

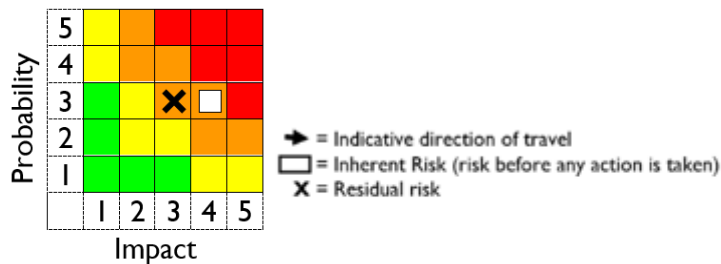
South Downs National Park Authority
Corporate Risk Register



Risk 01: Health and Safety

Owner: Vicky Paterson

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Possible with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is no change.



Description of impact of risk:

Accident or incident involving staff, volunteers, visitors, members or the public resulting in serious injury or death at an SDNPA facility or event. Breach of statutory duties, litigation and cost against the authority.

Mitigations:

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

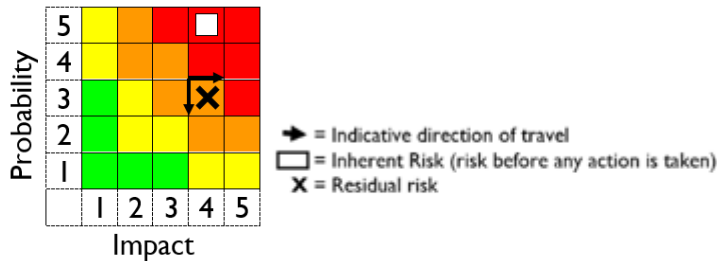
Updates:

Internal audit raised some concerns in relation to a lack of clarity of roles between SDNPA and the company managing SSCP on H&S matters. Responsibility matrix (RACI) has been produced by the Authority's H&S Officer working with the SSCP Manager.

Risk 02: Finance and Budgets

Owner: Tim Slaney

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Almost Certain with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Major impact. Perceived direction of travel is the probability Decreasing due to prudent financial planning providing short-term stability, however, the impact Increasing due to uncertainty over future funding arrangements..



Description of impact of risk:

Budgets insufficient or budgets become insufficient due to a failure of the Defra grant to increase in real terms over a number of years, a reduction of the Defra grant, or an in-year requirement for savings; failure to match resources and workloads across the organisation; or negative impact of increased inflation rates on costs. Management plan suffers and SDNPA lacks capacity to properly remunerate the staff and/or support other work. Resources not available to deliver on all priorities.

Mitigations:

1. Sufficient headroom within revenue budget and sufficient reserves to enable any shortfall to be managed in the short term whilst Medium Term budget adjusted.
2. Income Generation activity underway (see risk 22) to provide potential to raise income.
3. Effective and early planning process through Member workshops to redefine MTFP process and approach to Budget setting, including refocussed corporate plan.
4. Monthly budget monitoring undertaken by managers and OMT, enables identification of areas of potential overspend and compensating savings. Industry indices used to model real world inflation implications through MTFS.
5. Procurement processes identify issues related to inflation and, where appropriate, changes to specifications etc. made to manage impacts of inflation.
6. Work underway to secure private investment into the National Park which would result in opportunities for cost recovery for the Authority e.g. Nature Based Solutions funded by Nitrate offsets, BNG credits, and potentially carbon offsets (ReNature Credits schemes).
7. Review of fixed costs, including staffing costs completed with significant savings identified.
8. 2023/24 Invest to Save reserve created

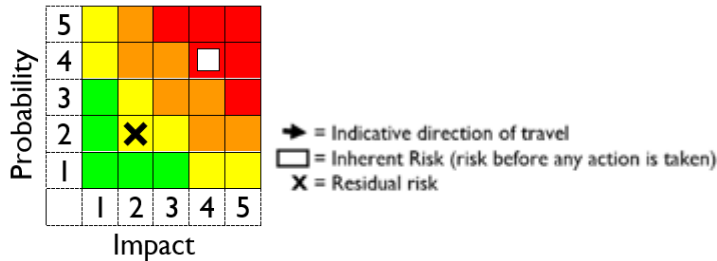
Updates:

Budget set with headroom. Some additional Capital programme expenditure and medium term financial strategy established. Work of Members and Officers has enabled some short-term stability. However, future funding arrangements for the Protected Landscapes family remain uncertain.

Risk 16: Staffing

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

Inability to attract/retain key staff impacts upon the organisation’s service delivery. High staff turnover results in inefficiency across the organisation. Mental Health issues affect staff performance and delivery.

Mitigations:

1. Pay structure and terms and conditions in place, with new pay award post April 2024.
2. Training and development programme,
3. Staff survey and action plan,
4. PDR policy,
5. Internal policies and procedures in place e.g. (Family friendly, flexible working).
6. Staff survey to inform development of post-Covid plan.
7. Webinars available for all staff related to mental health and homeworking, regular communications through internal communications channels.
8. Mental health first aiders in place, independent counselling and support resources available through Simply Health. Regular communication of wellbeing resources to staff and access for staff and Members to wellbeing portal.
9. Corporate plan prioritisation exercise to inform allocation of staffing resources.
10. Blended working policies agreed and monitored through OMT.

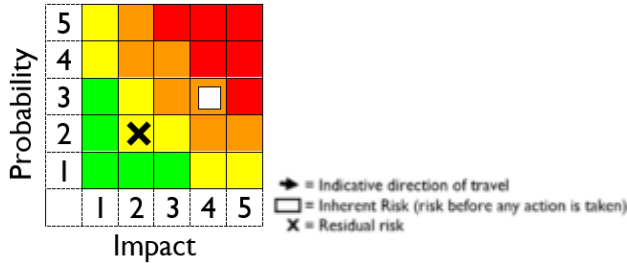
Updates:

Staff recruitment and retention continues to be good. Action plan following the recent staff survey agreed with actions underway.

Risk 20: Business Continuity Planning and Organisational Resilience

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

Lack of organisational business continuity planning and organisational resilience may prevent delivery of key services in the event of a major incident, cyber attack, or as a result of the loss of key staff.

Mitigations:

1. BCP in place and regularly reviewed for Authority and its offices.
2. Business Critical functions identified and planned for.
3. IT Disaster Recovery plans in place and tested annual.
4. Cyber incident response plans in place.
5. Key staff roles identified in BCP and communicated.
6. Documenting of key processes to mitigate points of failure.
7. Specific implications of IT provision addressed through day to day IT support functions being provided via outsourced contracts meaning that user support would not be immediately impacted by the departure or absence of the IT Strategy Manager.
8. IT network and key systems delivered externally via contracts.
9. Network Resilience and continuity issues have also been addressed via the IT contracts. Linked to mitigations of risk I6 related to staffing.
10. BCP for Seven Sisters Country Park in place.

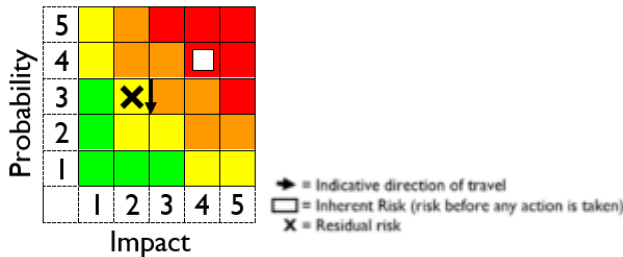
Updates:

Cyber incident response plans in place. New Senior Leadership Team has been trained on the principles of BCP and the Authority’s BCP.

Risk 21: Projects - External facing (Delivery and Reputation)

Owner: Tim Slaney

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is likely with a Major impact and after mitigations, it is scored as Possible with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel is probability Decreasing given the positive developments in relation to the S62 duty whereby “have regard to” has been replaced by the much stronger “seek to further”.



Description of impact of risk:

Failure to deliver key projects or PMP outcomes due to lack of flexible resources and staff time within the SDNPA, unrealistic expectations or alignment with partner business plans and /or loss of commitment or ability to deliver from Partners. This could result in SDNPA reputation and influence with decision makers, partners and other stakeholders being negatively impacted.

Mitigations:

1. South Downs Partnership established and operating as an independent advocate and champion.
2. 2020-25 PMP in place, new approach to budget setting embedded, review process for next PMP under development having regard to the new outcomes framework.
3. Public affairs strategy and proactive comms: managing public expectations and setting out key messages to stakeholders and partners.
4. Project evaluation and lessons learnt reported to committee and used to inform future practice.
5. Development with the South Downs Trust of longer term and diversified streams of income

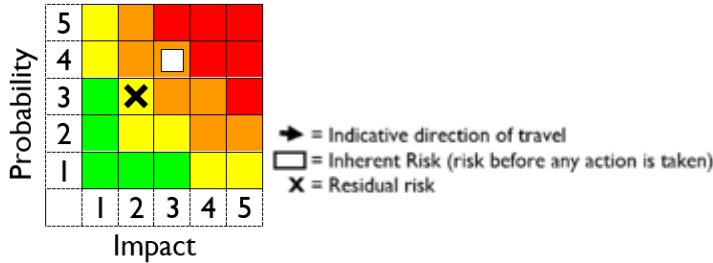
Updates:

Draft of new management plan guidance was released to NPAs in mid-May which, together with the Protected Landscapes outcomes framework and the need for links with LNRS', will shape the future direction of the PMP as well as the need for clarity and engagement with wider audience. South Downs Partnership to develop alongside the next PMP including role as a key vehicle to facilitate the delivery of PMP outcomes.

Risk 22: Income Generation

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

Insufficient income generation opportunities are identified to generate significant income to support NPA budgets. Inability to meet expectations of Government in relation to income generation. Insufficient skills /experience “in house” to exploit potential income generating opportunities. Challenge to commercial activity results in additional costs or reputational damage to the Authority.

Mitigations:

1. Governance framework for consideration of SDNPA powers in relation to commercial/income generation activity developed.
2. South Downs Commercial Operations Operating Agreement and Business Plan in place as a key aspect of the Authority’s control framework over its teckal company for the management of Seven Sisters Country Park.
3. Sufficient reserves held to enable recruitment of staff with necessary skill set if required.
4. Skilled income generation team operating well and meeting its targets.
5. Ongoing support for South Downs National Park Trust.
6. ReNature Credits scheme promotes nature recovery and biodiversity gains on sites in the SDNP and provides the Authority with opportunities for cost recovery in the delivery of the service (see Risk 02 point 6).
7. Reviewing future workstreams with a view to greater targeting of external grants and other income streams.
8. Discretionary fees in planning under review.

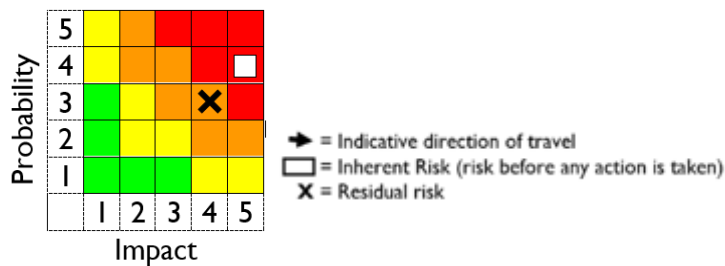
Updates:

Review of the management of SSCP reporting to NPA in July. Processes and governance around grant bids reviewed and clarified.

Risk 26: Seven Sisters Country Park – Health and Safety

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

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

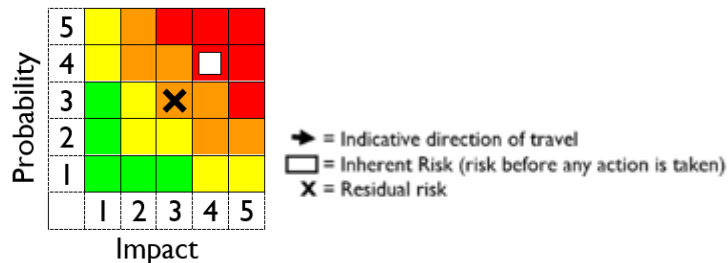
Updates:

Internal audit raised some concerns in relation to a lack of clarity of roles between SDNPA and the company managing SSCP on H&S matters. Responsibility matrix (RACI) has been produced by the Authority's H&S Officer working with the SSCP Manager. Programme for replacement of fencing where required in place and close liaison with grazier on management of livestock.

Risk 27: Seven Sisters Country Park – Asset ownership

Owner: Tim Slaney

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



Description of impact of risk:

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

Mitigations:

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

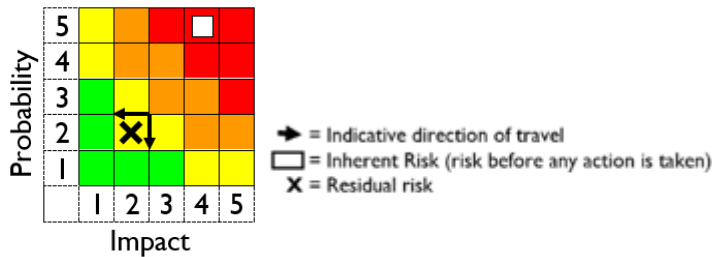
Updates:

Survey of assets at SSCP to be undertaken. Works taking place on the reed bed. New grazing arrangements in place with work on a long-term agreement underway. Programme for replacement of fencing where required in place and close liaison with grazier on management of livestock. Following renovation to Foxholes Cottages and the Camping Barn these are now open as holiday accommodation.

Risk 29: Direct Action Urgent Works at the Angel Inn and the Tuck Shop, North Street, Midhurst

Owner: Mike Hughes

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is almost certain with a major impact and after mitigations it is scored Unlikely with a Minor impact. Perceived direction of travel of risk is improving due to progress towards cost recovery and eventual transfer of scaffolding ownership.



Description of impact of risk:

SDNPA remain responsible for the scaffolding (but are progressing with cost recovery of the ongoing costs from their owners/their insurers) and therefore the SDNPA continues to carry financial, reputational and health and safety risks.

Mitigations:

1. Skilled and experienced specialist contractor carried out the urgent works. This work was completed successfully and ahead of time. An independent check of the scaffolding design and installation (over and above that legally required) was commissioned and completed to ensure safety.
2. Monitoring of the scaffolding by a specialist contractor carried out monthly to ensure safety.
3. Costs of the direct action that SDNPA commissioned were shared with Chichester District Council and West Sussex County Council.
4. Detailed legal advice was taken and followed.
5. Appropriate insurances and security arrangements are in place in respect of the scaffolding.
6. Strong project management, procurement, legal and facilities procedures are in place to deal with the ongoing (monthly) monitoring of the scaffolding.
7. Vehicle safety measures associated with the hoarding around the scaffolding have been designed and implemented by West Sussex County Council as Highways Authority.

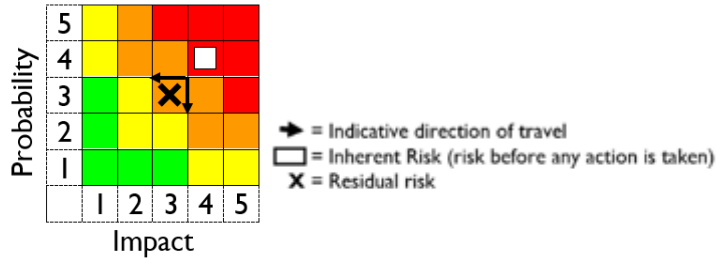
Updates

Cost Recovery Notices served in late Summer 2023. Payment plan agreed with one owner and monies received with more to come. The second Cost Recovery Notice has been appealed to the Secretary of State and we are awaiting details of the Inspector and when this will be considered.

Risk 30: Host Authority Section 101 Planning Contracts

Owner: Mike Hughes

The grid below highlights that the inherent risk is Likely with a Major impact and after mitigations it is scored as Possible with a Moderate impact. Perceived direction of travel is that the risk is decreasing for both probability and impact given the progress made on S101 contracts.



Description of impact of risk:

The Section 101 contract with Lewes District Council expires on 30 September 2024. The other four host authority contracts expire on 30 September 2024 - unless they are extended, by mutual written agreement, to 30 September 2026. A number of the host authorities have indicated that they may not wish to extend the Section 101 planning contracts beyond 30 September 2024 on the current terms, for a number of reasons, including inflationary pressures and need for cost recovery.

Mitigations:

1. Meetings held at senior officer level to try and ensure Section 101 cover in place to 30 September 2026. SDNPA remains committed to the host authority arrangements as it delivers a number of benefits for the Authority.
2. All hosts have agreed to ensure that SDNPA has 12 full months to take over their Service, if this ultimately proves to be required.
3. Contingency plans being drawn up to recover the Planning Service from a host or hosts if this proves to be required.

Updates:

Two of five contracts renewed to 30 September 2026. Terms agreed with two other host authorities and formal paperwork to be concluded soon. One host authority (Horsham) will not be renewing their contract and the Authority will recover the planning service for that area. The impact on the Authority is not expected to be too significant as Horsham is our smallest host authority. Plan for Lewes cost assessment in the next few months to ensure clarity for the next round of negotiations.