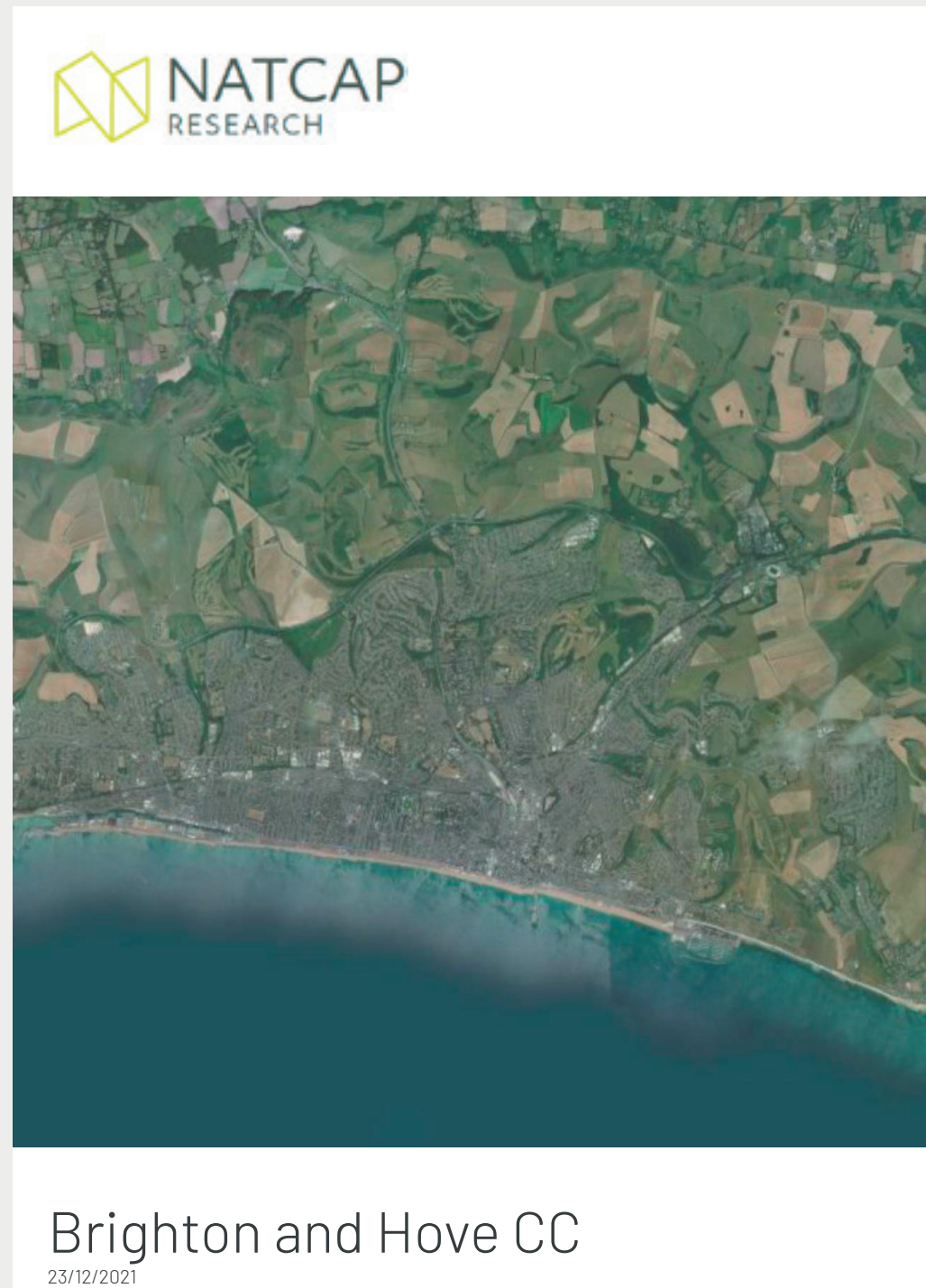
- Benfield Valley Project
- Brighton Downs Alliance
- Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society
- Brighton & Hove City Council Public Health
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
- Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum
- Brighton Active Travel
- Coldean Community
- CPRE Sussex
- Cycling UK
- Environment Agency
- Equine Gently
- Extinction Rebellion Brighton
- Friends of the Brighton Downs
- National Farmers Union
- Ovingdean Preservation Society
- Pasture for Life
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Rottingdean Parish Council
- Speakout Link Group
- Southern Water
- Sussex Wildlife Trust
- The Aquifer Partnership
- The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere Partnership
- The South Downs Society
- Withdean Branch Labour Party
- Woodingdean Wilderness Group

The written submissions from both organisations and individuals can be accessed in full on the interactive webpage here.
https://climateconversationsbrighton.uk.engagementhq.com/city-downland-estate-plan/widgets/24387/key_links

Appendix ii*A Brighton Landscape plan*

Appendix iii

Natural capital baseline



Go to <https://climateconversationsbrighton.uk.engagementhq.com/6401/widgets/47022/documents/26796> to download full report

Appendix iv

Farm Carbon Toolkit report



Go to <https://climateconversationsbrighton.uk.engagementhq.com/6401/widgets/47022/documents/26795> to download full report

Appendix v

Planning for Real report on the visioning event

Report of the Brighton and Hove City Downland Estate Visioning Event 23rd April 2021 10am to 4pm



Figure 1: Cover of the original Postcard from the Future sent to every household in Brighton in autumn 2020

Brighton and Hove City Downland Estate Plan Consultation Statement Part 2 Vision, Aims and Policy Objectives July 2021

Go to <https://climateconversationsbrighton.uk.engagementhq.com/6401/widgets/48817/documents/27813> to download full report

Appendix vi

Summary findings from the second public consultation

Consultation on the draft City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP), May – July 2022.

Introduction and background

The City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP) sets out Brighton & Hove City Council's proposed future vision, ambitions and plans for the Downland Estate owned by Brighton & Hove City Council over the next 100 years.

A self-selecting survey was available on Brighton & Hove Consultation Portal from 13 May 2022 till 15 July 2022. The survey outlined the council's draft proposals and objectives for the city's Downland Estate with the questions in this survey ordered according to the sections in the Draft City Downland Estate Plan. Respondents were not required to answer all questions but could select sections relating to their experience and/or interest.

Respondent profile

Just under a fifth of responses (27 people, 19%) were from representatives of the following organisations:

- A Dog's Best Friend
- Benfield Wildlife and Conservation Group
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
- Brighton CSA - Fork and Dig It CIC
- Brighton Dogwatch

- Brighton Permaculture Trust
- Brighton Radio Flying Club
- Cycling UK's Cycle Advocacy Network (CAN)
- DueEast
- Extinction Rebellion Brighton
- Fernee Forest Club
- Forestry Commission
- Green Wellbeing Alliance
- National Farmers Union
- PDW's of Brighton and Hove
- Pesticide Action Network UK
- Put That Light Out
- Ray & Sons High Park Farm
- Saltdean Climate Action Network
- SERA
- So Sussex
- Southern Water
- Sussex Wildlife Trust
- The Aquifer Partnership
- The Benfield Valley Project
- The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere partnership
- Among the rest of the respondents (119 people, 81%)
- 109 people (87%) are users of informal recreation in the Downland Estate
- 9 people (7%) are users of formal recreation in the Downland Estate
- (17 people (14%) live and work in the Downland Estate

Go to <https://climateconversationsbrighton.uk.engagementhq.com/6401/widgets/48817/documents/30324> to download full report

Appendix vii

Policy Digest

The implementation of the proposed actions set out in our Whole Estate Plan are influenced (and in some cases constrained) by existing and evolving policy at local, regional and national levels. While not exhaustive, this appendix summarises policy statements among those which have the greatest bearing on the delivery of estate objectives. These are in addition to the Planning for Real consultative process – the cornerstone of the Whole Estate Plan’s development.

Brighton & Hove City Council policy

This encompasses plans and activities implemented directly by the council, and wider initiatives where the council is working in partnership with stakeholders.

Corporate plan

Covering the period 2020 – 2023, the plan sets out the council’s overall direction, aiming to deliver a fairer city with a sustainable future. It identifies six outcomes that the council wishes to achieve for the city:

- A city to call home
- A city working for all
- A stronger city
- A growing and learning city
- A sustainable city
- A healthy and caring city

The outcome most relevant to the Whole Estate Plan is a sustainable city. Key actions to promote this objective support the priorities identified through our community consultation. These include: promoting and protecting biodiversity; achieving carbon neutrality by 2030; creating and improving public open spaces; reducing waste and promoting recycling; and developing an active and sustainable travel network. Given the holistic nature of the council’s objectives, the estate has a part to play in achieving other outcomes. These include, for

example: a city working for all (supporting local businesses and charities, developing our visitor economy); a growing and learning city (promoting lifelong learning and transition into adulthood); a healthy and caring city (increasing healthy life expectancy and reducing health inequalities).

Corporate Property Strategy and Asset Management Plan

This plan links the council’s property holdings and functions to our strategic goals. It aims to ensure that the council’s actions help to maximise income while achieving effective delivery and customer satisfaction. Corporate property objectives include:

- providing the right buildings in the right place and condition to meet future service delivery needs;
- deliver value for money property services and support the council modernisation;
- use our assets to help achieve a sustainable and carbon neutral city by 2030;
- optimising the financial and social value received from our non-operational urban and agricultural commercial portfolios; and
- using assets to enable city and regional regeneration and community wealth building in partnership.

The strategy for the agricultural portfolio is to identify and dispose of underperforming non-core assets while retaining the social benefits of land ownership and mitigating any reduction in rental income.

City Downland Estate Asset Management Policy (the Downland Initiative)

Since its first publication in 2006, this has been the principal guiding policy document for the estate, focusing on achieving access, wildlife conservation, education and local food production.

The overarching aim is to ‘Diversify and balance the range of ecosystem services provided by the council’s Downland Estate by working in partnership with relevant stakeholders and potential beneficiaries and pursuing an economically sustainable approach for the council and its tenant farmers.’

Ranging across council teams including Property and Design, Cityparks and Sustainability, the policy seeks to ensure that the council identifies strategic opportunities for social and environmental gain through land ownership, and takes these into account in day-to-day management decision-making. It examines the feasibility of securing more sustainable management of the Downland Estate and is aligned with The Living Coast biosphere reserve objectives (see ‘National and international policy’, on page 106).

Detailed policy covers: agriculture; land use and groundwater protection; public access, recreation and understanding; wildlife and landscape conservation; and farmer and stakeholder conservation.

Although, as a result of agricultural tenancy arrangements, the council has limited direct control over its land, the policy has delivered tangible results – particularly with regard to improving access.

2030 Carbon Neutral Programme

The council’s response to the climate and biodiversity emergency, the Programme sets out actions and interventions needed to achieve net zero by 2030. To meet the target, the city’s greenhouse gas emissions will need to fall by 12.7% annually starting from 2020. The Programme’s priority topics are travel and transport; energy and water; waste; the built environment; and nature and environment (food, land use and agriculture).

The cross-party 2030 Carbon Neutral Member Working Group was established in 2019 to oversee the delivery of the Programme. The Programme will continue to be reviewed in the light of the council’s corporate plan, with progress reported annually.

Climate Assembly Findings Report

The council commissioned Ipsos MORI to hold a Climate Assembly, bringing together a randomly selected group of Brighton & Hove citizens to discuss how approaches to transport can help the city achieve its net zero target.

Fifty residents took part in presentations and workshops. The assembly was supported by an independent advisory board of 15 volunteer experts, including councillors, campaigners and stakeholders. Key recommendations emerging from the assembly were: a car-free city centre; affordable and accessible public transport; and healthier, low traffic or pedestrianised communities. Published in December 2020, the report is being used to ensure transport plays its full part in reducing emissions.

Developing a New Transport Plan for Brighton & Hove

Published in September 2021, the document reflects the changing nature of travel and the growing significance of remote working following the pandemic. The greatest challenge in the field of transport will be to address the climate emergency and to create ‘a liveable city which can be carbon neutral by 2030’.

To this end, the council is pursuing three key objectives. These are to:

- reducing the need to travel (specifically, eliminating journeys made by vehicles, or

reducing the frequency or length of these trips;

- changing how people travel (increasing walking and cycling for shorter journeys, and using public transport for longer ones); and
- achieving cleaner travel, through low – or no-emission vehicles powered by renewable energy sources.

Priority areas and interventions to deliver these objectives include: developing streets and places that encourage and enable active travel; promoting and using technology to reduce and manage travel; and reducing car use, for example, through car-sharing.

Brighton & Hove Visitor Economy Strategy

Covering the period 2018 – 2023, the strategy addresses the objective of achieving the long-term sustainability of tourism in the city. This involves clearly defining and carefully managing growth, integrating tourism into wider planning processes.

In addition to safeguarding jobs in the leisure sector, key aims include nurturing the facilities that attract visitors and looking at creative ways to fill the gaps. The strategy also encourages closer collaboration with regional partners where this will help to boost Brighton & Hove's positioning and delivers new tourism activity.

While the current strategy focuses on urban tourism, it is envisaged that subsequent reviews will take greater account of the Downland Estate as part of the city's tourism offering.

Outdoor Events Strategy

The strategy focuses on outdoor events' potential to act as a vehicle for achieving other city-wide needs. Objectives include:

- enhancing the city's national and international profile and reputation;
- attracting visitors to the city year-round, in line with the Visitor Economy Strategy;
- delivering measurable benefits for city businesses; encouraging civic pride and community cohesion;
- developing capacity and capabilities in the city's events sector; and
- supporting positive engagement between people and the natural environment.

Particularly with regard to the latter point, the implementation of the Whole Estate Plan will be aligned and co-ordinated with the Outdoor Events Strategy.

Open Spaces Strategy

The document explores a range of options and initiatives, including:

- establishing a Brighton & Hove Parks Foundation to lead creative and innovative fundraising;
- developing a tree strategy for the city;
- generating new income streams, with the City Parks department operating more commercially;
- introducing more natural play features into playgrounds; and
- identifying potential partnerships with private, public and third sector bodies, such as Plumpton College and the Wildlife Trust.

All proposed policies and actions will be incorporated into a draft plan to be brought back to a future committee. Key criteria will include the proposals' capacity to: assist the most vulnerable members of society; protect the biosphere and environment; and build a robust economic case for the long-term sustainability of open spaces.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The council's vision is for the city's residents and visitors to be able to use a well-maintained and joined up public rights of way network, connected to the varied green and blue spaces around the city – the seafront, city parks and gardens, open spaces on the urban fringe and the South Downs National Park.

The five main aims of the RoWIP are to:

- improve accessibility for diverse users in Brighton & Hove
- make information on the rights of way network and access to green spaces more accessible
- improve connectivity to green spaces within the city
- work with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and neighbouring authorities to reduce severance and improve access to the national park and The Living Coast UNESCO Coastal Biosphere; and
- improve the connectivity of the existing rights of way network.

With 40% of Brighton & Hove falling within the borders of the national park, the SDNPA has a key role to play in securing funding and involvement from corporate and charitable sources to augment council budgets and help support potential bids for funding from other sources.

SDNPA policy

The council closely collaborates with the authority in numerous areas – for example, rights of way (see above) and water management (see page 104). Our partnership is formally structured through a memorandum of understanding between the two parties.

Aspects of SDNPA policy that are particularly relevant to the estate include its Local Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

South Downs Local Plan

Adopted in July 2019, the Local Plan reflects SDNPA's vision to be accomplished by 2050 – it envisages:

- iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced;
- people will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the national park provides;
- opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the national park;
- Its special qualities will underpin the economic and social well-being of communities; and
- successful farming, forestry and tourism will contribute to and benefit from the park's special qualities.

These objectives will be taken into account within the remit of the Local Plan and in assessing planning applications.

Climate Change Adaptation Plan

In 2021, the SDNPA adopted a new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. This confirms the authority's commitment to becoming a net zero organisation by 2030, and working towards the whole park becoming 'net zero with nature' by 2040.

The plan includes:

- an assessment of current and predicted impacts of climate change in relation to the SDNPA's purposes and statutory functions;
- assessment of the risks and opportunities this presents to the assets of SDNP and the business of the authority;

- a draft Action Plan highlighting proposals for responding to the climate emergency.

The delivery of the Plan will be co-ordinated with partners at a national and local level, including the UK government, councils, communities, landowners and stakeholder groups.

Local and regional partnerships

The Aquifer Partnership (TAP)

A partnership between the council, SDNPA, Southern Water, and the Environment Agency, TAP works with residents, farmers, landowners, and schools across Brighton & Hove and Lewes to safeguard drinking water. This includes protecting the Brighton Chalk Block from pollution and increasing resilience to flooding and drought caused by climate change and extreme weather events.

TAP was formed in response to the pressing need to tackle rising nitrate levels in groundwater that leaches into the aquifer. Over 70 % of Southern Water's groundwater sources within the Brighton area have rising nitrate levels requiring either treatment or a catchment-based solution to manage concentrations.

Key aspects of the group's programme include:

- creating 'rainscape' projects – SuDS which use vegetation to collect runoff so that water enters into the aquifer in a cleaner state;
- working with farmers and landowners to promote groundwater-friendly interventions, such as using winter cover crops on fields that would usually be left bare;
- promoting awareness of issues affecting the aquifer to achieve groundwater-friendly land management at recreational and industrial sites;
- delivering community and school

workshops to raise awareness of the importance of the aquifer for future generations; and

- collaborating with equestrian facilities to encourage adoption of sustainable manure management practices.

TAP liaises closely with other organisations involved in promoting sustainable water management, including the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

Water Resources South East

In 2020, the Environment Agency published the first national framework for water resources. It requires water companies and large water users to collaborate in planning water needs on a regional basis.

Water Resources South East, an alliance of the six water companies covering the region, is developing a plan to identify how best to meet water needs over the long term. The plan is at the consultation stage.

Given the high population and relatively dry climate of the south east, the likelihood of water shortages remains high. New flood management grant funding, through the Countryside Stewardship scheme, including creation of water meadows and tree-planting, has increased opportunities for investment in the Downland Estate and water quality.

Greater Brighton Economic Board

Stretching north from Brighton to Crawley and Gatwick, west to Bognor and east to Seaford, the GBEB comprises seven local authorities, local education providers and businesses operating across the region. The board aims to bring jobs and prosperity to the area, helping the region to become the most successful economy in the south east. So far it has brought more than £150m of direct investment into the region's local economies.

Key initiatives include:

Ten pledges on the environment – in conjunction with The Living Coast (see 'National and international policy, overleaf), the board pledges include the following:

- backing a scheme to introduce a carbon-capturing kelp forest off the Sussex coast;
- partnering projects to introduce recycled water into new homes;
- committing to phasing out diesel cars, refuse trucks and vans;
- supporting a substantial increase in electric vehicle charging points; and
- achieving rewilding through an increase in natural landscapes and rain garden projects.

Greater Brighton Energy Plan

GBEB is committed to 'a resilient, net zero carbon and smart energy system that enables and supports a sustainable and healthy economy, environment and society across the city region'.

The plan identifies over 30 investable pipeline projects under the headings: low carbon heat; transport; renewable generation; smart energy systems; energy efficiency; and delivery and innovation.

Greater Brighton Water Plan

The plan aims to achieve sustainable water management and to improve the affordability of water and energy for residents. It proposes to bring together water companies, local authorities and businesses to address key issues, share best practices and identify solutions.

Pressures from climate change and rising populations have meant that the Brighton region faces a water supply deficit of almost 90 million litres per day by 2050. Key areas for attention include: limiting consumption to 100 litres per person per day; achieving and maintaining affordable water bills;

investing in Brighton's natural capital; and increasing the resilience of the water environment.

Both the energy and water plans were published in 2020 with a five-year time horizon.

Food Partnership strategy action plan

The partnership brings together food providers and the public to work towards achieving healthy, sustainable and fair food for all. Brighton & Hove was first to achieve Silver Sustainable Food City status in 2015. The partnership has identified eight key aims:

Aim 1 Champion healthy and sustainable food

Aim 2 Take a preventative upstream approach to food poverty and ensure equal access to healthy food

Aim 3 Nourish a vibrant, diverse and skilled food community sector

Aim 4 Improve sustainability and security in urban, rural and marine food production;

Aim 5 Encourage a vibrant and sustainable food economy;

Aim 6 Transform catering and food procurement

Aim 7 Become a 'food use' not a 'food waste' city

Aim 8 Ensure healthy, sustainable, fair food is embedded in policy and planning, and has a high profile right across the city

Under each aim, the plan identifies specific actions and the role of partners involved in supporting their delivery. Actions particularly relevant to the estate include:

- ensuring access to community gardening and other food growing opportunities;
- championing community food projects;

- taking a holistic approach to improving sustainability and security in food production across the urban, rural and marine environments; and
- maintaining and improving connections between food producers.

National and international policy

The Agriculture Act 2020

The Agricultural Act, which gained Royal Assent in November 2020, authorises expenditure for agricultural and other purposes. It marks a significant milestone in agricultural policy. The underlying objectives of the legislation are to drive competitiveness, increase productivity and the use of technology, and to generate fairer returns.

The Act shapes the post-Brexit future of farming and rural land management in the UK – through the phasing out of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and the introduction of a regime where land managers are supported for providing public goods, such as better air and water quality and soil health.

The Act covers the following broad areas:

- supply chain
- food security
- trade
- landlord and tenant issues
- intervention, marketing standards and traceability.

In addition to delivering support through Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs), under the Act, the Secretary of State is empowered to provide financial assistance in England for a range of purposes.

The Environment Act 2021

The legislation replaces enforcement

mechanisms that were lost as the UK left EU environmental jurisdiction. It is intended to set the precedent for how the UK's natural environment will be protected and enhanced for future generations.

Key areas covered by the Act include:

- five environmental principles which will be enshrined within policy-making ('prevention', 'precautionary', 'integration', 'rectification at source' and 'the polluter pays');
- Long-term objectives regarding improvements to air and water quality, waste reduction, resource efficiency and biodiversity. Targets must be measurable and achieved within a time frame of not less than 15 years;
- biodiversity net gain requirements, which will be a mandatory condition of planning permission for future developments in England. There must be a 10% increase in biodiversity after development.
- the requirements for Local Nature Recovery Strategies to be adopted by all local authorities; and
- the use of conservation covenants to secure environmental benefits for the long term.

To strengthen environmental accountability, the Act establishes a new public body (Office for Environmental Protection) to act as an independent watchdog.

The Act does not contain detailed targets or mechanisms for achieving them. These will be incorporated in secondary legislation.

A Green Future: 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

This sets out the government's approach to protecting and enhancing the natural environment in England for the next generation. Its goals are: cleaner air and water; plants and animals which are thriving;

and a cleaner, greener country for us all.

It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing which puts the environment first. The plan outlines ways to reduce the use of plastics that contribute to pollution, and broader steps to encourage recycling and the better use of resources.

The plan will be co-ordinated with other government initiatives, particularly: Industrial Strategy – building a Britain fit for the future – and the Clean Growth Strategy.

National Food Strategy

Henry Dimbleby, the co-founder of LEON Restaurants, led this independent review examining the whole food chain, including production, marketing, processing, sale and purchase. Its recommendations cover immediate responses to hunger and ill health resulting from the pandemic, and trade and food standards issues following Brexit. The report also provides a structural analysis of England's food system and its current shortcomings.

Proposals most relevant to the City Downland Estate include guaranteeing the budget for agricultural payments until at least 2029, to help farmers adjust to more sustainable land use. This includes ensuring that ELMs are funded, accessible and long term. The report recommends Defra work with local Nature Recovery Networks to prepare a national rural land map, leading to the development of a rural land use framework.

The government should draw up a list of core minimum standards which it would defend in any future trade deals. These would cover animal welfare, environment and health protection, carbon emissions, antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic disease risk. A further recommendation is to strengthen government procurement

rules to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on healthy and sustainable food.

Water Framework Directive

The European Commission's Water Framework Directive (WFD) obliges EU member states to meet targets on the ecological and chemical status of water bodies. Any activity which may affect the quality or ecology of water must be assessed with a view to showing how any adverse impacts will be mitigated. The Directive aims for 'good status' of all ground and surface water and aims to prevent deterioration of the water environment.

Since the UK left the EU, the EU WFD has been replaced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017. These place a general duty on the Secretary of State, the Environment Agency, Welsh Ministers and Natural Resources Wales to exercise their relevant functions to secure compliance with the new directive.

The Living Coast/UNESCO Biosphere

The Brighton & Lewes Downs was designated a UNESCO World Biosphere Region in 2014 – an international demonstration area for sustainability, part of the world network of biosphere reserves. Known as The Living Coast, the initiative covers the landscape between the River Adur and the River Ouse and thus encompasses the City Downland Estate.

Biosphere reserves aim to:

- improve and protect the natural environment via nature conservation and management initiatives;
- use sustainable socio-economic

development techniques to improve the environment and develop new social and economic opportunities; and

- work with local people and organisations to increase knowledge, learning and awareness of the environment.

The council is promoting these aims as the lead partner in a collaboration involving over 40 local organisations. The biosphere reserve award offers opportunities for grant funding for further projects.



Appendix viii

Geographical plan

Plan Produced 10/11/2020. Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or Civil Proceedings. Brighton & Hove City Council Licence : 100020999



Appendix ix

Asset register

PROPERTY	PROPERTY	USE
Standean Farm	Standean Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Standean Farmhouse	
	1 Standean Cottages	
	2 Standean Cottages	
	Alpha Cottage	Residential
	Beta Cottage	Residential
	3 Standean Cottages	Residential
	4 Standean Cottages	Residential
Balmer Farm	Balmer Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Balmer Farmhouse	
	1 Balmer Cottages	
	2 Balmer Cottages	
	3 Balmer Cottages	Residential
	4 Balmer Cottages	Residential
	5 Balmer Cottages	Residential
	6 Balmer Cottages	Residential
	88 Housedean	Residential
Balsdean Farm	Balsdean Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Balsdean Farmhouse	
	1 Balsdean Cottages	
	2 Balsdean Cottages	
	3 Balsdean Cottages	Residential
	4 Balsdean Cottages	Residential
Lower Paythorne	Lower Paythorne Farmland	Farmland
	422 Mile Oak Road	Residential
Upper Bevendean Farm	Upper Bevendean Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Upper Bevendean Farmhouse	
	1 Upper Bevendean Cottage	
	2 Upper Bevendean Cottage	
	3 Upper Bevendean Cottage	Residential
Challoners & New Barn Farm	Challoners & New Barn Farm	Farmland
	3 Northgate (flat)	Residential
	4 Northgate (flat)	Residential
	50 Greenways	Residential
Mile Oak Farm	Mile Oak Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Mile Oak Farmhouse	
	Mile Oak Cottage	
	56 Foredown Road	Residential
	58 Foredown Road	Residential
East Hill	Land at East Hill	Farmland
Waterhall Farm	Waterhall Farm	Farmland
	1 Waterhall Cottage	Residential
	2 Waterhall Cottage	Residential

New Barn Farm	New Barn Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	New Barn Farmhouse	
Hangleton Bottom	Land at Hangleton Bottom	Paddock
Land at Mill Hill	Land at Mill Hill	Farmland
Shoreham		
High Park Farm	High Park Farm	Farm Holding
	1 High Park Farm	
	2 High Park Farm	Residential
	3 High Park Farm	Residential
	4 High Park Farm	Residential
Home Farm Stanmer	1 &2 Home Farm Farmhouse	Residential
	1 Stanmer	Residential
	2 Stanmer	Residential
	6 Stanmer	Residential
	7 Stanmer	Residential
	9 Stanmer	Residential
	12 Stanmer	Residential
	13 Stanmer	Residential
	14 Stanmer	Residential
	15 Stanmer	Residential
Stanmer Properties	The Forge	Commercial
	The Traditional Farm Buildings/ Stables	Commercial
	Farmland	Farmland
	Stanmer Orchard	Farmland
Housedean Farm	Housedean Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Housedean Farmhouse	
	86 Housedean	Residential
	87 Housedean	Residential
	89 Housedean	Residential
	Housedean Sussex Barn	Commercial
Ovingdean Grange Farm	Ovingdean Grange Farmland & Buildings	Farm Holding
	Bulstrode Farmhouse	
	1 Greenways Corner	Residential
	4 Greenways Corner	Residential
	5 Greenways Corner	Residential
	8 Greenways Corner	Residential
Court Farm	Court Farmland & Buildings	Farmland
	1 Orchard Cottage	Residential
	2 Orchard Cottage	
Park Street	61 Park Street	Residential
Ridge Road, Land at	Land at Ridge Road	Paddocks
Falmer Farm	Falmer Shop & Land	Retail
Falmer Chalk Field	Land at Falmer	Farmland

Pickershill Farm	Pickershill Farmland & Buildings	Farmland
	1 Pickershill Farm Cottages	Residential
	2 Pickershill Farm Cottages	Residential
Patcham Rifle Range	Patcham Rifle Range	Commercial
Patcham Court Valley Farm	Patcham Court Valley	Farmland
	130 Vale Avenue Cottages	Residential
	132 Vale Avenue Cottages	Residential
	134 Vale Avenue Cottages	Residential
Patcham	Patcham Court Tegdown South	Farmland
	Patcham Court Scare Hill and Tegdown	Farmland
Beacon Hill	Land at Beacon Hill	Paddock
Castle Hill	Land at Castle Hill	Farmland
Coldean	Land at Coldean	Paddock
Ingleside	Ingleside Racing Stables	Riding School
Southdown Riding School	Southdown Riding School	Riding School
Plumpton Hill	Land at Plumpton Hill	Farmland
Poynings	Land south of Poynings	Farmland
Falmer Road, Land at	Land to the east of Falmer Road	Paddock
Falmer Road, Land at	Land to the west of Falmer Road	Paddock
Stanmer Home Farm & St Mary's	Stanmer Home Farm & St Mary's	Farmland
Land East & West of Ditchling Road	Land East & West of Ditchling Road	Farmland
Green Broom	Land adjoining Green Broom	Farmland
Home Farm Moulescoomb	Home Farm Moulescoomb	Farmland
Mile Oak, Land at	Land to the west of Mile Oak	Paddock
Downsview Road, Land at	Land South of Downsview road	Paddock
Land at Saltdean	Land at Saltdean	Paddock
Rottingdean Football Fields	Rottingdean Football Fields	Leisure
Rottingdean Cricket Club	Rottingdean Cricket Club	Leisure
Rottingdean Recreation Ground	Rottingdean Recreation Ground	Leisure
Beacon Hill Open Space	Beacon Hill Open Space	Leisure
	Hildesland Allotment	Agriculture
	Hoggs Platt Allotment	Agriculture
	Hoggs Platt Extension Allotment	Agriculture
	Windmill Hill Allotments	Agriculture
	Rottingdean Windmill	Historic Building
Undercliff & Beach	Rottingdean Chalets	Leisure
	Ovingdean Chalets	Leisure
	Public Toilets Ovingdean Gap	Public Conveniences
	Refreshment Kiosk Ovingdean Gap	Retail

Roedean Miniature Golf Course & Café	Roedean Miniature Golf Course & Café	Leisure
East Brighton Park	East Brighton Park	Leisure
	East Brighton Park House	Residential
	East Brighton Park Pavilion	Leisure
	East Brighton Park Depot	Operational
	East Brighton Park Tennis Courts	Leisure
	Astroturf Pitches	Leisure
Brighton Recycling Site Sheepcote Valley	Brighton Recycling Site Sheepcote Valley	Waste Site
Sheepcote Valley Open Space	Sheepcote Valley Open Space	Leisure
Happy Valley Recreation Ground	Happy Valley Recreation Ground	Leisure
Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Warren Road	Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Warren Road	Cemetery
Walpole Road Allotments	Walpole Road Allotments	Agriculture
St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School	St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School	Education
Whitehawk Hill Allotments	Whitehawk Hill Allotments	Agriculture
Whitehawk Hill Transmitter Station	Whitehawk Hill Transmitter Station	Mast
Whaitehawk Camp	Whaitehawk Camp	Monument
Brighton Racecourse	Brighton Racecourse	Leisure
Wyvale Garden Centre	Wyvale Garden Centre	Commercial
Whitehawk Recreation Ground & Play Area	Whitehawk Recreation Ground and Play Area	Leisure
Race Hill Farm Allotments	Race Hill Farm Allotments	Agriculture
Race Hill Community Orchard	Race Hill Community Orchard	Agriculture
The Crew Club, Coolham Drive	The Crew Club, Coolham Drive	Community Centre
Tenantry Down Allotments	Tenantry Down Allotments	Agriculture
Bevendean Recreation Ground	Bevendean Recreation Ground	Leisure
Manton Road Allotments	Manton Road Allotments	Agriculture
Lower Bevendean Allotments	Lower Bevendean Allotments	Agriculture
Moulscoomb Estate Allotments	Moulscoomb Estate Allotments	Agriculture
Bevendean Community Garden, Heath Hill Avenue	Bevendean Community Garden, Heath Hill Avenue	Agriculture
Bexhill Road Open Space & Play Area	Bexhill Road Open Space & Play Area	Leisure
Falmer Pond & Open Space	Falmer Pond & Open Space	Leisure
Ridge Road Allotments, Falmer	Ridge Road Allotments, Falmer	Agriculture
Stanmer Park	10 Stanmer Village	Residential
	11 Stanmer Village	Residential
	16 Stanmer Village	Residential

	23 Upper Lodges, Stanmer	Residential
	38 Lower Lodges, Stanmer	Residential
	5 Stanmer Village	Residential
	8 Stanmer Village	Residential
	Kiosk, Lower Lodges	Commercial
	Public Toilets	Public Conveniences
	Horticultural Training College	Education
	The Long Barn	Vacant
	Stanmer House	Commercial
	One Garden	Commercial
	Stanmer Park Offices	Operational
	Stanmer Park Earthship	Education
	Stanmer Park Tearooms	Commercial
	Stanmer Park Sports Pavilion	Leisure
	Stanmer Village Car Park	Car Parking
	Upper Lodges Car Park	Car Parking
	Lower Lodges Car Park	Car Parking
	Chalk Hill Car Park	Car Parking
	Stanmer Park	Leisure
Wolseley Road Playground	Wolseley Road Playground	Leisure
Wild Park	Pavilion Kiosk	Commercial
	Football Pavilion	Leisure
	Wild Park	Leisure
Moulscoomb Place Allotments	Moulscoomb Place Allotments	Agriculture
Brentwood Road Recreation Ground	Brentwood Road Recreation Ground	Leisure
Hollingbury Hawks Football Pitch	Hollingbury Hawks Football Pitch	Leisure
Lower Roedale Allotments	Lower Roedale Allotments	Agriculture
4 Lower Roedale Cottages	4 Lower Roedale Cottages	Residential
Hollingbury Golf Course	Hollingbury Golf Course	Leisure
Hollingbury Park	Hollingbury Park	Leisure
	Hollingbury Park Bowls Club	Leisure
	Hollingbury Park Playgroup	Education
	Hollingbury Park Tennis Courts	Leisure
Patcham Transmitter	Patcham Transmitter	Masts
Newmarket Hill Mast	Newmarket Hill Mast	Masts
Ladies Mile Road Open Space	Ladies Mile Road Open Space	Leisure
Horsdean Travellers Site	Horsdean Travellers Site	Residential
Horsdean Recreation Ground	Horsdean Recreation Ground	Leisure
	Horsdean Cricket Pavilion	
Braypool Recreation Ground	Braypool Recreation Ground	Leisure
	Cricket Shelters	Leisure
	Sports Pavilion	Leisure

Chattri Memorial	Chattri Memorial	Monument
Patcham Place	Patcham Place	Leisure
	Patcham Place Sports Pavilion	Leisure
Green Ridge Open Space	Green Ridge Open Space	Leisure
Three Cornered Copse Woodland & Open Space	Three Cornered Copse Woodland & Open Space	Leisure
Waterhall Former Golf Course	Waterhall Former Golf Course	Leisure
	Bungalow	Residential
	Clubhouse	Leisure
Waterhall Recreation Ground	Waterhall Recreation Ground	Leisure
	Brighton Rugby & Football Club	Leisure
	Sports Pavilion	Leisure
	Baseball Diamond	Leisure
	Artificial Pitch	Leisure
Model Flying Club Saddlescombe Road	Model Flying Club Saddlescombe Road	Leisure
The Dyke Golf Club	The Dyke Golf Club	Leisure
Devils Dyke Public House	Devils Dyke Public House	Commercial
Devils Dyke Old Railway Trail	Devils Dyke Old Railway Trail	Leisure
Benfield Valley Golf Course	Benfield Valley Golf Course	Leisure
Hangleton Bottom Waste Site	Hangleton Bottom Waste Site	Waste Site
Foredwon Allotments	Foredwon Allotments	Agriculture
Southwick Hill Recreation Ground	Southwick Hill Recreation Ground	Leisure

Appendix x

Ash die back plan

BHCC's ADB plan will outline the main aims and objectives giving a clear understanding how the Council are going to manage the challenges ADB presents. Two of our main aims and objectives are to reduce the risk to the public and property and replace trees we remove. We will be removing trees which may look healthy to the public, and some residents may be concerned by the works, but all trees have been surveyed by a professional Arboriculturist. The ADB fungal infection will cause a decline in tree health and condition resulting in a public safety risk. The disease is not only affecting ash trees in Brighton & Hove, but also killing ash throughout the country, with the worst affected areas being here in the south- east of England where major works have already taken place removing 100,000s of trees.

With an estimated 95% of Ash trees throughout the country expected to die within the next five to 10 years, we must accept that our woodlands will look very different as a result. As more detailed assessments are carried out on our woodlands our initial estimates of 20% of our woodland trees being ash look low and this figure could be as high as 35% which equates to as many as 40,000 trees.

This is a significant change to the city however there is the opportunity of a new start and a chance to replace the lost ash. A main aim of the plan will be regenerating the areas affected and bring a more biological diversity into the city.

Brighton & Hove City Council's Ash Dieback Action Plan (ADAP) Objectives and Aims

- Surveying and identifying the areas and trees affected by ADB to control future risk and to provide the information for the ADAP
- Identify the environmental, landscape and biodiversity loss/gain from the ADAP
- Aim to replace all canopy cover lost by the removal of ash. We have multiple different habitats across the city and the planting will be designed to improve the biodiversity in these woodlands by planting over 35,000 - 40,000 trees in woodland areas.
- It's unknown how much natural regeneration will occur across the woodlands so replanting with whips will help improve habitat and widen the biodiversity
- Create a ADB Forum which will discuss any current issues and up and coming events e.g., tree removal and regeneration plans
- Identify high risk ash in woodland and other areas, prioritise tree removal based on those considered high risk first. Those trees that pose a lower risk will be managed to an appropriate timescale
- Produce forecasts and identify budget requirements to deal with infected ash and to replant
- We may find areas of woodlands where public access is limited, or the woodland can be secured to allow the ash to decline and woodland to naturally regenerate. These areas will be limited because of the open access to our woodlands however surveying is ongoing to identify possible sites.
- Reviewing previous records of individual trees and areas of ash to identify risk and to inform management decisions after re-establishment measures have taken place

- Estimating the cost and then evaluating the recovery from the financial and environmental effects ADB has had on the city
- Building resilience for the future of the city's woodlands and enhancing the beautiful open spaces we have already
- Engaging community groups and residents in the regeneration of the woodlands affected, where possible, and improving the on-going management of our woodlands.

All about Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Ash Dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*

Ash Dieback is a fungal disease *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* affecting common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and other *Fraxinus* species, formerly known as *Chalara fraxinea*.

Common ash is the third most prevalent woodland species in the United Kingdom and within BHCC woodlands here in the city. They are present in high numbers throughout the city's approximate 500 hectares of woodlands.

In Brighton and Hove there are relatively few ash trees in street settings, some exist in parks and open spaces and, where prominent, their loss would create a significant impact upon the local visual amenity of the area.

The symptoms first become visible during early June when the leaves are first emerging. These show themselves as wilting and dark discoloration on the leaves with elongated lesions developing on the smaller branches. Eventually the whole crown will

become infected with a characteristic 'crown die-back' developing over the next few years.

There is no way to contain the disease and all the city's ash trees will be exposed to it.

The action the council takes to control Elm disease by sanitation felling is not appropriate for ADB, it cannot be contained, or the spread controlled. We will only act where ash trees become a danger, to reduce the risk of falling parts which could cause injury or damage to persons and property. Where appropriate, we will replace trees with other trees suited to the woodland conditions.

The disease spreads via spores caught in the wind from tiny mushrooms born from the main leaf stalk and can spread within a ten-mile radius within one year. Over longer distances the risk of disease spread is most likely to be through the movement of diseased ash plants and foliage.

The movement of infected ash timber is not restricted and where possible felled ash timber will be removed. Where we leave timber on site this is due to limited access for extraction and for the creation of habitat piles / dead hedges, which will be improve biodiversity. The decisions for which methods to employ will be based on the specific locations and woodland conditions. Further information on the disease is available from the Forestry Commission website.

General management advice

Other tree species in the areas affected may require removal during these works due to poor condition or over exposure to wind following the removal of adjacent ash trees. Furthermore, any elm trees which pose a threat to existing elm disease controls will also be removed, where necessary, as part of the ADB works.

Our basic management proposals are:

- Restrict the pace of landscape changes where possible, and planting replacement trees as quick as possibly safe
- Work with the Forestry Commission on licence and restocking
- Identify any individuals or groups with possible genetic resistance to the disease
- Reduce the impact on biodiversity and associated species
- Applications for works to ash trees under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) will be considered as per the current legislation with respect to disease and life expectancy
- Identifying effect on budget, timescales and costs more effectively
- Working in line with our current Elm disease management
- Minimising Disruption and risk to the city's residents during tree felling operations
- Replanting where we can to improve habitat and diversity of species

Landscape and biodiversity

- Review available historical wildlife and management records to inform regeneration plans relating to ADBP
- Identify where tree loss will increase noise and decrease visual screening and to replant trees accordingly

- Identifying any areas where tree loss will affect the prevention of flooding or soil stability
- Working in line with the UK's Government Biodiversity Plan and the BHCC Biodiversity Plan by identifying and considering areas and species of interest

Local landowners, land managers and homeowners

Here at BHCC we have identified that Ash Dieback will not only be felt by BHCC but by many local organisations and others in our communities. Within the BHCC ADAP we outline some of problems in trying to work with these other bodies and agencies. We will be identifying these areas and making sure that the other agencies understand the impacts that this problem may have on them.

Potential impact of Ash Dieback on our organisation

Health and safety impacts

- Areas of the city's woodlands and parks to be deemed as unsafe for public use due to declining ash trees
- BHCC staff and contractors working with an increasing risk when removing ash trees
- Increased health and safety issues because of declining ash trees on roads, owned and managed land such as in woodland and parks, housing estates, schools, cycleways, bridle paths and footpaths.
- Desire lines or unmarked path / cycle ways will not be prioritised as these are not publicly maintained. Designated footways only will be cleared first and then within the future management new pathway maybe cleared and created.

- Method of tree removal increasing in risk to contractors as trees become more hazardous, which will also increase costs to remove.

Economic and social impacts

- Increased liabilities in cases of property damage and injury because of ADB related incidents
- A shortage of suitable contractors coupled with recruitment difficulties may lead to inflated costs for work
- Increased direct and indirect costs caused by ADB such as additional staff, additional management activities and the impacts this may have on other services and budgets.

Reputational impacts

- Political and reputational risks because of negative press and/or public criticism of ash dieback management
- Potentially strained relationships with landowners and managers as ash dieback spreads and increased costs fall on the private owners' Environmental impacts
- Landscape changes with impacts on recreational opportunities.

Environmental Impacts

- Loss of Fraxinus excelsior Ash trees for our Cityscape
- Loss of Ash woodland habitat and protection to other woodland species
- Possible changes in environmental conditions within surrounding areas. Other tree species being affected due to new environmental changes (e.g., predation and loss of companion shelter).

The Delivery and Action Plan

The BHCC felling program and works are being planned for the next 3 years which will remove the high-risk ash from the highest risk areas. There will be more works to be undertaken for a possible 5-10 years to clear the remaining low risk ash and re-stock. It has been identified that extra resource / staff and funding will be needed to achieve these goals, and for all the woodland across the city for the near future where maintenance work is needed. The plan will be reviewed and developed in terms of the on-going effectiveness of the ADBP and other site management plans that are already in place. The negative effect of ADB has already been mentioned but its larger impact will need to be reviewed in order to change what we are doing and how long this will take to achieve the end goal. Here are some of key factors in achieving the plan.

- In house team of inspectors, from CityParks, to identify and risk assess
- In house Arboriculture service team for any Immediate tree issues arising from ADB
- GIS use and other surveying technology to help analyse and predicted changes
- Training to in-house and other stakeholders to survey and observe the changes eg tree sapling and wildlife surveys.

Activities required to ensure the Action Plan is effective

- Ash dieback surveying and Tree risk management / public safety focused methods to be used
- Create an Ash dieback group to deal with increase Safety risk and discuss the future management
- Review legal practice, creating partnerships

with Local Universities and scientific studies around the resistance and theories in dealing with ADB.

- Carryout immediate removal of trees identified within ADB survey 2020-21. Focus public on public safety and communication networks (e.g., ash trees along public roads, public rights of way and railways; ash trees near overhead cables; ash trees away from road, cables etc) and longer-term risks, to the environment eg Biodiversity impact; Landscape restoration.
- Producing a communications strategy and public information updates on the latest ADB news page.
- Developing an ash dieback recovery review timetable and bespoke site management to assists in a sensitive but efficient recovery.

Recovery from Ash Dieback

The recovery from ADB is going to be one of the greatest challenges of the plan and where we have the greatest chance of increasing and changing the landscape of the city’s woodlands. We aim to increase the biodiversity across all the woodlands creating areas of new habitat and protecting these areas for the future.

Here at BHCC we plan to replant all the areas where ash has been removed due to ADB. In nearly all sites the need for a Forestry Commission licence demands a replant strategy and species list before the licence to remove the trees can be granted. There are 8 categories of recovery from ADB. Replant felled area, restock by natural generation, restock with individual trees, restock with coppiced trees are the main four methods we will be using across the city’s woodlands.

The main method in dealing with ADB will be to replant felled areas. The density and the species will be selected based on limitations and site conditions.

The limitations to replanting can be proximity to property or highways and site conditions e.g., species, age, soil and density of remaining trees. The BHCC inspectors will be carrying out site visits with a Forestry Commission officer to discuss and agree the correct method of removal and working with other local stakeholders to identify areas of interest. Native trees will be mainly used to restock the woodland and non-native species maybe used in the future for reliance against pest and diseases and seed genetics strengths. We are in dialogue with multiple agencies who are involved in woodland regeneration plus local and national tree nurseries /suppliers to secure stock and adhere to plant health safety.

Most of the replanting will be carried out by the CityParks department, contractors and in house staff but we will be using voluntary groups and residents we have here in the city to help to achieve this. The design of the replanting plan is simple and is outlined in the Forestry Commission licence with spacing and density is measured pre felling. We are only required to replant areas of lost canopy as part of the licencing and the available grants which we will be applying for.

The removal and recovery will also affect the wildlife and impact on the biodiversity of the city’s woodlands. BHCC hope with the sensitive methods of removal and the restocking plan the impact to wildlife and residents will be at a minimum.

However, the safety of the public is our main concern which must be at the forefront of deciding when all ADB works begin which allows the recovery phase from ADB to be planned and delivered in a strategic and phased context.

ADB Planting List 2021-2022

This Table has been comprised of mainly native trees. Any non-native trees have been added due to their characteristics and habitat value. Woodland edge trees have been selected for these characteristics and their lower final growth height 5m-12m. This group will be used to line the edge the woodland paths and boundaries to properties bring new habitats and areas of widening the ecology. Woodland Centre trees have been selected also for the characteristics and their final growth height 9m-22m. This group will be used restock the central areas of the woodlands and different species percentages will be used in restocking due to the already resident species diversity. Eg 15% of beech in woodland – Restock percentage 5% beech. This method will ensure not to restock a larger percentage of one species and possible forming a monoculture.

Table 1. Ash Replacement Tree Selection 2022-23

Woodland edge	Common name	Scientific name
	Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa
	Cherry Plum	Prunus cerasifera
	Common Buckthorn	Rhamnus cathartica
	Damson	Prunus domestica
	Dog Rose	Rosa canina
	Dogwood	Cornus sanguinea
	Elder	Sambucus nigra
	Bullace	Prunus domestica
	Gelder Rose	Viburnum opulus
	Hawthorn	Cratagous monogyna
	Hazel	Corylus avellana
	Wild Honeysuckle	Lonicera periclymenum
	Juniper	Juniperus communis
	Medlar	Mespilus germanica
Woodland centre	Spindle	Euonymus europaeus
	Wayfaring Tree	Viburnum lantana
	Whitebeam	Sorbus aria
	Wild Crab Apple	Malus sylvestris
	Common name	Scientific name
	Western Red cedar	Thuja plicata
	Scotts Pine	Pinus sylvestris
	European Lime	Tilia x europaea
	Field Maple	Acer campestre
	Holly	Ilex aquifolium
	Hornbeam	Carpinus betulus
	Silver Birch	Betula pendula
	Walnut	Jugals Nigra
	Wild Cherry	Prunus avium
	Willow	Salix sp.(S. capraea)
	Yew	Taxus baccata
	Alder	Alnus glutinosa
	Yew	Taxus bactta
	Beech	Fagus sylvatica
	English Oak	Quercus robur
	Box	Buxus sempervirens
	Wild Service Tree	Sorbus torminalis
	Small Leaved Lime	Tilia x cordata

Appendix xi

Glossary

We have made a conscious effort in the plan to keep technical terms to a minimum and, where we use abbreviations, to identify what they stand for in the text.

The role of science however in tackling issues such as biodiversity, landscape restoration and climate change means that we have not been able to avoid using specialist language altogether. An array of organisations have a direct stake in the estate and many have contributed to our debate on its future. To save space we have referred to these using shorthand in the form of abbreviations and acronyms where appropriate.

The glossary below provides a brief note on terms and phrases referred to in the plan which may need explanation.

Adur and Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS)

Authored by the Environment Agency, CAMS set out how water resources are to be managed sustainably at a local level.

BAME

Black and minority ethnic.

Biodiversity net gain (BNG)

A legal obligation for developers to ensure that following their development they deliver a 10% gain in biodiversity, to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years.

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP)

A not-for-profit organisation that helps people learn to cook eat a healthy diet, grow their own food and reduce waste. It also provides advice on food poverty. See also the Food Partnership strategy action plan in the policy digest in Appendix vii.

Brighton Downs Alliance

A group of organisations and individuals campaigning for landscape restoration, sustainable management and public accessibility on the Downs.

Brighton & Hove Community Transport

An independent not-for-profit organisation, B&HCT provides transport to community groups, voluntary sector organisations and individuals with mobility problems.

Carbon net zero/neutral; carbon negative

The amount of CO₂ emissions the estate puts into the atmosphere is the same as the amount it removes; or is less than the amount it removes.

Carbon capture, storage, sequestration and sink

Carbon capture, storage and sequestration refer to the method of mitigating climate change by capturing carbon dioxide emissions before they reach the atmosphere, or by removing emissions from it. A carbon sink is a biological or other type of physical entity that holds more carbon than it releases. Examples include soil and trees.

Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs)

An umbrella term for government grants designed to reward environmental land management. These include the Sustainable Farming Incentive and local nature recovery and landscape recovery schemes.

LGBTQ

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning).

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan

This is a key part of the council's new transport plan (see policy digest in Appendix vii). The aim is to create a better connected city, with high quality infrastructure which promotes and supports active travel.

Local/national nature reserves

Local nature reserves are protected areas of land designated by a local authority because of their special natural interest and/or educational value (including for example SSIs - see below). National nature reserves are land established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. They are managed for the purpose of studying flora and fauna or geological and physiographical features, or to preserve them.

Local wildlife sites

Valuable wildlife areas defined by using scientific criteria and surveys. Local authorities, statutory agencies, landowners and other local partners work together to manage and monitor the sites.

Nitrate vulnerable zones (NVZ)

Areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, NVZs require farmers and landowners to follow regulations on for example the use of fertiliser and to prevent water pollution. NVZs cover about 55% of land in England.

Permissive and statutory access

Permissive access refers to a route or area which the landowner has given permission for people to use. Statutory access refers to paths and land which the public has a legal right to use.

Photovoltaic (PV)

The conversion of light into electricity using for example solar panels, for

the purposes of commercial electricity generation.

Natcap Research

A consultancy commissioned by the council to measure the estate's natural capital assets. See Appendix iii.

Regenerative/sustainable farming

Regenerative agriculture is a conservation and rehabilitative approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle and enhancing ecosystem services.

Sustainable farming is a broader concept that encompasses principles and practices which aim to eliminate avoidable harm to people, animals and the environment from food production. Sustainable agriculture preserves and strengthens ecosystem function both on and off the farm.

Rights of way improvement plan (ROWIP)

The plan is designed to enable residents and visitors to have better access to the city's green and blue spaces, through a well-maintained and joined up rights of way network. See also the policy digest in Appendix vii.

Scheduled monuments

Sites that are legally protected because of their historical importance. In addition to built structures they can include archaeological sites such as ancient burial mounds.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

A formal conservation designation, usually describing an area that is of particular interest to science because of the species of fauna or flora it contains.

Social prescribing

This is intended to help citizens take control of their own health by connecting them to support within the community. It is a new initiative introduced by the NHS England as part of its long term plan to improve personalised care.

Source Protection Zones; Safeguard Zones

Water sources include wells, boreholes and springs defined by the Environment Agency as showing risk from contamination. Safeguard Zones are a joint initiative between the Environment Agency and water companies. to deliver drinking water protection objectives

South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)

A type of designation for an agricultural area which needs special protection because of its landscape, wildlife or historical value.

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

Its role is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the area by the public.

Special Area of Conservation (SACs)

These are protected areas in the UK designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

State of Nature Partnership

A grouping of over 50 nature conservation organisations which have reported on the status of wildlife in the UK.

Stewardship schemes

The entry level stewardship scheme is a voluntary scheme to promote the countryside, administered by Natural

England and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). It aims to encourage large numbers of farmers and land managers across England to deliver simple but effective environmental management. Higher level stewardship schemes are intended for those who are able to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas.

Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

The centre provides environmental information services encompassing biodiversity, geodiversity and other aspects of Sussex’s natural capital. Hosted by the Sussex Wildlife Trust, its partners include local planning authorities, government agencies, conservation bodies and other organisations.

