

Report to **South Downs National Park Authority**  
Date **28 March 2024**  
By **Communications & Engagement Manager**  
Title of Report **Update on South Downs Green Finance Summit**

**Note**

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**Recommendation:**

**The Authority is recommended to note the updated plans for the South Downs Green Finance summit**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As part of our public affairs work, it was agreed that the SDNPA would run a South Downs policy summit in Spring 2024.
- 1.2 In March 2023, SMT/Committee Chairs met to discuss a short proposal for such a policy summit and agreed to progress the proposal and bring for approval to the NPA. It was agreed that the topic for the South Downs Summit should be Green Finance and how it can be used to accelerate high-quality, robust, landscape-led nature recovery.
- 1.3 An updated paper with details of the conference was taken to NPA and endorsed in October 2023. This paper is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Today's paper sets out the changes and updates since the October 2023 paper.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 As set out in the October paper to NPA, the aim of the Summit is to bring together policy makers, nature recovery and green finance specialists, landowners, developers and organisations offsetting, to debate how green finance can deliver more, better, faster, landscape-led nature recovery. In particular how the National Park and other protected landscapes can play a key role as conveners and in working with landowners and developers to demonstrate practical implementation at scale.
- 2.2 As an innovative Protected Landscape, playing a leading role in this area, we will act as convener, providing the “glue” to bring the experts and delivery partners together in one place to debate and agree how the public and private sector can better work together to maximise the nature recovery impact of this new market. The Summit will showcase the variety and effectiveness of providers operating in the South Downs all looking to unlock private finance for nature's recovery.

**3. Date and timing**

- 3.1 The date for the summit was shifted back to accommodate changes in SLT and enable more planning time. The date is now fixed as 10am–4pm on Thursday 23 May.

#### **4. Focus and outline of the day**

- 4.1 The summit will have a regional focus, homing in on the way the South Downs National Park is developing and delivering on green finance, lessons learned and how it may inform other approaches, as well as sharing the variety of approaches others are taking. As both custodian and Local Planning Authority of a protected landscape where 75% is farmed, which sits in the busiest part of the UK, the South Downs National Park Authority is using its expertise, local knowledge and work in partnership with landowners to deliver strategic nature recovery through green finance.
- 4.2 The day will be structured in four sections with a focus on including not just expert but authentic voices in each session:
- Welcome and Introduction
  - Session 1: Commitment to 30by30 and Net Zero (the strategic imperative).
  - Session 2: The ethics: Nature Market Principles.
  - Session 3: The Local Approach (partnership).
  - Session 4: Action (showcasing different approaches and signposting where to find out more and begin the journey to unite behind the common cause to deliver nature recovery through unlocking private finance)
  - Wrap up
  - Thank you and close - SDNPA Chair, Vanessa Rowlands.
- 4.3 The sessions will be a mix of speakers and panel discussions.
- 4.4 James Stuart from One Planet Consulting (Member at the Lakes and former Convenor of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs) will be the independent chair of the day, running the sessions, keeping things on track.
- 4.5 Discussions have taken place with James Stuart to develop the above structure of the day and his recommendation is that we should include the Accord previously discussed in the October paper as a commitment from the SDNPA and call on others to join that commitment rather than trying to get sign up on the day.

#### **5. Title and speakers**

- 5.1 The final title agreed in collaboration with James Taylor is “Pioneering the Future: Making Private Finance Work for Nature and Landowners”.
- 5.2 The previous Secretary of State (SoS) had expressed an interest in opening the summit. With the change in SoS we have approached the new Secretary of State are awaiting a response.
- 5.3 Current speakers/panellist confirmed as of 17 March include:
- Rob Stoneman, Director of Landscape Strategy, The Wildlife Trusts
  - Matthew Woodcock, MBE, Partnerships & Expertise Manager South East, Forestry Commission
  - Ben Taylor, Managing Director, Iford Estate
  - Olly Breen, Sustainability & Responsible Banking Senior Manager, Santander
  - Naomi Conway, National Park Partnerships
  - James Baird, landowner who is part of the Weald to Waves project
  - Finance Earth – awaiting speaker name.

#### **6. Audience**

- 6.1 Number will be limited to no more than 100 + speakers + staff

- Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Chairs and 3 additional members to be nominated by the Chair (7 places)
- Representative from each Local Authority (15)
- A place each for NPE, NPP, NPUK and CNP, NFU and CLA, EA and NE (8 places)
- Places remaining for delegates (70). (The focus for these places will be landowners, large developers, corporations, larger ecological consultants, NGOs, businesses.

6.2 The invitation list is in the final stages of completion and a hold the date is being sent out on week of 18 March.

**7 Other implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Budget has already been allocated to deliver the summit which includes lunch for delegates and speaker fees and expenses. The event will take place at SDC Hall so no premises hire costs are needed.</p> <p>Managers have agreed and allocated the time needed from key staff.</p>
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	<p>Summit will take place in SDC Hall to keep costs to a minimum.</p> <p>The summit is part of direct delivery for our PMP, Corporate Plan and Public affairs Strategy,</p>
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	<p>Public affairs strategy objectives around nature and climate.</p> <p>PMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome 1: Landscape &amp; Natural Beauty</li> <li>• Outcome 2: Increasing resilience</li> <li>• Outcome 3: Habitats &amp; Species</li> </ul> <p>Corporate Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Recovery: HLT3 To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)</li> <li>• Climate Action: HLT5. 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019</li> <li>• Generating Income: CP4. Incubate a number of income generating initiatives, building on Seven Sisters and the South Downs Trust, scaling these up to generate £200k per annum</li> </ul>
Links to other projects or partner organisations	<p>South Downs ReNature</p> <p>SDNPA Green Finance Initiative: ReNature Credits</p> <p>Our South Downs</p>

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	Supports delivery of Corporate Plan, in particular: 8 Nature Recovery: HLT3 To prepare for and implement Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) 9 Climate Action: HLT5. 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019
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?	Yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event will be held in SDC Hall to ensure full accessibility</li> <li>• Minibuses will be put on from Haslemere to Chichester to remove barriers to attending the conference</li> <li>• Invitation list will be designed to be diverse.</li> </ul>
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No: See points made on accessibility and access above.
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?	GDPR will be followed in the management of personal data of invitees and speakers.

### **I0 Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Key speakers unable to attend on the day	Medium	Gaps in programme	Plan will be put in place to fill/amend programme if key speakers are unable to attend.  Strong communication will be maintained with all speakers to avoid any last-minute surprises.

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Appendices	I. Proposal for South Downs Green Finance Summit – Oct 2023
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive (Interim); Director of Landscape and Strategy; Director of Planning (Interim); Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	None

