

Report to **South Downs National Park Authority**
Date **11 July 2023**
By **Performance and Projects Manager**
Title of Report **South Downs National Park Authority Corporate Plan – Year 4-5 Action Plan**

Decision

Recommendation: The Authority is recommended to:

1. Approve the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan for 2023/25

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan for 2023/25, which Members are asked to receive and approve. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority will prioritise its resources to deliver parts of the Partnership Management Plan.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan Year 3 action plan was approved by the NPA on 24 March 2022 (Report NPA20/21-26). The budget for 2023-24 was approved by the NPA on 30 March 2023 (Report NPA22/23-23).
- 1.3 Normally the Corporate Plan action plan would be considered by the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee and recommended to the NPA for approval at its March meeting. However, due to the Authority's financial situation and reduced resources of the Authority, Members requested further opportunity to consider the delivery of the Corporate Plan in Years 4 & 5. A Member workshop was held to provide this opportunity and Members of the P&R Committee, whilst not able to consider the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan at a formal meeting, have since been given the opportunity to provide written feedback prior to its recommendation for approval here.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Partnership Management Plan (PMP) sets out the overarching five-year strategy for the management of the South Downs National Park. It consists of a vision, three linked strategic themes and 10 outcomes which set where we would like to get to by 2050. The PMP sets out collective, partnership-based ambitions for the long term and the whole landscape, the Corporate Plan sets out the SDNPA contribution to this.

3. Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan for 2023/25

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan is a further development from the year 3 action plan. The year 3 action plan introduced three Higher Level Targets to help focus the work of the organisation, following a reduction in funding from Defra, in response to which the SDNPA has had to reduce staff levels and therefore capacity. This is reflected by the tighter focus of the Year 4-5 action plan. This Action Plan runs for two years, and a new Corporate Plan will be needed for 2026.

3.2 The corporate priorities are still grouped around Nature Recovery, Climate Action, and National Park for All. These are relevant to all parts of the SDNPA and all teams contribute towards their achievement. Rather than nine delivery areas there are proposed to be seven. In addition, contributions from across the SDNPA are described under the headings of place making, income generation, land management and the economy. Robust SMART indicators have been introduced and there are fewer, 31 instead of 75. The reporting is aligned to what we understand Defra requires, although fresh guidance for National Park Management Plans, together with KPIs for NPAs themselves, is being developed by Natural England and Defra, but is not yet finalised.

4. Issues for consideration

4.1 Measures for the Higher-Level Targets for National Park for All are subject to further work. We will need some time to refine them and put in place mechanisms to identify and collect the data to monitor them and establish baselines. This means they will be ready for year 5 onwards.

5. Options & cost implications

5.1 The Corporate Plan is developed alongside the budget and the action plan will be reviewed each year. There is minimal cost associated with the development of the Corporate Plan and associated action plans apart from some small cost for design.

6. Next steps

6.1 Once the NPA approve the Corporate Plan 2020-25 Year 4-5 action plan 2023/25 – subject to any required amendments it will be published on the website.

7. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	The resources for the areas of work in the Corporate Plan are set out in the budget for the South Downs National Park Authority, which was approved by the NPA, and in the revised staffing structure which sits alongside it.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The Corporate Plan itself does not raise an issue of value for money. However, the projects that the organisation funds are assessed for value for money when they are approved. In addition, projects are evaluated individually for value for money when they finish. This is reported regularly to the Policy and Resources Committee. Any work that is carried out which requires procurement is subject to the procedure for assessing value for money which is part of that process.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	The Corporate Plan demonstrates SDNPA delivery against the PMP outcomes and the delivery of our statutory planning function. As such it delivers something against most of the outcomes in the PMP
Links to other projects or partner organisations	Whilst partners may also focus on other aspects of the PMP, the Higher-Level Targets in our own Corporate Plan drive a lot of the relationships we have with other organisations

Implication	Yes*/No
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	One of our three high level targets focuses on Climate Action. The work we will deliver will address the Authority's climate change targets and demonstrates how we will support others to work towards Net Zero for the National Park.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	EDI Assessments were undertaken for each element of the corporate plan action plan as it was put together. Also, one of three High-Level Targets is A National Park for All, which contributes to removing barriers for all sectors of the community to engage with and access the National Park. All projects in the Corporate Plan will go through an assessment as part of the project approval process to ensure they contribute to the delivery of the enhanced public sector equality duty.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	No, not directly although during development of the Corporate Plan, sustainability issues are included as part of the process.

8. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

8.1 Robust corporate planning and monitoring of performance are part of the mitigations for our corporate risk as detailed in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Changes to the level of funding provided by relevant Government departments for future years	Unlikely	Significant	A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to P&R Committee on projects and the budget available along with a Corporate Plan which sets clear priorities to support delivery of Partnership Management Plan outcomes. The reduced focus of the plan and tighter reporting are in direct response to

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
			reductions in resources to deliver the plan. This tightening makes it more likely that the targets will be achieved.

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 Appendices I. Corporate Plan Year 4-5 Action Plan 2023-25
 SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services,
 External Consultees None
 Background Documents [SDNPA Budget 2023-24](#)
[Corporate Plan Year 3 Action Plan](#)
[Partnership Management Plan 2020-25](#)