

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK



A REVIEW OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN APRIL 2025



Resources
FOR CHANGE

JIM BOOT, CLARE FEATHERSTONE, MIKE KING & NEIL SMITH

Resources for Change Ltd
Directors: D Jones, M King, N Smith, S Sullivan,
VAT number: 996 4504 72. Company Number 7310220.
Registered Address: Cwrt Isaf Farmhouse, Llangattock, Crickhowell, Powys NP8 1PH.

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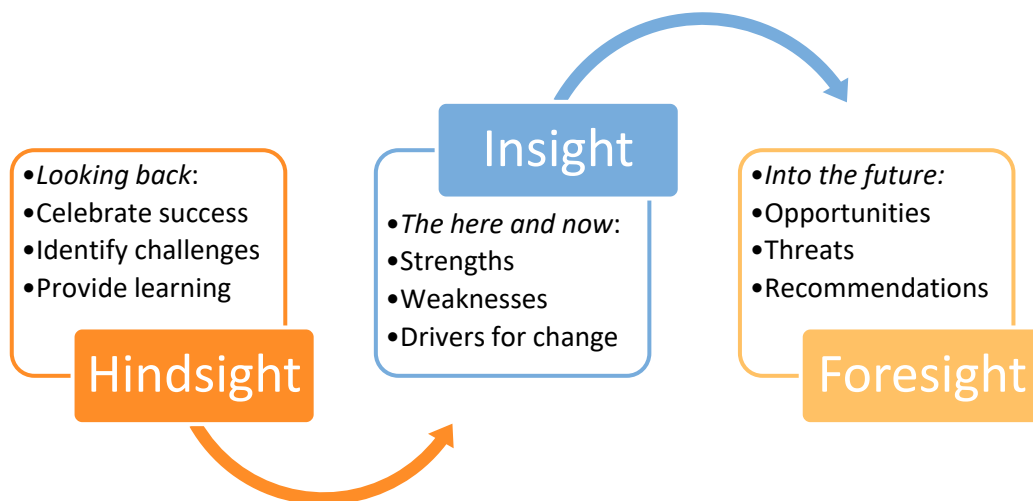


1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Resources for Change](#) (R4C) with consortium partners [Diversity Resource International](#) (DRI) and [Youngwilders](#) (YW) were commissioned by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to undertake a review of the existing [South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2020-25](#) (PMP) and deliver an extensive stakeholder engagement programme to support the development of the new South Downs Partnership Management Plan, 2026-31.

The PMP is a five-year strategic plan for the National Park, sets the framework for delivery to achieve key outcomes for people, nature and climate and is a statutory requirement for all National Parks and National Landscapes.

The methodology for this work was based on the following considerations:



A mixed-method approach was adopted encompassing desk research and involving 1,157 partners, stakeholders and members of the public through a stakeholder and partner online survey, a partner survey, one to one interviews and two phases of sector specific workshops and events.

Engagement focused on the following groups:

- Landowners, farmers and the local and rural business community
- Community groups, local authorities, parish and town councils
- Local communities within and residents outside the National Park
- People living in urban areas, especially people facing socio-economic barriers to inclusion
- Diverse communities
- Young people (aged 18-30)
- SDNPA staff, members and partners

There were several research limitations, which are set out in the report. The most significant of these was the lack of consistent quantitative data over the current PMP plan period due to changes in the monitoring and outcome framework from Defra. This means that the findings are largely qualitative in nature, and it has not been possible to do a full evaluation of the current PMP or to assess impact.

Looking back over the past five years of the current PMP 2020-25, the research has identified a wide range of activity across all aims and objectives by SDNPA and partners. Key highlights include a range of partnership projects, networks, membership schemes, policies, cultural and educational programmes, and volunteering initiatives that immersed local people and visitors in the South Downs National Park (SDNP), promoting the economy, health and wellbeing, helping protect landscape character and addressing nature recovery.

However, there is still much to be done, and challenges include the need for more joined up and larger scale habitat restoration, further engagement of partners in PMP development and delivery, improvements to accessibility and public transport, further support for farming and rural businesses, engaging young people and addressing skills gaps in green skills and traditional crafts, welcoming diversity and more emphasis on nature recovery and climate action.

This is set against a backdrop of political and economic uncertainty, development pressures, funding cuts, climate impacts and rapidly progressing technology.

Most people who participated in this engagement programme lived or worked locally or visited the National Park regularly. People love the South Downs for its landscape, beauty and tranquillity, access to nature and feeling of home. They disliked the impacts of climate change, pollution, funding issues, housing and traffic.

Participants perceived the key strengths to be natural beauty and the landscape, environmental impacts and conservation work, leadership and governance, collaboration and partnerships, knowledge and education, and policy and management. The key weaknesses and threat were development concerns from increased housing pressure, unsympathetic development and planning concerns, and the ineffectiveness of some management strategies. A lack of awareness of the SDNP, accessibility challenges, environmental concerns and poor public transport were also cited.

Throughout this engagement several key themes have emerged, which can inform the development of the new PMP for 2026-31. These themes are illustrated in the diagram below.

Key themes	Nature recovery	Climate action	Water management	Young people training and skills	Valuing, welcoming and accessible to all	Cultural Heritage	Rural economy and local communities
Cross-cutting themes	Collaboration						
	Welcoming diversity						
	Engagement and communication						
	Funding						

Creating a resilient landscape that is nature-rich was ranked by the majority as the number one priority for the new PMP. With so much of the land in private ownership, this will only be achieved if those working on and living off the land have strong, viable businesses that are working in harmony with nature. This theme, then, incorporates action for nature and action to support farming and other land-based businesses, with the priorities and actions incorporating those raised by landowners.

The second highest priority was to do more to mitigate for and adapt to climate change, building on the excellent community initiatives over the last five years... Enacting organisational climate action plans and continuing to work with other Protected Landscapes will help inform the development of activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

There is a growing interest in better management of water quality, nature-based flood management and waterway restoration, often expressed more widely through nature recovery.

There was a strong feeling from the community that young people were the future, and that they will be critical in addressing some of the key nature and climate issues being experienced. Whilst there has been extensive work by the SDNPA and partners with younger children and primary schools, it was felt that there needed to be a renewed focus on teenagers and young people up to the age of 30, focusing on skills, training and careers. Engagement with young people has strengthened the findings in this regard, and reinforced how important they feel that training, skills and career priorities are to address nature and climate issues going forward. Young people also highlighted the importance of public access, community engagement and partnerships.

Access is valued highly by most participants and was seen as essential for health and wellbeing. Access and wellbeing are a particular focus for more diverse communities and with young people but a lower priority for the 35-63 age group. There is a need to strengthen accessibility and make the SDNP more available and welcoming to diverse communities, with information and behaviours reflecting that they are welcome in the SDNP. Men considered improved access and enjoyment to be more important than women. The poor public transport system was cited by many as a particular issue, although slightly less so by under 35's, with men being more concerned about it than women. This was a slightly higher priority in the north of the SDNP.

Cultural Heritage did not come across as a priority for many, but this may simply reflect that the heritage organisations were not as involved in this engagement process as other sectors. This was more of a priority for diverse communities, young people and the 35-64 age group, and in the east and west of the SDNP.

Thriving communities and rural economy underpins people's ability and motivations to deliver better outcomes for nature and climate. There was enthusiasm from community stakeholders, rural businesses and landowners to engage with and embrace the SDNP. The priorities and actions incorporate feedback from rural businesses, who saw business support and a more balanced approach to planning as important, along with linking to the community and nature recovery.

SDNPA and partners should feel hopeful for the delivery of the next PMP, as there is real enthusiasm and commitment from partners, community stakeholders and the public to progress improvements to nature recovery, climate action, access, education and help promote a thriving rural economy and local communities. However, key partner engagement with this review was poor and their buy-in will be essential to galvanise action on the key priorities in the new PMP.

This research highlights some key areas for consideration, as fed back by a wide range of stakeholders in the new PMP. Embracing the recommendations in this report will help to ensure more effective and impactful delivery of the new plan.

“The fresh air. When you go out there, there’s no pollution, that’s where I can shout and sing and meditate. Let’s go up there and just enjoy the fact that it’s only five minutes, right?”



2.0 INTRODUCTION

[Resources for Change](#) (R4C) with consortium partners [Diversity Resource International](#) (DRI) and [Youngwilders](#) (YW) were commissioned by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to undertake a review of the existing [South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2020-25](#) (PMP) and deliver a stakeholder engagement programme to support the development of the new South Downs Partnership Management Plan, 2026-31.

As a strategic overarching document, the PMP coordinates and integrates other policies, plans and strategies. It sets the framework for the South Downs Local Plan which is also being reviewed. The consortium's role was to review progress towards the outcomes of the current PMP and help to bring all these threads and partners together to co-create the foundations of a single, coherent and overarching plan based on robust stakeholder engagement.

As well as being a statutory requirement, a five-year review of the PMP is necessary to ensure its continuing relevance in the light of changing circumstances, new drivers of change and learning from previous experience- successes and challenges- are identified through our review of the current PMP.

An extensive programme of stakeholder and public engagement, with a focus on people from underrepresented groups and young people, will help ensure that the new PMP meets the needs of stakeholders and diverse communities.

The consortium was led by R4C who held the contract with the SDNPA. Collaboration and co-design were at the heart of the approach throughout.

This report collates and summarises the findings from the review of the existing PMP and the stakeholder engagement programme and sets out conclusions and recommendations for the development of the new PMP. Throughout the report there are some photographs taken at the events, with quotes from participants. There are included to help bring alive the rich discussions that took place through this work but please be aware that quotes are not attributable to those photographed.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 NATIONAL PARKS

Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995 confirms the two core purposes of National Parks (as set out in the 1949 Act) as follows:

"The provisions of this Part of this Act shall have effect for the purpose— (a) of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the areas specified... and; (b) of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public."

Section 11 of the Environment Act 1995 (as amended by the S62 NERC Act 2006) outlines the duties of the National Park Authority:

"(1) Implications for Management Planning. A National Park Authority, in pursuing in relation to the National Park the purposes specified ... shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public

bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park.”

The key targets for National Parks are set out in the Protected Landscape Targets and Outcomes Framework¹:

“To support Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes) in meeting their huge potential for nature, climate, people and place we are establishing ambitious targets for National Parks and National Landscapes. These targets will promote the actions that are most needed to achieve positive changes. They will set the ambition for how we expect Protected Landscapes to achieve 3 outcomes from our [Environmental Improvement Plan \(EIP\)](#) 2023:

- *Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife*
- *Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change*
- *Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment”*

These set out the national priorities for National Parks, and the Management Plan should seek to address these, whilst considering local priorities.

3.2 PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN

The South Downs Partnership Management Plan (PMP):

- Is a five-year strategic plan for the whole of the South Downs National Park- not just the SDNPA
- Sets the framework for delivery to achieve key outcomes for people, nature and climate
- Is a statutory requirement. All National Parks and National Landscapes must have a 5-year Management Plan.

According to the draft Management Plan Guidance from Natural England:

“Protected Landscapes should clearly set out their statutory purposes in the Management Plans and link back to ambitions, targets and actions to further these purposes. This is crucial to support effective implementation of the Duty on Relevant Authorities in respect of the Statutory Purposes of Protected Landscapes. Clause 245 Protected Landscapes of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) places a duty on relevant authorities in respect of their actions, decisions and operations whereby they ‘must seek to further’ the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes.”

“Effective management planning enables those involved with the Protected Landscape to set the agenda for change and manage change effectively. ‘Management planning’ is how Plans are produced, reviewed, and delivered. The process is as vital as the Plan itself and should:

- *bring people together, build relationships and grow commitment*
- *build consensus around a vision for the future*
- *establish a Management Plan around which joint action can happen, and resources can be secured”*

¹ [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework - GOV.UK](#)

“Protected Landscapes teams are not expected to work alone. Management Plan review and delivery is a shared task.”

This programme of engagement aimed to help deliver the management planning, to ensure that that the new PMP reflects local priorities and gain partner and stakeholder buy-in.

In the workshops and events, participants were encouraged to get involved and have their say:

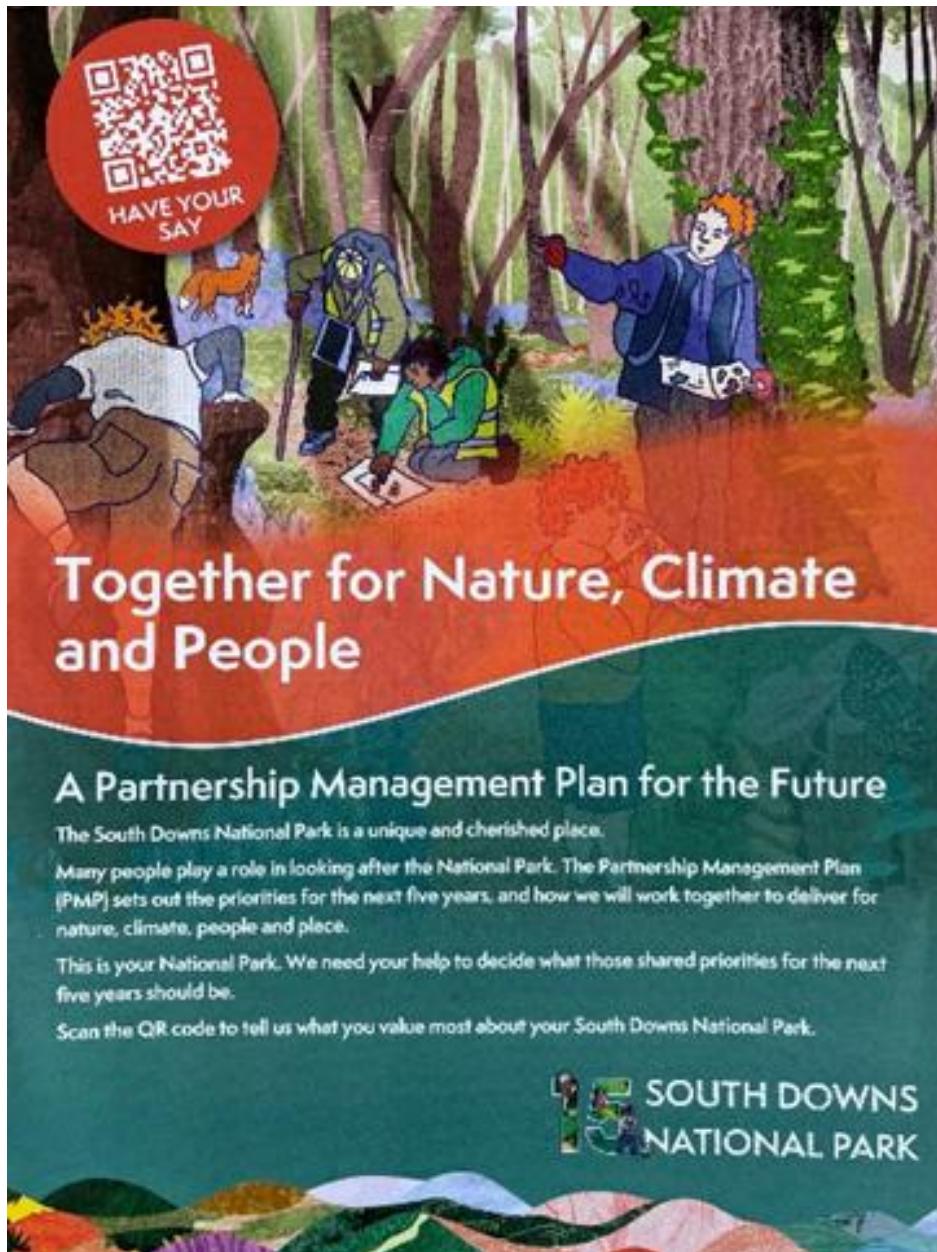
What does it mean for you?

- By participating in the review, you can help shape what happens in the South Downs in the next five years.
- The management plan will guide the support the SDNPA gives to wider projects and initiatives.
- It provides a clear steer for funding grant programmes and projects within the SDNP.
- It shows what you can deliver for nature, climate and people.
- It includes the South Downs contribution to 30x30 (30% of land protected for wildlife by 2030).
- It gives us all an opportunity to think big, deliver more together and celebrate success.

3.3 LOCAL PLAN

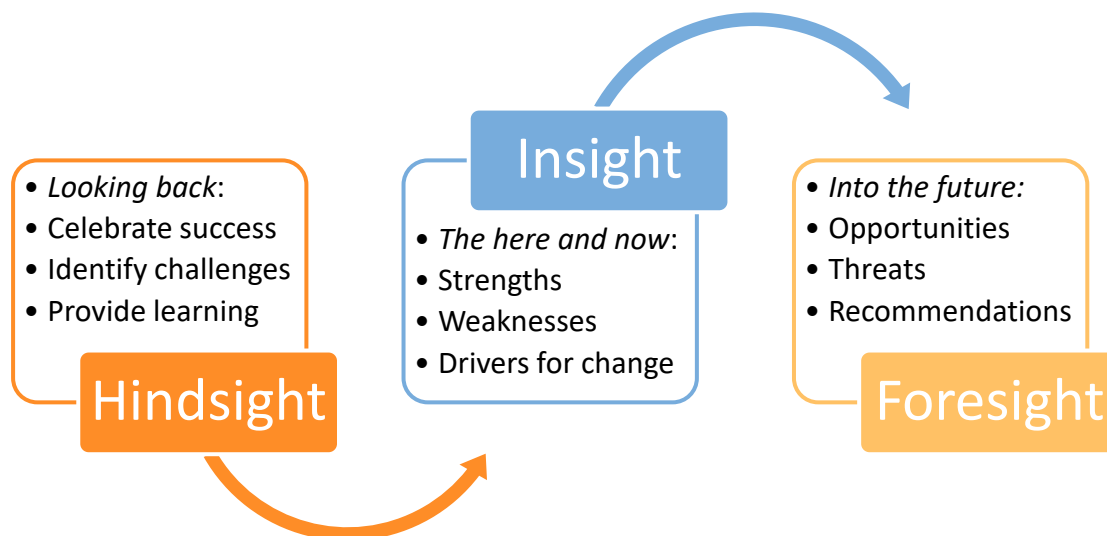
At the same time as engaging stakeholders and the public regarding the PMP, the SDNPA was also carrying out the Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan. This sets out the planning policies and site allocations for housing and economic development within the National Park boundary. Both plans contribute to delivering the Environment Act 2021 and resulting Environmental Improvement Plan and the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies for East and West Sussex and Hampshire. An example of how the two plans relate is given below:

Strategy / Plan		Example:
Partnership Management Plan	High level outcomes and five-year priorities	<p>Outcome 9: Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to address local needs and improved access to essential services.</p> <p>Priority 9.1 Increase affordable housing in the National Park, with a focus on exemplary design and using local sustainable materials.</p>
Local Plan	Policies to implement the outcomes	<p>Strategic Policy SD28: Affordable Homes – sets out the requirements for the number of affordable homes. Sites of 11 or more to provide 50% affordable homes. A sliding scale is set out for sites of between 3 and 10 homes.</p> <p>Strategic Policy SD5: Design – sets design standards for new development, including new homes.</p>



4.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this commission fell into three key areas:



1. **Hindsight-** Looking back to review progress towards the aims and objectives of the current South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2020-25, based on feedback from workshop participants, one-to-one interviews with key partners and desktop research, in terms of:
 - Celebrating success, through identifying examples of good practice, enabling the National Park to build on these.
 - Identifying what the challenges have been, understand barriers and identify how these can be overcome.
 - Providing learning that could inform the development of the new PMP.

The Hindsight Review also gives an opportunity to reassure residents, decision-makers and partners about the effectiveness of publicly funded delivery in the National Park. This is a summary review that tells a story of the past five years based on available information, rather than a formal evaluation.

2. **Insight-** Considering the here and now with an exploration of current views of partners and other stakeholders, including those from underrepresented groups, identifying key drivers for change.
3. **Foresight-** Looking into the future to Identify emerging priorities for consideration for inclusion in the new South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2026-31.

Hindsight, Insight and Foresight were incorporated into the engagement programme. Engagement focused on several parallel work streams:

- Two phases of stakeholder workshops and engagement events to explore insights and foresights, conducted by R4C and SDNPA staff, focusing on:
 - SDNPA staff, members and partners
 - Landowners, farmers and the local and rural business community
 - Community groups, local authorities, parish and town councils
 - Local communities within and residents outside the National Park
 - People living in urban areas, especially people facing socio-economic barriers to inclusion
- Specialist events for underrepresented groups and young people conducted by DRI and Young Wilders respectively focusing on:

- DRI- People from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse / global majority communities
- DRI- People facing forms of health and access inequalities including disabled people
- Young Wilder- Young people (aged 18-30)
- A stakeholder and public online survey, which was circulated to 700 partner contacts, shared through some sector stakeholder and partner newsletters and networks, and with the public in attendance at the PMP engagement events, including the Dark Skies events. There were 126 responses. The survey was a mechanism to capture info from stakeholders who were part of the co-creation of the draft PMP, who couldn't attend a workshop or wanted to add additional information. The questions asked in the online stakeholder and public survey are shown in appendix 1.

Where possible, questions and activities were applied consistently across all the events to build a picture of the views of the community living and working within and close to the South Downs National Park.

R4C led on the process and consortium engagement, working closely with SDNPA staff.

Support was provided by the SDNPA Communications Team, using existing communication channels including monthly newsletters, social media and events such as Farmers' Breakfasts and the Dark Skies Festival held in February each year.

4.1 EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

The table below shows a summary of all events and activities that were undertaken:

<i>Type of engagement*</i>	Date	Activity	Target audience	Venue	Participants
		Survey	Stakeholders and attendees of public events	Online	126
	19/09/24	Members workshop	Elected members		24
	28/11/24	Members workshop	Elected members and staff		40
SW&E	02/12/24	Learning Network Event	Learning providers	Online	15
	03/12/24	All Staff, All Members Event	Elected members and staff	South Downs Centre, Midhurst	115
SW&E	12/12/24	Learning Network Event	Learning providers	Iford Hall, East Sussex	15
YW	11/01/25	Youth Engagement Walk 1	Young people (18-30)	Devil's Dyke to Waterhall, Brighton	28
SW&E	15/01/25	Farming and Rural Issues Group South East (FRIGSE)	Farmer and rural representatives		13

YW	18/01/25	Youth Engagement Walk 2	Young people (18-30)	Cuckmere Haven and River (Seven Sisters)	30
YW	25/01/25	Youth Engagement Walk 3	Young people (18-30)	Queen Elizabeth Country Park	28
PE	22/01/25	Parishes, Local Authorities and public event	Public	South Downs Centre, Midhurst	38
PE	29/01/25	Parishes, Local Authorities and public event	Public	Festival Hall, Petersfield	35
DRI	01/02/25	Ethnically Diverse Women's Walking Group	Ethnically diverse members of the public	Seven Sisters Country Park	14
PE	05/02/25	Parishes, Local Authorities and public event	Public	Lewes Town Hall	37
DRI	09/02/25	Chinese Association New Year Gathering	Ethnically diverse members of the public	Eastbourne	25
SW&E	10/02/25	Wildlife, access, landscape and climate action groups workshop	Community stakeholders	Pulborough Village Hall	10
SW&E	11/02/25	Farmers' Supper	Farmers and landowners	Westmeston Village Hall, East Sussex	6
SW&E	12/02/25	Farmers' Breakfast	Farmers and landowners	Midhurst	6
SW&E	12/02/25	Wildlife, access, landscape and climate action groups workshop	Community stakeholders	Online	28
SW&E	13/02/25	Urban Edge workshop 1	Community stakeholders	Moulsecoomb, Brighton and Hove	40
SW&E	14/02/25	Urban Edge workshop 2	Community stakeholders	Winchester Cathedral Learning Centre	14
PE	15/02/25	Dark Skies Festival	Public	Seven Sisters Country Park	26
PE	18/02/25	Dark Skies Festival	Public	Alice Holt Forest	45
PE	20/02/25		Public	Queen Elizabeth Country Park	25
PE	22/02/25	Dark Skies Festival	Public	Brighton seafront	77

<i>DRI</i>	23/02/25	Survey with Children	Ethnically diverse members of the public	Eastbourne Mandarin School	8
<i>DRI</i>	26/02/25	Inclusive Walk/discussion with carers	Ethnically diverse disabled and able people, carers and people experiencing health inequalities	Railway Lands LNR and Linklater Pavilion, Lewes	9
<i>DRI</i>	28/02/25	Wildlife Corridor Planting, DRI with Diversity Lewes	Ethnically diverse members of the public	Lewes Football Club	8
<i>DRI</i>	01/03/25	Stop and Stare walk	Ethnically diverse members of the public	Attenborough Arts Centre, Sussex University, Falmer	10
	Feb- Mar	Partner survey	Key partners	Online	7
	Feb-Mar	One-to-one structured discussions	Key partners	Online	6
<i>2nd phase</i>	04/03/25	SDNPA all staff event	SDNPA staff	Midhurst	107
<i>2nd phase</i>	05/03/25	Stakeholder event	Community stakeholders	Online	8
<i>2nd phase</i>	06/03/25	Stakeholder event	Community stakeholders	Pulborough Village Hall	15
<i>DRI</i>	07/03/25	Inclusive Walk	Ethnically diverse members of the public		17
<i>2nd phase</i>	11/03/25	Stakeholder event	Community stakeholders	Online	13
<i>2nd phase</i>	12/03/25	Stakeholder event	Community stakeholders	Online	10
<i>2nd phase</i>	14/03/25	Stakeholder event	Community stakeholders	Linklater Pavilion, Lewes	5
<i>DRI</i>	17/03/25	Photography Walk with BCMEP	Ethnically diverse members of the public		17
<i>2nd phase</i>	19/03/25	Our South Downs Community Event	Businesses	Tottington Manor Hotel, Henfield	45
<i>2nd phase</i>	20/03/25	Youth Engagement Event	Young people (18-30)	Mrs Fitzherbert's Pub, Brighton	12
		Total active participation			1,157

*This refers to the categories of events listed below.

4.2 APPROACH TO DIFFERENT EVENTS

The events were split into two phases, as shown below:

4.2.1 FIRST PHASE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

ELECTED MEMBERS WORKSHOPS

Two workshops were held with elected Members early in the process.

After discussing how best to engage Members in the PMP development process they completed a SWOT analysis, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the existing PMP, and the opportunities and threats for the new PMP in the first workshop, then looked at hopes and fears for the new PMP in the second one.

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS (SW&E)

In the first set of workshops, a range of methodologies were used with different audiences to identify and test what the emerging priorities might be for the next Partnership Management Plan. The ambition was to consistently ask participants:

1. Hopes and fears for the National Park
2. The Drivers for Change that will impact the National Park at present and in the next five years
3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the following themes:
 - a. Landscape and cultural heritage
 - b. Climate change
 - c. Communities and the economy
 - d. Access
 - e. Nature and biodiversity
4. To prioritise these

Whilst this was the ambition, it was only possible to cover the full range of topics and activities in detail in the standalone workshops. Where there were shorter lengths of time available with participants, where for example we were piggy backing on another event such as with the Dark Skies or Farmers' Breakfasts, it was only possible to explore one of two themes or else ask people to respond to some survey / multiple choice questions.

R4C and SDNPA staff also facilitated shorter sessions at other events such as the Learning Network, Farming and Rural Issues Group (FRIGSE), Parishes and Local Authority events using online polling for the Drivers for Change and SWOT or undertaking a SWOT for that particular group – for example at the Farmers' Breakfasts if time didn't allow for the full suite of themes to be explored.

The results across the workshops and other events were combined, sorted into common categories and then the most frequently identified categories listed here by the frequency by which they were raised. This has enabled identification of the highest priority Drivers for Change, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. More detailed findings are presented by target audience, and these are brought together, by theme, in the Conclusion.

The Recommendations highlight key learning from the process that will help ensure the delivery of the next PMP is more effective and impactful.

YOUNGWILDER EVENTS (YW)

As there was a concern that the voices of 18-30 year olds wouldn't be heard in the other stakeholder and public engagement events, the aim of the walks organised by Youngwilders working with SDNPA staff was to:

- Listen to feedback from 18-30 years on the South Downs
- Guide young people through areas of the South Downs accessible by bus and train
- Support young people in learning about habitats and wildlife on these routes (as much as is possible in January)
- Provide an opportunity for the South Downs' Youth Ambassadors to represent the park and help other young people to understand its purpose and role

DRI EVENTS (DRI)

A slightly different but related approach to Young Wilders was undertaken by Diversity Resource International (DRI) working with groups primarily in East Sussex where they are based. The intention of their work was to engage with ethnically diverse or global majority communities living in and around the National Park.

They organised a range of events mainly with existing groups. Mostly they used a focus-group approach, but they also carried out surveys with three groups: the Women's Walking Group, a children's Mandarin Chinese language class and with the Chinese Association New Year's Gathering in Eastbourne.

PUBLIC EVENTS (PE)

As well as workshops a series of indoor and outdoor events for the public were held. The indoor events were part of the Regulation 18 consultation for the Local Plan, and were held at the South Downs Centre, Midhurst, the Festival Hall, Petersfield and Lewes Town Hall. All these drop-in events for the public, followed an invitation event to district, parish and town councillors. The outdoor events were held as part of the South Downs annual Dark Skies festival at Seven Sisters Country Park, Alice Holt Forest, the Queen Elizabeth Country Park and on Brighton seafront. As it was expected that people would only have a small amount of time for a survey, a five-minute sticker / pin board activity was devised. The questions were linked to the other engagement activities and mirrored in an online survey.

4.2.2 SECOND PHASE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS (2ND PHASE)

Following on the first round of stakeholder and public engagement that took place from December through to the end of February, an interim report was completed, which identified several emerging priorities. The second round of events, which focussed on further prioritisation based on the findings in the interim report and the development of measures or actions and pledges, followed in March and were online and in person.

Then in small groups, each taking one of the emerging priorities in turn, the groups discussed what:

- Should continue
- Do differently (and better)
- New things

At the in-person events, there was time to dive into one or more issues in greater detail to develop measures / actions and make pledges to contribute to achieving the priorities.

4.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There were several research limitations that have impacted the results within this report, that should be born in mind when interpreting the findings:

4.3.1 HINDSIGHT:

- Data - There have been challenges in securing trend data for several reasons including changes to methodologies and baselines and the introduction of the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework (PLTOF) and the cessation of the Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in National Parks and National Landscapes (MEOPL) during the plan period. This means there was limited consistent quantitative data to evaluate progress of the existing PMP.
- Partner engagement – An online evaluation survey for partners was only completed by five partners, and only three of these left any comments. An invitation for a 1 to 1 structured discussion was only taken up by six partners. This demonstrates a much lower level of engagement than would usually be expected for this type of work and is likely to have resulted in feedback biased towards those who chose to be involved.
- SDNPA Annual Reviews and websites - the Annual Reviews and website pages are published to celebrate achievements, rather than as evaluation documents, and whilst they demonstrate many excellent initiatives by the SDNPA and partners, they do not highlight gaps or where work has been less successful. Changes to the format within the past five years, has meant that it has not been possible to amalgamate data across the Annual Reviews.

4.3.2 INSIGHT AND FORESIGHT

- Perceptions vs reality- This report captures the perceptions of stakeholders and local people, which may not reflect what's actually happening. However, it is important to understand this and consider areas and activities that need to be better communicated.
- Stakeholder and public survey- An online survey was provided to the PMP distribution list of approximately 700 partner contacts, shared through some sector stakeholder and partner newsletters and networks, and with the public in attendance at the PMP engagement events, including the Dark Skies events. The survey was a mechanism to capture info from stakeholders who were part of the co-creation of the draft PMP, who couldn't attend a workshop or wanted to add additional information. The survey results cannot, therefore, be seen as fully representative of the population. Broader public feedback will be encouraged through the public consultation on the draft PMP.
- Participants- Invitations to the engagement workshops and events were focused on partners, key stakeholders and underrepresented groups. Broader public feedback will be encouraged through the public consultation on the draft PMP.
- Treatment of data- The feedback from the workshops and events was qualitative and all views have been treated the same way, regardless of where it has come from, with no weighting attached. The findings have been themed and the frequency by which they have been raised has been recorded to give an indication of the number of people who share the same priorities or concerns.

- Second phase workshops- Lower attendance may have been partly due to the proximity of the first to second round events and the significant amount of other engagement taking place around us at the time. This means that whilst there is clarity over priorities, because of the level of engagement in the first round, there is less clarity around partnership pledges, and these may need to be further explored as the plan is developed.
- Sector engagement- Whilst there has been good engagement from some sectors such as learning and education, farming and business, other sectors, such as art and heritage and health were not so well represented.
- Attendance- The PMP stakeholder engagement followed a period of intense engagement on the Sussex and Hampshire Nature Recovery Strategies – and so this may have impacted on individuals' and organisations' ability or willingness to participate in another programme of nature-based engagement. The Local Plan consultation was also running in parallel and may have meant there was too much engagement going on at the same time, but also that people who may not normally have participated in the PMP engagement, did. Having said that the enthusiasm and levels of engagement from those who did participate was excellent – with very positive feedback from event evaluations that were carried out.





"I'm always thinking, 'oh, how am I going to make next month's rent'. My concern is not, 'how do I go into the countryside'. But it's so rejuvenating, and I think more people need to have access to these experiences. It's like something radical needs to happen, that's all."

"I love the South Downs for its breathtaking landscapes, peaceful atmosphere, and biodiversity. The rolling hills, ancient woodlands, and open spaces provide a perfect escape from the city, allowing me to reconnect with nature and unwind."



"It has become my weekly escape - so easy to access from uni."

5.0 RESULTS

This section summarises the findings from the desk research, online survey, partner discussions and different types of engagement workshops and events against the three timelines discussed above:

- **Hindsight-** Looking back to review progress towards the aims and objectives of the current South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2020-25, based on feedback from workshop participants, one-to-one interviews with key partners and desktop research.
- **Insight-** Considering the here and now with an exploration of current views of partners and other stakeholders, including those from underrepresented groups, identifying key drivers for change.
- **Foresight-** Looking into the future to identify emerging priorities to inform the new South Downs Partnership Management Plan 2026-31.

The findings from each of the different approaches, for different groups are shown in more detail in a separate Annex.

5.1 HINDSIGHT

The aim of the Hindsight Review was to assess the progress towards the [South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2020-25](#), in terms of:

- Celebrating success, through identifying examples of good practice, enabling the SDNPA and partners to share these more widely.
- Identifying what the challenges have been, understand barriers and identify how these can be overcome.
- Providing learning that could inform the development of the new PMP.

It also gives an opportunity to reassure residents, decision-makers and partners about the effectiveness of publicly funded delivery in the National Park.

The Hindsight Review is a summary that tells a story of the past five years based on available information, rather than a formal evaluation. It reports on feedback from structured discussions with six partners, feedback from 7 partners from the partner online survey, reported progress and challenges from the recently published State of the Park report and online desk research, including the SDNPA Annual Reviews, and SDNPA and partner websites. The full report can be found in the Annex, Appendix 2.

The Hindsight Review highlights many excellent projects and initiatives by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and partners, that have helped demonstrate significant progress towards the PMP outcomes.

It also identifies some challenges and presents learning that could help inform the new PMP.

A summary of the findings from the Hindsight Review and feedback from Members aligned to the outcomes and objectives in the South Downs PMP 2020-25 is shown below:

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Outcome	Celebrating success	Challenges and barriers to success	Learning to inform the development of the new PMP
<i>Overview</i>	<p>The SDNP is recognised as a place that is inter-connected, feeds creativity, aids conservation, promotes education and raises awareness of environmental sustainability.</p> <p>It is valued as a place to connect with nature and promote physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Relationships between SDNPA and some partners are extremely good, and collaborative approaches on the ground can work well.</p> <p>Financial support from the SDNPA has been welcomed and has enabled some important projects.</p> <p>SDNPA understand funding opportunities and co-ordinate bids.</p> <p>South Downs Trust is seen as a major success. SDNPA are congratulated on having the foresight to invest in staff resources to enable fundraising.</p> <p>Some partners found the SDNPA inspiring and looked to SDNPA staff for inspiration and advice, which enables partners to mirror thought processes and procedures.</p> <p>PMP is a useful document for funding bids as it gives a clear structure for SDNP</p>	<p>The SDNP and SDNPA face challenges related to management, data, collaboration, and funding.</p> <p>The PMP should be shorter and more focused, with clear targets and monitoring.</p> <p>Devolution and the cost of living crisis may impact planning and nature engagement.</p> <p>Improved guidance from Defra and better data collection are needed.</p> <p>Partners should be more involved in delivering the PMP, and the SDNPA should focus on strategic facilitation.</p> <p>Funding and staff resources remain significant issues.</p>	<p>There's a perception that the policy focus has shifted away from biodiversity to tree planting, housing, and employment; management and strategies seem ineffective.</p> <p>The SDNPA should be seen as the 'glue' that brings together partners to take action.</p> <p>The PMP feels like an SDNPA strategy rather than a partnership document, and key partners don't seem fully engaged.</p> <p>Reviewing the Local Plan and Partnership Management Plan (PMP) simultaneously is not helpful, and there is a lack of coordinated planning.</p> <p>There is insufficient consultation and engagement with communities and landowners.</p> <p>The next PMP should clearly indicate who is responsible for delivering each part. It is unclear whether the PMP is intended for the community or partners.</p> <p>Long-term thinking about the National Park's vision is encouraged.</p> <p>Cost of living crisis impacts nature and disconnection from it; relevance is questioned.</p> <p>The establishment of Mayoral Authorities will impact planning and development delegation, challenging the SDNPA's role and voice.</p>

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	<p>priorities and demonstrates how projects align.</p>		<p>Lack of data, monitoring, and evaluation; unclear progress towards long-term goals.</p> <p>Funding from the Government is not rural-focused, impacting the National Park's ability to address rural issues. Staffing and funding shortages are widespread, and there are more opportunities than can be addressed.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 1- Landscape and Natural Beauty</i></p>	<p>Organisations across the South Downs National Park have implemented several initiatives to protect and enhance its landscape, improve green infrastructure, and maximise the benefits of agri-environment schemes. Key achievements include:</p> <p>Protected Landscape Character: Development of a carbon monitoring dashboard and tracker. Updates to the South Downs Integrated Character Assessment. Celebration of landscape character through the SDNP Design Awards. Maintaining dark skies and tranquility through Local Plan policies. Initiation of ReNature Credits to secure land for nature recovery and create new income streams for landowners.</p> <p>Create Green Infrastructure: The People and Nature Network (PANN) was developed. Expansion of cycling and walking paths like the Centurion Way and Egrets Way. Opening of new routes such as the King Charles III England Coast Path.</p>	<p>The landscape faces pressures from changing land use, human settlement, and infrastructure. There is a lack of consistent data on landscape character changes over time. Local Plan policies exist but may not fully prevent incremental changes.</p> <p>Urban settlements show a slight reduction in greenness, and there is a perception of little new green infrastructure being created.</p> <p>A significant portion of arable land remains bare in winter, increasing soil erosion risk.</p> <p>Landowners can feel unsupported by SDNPA, possibly due to its role as a planning authority. A landscape-scale approach with Catchment Partnerships could be beneficial.</p>	<p>Protection of landscape character, compared to outside the National Park, is seen as successful.</p> <p>Farmer clusters, whole estate plans and SDNPA support with agri-environment schemes demonstrate a strong relationship with landowners, and should ensure much of the privately-owned land in the SDNP is managed sympathetically.</p> <p>Catchment Partnerships are working well and making a difference on the ground, including with water company management planning. Collaboration between Catchment Partnerships could lead to landscape-scale water management improvements and a stronger voice with policy makers.</p> <p>ReNature Credits is leading the way in terms of encouraging green investment and ensuring there is a local mechanism to secure BNG within the SDNP. Sharing this mechanism more widely across the region could lead to more effective use of resources and expertise, and make it more viable.</p> <p>Planning policy should be maximising residential areas and providing better access to nature. Regional approaches to green infrastructure</p>

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<i>Outcome 2- Increasing Resilience</i>	<p>Target New Payments: Collaborative efforts with landowners, water companies, Defra, and Natural England. Endorsement of Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) and funding of projects under the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme. Formation of farmer clusters to enhance environmental management, and the introduction of Conservation and Catchment Partnerships.</p>		<p>master planning and investing in public transport and active travel, working with partners outside SDNP, could help address some of the issues raised.</p> <p>Investigation into alternatives to developer led green space management, could result in better quality greenspace for people and wildlife e.g. Hampshire fund for heathland management.</p>
	<p>Soil and Water Improvements: Initiatives like Catchment Partnerships, Downs to the Sea, and Cockshut stream restoration have focused on wetland habitats and reducing pollutants.</p> <p>Tree and Woodland Improvements: Sustainable management of 70% of woodland, creation of 74km of hedgerows, and planting of over 22,000 trees. Projects like Trees for the Downs and Hampshire Hedgerows have contributed significantly.</p> <p>Climate Action: Since 2020, various projects like South Downs Climate Action Knowledge Hub, Ouse Valley Climate Action, Community Energy Pathway, and WeCAN/PeCAN projects have aimed at achieving 'Net-Zero with Nature' by 2040, improving energy efficiency, and supporting community-based energy projects.</p>	<p>Soil and Water Improvement: Focus on reducing soil erosion, carbon capture, and reconnecting wetland habitats. Major challenges include insufficient water quality data, planning consent issues, deregulation, and pollution from pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals.</p> <p>Tree and Woodland Improvement: Improve resilience, quality, and quantity of trees and woodlands. Challenges include deer browsing, water availability, tree diseases, and climate change impacts.</p> <p>Climate Action: Address the impact of the Gatwick Airport extension and ensure compensation benefits. Enhance the Knowledge Hub to link with other initiatives and recognise climate change as a key priority.</p>	<p>Several partnership projects have focused on enhancing water management through pond and wetland creation, tree planting, and hedgerow management.</p> <p>Improved water quality monitoring and natural flood management are needed.</p> <p>Planning consent requirements for wildlife ponds should be addressed, and pollution from pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals addressed.</p> <p>Collaboration with National Landscapes and Catchment Partnerships could optimise resource sharing.</p> <p>Climate change initiatives are crucial, with community-led actions supported.</p> <p>Gatwick Airport's extension offers potential for carbon-offsetting and conservation funding for impacted areas.</p>

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<p><i>Outcome 3- Habitats and Species</i></p>	<p>Join up habitats: 96% of SSSIs in the National Park are in favorable or improving condition as of 2020. Since 2022, 6,082 hectares of land have been newly managed for nature and 42 sites covering 555 hectares have undergone rapid condition assessments. Several projects, such as Changing Chalk Partnership and Weald to Waves, contribute to habitat restoration and connectivity.</p> <p>Manage Priority and Invasive Species: Beaver reintroduction near Petersfield. 2,800 water voles reintroduced since 2013. Lodsworth Bat Roost renovation supported by grants. Bee Lines project created 100 hectares of wildflower meadows.</p> <p>Controlling invasive species: Efforts to control invasive species like Himalayan Balsam. Fair Game project addressing deer management and nature recovery.</p>	<p>The challenges and priorities for habitat restoration within the SDNP include joining up habitats, managing priority and invasive species, and enhancing species recovery. There are 417 features across 85 SSSIs, with 53% in favourable or recovering condition. Trends in butterfly and farmland bird populations reflect regional and national patterns. Collaborative efforts with conservation organisations are essential, but more action is needed on invasive species control.</p>	<p>There has been a lot of activity to improve habitats and species recovery, with some significant landscape-scale partnership initiatives and reintroduction projects.</p> <p>The ReNature Nature Recovery Programme appears extensive, integrated into monitoring of landscape character and biodiversity, and to be delivering significant impact on the ground.</p> <p>More action needed on invasive species control.</p> <p>Mechanisms to increase the numbers of nationally and internationally protected sites should be investigated.</p> <p>There should be more focus on improving habitats for species that should be seen in higher populations within the National Park.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 4 - Arts and Heritage</i></p>	<p>Conserve heritage: Heritage assets at risk in the South Downs National Park reduced from 2.5% in 2014 to 0.6% in 2024.</p> <p>Scheduled Monuments Monitoring Project developed a sustainable model for monitoring monuments, assessing the condition of 89 monuments.</p> <p>Promote contemporary arts and crafts: Several cultural heritage projects completed, including audio trails, an</p>	<p>41% of Scheduled Ancient Monuments were identified as vulnerable in 2021. Climate change poses risks due to coastal erosion.</p> <p>Ongoing issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, spending challenges, and energy costs.</p> <p>Lack of joint initiatives for apprenticeships and mentoring.</p>	<p>There have been many inspiring and interesting arts and heritage activities and projects that actively involve those from under-represented groups.</p> <p>More focus could be considered on joint initiatives for apprenticeships and mentoring and encouraging the use of traditional skills and crafts.</p> <p>There is a lot of information on websites when projects are launched but little about what they</p>

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	<p>immersive app, and various performances and collaborations.</p> <p>Creative initiatives reached thousands, including hybrid festivals, digital assets, and training workshops.</p> <p>Heritage Crafts and Skills Pilot provided hands-on training for young people.</p>	<p>Need for publicising evaluations of projects to better understand achievements.</p>	<p>have achieved. Ensuring these projects are evaluated and publicising the results of this online would make it easier for people to understand what has been achieved.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 5- Outstanding Experiences</i></p>	<p>National Park for All: Improved accessibility of Rights of Way network, high visitor enjoyment ratings, Defra grants funded accessible equipment, new access land and trails at Seven Sisters Country Park, inclusive walks and creative opportunities for diverse audiences.</p> <p>Improve Accessibility: Increased percentage of 'easy to use' PROW; resurfaced and cleared routes on South Downs Way, relaunched the Serpent Trail with improved accessibility.</p> <p>Encourage Sustainable Transport: Promoted public transport access, South Downs Discovery Ticket for unlimited bus travel, suggested public transport itineraries, assistance at the South Downs Centre.</p>	<p>Challenges include reduced use of public transport due to Covid-19 and ongoing access inequalities, budget cuts affecting path maintenance, staff cutbacks, unclear community engagement, climate change impacts, and misuse of byways by motor vehicles.</p> <p>Limited public transport, threats to bus services in Hampshire, and lack of coordination with bus companies.</p>	<p>93% of public rights of way (PROW) are considered 'easy to use,' despite reductions in local government funding. Progress has been made in improving access on all routes, including the provision of free mobility scooters. Several new and connecting routes have been established over the past five years. The South Downs Local Access Forum proposes a survey to benchmark the accessibility of the PROW network prior to devolution. Visitor satisfaction, as of 2021, was reported to be very high.</p> <p>Efforts to focus on activities for young people and reach culturally diverse audiences, along with ensuring that information is available through appropriate channels, could potentially broaden the appeal of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Collaboration between the SDNPA, local authorities, and other partners could increase funding for access and public transport projects. It is acknowledged by stakeholders that sustainable access to the National Park is an important issue requiring prioritisation.</p> <p>The formation of a public transport partnership involving transport operators could enhance coordinated access to the SDNP, especially in areas currently not served by public transport.</p>

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		<p>Learning from other National Parks, such as the Mountain Goat service in the Lake District, could inform the development of more commercial public transport routes. It is suggested that monitoring and evaluation of projects, as well as the quality and accessibility of routes, should be publicly accessible.</p> <p>Further action is needed regarding the motorised use of byways open to all traffic (BOATs) and other PROW in East Hampshire and Petersfield.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 6- Lifelong Learning</i></p>	<p>The South Downs National Park has been providing high-quality outdoor learning opportunities for young people through various programs and grants. Notable initiatives include, Outdoor Learning Grant: Awarded to schools, residential trips, teacher training Sessions, South Downs Learning Zone, South Downs Ambassador School Scheme, Discover the Downs, South Downs Generations, the Schools' Newsletter, Downs to the Sea, LEAF education training grants for farmers conducting educational visits and an Apprenticeship Bursary Program that supports skill development in countryside management and forestry.</p>	<p>Growing deficit in green skills and traditional crafts.</p> <p>Insufficient engagement with colleges and universities. Perceptin that more could be done with local schools.</p> <p>Lack of career advice for countryside management and associated skills, skills-based learning, training and internships.</p> <p>Not enough education or access. Barriers appear to be transport and funding.</p>
		<p>There has been considerable focus on schools and young people, with high levels of engagement and the development of extensive information about the SDNP, linked to the curriculum and schemes to help with the costs of transport. The Ambassador School scheme has been well recieved.</p> <p>However, lifelong learning should be for all ages. There is an opportunity to provide more for older people, especially those from disadvantaged or culturally diverse groups.</p> <p>Young people have called for better engagement with local universities.</p> <p>There may be opportuniities with some of the private schools in the area.</p> <p>There is a need to focus on encouraging careers in nature conservation, heritage and green finance, including skills-based events, training and internships, building on the bursary programme from the SDNP Trust.</p>

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<p><i>Outcome 7- Health and Wellbeing</i></p>	<p>31% of visitors reported using the National Park for health and wellbeing improvement (SDNPA survey, 2021).</p> <p>Achievements include:</p> <p>Accessible walks, creative activities, and conservation tasks are promoted for mental and physical health. Priorities include supporting those facing physical and mental health challenges, loneliness, and isolation with partners like MIND, community mental health teams, and groups supporting carers, families, and asylum seekers.</p> <p>SDNP Health and Wellbeing Strategy published in 2020/21.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Hubs with facilities across the SDNP.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Travel Grants for funding relevant organizations.</p> <p>Connecting In Nature programme offering eco therapy courses.</p> <p>Timescape initiative engaging people with loneliness through creative arts.</p> <p>Downs to the Sea project providing activities for those experiencing loneliness, anxiety, and depression.</p>	<p>Health inequalities have worsened since Covid-19, particularly for more deprived communities. Rising poor mental health and social isolation further highlight the need for greater inclusion and support. At the same time, funding challenges for voluntary and community sector organisations are increasing due to cuts in public funding.</p> <p>The climate crisis also poses a significant threat, not only to the environment but to people's mental wellbeing.</p> <p>There needs to be more focus on improving the built environment and green infrastructure.</p>	<p>There are some good examples of one-off projects to aid health and wellbeing. However, there is a mental health crisis that Protected Landscapes, partnering with the Primary Care Trust, Health Boards, national charities and community health and wellbeing groups could help address. Partnership working with health and wellbeing organisations is the most effective way of engaging those in most need, and ensure the landscape works better for a more diverse population. Devolution may offer better opportunities to do this, with fewer partners working over larger areas.</p> <p>A regional approach, working with other Protected Landscapes and with universities, to share resources and evidence of the benefits of nature-based therapy, with clear outcomes and measures could be considered. A shared prospectus with opportunities for nature-based health outcomes has been suggested.</p> <p>Consideration of quality greenspace and other green infrastructure close to where people live is also critical, and delivery of this through Local Plan policies should be prioritised.</p> <p>Forest bathing is becoming increasingly popular and sites could be promoted to practitioners that are suitable for this.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 8- Creating Custodians</i></p>	<p>Generation Green was a project aimed at connecting young people to nature and promoting green careers. It involved the recruitment of South Downs National Park</p>	<p>Insufficient outreach for young people and hard to reach groups.</p>	<p>There is tremendous dedication to volunteering by local people within and around the SDNP.</p>

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	<p>Youth Ambassadors and the launch of South Downs Youth Action days. Hundreds of disadvantaged children participated in nature-based activities.</p> <p>Since 2016, volunteer days have increased, and a Volunteer Network Survey is underway to provide updated figures for 2025.</p> <p>Youth Action Days and various volunteering opportunities, such as the iNaturalist LookWild project, engaged young people in environmental action.</p> <p>Additionally, partnerships and grants like the #iwill Fund supported youth volunteering opportunities, and over 350 volunteers contributed to conservation, events, and access roles.</p>	<p>Lack of opportunities for volunteering/ work experience/ placements for under 18's.</p> <p>Lack of inclusivity.</p> <p>A lot of wildlife groups feel isolated.</p> <p>Feels like people care less and less about young people.</p> <p>Less reliance on volunteer labour, but also make volunteering opportunities more accessible (transport, timing, beginner friendly, inclusive etc.).</p> <p>Need more research opportunities, including for students and postgrads</p>	<p>Whilst there is a welcome focus on young people, more could be done to encourage diversity and those from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Custodianship is not just about volunteering and more emphasis could be put on working with young people to link more with career progression and include working with tertiary education to encourage more people to consider countryside, heritage and green finance careers.</p>
<p><i>Outcome 9- Great Places to Live</i></p>	<p>Affordable Housing: Since 2014, 372 affordable homes have been built with 536 more planned. Recent projects include 32 modular homes at Pells School, Lewes, and a 97-unit retirement community at Harrier Way, Petersfield.</p> <p>Community Support: 71% of neighbourhood areas have Neighbourhood Development Plans. The Community Infrastructure Levy raised nearly £2m in 2023-24, funding various local projects.</p> <p>Digital Infrastructure: From 2019 to 2024, there was an increase in superfast broadband coverage, with the 'Growing Sussex 5G Innovation Region' project</p>	<p>Key challenges include the high cost of housing, limited access to affordable homes, maintenance of local facilities, impacts of an aging population, and concerns about 5G infrastructure.</p>	<p>According to the Office for National Statistics, the average percentage of affordable housing in the South East in 2024 was 8.1%. If the SDNPA can achieve 33%, this will be a significant achievement.</p> <p>The growth of Neighbourhood Planning is impressive and demonstrates active involvement with those communities.</p> <p>The SDNP covers a large area, and engaging communities across this is a challenge. To make the SDNP feel more relevant, activities and events that encourage communities of interest from across the area may help strengthen relationships.</p>

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	enhancing digital connectivity in agricultural practices.		<p>Linking local services with visitors can help make them more accessible to local people.</p> <p>Engaging with internet infrastructure providers to negotiate less intrusive structures for 5G connectivity would help protect the landscape character of the SDNP.</p>
<i>Outcome 10- Great Places to Work</i>	<p>In 2024, the South Downs Business Network grew to over 400 members, fostering connections and skills development among small businesses.</p> <p>Approximately 87% of products at the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre in 2022 were sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability.</p> <p>Visitor numbers to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) reached pre-Covid levels with 19 million visitors annually, generating £554 million in 2023.</p> <p>The SDNP improved its national and international profile, with high ratings on Tripadvisor (4.7/5) and a dedicated section on Visit Britain's website.</p> <p>The SDNP introduced Green South Downs, a certification scheme promoting sustainable tourism, with 30 businesses certified by the end of 2024.</p> <p>Visitor experiences are curated to highlight the unique qualities of England's National Parks, with funds reinvested into sustainable tourism initiatives.</p>	<p>Challenges are faced by the land-based sector due to reduced support, tax changes, and extreme weather events.</p> <p>Many businesses have not calculated their carbon footprint.</p> <p>There is a need to balance conservation with commercial development and improve design to conserve nature.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of SDNP affects habitats and local communities.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism requires collaboration, managing visitor pressures, and better infrastructure.</p> <p>Gatwick Airport's extension could increase international visitors and impact sustainable tourism.</p>	<p>The 'Our South Downs' and Green Tourism schemes aim to engage businesses in sustainable practices and promote visitor environmental responsibility. However, more attention is needed to provide services and infrastructure for sustainable enjoyment of the SDNP, such as public transport and active travel options. Support for market towns and businesses to maximise positive impacts is key.</p> <p>Economic development and environmental protection can coexist. There are pleas to avoid rejecting planning proposals solely based on the NP designation and instead explore all opportunities thoroughly. Effective design can ensure commercial development conserves nature and landscapes.</p> <p>Collaboration with other Protected Landscapes has been proposed, to share resources and skills.</p> <p>Extending Gatwick Airport offers a unique chance to promote sustainable tourism, alongside compensation strategies for Protected Landscapes.</p>

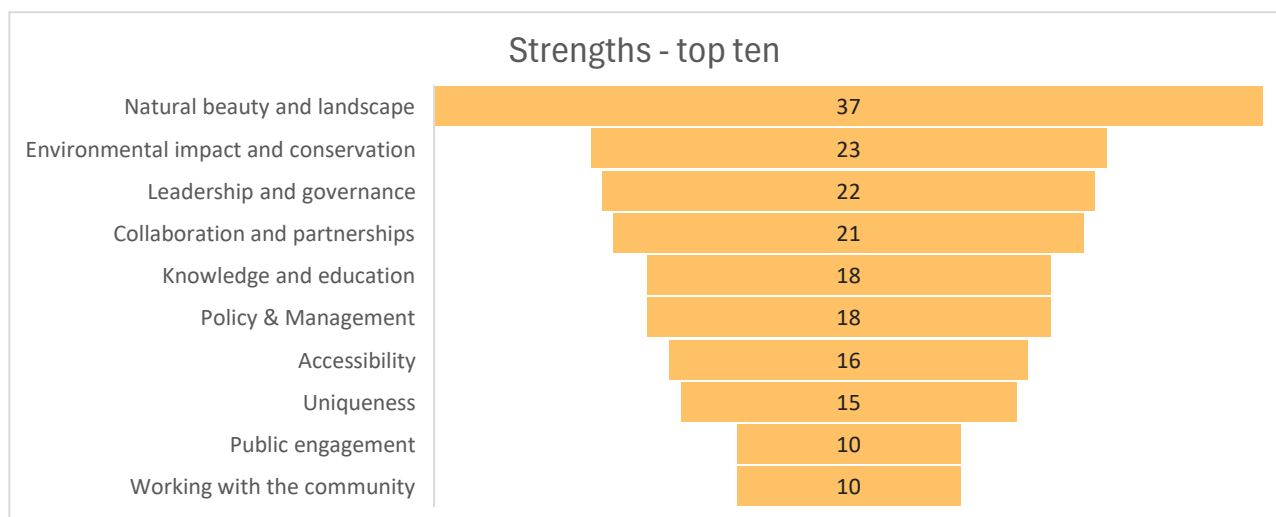
Feedback from 7 partners through the partner survey suggested that landscape character had been well conserved and enhanced, the SDNP is well-used for health and wellbeing, and there has been good progress towards a thriving and connected network of habitats and increased resilience within the landscape. They thought less progress had been made on supporting high quality access and active travel, visitors, communities and businesses taking action to conserve and enhance and improving understanding of the special qualities of SDNP and the benefits it provides.

They felt that the key barriers to the successful delivery of the PMP were lack of knowledge of the PMP and lack of organisational buy-in, followed by local changes to policy and insufficient funding.

5.2 INSIGHT

Looking at the here and now- The current views from the engagement workshops and events, partner interviews and survey are presented here overall in terms of the frequency it was mentioned, and by target audience, to help identify where there may be different views from different groups. This included strengths and weaknesses identified, incorporating likes and dislikes.

5.2.1 SWOT ANALYSIS



The natural beauty and landscape of the South Downs is considered a significant strength. Most commonly cited by category (37) were the natural beauty and landscape. People commented about the chalk downs and streams, dark skies, the coastline, and the landscape in general. The area was frequently described as “beautiful” and “tranquil”.

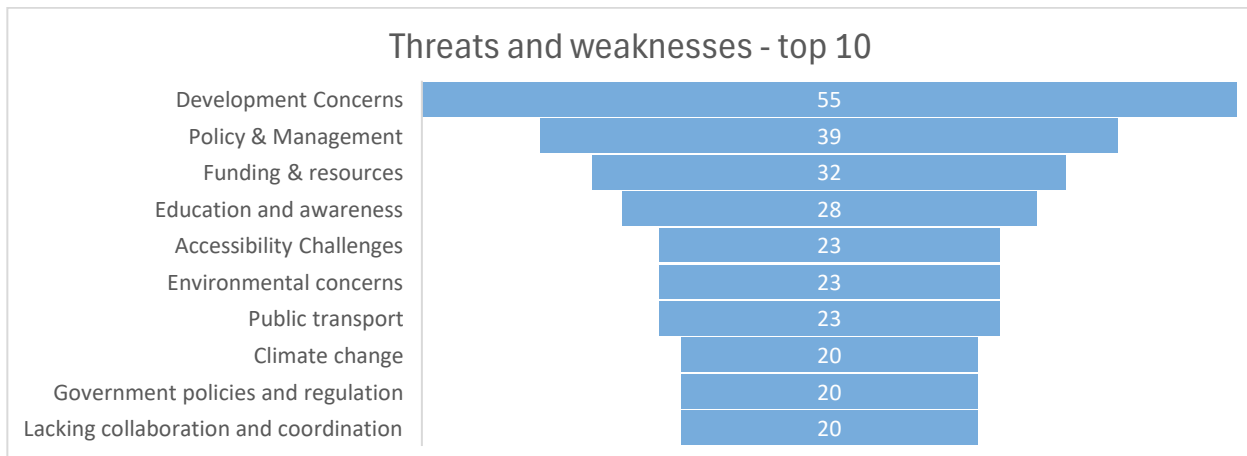
Next most frequently cited (23) were the environmental impact and conservation work that goes on in the South Downs National Park (SDNP), improving biodiversity and protecting the environment.

Another key strength is the leadership and governance of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), cited 22 times. There were many comments about passionate and dedicated organisations and leaders that hold strong values to benefit the South Downs. Some comments mention the strong stable team at SDNPA, and SDNPA as a convenor or “catalyst”.

Next most frequently cited (21) were the collaboration and partnerships within the South Downs. Comments talked about collaboration between local organisations, councils, and communities.

Other key strengths include:

- Knowledge and education- forest schools and the Learning Network
- Policy and management- local planning and legal protection
- Accessibility of the national park- close to towns and communities, free access



In terms of weaknesses and threats facing the South Downs most commonly cited by category (55 times) were concerns relating to development. Many people made comments about development encroaching close to the boundary of the national park and increasing housing pressure from government targets. While there were many comments considering development in general as a weakness/threat, some people did specify that “unsympathetic” development is the issue.

The next most frequently cited category (39 times) related to policy and management. Many people brought up planning, some considering it slow, and lacking enforcement. There were some comments about management strategies being ineffective, and a few comments about a need for more responsibility and accountability.

Next most frequently cited (32) were concerns about funding and resources, with the general sentiment being summarised as “lack of funding”.

Other significant weakness and threats were:

- Education and awareness – lack of awareness about the national park, misunderstandings and misconceptions about the SDNPA, people lacking knowledge of the importance of the landscape.
- Accessibility challenges – poor public transport, lack of accessible gates and rights of way, poor disabled access.
- Environmental concerns – pollution, wildfires, water extraction, inadequate protections.
- Public transport – High cost, low quality, not enough connections.
- Climate change – flooding, balancing peoples living standards with carbon footprint.

FACILITATION OF ENGAGEMENT FOR THE REVIEW OF THE SOUTH DOWNS PMP

- Lack of collaboration and cooperation – many organisations and authorities but poor cohesion, lacking coordination with local councils, “siloed” thinking and working.
- Government policies and regulation – Local government reorganisation, political and development pressures.

The table below presents more details on the strengths/ likes and weaknesses/ dislikes by target audience.

Target audience	Strengths/ Likes	Weaknesses/ Dislikes
<i>Overall</i>	<p>Landscape, nature, wildlife, sense of space, views and beauty.</p> <p>Consider it home, love its history and that it is accessible particularly for walking.</p>	<p>Climate and climate change were most frequently cited, followed by development, pollution, funding, housing and traffic.</p>
<i>Elected Members</i>	<p>Beautiful document but too long and wordy. Pithy summaries work well, as does leaflet scale document.</p> <p>Clear outcomes, with good, demonstrable delivery in SDNP.</p> <p>Achievements include, green finance, estate planning, farm clusters, more diverse visitors, Seven Sisters, health and wellbeing travel grant, writer in residence, FIPL, setting up the South Downs Trust.</p> <p>Range of excellent partnership projects such as Downs to the Sea, Changing Chalk, Generation Green, Hampshire Hedgerows, Fair Game, Egret’s Way, Centurion Way, Re-nature campaign.</p> <p>Ambitious scope of existing PMP.</p> <p>Improved partnership working, with strong networks e.g. climate and Learning Network.</p> <p>Better clarity on partnership roles.</p>	<p>PMP is too long, which may be a barrier.</p> <p>Wording can be vague and some of it feels ‘token’.</p> <p>Does not always feel relevant.</p> <p>There are too many outcomes, they are too broad and some lack focus.</p> <p>Partnership working could be improved. PMP is not community or partner led, there is poor partner commitment and a lack of awareness of partner priorities. Need to work more closely with Local Authorities.</p> <p>Lack of awareness and visibility with communities.</p> <p>Lack of measurement and reporting.</p> <p>40% reduction in Defra grant has impacted SDNPA delivery.</p>
<i>Community stakeholders</i>	<p>Natural beauty and landscape- chalk streams, dark skies, the coastline, and the landscape in general, the area is “beautiful” and “tranquil”.</p> <p>Environmental impact and conservation work to improve biodiversity and protect the environment.</p> <p>Leadership and governance of the SDNPA- passionate and dedicated organisations and leaders that hold</p>	<p>Development concerns- development encroaching close to the boundary of the national park, increasing housing pressure from government targets and “unsympathetic” development.</p> <p>Policy and management- planning, some considering it slow, and lacking enforcement, management strategies being ineffective, and a need for more responsibility and accountability.</p>

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	<p>strong values to benefit the South Downs, with strong stable team at SDNPA, and SDNPA as a convenor or “catalyst”.</p> <p>Partnership working- between local organisations, councils, and communities.</p> <p>Knowledge and education – forest schools and the Learning Network.</p> <p>Policy and management – local planning and legal protection.</p> <p>Accessibility of the national park – close to towns and communities, free access.</p>	<p>Lack of funding and resources.</p> <p>Education and awareness – lack of awareness about the SDNP, misunderstandings and misconceptions about the SDNPA, people lacking knowledge of the importance of the landscape.</p> <p>Accessibility –lack of accessible gates and rights of way, poor disabled access.</p> <p>Public transport – High cost, low quality, not enough connections.</p>
<i>Learning network</i>	<p>Community- Greater sense of belonging, connection pride and understanding and understanding of importance, awareness and valuing.</p> <p>Benefits to wellbeing and mental health- Green Social Prescribing, alternative physical activities, not necessarily sport.</p> <p>Diversity- high engagement with diverse/ low-income school groups, working with all - promoting accessibility, SDNP funding for access - bus grant.</p> <p>Partnership working - grants to support schools, strong networks, Forest school network, diversity of outdoor providers, breadth and wealth of provision, involving business</p> <p>Previous government focus supported our work.</p> <p>Entry level job creation e.g. young guides.</p> <p>Training and skills- Educator skills</p> <p>Five pathways to nature connection.</p>	<p>Diversity- Diversity in all areas, accessible sites e.g. Forest Schools.</p> <p>Schools- can be hard to reach schools, school budgets and staffing are tight.</p> <p>Funding- limits to funding and ongoing uncertainty. Need time/resources to grow options.</p> <p>Intergenerational opportunities- engaging teenagers can be challenging,</p> <p>Barriers- misconceptions of what organisations do/are, the need to use technical terms/jargon, livestock can be offputting and scary, public transport costs.</p> <p>Training and skills- younger people not getting involved in work/training, losing skilled people.</p>
<i>Farmers and rural businesses</i>	<p>Community- Proximity to large, diverse, urban community, increasing population seen as an opportunity. Accessible from population centres.</p> <p>Education in the rural economy. Green prescribing. Space for recreation.</p>	<p>Economics- Insecure funding, economic land management is unprofitable (farming, forestry, hospitality), limited funding, short-term stewardship thinking, infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Conflicts- Business purposes vs. nature recovery benefits.</p>

	<p>Partnership working- Strong relationships among key stakeholders. Collaboration opportunities</p> <p>SDNPA- Dynamic, strong, stable team at SDNPA, with continued progressive policy planning. Open conversations.</p> <p>Nature recovery- Coherent vision, SDNP has a clear identity. Natural and cultural capital, biodiversity.</p> <p>Opportunities for landscape-scale restoration- Landscape, views and access, ancient woodland – use and tourism potential. Large scale – particularly East to West.</p> <p>Business- Opportunities for job creation in tourism, entrepreneurialism, diversification, especially buildings and non-farm businesses, dynamism in the SME sector, advanced farming methods. Older assets provide greater security, such as succession rights.</p> <p>Funding- FiPL</p>	<p>Skills- Loss of rural skills, rural skill shortage vs. urban opportunities nearby</p> <p>Planning and development- No open conversations in planning, inconsistent planning, poor understanding of planning, change of use from traditional buildings, onerous building conservation for renovations, high planning costs.</p> <p>Housing- Poor quality accommodation, lack of affordable housing</p> <p>Focus on larger settlements</p> <p>Public transport- Poor public transport accessibility.</p> <p>Access- Mismanaged footpath system</p> <p>Awareness-Low Park visibility, limited awareness of the National Park.</p> <p>Government policy- Government lacks transparency.</p>
<i>SDNPA staff</i>	<p>The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is valued for its beautiful and diverse landscape, strong local communities, protection of the environment, and accessibility. It provides opportunities for nature engagement, supports biodiversity, and promotes sustainable travel. The SDNPA collaborates with local stakeholders, supports local projects, and has a strong legal framework to protect its unique environment. The park's educational initiatives and commitment to mitigating climate change further enhance its significance.</p>	<p>Community- It's seen as too middle class. Traffic, parking, housing, and population are significant concerns.</p> <p>Youth engagement- Lack of engagement from young people in tours and hiking activities.</p> <p>Public transport- There is a lack of public transport.</p> <p>Tourism- Issues with tourism management.</p> <p>Partnership working- The need to share strengths and progress with others pursuing similar goals. The park is often led rather than leading and attempts to cater to everyone.</p> <p>Economy and employment- It's a prime location for employment due to its proximity to Europe and the sea, which aids in developing the marine economy and engaging young people.</p>
<i>Diverse communities</i>	<p>Health and wellbeing- A perfect escape from the city, allowing me to reconnect with nature and unwind. Breathe and let my thoughts settle. Relax and de-</p>	<p>Access- Can feel very big. Avoid walking in the winter due to the weather. Shelters would help. More facilities e.g. toilets, in remote areas. Access can be</p>

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	<p>stress, reduce anxiety. Enhance creativity. Seeing others enjoying themselves can give hope and bring joy. Physical activity.</p> <p>Access- to nature and outdoor spaces is important. Country Park facilities and food are good.</p> <p>Landscape- walks, views, chalky soil, wildflowers, fauna and flora, beautiful, breathtaking views.</p> <p>Culture and heritage- Poetry trails with poets from different cultures makes you feel accepted.</p>	<p>challenging if relying on public transport, and at times, certain areas feel isolated and unsafe due to poor lighting. Concerns about over development/dogs not on leads/safety e.g. for women and people of colour. Too far from urban centers- need to travel too far. Concerned about difficult terrain. Can't tell if trespassing on private property. Lack of education, access and barriers such as transport and funding.</p> <p>Communication- Poor mobile signal, lack of information, not sure what activities are available. Not aware of information targeted at ethnic groups.</p> <p>Development- urban growth and development. Litter and plastic. Threat to biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental challenges- climate change impacts and human activities on SDNP ecosystem, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity and pollution.</p> <p>Not enough young people in the area.</p>
Young people	<p>Nature recovery- Iconic views, legendry, unique, green, fresh air, seaside, botanical, biodiversity. Chalk grassland and streams & the unique/special plants/wildlife it supports. The connectivity it provides, wildlife corridors.</p> <p>Culture and Heritage- connection to the past, interesting cultural history, the light.</p> <p>Free access- connecting with nature, close and accessible, trails and information on website.</p> <p>Public transport- is available.</p> <p>Wellbeing- Moves you, gets people active, awe inspiring, mental clarity, escapism.</p>	<p>Farming practices- Intensive agriculture - poor environmental practice outside of areas managed for wildlife. Lack of diverse habitats. 20% in favourable condition. Farmers not walker and nature nerd friendly.</p> <p>Flood management- lack of natural solutions.</p> <p>Events and activities- not youth centred, no toilets/ welfare. Not enough free camping sites.</p> <p>Lack of public transport.</p> <p>Communication- lack of awareness/ social media, lack of signposting and information.</p> <p>Access- lack of accessibility. Eroding chalk paths. Too many dogs and lack of responsible dog ownership.</p> <p>Education and skills- more engagement with schools and universities, more information about green careers, skills-based events, training and internships. Need more research opportunities, including for students and postgrads.</p>

<i>Stakeholder and public survey</i>		<p>Volunteering- Less reliance on volunteer labour, but also make volunteering opportunities more accessible (transport, timing, beginner friendly, inclusive etc.)</p> <p>Diversity- Not enough grants for minority ethnic groups, queer, disabled groups.</p>
	<p>Nature and wildlife, landscape and views, historic towns, villages and cultural sites, access to green space, peace and tranquillity.</p> <p>Access by public transport was less popular.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and nature loss, climate change, pollution, development, traffic, impact of visitors and lack of access.</p>

The online stakeholder and public survey suggested that almost everyone regardless of age, gender or where lived felt that the landscape and views were great, the nature and wildlife, and access were good or great. Most responses across all age groups, gender and locations are within the a little worried to worried about impact of visitors.

When asked to rank priorities, the results from all respondents are shown below:

All Respondents	
Priority	
1	Nature and Biodiversity
2	Climate Action
3	Vibrant and resilient communities
4	Improve access and enjoyment
5	Culture, arts and heritage
6	Strong local economy

For all age groups, nature and biodiversity and climate action were the most important priorities.

There were some differences by age, gender and location and these are summarised below:

Audience	Differences
<i>Under 35's</i>	<p>Thought the SDNP was more peaceful and tranquil.</p> <p>Public transport was liked more.</p> <p>Like historic towns, village and cultural sites slightly less.</p> <p>Slightly less worried about lack of access.</p> <p>More hopeful about the legal protection of the SDNP.</p> <p>Less hopeful about nature's resilience.</p> <p>Less hopeful due to organisation's working there.</p>

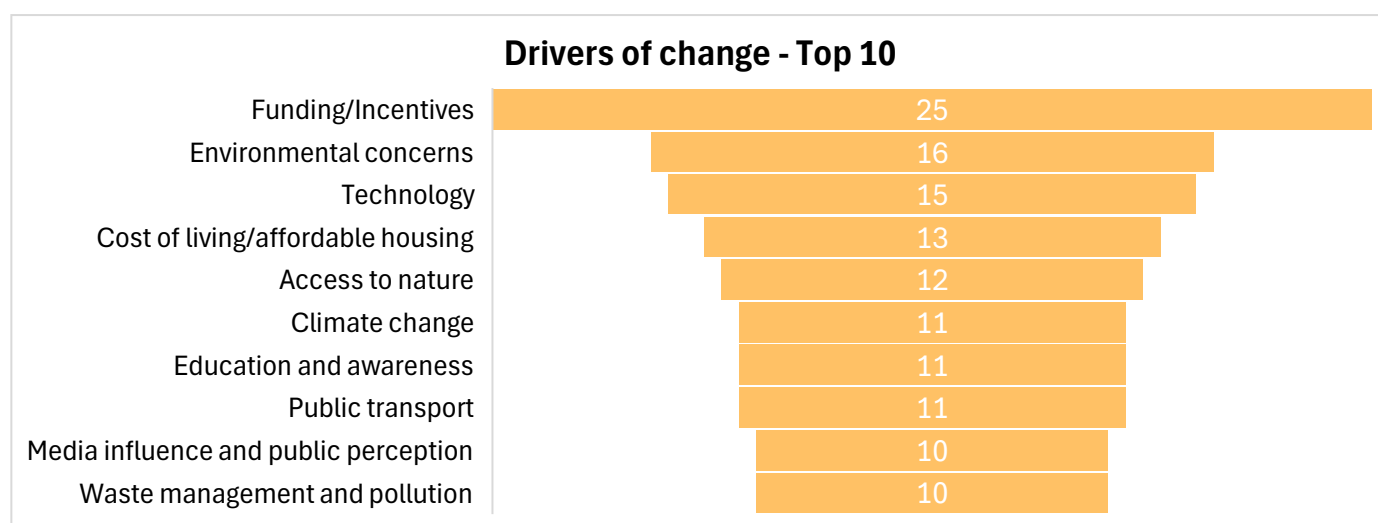
	<p>Slightly more hopeful due to energy from young people.</p> <p>Thought that improved access and enjoyment and culture, arts and heritage were more important than vibrant and resilient communities.</p>
35-64	<p>Slightly more concerned about climate change.</p> <p>Slightly less hopeful due to energy from young people.</p> <p>Improved access has dropped to the bottom of the list of priorities.</p> <p>Culture, arts and heritage is ranked with the same score as a Strong local economy.</p>
Over 35's	<p>More worried about biodiversity or nature loss than under 35's.</p>
Female	<p>Thought the SDNP was more peaceful and tranquil.</p> <p>Slightly more concerned about biodiversity and nature loss.</p> <p>More worried about climate change.</p> <p>Slightly more worried about lack of access.</p> <p>Slightly more concerned about traffic.</p> <p>Slightly more hopeful due to energy from young people.</p>
Male	<p>Liked public access less than females.</p> <p>Slightly less hopeful about organisations working there.</p> <p>Consider Improved access and enjoyment to be a higher priority than Vibrant and resilient communities.</p>
North	<p>Less hopeful due to people's passion for the South Downs.</p> <p>Consider Improved access and enjoyment to be a higher priority than Vibrant and resilient communities.</p>
West	<p>More respondents very worried about biodiversity and nature loss.</p> <p>Significantly more respondents very worried about climate change.</p> <p>Slightly more worried about pollution.</p> <p>Slightly more concerned about traffic.</p> <p>More hopeful about nature's resilience.</p> <p>Ranked Nature and biodiversity equal with Climate action, both jointly being their highest priority.</p> <p>Culture, arts and heritage is more important than Improve access and enjoyment.</p>
East	<p>Liked access to the SDNP more.</p> <p>Felt that access to the SDNP by public transport was better.</p> <p>Felt happier with historic towns, village and cultural sites.</p> <p>Slightly more respondents are Very worried about Development.</p>

Consider Culture, arts and heritage to be a higher priority than Improved access and enjoyment.

Full results from the stakeholder and public survey can be found in Appendix 3 of the Annex.

5.2.2 KEY DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

At some of the workshops, where there was time, groups were asked to identify key drivers for change. The results of those discussions are summarised below. Further consideration of drivers for change, taking into account findings from all sources is given in the conclusions.



The table below looks at this in more detail, highlighting the responses from different audiences.

Target audience	Drivers for Change
Overall	<p>Highest frequency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Funding and incentives- an overall lack of funding for landowners and conservation organisations. Funding focused too much on short term projects and should instead be directed to longer term change. Environmental concerns- flooding, droughts, habitat loss, and visitors damaging the environment. Technology- developing technology could improve sustainability, help educate people and make it easier for people to access nature. The use of QR codes and apps to guide people through the National Park. <p>Others:</p> <p>Cost of living/ affordable housing – some people lack disposable income for travel, making accessing nature difficult. The need for housing creates development pressure.</p> <p>Access to nature – Difficult to access nature from urban areas especially without a car, or with limited mobility.</p> <p>Climate change – there is a need for awareness and strategies put in place.</p>

	<p>Education and awareness – there is a lack of understanding and awareness about the environment.</p> <p>Public transport – Limited transport reduces accessibility.</p> <p>Media influence and public perceptions</p> <p>Waste management and pollution – this particular Driver features strongly in weaknesses, threats and opportunities.</p>
<i>Elected members</i>	<p>Need for community buy-in- a movement, so that people think of nature. In a language people use.</p> <p>Behavioural aspects- needs a national effort to impact behaviour change.</p> <p>Partnership working- clarity on ‘what you can do’ and responsibilities.</p>
<i>Learning Network</i>	<p>Cost of living</p> <p>Government- Department for Education expectations, changing Government focus.</p> <p>Behaviour aspects- eco-apathy and fatigue, lack of self-awareness of our impact on climate, people not seeing nature for them, low resilience of children post-Covid.</p> <p>Lack of diversity</p> <p>Lack of funding- schools, SDNPA</p> <p>Lack of public transport</p>
<i>Farmers and rural businesses</i>	<p>Government- Lack of representation of rural voices, weakness of DEFRA – finding routes to influence through other departments, lack of resources in Defra arm’s length bodies, lack of engagement from Government/Defra. Glover Review – what happened to the outputs from that? Political uncertainty – decisions are put off until there is more clarity. Devolution – short term turbulence – longer term easier and simpler. Land Use Framework. Greater food security</p> <p>Economics- Global economic changes, prices and economic resilience – businesses in the SDNP are mostly SME.</p> <p>Funding- Local Government budget cuts, fiscal incentives to plant woodland, BNG offsets, Grant support and infrastructure, business support for smaller businesses, Consistency of funding - longer term models needed, organisations being funding flexibly.</p> <p>Housing- Housing priorities/ targets, local needs: housing, business support, NPPF.</p> <p>Skills and employment- Skills pipelines- local skills improvement partnerships, Homeworking/flexible working- impact on services, retirement- demographic imbalance.</p> <p>Tourism- Sustaining year-round visits.</p> <p>Access to nature- Encouraging responsible behaviour.</p> <p>Climate action- Infrastructure to support electric cars, Energy Infrastructure/ production does not support need, additional infrastructure for renewables & impact on Landscape.</p> <p>Technology- 4G and 5G.</p>

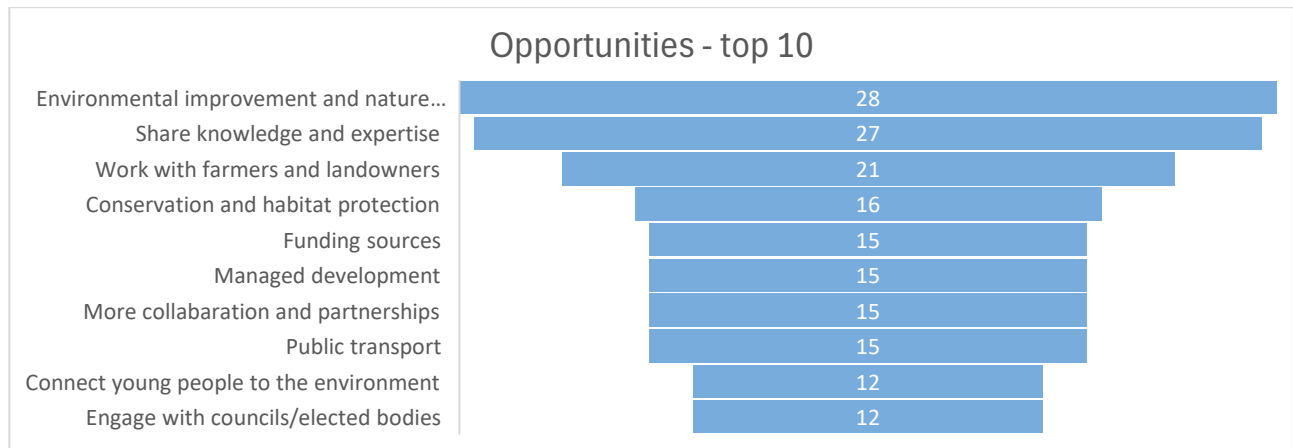


"It was like earlier, I was walking, and there was an older man. He gave me a really funny vibe, because I was walking, and he stopped in the park, and I walked around, but he was almost like 'why are you in my way'. And I was like, this is here for all of us. And I felt a bit miffed for a moment. And then kept walking, and then around another corner, and this other lady gave me this huge smile, and I was just like, you know, it's not everybody here. And like, you can't allow those people to taint it for you."

5.3 FORESIGHT

5.3.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Opportunities to inform the new PMP are summarised overall, by the frequency they were raised. Opportunities and threats (incorporating hopes and fears) are also summarised by target audience below.



Environmental improvement and nature recovery were seen as the highest priority for action. It is interesting that sharing knowledge and expertise was most frequently seen as the opportunity to bring about change followed by working with farmers and landowners.

Next most frequently cited (28) were opportunities for further environmental improvement and nature recovery in the South Downs. Some improvements suggested were: further work to protect the chalk streams, planting trees for carbon sequestering and woodland diversification, and encouraging environmentally conscious planning.

Nearly as frequently cited (27) were opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise. Several people made suggestions for sharing information and educating the public, such as information boards, QR codes and signage to guide people through the park. There were also comments about sharing learning and expertise between organisations and partners.

And again, frequently cited (21) were more opportunities for working with farmers and landowners. There were several suggestions to work with farmers to encourage and support regenerative farming. Working with landowners could provide opportunities to improve accessibility.

Other key opportunities include:

- Conservation and habitat protection – preserving green spaces and protecting wildlife habitats.
- Sources of funding – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), nature credits, rural grants.
- Managed development – find the right “character” of development, focussed on building communities and biodiversity friendly measures.
- More collaboration and partnerships – continue bringing people together, have conversations with organisations and partners, work with councils.
- Public transport – encourage use and more connections to the national park.

These are considered in more detail by target audience in the following table.

Target audience	Opportunities/ Hopes	Threats/ Fears
<i>Overall</i>	The passion that people feel for the Downs, the opportunities, protection and partnerships, collaboration and local support.	
<i>Elected Members</i>	<p>Inspiring and meaningful plan that is more people focussed. An accessible process and concise document that people want to engage with, that results in action.</p> <p>A knowledge hub should be considered. Smaller document, printed on demand in other languages. Use different mediums for story-telling such as poems/ song.</p> <p>Genuine collaboration with partners- frame as a delivery plan, showing how partner strategies link, gaining better commitment and a call to action.</p> <p>Pool resources around shared outcomes and prioritise activity to maximise results with reduced funding.</p> <p>Link with Government priorities and provide clarity on how PMP links with other strategies e.g. LNRS and Local Plan. Ensure new Section 245 duty is delivered.</p> <p>More focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green jobs • Wellbeing • Nature-based solutions • System issues <p>Members included in developing the new content.</p> <p>Ensure outcomes are measurable, benchmarked against other PMPs and demonstrate outcomes.</p> <p>Ambitious and achievable plan, galvanising action- That within a very short time we will see positive changes that ALL people can benefit from.</p> <p>Enthusiastic and unwavering support for the conservation and enhancement of the heritage of the SDNP.</p>	<p>External factors will influence delivery, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political landscape, changing priorities and lack of focus on countryside. • Devolution. • Pressures on farming. <p>Environmental damage, climate emergency and nature decline.</p> <p>Partnership engagement may be impacted by lack of clarity, silo working and lack of motivation.</p> <p>The PMP is not strategic, deliverable or realistic, with impenetrable language. Can't be all things to all people.</p> <p>Getting bogged down in bureaucracy.</p> <p>Committing to too many outcomes and failing to deliver significant change.</p> <p>Lack of funding.</p> <p>Lack of public engagement and action, not listening to all voices.</p> <p>Seen as a plan for the SDNPA.</p>

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<i>Community stakeholders</i>	<p>Environmental improvement and nature recovery- sharing knowledge and expertise, working with farmers and landowners, further work to protect the chalk streams, planting trees for carbon sequestering and woodland diversification, and encouraging environmentally conscious planning.</p> <p>Sharing knowledge and expertise- sharing information and educating the public, such as information boards, QR codes and signage to guide people through the park, sharing learning and expertise between organisations and partners.</p> <p>Opportunities for working with farmers and landowners- encourage and support regenerative farming and to improve accessibility.</p> <p>Conservation and habitat protection – preserving green spaces and protecting wildlife habitats.</p> <p>Sources of funding – BNG, nature credits, rural grants.</p> <p>Managed development – find the right “character” of development, focussed on building communities and biodiversity friendly measures</p> <p>More collaboration and partnerships – continue bringing people together, have conversations with organisations and partners, work with councils.</p> <p>Public transport – encourage use and more connections to the national park.</p>	<p>Climate change – flooding, balancing peoples living standards with carbon footprint.</p> <p>Lack of collaboration and cooperation – many organisations and authorities but poor cohesion, lacking coordination with local councils, “siloed” thinking and working.</p> <p>Environmental concerns – pollution, wildfires, water extraction, inadequate protections.</p> <p>Government policies and regulation – Local government reorganisation, political and development pressures.</p>
<i>Learning network</i>	<p>Habitat management and rewilding for children- activities with young people e.g. leaky dams or meadow making, creating opportunities at school and at home, nurturing connections to environment in school, matchmaking land owners with learning providers. Follow up activities e.g. open farm days embedding experiences.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing- pandemic led to realisation of importance of physical and mental health, Green Prescriptions empowering people, benefits of nature for everyone’s mental health and sense of</p>	<p>External factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living is high. • Changing government focuses. • Department for education expectations can be high. • SEND needs - overstretched schools / worries about taking children out. • Low resilience of children due to effects of covid. <p>Attitudes and behaviours- eco-apathy and fatigue, lack of self awareness of our impact on climate change and</p>

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	<p>belonging, building on success, sense of belonging for everyone, supporting all children – esp. the neurodiverse.</p> <p>Nature recovery and climate action- schools will have sustainability lead and climate action plan, greater understanding/awareness of nature and outdoor education in schools. Connectivity projects e.g. Weald to waves corridor, Downs to the sea</p> <p>Training and skills- Connecting islands of expertise, older people - opportunities for older people to share knowledge with younger people, strong opportunity for learning. Growing green careers. New GCSE to lead to developed understanding. Providers to tell their story and sell it as an education package</p> <p>Partnership- networks like learning providers network.</p> <p>Equipment- Wellie bank.</p>	<p>nature, stereotypes of nature leading to people not seeing nature as for them - no public images of "them" in these areas, feeling welcome / a sense of belonging is not equal for all, sense of "me" rather than us, perception of what being in the SDNP means, reaching the missing percentage.</p> <p>Lack of public transport access.</p> <p>Careers advice at schools.</p> <p>Funding- internal and external, reduction in funding in schools, teacher workload and capacity, lack of continuity of staff.</p>
<i>Farmers and rural businesses</i>	<p>Community engagement- Links to large population.</p> <p>Nature recovery- Landscape recovery, local landscape framework.</p> <p>Climate action- Green energy, climate changes.</p> <p>Access- Public transportation access.</p> <p>Community Land Trust model – nature and housing assets.</p> <p>Tourism – wellness, nature, woodland, enhance brand for overseas visitors Festivals, wealthy tourism.</p> <p>Health & wellbeing- NHS collaboration – Green prescribing.</p> <p>Business- Recognition that individuals working on South Downs need to maintain viable businesses and generate profit, facilitation of discussions with the park authority regarding strategies for diversification, streamlining and support for change of use. Recognition of alternative uses for redundant buildings.</p> <p>Grants and funding- Nature recovery grants from Natural England, BNG, nature credits markets, rural grant schemes as alternative income sources.</p> <p>Education- via SDNP image. Increased presence on the ground offers educational opportunities.</p>	<p>Economics- Breakup of estates, unstable funding environment, precarious funding conditions, farmer bankruptcies. Modern farm tenancies offer flexibility but less security, similar to a license.</p> <p>Population pressures- Increasing visitors due to new housing, SDNP access under strain, growing suburbanisation.</p> <p>Skills- Land-based skills and opportunities, lack of education.</p> <p>Planning- Weak planning system. Balancing landscape and development.</p> <p>Climate change impacts- Weather challenges.</p>

	Sussex Bay National Park.	
<i>SNDPA Staff</i>	<p>Nature recovery- Protection of wildlife habitats and green spaces. Environmentally friendly farming practices and protection of agricultural land. Support for regenerative farming.</p> <p>Communities- Enhanced engagement with local communities with regular consultations. Progressive plans for community-led housing and balanced development. Focus on affordable housing. Effective traffic management and speed limit enforcement.</p> <p>Public Transport- Better public transport solutions, including free buses for school children and bus reliability programs.</p> <p>Economy and employment- Encouragement of eco-tourism and low-impact tourism. Support employment opportunities to reduce car dependency.</p> <p>Partnership working- Improved transparency and collaboration with local councils and elected bodies.</p>	<p>Food security vs rewilding.</p> <p>Overburdening skirting villages.</p>
<i>Diverse communities</i>	<p>Increase awareness- seeing themselves more represented in information (about activities in the National Park). Educate, make people aware of what's on their doorstep. Promoting and encouraging cultural difference and how ethnically diverse people interact and engage with SDNP.</p> <p>Installing signs in Braille to assist blind and visually impaired visitors.</p> <p>Providing sensory-friendly trails designed for neurodivergent individuals who may be sensitive to noise and crowded spaces.</p> <p>Offering multilingual resources and guided tours to engage communities from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Enhancing public transport links to make the park more accessible to those without private vehicles.</p> <p>Holding more events/ music/ festivals / walking groups and joining with existing groups and their events with the South Downs activities. Make events free.</p>	<p>The biggest challenge for people would be to plan their visit if they've never been to the park before.</p> <p>Not everyone may be entirely comfortable with local public transport routes-so having clear information that makes the journey sound easy and accessible would be good.</p>

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	<p>Guided walks about different plants and trees that are from different parts of the globe to help people understand the interconnection of people and places.</p> <p>Helping people feel safe, positive signing and visuals, artwork.</p> <p>Better lighting in key areas, as some parts of the park can feel too dark and isolated, especially in the evening.</p> <p>Clearer signage and maps to help visitors navigate the trails and find emergency contact points.</p> <p>More visible park rangers or volunteers patrolling certain areas to provide assistance if needed.</p> <p>Accessible emergency call stations in remote locations for added security.</p> <p>Dogs on leads or awareness about keeping dogs close to their owners.</p> <p>Work closely and constantly with local community groups to build a strong relationship and represent diverse populations.</p> <p>Create collaborative projects, events and initiatives designed for specific needs and interests of different ethnic communities.</p>	
Young people	<p>Partnerships- Collaborate with local fairs, societies, and colleges, partner with youth groups, such as Peaks of Colour, collaborate with young influencers to reach their audience. Partner with hike/run communities. Collaborate with farmers on enviro-friendly methods and traditional practices, promoting biodiversity and nature-based solutions.</p> <p>Education and skills- Increase paid opportunities and outreach to disengaged youth, expand youth education engagement, more research opportunities for students and postgrads, provide work/training opportunities for under 30s. Engage school groups with free offerings and youth volunteer-led sessions. Advertise through various platforms, including environmental job sites</p> <p>Community Engagement- Promote community-led nature recovery.</p>	

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	<p>Infrastructure and Access- Enhance road crossings and traffic calming measures. Increase public access (right to roam, wild camping, bothies). Encourage dog owners to respect land and wildlife, pick up waste, and leash their dogs. Establish "volunteer rangers" to educate others on responsible land use. Implement a self-policing system like fishing communities, using respected local members.</p> <p>Climate Change- Improve landscape climate resilience.</p> <p>Communication- Issue a monthly newsletter about upcoming events and easy routes, utilise social media (Instagram, TikTok) for engagement. Create a centralized platform for all projects, volunteering, creative contributions, sports events, and walking routes.</p>	
<i>Public</i>	<p>People's passion for the Downs, legal protection and organisations working there.</p> <p>Nature and biodiversity, climate action, improved access and enjoyment and culture, arts and heritage.</p> <p>Energy from young people.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and nature loss, climate change, development and traffic.</p> <p>Lack of public transport.</p>



“Improve accessibility - transport and physical but also how things are communicated. Info. is hard to digest unless you already know something about SDNP/ nature/ conservation. I know stuff and even find some of the 5-year plan hard to understand - lots of jargon.”

“I would create a centralised platform with all projects that are happening and volunteering opportunities. Maybe a map, a way for people to find what's happening, ways to get involved not only with natural park related but associated - creative contributions, sports events, planned walking routes.”



“My partner just moved from London. And London is a very diverse place especially depending on where you live, and he lived in a very diverse neighbourhood. And when I proposed the idea that he should move here so we could save on rent and things like that, he said, “Isn’t it really white down there?” I said, “Yeah, but you’re ignoring these really rich communities that do all of these events, engage with one another. There’s so much going on all the time.” I think that’s what gets missed out a lot. Like we exist here. You know? And like to just brush off our existence and say, it’s just a white place, I think that doesn’t do justice to the neighbourhoods, the communities, that are here.”

5.3.2 ACTION PLANNING

SECOND PHASE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

The second phase events focussed on four priorities emerging from the first round of stakeholder events, as agreed with the SDNPA, as key themes for further discussion:

1. Nature Recovery and Environmental Improvement
2. More collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and expertise
3. Working with farmers and landowners
4. Connecting young people to the environment

One of the online events and one of the in-person events were cancelled owing to low booking numbers (under ten). Although 17 people booked onto the Lewes event, only five attended. Further exploration into actions and pledges could be considered as the plan is developed.

IDEAS FOR THE NEW PMP

Appendix 10 shows a summary of findings from the second phase workshops in terms of what should continue, what should be done differently and what new things should be considered. These are picked up in the conclusions of this report within the key priorities and actions.

ACTIONS AND PLEDGES

At the in-person events, there was time to dive into one or more issues in greater detail to develop measures / actions and pledges to contribute to achieving the priorities.

While it is acknowledged that the numbers attending these sessions were low, the approach appeared to work well, and the following suggested actions and pledges emerged which could be treated as worked examples. There is more detail in Appendix 10.

- Apprentices and routes to employment in nature and land-based work
- River Schools- a pilot scheme within the Downs to the Sea project.
- Biodiversity Net Gain- Quality standards and accreditation.
- Bringing practitioners together- Ecologist and volunteer networks.
- Improving access- Distribute visitors over the park, wider awareness of the park, broaden the park 'offer', make camping easier.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This was an extensive programme of engagement over six months, which involved desk research, surveys and workshops and events. Around 1,157 people from the following target audiences were engaged with the process:

<i>Target audience</i>	Numbers involved
<i>Community stakeholders</i>	143
<i>Farmers and rural businesses</i>	70
<i>Learning providers</i>	30
<i>People from diverse communities</i>	108
<i>Young people (18-30)</i>	98
<i>SDNPA staff and Elected Members</i>	286
<i>Key partners</i>	13
<i>Public</i>	283
<i>Survey respondents</i>	126
TOTAL	1,157

The engagement focussed on partners, community stakeholders and underrepresented groups from diverse communities and young people. Wider public consultation will be undertaken on the draft PMP once completed.

The conclusions are derived from the results of the desk research, 39 engagement events, 6 one-to-one discussions with key partners and the online surveys for stakeholders and partners. In this section, progress towards the aims of the current PMP is considered first, then the overall strengths and weaknesses and Drivers for Change across all activity. Priorities for the new PMP are framed under the key themes that have emerged through the process, some of which are cross-cutting.

6.1 HINDSIGHT

Looking back over the past five years of the current PMP 2020-25, the research has demonstrated a wide range of activity across all aims and objectives by SDNPA and partners. However, there are some key challenges and gaps that could be addressed in the new PMP.

The SDNP is recognised as a place that is inter-connected, feeds creativity, aids conservation, promotes education and raises awareness of environmental sustainability. It is valued as a place to connect with nature and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

Relationships between SDNPA and some partners are extremely good, and collaborative approaches on the ground can work well. Financial support from the SDNPA has been welcomed and has enabled some important projects. It is felt that the SDNPA understand funding opportunities and help coordinate bids.

Funding and staff resources remain significant issues across the board and the South Downs Trust is seen as a major opportunity to help address this. The SDNPA have been congratulated on having the foresight to invest in staff resources to enable fundraising. However, given the current financial restrictions, the need

to work collaboratively to share resources and focus on key priorities that will have the most impact is also important.

The SDNPA faces challenges related to management, data, collaboration, and funding. Partners raised the lack of data, monitoring, and evaluation as a key issues as it has not been possible to understand impact towards long-term goals.

To partners, the PMP feels like an SDNPA strategy rather than a partnership document, and key partners don't seem fully engaged. Partners should be more involved in delivering the PMP, with the SDNPA being seen as the 'glue' that brings together partners to take action.

It is felt that there should be more consultation and engagement with landowners and the wider community and that this should be ongoing.

Progress towards the current PMP outcomes is considered in the table below.

Outcome	Progress	Challenges and gaps
<i>Outcome 1 - Landscape and natural beauty</i>	<p>Significant progress towards protecting and enhancing the landscape, improve green infrastructure and maximise benefits of agri-environment schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan policies are aligned. • Integrated Character Assessment has been completed. • ReNature Credits set up. • The People and Nature Network developed. • Farmer clusters. • Whole Estate Plans. • FiPL. 	<p>The landscape faces pressures from changing land use, human settlement, and infrastructure.</p> <p>Lack of consistent data.</p> <p>Local Plan policies not always effective.</p> <p>Sharing information and expertise on green investment.</p> <p>Green space planning in new developments.</p>
<i>Outcome 2 - Increasing resilience</i>	<p>Significant progress towards increasing resilience, with several high-profile partnership projects helping with water management, tree planting and hedgerow restoration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment Partnerships. • South Downs Climate Action Knowledge Hub. • Community climate action groups. • Ouse Vally Climate Action 	<p>More focus on soil erosion, carbon capture, and reconnecting wetland habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient water quality data. • Planning consent issues for ponds. • Deregulation. • Pollution from pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals. • More climate action projects. • Greater collaboration with organisations outside the SDNP, including other Protected Landscapes in the South East.

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<i>Outcome 3- Habitats and Species</i>	<p>Significant progress towards habitat and species management, with some significant landscape-scale partnership initiatives and reintroduction projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReNature Nature Recovery Programme • Changing Chalk partnership. • Weald to Waves. • Fair Game project. 	<p>More action needed on invasive species control.</p> <p>Mechanisms to increase the numbers of nationally and internationally protected sites.</p> <p>Improving habitats for species that should be seen in higher populations within the National Park.</p>
<i>Outcome 4 - Arts and Heritage</i>	<p>Significant progress on a wide range of inspiring activities and initiatives, especially those targeting more diverse communities and for health and wellbeing benefit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio trails, an immersive app, and various performances and collaborations. • Heritage Crafts and Skills Pilot provided hands-on training for young people. • Scheduled Monuments Monitoring Project. 	<p>Ongoing issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, spending challenges, and energy costs.</p> <p>Lack of joint initiatives for apprenticeships and mentoring.</p> <p>Need for publicising evaluation of projects to better understand achievements.</p>
<i>Outcome 5- Outstanding Experiences</i>	<p>Significant progress with generally well managed and maintained PROW network, with good range of promoted routes and high visitor enjoyment ratings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven Sisters Country Park development. • South Downs Discovery Ticket. • South Downs Centre. 	<p>Poor public transport system and lack of active travel routes leading to more traffic. Little involvement of transport operators.</p> <p>Some issues with PROW maintenance and motorised use.</p> <p>Insufficient focus on activities for young people and diverse audiences and lack of appropriate promotion.</p> <p>Difficulty for pedestrians, riders and cyclists for accessing the NP from towns ie Eastbourne, Winchester, Brighton and Hove, Worthing, crossing major roads, traffic and speeding vehicles.</p>
<i>Outcome 6- Lifelong Learning</i>	<p>Significant progress with high-quality outdoor learning opportunities for children through various programs and grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor learning grant • Ambassador Schools. • Learning Zone. • Learning Network. 	<p>Growing deficit in green skills and traditional crafts.</p> <p>Insufficient engagement with colleges and universities.</p> <p>Perception that more could be done with local schools.</p> <p>Lack of career advice for countryside management and</p>

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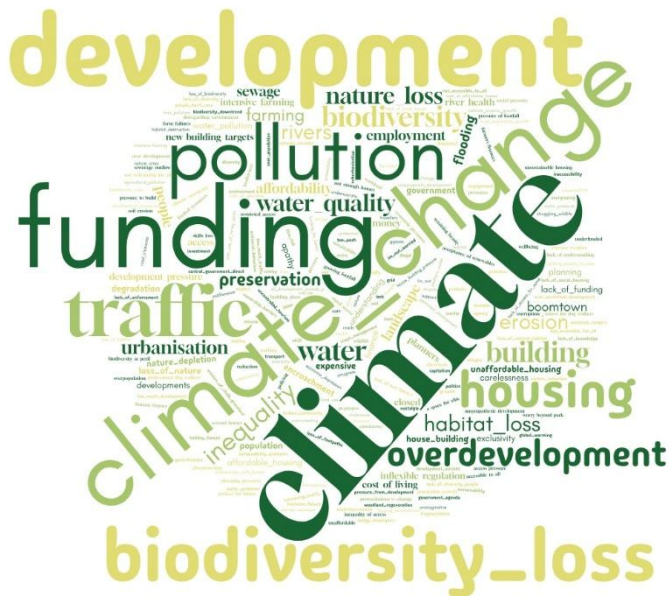
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship Bursary Programme. 	associated skills, skills-based learning, training and internships.
<i>Outcome 7- Health and Wellbeing</i>	<p>Good progress with SDNP Health and Wellbeing Strategy being produced and good examples of projects to aid health and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Wellbeing Hubs. Health and Wellbeing Travel Grants. Connecting In Nature programme. Timescape initiative. Downs to the Sea. 	<p>Mental health crisis.</p> <p>Green infrastructure on new developments and master planning.</p> <p>Need for a regional approach, working with other Protected Landscapes, health providers and universities, to share resources and evidence the benefits of nature-based therapy.</p>
<i>Outcome 8- Creating Custodians</i>	<p>Tremendous dedication to volunteering by local people within and around the SDNP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Ambassadors. Youth Action Days. Generation Green. 	<p>More could be done to encourage diversity and those from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Links through to countryside, heritage and green finance career progression.</p>
<i>Outcome 9- Great Places to Live</i>	<p>Good progress on affordable homes, with ambitious targets.</p> <p>Extensive development of Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Priority Statements.</p> <p>Effective delivery of CIL funded projects.</p> <p>Increased superfast Broadband.</p>	<p>High cost of housing, limited access to affordable homes, maintenance of local facilities, impacts of an aging population, and concerns about 5G infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage communities of interest from across SDNP to help strengthen relationships. Link local services with visitors to improve accessibility. Engaging with internet infrastructure providers to negotiate less intrusive structures for 5G connectivity.
<i>Outcome 10- Great Places to Work</i>	<p>Significant progress on business engagement and green tourism, with high visitor numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Downs Business Network. Green South Downs tourism scheme. Curated visitor experiences. 	<p>Insufficient services and infrastructure for sustainable enjoyment of the SDNP, such as public transport and active travel options.</p> <p>Support for market towns and businesses to maximise positive impacts is key.</p> <p>More support to enable diversification through planning, with effective design approaches.</p>

6.2 INSIGHT

Participants love and value the SDNP, especially the landscape, nature, wildlife, beauty, views and feelings of home, as demonstrated in the word cloud on the right.



Overall, they are worried about the impacts of climate change, funding, development and the loss of biodiversity.



Participants are hopeful due to the passion of people living, working and visiting the SDNP, the breadth of opportunities to make an impact, the SDNPA and young people.



6.2.1 DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

‘Drivers for Change’ refers to external influences that are underlying the need to change. These can be political, economic, environmental, technological or social.

The Drivers for Change raised by participants are set out in the table below.

Category	Drivers for Change
<i>Political</i>	<p>Devolution- The establishment of Mayoral Authorities will impact service areas led by the Local Authorities in the SDNP area. This includes planning and development delegation, highways and PROW, waste, public transport etc. The process is likely to challenge the SDNPA’s role and voice in the region. Whilst this will be diverting attention in the short term, it is expected to make things easier and simpler in the longer term.</p> <p>Government- The change of Government has resulted in some uncertainty, with concern over the lack of representation of rural voices. In particular, the strategic direction and expectations from Defra are changing, which will impact on the ground delivery. Lack of engagement appears to be an issue.</p> <p>The Defra Protected Landscape Outcomes Framework will be a key monitoring and reporting mechanism for the new PMP.</p> <p>Defra is still considering the Landscapes Review: National Parks and AONBs by Julian Glover, with further changes likely over the next 12 months.</p> <p>Businesses are also impacted by political uncertainty and have reported delaying decisions until there is more clarity.</p> <p>Some felt that partners needed to find routes to influence other departments.</p> <p>Land Use Framework- The new Land Use Framework aims to produce a toolkit to support decision making and inform discussion on how we can guarantee our long-term food security, how we can support development and how we can achieve our targets on nature and climate that deliver multiple benefits and support economic growth. Consultation on this is due to close on the 25th of April, so it is not yet clear what the expectations may be.</p> <p>Greater food security.</p> <p>Development pressures- housing targets have increased and development pressure in and around the SDNP is intense.</p> <p>Department for Education expectations are growing and there is pressure from SEND needs with overstretched schools and worries about taking children on trips out.</p>
<i>Environmental</i>	<p>The landscape faces pressures from changing land use, human settlement, and infrastructure.</p> <p>Environmental and climate change concerns include waste management and pollution, water extraction, inadequate protections, flooding, droughts, habitat loss, wildfires and severe weather challenges, balancing peoples living standards with their carbon footprint and visitors damaging the environment.</p> <p>Education and awareness – there is felt to be a lack of understanding and awareness about the environment.</p> <p>Behaviour aspects- eco-apathy and fatigue, lack of self-awareness of people’s impact on climate, people not seeing nature for them.</p>

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	<p>Climate action- Infrastructure to support electric cars, Energy Infrastructure/ production does not support need, additional infrastructure for renewables and impact on Landscape.</p>
<i>Economic</i>	<p>Lack of funding- across the board for SDNPA, Local Authorities, Defra Family of organisations, schools, charities.</p> <p>Global economic changes, prices and economic resilience- businesses in the SDNP are mostly SME and vulnerable to global markets.</p> <p>Land based businesses- Breakup of estates, unstable funding environment, precarious funding conditions, farmer bankruptcies. Modern farm tenancies offer flexibility but less security, similar to a license.</p> <p>Funding and incentives- an overall lack of funding for landowners and conservation organisations. Fiscal incentives to plant woodland, BNG offsets, grant support and infrastructure, business support for smaller businesses. Lack in consistency of funding. Funding is focussed too much on short term projects and should instead be directed to longer term change; organisations being funding flexibly.</p>
<i>Social</i>	<p>Cost of living crisis- impacts nature and disconnection from it; relevance is questioned. Some people lack disposable income for travel, making accessing nature difficult.</p> <p>Affordable housing- The need for housing creates development pressure. Housing priorities/ targets, local needs.</p> <p>Low wage economy- Prevalence of low paid jobs in tourism / hospitality and agricultural / land-based industries.</p> <p>Public transport – Limited transport reduces accessibility and it likely to be exacerbated by local government funding cuts.</p> <p>Behavioural aspects- needs a national effort to impact behavioural change; a movement, so that people think of nature, and access. In a language people use.</p> <p>Media influence and public perceptions. Low resilience of children due to effects of covid. Stereotypes of nature leading to people not seeing nature as for them - no public images of "them" in these areas, feeling welcome / a sense of belonging is not equal for all, sense of "me" rather than us, perception of what being in the SDNP means, reaching the missing percentage.</p> <p>Skills and employment- there is concern about the skills pipeline, especially rural and land-based skills and opportunities. Homeworking/ flexible working, demographic imbalance with retired people- impact on services. Concerns about general lack of education about nature recovery and climate change.</p> <p>Tourism- Sustaining year-round visits is important for the economy but has other impacts, especially with traffic and parking.</p> <p>Population pressures- Increasing visitors due to new housing, SDNP access under strain, growing suburbanisation</p>
<i>Technological</i>	<p>Developing technology could improve sustainability, help educate people and make it easier for people to access nature- AI, 4G and 5G.</p>

6.3 FORESIGHT

Looking to the future, there is real enthusiasm to drive positive change in the SDNP, with many passionate people and organisations wanting to make a difference. However, the SDNP, SDNPA and partners face many challenges and the new PMP will need to embrace and channel this enthusiasm to collaboratively deliver meaningful change.

Throughout this engagement several key themes have emerged as priorities and these themes are illustrated in the diagram below.

Key themes	Nature recovery	Climate action	Water management	Young people training and skills	Valuing, welcoming and accessible to all	Cultural Heritage	Rural economy and local communities
Cross-cutting themes	Collaboration						
	Welcoming diversity						
	Engagement and communication						
	Funding						

Under each theme, the results have been considered in the following way, to draw conclusions that should enable the findings of this engagement to be easily incorporated with other considerations into the new PMP. These are based on the perceptions of the people involved.

- Insight- the here and now...
 - **Strengths**- sharing what people value and enjoy about the South Downs.
 - **Weaknesses**- embracing and understanding where there can be improvements.
- Foresight- looking to the future...
 - **Key priorities**- understanding longer term priorities.
 - **Key actions**- innovative thinking that could change how things are done.
 - **Specific ideas**- some interesting ideas for specific activities.

6.3.1 NATURE RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

The South Downs are recognised and highly valued for the landscape, nature and wildlife. Creating a resilient landscape that is nature-rich was ranked by the majority as the number one priority for the new PMP. With so much of the land in private ownership, this will only be achieved if those working on and living off the land have strong, viable businesses that are working in harmony with nature. This theme, then, incorporates action for nature and action to support farming and other land-based businesses, with the priorities and actions reflecting those raised by landowners.

1. Nature resilience and recovery	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Iconic views, legendary, unique, green, fresh air, seaside, botanical, biodiversity. Chalk grassland and streams & the unique/special plants/wildlife it supports.</p> <p>A coherent vision and a clear identity.</p> <p>Legal protection and planning policies that help protect the environment.</p> <p>Protection of landscape character.</p> <p>Farmer clusters, whole estate plans and SDNPA support with agri-environment schemes.</p> <p>ReNature Credits encouraging green investment and ensuring there is a local mechanism to secure BNG within the SDNP.</p> <p>The ReNature Nature Recovery Programme.</p> <p>Opportunities for landscape-scale restoration- Landscape, views and access, ancient woodland – use and tourism potential. Potential to be large scale – particularly East to West.</p>	<p>Planning and development- Not enough open conversations about planning, can be seen as inconsistent. Difficult to get change of use for traditional buildings, onerous building conservation for renovations, high planning costs.</p> <p>There seems to be a poor understanding of planning in the community.</p> <p>Farming practices- Intensive agriculture and poor environmental practice outside of areas managed for wildlife. Lack of diverse habitats. Farmers not always seen as walker and nature nerd friendly.</p> <p>The need for food security vs rewilding.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<p>Some of the key priorities for this these include:</p> <p>Nature recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote ambitious, landscape-scale habitat restoration and management plans, sharing knowledge and expertise, working with farmers and landowners and their advisors. • Strengthen links between terrestrial, coastal, and maritime landscapes. • Further work to protect and restore chalk streams, chalk grassland, planting trees for carbon sequestering and woodland diversification, and encouraging environmentally conscious planning. • Align PMP with LNRS and other strategies. • Encourage and support regenerative farming and improve accessibility. National target aims to have 65% of land in regenerative agriculture. • Embrace the Protected Landscapes Outcomes Framework ensuring effective monitoring, ongoing evaluation and sharing or data. <p>Supporting land-based businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with sector resilience plans and adapt to Land Use Framework changes. • Continue to establish farm clusters and build relationships with landowners, with a focus on supporting tenant farmers and traditional family farms. • Support the farming economy. Articulate to farmers that they are vital to achieving the PMP. • Recognise that individuals working on South Downs need to maintain viable businesses and generate profit, facilitation of discussions with the SDNPA regarding strategies for diversification, streamlining and support for change of use. Recognise that economic development and environmental protection can coexist and encourage alternative uses for redundant buildings. Reduce barriers for landowners, e.g. planning permissions. Effective design can ensure commercial development conserves nature and landscapes. • Promote wood products and local timber economy. • Maximise grants and funding- Nature recovery grants from Natural England, BNG, nature credits markets, rural grant schemes as alternative income sources. • Promote mental health support for farmers. 	

- Manage development – find the right “character” of development, focussed on building communities and biodiversity friendly measures.
- Improve knowledge sharing on nature, markets, and biodiversity net gain.
- Advocate for financial support to government (FiPL or similar) and helping farmers diversify income to include nature. Providing additional support to current schemes - adding value. Small grants. Help with licenses. CIL funding opportunities.

Nature in communities

- Prepare for new public land due to devolution with a strategic approach.
- Develop nature spaces and compensate for nature loss.
- Enhance urban nature recovery efforts and engage with emerging groups with neighbourhood-focussed initiatives.

Key actions

Some key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- Continue with farm clusters, engage more with traditional family farms and tenant farmers and integrate farm clusters more effectively. Share learning - what works e.g. Shelbourne cluster biodiversity - soil/carbon. Promote the positive work being done with case studies. Communicate the impact of work with landowners more clearly.
- Encourage peer networks to promote nature-friendly farming.
- Free pre-app for agricultural development/ farm diversification.
- Whole Estate Plans- continue collaborating with larger farms and focus more on public access. Introduce a micro-WEP for smaller farms and track engagement with farmers.
- Implement bespoke Agri-Environment Schemes for SDNP.
- Continue to build the ReNature credits and nature-based solutions portfolios and share learning. Consider the role of partners who are already working with landowners as brokers. Promote BNG, secure investments in ecological information and link to education. Recognise development sites' value for nature recovery and connect them to the National Park. Sharing this mechanism more widely across the region could lead to more effective use of resources and expertise, and make it more viable.
- Community grazing projects and advice on grazing, considering novel approaches. Support for conservation grazing and rare breed herds.
- More action needed on invasive species control.
- Ranger team offering support with habitat management - tasks on the ground.
- Mechanisms to increase the numbers of nationally and internationally protected sites should be investigated.
- Promote dark skies and anti-light pollution initiatives in conversations with landowners.
- Find a solution to the planning permission issues for creating new dew ponds and scrapes.
- Work with National England to prioritise condition monitoring of SSSIs.
- Champion green bridges, road tunnels, and verges.
- Enhance nature recovery monitoring and data capture (habitat extent and condition) to ensure more and better information to help guide activities. Get more people involved through Citizen Science. Invest in remote tech for biomonitoring.
- Implement adaptive management strategies for landscapes, integrating planning and nature recovery initiative.
- Consider more species reintroduction, including beavers, red squirrels and choughs.
- Link with other landowners to fill the gaps. Engage more with vineyards and wineries, and golf courses.
- Promote fresh local produce - buy British. Enhance deer management and venison market.
- Acquire land for model farms and community greenspace.

Specific ideas

- Secure funding for project feasibility and consents phases.

- Matching service- young people who want to get involved in nature recovery with farmers have a need for data and practical support.
- Continue making Seven Sisters an exemplary nature recovery site.
- Focus on deer management interpretation and communication.
- Increase venison market utilisation.
- Red Chairs- encourage people to visit and sit (Canadian NP idea).
- Develop policies for better garden designs in new builds.
- Leverage Dark Skies for species engagement and nocturnal habitat recovery.
- Encourage moon gardens and orchard restoration.

6.3.2 CLIMATE ACTION

The second highest priority was to do more to mitigate for and adapt to climate change, building on the excellent community initiatives over the last five years. Enacting organisational climate action plans and continuing to work with other Protected Landscapes will help inform the development of activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

2. Climate action	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Development of a carbon monitoring dashboard and tracker. South Downs Climate Action Knowledge Hub Community Energy Pathway WeCAN/PeCAN and other community projects Improvements to energy consumption of the SDNPA offices at Midhurst.	Not prioritised in current PMP, with less activity as a result.
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising with communities and businesses. • Climate action strategies put in place. • Encourage the development of green energy and retrofitting. • Address climate migrant species. • Utilise waste products for composting and recycling. 	
Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with existing community groups and consider how geographies might change with Devolution. • Continue to fund community-led climate initiatives. 	
Specific ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatwick Airport's extension offers potential for carbon-offsetting and conservation funding for impacted areas. 	

6.3.3 WATER MANAGEMENT

There is a growing interest in better management of water quality, nature-based flood management and waterway restoration, often expressed more widely through nature recovery.

3. Water management	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Chalk streams. Catchment partnerships. Partnership projects.	Lack of nature-based flooding and pollution control solutions. Soil erosion Carbon capture Reconnecting wetland habitats. Insufficient water quality data. Planning consent issues for pond creation. Deregulation. Pollution from pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals. Water extraction.
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on high water quality, restore natural watercourses, and support regenerative farming. • Continue to grow and build Catchment Partnerships and joining them up to cover larger areas, including outside the SDNP. • Consider working with other Protected Landscapes to prioritise water management at a landscape scale. 	
Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment Partnerships are working well and making a difference on the ground, including with water company management planning. Collaboration between Catchment Partnerships could lead to landscape-scale water management improvements and a stronger voice with policy makers. • Evaluate partnership projects and build learning into new initiatives. • Planning consent requirements for wildlife ponds addressed. • Nature based solutions to pollution from pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals. • Reconnect floodplains to rivers by removing riverbanks. • Monitoring of water quality, pharmaceuticals and forever chemicals more effectively across partners and sharing data. • Nature-based flood management and pollution control. • Reintroduction of beavers. 	
Specific ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider Citizen Science approach to water quality monitoring. 	

6.3.4 YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINING AND SKILLS

There was a strong feeling from the community that young people were the future, and that they are likely to be more motivated to address some of the key nature and climate issues being experienced. Whilst there has been extensive work by the SDNPA and partners with younger children and primary schools, it was felt that there needed to be a renewed focus on teenagers and young people up to 30, focussing on skills, training and careers. Engagement with young people has really strengthened the findings in this regard, and reinforced how important they feel that training, skills and career priorities are to address nature and climate going forward. Young people also highlighted the importance of public access, community engagement and partnerships.

4. Young people training and skills	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Learning Network. Five pathways to nature connection. The SDNPA has been providing high-quality outdoor learning opportunities for young people through various programs and grants. Outdoor Learning Grant awarded to schools. Residential trips. Teacher training Sessions. South Downs Learning Zone. Schools' Newsletter. Ambassador School Scheme, Discover the Downs. Downs to the Sea. South Downs Generations. LEAF education training. Generation Green. Youth Ambassadors. Entry level job creation e.g. young guides. Educator skills. Forest Schools. Youth Action days. iNaturalist LookWild project. Partnerships and grants like the #iwill Fund supported youth volunteering opportunities.</p>	<p>More could be done to encourage diversity and those from disadvantaged groups. Accessible sites e.g. Forest Schools. Can be hard to reach schools, school budgets and staffing are tight. Cuts to funding, ongoing financial uncertainty and transport costs. Need time/resources to grow options. Engaging teenagers can be challenging, Misconceptions of what organisations do/are. The use of technical terms/jargon. Livestock can be offputting and scary. Public transport costs. Skills gap- losing skilled people. Younger people not getting involved in work/training Lack of engagement from young people in tours and hiking activities. Not enough young people in the area. Events and activities are not youth centred. No toilets/ welfare. Not enough free camping sites. Lack of public transport. Insufficient engagement with colleges and universities</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby Defra to do more to engage Young People in PLs. <p>Involving young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision for the future - involve them in reviewing our vision for the SDNPA. Co-create projects with young people. Encouraging young people to have a voice through forums and existing boards. Engage through events and festivals e.g. Dark Skies, Boomtown, Salsa Salona. <p>Skills and career progression for teenagers and young people to 30</p>	

- Working with young people to link more with career progression and include working with tertiary education to encourage more people to consider countryside, heritage and green finance careers.
- Skills-based events, training and internships and research opportunities, including for students and postgrads.
- Career advice at schools, especially for green careers, countryside management and land-based skills, including nature tourism.
- Targeting schools and colleges in developing planning strategy and policy
- Youth volunteering programmes including micro-volunteering.
- Flip Volunteer Ranger Service into a paid model to finance a junior VRS that is free to access and fully funded.
- Accessible/ alternative ways for visiting the downs. Improving safe active travel.

Working with primary schools and younger children

- Efforts aimed at primary schools, Forest Schools, and nursery schools.
- More support for school visits (not only transport- e.g. risk assessment, resources, advice, ranger talks etc.).
- Appeal to different demographics building on schools work i.e. near urban community.
- Meet the producer- where food comes from.

Communication

- Speak their language- less jargon. More good news- climate action impact. Younger people being involved in our social media and influencers, videos – Instagram, Tik Tok, ranger engagement, Blogs from a young planner. Park brand recognition. Merch.
- Intergenerational - mentors, initiation, understand, developmental psychology.
- Going to young people where they are, not expecting them to come to us. Finding a way to address transport costs.

Key actions

Involving young people

- Young SDNP Forum.
- Young Planners Network.
- More youth representation on boards. Inviting representation from urban fringe communities onto the committees/membership who can speak for youth needs in their context.
- Challenge the parishes to have youth represented on their boards/committees.

Skills and career progression

- Career advice- SDNPA and partner staff to go into schools to talk about what they do.
- More work experience, training, apprenticeships and internships, building awareness of green careers, including nature tourism. Consider working with location managers working with TV and film companies and key partners such as the National Trust and RSPB.
- Support the natural history GCSE more.
- Conservation projects in school grounds by rangers.
- Increase paid opportunities and outreach to disengaged youth, expand youth education engagement, provide work/training opportunities for under 30s.
- Visit colleges and local Universities with countryside-based subjects e.g. Sparsholt, to describe different roles with SDNPA and career pathways and do practical management/ tasks in SDNPA.
- More research opportunities for students and postgrads Education.

- Engage school groups with free offerings and youth volunteer-led sessions. Advertise through various platforms, including environmental job sites.
- Youth Action volunteering, working with Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Scouts, Cadets, night hikes, adventure. Link up with youth groups in towns and villages. Recruit more regularly. Expand Junior Ranger programme.
- Engage with exam boards/Dept for Education around courses/qualifications.
- Corporate mentorship project.
- Diversifying opportunities for young people not in education, training or work- make sure they are accessible.
- Proactively encourage and invite young people to join in with the day-to-day workings of SDNPA - less visible things.
- Dedicated youth engagement officers/interns (voluntary role)
- Young offenders' engagement.

Primary schools and younger children.

- Ambassador Schools.
- Better engagement with local attractions and appealing to family groups to recruit more young volunteers.
- Family events and free events.
- Grants to support schools, strong networks, Forest School network, diversity of outdoor providers, breadth and wealth of provision, involving business

Specific ideas

- River Schools
- Link with Brighton Museum.
- Summer jobs based on Canadian NP initiatives.
- More youth engagement with larger estates e.g. Cowdray Estate. Downs to the Sea - employing water champion with schools.
- Young farmers to give guided walks.
- Weald to Waves including school visits.
- Camping on larger estates as alternative to wild camping. Camping barn - wider package to include opportunities to engage, walk, experience.
- River Schools.
- Dance, music, art (festival).
- More tailored walks for young people.
- Staff experiences - video blogs.
- Support more care farming.
- Featuring younger people (staff/volunteers) on social media.
- Advice for young people on speaking at planning committee.
- AI - create a plant competition.
- Holiday support for young carers.
- Reintroduce Geocaching coins.
- Minecraft 'hackathon' for kick to introduce them to planning.
- Ranger for hire - youth engage and nature tour.
- Expand/bring back John Muir award.
- Mascot for SDNP - Southdown sheep? Cuddly toy for SDNPA key species - kid marketing.
- Pokémon Go SDNPA specific.
- Create opportunities for adventure playgrounds.
- Social media take over and lead tasks and ambassador in office.

- Volunteer social media platform.
- School holiday ranger club.
- Young person innovation prize, Youth Action Award recognition.
- Experience days so people can buy vouchers to do activities.

6.3.5 VALUING, WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Access is valued highly by most participants and was seen as essential for health and wellbeing. Access and wellbeing are a particular focus for more diverse communities and with young people but less of a priority for the 35-63 age group. There is a need to strengthen accessibility and make the SDNP more available and welcoming to diverse communities, with information reflecting that they are welcome in the SDNP. Men considered improved access and enjoyment to be more important than women. The poor public transport system was cited by many as a particular issue, although slightly less so by under 35's, with men being more concerned about it than women. This was a slightly higher priority in the north of the SDNP.

5. Valuing. welcoming and accessible to all

Insight

Strengths

Accessibility of SDNP, close to towns and communities, free access.

Access to nature and outdoor spaces is important. Country Park facilities and food are good.

Free access to connect with nature, trails and information on website.

Public transport is available. South Downs Discovery Ticket for unlimited bus travel, suggested public transport itineraries, assistance at the South Downs Centre.

93% of PROW are considered 'easy to use,' despite reductions in local government funding.

Progress has been made in improving access on all routes, including the provision of free mobility scooters. Several new and connecting routes have been established over the past five years. Visitor satisfaction, as of 2021, was reported to be very high.

Benefits to wellbeing and mental health- Green Social Prescribing, space for recreation, alternative physical activities, not necessarily sport.

A perfect escape from the city, to reconnect with nature and unwind, relax and de-stress, reduce anxiety. Enhance creativity.

Seeing others enjoying themselves can give hope and bring joy.

Physical activity.

Weaknesses

Poor public transport available.

Concerns about management of Rights of Way.

For those less used to the countryside, the SDNP can feel very big. More facilities e.g. toilets, in remote areas would help.

Access can be challenging if relying on public transport, and at times, certain areas feel isolated and unsafe due to poor lighting.

Concerns about over development/dogs not on leads, safety e.g. for women and people of colour.

It can feel too far from urban centers.

Concerns about difficult terrain and bad weather.

Confusion over whether people are trespassing on private property.

Lack of education, access and barriers such as transport and funding.

Eroding chalk paths.

People from more diverse backgrounds can feel that they are not welcome- open to micro-aggression from other users at Country Parks.

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<p>Moves you, gets people active, awe inspiring, mental clarity, escapism. SDNP Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Health and Wellbeing Hubs with facilities across the SDNP. Health and Wellbeing Travel Grants. Connecting In Nature programme offering eco therapy courses.</p>	
<p>Foresight</p>	
<p>Key priorities</p>	
<p>Engaging a wider audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on activities for young people and to reach culturally diverse audiences, along with ensuring that information is available through appropriate channels to broaden the appeal of the SDNP. • Encourage dog owners to respect land and wildlife, pick up waste, and leash their dogs. • Increase awareness and broaden park offer. • Cater to interests of young people and more diverse communities. • Make free camping easier. • Improve signage. <p>Creating and improving green infrastructure and access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policy should be maximising residential areas and providing better access to nature. Regional approaches to green infrastructure master planning and investing in public transport and active travel, working with partners outside SDNP, could help address some of the issues raised. • Investigation into alternatives to developer-led green space management, could result in better quality greenspace for people and wildlife e.g. Hampshire fund for heathland management. • Community Land Trust model – nature and housing assets. • Enhance road crossings and traffic calming measures. • Increase public access (right to roam, wild camping, bothies). • Survey to benchmark the accessibility of the PROW network prior to devolution. <p>Manage visitor pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the public transportation system, with better options including free buses for school children and bus reliability programs. Learning from other National Parks, such as the Mountain Goat service in the Lake District, could inform the development of more commercial public transport routes. • Improves and promote active travel routes. • Collaboration between the SDNPA, local authorities, and other partners could increase funding for access and public transport projects. • Distribute visitors across the SDNP to help avoid overcrowding at hotspots. • Encourage more visitors by train. • Improve and promote active travel routes. <p>Health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a mental health crisis that Protected Landscapes, partnering with the Primary Care Trust, Health Boards, national charities and community health and wellbeing groups could help address more. Partnership working with health and wellbeing organisations is the most effective way of engaging those in most need, and ensure the landscape works better for a more diverse 	

population. Devolution may offer better opportunities to do this, with fewer partners working over larger areas.

- Develop the regional approach, working with other Protected Landscapes and with universities, to share resources and evidence of the benefits of nature-based therapy, with clear outcomes and measures. A shared prospectus with opportunities for nature-based health outcomes has been suggested.
- Consideration of quality greenspace and other green infrastructure close to where people live is also critical, and delivery of this through Local Plan policies should be prioritised.

Key actions

- The formation of a public transport partnership involving transport operators could enhance coordinated access to the SDNP, especially in areas currently not served by public transport.
- Broaden the Local Access Forum, coordinate advice.
- Establish "volunteer rangers" to educate others on responsible land use.
- Implement a self-policing system like fishing communities, using respected local members.
- Build more cycle paths and active travel routes, including reopening old railway routes and encourage more permissive cycle routes.
- Better engagement with, information for, and management of activities in the countryside e.g. motor cross.
- Lobby for dog walking bylaws.
- Promote nature connectedness.
- More Green Prescribing.
- Forest bathing sites could be promoted to practitioners that are suitable for this.
- Engage young people through nature walks.
- Lobby rail operators to provide cheaper off-peak tickets.

Specific ideas

- Adopt New Forest Code of Conduct.
- Action is needed regarding the motorised use of byways open to all traffic (BOATs) and other PROW in East Hampshire and Petersfield.

6.3.6 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural Heritage did not come across as a priority for many, but this may simply reflect that the heritage organisations were not as involved in this engagement process as other sectors. This was more of a priority for diverse communities, young people and the 35-64 age group, and in the east and west of the SDNP.

6. Cultural heritage	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Connection to the past, interesting cultural history, the light.</p> <p>Heritage assets at risk in the South Downs National Park reduced from 2.5% in 2014 to 0.6% in 2024.</p> <p>Scheduled Monuments Monitoring Project.</p>	<p>41% of Scheduled Ancient Monuments were identified as vulnerable in 2021. Climate change poses risks due to coastal erosion.</p> <p>Ongoing issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, spending challenges, and energy costs.</p> <p>Lack of joint initiatives for apprenticeships and mentoring.</p>

<p>Many cultural heritage projects completed, including audio trails, an immersive app, and various performances and collaborations.</p> <p>Creative initiatives reached thousands, including hybrid festivals, digital assets, and training workshops.</p> <p>Heritage Crafts and Skills Pilot provided hands-on training for young people.</p> <p>Poetry trails with poets from different cultures makes you feel accepted.</p>	<p>Need for publicising evaluations of projects to better understand achievements.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more use of public transport to heritage attractions, with better connections. • More focus on joint initiatives for apprenticeships and mentoring and encouraging the use of traditional skills and crafts. • There is a lot of information on websites when projects are launched but little about what they have achieved. Ensuring these projects are evaluated and publicising the results online would make it easier for people to understand what has been achieved. 	
Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with cultural heritage groups to better understand key needs. 	
Specific ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better promotion of poetry trails to diverse communities. 	

6.3.7 THRIVING RURAL ECONOMY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Thriving communities and rural economy underpins people's ability and motivations to deliver better outcomes for nature and climate. There was enthusiasm from community stakeholders, rural businesses and landowners to engage with and embrace the SDNP. The priorities and actions reflect feedback from rural businesses, who saw business support and a more balanced approach to planning as important, along with linking to the community and nature recovery.

7. Thriving communities	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>There is tremendous dedication to volunteering by local people within and around the SDNP. According to the Office for National Statistics, the average percentage of affordable housing in the South East in 2024 was 8.1%. If the SDNPA can achieve 33%, this will be a significant achievement.</p> <p>The growth of Neighbourhood Planning is impressive and demonstrates active involvement with those communities.</p>	<p>Loss of rural skills, rural skill shortage vs. urban opportunities nearby.</p> <p>Poor quality accommodation and lack of affordable housing.</p> <p>Focus on larger settlements.</p> <p>Overburdening skirting villages.</p> <p>Community can be seen as too middle class.</p> <p>Traffic, parking, housing, and population are significant concerns.</p>

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<p>Greater sense of belonging, connection pride and understanding and understanding of importance, awareness and valuing. Proximity to large, diverse, urban community, increasing population seen as an opportunity. Accessible from population centres. Education in the rural economy.</p>	<p>Issues with tourism management and overcrowding at honey pot sites. Urban growth and development. Litter and plastic. Threat to biodiversity. Less reliance on volunteer labour, but also make volunteering opportunities more accessible (transport, timing, beginner friendly, inclusive etc.).</p>
<p>Foresight</p>	
<p>Key priorities</p>	
<p>Economy and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for job creation in tourism, entrepreneurialism, diversification, especially buildings and non-farm businesses, dynamism in the SME sector, advanced farming methods. Older assets provide greater security, such as succession rights. Support employment opportunities to reduce car dependency. • SDNP is a prime location for employment due to its proximity to Europe and the sea, this should be promoted to aid development of the marine economy and engage young people. • Provide services and infrastructure for sustainable enjoyment of the SDNP, such as public transport and active travel options. Support for market towns and businesses to maximise positive impacts is key. • Develop tourism offer around eco-tourism, low impact, wellness, nature, woodland and enhance brand for overseas visitors <p>Thriving communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive plans for community-led housing and balanced development. Focus on affordable housing, effective traffic management and speed limit enforcement. • Consider affordable housing approaches for rural communities. • Linking local services with visitors can help make them more accessible to local people. 	
<p>Key actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further promote 'Our South Downs' and Green Tourism schemes to engage businesses in sustainable practices and promote visitor environmental responsibility. • Build on events and festivals. • Support landowners in providing affordable community housing. • Enhanced engagement with local communities with regular consultations. 	
<p>Specific ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with internet infrastructure providers to negotiate less intrusive structures for 5G connectivity to help protect the landscape character of the SDNP. • Extending Gatwick Airport offers a unique chance to promote sustainable tourism, alongside compensation strategies for Protected Landscapes. 	

6.3.8 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

There were several themes that emerged which apply across all priorities, with the most prominent being collaboration, welcoming diversity, engagement, knowledge sharing and communication, and funding. These are considered in more detail below.

A. Collaboration	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Relationships between SDNPA and some partners are extremely good, and collaborative approaches on the ground can work well. Some partners found the SDNPA inspiring and looked to SDNPA staff for inspiration and advice, which enables partners to mirror thought processes and procedures.</p> <p>Leadership and governance of the SDNPA. Passionate and dedicated organisations and leaders that hold strong values to benefit the SDNP, with strong stable team at SDNPA. SDNPA as a convenor or “catalyst”.</p> <p>Partnership working- between local organisations, councils, and communities. Partnership working- Strong relationships among key stakeholders. Collaboration opportunities</p> <p>SDNPA- Dynamic, strong, stable team at SDNPA, with continued progressive policy planning. Open conversations.</p>	<p>The need to share strengths and progress with others pursuing similar goals. The SDNPA is often led rather than leading and attempts to cater to everyone.</p> <p>Better clarity on partnership roles. Many organisations and authorities but poor cohesion, lacking coordination with local councils, “siloes” thinking and working practices.</p> <p>The PMP feels like an SDNPA strategy rather than a partnership document. Partners should be more involved in delivering the PMP, and the SDNPA should focus on strategic facilitation.</p> <p>Partnership working could be improved. Need to work more closely with Local Authorities.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SDNPA should be seen as the 'glue' that brings together partners to take action. • Genuine collaboration with partners- frame as a delivery plan, showing how partner strategies link, gaining better commitment and a call to action. • More collaboration and partnerships- continue bringing people together, have conversations with organisations and partners, work with councils. • Partnership working- Improved transparency and collaboration with local councils and elected bodies. • Partnerships- Collaborate with local fairs, societies, and colleges, partner with youth groups, such as Peaks of Colour, collaborate with young influencers to reach their audience. Partner with hike/run communities. Collaborate with farmers on environmentally-friendly methods and traditional practices, promoting biodiversity and nature-based solutions. • Collaboration with other Protected Landscapes has been proposed, to share resources and skills. • Enhance SDNPA cross-directorate awareness of project impacts and communication. Improve collaboration across directorates and specialisms. • Linking up groups in Winchester – Eastbourne. • Bottom up listening and working/connecting. Convening. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate partners' successes. • Invest in and improve collaboration at a national level across PLs/NPE/NPUK • Planning - SDNPA working better with host authorities. • Shared systems and strategic planning process (PMP partners). • Shared systems and processes (NPUK family). • Planning and specialists work more closely with host authorities – collaborate. • Devolution presents opportunity to take bigger role in local communications.
Key actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecologists Network • Volunteer Network • Learning specific events - host/organise subject matter/disciplinary focussed partnership activities with partners e.g. all rangers in NP event, external partner forum. • Stakeholder mapping - where are gaps? • More knowledge hubs e.g. Dark Skies community collaboration. • Other partnership group breakfasts e.g. Heritage Conservation, Landscape, Access. • Explore connections between parishes, town councils, and local landowners.
Specific ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-organisational ranger days.

B. Diversity	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
High engagement with diverse and low-income school groups, working with all and promoting accessibility, SDNP funding for access - bus grant.	<p>Not enough grants for minority ethnic groups, queer, disabled groups.</p> <p>The biggest challenge for people would be to plan their visit if they've never been to the park before.</p> <p>Not everyone may be entirely comfortable with local public transport routes - so having clear information that makes the journey sound easy and accessible would be good.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness. Diverse communities seeing themselves more represented in information about activities in the SDNP. Educate, make people aware of what's in their doorstep. Promoting and encouraging cultural difference and how ethnically diverse people interact and engage with SDNP. • Enhancing public transport links to make the park more accessible to those without private vehicles. • Helping people feel safe, positive signing and visuals, artwork. • Better lighting in key areas, as some parts of the park can feel too dark and isolated, especially in the evening. 	

- Work closely and constantly with local community groups to build a strong relationship and represent diverse populations.
- Create collaborative projects, events and initiatives designed for specific needs and interests of different ethnic communities.

Key actions

- Holding more events/ music/ festivals / walking groups and joining with existing groups and their events with the South Downs activities. Make events free.
- Guided walks about different plants and trees that are from different parts of the globe to help people understand the interconnection of people and places.
- Clearer signage and maps to help visitors navigate the trails and find emergency contact points.
- More visible park rangers or volunteers patrolling certain areas to provide assistance if needed.
- Accessible emergency call stations in remote locations for added security.
- Dogs on leads or awareness about keeping dogs close to their owners.

Specific ideas

- Simplify information e.g. '5 things you can do for nature recovery', and a call to action.
- Installing signs in Braille to assist blind and visually impaired visitors.
- Providing sensory-friendly trails designed for neurodivergent individuals who may be sensitive to noise and crowded spaces.
- Offering multilingual resources and guided tours to engage communities from diverse backgrounds.

C. Engagement, knowledge sharing and communication

Insight

Strengths	Weaknesses
SDNPA website. Climate Action Knowledge Hub. Learning Network. Farmer clusters. Catchment Partnerships.	Low Park visibility, limited awareness of the National Park. Poor mobile signal, lack of information, not sure what activities are available. Not aware of information targeted at ethnic groups. Lack of awareness/ social media, lack of signposting and information.

Foresight

Key priorities

- The SDNP covers a large area, and engaging communities across this is a challenge. To make the SDNP feel more relevant, activities and events that encourage communities of interest from across the area may help strengthen relationships.
- Increasing awareness and understanding of the PMP priorities and work of the SDNPA and partners, focussing on what people can do to help.
- Effective communication beyond buzzwords, especially to young people.
- Stronger brand identity - brand/product collaborations.
- Improve knowledge sharing on nature, markets, and biodiversity net gain.

Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing knowledge and expertise- sharing information and educating the public, such as information boards, QR codes and signage to guide people through the park, sharing learning and expertise between organisations and partners. • The introduction of a SDNP induction scheme for partners has been suggested, and more opportunities for learning generally. • Communication- Issue a monthly newsletter about upcoming events and easy routes, utilise social media (Instagram, TikTok) for engagement. Create a centralized platform for all projects, volunteering, creative contributions, sports events, and walking routes. • Highlight nature guardians through media. • Showcase how planning adds value. Accept and promote planning as a tool for positive change. • Develop nature recovery fact sheets for garden centres. • Collect and share data that separate partners and orgs might have. • Fewer acronyms. • Work with partners better around data sharing and data capture. Better data sharing and centralised hubs for ecological data (external or in-house). • Technology to help us collect data better and to display the data better to share. More awareness of systems that automate collaboration/engagement. • Engage with more diverse groups to further reach. • Sponsor more pioneering university research. • Stakeholder management - centralised knowledge share. • Better understanding of Rol/opportunity cost of what we do. • Channels of communication between partners. • Better intelligence understanding of the groups that are active and consulting them. 	
Specific ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broader knowledge hub. SDNPA as a 'nature hub' linking with LAs. • Interactive project map. • Revive collaboration with rail franchise - way marks, shopfront at railway stations. • Centralised contact management system - stakeholder management. AI chatbot (closed but safe and transparent). Collaborative platforms. • Engage more diverse groups to spread our messaging. • Raising profile in a variety of industries e.g. water, finance, education, transport, e.g. other professional conferences and publications. • Better sharing of information- Ecologist Working Group/ LNRS. • Provide mentors. 	

D. Funding	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
FiPL programme for land management. Financial support from the SDNPA has been welcomed and has enabled some important projects.	Public sector funding cuts- 40% reduction in Defra grant has impacted SDNPA delivery. Funding and staff resources remain significant issues. Lack of funding in other sectors.

<p>SDNPA understand funding opportunities and coordinate bids.</p> <p>South Downs Trust is seen as a major success.</p> <p>SDNPA are congratulated on having the foresight to invest in staff resources to enable fundraising.</p>	<p>Funding from the Government is not rural-focussed, impacting the National Park's ability to address rural issues. Staffing and funding shortages are widespread, and there are more opportunities than can be addressed.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool resources around shared outcomes and prioritise activity to maximise results with reduced funding. Align roles to the PMP priorities and support smaller-scale, cost-effective projects. Sources of funding – BNG, nature credits, rural grants. Promote funding opportunities such as CIL. Focus available funding on strategic projects. 	
Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain why offsite BNG is better. Evaluate proportionality of BNG on brownfield developments. 	
Specific ideas	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BNG collaboration, pooling knowledge, shop window- landscape scale. 	

6.3.9 THE SDNP PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Some of the findings related specifically to the Partnership Management Plan document and these are summarised here.

The Partnership Management Plan	
Insight	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>PMP is a useful document for funding bids as it gives a clear structure for SDNP priorities and demonstrates how projects align.</p> <p>Beautiful document but too long and wordy.</p> <p>Pithy summaries work well, as does leaflet scale document.</p> <p>Clear outcomes, with good, demonstrable delivery in SDNP.</p> <p>Ambitious scope of existing PMP.</p>	<p>The PMP should be shorter and more focussed, with clear targets and monitoring.</p> <p>Wording can be vague and some of it feels 'tokenistic'.</p> <p>Does not always feel relevant.</p> <p>There are too many outcomes, they are too broad and some lack focus.</p> <p>PMP is not community or partner led, there is poor partner commitment and a lack of awareness of partner priorities.</p>

	<p>Lack of awareness and visibility with communities.</p> <p>Lack of measurement and reporting.</p> <p>Reviewing the Local Plan and PMP simultaneously is not helpful, and there is a lack of coordinated planning.</p> <p>There is insufficient consultation and engagement with communities and landowners.</p> <p>Lack of data, monitoring, and evaluation; unclear progress towards long-term goals.</p>
Foresight	
Key priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term thinking about the National Park's vision is encouraged. • The next PMP should clearly indicate who is responsible for delivering each part. It is unclear whether the PMP is intended for the community or partners. • Genuine collaboration with partners- frame as a delivery plan, showing how partner strategies link, gaining better commitment and a call to action. • Inspiring and meaningful plan that is more people focussed. An accessible process and concise document that people want to engage with, which results in action. • Link with Government priorities and provide clarity on how PMP links with other strategies e.g. LNRS and Local Plan. Ensure new Section 245 duty is delivered. • Ambitious and achievable, galvanising action- That within a very short time we will see positive changes that ALL people can benefit from. • Ensure outcomes are measurable, benchmarked against other PMPs and demonstrate outcomes. • Make the plan more relevant and accessible to all stakeholders. 	
Key actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller document, printed on demand in other languages. Use different mediums for story-telling such as poems/ song. • Members included in developing the new content. 	
Specific ideas	

6.3.10 ACTION PLANNING

The Actions and Pledges approach adopted in some of the second phase events could be considered to further develop some of the key actions. This is described in more detail in Appendix 10.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This has been a significant and complex engagement process, which has collated information from a wide range of partners, community stakeholders and underrepresented groups.

SDNPA and partners should feel hopeful for the delivery of the next PMP, as there is real enthusiasm and commitment from partners, community stakeholders and the public to progress improvements to nature recovery, climate action, access, education and help promote a thriving rural economy and local communities. However, key partner engagement in the engagement process was poor and their buy-in will be essential to galvanise action and deliver on the key priorities in the new PMP.

This research highlights some key areas for consideration, as fed back by a wide range of stakeholders in the new PMP. Embracing the recommendations in this report will help to ensure more effective and impactful delivery of the new plan.

However, having completed the programme, there are several recommendations for the future, which are presented below.

7.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Whilst there has been significant work by SDNPA and partners, it has not been possible to assess the impact of this without quantitative data or more direct feedback on individual initiatives. Targets, monitoring and a culture of evaluating progress should be integrated into the new PMP and across partners, with the results published on websites. Project pages should be updated on a regular basis to demonstrate the impact of projects and enable people to understand the benefits of these investments. Some partners and community stakeholders have asked for a central database for monitoring that is shared.

Taking time to reflect, review progress and celebrate achievements can be motivating for all involved and lead to better outcomes in the longer term.

7.2 PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND COLLABORATION

Whilst partnership working with the SDNPA can be excellent, as demonstrated by the range of partnership initiatives above, this does not seem to be true across the board. It is felt by some that the partnership approach needs to change. This is reflected in partners seeing the current PMP as solely the SDNPA's plan.

Partners see the SDNPA's key role as the strategic facilitator with partners doing more delivery. The SDNPA should be enabling, encouraging, signposting and inspiring others to get better results. Partner delivery is a critical part of the PMP and having a clear role for partners, with agreed action plans, that can make them feel more involved and result in significantly more impact.

Community partners are well placed to engage at a grassroots level as the local, trusted voice. Partnership approaches that help enable this, with the SDNPA taking the strategic lead and influencing policy, is seen as more productive.

Key partner engagement was poor and contact information seemed problematic, which would have been helped by a comprehensive Customer Relationship Management system. Engagement by more of the key partners would have enabled more informed results. Utilising the approach to actions and pledges,

described in Appendix 10, with key partners over the next couple of months would help ensure partner buy-in to delivery of the new PMP.

Working closely with other Protected Landscapes could help develop innovation and share learning.

7.3 PROACTIVE DEVELOPMENT THAT HELPS NATURE RECOVERY AND CLIMATE ACTION

The SDNP needs to be open for business. Economic development and environmental protection can coexist and enhance each other. A more nuanced approach has been called for, avoiding the use of the National Park designation as a reason to reject proposals before thoroughly exploring all opportunities. Effective design may be the most suitable method to ensure that commercial development also conserves and enhances nature and the landscape.

7.4 THE PMP DOCUMENT

The PMP should be a shorter, more focused document, which includes priorities led by partners. A long-term (75-year) vision, with targets based on scenario planning, would help focus activity and set targets.

The PMP/ SDNPA should be key enabling mechanisms for the Local Nature Recovery Strategies to ensure these are delivered within the SDNP.

7.5 ENGAGEMENT

Whilst people were generally not aware of the PMP, they were delighted to be asked about the future priorities for the SDNP. It is recommended that this engagement continues, possibly with annual opportunities to feedback on progress through events and an annual survey for stakeholders.

7.6 THE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

SDNPA invited over 700 stakeholders, both individuals and organisational representatives, to attend the in-person and online workshops via email. These events were further publicised through strategic networks and relevant b2b newsletters. Working with sector specialists focussing on particular target audiences worked well and this approach is encouraged for the future. As did having targeted workshops and events for specific audiences, which helped focus discussions and identify key priorities and areas of concern. Attendance at public events helped give breadth to the findings.

Climate change, health and cultural heritage partners have yet to be engaged, and it is recommended that this happens before the PMP is drafted. It is also suggested that SDNPA continues to review activity in other Protected Landscapes to understand what's working well elsewhere.

There were a variety of entry points for stakeholders and the public to contribute their issues and ideas to the PMP. Events took place during the day (mainly workshops), during weekday evenings (with the public, councillors and online) and at weekends (the Dark Skies events). However, consideration could be given in future to holding a Saturday half or all day charette style workshop to enable those in work to participate more fully.

The disappointing attendance on the first event for Wildlife, access, landscape and climate action groups may in part be explained by it also being followed two days later by an evening online event for the same audience which was well attended. The community-based event at Moulsecoomb by contrast was sold out

and had a waiting list. This was down in part to helpful promotion by local infrastructure bodies such as Trust for Developing Communities, Community Works and local groups such as Greening Hanover. Anecdotally, word of mouth by local activists may also have contributed.

The joint events with the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation worked well in driving the numbers of people participating but also in highlighting the difference/links between the two plans. It was apparent that the audience who were drawn to commenting on the Local Plan/planning weren't very aware or at all of the PMP, but that level of understanding grew as a result of the joint consultation. However, there was feedback that having the two consultations running in parallel wasn't helpful and this may have reduced involvement in this PMP engagement.

The pin/sticker board activities worked well at the public indoor and outdoor events with 283 people participating – more than the online survey. These could have been used also at the DRI and Young Wilders events in addition to focus group style approach to provide more quantitative information. Further questions on ethnic origin and health (similar to that used in the Census 2021), albeit needing to be sensitively handled, would provide additional useful data.

The combination of asking people about what they loved, their fears and hopes for the National Park, about Drivers for Change and the SWOT analysis all worked well for the different audiences and were able to be combined well in developing this report.

The follow up work to identify actions and pledges worked well but there was insufficient time to engage more fully. This could be integrated into any future engagement programme.

Given the low level of participation in the second phase events, and the fairly short length of time between when the first and second round events took place – mainly between the beginning of the New Year and mid-March - perhaps only one round of events should have been undertaken.



“The knowledge we have is different than maybe what our parents and grandparents knew of nature and how it sort of functions and impacts on every day. So, I guess I'm hopeful that the current generation are passing on the information and knowledge of what could or what could not be if nature continues down the path its going.”

8.0 GLOSSARY

The table below explains the abbreviations used in this report.

Abbreviation	Full title	Commentary	Web link for more information
<i>AI</i>	Artificial Intelligence	The development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, decision-making, and perception.	
<i>BNG</i>	Biodiversity Net Gain	In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.	Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK
<i>CIL</i>	Community Infrastructure Levy	A charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.	Community Infrastructure Levy & Section 106 - South Downs National Park Authority
<i>D of E</i>	Duke of Edinburgh Awards	Open to any young person aged 14-24. Each young person builds their own programmes – picking their own activities and choosing which cause to volunteer for – to achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold D of E Award.	DofE - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
<i>Defra</i>	Department of Environment, Food and Farming	The ministerial department of Government responsible for improving and protecting the environment, aiming to grow a green economy, sustain thriving rural communities and support food, farming and fishing industries.	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK
<i>DRI</i>	Diversity Resource International	A company that focusses on developing human capital and creating a safe environment for the learning and development of ethnic minority individuals, communities and organisations.	Diversity Resource International DRI Non-Profit Social Enterprise
<i>FiPL</i>	Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme	The FiPL programme offers funding to farmers and land managers in National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)), National Parks and the Broads. It is funded by Defra but not an agri-environment scheme. The programme will fund projects that: support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural	Get funding for farming in protected landscapes - GOV.UK

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		heritage, protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place.	
<i>FRIGSE</i>	Farming and Rural Issues Group South East	Group promoting farming and rural issues in the South East of the SDNP.	
<i>LNRS</i>	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Strategies that present agreed priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has appointed 48 responsible authorities to lead on preparing a local nature recovery strategy for their area.	Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK
<i>LP</i>	Local Plan	Setting out the spatial strategy for the NP – planning for new homes, community facilities and employment	South Downs Local Plan - South Downs National Park Authority
<i>LUF</i>	Land Use Framework		
<i>MEOPL</i>	Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in National Parks and National Landscapes	The previous monitoring framework for Protected Landscapes- published in 2014. No longer apply.	Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes - NERR055
<i>NPE</i>	National Parks England	National Parks England is the collective voice English National Park Authorities, working together to achieve these aims through influencing policy.	National Parks England
<i>NPs</i>	National Parks	World-class landscapes with the power to inspire everyone, they've been designated on behalf of the entire nation because of their special qualities. Stunning natural beauty, beautiful wildlife and fascinating cultural heritage make these living and working landscapes truly unique.	What is a National Park? - National Parks

<i>NPUK</i>	National Parks UK	UK National Parks work with partners and landowners to conserve and enhance nature, wildlife and cultural heritage in England, Wales and Scotland; and provide opportunities for everyone to access nature for their wellbeing, whilst working positively with local communities.	National Parks UK // British National Parks
<i>PANN</i>	The People and Nature Network	A wide range of partners who work together to plan positively for nature and natural services within and surrounding the protected landscapes of the South East.	The People and Nature Network – a Summary Guide - South Downs National Park Authority
<i>PeCAN</i>	Petersfield Climate Action Network	An environmental charity aiming to help local communities reduce their carbon emissions and protect nature.	Petersfield Climate Action Network
<i>PLs</i>	Protected Landscapes	National Parks and National Landscapes are collectively known as Protected Landscapes.	
<i>PLTOF</i>	The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework	Targets will promote the actions that are most needed to achieve positive changes in Protected Landscapes. Published in 2024, they set the ambition for how Defra expect Protected Landscapes to achieve 3 outcomes from our Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023: Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment	Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework - GOV.UK
<i>PMP</i>	Partnership Management Plan	A five-year overarching strategy for the management of the South Downs National Park, that sets out to shape the future of the South Downs National Park. Legal requirement. Led by the South Downs National Park Authority but delivered in partnership.	Partnership Management Plan - South Downs National Park Authority
<i>PROW</i>	Public Rights of Way	Part of the highways network. All can be used for walking, some for horse riding, cycling or by motorists. Legal responsibility sits with Local Authorities.	Rights of way and accessing land: Use public rights of way - GOV.UK
<i>R4C</i>	Resources for Change	A socially responsible, employee-owned consultancy with a significant reputation for innovation in involving people in the matters that affect their lives. Originating in 1997, we focus on work which integrates people and their environment.	Resources for Change - Resources for Change
<i>RSPB</i>	Royal Society for the	A national charity for the conservation of birds and nature.	RSPB Bird & Wildlife

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	Protection of Birds		Conservation Charity
SDNP	South Downs National Park	The area of land legally designated as a National Park.	South Downs National Parks // South Downs Cliffs
SDNPA	South Downs National Park Authority	An organisation responsible for keeping the South Downs a special place. The SDNPA is also the planning authority for the National Park. The Authority is a public body, funded by the government, and run by a Board of 27 Members.	About - South Downs National Park Authority
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability	Children and young people with special needs who receive additional support in schools.	Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND): Overview - GOV.UK
SoNPR	State of the National Park Report	Statistical or quantitative report of change, positive and negative, based on the outcomes in the existing PMP.	State of the Park Report 2024 - South Downs National Park Authority
SSCP	Seven Sisters Country Park	280 hectares of chalk cliffs, meandering river valley and open chalk grassland, with visitor centre and facilities.	Visit Seven Sisters Country Park - South Downs National Park Authority
SSSIs	Sites of Special Scientific Interest	The UK's very best wildlife and geological sites, as notified and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in England and Wales.	
WeCAN	Winchester Climate Action Network	An environmental charity aiming to help local communities reduce their carbon emissions and protect nature.	Winchester Climate Action Network – Winchester Action on Climate Crisis
WEPS	Whole Estate Plans	Documents prepared by individual landowning organisations that set out the assets of the organisation and the opportunities and threats which the organisation may encounter and describes their plans for the future.	Whole Estate Plans - South Downs National Park Authority
YW	Youngwilders	Organisation focussed on young people and nature recovery.	Youngwilders Youth-led nature recovery in the UK

